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Abstract

Capacity development, capacity building and organisation development (OD) are key priorities of international development, and this is especially true in the African context. With regard to the NGO sector, since the 1990s donors and especially international NGOs have invested significant resources in building the capacity of African NGOs.

While academic research on NGO management and OD has grown significantly in the last decade, it has often taken a decontextualised stance, largely resting on assumptions about the universality and neutrality of management principles, practices and approaches. Furthermore, there are still few accounts on NGO management and OD from within the African NGO sector.

This study intends to contribute to filling this gap, by focusing on OD and management in Ugandan NGOs. It originated in my work as OD advisor with two Ugandan NGOs, between 2007 and 2009. The research thus took shape through an iterative process of hands-on immersion as an OD practitioner, focused on the specific dimensions of the action scene I was involved in, and of reflexive inquiry as a theoretical researcher. This study specifically examines how OD is understood in the NGO sector in Uganda: what needs, demands and aspirations it serves, what challenges it faces and what opportunities it offers. It also investigates how management principles and practices shape the role of NGOs within the development industry. In particular, acknowledging NGOs’ commitment to alternative bottom-up development thinking and practice, it investigates whether and how OD processes and management practices might help NGOs to fulfil their stated role.

The findings indicate that OD and management processes were fundamentally shaped by external pressure from various actors, especially donors, pushing both NGOs toward the adoption of specific management systems and tools. However, the research also reveals that the NGOs dealt with such externally driven management requirements in various ways, including acts of opposition and resistance. Overall, the findings suggest that management imperatives and requirements not only significantly affect the OD processes of NGOs, but also shape the role of NGOs in the development process, by narrowing their possibilities for engagement with social change agendas and with bottom-up, transformative practice within the aid industry more generally.
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I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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To the thousands of women I saw walking along the road in Uganda, carrying children on their back, water jerrycans on their head and a hoe in their hand: your tenacity and endurance are humbling and inspiring.
**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWIs</td>
<td>Bretton Woods Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CODESRIA</td>
<td>Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONOB</td>
<td>Coalition on Non-Governmental Organisation (Amendment) Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENIVA</td>
<td>Development Network of the Indigenous Voluntary Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>(United Nations) Economic Commission for Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERP</td>
<td>Economic Recovery Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDB</td>
<td>Multilateral Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MfDR</td>
<td>Management for Development Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoFPED</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organisation of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>Organisation Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAP</td>
<td>Poverty Eradication Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QuAM</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPRIN</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBOS</td>
<td>Uganda Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGMP</td>
<td>Uganda Governance Monitoring Project</td>
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<td>UDN</td>
<td>Uganda Debt Network</td>
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<td>UNNGOF</td>
<td>Uganda National NGO Forum</td>
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Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This study concerns organisation development (OD) and management in the Ugandan NGO sector and is shaped by my practice as an OD advisor with two Ugandan NGOs. OD is a change process which is understood in many different ways (see for instance Worley and Feyerhem 2003, Cooke 1997, Porras and Berg 1978, Holvino 1996, Mann 1995, Voronov 2005, McKendall 1993, Schein 1999). Most of these approaches centre around a conception of OD as a process of enhancement of the capabilities and wellbeing of an organisation through participatory and inclusive methods.

OD - also called capacity building or institutional development - has acquired particular relevance in the context of international development. With regard to Sub-Saharan Africa, several international development organisations consider the enhancement of organisational capacity at all levels, from the national government to community-based organizations, as a key enabler of social and economic development (see for instance World Bank 2005a, OECD 2006a, Commission for Africa 2005, Moss et al. 2006, Oxfam GB 2004, SNV 2005, Sako and Ogiogio 2002).

The assumption that socio-economic development can be facilitated by OD initiatives has generated a certain amount of academic debate ranging from discussions regarding the adequacy of traditional OD approaches in the development context (Cooke 1997, Joy 1997, Malunga and James 2004, James 2004, Golembiewski 1991, Lewis 2002, Jones and Blunt 1993), to critical

---

1 Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are an extremely diversified typology of organisational entities and it would be virtually impossible to find a definition that includes and represents such a variety. The Ugandan NGO Act defines an NGO as an "organisation established to provide voluntary services, including religious, educational, literary, scientific, social or charitable services, to the community or any part of it" (Government of Uganda 2006 Art. 1). However, this definition is contested and might not mirror the actual diversity of the Ugandan NGO sector, as we shall discuss in section 1.3.2.

2 International development (hereafter development) is claimed to be a global effort to fight poverty and inequalities (IMF et al. 2000, United Nations 2003), involving sets of actors (such as multilateral agencies, governments and NGOs), practices (such as knowledge production, policy-making and funding allocation mechanisms) and resources (financial, technical and human), often referred to as the ‘development system’, ‘development machine’ (Fergusson 2007) and/or development/aid ‘industry’ (Tandon 2008: 105, Powell and Seddon 1997, Kothari 2006). However, the official goals of development have been widely questioned, as we shall analyse in greater detail in Chapter Two.

This research specifically examines how OD is understood in the NGO sector in Uganda: what needs, demands and aspirations it serves in this particular context, and what challenges it faces. In the next section I discuss in more detail what is meant by the term NGO in the context of this research, and introduce issues that characterise OD in relation to NGOs working in international development (1.2). I then provide a brief introduction to the research context (1.3), and then introduce the research questions and the structure of the thesis (1.4).

1.2 NGOs, OD and Development

This section introduces key issues with regard to development, NGOs and OD. It firstly analyses the rise of NGOs as development actors and the reasons that have favoured their emergence; it highlights critical issues that have emerged in the last two decades with regard to the role of NGOs within the development industry as well as the state of research on African NGOs. Finally, the section previews some relevant themes with regard to OD and management in the NGO sector.

1.2.1 The Rise of Development NGOs

In Uganda and in Sub-Saharan Africa more generally, the NGO sector can hardly be comprehended without making reference to the word ‘development’.

The African NGO phenomenon exploded in the late 1980s, partly as a result of what is usually called the development ‘impasse’ or ‘crisis’ i.e. a widespread sense of disillusionment with, and sense of failure of, development thinking and

3 While the focus of this thesis is Uganda, as we shall see in the following pages, since the 1980s, dominant development policies have been largely the same across the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, leading in turn to similar positionings of the NGO sector across the whole region. Many scholars use the notion of African NGOs enlightening common features and challenges (see Hearn 2007, Bruton 1989, Shivji 2007, Manji and O’Coill 2002); thus while maintaining my main attention on Uganda, I find it productive to widen my perspective at the outset to Sub-Sahara Africa.

With regard to the first of these tenets, by the 1980s there was widespread disappointment with the state-led models of development that had characterised development since the 1960s, when the majority of African countries achieved independence (Brodhead 1987). On one hand, the neoliberal policies of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) advocated a minimal state to remove a major obstruction to Africa’s development (Onis and Senses 2005, Gros and Prokopovych 2005, World Bank 1981). On the other hand, neo-Marxist critiques saw the state’s role in development as oppressive and exploitative, especially in the light of rising military expenditure and the heavy taxing of peasants (Bernstein 1990: 110, Hyden 1994: 316-317, Lawrence et al. 1985, Shindo and McCormack 1985, Lemma 1985).

With regard to economic growth, questions began to be asked in the 1980s about its primacy in development thinking and the assumption that it would reduce poverty. More specifically, the neoliberal reforms which dominated the development agenda since the early 1980s attributed to the market the role of key-engine of development, assuming that economic growth and wealth would trickle down to the poor, hence eradicating poverty and inequality (Stewart 1997: 16).

However, in the 1980s Africa witnessed an economic decline, an increase in poverty levels and a deterioration in living standards (ECA 1989). Income per person declined more than 25%, while the number of people living below the poverty line increased by two-thirds, so that in 1990 more than half of the total

---

4 As Harvey puts it, “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005: 2). Chapter Two analyses in greater detail the meaning of neoliberalism in development policies in Africa.

5 However, economic growth was a key goal also in the previous decades. Despite the diversity among the different countries, the development strategies across the African continent in the 1960s/70s shared the primacy attributed to economic growth. It was pursued both through programmes of agriculture diversification and modernisation, so to overcome the dependence on one or two crops characteristic of the colonial era, and through industrialisation especially in the form of import-substitution (Mkandawire 2003:103-105, Hyden 1994:310-311, Cooper 2008:99-103, Olutayo and Omobowale 2007) which was though to decrease Africa’s dependence on import and diversify the productive system.
population lived in absolute poverty (UNDP 1990: 34, 18). Sub-Saharan Africa’s share of global exports dropped from 3.1% in the 1950s to 1.2% in 1990 (ILO 2000), while its external debt rose from $14.8 billion in 1974 to $91 billion in 1984 (Akokpari 1999: 26).

Hence, disillusionment with top-down state-led development practices on one hand, and critiques against a predominantly ‘economistic’ understanding of development on the other led, in turn, to a flourishing of alternatives conceptions of development, including ‘participatory development’, ‘human development’, ‘post-development’ and ‘rights-based development’ (Pieterse 1998, Schuurman 2000, Chambers 1985, Simon 2007, Manzo 2003). Despite the heterogeneity among and within these perspectives, most of them advocated alternative, ‘bottom-up’ development thinking and practices. Against this background, a wide consensus emerged in the 1980s around the potentially positive role of NGOs (Hearn 2007, Pieterse 1998: 346, Brodhead 1987, Wallace 1997: 38). NGOs were expected to bring about fundamental change, by means of adopting participatory and emancipatory approaches focused on the development aspirations of grassroots communities, thus widening development thinking and practices beyond economic growth. In addition to this, NGOs were also favoured by official development agencies, which considered them cheaper and more effective than governments in the delivery and implementation of development programmes (Edwards and Hulme 1996).

In the period between 1980 and 2010 the number of NGOs, national and international, in sub-Saharan Africa thus rose dramatically. In Kenya in 1980 there were 102 international NGOs (INGOs) and 1421 national NGOs, while in 2000 there were respectively 536 and 5988 (Amutabi 2006: 40). In Tanzania in the 1980s there were 25 registered NGOs; in 2000 there were more than 10,000 (Reuben 2002). In Uganda there were 160 registered NGOs in 1986 (Barr et al., 2003), rising to 3499 in December 2000 (DENIVA 2006) and to 8564 in 2011 (Uganda National NGO Forum 2011).

The prominence of NGOs has grown correspondingly, so that today in Uganda, as in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, NGOs are widely considered legitimate actors in development. They are actively involved in the implementation of development projects, usually participate in national and international policy making (De Coninck 2004, Wallace, Bornstein et al. 2007:19-20, Bebbington,
Hickey et al. 2007a:3-18) and are allocated a significant portion of development funding (Koch 2008).

The linkage between NGOs and development has also inspired much academic research. In this respect, Edwards and Fowler make the link explicit, by talking of Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO) to refer to those organisations working “on poverty and injustice within ‘developing’ countries” (2003b: 2). Similarly, Lewis defines NGOs as “the group of organisations engaged in development and poverty reduction work” (Lewis 2003: 1). Other authors further circumscribe the relation between NGOs and development, asserting that “NGOs are only NGOs in any politically meaningful sense of the term if they are offering alternatives to dominant models, practices and ideas about development” (Bebbington et al. 2007b: 3).

In Chapter Two I elaborate in more details different understandings regarding NGOs and their linkage with and role in development.

1.2.2 Another Failed Promise?

Three decades on, the increasing involvement of NGOs in international development does not seem to have brought the expected transformation in development thinking and practice (Bebbington et al. 2007b). If anything, the critical issues addressed by the impasse have worsened, as explained below.

On one hand, with regard to the stated main goal of international development – namely the fight against poverty and injustice – the overall picture is not encouraging. The 2010 World Development reports starts with the following message:

Poverty reduction and sustainable development remain core global priorities. A quarter of humanity still lives on less than $1.25 a day. One billion people lack clean drinking water; 1.6 billion, electricity; and 3 billion, adequate sanitation. A quarter of all developing country children are malnourished (World Bank 2010b: viii).

Global inequality has risen: according to the UN, while in 1950 GDP per capita in the developed world was seven times higher than in Africa, in 2001 the gap had more than doubled (22825 compared to 1489) (United Nations 2006: 5).
Inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient has increased in the past two centuries by 30% (World Bank 2009: 110)\(^6\).

On the other hand, the ‘development system’ has also demonstrated a particular capability to ‘absorb’ and incorporate the alternative and critical perspectives that NGOs should have brought about, so much that it now makes sense to speak of “mainstreamed alternative development” (Pieterse 1998: 350, see also Cooke and Kothari 2001, Dagnino 2007). In particular, despite the introduction of policies and programmes which directly address poverty (such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes, which I shall discuss in Chapter Two) and despite the claimed adoption of participatory and inclusive bottom-up approaches, “the enthusiasm for the market [...], the core neo-liberal agenda of deregulation, privatization and opening up of international trade and investment has remained the same since the 1980s” (Chang 2007: 13, see also Onis and Senses 2005, Gros and Prokopovych 2005, Hahn 2008). In this respect, Sen (2002) argues that the grip of the neoliberal agenda on development policies and practices has in fact strengthened since the 1980s, indicating a failure to consider – let alone debate – alternative frameworks.

Hence, the initial enthusiasm for NGOs has thus left place to a critical questioning of their role in Africa’s development and especially of their ability to provide or commit to an alternative to the neoliberal agenda (Manji and O’Coill 2002, Hearn 2007, Stewart 1997, Powell and Seddon 1997, Amutabi 2006, Shivji 2007, Dicklitch and Lwanga 2003, Dicklitch 1998, Chachage 2005, Oloka-Onyango and Barya 1997). Simply put, the central issue in this debate is whether NGOs are pursuing an alternative agenda and bottom-up development thinking and practices or supporting the expansion of top-down neoliberal development agendas. We shall analyse this debate in greater details in Chapter Two, so to better understand what NGOs in Uganda are doing, which are their claims and aspirations and the challenges they face in pursuing them. This investigation on the Ugandan NGO sector appears to be relevant also considering one theme frequently discussed in the literature, namely ‘the NGO myth’.

\(^6\) Also, indicators such as infant mortality rate, life expectancy and education show that global inequality is on the increase. For instance, with regard to life expectancy, in 2000 the gap between sub-Saharan Africa and North America was higher than in 1950; the average educational attainment of a person born in sub-Saharan Africa in the period 1975-1979 was less than six years, while that of a person from an OECD country was more than 12 years (World Bank 2005d). Whatever indicator one might privilege, from GDP to access to health or education, sub-Saharan Africa is the region of the world that most clearly exposes the failure of development (Lushaba 2009: 1, see for instance World Bank 2009, ECA 2010).
1.2.3 The NGO Myth

Over the past decade one of the themes that has systematically emerged from the literature is that of the 'NGO myth' (Nauta 2004, Igoe and Kelsall 2005, Efuk 2000, Tvedt 1998, Hilhorst 2003, Amutabi 2006), suggesting that many widely held beliefs about NGOs are questionable. Four themes from the literature underpin the NGO myth.

First, the term NGO as applied in mainstream literature is ambiguous in itself (Srinivas 2009: 2-3, Lewis 2001, Tvedt 1998: 12-37, Hossain 2001: 44-46). It refers to a set of organisations which differ greatly in size, budget, activities and ideological orientation. It includes transnational religious organisations that manage billions of dollars and secular organisations with regional areas of operation and no budgets to be managed. Thus, one aspect of the NGO myth is the impossibility of identifying features shared throughout the sector.

Secondly, much research on NGOs and on civil society generally is funded by donors active in the development system, so it is often driven by normative assumptions whose aim is to understand how well NGOs (can) fit into the development agenda (Igoe and Kelsall 2005:19, Mercer 2002, Lewis 2005, Mamdani 2004:13-21). These critics argue that this programmatic approach, being predominantly ahistorical and decontextualised, has failed to engage with the multilayered and ever-changing nature of existing NGOs.

A third important factor informing the myth-reality dichotomy is the lack of ethnographic research on African NGOs (Dorman 2005: 36, Lewis 2001). This results in a lack of understanding of their role, their everyday politics and their relations with other development actors. With regard to Uganda as the context of this research, there seems to be a lack of comprehensive information on the NGO sector as a whole (The Republic of Uganda 2010a, Barr et al. 2003) and on the specific contribution it offers to Uganda’s development (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009a: 8). These lacunas make it difficult to assert what NGOs are and do (or are not and do not do).

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7 See for example the data reported by the OECD regarding Official Development Assistance in 2005 (Koch 2008).
8 In this regard, since November 2009, The Uganda National NGO Forum has been committed to enhancing knowledge and understanding on the sector, building an online database, which at the time of writing is still at an early stage. In March 2011 the database provided information on 100 NGOs, including their activities, staffing, areas of operation and budgets.
Finally, the NGO myth might arise also from the adoption, in much research on Africa, of a comparative or evolutionist perspective, which assumes the universality of western lenses and concepts and thus their validity for describing and explaining African social phenomena (Mamdani 2004:8-10, Mudimbe 1988, Prasad 2003, Shivji 2009b, Okere 2005). Drawing on these critiques, the NGO myth may arise from inaccurate assumptions about similarities and affinities of NGOs across the globe, reflected, for instance, in the notion of a global civil society (see for instance Edwards 2000).

I shall return to these debates in more details in Chapters Two and Three. Here, I wish to note however that when it comes to analysing NGOs in development, as the critiques above suggest, the social, political, economic and historical context is important as is solid and independent research; hence, with this study I intend to make a contribution in this sense. In particular, in researching OD and management in Ugandan NGOs I have found it crucial to take seriously into account the broader historical, economic and social context, which I introduce in the next section and then analyse in greater details in Chapter Two. However, I firstly conclude this review of the key issues at the core of this research by focusing in more details on the role of OD in the development context.

1.2.4 NGOs, OD and Development

Since its origins in the late 1940s, OD has been primarily engaged with understanding how to bring about social change oriented towards emancipation and justice (Cooke 1996). In this respect, the goals of OD mirror quite closely the real, claimed or assumed mission of African NGOs, namely to promote bottom-up emancipatory ‘development alternatives’ (Bebbington et al. 2007a).

OD in NGOs presents distinctive challenges however.

Historically conceived as a process of change and “renewal” (French and Bell 1990: 18) aimed at enhancing an organization’s ability to “perceive, understand and act upon” its environment (Schein 1969: 9), OD relies in fact upon organisations having some leverage with regard to bringing about desired changes in their management practices, decisions and actions. Beckhard suggests in particular that traditional OD approaches generally assume “very general constraints from the environment” (Beckhard 1969: 1 italics in original).
The discussion undertaken in the previous sections, regarding the expansion of the neoliberal agenda, suggests however that NGOs operating in development contexts might not be as unconstrained as the historical conception of the OD process seems to require.

Furthermore, Ugandan NGOs are highly dependent on donor funding (DENIVA 2006: 34-36, Fafchamps and Owens 2009: 297, USAID 2010: 132, Robinson and Friedman 2007: 661), and the availability of this funding has become increasingly conditional on the adoption on the part of NGOs of particular management practices and systems specified by donors (e.g. performance measurement, accountability and reporting systems) (Wallace et al. 2007, Mawdsley et al. 2005), hence curtailing NGOs autonomy in choosing and shaping their management practice and systems. Furthermore, donors and especially international NGOs have been progressively engaged in OD/capacity building projects of African NGOs, where the OD intervention has taken a predominantly narrow focus concerned with organisational effectiveness and management systems (Smith and Bornstein 2001, Roberts et al. 2005), while marginalising issues concerned with human relations and social change. This reflects in turn a wider ‘managerialisation’ of the development industry as a whole, and the widespread adoption in the international development context of western business models and principles (Cooke 2004, Cooke and Dar 2008b). This emphasis on management is explained by the need to increase aid effectiveness and harmonisation among development agencies so as to achieve visible and measurable results (OECD 2008b, 2009a, World Bank 2004).

From the current academic debate on development management, there emerge two sets of critiques especially relevant for this research.

One is the argument that management knowledge is firmly rooted on "westocentric assumptions” (Prasad 2009). It has been predominantly produced in North America and United Kingdom and has hardly ever had non-western organization as its 'object' of study (Cooke 2004, Kiggundu et al. 1983, Jaya 2001, Gantman and Parker 2006, Ibarra-Colado 2006). Hence, these critiques invite to question the uncritical adoption of western management theories and practice in non-western context. In addition to this, a number of authors (see for instance Cooke and Dar 2008a, Wallace et al. 2007, Mowles et al. 2008, Nuijten 2005) underline that mainstream management development thinking and practice, on which many OD interventions are based, tend to treat issues such as
poverty, human rights or governance primarily as technical issues, while – it is argued – such issues are also, if not fundamentally, political, and as such cannot be comprehended, let alone changed, by technocratic means. In this regard it has also been argued that mainstream development management practice seems to be overly concerned with efficiency-related goals, overlooking issues related to human rights, poverty and social justice (Murphy 2010).

To sum up, from the above it emerges that while OD theories and practice might be especially relevant for the NGO sector in Uganda, it seems that within the aid industry OD practice has been highly influenced by western business management approach, hence focusing predominantly on issues such as efficiency and effectiveness. Recalling that NGO’s raison d’être in the development system was that of providing bottom-up alternative development thinking and practices, the background above invites us to investigate whether current understanding of NGO management and OD are supporting NGOs to fulfil their claimed role.

This study aims to investigate these matters further, drawing from my practice as an OD advisor with two Ugandan NGOs. In the next section I provide an introduction to the particular context of this research, by highlighting some of the peculiarities that characterise the existence and the work of NGOs in the Ugandan context. I then conclude the chapter by outlining the focus of this research, my research questions and the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Introduction to Uganda

Having highlighted in the previous section the importance of placing NGOs in their broader context, this section starts providing an initial introduction to Uganda, which will be then deepened in Chapter Two. Then, recalling the debate on the ‘NGO myth’, the section attempts to circumscribe, as far as possible, the Ugandan NGO sector. Firstly I examine the current debate between the government and the NGO sector on the role of NGO in the development process and then I focus on key dimensions in the sector emerging from the literature.

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9 Here I provide a very brief background to Uganda. However, Appendix 1 offers a more detailed background on the political-economic history of the country.
1.3.1 Uganda Today

Uganda gained independence in 1962 after having been a British protectorate for sixty-eight years. After a few years of apparent peace and unity, in the mid 1960s the constitutional and political arrangements created at independence proved problematic, leading to a period of political instability, characterised by violence, repression and eventually economic collapse (Karugire 1980, Sejjaaka 2004, Sathyamurthy 1994). In 1986 Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) seized power after five years of guerrilla war, promising to bring a “fundamental change” (Mukholi 2004: 26, Mamdani 1988: 1167). Since then, Museveni and the NRM have remained in power, winning also the last recent presidential and parliamentary election held in February 2011.

The advent of the NRM regime brought significant, mostly positive, changes to the country. For instance, from the 1990s onwards, economic growth has been remarkable, with an average GDP growth varying from 7.2% in 1997/98 to 8% in 2007/08 (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 10, Dijkstra and Van Donge 2001, Muwanga 2001: 1). The proportion of the population living below the poverty line has also decreased from 56% in 1992 to 31% in 2005/06 (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 1) and there have been significant improvements in the health and education sectors (see The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 246-249, MoFPED 2010b: 20-30).

However, there are significant disparities between the North and the South and between urban and rural populations (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 13-14), with the rural sector accounting for 85% of the total (Baryahirwa 2010). Overall, since the 1990s, inequality within the country has increased: the poverty headcount is much higher in rural areas (34%) than in urban (14%); in the

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10 The election was judged generally fair by both AU and EU observers (AU 2011, EU 2011), notwithstanding a number of weaknesses observed, such as the heavy deployment of armed forced across the country during the voting process, concerns on the composition of the Electoral Commission, administrative and logistic failures and the distribution of money and gifts by candidates (U.S. Department of State 2011, EU 2011, AU 2011). In addition, as reported by the two main national newspapers – New Vision and Daily Monitor - the weeks following the electoral process witnessed protests and riots in different areas of the country, some culminating in violent repression by the police and the military forces and the arrest of leaders of the opposition parties.

11 For instance, life expectancy has risen from 45 years in 2003 to 52 years in 2008; HIV prevalence has decreased from 30% in the 1980s to 6-7% in 2008; other indicators such as under five mortality or maternal mortality show improvements, although remaining high (see The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 246-249, MoFPED 2010b: 20-30).

12 With the introduction of Universal Primary education in 1997, the enrolment has increased dramatically, from 2.5 million pupils in 1997 to 7.5 million in 2008, although the completion rate in primary school is only 49% and drop-out affects more girls than boys (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 20°, 210-216).
period 1991/92-2005/06, the poverty headcount in the central region dropped from 46% to 16%, but in the Northern region it has fallen only from 74% to 61% (MoFPED 2010b: 13)\(^\text{13}\).

Inequality significantly impacts on women: while constituting 70% of the workforce in the agriculture sector (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 21), they own only 5% of the land (UNDP 2010a: 76); in wage employment they are concentrated in the lower grades (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 21). The vast majority of the population (75%) derives its livelihood from subsistence agriculture (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 204). While the overall economy has grown steadily, the contribution to GDP of the agricultural sector has constantly declined, from 51.1% in 1988 to 15.4% in 2008 (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 15).

The UN classifies Uganda within the group of 48 least developed countries\(^\text{14}\) (33 of them are in Sub-Saharan Africa) and the Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Uganda as 'low': of 169 countries analysed, Uganda occupied 143\(^{rd}\) position, with an HDI value of 0.422 (UNDP 2010a).

Uganda depends significantly on foreign assistance. Between 1995 and 2005, foreign financing covered 50% of public expenditure (Lister et al. 2006), although the last national budget (FY 2010/11) relies on foreign assistance for only 31% of the total (MoFPED 2010a: 90). Uganda has benefited from several debt relief initiatives, which have significantly reduced its debt burden, although in 2009 its total external debt was over two billion US dollars (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009c: 14).

1.3.2 What Are NGOs in Uganda?

Against this socio-economic background, what NGOs are and do (or should do) in Uganda is a highly contested issue. The NGO Registration (Amendment) Act 2006 defines NGOs as organisations “established to provide voluntary services, including religious, educational, literary, scientific, social or charitable services, to the community or any part of it” (Government of Uganda 2006 Art. 1). This definition has been strongly disputed within the Ugandan NGO sector, on the

\(^{13}\) Here it is important to consider that the Northern region had been ravaged, since 1987, by a twenty-years civil war.

\(^{14}\) Countries are classified within this category according to three criteria: low income, low human capital and economic vulnerability (UN 2011)
ground that it limits NGOs to service delivery, thus excluding advocacy NGOs or those engaged with public policy (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009a, Uganda National NGO Forum and DENIVA 2006). During consultation on the NGO Registration (Amendment) Bill 2001, the NGO sector manifested its concerns and opposition to it. In 2004 a group of Ugandan NGOs formed the Coalition on Non-Governmental Organisation (Amendment) Bill (CONOB), which among other initiatives developed an Alternative NGO Bill, defining NGOs as "legal entities constituted as such under this Act, [which] are independent, not for profit and serve the interests of society generally or disadvantaged sections of society in particular" (CONOB 2004: 4). However, the 2001 Bill was passed in April 2006. Furthermore, besides the definition of NGOs, the 2006 Act and the attached regulations issued in 2009 (The Republic of Uganda 2009) include provisions considered restrictive by the NGO sector\(^\text{15}\), which has lobbied the government to change the legal framework of the sector\(^\text{16}\). Partly in response to this pressure, the government, in consultation with the NGO sector, developed a draft NGO policy in 2008. Contrary to the exclusive focus on service delivery of the 2006 Act, the policy grants NGOs a crucial role in agenda setting and policy development as well as implementation (Government of Uganda 2008: 7) and clearly recognises advocacy NGOs. Thus, notwithstanding the persistence of some controversial issues, the 2008 NGO policy is said to represent a step toward the creation of an enabling environment for NGOs (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009a: 5); importantly, it also signals the need to review the legal framework to achieve a better balance between clear regulations and the dynamism and autonomy of the NGO sector.

This debate has continued inasmuch as the NGO law and regulations have not been reviewed yet, nor has the policy been passed. However, as we shall see in the next sub-section, in practice NGOs in Uganda are involved in a wide range of activities which include advocacy work. We shall return to NGO-government

\(^15\) Issues of the legislation and regulations vehemently contested include: the procedure for registrations with the National Board and that for the renewal of the NGO permit (considered tedious, time-consuming and restrictive of NGOs’ autonomy); the duty of NGOs to inform a week in advance and in writing the (local) government before making any contact with communities (considered not only burdensome, but impossible for rural NGOs to respect); the composition of the NGO Board and the lack of representatives from the NGO sector (CONOB 2006, NGO Forum 2009, NGO Forum and DENIVA 2006).

\(^16\) This includes a petition to the President presented on 05 May 2006 by eight membership NGOs, including the NGO Forum; it asked him not to assent to the NGO Registration Act (NGO Forum and DENIVA 2006: 17-23), which however he did. Another petition was presented to the Constitutional Court on 2\(^\text{nd}\) April 2009, asking the Court to declare some sections of the NGO Act and Regulations unconstitutional. It was dismissed by the Attorney General, who considered NGOs’ concerns unfounded and premature (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009b).
relations further in this thesis. Here it is important to note that the ongoing, contested and partially contradictory nature of legislation and regulations in Uganda arguably contributes to nurture the NGO myth, since we have noted above that questions of what NGOs should do and actually do cannot be answered unequivocally in the Ugandan context.

1.3.3 Key Issues on Ugandan NGOs from the Literature

Despite the unfinished state of the legal framework on NGOs and the lack of comprehensive information on the sector, some recent research has provided descriptive information on the Ugandan NGO sector. (Barr et al. 2003, DENIVA 2006, Muhangi 2004a, 2004b, Barr et al. 2005, Grover et al. 2010) provide an outline that will be elaborated in later chapters.

As noted previously, the Ugandan NGO sector has grown dramatically in three decades, so much that 8564 NGOs are currently registered with the National NGO Board (Uganda National NGO Forum 2011). In the 1990s Ugandan NGOs were mainly subcontracted by donors for the provision of welfare services, supplementing or substituting for the government (De Coninck 2004, Cannon 1996). Then, with the changing development policies (to be analysed in Chapter Two), their role expanded to include advocacy work in various areas such as human rights, democratisation and anti-corruption (De Coninck 2004, Muhumuza 2010, Brock et al. 2002, 2003, Robinson and Friedman 2007). This does not mean that NGOs can be clearly identified as providing either services or advocacy; rather, they tend to be involved simultaneously in a range of different programmes (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003: 103) and are reluctant to define their scope and activities rigidly. They prefer to describe their work in general terms, such as ‘community development’ (Barr et al. 2003) and, as recent research shows in Uganda, virtually all NGOs claim to be committed to public information and raising awareness (DENIVA 2006: 70-71, Barr et al. 2005: 663, Grover et al. 2010).

Thus, it has been suggested that in practice NGOs enjoy a greater freedom than the law might suggest, partly because the government has insufficient resources to enforce the law and monitor the sector strictly (USAID 2010: 131, Barr et al. 2005: 675)\(^\text{17}\). This seems to be indirectly confirmed by the high number of

\(^{17}\) In Uganda the National NGO Board (Ministry of Internal Affairs) is the body in charge of NGOs’ registration, regulation, coordination and monitoring. The inadequate institutional
legally registered NGOs that are openly engaged in advocacy and awareness-raising. In addition, in the last ten years the government has invited NGOs to participate in developing many crucial policies, including the Poverty Eradication Plan, the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture and the Education Investment Plan (UGMP 2005: 25), effectively recognising their role beyond service delivery. Hence, from the above it emerges that Ugandan NGOs, besides the provision of welfare services, have been progressively involved in a wider range of activities (to be examined in greater detail in Chapter Two).

Another key issue is that NGOs in Uganda are highly dependent on foreign donors (DENIVA 2006: 34-36, Fafchamps and Owens 2009: 297, USAID 2010: 132, Dicklitch 1998: 28, Robinson and Friedman 2007: 661, CDRN 2004a: 7-9). This is crucial inasmuch as it has been argued that their work, rather than being organically linked with their constituencies, largely reflects the agendas of their donors (Barr et al. 2005: 675). Indeed, financial dependence is a common feature of the sub-Saharan NGO sector at large in Africa and one of the most critically debated issues with regard to NGOs’ ability to nurture bottom-up development alternatives (Chachage 2005, Shivji 2003a, Amutabi 2006, Powell and Seddon 1997, Igoe and Kelsall 2005).

A further common feature that seems to emerge from the NGO sector concerns its composition. Several researchers point out that NGO employees in Uganda are mainly highly educated and often urban-based (Barr et al. 2005: 670, Robinson and Friedman 2007: 655, DENIVA 2006). More often than not, these individuals are driven by the desire to find employment (Barr et al. 2003). In fact, the explosion of NGOs is said to have contributed to nurturing “middle class entrepreneurial talent [...]”; but on the negative side, it has left NGOs wholly unaccountable to people at home” (Mamdani cited in Oloka-Onyango and Barya 1997: 121, see also De Coninck 2004). Similar concerns have emerged within the sector, where one commentator has argued that “we [NGOs] are being assimilated with private sector companies [...] from charitable do-gooders, we are turned into sharp business people” (CDRN 2004a: 27, see also De Coninck 2004). In other words, the financial dependency of NGOs, coupled with the stringent conditions attached to their funding, raises questions of whose interests NGOs are serving.

and financial capacity for the NGO Board to fulfil its mandate is recognised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs itself (MIA 2009). For instance, in the financial year 2008/09 the national NGO Board carried out thirty-six monitoring visits (roughly 0.4% of the whole sector) and twenty-five ‘fact finding’ visits following complaints, which led to the de-registration of two NGOs (MIA 2009: Vote Function 1215)
Finally, the NGO sector in Uganda is not as separate from the state and government as assumed by the dominant development discourse (see for instance the definition of NGOs in Edwards and Fowler 2003b: 3-4, Lewis 2001: 36-39, Lewis and Kanji 2009: 11, Lekorwe and Mpabanga 2007: 4). NGOs are generally assumed (and sometimes required by government and donors) to be apolitical and nonpartisan (Fisher 1997: 446, Lekorwe and Mpabanga 2007: 4) and directly serving the common good (Fowler 1991: 16, Kamat 2004: 157, Oyugi 2004: 21). However, in Uganda, individuals move easily from one sector to the other, according to the availability of work (De Coninck 2004), playing multiple roles, so that one may be simultaneously a civil servant or an MP and a member (or indeed founder) of an NGO (Brock 2004a, Bornstein 2005). This 'wearing of multiple hats' by NGO leaders will also be discussed later in this study.

Hence, besides issues of legal definition (analysed in the previous sub-section), the overlaps between service delivery and advocacy, between constituencies and funders, and between charity and business evident from the literature on Ugandan NGOs also potentially contribute to the NGO myth in Uganda, insofar as they highlight the complexity of circumscribing the sector within the country. Considering the multiple understandings on what NGOs are or ought to be, and their in-the-making nature, leads me to suggest considering NGOs as socially constructed processes, shaping and shaped by a variety of development discourses18, which provide different avenues – overlapping or competing – for NGOs to secure their identity and make sense of their work. This allows us to view NGOs, on the one hand, as belonging and contributing to the neoliberal development discourse, which constructs them as effective and apolitical actors engaged in various ways to counter state power and to safeguard individual liberty and the common good (see for instance Diamond 1994, 2008). On the other hand, it also allows, as observed in a previous section, to see them as belonging and contributing to alternative development discourses that challenge the neoliberal order and promote alternative development theory and practice. This socially constructed perspective helps in sharpening our research focus to investigate how NGOs in Uganda interact with, contribute to and articulate

18 With the term discourse I refer to specific socially constructed systems of meanings, rule and social practices, which simultaneously define and create subjects and objects (while excluding others) and the relationship between them (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000).
different development discourses and how these transactions shape their understandings, aspirations and needs with regard to OD.

With the above scene setting in place, in the next section I specify the focus of this study more clearly.

### 1.4 The Focus and Structure of the Thesis

In this section I firstly focus on the research questions, giving an account of the process through which I defined them, and then I present the overall thesis structure.

#### 1.4.1 Identifying and Formulating the Research Questions

My research questions emerged gradually and took shape during the course of my research.

Between 2007 and 2009, I volunteered to work as an OD advisor with two indigenous Ugandan NGOs, Karibu and Agandi\(^{19}\). Each had specifically asked for an OD advisor through the support of an international organization. As an organisational psychologist with more than ten years experience in a similar role in Europe, I initially saw my engagement in these successive assignments as an opportunity to reflect more systematically and widely on my practice. In particular, working in Uganda evoked a number of questions regarding the appropriateness of my background in such a role, as explained below.

Although I had not firmly identified the research question before starting fieldwork, my initial thinking revolved around OD methodology and its underpinning humanistic values: participation, emancipation and social justice (Grieves 2000, Cooke 1997, Reason and Mc Ardle 2006, French and Bell 1990, Schein 1999). I was intrigued as to their distinctive meaning in the non Western context of the Ugandan NGO sector. I initially saw my research as a potential contribution to the debates mentioned in section 1.1, with specific references to the challenges of OD in the context of Ugandan NGOs: how is participation conceived and understood? How would my foreign face and background impact

\(^{19}\) These are pseudonyms: the real names of the NGOs I worked with have been changed to protect the anonymity of those involved in the research.
on developing a participatory methodology? So the first question that guided my work could be summarised as follows:

1. **What are the distinctive features of the OD processes of NGOs in Uganda?**

When I started the fieldwork, however, I soon realized that I would have to rework both my focus and my methodological perspectives. From the outset a key issue that emerged was the overly formalistic and technocratic understanding of OD and management, an issue increasingly debated in the field of development management (Dar and Cook 2008, Wallace *et al.* 2007, Gulrajani 2010). That my Ugandan colleagues, in both Karibu and Agandi, called me ‘the technical advisor’ indicated the dominant expectations of my role: I was expected to ‘put the organization right’, where what was right had been defined somewhere else and was known to me. More precisely, in the first weeks of my work with Karibu, I perceived a gap between OD and development practices in that the expectations concerning OD seemed dislocated from the NGO’s actual work. For instance, in one of my first meetings with Karibu’s director, she told me that I would have to “do OD on your own because I am very busy in the field”. I soon realised that I had wrongly assumed that the OD process would be shaped by the distinctive work of Karibu and Agandi. This raised some new questions: Who and what shapes the OD process in particular contexts? Whose needs and aspirations drive it? How is the OD agenda set? These queries became summarised in a second research question:

2. **How do contextual factors shape the OD processes of NGOs?**

As time passed I was increasingly questioning the gap that I had perceived between NGOs’ work and what appeared to be their technocratic understanding of OD. It increasingly appeared that the management requirements of the aid system had consequences for NGOs’ work, favouring certain agendas and practices over others. In this sense, some scholars have argued that mainstream development management might detrimentally impact on NGOs’ possibility to engage with bottom-up practices and social change agendas (Wallace *et al.* 2007). Hence, I found it important to also investigate the underlying assumptions of development management, and consider its impact not only on the work of NGOs, but more generally on the role of NGOs within the national development process. This led to a third research question:
3. How do the discourses of NGO management and organisational development shape the role of NGOs in the "development" process in Uganda?

I formulated these three research questions during fieldwork, building on my initial thinking and maintaining my focus on practical concerns regarding how to support learning and development in the NGOs I was working with. The questions were thus very much guided also by what events dictated, and wove parallel threads of thinking throughout my work. While the first question directed my gaze inside the NGO with which I was working (its dynamics, its routines, its challenges and so on), the second and third questions invited me to contextualise NGOs within the wider development system.

1.4.2 Framing and Structuring the Thesis

How might my approach to investigating the three questions above be framed? The thesis is structured into seven chapters, with the following sequence:

Chapter Two analyses the changing role of the NGO sector in Uganda since their emergence in late 1980s and pays especially attention to examine the progressive narrowing of the options available to NGOs in terms of the role they can play in the context of development, as introduced in section 1.1. This chapter analyses NGO progressive involvement in the aid industry and critically reflects on how NGOs have dealt with and have been influenced on the one hand by the expansion of the neoliberal agenda on the other by alternative development discourses.

Chapter Three explores the debates concerning NGO management and organisational development. More precisely, firstly the chapter, by examining development policies, illustrates how development management is currently understood and practiced within the aid industry. Then the chapter analyses the academic debate on development management and OD, enlightening the competing understandings which emerge from the literature.

Chapter Four presents the methodological approach to this research. It encompasses both theoretical perspectives and the practical emphases deployed for the generation and analysis of the empirical material.
Chapters *Five and Six* directly address the research questions. Each provides an analysis and interpretation of the data generated during the fieldwork.

Chapter *Seven* summarises the main research findings, and provides a reflection on my methodological approach to OD in NGO management in Uganda. It also highlights what the study has contributed and identifies directions for future investigation.
Chapter 2 - Ugandan NGOs and the Development Industry

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces development and national NGOs20 in Uganda. It analyses the changing role of the NGO sector in Uganda from the late 1980s, attending especially to the progressive narrowing of the options available to NGOs in terms of the role they can play in the context of development, as previewed in the previous chapter. The chapter thus attempts to ‘historicise’ and contextualise NGOs and development in Uganda, examining NGOs changing roles, positioning and stances vis-à-vis changes in development discourse. And by retracing the history of NGOs in Uganda I also address one of the main criticisms regarding research on NGOs: its de-contextualised and a-historical character (Igoe and Kelsall 2005:19, Mercer 2002, Mamdani 2004:13-21).

The chapter proceeds as follows. First I focus in some detail on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era of international development (from 1980 until mid-1990s), crucial for the radical changes it introduced in the development system (section 2.2); then I focus on analyses of NGOs’ role throughout this period (2.3) and on the so-called post-Washington consensus, the development discourse that has became dominant since late 1990s (2.4), before moving on to examine the role of NGOs and the changes implied for their work (section 2.5). In section 2.6 I provide some concluding reflections. In starting the above analysis, I find it important to briefly introduce how I deploy the concept of ‘civil society’, the wider arena where NGOs are usually collocated. Mainstream development practice in Uganda and more in general in sub-Saharan Africa have largely equated civil society organisations (CSOs) with NGOs (Powell and Seddon 1997:9, Igoe and Kelsall 2005:23, De Coninck 2004:58, Katusiimeh 2004:105). As we shall see in the following pages, civil society is indeed a hallmark of current mainstream development. But the notion of ‘civil society’ is open to different interpretations (see for instance Mercer 2002, Diamond 1994, Hearn 2001, Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995) and so it is important to briefly outline how the term will be employed in this research.

20 In this chapter the term NGO refers to Ugandan NGOs only, unless specified otherwise.
2.1.1 Civil Society

I broadly draw upon neo-Gramscian perspectives, according to which civil society is “the realm in which the existing social order is grounded; and it can also be the realm in which a new social order can be founded” (Cox 1999: 4). By contesting the dichotomy between state and civil society, Gramsci proposes to conceptualise the state as an ensemble of social relations, which encompasses both political and civil society: the former is the realm of coercive and punitive power (such as the military and the juridical); the latter is the realm of consent (Gramsci 1992: 261-268, Bobbio 1979, Morton 2007: 88-95, 118-121, Grisoni and Maggiori 1977: 132-140, 236-238).

Civil society is the site through which ruling groups organize and construct consensus, by diffusing and naturalising certain values, worldviews and hierarchies (Morton 2007: 88-95). In this sense civil society provides the basis for hegemony, i.e. a form of rule which despite privileging the interests of the ruling class, combines coercion and opinion-moulding, so to obtain legitimacy and active consensus of the wider masses (see for instance Gramsci 1992: 11-12, 258). Hence, Gramsci suggests, the radical transformation of an existing order starts from changing the ideologies that naturalise and legitimise it, which are constantly diffused within and by civil society, such as schools, media and intellectuals (Bobbio 1979). Civil society, therefore, while not independent from the state, enjoys a degree of autonomy from it, and as such it is a key site for political struggles among competing social forces and worldviews (Levy and Egan 2003: 806, Bebbington et al. 2007b: 7). As Cox puts it, civil society is

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21 With this regard, Gramsci proposes to consider the state as “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules” (Gramsci 1992: 244).

22 Hegemony is a term that Gramsci deploys in several manners, as he does with many other crucial notions. For instance, he also uses this notion to indicate the ability of a social force to articulate interests beyond its particular corporative-economic sphere, so to create a wider bloc able to include demands and aspirations existing across different social groups/forces (Grisoni and Maggiori 1977: 178-181). In the following pages I shall return to this concept. However, a central feature of hegemony is its consensual dimension, achieved either by incorporating, hence neutralising, potential and actual opposed forces and/or by naturalising certain worldviews, by continuous opinion-moulding efforts through civil society.

23 Gramsci’s understands ideology as “a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life” (Gramsci 1992: 328). Gramsci’s notion of ideology thus is neutral, insofar it does not refer to a mystification or a distorted representation, but rather to a device through which individuals and collectives make sense of their world and their identity; hence, as Mouffe observes, Gramsci’s notion of ideology can be considered as a practice producing subjects (Mouffe 1979), an aspect that became crucial in discourse theory (see Foucault 2009, Howarth 2000)
“both shaper and shaped, an agent of stabilisation and reproduction, and a potential agent of transformation” (1999: 4-5). Importantly for our research scope, Gramsci suggests that in order to understand political struggles within a country, it is important to take into account not only internal dynamics, but also their geo-political positioning and the pressures exercised by international forces (Gramsci 1992: 116-119, see also Morton 2007). In this sense, political and civil society, and struggles for hegemony, are better understood by widening the perspective beyond national borders, which, as we shall see, is of paramount important when researching on Ugandan NGOs.

Hence, neo-Gramscian perspectives invite us to contextualise Ugandan NGOs within the wider arena where they operate, examining how they engage with the different existing social forces and discourses. This is exactly what this chapter attempts to do.

2.2 Development in the 1980s and 1990s

The 1980s were characterised by a radical break with the development policies and practices of the previous decades, which, for various reasons, analysed at the end of this section, paved the way for the NGO boom. The main motive for this radical change has been identified by many in the Africa’s economic crisis: while in the early stage of independence many African countries registered modest but significant economic and social growth, at the end of the 1970s the effects of the global recession impinged upon Africa, worsened by the fragility of the African economy and the increased debt burden (Cooper 2008: 105-107, Shivji 2009a: 8-9). In Sub-Saharan Africa external debt rose from US$ 6 million in 1970 up to US$ 32 million in 1979 (World Bank 1981: 3). Two reports referred to below addressed the economic crisis: the Lagos Plan by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Berg report by the World Bank.

2.2.1 The Lagos Plan

The Lagos Plan of Action for Economic Development of Africa 1980-2000 (LPA) was adopted by the OAU in April 1980 (Organization of African Unity 1980). It represented the first attempt by African leaders to formulate a shared and comprehensive vision for the continent’s development (Gros and Prokopovych
One of its central points was the concern for the high dependency of the African economy on the export of raw material and minerals. This made the continent vulnerable to foreign plans and demands and it stifled industrialization, considered a priority for development and economic independence (Organization of African Unity 1980: 6). Pursuing the vision of a new international economic order and deploiring the lack of political will of industrialised countries to alter the status quo, the plan envisaged a self-sustaining development based on an African Economic Community, which would emphasise both agriculture and industrialization (Organization of African Unity 1980: 98-102). As Ejigiri puts it, the LPA was based upon a strategy of delinking from the West (Ejigiri 1991). Seeing the economic crisis as predominantly caused by external factors, it accordingly identified a development strategy based on principles of auto-centric development, self-reliance and integration among African countries (Owusu 2003, Arrighi 2002, Shivji 2009a:15, Campbell 1989:28, Ake 1996:21-42). As Owusu (2003: 1657) notes, the LPA also emphasised both economic growth and income distribution. Also, it was the first collective and official document by African leaders to acknowledge the crucial role of women in the development of the continent (Parpart 1986).

Here it is important to mention Amin’s (1990) critique of the LPA. Amin argues that the LPA’s strategies, rather than promoting de-linking and self-reliance, relied heavily on the world market and demand (Amin 1990). He sees a deep contradiction on the one hand between the stated aim of auto-centric development with the declared rejection of the prevailing economic order and on the other the simultaneous acceptance of the governing role of global capitalism as evident in the LPA’s methodological assumptions which relied upon the given

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24 Here it is also important to consider that in the pre and immediately post independence era one of the themes at the core of the debates within the AOU was that of Pan-African Union (or United States of Africa). Nyerere and Nkurumah, Presidents respectively of Tanzania and Ghana, were deeply convinced that Africa could obtain political and economic independence only by going beyond the artificial boundaries set up by the colonial rule. However, while a widely shared vision, its implementation was systematically postponed (see Shivji 2006b, 2009c). Given therefore the lack of an officially shared agenda in the previous two decades, the Lagos plan represented a turning point.

25 The LPA needs to be understood within the context of collective efforts of “Third world” countries to affirm their right to self-determination and their struggle for a new international economic order, which started at the Bandung conference in 1955 with the Non-Aligned Movement, continued with the establishment of the G77 in 1964 and also brought in 1974 the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the “Declaration on the establishment of a new international economic order” (UN General Assembly 1974). With regard specifically to Africa, the LPA was preceded by the Monrovia declaration, eloquently entitled “Guidelines and measures for national and collective self-reliance in social and economic development for the establishment of a new international economic order” (Organization of African Unity 1979).
world demand. Hence, according to Amin, the LPA, through a naïve understanding of capitalism or a “lack of nerve” – or both – failed to challenge the international division of labour and the prevailing order which confined Africa to a dependent role as a supplier (Amin 1990: 57-60).

2.2.2 The Berg Report

Another key report that addressed the African crisis was *Accelerating Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* by the World Bank (1981), also called the Berg Report after the name of its author, Elliot Berg. The report identified three priority sets of policies, respectively on trade and exchange rates, on agriculture, and on the efficiency of public expenditure (World Bank 1981: 5). With regard to this last point, in order to increase ‘efficiency’, governments were “invited” to reduce their “widespread administrative overcommitment” and rely more “on the managerial capacities of private individuals and firms” (World Bank 1981: 5). In other words, governments had to sharply reduce their budgets and workforces and introduce user fees for public services, including health and education (World Bank 1981: 84-88). With regard to trade and agriculture, the report is highly critical of African policies, considered to be based upon an overvalued exchange rate, wrongly biased against agriculture and exports, and over-focused on import substitution industrialisation (World Bank 1981). Instead, it recommended a new “agriculture-based and export-oriented growth development strategy for the 1980s”, which would constitute “the prelude to industrialization” (World Bank 1981: 6). To be successful, such a strategy needed a market that was free to allocate resources, without undue intervention from the state, thus requiring the removal of subsidies, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and an opening to foreign investments (Mihevc 1995: 95).

Finally, the report anticipated African governments’ need for assistance in developing the policy reform package and ensured the World Bank’s willingness and availability for close cooperation. But it also specified that the increased aid and technical assistance announced in the report “can only be mobilized if [African countries] support deliberate and well formulated programs to reverse the downward trend of development in Africa” (World Bank 1981: 132). In other words, with the Berg report the World Bank announced the introduction of policy ‘conditionality’, according to which the availability of financial assistance
depended on the adoption of specific policy reforms, towards privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation.

Like the LPA, the Berg report has also attracted significant criticism, focusing in this case on its methodological and theoretical inaccuracy, as well as its strongly ideological nature. As Kapoor (2008) puts it, the report assumes “the Euro-North America capitalistic growth process […] as a universal model for development”, and non-market-oriented choices are rejected as either irrational or archaic (2008: 26, see also Bernstein 1990: 60, Amin 1990, Ferguson 2007: 78-79). Furthermore, the introduction of conditionalities introduced a wider role for the World Bank, part of which was its heavy involvement in African governments’ policies, which Bernstein describes as “an overt politicisation of the Bank’s stance and role” (Bernstein 1990: 103) expanded well beyond its original mandate (Chang 2007: 31-37, Raffer and Singer 2001).

The LPA and the Berg report were clearly pulling in opposite directions, one toward delinking with the existing world order, the other toward adjusting to it (Owusu 2003). But Amin argues that “the powers that be in the world exchequer are such that the Lagos Plan […] was soon buried, while the World Bank’s language became the leitmotiv of official policies” (Amin 1990: 60). In particular, the high level of indebtedness made virtually all Africa countries in dire need of financial support from the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs). This support would now come with a variety of attached ‘conditionalities’ centred around the adherence to the policy prescription of the report, as discussed in more detail the next section.

2.2.3 From the Berg Report to Structural Adjustment

The Berg Report paved the way for so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999:41, Gros and Prokopovych 2005:26, Mihevc 1995:16), which dominated African development policies from the 1980s. SAPs are a set of neoliberal economic policy instruments based upon heavy reliance on market forces and the abatement of state intervention as triggers of economic growth (Owusu 2003, Ibhawoh 1999, Makki 2004). SAPs were the

26 With regard to Sub-Saharan Africa SAPs implied measures to attract foreign investors: currency devaluation, elimination of restrictions on importing, elimination of subsides and price control, state retrenchment, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and introduction of fees for public services (Gros and Prokopovych 2005).
expression of the so-called Washington Consensus\textsuperscript{27}, denoting the neoliberal approach to developing countries shared by the World Bank, the IMF and the US Treasury Department. This can be summarised in three key principles: stabilization, privatization and liberalization (Rodrik 2006: 973). From this perspective, state intervention is seen as inimical to economic growth, and only a market free from its influences can achieve better economic performance (Onis and Senses 2005: 264). From the 1980s onwards the IMF and the World Bank imposed SAPs upon African governments as conditions for receiving loans. They were soon followed by other lenders, such the OECD members (Gros and Prokopovych 2005). In the period 1980-1996, SAPs were adopted by thirty-seven Sub-Saharan countries (World Bank 1997), making neoliberalism the dominant approach to African development (Shivji 2009a, Owusu 2003). As we shall see in section 2.4.3, some of the reforms suggested in the Berg Report, such as privatisation and state retrenchment, have been extremely relevant to the NGO sector.

2.2.4 SAPs in Uganda

In Uganda SAPs were introduced in 1981 as so-called stabilisation programmes, started soon after Milton Obote returned to power following the fall of the Idi Amin regime (see Appendix 1). The programmes imposed tight economic conditions, such as the devaluation of the Ugandan shilling, trade liberalisation and price deregulation (Nabudere 1990). Over time, however, the Obote II regime (as it came to be known) distinguished itself for its repressive character, and more generally led, according to some, to a process of “state collapse” (Makara 2009: 126-128), both economically and socially, characterised by anarchy, abuse and repression. This eventually led to the withdrawal, after a few

\textsuperscript{27} The Washington Consensus is better understood with reference to the attempts to address the global economic crisis of the 1970s, epitomised by the high levels of inflation and unemployment in both the US and Europe reaching their peak in mid-1070s (Harvey 2005: 12-30). The turn to the right in the governments of key economic powers at the beginning of the 1980s (the US with Regan, Britain with Thatcher and Germany with Kohl) determined radical changes in the welfare state and the adoption of neoliberalism in general as guiding frames for economic and social policy making (Gros and Prokopovych 2005: 22-23, Morton 2007: 123-129), including deregulation of the economic sector, budget cuts and dramatic reduction of corporate taxes (Harvey 2005: 5-38). A final, key aspect was the transnational restructuring of capitalism: progressive internationalisation of production and finance and the emergence of transnational corporations fragmenting their operations and activities across different locations (Morton 2007: 124). Important to emphasise here is how neoliberalism/globalisation, despite the rhetoric of minimal state intervention, has been actively nurtured by national and international legislation, so much that Harvey argues that neoliberalism is a “political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey 2005: 19).
years of cooperation and generous loans\textsuperscript{28}, of all foreign support to Uganda in 1984 (Sathyamurthy 1994: 517).

The situation changed with the advent of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime in 1986. Initially, the NRM government opposed the IMF and World Bank policies and programmes (Sejjaaka 2004: 105), stating its commitment to build an “independent, integrated, self-sustaining national economy” as spelt out in the Ten Point political manifesto (see Museveni 2007: 211). However, the attempt to restore the collapsed national economy without external assistance failed and in May 1987 the government adopted the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), sponsored by the BWIs and broadly in line with their policy prescriptions (Muwanga 2001: 6, Sejjaaka 2004: 105)\textsuperscript{29}. Between 1987 and 1997, Uganda thus implemented a number of structural adjustment reforms toward stabilisation, liberalisation and privatisation of the economy, under the aegis of the ERP. The stated goal of these reforms was to increase agriculture production and export as well as create a conductive environment for general economic growth (Muwanga 2001, SAPRIN 2002: 102).

These reforms included measures such as the devaluation of the Ugandan Shilling, the removal of price control and government subsidies in the agriculture sector, the abolition of export and industrial licensing, the institution of free-exchange mechanisms and the liberalisation of the interest rate (Okuku 2006: 146-185, SAPRIN 2002: 112). In addition, a strong emphasis was put on privatisation: in 1987 the government published its privatisation strategy - Public Enterprise Reform and Divestiture (PERD) – through which it has progressively reduced its direct role in the economy so as to allow the expansion of the private sector (Okuku 2006: 160-166, SAPRIN 2002).

The ERP also brought an overall reduction of government spending, including in social services a downsizing of the civil sector (Muwanga 2001: 6) and among

\textsuperscript{28} For instance in 1982 the World Bank granted 557 million dollars and in 1984 further 430 millions were added for the development plan (now called a recovery plan) (Sathyamurthy 1994: 517). More generally, in the first half of the 1980s reliance on external financing increased steadily; for instance, by 1983 the development plan was 80% reliant on external finance (Nabudere 1990: 41) and external debt rose from US$ 4568 million in 1980 to US$ 1 billion in 1985 (Sejjaaka 2004: 104).

\textsuperscript{29} More precisely, the World Bank states that “the programme was largely formulated by the Bank and Fund staff and pushed through the highest echelons of the Government, leaving many Cabinet ministers and senior and middle level public servants ignorant or even hostile to the programme in general and the adjustment measures in particular” (World Bank 1992b: iv)
other things the introduction of user fees for basic services such as health care and primary education\(^\text{30}\) (Nyamugasira and Rowden 2002: 35’’, 47).

**Critiques**

Since the beginning of their implementation, SAPs have attracted vehement criticism, especially for three reasons. First, the plans were viewed by some as a strategy to further Africa’s dependency and marginalisation, by forcefully perpetuating its role as provider of raw materials and as an import market for basic commodities at the service of capitalist expansion (Amin 1990). Secondly, according to some, SAPs had the negative effect of undermining recently gained national sovereignty, insofar as they prevented governments from formulating their own policies and choices, forcefully directing them towards pre-defined neoliberal paths (Ibharoh 1999, Nyerere 1985, Gros and Prokopovych 2005: 34). Yet it is noted that while adoption of SAPs certainly implied significant coercion, African political leaders did not react as passive puppets. Apart from unique cases such as that of Nyerere, who decided to resign rather than succumb to the BWIs, others skilfully managed through their policies and measures to strengthen their positions. This was certainly the case in Uganda, where the NRM regime managed to combine the adoption of BWI prescriptions with the expansion of governmental power and patronage networks\(^\text{31}\). This may explain why after brief initial scepticism, President Museveni eventually fully embraced the neoliberal doctrine, leading Uganda to be often cited by the BWIs as a successful example of development through neoliberal reforms (Lister et al. 2006, Dijkstra and Van Donge 2001). Finally, a third set of critiques focused on the detrimental impact of SAPs on the majority of the population\(^\text{32}\) (Onimode

\(^{30}\) The fees were eventually partly removed respectively in 2001 and in 1997.

\(^{31}\) For instance, Uganda privatisation satisfied both exogenous and endogenous demands: on one hand the privatisation of state-owned enterprises meant a substantial increase of transnational and foreign companies in the country, so much that only 16% of the total proceeds remained under Ugandan ownership (SAPRIN 2002: 100); on the other hand, the government largely controlled the process, thereby significantly extending its patronage and support network nationally and abroad (see Okuku 2006: 164-165’, 182-184).

\(^{32}\) As far as Uganda is concerned, although the country has been considered a ‘show case’ example of SAP implementation (Dijkstra and Van Donge 2001), research has shown that since the introduction of SAPs real income for most farmers remained the same or deteriorated, overall food security worsened, and the progressive liberalisation of the agriculture sector benefited in particular a minority of farmers, while impacting negatively on the great majority (Nyamugasira and Rowden 2002: 53, Makokha 2001: 24-28, SAPRIN 2002: 117-123). With regard to education a research showed that in 1999 52.9% of pupils in towns and 97.7% of those in rural areas could not read and write after completing primary education (Makokha 2001: 23).
1989, Campbell 1989). These critiques came from a wide range of actors, including international agencies such as UNICEF and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, which, in the second half of the 1980s, urged a review of the adjustment policies so as to address their social cost (Jolly 1991).

It is against the background of these critiques that NGOs emerged as a key development actor, as illustrated in the next section.

2.3 The Rise of NGOs

Due to the continuous economic and social decline that characterised them, the 1980s and the 1990s are usually considered the 'lost decades' of development (Gros and Prokopovych 2005:34, Hulme 2009:8, Stewart 1997:11). Interestingly, though, they are also called the ‘NGO decades’ (Bratton 1989: 61, Tvedt 1998), for the NGO boom coincided with this particular major crisis in development thinking and practice (see also Chapter One, section 1.2). A number of different factors have been identified in the literature to explain the NGO boom, including the rise of neoliberalism, a trend toward the downsizing of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the search for development alternatives made necessary by the African crisis (Bebbington et al. 2007: 19, Wallace et al. 2007: 19, Brodhead 1987, Edwards and Hulme 1996).

Regarding the first of these factors, at a very simple level neoliberalism’s “anti-state stance” (Shivji 2007) arguably required the search for an alternative development actor, and NGOs soon emerged as a possible one (De Coninck 2004, Bratton 1989, Shivji 2007, Gary 1996). The second factor concerns SAP prescriptions on privatisation and cuts in public expenditure, which created the space for NGOs to expand their role in relation to social service delivery (Manji and O’Coill 2002, Gary 1996, Bratton 1989). This was particularly so in the later phases of the implementation of SAPs, when the devastating effects brought about by these plans led bilateral and multilateral organisations to allocate more funds to the safety nets, social services previously delivered by the state which could, in the new era, now be provided by other actors, including NGOs (Manji and O’Coill 2002, Amutabi 2006: 36).
The late 1980s also brought about a trend toward downsizing Official Development Assistance (ODA)\textsuperscript{33}, which shifted donors’ attention towards low-cost interventions (Powell and Seddon 1997: 6, Brodhead 1987). In particular, donors shifted from funding infrastructure and industrialisation projects as they had done previously to funding local and micro projects to be implemented by NGOs, widely assumed to be cheaper and more effective than the government (Edwards and Hulme 1992). This trend was formalised in 1987, when the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) first officially earmarked part of its funding specifically for the implementation of programmes directly through NGOs, defining this “bilateral aid administered by NGOs on behalf of the official sector” (Agg 2006: 17). Initially, the bodies involved in this ‘outsourcing’ process were predominantly northern/international NGOs (INGOs), mainly contracted as service delivery organizations. Such organisations had already been playing this role in Africa, but in the form of ‘charitable’ work predominantly funded by the general public (Bratton 1989: 570). The inclusion of NGOs in the ODA channels led however to a significant shift in their identity, i.e., a turn from charitable organisation to development agency.

The third factor contributing to the NGO boom was the search for bottom-up participatory development practices, originating on one hand from the disillusionment with top-down state-led development practices, and on the other from critiques against a predominantly ‘economistic’ understanding of development. From the late 1980s there emerged different alternative development perspectives focused on human and social development – such as ‘participatory development’, ‘human development’, ‘post-development’ and ‘rights-based development’ (Pieterse 1998, Schuurman 2000, Chambers 1985, Simon 2007, Manzo 2003). Despite the heterogeneity among and within these perspectives, most of them shared a substantial trust in the ability of and possibility for NGOs to bring about fundamental change in development thinking and practice (Hearn 2007, see also Pieterse 1998:346, Brodhead 1987, Wallace 1997:38).

\textsuperscript{33} It has been suggested that the sharp drop in ODA flows which occurred in the 1990s was due to the end of the Cold War (Boschini and Anders 2007: 64-78, Raffer and Singer 2001), a period in which aid to Africa was significantly driven by geopolitical interests rather than poverty issues (Bernstein 2006: 52, Rist 1997: 80-81, Akindele 1985, Schwab 1978). This is confirmed by a recent World Bank report which acknowledges that during the Cold War aid to Africa was more linked with geopolitical interests than with development, “leaving a legacy of ineffective aid, partly in the form of loans that have accumulated into large debt stocks” (World Bank 2000a: 239).
Thus, in the 1980s these developments and the different and to some extent opposite expectations they created generated a favourable environment for an increased involvement of NGOs in the development system. By the 1990s, NGOs had become the “favoured child” of development agencies (Edwards and Hulme 2003: 5), reflected in continued increases in the size of the aid funds channelled to and through them in the 1980s and 90s (Edwards and Hulme 1996, Bratton 1989, Brodhead 1987, Powell and Seddon 1997, Agg 2006). NGOs eventually also came to be embraced by the World Bank: between 1973 and 1988, only six percent of World Bank-financed projects involved NGOs; in 1994 half of the approved projects included some form of NGO involvement (Malena 1995: 12). And with time the focus shifted also from INGOs to local NGOs, determining in turn a shift in the focus of INGOs, from project implementation toward capacity building of their Southern counterparts (Hearn 2007, Fowler and James 1994). INGOs acted as intermediaries in the funding flow from donors to local NGOs and assumed the role of developing the organisational capacity of the increasing number of the latter (Bornstein 2003).

2.3.1 Emerging Issues

Initial reports on NGOs as development actors reflected many of the positive expectations mentioned above: closeness to the poor, democratic values, independence, flexibility, voluntarism, value for money, and consistency with the anti-state stance of neoliberal approaches to development (see for instance Bratton 1989, Fowler and James 1994, Edwards and Hulme 1992). Significantly, early literature on NGOs was also often anecdotal and produced from within the NGO community (Edwards and Hulme 1996, Hearn 2007), meaning that positive impacts were often taken for granted rather than based on empirical evidence. With time however this acclamatory tone was moderated by the emergence of a number of criticisms, in particular from the beginning of the 1990s onwards.

Some of these criticisms regarded the nature of the relationship between Northern and African NGOs: while frequently couched in terms of partnership, it more often than not was substantially unequal (Fowler and James 1994). Elliot (1987) challenges in particular the rhetoric of ‘partnership’ and the unquestioned assumption that INGOs had something to transfer to local NGOs – not because they did not, but because of the assumption itself, which reinforced unequal relations and “an asymmetry of power that no amount of well-intentioned dialogue can remove” (Elliott 1987: 65). This last point is taken up by Tandon,
who questions the generally uncritical acceptance of western NGOs and the unequal relationships between them and local NGOs. A good example is that the former evaluate, monitor and request reports and information from their African counterparts, while the latter are not entitled to act in a reciprocal manner (Tandon 1991). More recent research suggests that the existence of unequal relationships between local and international NGOs is a matter that has remained unresolved (Smith and Bornstein 2001, Mawdsley et al. 2005, Wallace et al. 2007).

Another key issue debated since the early 1990s in relation to NGOs as a development actor is the tension between their role as project implementers and their advocacy role. For some, the involvement of NGOs in official development efforts is in fact seen as providing NGOs the opportunity to influence development policies from within, by combining pressure from below (in cooperation with grassroots communities) with pressure from above (in cooperation with aid agencies) (Clark 1992). At the same time however, the increased reliance of NGOs on donor funding, and the role attributed to them as implementers arguably limits their capacity to question dominant neoliberal agendas and to influence policy making in favour of the poor (Edwards and Hulme 1992, Bebbington and Farrington 1992). Edwards and Hulme maintain that although official funding represents a potential threat to the autonomy of NGOs, service provision, advocacy and ‘development-as-empowerment’ are not necessarily incompatible (Edwards and Hulme 1995a). For these authors, effective performance assessment and the development of multiple accountabilities (responsive to both donors and grassroots communities) can help address tensions between the role of NGOs as implementers and their lobbying and advocacy profile (see the various contributions in Edwards and Hulme 1995b).

Other scholars see the involvement of NGOs in official aid as more problematic. Tandon suggests that the reliance of NGOs on western government funding undermines their possibility to act beyond the boundaries of mainstream development. It restrains their ability/possibility to provoke significant changes in development thinking and practice (Tandon 1991). Manji and O’Coill go even further, arguing that besides the stated humanitarian motivation of providing the poor with basic services, during the SAP era NGOs were deployed in “a programme of social control” aimed at suppressing protests against the adjustment programmes (Manji and O’Coill 2002: 579). This view sheds light on
the contestations that accompanied the introduction of SAPs. While mainstream literature on NGOs in the 1980s and early 1990s presents the poor as passive victims of adjustment programmes, in dire need of help in terms of basic social services and empowerment projects, in many cases those poor were actively protesting against SAP policies, and their protests were more often than not violently repressed by those governments upon which such reforms were imposed. In this respect, critics of the role of NGOs in development suggest in particular that reliance of NGOs on official aid represents more than a ‘potential threat’ to their advocacy agenda: it has the effect of legitimising the same agenda they claim to oppose.

Whatever the point of view, we can conclude from this discussion that NGOs gained their legitimacy as development actors first and foremost on the basis of principles derived from neoliberal agendas (Bebbington et al. 2007b: 17). With this in mind, we now discuss the evolution of the NGO sector from the mid-1990s to the present.

2.4 The Post-Washington Consensus and NGOs

From the early 1990s onwards the faith on hardcore neoliberal development policies started diminishing. Not only did the SAPs not bring the promised economic growth, but they in fact worsened pre-existing inequalities within African countries and between Africa and the West. As Wai puts it, “both in academic and policy making circles, there is a general agreement that SAPs have failed miserably in Africa, in most cases leaving the countries worse off than they were before their commencement (Wai 2007: 87, see also Mkandawire 2005)". First the World Bank and later the IMF revisited their approach, articulating what came to be known as the “post-Washington consensus” (Onis and Senses 2005, Ruckert 2006). The novelty of the post-Washington consensus lies in three key elements: the recognition of the role of the state in development processes; a new interest in democracy and ‘good governance’; and a renewed concern with poverty reduction (Onis and Senses 2005: 276).

34 In the period between 1976 and 1992 146 protests were organised in 39 countries against the Structural Adjustment Programmes (Manji and O’Coill 2002: 578). In several countries, the “international authoritarianism” (Nyerere 1985: 494) through which SAPs were imposed was reflected nationally in government authoritarianism and violent repression of the widespread protests against policy reform (Ibhawoh 1999, Hansen 1987, Abubakar 2001, Animashaun 2009).

35 See also section 1.2.1 for specific data.
With regard to the first of these elements, the post-Washington consensus was characterised by the (re)-attribution of a key role to the state in the development process. In particular in the new perspective, state and market are no longer seen in opposition, but rather as complementary to each other (Onis and Senses 2005: 275): while the market retains its unquestioned centrality, recognition increases in BWIs that “a capable State is essential for faster growth (World Bank 2005a: 3).

The notion of ‘capable state’ brings in the second element of the post-Washington consensus: ‘good governance’. The concept of good governance emerged in response to a diffused conviction that the persistence of poverty in Africa was due to the existence of weak and ineffective states, which had hindered development efforts through corruption, unaccountable systems and undemocratic rules (World Bank 2000a, Commission for Africa 2005):

Weak governance has blighted the development of many parts of Africa to date. Weak governance can include bad government policies and an economic and political climate which discourages people from investing. It can also include corruption and bureaucratic systems that are not open to scrutiny and therefore are not answerable to the public. And it includes a lack of accountability and weakness in mechanisms to ensure that people’s voices are heard and their rights upheld, such as parliaments, the media and the justice system. (Commission for Africa 2005: 63)

In response to this alleged state of affairs, donors introduced the good governance agenda, centred around three key dimensions:

(a) the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored, and replaced; (b) the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently and to formulate, implement, and enforce sound policies and regulations; and (c) respect for institutions that govern economic and social interactions (Girishankar et al. 2002: 271)

On the basis of the principles, or dimensions, the new agenda envisaged several broad reforms, centred around multi-party elections, human rights, the legal system, decentralisation, and - importantly - the adoption of sound management systems (the latter to be analysed in the next chapter) (Girishankar et al. 2002, Diamond 2003).

A third key element of the post-Washington consensus is a renewed interest in poverty, originating from the acknowledgment that economic growth, although essential, is not sufficient for the reduction of poverty levels (World Bank 2000a: 15). This shift was signalled in particular by the emergence of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) as the preferred policy instrument of BWIs
replacing SAPs. Initiated by the World Bank and the IMF in 1999, PRSPs soon became the overarching principles of national development approaches, adopted by virtually all development countries (Steinle and Correll 2008: 2) and endorsed by other major players such as the EU, the DAC/OECD and virtually all NGOs. In the words of the World Bank, despite their name, PRSPs should not be understood exclusively as a poverty reduction mechanism, but rather as overall “broad-based growth and poverty reduction” initiatives (World Bank 2004: 4-5), in which the first element - economic growth – firmly drives the agenda. In this sense, PRSP represent more an evolution than a rupture with SAPs, and in particular a passage from the short-term focus of SAPs on price distortion and stabilisation measures to a broader development approach, centred around long term structural, social and institutional reforms in four key areas: macroeconomic and structural policies, strategies for improving governance, appropriate sectoral policies and programs, and realistic costing (World Bank 2001a, Klugman 2002a: 17).

2.4.1 PRSPs in Uganda

Uganda developed its first PRSP – called Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) - in 1997, and then revisited it in 2000 and 2004. The two tables below summarise the main pillars of both plans.

### Table 2.1 Poverty Eradication Action Plan - 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillars</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To create a framework for economic growth and transformation</td>
<td>Macroeconomic stability, increased export activity, labour intensive investments, removal of constraints on private sector competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good governance and security</td>
<td>Establishment of regulations and institutions for improving accountability and transparency and the adoption of result-oriented management systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To directly increase the ability of the poor to raise their incomes</td>
<td>Introduction of advisory services in agriculture, improved access to credit, markets, research and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase the quality of the life of the poor</td>
<td>Adult literacy programmes, the introduction of a ‘minimum health care package’, and improved access to water and sanitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (MoFPED 2000).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillars</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Management</td>
<td>Removal of barriers to investment, improvement of transport infrastructure, and modernisation/commercialisation of agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enhance production, competitiveness and income</td>
<td>Agricultural research, improvement of infrastructure, expansion of the microfinance sector, enhancement of workers’ productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security, conflict-resolution and disaster-management</td>
<td>Political stability, peace in Northern Uganda, disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Governance</td>
<td>Democratisation and introduction of multi-party election, enhancement of the judicial system and legal framework, improvement of public sector management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development</td>
<td>Enhancement of education, health, water supply and social development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (MoFPED 2004).

A first look at these plans suggests that in both cases priority was given to further supporting liberalisation, attracting foreign investment and enhancing the role of the private sector. This prioritisation is also reflected in practice by the fact that a number of human and social development programmes relating to the plans were eventually significantly underfunded compared to the targets that had been set\(^\text{36}\).

The Ugandan case reflects quite clearly how the Post-Washington consensus remains driven by the unquestioned prominence of neoliberal market economy agendas (Onis and Senses 2005: 286, Wallace et al. 2007: 25), and in particular the elision from the picture of the importance of international or global economic factors that may affect national development (Chang 2009: 4). Like many other African PRSPs, the PEAP not only takes for granted the soundness of neoliberal policies, but also addresses only national institutional ‘inefficiencies’ policies, ignoring the impact of international rules, agreements and trends on the poverty reduction agenda (Wallace et al. 2007: 25).

\(^{36}\) For example, the budget allocated to education in Uganda has steadily decreased since 2000. In the health sector, the ‘minimum health care package’ was estimated to cost USD 41.2 per capita, but the actual public expenditure in 2008/09 was only USD 10.4 per capita.
From the post-Washington Consensus came two important innovations in development theory and practice of particular relevance to the work of NGOs: the discovery of ‘ownership’ and the importance of ‘consensus building’.

2.4.2 The Discovery of Ownership

According to the IMF and the World Bank, the PRSPs represent “a new approach to the challenge of reducing poverty in low-income countries based on country-owned poverty reduction strategies that would serve as a framework for development assistance” (IMF and World Bank 2002b). As a crucial turn in international development, its emphasis on civil society participation and country ownership – now considered essential for development (Wolfensohn 1999: 9, IMF et al. 2000) – represents a “shift of power in the aid relationship” (OECD 2009a: 10). This is from the externally imposed conditionalities of the SAPs era to the emergence of nationally determined agendas where developing countries are “in the driver’s seat and set the course” (Wolfensohn 1999: 9):

“The PRSP is prepared by the government through a country-driven process, including broad participation that promotes country ownership of the strategy and its implementation” (World Bank 2001b: 1emphasis in original).

Close analysis reveals something different though. While the World Bank claims to put governments in the driving seat, the role of the state seems more constrained than in the SAP decades, so much so that some government officials “describe themselves instead as chauffeurs” (Wallace et al. 2007: 25). PRSPs are in fact highly pre-defined in their structure and goals, leaving ownership only to marginal aspects (Cooke 2003). This is reflected in the ‘Sourcebook’ developed by the World Bank to guide government in the development of PRSPs (see Klugman 2002b), which consists of more than a thousand pages encompassing a wide range of topics. They range from techniques to be deployed for the formulation of a PRSP to cross-cutting issues like participation and gender that interface with macro-economic issues like trade policy, poverty and the private sector. Although the sourcebook is to be only a guide and not prescriptive, its chapters describe in detail the right policies needed to sustain economic growth and poverty reduction. They provide clear benchmark frames from the best tax system to optimal liberal trade to guide the formulation of the PRSP (see
Klugman 2002b). Furthermore, adoption of PRSPs is a pre-condition to access debt relief and loans (World Bank and IMF 2005). As the World Bank points out, “while the shift to country ownership will allow substantially more leeway in terms of policy design and choices, acceptance by the World Bank and the IMF boards will depend on the current international understanding of what is effective in lowering poverty” (Klugman 2002a: 4). In other words, while countries are being asked to formulate their PRSPs through extensive participatory processes, the validity of those plans is to be evaluated by a team of World Bank/IMF staff who will decide whether or not those plans are worth funding.

The PRSP focus on the good governance agenda brings an additional set of political conditionalities beyond those imposed by SAPs, which vary from multiparty elections, to decentralisation, to anti-corruption measures (Nyamugasira and Rowden 2002)\textsuperscript{37}. In many respects, this represents a further narrowing of the sovereign options available to states. An example in this sense, is the narrowing of the concept of democracy to the execution of multi-party elections and the establishment of the ‘right’ legal framework, which eschews issues of social progress and popular scrutiny on crucial political-economic decisions (Shivji 2009b, Neocosmos 2008, Amin 2008). These externally imposed conceptions of ‘democracy’ and the funding conditionalities accompanying them arguably deprive African citizens of the agency of change that lies at the basis of the concept of ownership (Shivji 2009c: 24). Despite the claimed prominence of ownership, of participation and even of democracy, the ‘new’ development agenda brought about by the post-Washington consensus seems to continue to deny African citizens the right of self-determination. The option left to them is that of articulating ‘consensus’ with pre-defined policies and goals (Fraser 2005, Ruckert 2006, Murphy 2008, Murithi 2009, Sen 2002, Bond and Dor 2003).

‘Consensus building’ in fact is the second key innovative concept brought about by the post-Washington consensus.

\textsuperscript{37} This set of extended conditionalities has been adopted also outside the financing of PRSPs as donors have shifted from conditionality to “policy selectivity”, according to which they fund countries adhering to the good governance agenda (see Hout 2004). The Millennium Challenge Corporation, an agency created by the US congress in 2004 to assess countries’ eligibility for its grants, uses a set of non-economic criteria under three macro-areas: just and democratic governance, economic freedom, investments in people; the criteria include: promotion of political pluralism, respect of human and civil rights, promotion of private sector growth, strengthening market forces, promote broad-based primary education (US Congress 2003).
2.4.3 'Consensus Building'

From the late 1990s onwards the perceived importance of achieving consensus around development reforms and of ensuring that development practice conforms to such consensus characterised the new policy agenda. Emblematic in this sense is the agreement signed in 2002 at the Monterrey Conference. Attended by over 800 people, including more than 50 heads of state and 200-plus ministers, it was considered a turning point in development cooperation (United Nations 2002a) – the foundation for a new development paradigm (Picciotto 2002). Monterrey was defined by the UN as the basis for a “new global alliance for development” based on the principle of full ownership by developing countries (United Nations 2002a: 2). Official reports of the conference claim “unprecedented cross-ministerial and cross-institutional commitment” (United Nations 2002a: 3); speeches and documents during the conference and since have reiterated the uniqueness of the high-level agreement among all development partners (United Nations 2002b). Importantly, the Monterrey consensus also resulted in the informal approval of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a global overarching development programme currently at the top of the international development agenda (Hulme 2009).

Sen (2002) argues that this high level of consensus can be proclaimed only by silencing the dissent that did emerge in the conference. The final statement of the G77 and China also downplayed the final consensus, stating: “Consensus cannot be absolute. Absolute consensus does not exist. It is impossible. There are a few important ideas” (Chavez Frias 2002). Furthermore, the NGO Global Forum, hosted as part of the conference, expressed its opposition to the Monterrey Consensus (a pre-conference draft had been circulated) from the first day of the conference right up to its final statement in the closing plenary (Carkey and Vincent 2002, Frade 2002). None of the proposals made by the NGO Global Forum on debt cancellation, elimination of ODA conditionalities, protection of internal markets and the reform of global economic governance were included in the ultimate ‘consensus’.

Following Monterrey other international agreements have been signed to formalise the new aid architecture and the prominence of ‘ownership’: the Rome Declaration in 2003, the Paris Declaration in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 (OECD 2003, OECD 2008, OECD 2009b). The latter two were
both endorsed by 135 countries and by dozens of key multilateral and bilateral development organisations (the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the Commonwealth Secretariat, New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Bank and the Asian Bank). The Paris Declaration in particular represents “unprecedented consensus among donor and aid recipient countries about what needs to be done to substantially improve the impact of development co-operation” (Herfkens and Bains 2007: 4).

The passage from SAPs to PRSPs has determined a significant shift in the aid industry: from the contestations and disagreements of the 1980s, the last decade has seen the emergence instead of “a remarkable apparent confluence” of views across different development actors (see also Cornwall and Brock 2005: 1044, Owusu 2003). The current position of the African Union (AU, which in 2002 replaced the OAU) is a case in point, entirely aligned with those of the World Bank and the IMF. As Owusu (2003) observes, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), adopted in 2001 by the AU “as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African-led development programme” (AU 2001: 13), shows remarkable similarities with the BWIs’ position and recalls many features of the PRSPs (primacy of macroeconomic stability, need to attract foreign investments and support the private sector, value of good governance) (see AU 2001)38. Clearly, things seem to have changed from the time when the OAU formulated the Lagos Action Plan (cf. section 2.4.1).

Importantly, the PRSPs have been positively received also by the NGO sector. Oxfam, for example, while recognising that they are a World Bank/IMF-driven initiative and besides signalling a number of weaknesses (including the lack of dialogue on the macro-economic framework), saw in PRSPs “a key opportunity to put country-led strategies for poverty reduction at the heart of development assistance” (2004: 1) and praised what it considered the higher than ever level of participation and involvement of civil society in the development of national programmes (Oxfam International 2004). More generally, the BWIs have involved leading NGOs, such as Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision, to name but a few, in several discussions, assessments and analyses of the PRSPs

38 Because of these striking similarities, the claimed ‘home-grown’ character of the NEPAD has been widely questioned (see for instance Akokpari 2003, Adésinà’ 2001, Shivji 2009b: 206)
(see for instance IMF and World Bank 2002a) and have significantly extended their consultations and cooperation with CSOs (Murphy 2005).

Thereby, PRSPs, despite largely resting on the same neoliberal precepts of SAPs, now also expanded to the political sphere, have now attracted consensus among civil society organisations.

In this sense and drawing on Gramsci’s work, I suggest to consider the commitment to extensive participation that accompanied the PRSPs as a strategy for the hegemonic expansion of neoliberalism; more precisely, a neo-Gramscian perspective invites us to consider participation as a mean through which the BWIs attempted (apparently successfully) to build consensus around policy prescriptions so that they could be adopted without heavy reliance on coercive power, as occurred in the 1980s (Ruckert 2006, see also Morton 2007: 76-108, Gramsci 1975b: 40-42). Here the term hegemony refers to an historical momentum when “broadly accepted norms are consistent with the real hierarchy of forces, which in turn maintains and observes these norms” (Cox 1980: 376). Hence hegemony can be considered an “opinion-moulding activity” (Morton 2007: 113), through which naturalise particularistic worldviews (in this case, neoliberalism) so that they can resemble to everyone’s advantage and of universal validity (Cox 1980, 1981, Ruckert 2006, Morton 2007).

From the critical review above of the development system, the neoliberal orthodoxy seems to have reached a hegemonic position, enjoying a much wider support than in the previous decades. Yet the extent of the current neoliberal hegemony in Africa development is a debated issue. The term ‘hegemony’ itself is widely used (see for instance Hahn 2008, Shivji 2009b, Owusu 2003, Manji and O’Coill 2002, Gros and Prokopovych 2005, Lushaba 2009, Adésínâ’ 2001); some even speak of a transnational historic bloc39 (Bayart 1993, Abrahamsen 1997). However, all these critiques also emphasise that the neoliberal hegemony rests on a restricted alliance which not only silences dissident voices, as took place over the contestations from the G77 and the Global NGO Forum, but

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39 ‘Historical bloc’ is a Gramsci’s notion which indicates the unity of material forces, institutions and ideologies (Abrahamsen 1997: 148). In our case it might indicate the convergence of “most powerful corporate economic forces, their allies in government and the variety of networks that evolve policy guidelines and propagate the ideology of globalisation (Cox 1999: 12). Historic bloc indicates a convergence of leadership in the sphere of culture, ideas and opinions with that in the economic sector. Gramsci also uses the notion of ‘historic bloc’ to refer to the coming together of different social forces and interest around and against a dominant hegemony (Morton 2007: 95-99, Sassoon 1980: 119-125).
significantly excludes popular masses. Within this debate, NGOs, by occupying a crucial connective role between development policies and grassroots aspirations, are potentially able to support both the expansion of the neoliberal orthodoxy and the counter-hegemonic struggle. Thereby, as already mentioned previously (see section 2.1.1), NGO can be both “an agent of stabilisation and reproduction, and a potential agent of transformation” (Cox 1999: 4-5).

It is widely known that NGOs working in Africa (and more generally in international development) contest the neoliberal order, as they did for example at the Monterrey conference. However, following Gramsci, to analyse NGOs’ counter-hegemonic potential it becomes crucial to analyse if oppositional voices are able to effect a change in the existing order, or are they incorporated to provide it with a wider legitimacy. We also need to examine whether these oppositional voices are organically linked with the social forces they claim to represent and support: where are NGOs positioned within the aid industry? What do they do? And especially who and what legitimise their role?

It is time to carry forward this argument by focusing specifically on Ugandan NGOs.

2.5 Ugandan NGOs in the Context of the Post-Washington Consensus

All three key elements of the so called “post-Washington consensus” – the new role of the State, the focus on good governance and the renewed interest in poverty – as well as the concern for participation and ownership, have significant impacts on the work, identity and role of NGOs within the development industry. From the new perspective, Ugandan NGOs are expected to continue providing welfare services to the poor, but are also entrusted a key role in the good governance agenda and in the democratisation process (De Coninck 2004).

The first of these roles (service delivery) is in continuity with the role historically played by NGOs in Africa, the provision of basic services to communities. While in the past this was often done through donor-supported projects, the new approach envisages stronger cooperation between NGOs and the government in the context of the implementation of the PRSPs. This is mainly due to new funding mechanisms introduced with the PRSPs, namely Programme Based Support (PBS) and Sector Wide Approach (SWAP), according to which donors –
rather than funding directly NGOs – channel their funding through government for specific programmes in specific sectors, e.g., HIV/AIDS, agriculture or education (Handley 2009). From this perspective, governments and NGOs are expected to cooperate for the planning and implementation of funded programmes and projects. In Uganda, NGOs are often sub-contracted by the government for the provision of public services and the implementation of projects as defined in the PRSPs (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003, Ssewakiryanga 2005). But because official aid channelled through PBS and SWAPs is still only a small portion of the overall financial assistance received by Uganda, NGOs also continue to provide services directly funded by donors.\(^{40}\)

The second role of NGOs, linked to the good governance agenda, is more controversial and theoretically contested. We saw previously that the good governance agenda comprises several components, varying from fighting corruption to promoting multi-party elections, sound financial management and a free press. In analytical terms, good governance could thus be said to combine a number of ‘management’ principles (e.g. greater accountability, public sector reform) with broader principles relating to ‘democracy’ (participation, ownership, consensus). The role of NGOs could thus be viewed from both ‘management’ and ‘democracy’ principles. I deal with the former as part of the analysis of the role of OD in NGOs in Chapter Three. Below I wish elaborate the role of NGOs in relation to ‘democracy’ aspects of the good governance agenda within the Ugandan context.

The dominant discourse can be simply put: NGOs as part of civil society are able to pluralise the institutional arena, challenge state power and make government accountable. Strengthening civil society therefore means strengthening democracy (Mercer 2002, Edwards and Hulme 1996). The dominant understanding of civil society is underpinned by an equation of democracy with liberal democracy (Igoe 2005, Mercer 2002). This is based on a dichotomy between state and civil society, each seen as an independent and necessary player for the constitution and consolidation of a democratic regime. Civil society

\(^{40}\) This is due to two reasons. One is that there are donors which have not adhered to the Paris Declaration, including a few donors countries (China and India) and private foundations (the Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation). Secondly, among those donors which supported and subscribed to the various agreements regarding the new aid architecture, only a few channel their funding through PBS or SWAPs and they do so only for a small part of their projects. Overall, 56% of the total funding is managed outside government systems, in some sectors reaching 90%. In the heath sector, which is a key area for NGOs, 90.54% of the funding was outside the government budget (Ofwono et al. 2011: 28-30).
is portrayed as an ensemble of diverse, voluntary and autonomous organisations committed to pursue the public good and able to restrain state/government\textsuperscript{41} power by demanding transparency, accountability and exposing abuse and violations (Diamond 1994, USAID 2004, Lehning 1998:28). The role of civil society is conceptualised within broader market-led development where “besides enhancing individual liberties, a participatory civil society, free speech, and an independent press are \textit{indispensable for promoting productive and healthy investment}” (World Bank 2000a: 51 emphasis mine ). So a vibrant civil society is thought to play a fundamental role in strengthening transparency and predictability of government action as well as overall stability, all considered key features for attracting investments and promote economic growth (see for instance World Bank 2000a, 2005a).

In Uganda, major donors have been committed to build the capacity of civil society organisations and strengthen their role in the democratisation process (NORAD 2002: 29). This for instance includes the Civil Society Capacity Building Programme initiated by the EU in 2005 (Floridi \textit{et al.} 2009), the Deepening Democracy programme jointly sponsored by six European governments\textsuperscript{42}, and other programmes through which leading NGOs, usually Kampala based, train their rural counterparts (see for instance HURINET-U 2009, ACCU 2011b, UDN 2002). Such capacity building programmes, though, often reflect donors’ priorities: “donors seem to constitute the single most important factor that influences the character and role of CSOs in Uganda” (NORAD 2002: 29). Hence, one could argue that capacity building initiatives might resemble social engineering programmes, through which mould the Ugandan NGO sector accordingly to the priorities envisaged for NGOs by the good governance agenda, namely, participation in policy making and, combined with civic education, the holding of government to accountability (Blair 1998).

2.5.1 Policy Making

The post-Washington consensus assumes the involvement of CSOs in policy making is crucial. It increases ownership of development programmes and it ensures the consideration of different interests, especially those of the poor. NGOs are thereby considered representatives of the marginalised and

\textsuperscript{41} One problematic aspect of the literature on the role of civil society in the good governance agenda is that state and government are used as synonymous (for instance see Lehning 1998).

\textsuperscript{42} Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK.
disadvantaged sections of society and committed to advocate for their interests (OECD 2001: 66, Brock 2004b: 98). Since 1998 Ugandan civil society organisations (mainly NGOs) have been involved in the formulation of a number of key national development policies: the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), and the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process (UPPAP) (UGMP 2005: 24-26, Eberlei 2003). The involvement of NGOs in national policy-making usually occurs through specific task forces established as and when called. In 2002, for example, following a meeting between Ugandan NGOs and World Bank and IMF representatives, the government instituted a Civil Society PEAP Revision Task Force, composed of ten Ugandan NGOs under the leadership of the Uganda Debt Network (UDN). The group was tasked with informing grassroots communities about the PEAP and consulting with other CSOs so as to formulate their input for the revision of the national PEAP (Isooba and Ssewakiryanga 2005: 41). The CSO Task Force held twelve regional meetings involving over 600 people (405 men and 239 women). Informing the public about the PEAP through leaflets, media insertions and radio and television programmes, it was then invited into the consultative meetings between CSO, the Government and donors for the review of the PEAP (Isooba 2005). But this role of NGOs in the Ugandan context has come under criticism.

Questions have arisen regarding the legitimacy of the organisations involved. The involvement of NGOs in policy-making rests on the assumption that they are close to the poor, able to represent them and/or speak on their behalf. Yet research suggests the Ugandan NGO sector is made up of an educated elite, often urban-based, and substantially removed from the predominantly rural and agrarian population (Barr et al. 2005: 670, Robinson and Friedman 2007: 655, DENIVA 2006). Additionally, while Uganda’s national NGO sector is arguably quite heterogeneous, funding and involvement in policy-making has been highly concentrated within a small circle of prominent NGOs with a narrow social basis (Fafchamps and Owens 2009: 665, Robinson and Friedman 2007: 664, DENIVA 2006). This raises questions whether the organisations involved hold the capacity and will to effectively give voice to the wider society. More broadly, Shivji (2007) contests the legitimacy of African NGOs in policy making, as “they are neither elected representatives of the people nor mandated to represent them” (2007: 57). Concerned that their involvement is effectively undermining popular participation, he suggests that NGOs, if they are to promote democracy, should struggle to widen the spaces and opportunities for bottom-up
participation rather than legitimising a ‘participation by substitution’ principle (Shivji 2007: 56-58).

The actual level and amount of influence of Ugandan NGOs in the context of policy formulation has also been questioned – both from within and outside the sector. Concerns have emerged internally regarding the non-negotiability of the overarching economic policy reforms introduced with the PEAP. Despite numerous consultations, these were never actually put on the table for discussion, creating the “perception that the NGO community has given its blessing to a strategy which is basically being used by the IMF and World Bank to publicly justify their continuing the same structural adjustment programs” (Nyamugasira and Rowden 2002: 17). Here the notion of ‘consensus’ is key. Evidence shows in Uganda, as in many other contexts, that NGO participation in policy processes happens by invitation, often restricted to NGOs known to agree with the policy in question (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003: 99, Brock et al. 2002: 48)\(^4^3\). Studies demonstrate that CSO involvement in Ugandan policy making is restricted to a small circle of well-established Kampala-based NGOs (DENIVA 2006: 67) – such as UDN, DENIVA, Oxfam, Action Aid and the National NGO Forum, while others, like trade unions who vocally opposed privatisation and liberalisation policies, have been systematically and deliberately sidelined (Nyamugasira 2004).

The inclusion of NGOs in Ugandan policy making thus seems to be driven mainly by a desire to legitimise what has already been decided; their contributions are hardly considered if they are not in line with pre-established priorities (De Coninck 2004:65, Isooba 2005:45-46, Ssewakiryanga 2005:50). Others suggest more generally that NGOs in Uganda tend to avoid confronting the government and proposing alternatives to dominant practice and policies (Dicklitch and Lwangaka 2003:102, Lister and Nyamugasira 2003, Robinson and Friedman 2007). It is also highlighted how some NGOs that started in the early 1990s with a confrontational approach have progressively aligned their position to that of the Government and donors (Brock et al. 2002). In this sense, Ugandan NGOs seem to pursue a “politics of presences” (Brock et al. 2002: 20), more focused on securing their inclusion in policy circles and consultative processes rather than on influencing them.

\(^4^3\) So much so that recent reports complain specifically that the role of NGOs in the context of policy making is not institutionalised, since it is the government that decides the extent of their involvement in each case (UGMP 2005: 25).
There remain, however, at the margin NGOs that have decided to stay outside the official policy circle. In 2001 a number of conference were held in Africa (including Kampala), Asia and Latin America where NGOs critically discussed their involvement in the formulation of PRSPs, seen simply as the continuation of the SAPs under a different label (Nyamugasira 2004, Nyamugasira and Rowden 2002). In front of these critiques and pressures for abandoning the PRSP process, in Uganda, however, those NGOs leading CSO involvement in PRSP formulation (such as Oxfam, Action Aid, UDN, Deniva and the NGO Forum) decided to continue their cooperation with donors and the government, yet ensuring to maintain “strong links” with the NGOs un-invited and the self-excluded, as well as their commitment to occasionally criticise the process they were involved in (Nyamugasira 2004: 5).

2.5.2 Holding the Government to Account and Civic Education

A second important role entrusted to NGOs in the democratisation process as conceived in the post-Washington consensus is that of holding the government accountable, especially with regard to the respect of civil and political liberties (usually equated with human rights) and the usage of public resources. There are two key areas of NGOs involvement in this respect: monitoring projects, and engaging in public information. An example of the first in Uganda is constituted by the work of UDN, which since 2003 has trained five thousand community-based monitors and supported the establishment of CSO monitoring committees in twelve districts, with the aim of monitoring and evaluating the government’s service delivery and utilisation of funds (UDN 2009). Similarly, the Ugandan Anti-corruption Coalition trained more than a thousand ‘independent budget monitors’ in 2010, and through its NGO members operating in twenty districts has implemented various monitoring projects at local and national government level (ACCU 2011a). The second area of activities, public information and raising awareness, is said to be a key priority shared by virtually all NGOs in Uganda (DENIVA 2006:70-71, Barr, Fafchamps et al. 2005:663, Grover, Burger et al. 2010). They aim to build the capacity of the general public and of the NGO sector specifically with regard to holding the government accountable, by knowing and demanding human rights and exposing abuses and violation (see for instance HURINET-U 2009, ACCU 2011b, UDN 2002). As in policy making, the role of Ugandan NGOs has been subjected to criticism also in these areas of accountability and civic education.
A first line of criticism is around role clarity and boundaries. While official development policy seems to assume a distinction and separation between NGOs engaged in service delivery and NGOs committed to advocacy, lobbying and accountability monitoring, in Uganda the NGOs tend to be involved simultaneously in all or combinations of these different functions (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003:103, Barr, Fafchamps et al. 2003). It is not rare for the same NGO to be contracted by the local government for a service delivery programme and to simultaneously be involved in monitoring and tracking the expenditure of other projects run by the same local government authority. Yet research has shown that NGOs find it quite hard to play simultaneously the role of sub-contractor and that of watchdog (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003). More generally, if as mentioned before Ugandan NGOs tend to avoid confrontation with the government, this can arguably make it quite difficult to perform their expected role of exposing corruption and violation. In this sense, research shows that Ugandan NGOs largely prefer to organise workshops and civic education programmes (Dicklitch and Lwanga 2003, Robinson and Friedman 2007), which allow them to maintain their apolitical stance and engage in cordial relations with both donors and the government. This underscores the first criticism here of the ambiguity in Uganda NGO roles.

A second line of criticism revolves around the assumption that NGOs, government watchdogs, are independent and clearly separated from the Government and from the State. Research has revealed in Uganda the boundary between the NGO sector and the public sector is murkier than what is normally assumed and prescribed by the dominant discourse: individuals easily move from one sector to the other according to the availability of jobs (De Coninck 2004). They also play multiple roles, some simultaneously being a civil servant or an MP and at the same time a member (if not the founder) of an NGO (Brock 2004a, Bornstein 2005). More generally, the assumed independence of NGOs has also been questioned from a financial point of view, considering their heavy reliance on foreign donors who usually fund more than 90% of NGO budgets (DENIVA 2006:34-36, Fafchamps and Owens 2009:297, USAID 2010:132, Dicklitch 1998:28, Robinson and Friedman 2007:661, CDRN 2004:7-9). In such circumstances, how is it possible for NGOs to develop autonomous programmes? How, this critique continues, can an NGO be able to proceed independently in its activities vis-à-vis their donor(s)? Some suggest that NGOs are in fact predominantly serving the expansion of dominant foreign agendas, and that they
run the risk of undermining endogenous struggles for democracy (Chachage 2005, Shivji 2007, Manji and O’Coill 2002, Hearn 2007). A cross cutting theme emerging from these critiques regards NGOs’ alignment with donors position, which, it is argued, besides providing legitimisation of foreign donors’ involvement in national policy, contributes to strengthen an idea of democracy delinked from economic and social rights.

An emblematic example in this sense is the Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform (UGMP), a task force of seventeen Uganda NGOs and five Dutch partners (NGOs) established in 2004 with the aim of monitoring governance and democracy issues in Uganda (UGMP 2004, UGMP 2010, UGMP 2005). The task force largely bases its monitoring work on a matrix developed by donors to assess Ugandan government progress with regard to the PEAP, from which it has selected benchmarks regarding four areas, namely democratisation, human rights, transparency and accountability, and conflict resolution (UGMP 2004: 5`,13). The reports produced by the group are predominantly an update on progress or lack of it in terms of legislative frameworks, with regard to areas prescribed as crucial by the dominant discourse: political pluralism, the respect of civil and political rights and anticorruption measures. There is no questioning of the value of these reforms, or any evaluation of the impact of these externally-imposed ‘democratisation’ measures in terms of whether they answer Ugandan citizens aspirations and needs⁴⁴.

From the above critical analysis of the local context, can it not be said Ugandan NGOs, after having been subjected to years of bilateral and multilateral capacity building programmes, seem to be fully playing the role envisaged for them by the World Bank:

> Programs should empower citizens to hold governments accountable, enable governments to respond to new demands, and enforce compliance with the economic and political rules of the game (World Bank 2000a: 3 emphasis mine ).

⁴⁴ With this I do not mean to suggest that corruption rather than the separation of powers are irrelevant to the majority of Ugandan citizens. It is certainly important to denounce the drugs stolen by health workers and inform the citizens on the few drugs provided for free by the government, as many NGOs do (see for instance ACCU 2011a). But if this is accompanied by a silence on the progressive reduction of the public budget for health services, the privatisation of health facilities and the overall lack of facilities, equipments and drugs, especially in rural areas (The Republic of Uganda 2010b: 246-268), the public information or anti-corruption project raises questions about which agendas and interests NGOs are serving.
2.6 Concluding Reflections

In this chapter we have seen that NGOs entered the development industry expected and promising to be the alternative to mainstream development thinking and practices. However, an analysis of their history and of the evolution of their role both generally and in Uganda suggests that rather than promoting counter-hegemonic alternatives, NGOs especially in Uganda may in fact have been instrumental in the establishment of the current neoliberal hegemony on development practice and thinking. Critically reviewing the role of Ugandan NGOs since their emergence in the late 1980s has allowed in particular the identification of several strategies through which these organisations have been successfully co-opted into ‘consensus building’ for the neoliberal orthodoxy.

First we saw, as in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, that the NGO boom in Uganda coincided with the imposition/adoption of hard-core neoliberal reforms. Even though in Uganda and elsewhere NGOs often claimed to be generally contrary to liberalisation and privatisation reforms, they nevertheless seized opportunities for expanding their roles offered by the same reforms they claimed to oppose, facilitating de facto the remarkable growth of the sector. Secondly, the eventual emergence of the post-Washington consensus has also offered significant additional symbolic and material rewards to these organisations. In some cases indeed they have raised their profile from cost-effective service delivery organisations to key actors in the democratisation process. This development was characterised particularly by an expansion of the role of NGOs into policy making, community mobilisation and acting as government watchdogs. These in turn contributed to further funding opportunities and overall growth of the sector. Their increased prominence and their extensive involvement in the development system was not, we have found though, necessarily accompanied by increases in their influence, but rather crafted so as to legitimise largely pre-defined reforms and goals. More generally, the significant dependency of Ugandan NGOs on donor funding has impacted detrimentally on their social basis and bottom-up legitimacy, since their agendas and programmes largely reflected – if not coincided with – donors’ priorities.

With NGOs’ efforts in educating and raising the awareness of the citizens on exogenously-driven issues, they seem to be playing the role of “organiser of the hegemony” (Sassoon 1980: 134), a function that Gramsci attributed to the
intellectuals\textsuperscript{45} (Gramsci 1997: 307-323). In this sense, the NGO role in community mobilisation and civic education, while it might have the potential of developing bottom-up emancipatory alternatives to neoliberal development, resembles a work of persuasion through which NGO provide grassroots a framework for interpreting their condition, where poverty is due to corruption and oppression to rigged electoral process and lack of civil liberties.

From a wider perspective, then, a problematic aspect of the work of NGOs seems to be their intended or unintended contribution to the progressive undermining of the right of self-determination of the communities they claim to serve. If this was the case, they may be colluding with a common feature of orthodox development thinking and practice across the continent since colonialism.

My study probes this possible contradiction further. From actual OD practice, I want to critically account for how OD in the Ugandan NGO sector is conceptualised and in which direction and by whom. Will it be a process aiming to enhance NGOs’ ability to influence policy-making? Will it be driven by the goal to better link NGOs’ work with everyday struggles at the grassroots? If OD is indeed a process aiming at enhancing the organisation’s ability to “perceive, understand and act upon” its environment (Schein 1969: 9), what can my action research at the sharp end illuminate in terms of how the process contends with and is impacted by the different social forces existing in the NGO environment, the government, the donors and the grassroots communities?

\textsuperscript{45} Gramsci deploys a wide notion of intellectuals. He sees all human being as intellectual, and considers it impossible to detach the ‘homo faber’ from the ‘homo sapiens’ (Gramsci 1997: 322) insofar all humans develop a worldview that guide them in making sense of their life. He also identifies certain categories, such as teachers, journalists and priests, as socially recognised intellectuals, playing a crucial role in moulding the masses’ worldview, either toward the diffusion of the dominant ideology or the creation of counter-hegemonic ideologies (Gramsci 1997: 307-362).
Chapter 3 - Management and Organisational Development in the NGO Sector: Development for Whom?

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the debate concerning NGO management and organisational development, a core area of the inquiry as the two introductory chapters have indicated. To avoid a decontextualised study of NGOs (as previewed in Chapter 1), I place the NGO-management debate within the wider development management debate alongside the influential role of the aid industry in shaping the NGO sector in Africa (also previewed in Chapter 2). With regard to management, an additional scholarly factor lies behind this widening of the perspective beyond the boundaries of NGO management: the desirability of bridging two academic streams which are sometimes kept separate. One strand of development management focuses predominantly on the state and governance, in a continuation of the legacy of development administration (Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999, Brinkerhoff 2008, Hirschmann 1999, Desai and Imrie 1998). The other growing strand specifically examines the management of NGOs (Lewis 2001, 2003, Wallace et al. 2007, Wallace 2000, Edwards and Fowler 2003b, Edwards 1997, Roberts et al. 2005).

Despite this divide in the academic discourse, the way management is conceptualised, practiced and prescribed in the development industry is marked by significant convergences throughout the aid chain. Specifically in the last decade, through a number of policies agreed by key institutions, there has been a progressive definition and structuring of how development ought to work, leading to the establishment of an overarching approach to development management. This encompasses all development actors, including the state and the NGO sector. Placing official development policies and practice at the centre of our analysis, therefore, should make it possible to identify significant convergences that can contribute to and draw from both academic debates. It also helps to maintain the strong engagement of this research with the actual practice of development, mentioned in Chapter 1 and to be discussed further in Chapter 4 on methodology.
This chapter begins by examining how management is conceptualised within the development industry (section 3.2), including the policies and practices adopted by the aid industry. Section 3.3 critically reviews the academic literature, focusing on competing understandings of development management and OD. Finally, section 3.4 provides some concluding reflections.

**3.2 Donors’ Perspectives on Development Management**

In the last decade, conventional management thinking, tools and practice have gained a central position in development policies and practices (Wallace et al. 2007, Cooke and Dar 2008a). This reflects a significant turn in development policies and practice, notably the passage from “development as markets” to “development as (good) governance” (Hout 2009), according to which “development is no longer seen primarily as a process of capital accumulation but rather as a process of organizational change” (Hoff and Stiglitz 2001: 389).

From the previous chapter, we know the turn to governance does not mean economic growth plays an ancillary role in mainstream development. Rather, increased emphasis is given now to the establishment of the right institutional framework for unleashing markets (see for instance World Bank 1994), as epitomised by the ‘good governance’ agenda. This covers both policy reforms (see previous chapter) and “sound development management” (World Bank 1992a: 1). Thus, if SAPs showed an abiding faith in conventional economics (Amin 1990: 1-41), development policy and practices since the late 1990s have been enriched by an equally strong trust in conventional management. This is not to say that management was unheard of before, but in presenting the Country Development Frameworks (CDFs)\(^{46}\), the then President of the World Bank clearly stated the need to learn lessons from “good business strategy […] to attack poverty and bring about development” (Wolfensohn 1999: 9, see also Cooke 2004, Murphy 2008). In fact, in the last decade there has been a notable proliferation of reports, studies and events in relation to development management and effectiveness, currently cutting across fundamental and hitherto unquestioned themes within the development industry (OECD 2009a, World Bank 2010a).

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\(^{46}\) CDF is the overarching approach which provides the foundation of PRSPs, built upon four principles: country ownership, country-led partnership, holistic vision and result focus (see World Bank 2005b)
The turn toward sound management and aid effectiveness has implied a growing concern with capacity building/development, especially by Southern actors such as the state and civil society.

According to the World Bank:

Capacity is a critical element in addressing Africa’s problems. [...] The capacity of individuals, organizations and institutions to set goals and achieve them, the capacity to budget resources and use them for agreed purposes, the capacity to manage the complex processes and interactions that constitute a working political and economic system – all are essential. [...] Successful capacity development moves along a continuum, with causal links, from process, to outcomes and finally to goals. The process entails interventions to address weakness in human skills, in organisational and institutional performance and in overall governance (World Bank 2005a: 2-3).

The focus on capacity building is a priority of virtually all key development actors (see for instance World Bank 2005a, DBSA et al. 2000, OECD 2009b, UNDP 2010b, USAID 2009) and represents a significant portion of aid flows.

This relevance attributed to management reflects its tendency to permeate everyday experience everywhere (Townley 2002, Grey 1999), so that management “is increasingly articulated as a universal solution to whatever problem presents itself [and] is considered a precondition of an organised

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47 Within the aid industry terms such as ‘capacity building’, capacity development and ‘organisation development’ are usually interchangeable (Jones and Blunt 1999: 382).

48 Capacity is defined in different but very similar manners. For instance, the UNDP defines capacity as “the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner” (UNDP 2010b: 2); the OECD defines it “as the ability of people, organisations, society to manage their affairs successfully” (OECD 2006b: 9).

49 According to the OECD, in 2004, one quarter of the overall ODA (US$ 19 billion) was spent in technical assistance, especially in the form of research and supply of experts for training and other capacity development initiatives, this last one (capacity development) representing one third of the overall ODA spent on technical assistance (OECD 2006c: 114). However, in certain sectors, the percentage of ODA spent on technical assistance appears to be even higher. For instance a World Bank report on the progress of the MDGs has revealed that in the period 2001-2003, 80% of the overall ODA in the education sector was extended as technical assistance, such as training and capacity building. The report critically comments that “the current pattern of education assistance represents a very inefficient transfer”, insofar as recipient countries identified needs for the achievement of the MDGs predominantly concerning the cost of teachers, classrooms and books (World Bank 2005c: 93). Finally, it is worth noting that a significant portion of technical assistance is tied aid, i.e., its procurement is limited to the donor country or to a group of countries which excludes the recipient country (Clay et al. 2009, Action Aid International 2006). While donors are reluctant to provide clear data on the proportion of tied technical assistance, it is widely acknowledged that it largely relies on foreign experts and companies (Action Aid International 2006, OECD 2006c: 111-129), which not only increases the costs significantly but might undermine the overall value of capacity development initiatives by increasing dependency on foreign expertise and by importing approaches and expertise which might not be relevant in the local context (Action Aid International 2006).
society, for social progress, for economic growth” (Parker 2002: 2). Yet, while Parker makes explicit reference to the “first world”, the pervasiveness of management thinking and the faith in it appear to have expanded beyond the West. The idea that Africa needs more and better management now seems widespread within the development industry, academic circles included.

With this background, the following section, by drawing on documents related to key official development policies, identifies and analyses core dimensions of the dominant management approach in mainstream development.

3.2.1 Distinctive Features of Development Management

How is management conceptualised in development? In the last ten years, starting from the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, through a number of international events – the Rome Declaration (2003), the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA; 2008) – the development industry has progressively assumed an overarching management approach. This is epitomised in ‘Managing for Development Results’ (MfDR), an OECD / DAC-MDB joint venture: a “global agenda and community of practice” concerned with improving the effectiveness and accountability of development intervention (OECD and World Bank 2006: 1). MfDR is the management approach underpinning all development programmes, from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to PRSPs:

... a management strategy that focuses on using information on results to improve decision-making. MfDR involves using practical tools for strategic planning, risk management, progress monitoring, and outcome evaluation (OECD and World Bank 2007: 9).

MfDR is said to provide a “higher management standard” (OECD and World Bank 2006: 9) and a “modern management agenda” (CIDA 2009: 9), which “entails tracking progress and managing business based on solid evidence and in a way that will maximise the achievement of results” (OECD 2008a: 6). MfDR is said to be more than a management approach; it is supposed to be a new way of thinking committed to the establishment of a “performance culture” within the aid industry across all institutions (OECD 2008a: 6-8). From the variety of

50 Although the MfDR was finalised in 2006, the aid industry had adopted results-based management since the 1990s (see for instance Minogue et al. 1998). It was at the core of much public sector reform in Africa and elsewhere, slowly expanding to involve all organisations in the development industry. The novelty introduced by the MfDR lies not in its content, but rather in its representation of a global agreement on the best approach to tackle poverty and development, adopted by virtually all the aid agencies and extended to all development programmes.
handbooks, sourcebooks and reports on MfDR, its three cultural foci emerge: on the primacy of results, on performance measurement and on linear causal reasoning. I now analyse these in turn\(^{51}\).

MfDR is said to be a results-based management approach which “shifts the focus from inputs (‘how much money will I get / how much money can I spend?’) to measurable results (‘what can I achieve with the money?’) at all phases of the development process” (OECD 2008a: 6). Results are defined in ‘output’ / ‘outcome’ / ‘impact’ of development interventions, each word denoting a sequential and hierarchical step: outputs (products or services) from a development intervention lead to outcomes (short- and medium-term effects) and finally to impacts (long-term effects) (OECD/DAC 2002, UNDP 2010b).

Performance measurement is central to the MfDR approach (OECD and World Bank 2006: 3, CIDA 2009). MfDR requires the identification of clear, measurable and time-bound goals (OECD 2008a: 6) and the selection of objectively verifiable performance indicators which clearly quantify progress towards expected results (OECD and World Bank 2006: 9-12, Ortengren 2003: 16)\(^{52}\). Hence, the emphasis goes on monitoring and evaluation strategies which continuously assess and measure performance against selected targets and specified results (OECD and World Bank 2006, UNDP 2009, Kusek and Rist 2004, Segone 2009). The approach highly regards quantitative indicators and results which can be measured, verified and validated (see for instance Kusek and Rist 2004: 69-70). Qualitative indicators may be added to corroborate and supplement the assessment (OECD and World Bank 2006: 12, Klugman 2002b: 13).

Linear causality is the underpinning reasoning of the approach, as explained in the quote below:

Results-based management is centred on a strong notion of causality. It theorizes that various inputs and activities lead logically to higher orders of results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts). These changes are usually shown in a “results chain” or “results frame-work” that clearly depicts cause-and-effect relationships. Development results are usually understood as sequential and time-bound, and changes are linked to a series of management steps within the programming cycle for any development initiative (OECD and World Bank 2006: 8).

\(^{51}\) In addition, MfDR highly regards wide participation, stakeholders’ consultation and ownership (GTZ 1997: 22-23, OECD and World Bank 2006: 6\(^{5}\), 10-11, EC 2004: 6), which, as already discussed in the previous chapter, are considered key elements of the good governance agenda.

\(^{52}\) Results and indicators should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (UNDP 2009: 19-79).
Consistent with this underpinning reasoning, the tools and techniques that operationalise the dominant approach to management development are called “logic models” (UNICEF 2009, OECD and World Bank 2006, UNDP 2009, GTZ 1997), i.e. “frameworks intend(ed) to demonstrate cause and effect of planned programme components by linking activities and outputs to higher order outcomes and impacts (goals)” (Kusek and Rist 2009: 191).

Logic models and logical frameworks are built out of matrices and categories, for activities/inputs, outputs, outcome and results, indicators and means of verification (see for instance OECD and World Bank 2006: 9, CIDA 2009: 33, UNDP 2009: 54-55). A given goal (say, poverty eradication) is broken down into factors/units, then into activities; targets and indicators are set for each to allow monitoring and evaluation against the goals, assumed to result from the sum of all the different micro-targets achieved. For instance, the Canadian Development Agency (CIDA) calls this a "work breakdown structure" and defines it as "a deliverable-oriented hierarchical decomposition of the work executed by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables” (CIDA 2009: 162).

Our first section on donors’ views on development management concludes below with an example taken from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which shows some of the features of the MfDR discussed above (see also Appendix II):

**Table 3.1 Millennium Development Goals**

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<tr>
<th>GOAL 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</th>
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<td><strong>Goals and targets</strong></td>
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<td>Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</td>
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<td>Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</td>
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3.2.1 Standardisation and Universalisation of MfDR

The MfDR and its key features identified above (results, performance measurement and linear causality) constitute a management approach currently underpinning virtually all development programmes, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) and MDGs, and adopted by virtually all development agencies (see OECD and World Bank 2006: 153-152). More precisely, the adoption of result-oriented policies and results-based management is usually a precondition for funding development programmes, as for instance is the case for PRSPs (World Bank 2007).

The illustrative table above shows the main goal (eradication of poverty) divided into two targets, which are then linked to a number of quantitative indicators. Development projects falling under this goal are then monitored and evaluated according to their contribution to these expected results. A similar approach is generally followed across all development programmes, insofar as MfDR is an approach considered valid for any country, at any level and for any project, as often claimed in the various publications (OECD and World Bank 2006, 2007, OECD 2008a). A plethora of “observable and replicable interventions” (OECD 2008a: 4), presented as exemplar case-studies will often follow the conceptual presentation of the approach, to strengthen its claims of validity by providing practical applications of the model (see for instance OECD 2008a, UNICEF 2009).

Donor agencies have put considerable effort into preparing handbooks and manuals to guide staff, recipient countries and organisations throughout the aid chain (AUSAID 2005, EC 2004, UNHCR 2001, Ortengren 2003). These specify how programmes and projects need to be ‘packaged’ to make them eligible for funding and how they are to be managed and monitored for assessment. But each donor agency will have its own respective format, matrix and rules (for instance’, see CIDA 2009, UNDP 2009, UNICEF 2009, World Bank 2000b), which must then be followed variously by each recipient country and organisation.53

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53 CIDA makes this point very clear: “CIDA’s partners are expected to both demonstrate their understanding of and apply RBM [Results Based Management] concepts in the planning and implementation of projects for which CIDA funding is requested. The assessment of an organization includes an examination of its ability to effectively apply RBM principles to the development and delivery of programs and the demonstrated capacity to manage for results” (CIDA 2009).
As already mentioned, MfDR is the overarching management approach underpinning virtually all development programmes, from national programmes like PRSPs to small local NGO projects. Research confirms the NGO sector, including in Africa, has been significantly permeated by this managerialist thinking and practice (Wallace et al. 2007, Lewis 2008, Dar 2007). The extent of NGOs’ adoption of results-based management is indicated by the example of Oxfam, which appears to have fully embraced the MfDR approach. Many of its corporate documents (see for instance Oxfam GB 2009, 2008, 2011) reveal the adoption of logic models and linear reasoning for all its programmes and adherence to SMART rules for identifying performance indicators and measuring results.

The widespread adoption of standardised management models and tools, at all levels of the aid chain, might help us to better comprehend why OD/capacity building projects of African NGOs have taken a predominantly narrow focus concerned with management systems and techniques (Smith and Bornstein 2001, Roberts et al. 2005). As previewed in Chapter One, questions have been raised regarding the appropriateness of such management models, largely drawn from the business sector, in the development context and specifically in the NGO sector. For instance, can MfDR help NGOs to better comprehend and promote bottom-up social change? Can result-based management support NGOs claimed mission of pursuing alternative development thinking and practice?

With this background, the following section begins analysing the academic debate on development management, paying particular attention to the NGO sector.

### 3.3 Linking Insider and Academic Views of Development Management

This section aims to analyse the academic literature on NGO management and OD, so to identify key themes, controversies and gaps which might help us in addressing the research questions.

The academic field of development management has its origin in the discipline of development administration, which emerged in the early 1960s largely to address issues of public administration in developing countries (Hirschmann 1999, Milne 1973, Schaffer 1971, Dwivedi 1990, Hirschmann 1981, Hossain 2007). The previous chapter described changes since the 1980s in the development system regarding the role of the state, the involvement of new stakeholders, and the shift towards more participatory approaches. However, the adoption of standardised management models and tools has raised questions about their appropriateness in the context of development NGOs.

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54 Appendix III shows Oxfam’s logic model and plan for its work in Uganda.
actors such as NGOs and private companies, and the expansion of the notion of development well beyond the economic field. These have caused a shift from development administration towards development management (McCourt and Gulrajani 2010, Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999). Hence, while throughout the 1960s and 1970s development predominantly concerned public administration (largely the civil service), development management involves more actors and more themes of interest.

However, while the discipline certainly has a wider focus, there is no simple answer to the question ‘What is development management about?’ The literature suggests a continuum of views: at one end, development management contributes to the fight against poverty and injustice by enhancing the effectiveness of the development system (see for instance Brinkerhoff 2008, Thomas 1999, Edwards and Hulme 2003); at the other, it is increasingly seen as an oppressive discourse exacerbating global asymmetries and strengthening assumptions of the superiority of Western knowledge and approaches (see for instance Cooke and Dar 2008a, Murphy 2008, Cooke 2004). The following pages address this spectrum of positions, focusing on three stances, which I have labelled the ‘orthodox’, the ‘reformist’ and the ‘radical’. Before delving into each of them, it is important to specify that the tripartite perspective is simply a heuristic device to explore the debate on development management. I acknowledge important common issues along the spectrum, including general misgivings around uncritical adoption of business management and technique-driven approaches (see for instance Edwards and Fowler 2003b, Wallace et al. 2007, Lewis 2008, Kerr 2008, Boesen 2010, Cooke 2004, Gulrajani 2011). As I shall discuss, what changes along the spectrum are the significance attributed to these concerns and how they are addressed.

3.3.1 The Orthodox Position

The individual perspectives within the orthodox position agree that management studies can make a significant contribution to development and, while consistently engaged with the advancement of development management, they vary in emphasis. Some tend, as did development administration, to focus on the role and functioning of the state and the civil service (Brinkerhoff 2008, Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2010, Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999, Kiggundu et al. 1983); some are predominantly concerned with the NGO sector (Edwards and

A central theme of this orthodoxy is the distinctiveness of development management and its differentiation from generic management (Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999, Lewis 2001, 2003, Thomas 1996, 1999, Edwards and Fowler 2003b, Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2010). This is reflected in concerns with how to combine task-orientation and effectiveness with social changes and empowerment. For instance, Lewis argues that while NGOs are called on to “give priority to well-established management principles, most of which are drawn from the business world” (Lewis 2003: 340, see also Dichter 1989), there are also distinctive features of NGO management, including relations with funders and a commitment to participation and empowerment (Lewis 2006: 189-200).

Similarly, for Thomas, the specificity of development management results from the articulation of three different angles: management in development, which refers to the specificity of management in less developed regions; management of development, which refers to the task-oriented management of development projects; and management for development, which is oriented towards progressive change, learning and empowerment (Thomas 1996, 1999). Hence he argues, “the clearest examples of good development management will be those which use the enabling and empowerment mode of management to achieve development goals for the relatively powerless” (Thomas 1999: 51), thus combining instrumental (goal-orientated) and developmental (empowerment-oriented) dimensions. Similarly, Fowler sees NGO management as a combination of instrumental, task-driven features with value and process-driven dimensions, where conventional management thinking and tools are adapted to fit the distinctive NGO context and mission (Fowler 1997).

More generally, the orthodox perspective appears to assume that conventional management theory and practice, adapted to the NGOs’ focus on social change rather than profit, will deliver micro-changes which together will result in wider societal changes. For instance, Thomas sees development at societal level “as resulting from the combination or accumulation of changes or development at lower levels” (Thomas 1999: 47). The lowest level is that of human development, which occurs through the training and empowerment of community members. Next comes organisation development, which supports changes within organisations involved in development. At the third level,
institutional development arises from direct progressive changes outside the organisations. The cumulative result is development at the societal level (Thomas 1999).

A similar reasoning is offered by Edwards and Sen (Edwards and Sen 2000), who suggest that social transformation occurs by integrating changes at three levels: personal, organisational and societal. They argue that personal transformation towards cooperative, caring and compassionate ways of thinking and behaving acts as a “well-spring of change in all other areas” (Edwards and Sen 2000: 609) and as the basis of wider changes in the social and economic spheres. From this perspective, NGOs’ effectiveness in promoting social change depends on their ability to integrate personal transformation into their programmes, activities, partnerships and organisational praxis. This in turn requires them “to experiment more seriously with management practices, organisational structure and personnel policies that create the feedback loops we are looking for between personal change, institutional performance and wider impact” (Edwards and Sen 2000: 614).

From the above it seems that orthodox perspectives on development management share MfDR’s belief in the contribution that management thinking and practice can make to the achievement of micro and meso levels (personal / organisational / communal) changes, which in turn foster macro-level (societal) development. As a result – and, consistent with the dominant performance culture described in the previous section – NGO accountability and performance become central themes of the orthodox perspective (Fowler 1997: 160-183). The shared starting point of orthodox perspectives is that NGOs have to provide evidence of the impact they make, so strategic planning, performance appraisal and accountability mechanisms are considered crucial (Edwards and Hulme 1995b, Fowler 2003a). Interestingly, NGOs’ performance and accountability imperatives are usually associated with the increased competitiveness of the development industry on one hand and with issues of legitimacy on the other (Fowler 1997: 160-183). It is argued that if NGOs aim to maintain or even strengthen their position within the aid industry, they must be able to demonstrate their impact, providing evidence of their competitive advantage vis-à-vis other development actors, the government and the private sector; in turn, evidence of their impact will strengthen their legitimacy as development actors.
However, in addressing these themes, a key feature of orthodox development management remains the effort to combine rational, logical thinking and tools. These highlight cause-and-effect relations and measurable changes, with participatory ones, which promote empowerment and foster social change (see for instance Aune 2000, Beckwith et al. 2002, Dierolf et al. 2002, Ebrahim 2003, Padaki 2002, Hailey 2000). Such a twofold orientation, grounded in the linear parcelisation of social reality on one hand and on process, values and bottom-up change on the other, emerges, for instance, from Fowler’s analysis of NGOs’ effectiveness. He argues:

The starting point for effectiveness, therefore, is knowing what tasks to do, why and how they must relate to each other. This involves a reasonably logical set of steps that move from the organisation’s vision of a changed society to the actions or activities needed to reach it. In technical terms, this is moving from reaffirmation of mission to ensure that it is still relevant, through strategic analysis, into operational planning and then development activities (Fowler 2003c: 76).

Fowler goes on to examine the value of strategic planning in fostering the rationalisation of decision-making and the prioritisation of resource allocation – even though “the nature of sustainable development processes means that they cannot be imposed and have to be negotiated” (Fowler 2003c: 79). Strategic planning has to be flexible and participatory, including consultation with field staff, board members and communities, although leaders and managers play cardinal roles (Fowler 2003c).

The twofold orientation of orthodox development management also emerges from a concern with accountability and performance measurement, thus with measurable progress towards targets, cost-effectiveness and community participation (see for instance Hashemi 2003, Desai and Howes 1995, Ebrahim 2003, Zadek and Raynard 2003). It is recognised that donors’ requirements and expectations with regard to accountability and performance may differ from those of communities, requiring NGOs to manage “multiple accountabilities”, upwards and downwards, toward targets and towards participation (Ebrahim 2003, Hudson 2000, Fowler 2003a, Edwards and Hulme 2003, Brown and Moore 2001, Walsh and Lenihan 2006). Edwards and Hulme suggest the dilemmas arising from NGOs’ multiplicity of stakeholders cannot be solved: instead, “they

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55 Edwards and Hulme define accountability as “the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognised authority, or authorities, and are held responsible for their actions” (Edwards and Hulme 2003: 192). Hence, accountability requires clear goals, transparency and appraisals, to assess performance against goals, as well as mechanisms (punitive and rewarding) for holding accountable those responsible (Edwards and Hulme 2003).
have to be *managed*” (Edwards and Hulme 1995a: 223 emphasis in original). Thus, “much of the art of NGDO management lies in reconciling, or at least accommodating, these competing perspectives” (Edwards and Fowler 2003b: 6, see also Fowler 2003a). Similar views are expressed by other scholars, who suggest that negotiation among different expectations and aspirations is a key dimension of development management (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2010, Thomas 2007). There is a recognition that development is a contested terrain, accompanied by a belief that diverse interests and perspectives can be reconciled and that management skills, thinking and practice can support this process.

**OD from an Orthodox Perspective**

Although capacity building (CB) has, since the 1990s, been a core concern of the NGO sector, it is widely recognised that the term is highly evasive (Bebbington and Mitlin 1996, Kaplan 2000, Fowler 1997: 187). For instance, a 1994 study of 531 North American and European NGOs found that 93% of them were providing CB/OD services to their partners in the South (James 1994). Yet their definitions of CB were usually vague, spanning monitoring visits, financial support and management training. In this connection, while the rise of Southern NGOs is said to have contributed to development, especially because they are assumed to be closer to the poor, there have been concerns regarding their weak structures and poor management capacity (see for instance Fowler and James 1994). Eade suggests that the debate on CB in the NGO sector starts from the widely shared assumptions that “capacity building is an exclusively Southern ‘need’, and that international NGOs are among those best placed to meet it” (Eade 2010: 207).

The term CB/OD usually refers to NGOs’ capacity and effectiveness, as indicated by these quotes:

Organisational development implies a conscious process of acquiring and strengthening the characteristics required by an NGDO to position itself for maximum impact and effectiveness (Edwards and Fowler 2003b: 3).

Organisational capacity-building is a conscious intervention to improve an organisation’s effectiveness and sustainability in relation to its mission and context (James 2002: 6).

Fowler (1997) distinguishes three related meanings: OD as a *means*, which focuses on enhancing NGOs’ performance of specific tasks; OD as a *process*, focusing on learning and adaptation; and OD as an *end*, aiming to improve sustainability and impact, consistently with the NGO mission (1997: 188).
The literature on OD in the NGO sector predominantly presents and explains models for capacity building, sometimes analysing specific OD initiatives in support of a proposed model (see for instance James 2002, Fowler 1997: 187-213, James 1998, Kaplan 2000, Booth et al. 1998, Padaki 2002, Sanyal 2006). These are clearly addressed to NGOs, to guide them and enhance their CB/OD efforts, offering checklists, diagrams and tips. Despite the diversity of the models proposed, they seem to follow a general sequence of diagnosis/assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, paying attention at each phase both to task-oriented issues, such as management structure and performance, and to developmental issues, including participation, ownership and learning. This reflects the twofold orientation of development management discussed above. This literature has another feature discussed above, regarding how changes occur. Some of the proposed models envisage OD starting from changes in individual behaviour, triggering changes at NGO level and in turn at community level (Simister and Smith 2010, James 2002: 101-154, Hailey and James 2003). According to their authors, this threefold stratification of OD should be reflected in monitoring and impact assessment, to identify and measure the changes resulting from the OD process.

In summary, orthodox perspectives on development management and OD share three crucial features. First, they agree that conventional management can contribute to development work, thanks, for instance, to the value attributed to strategic planning, performance appraisal, effectiveness and efficiency. Secondly, the distinctiveness of development management lies not only in its final goal (social change), but also in its developmental orientation, i.e., towards empowerment, participation and learning. Thirdly, these perspectives are underpinned by a consensual understanding of development, where different interests can be harmonised and negotiated for the sake of the struggle against poverty and injustice.

This section concludes by considering the significant similarities between orthodox perspectives on development management and the mainstream approach analysed in the previous section. The three distinctive features of the orthodox perspectives identified above are also present in the MfDR approach. Therefore, while these perspectives have previously been labelled ‘reformist’ (see Gulrajani 2010), I prefer the term ‘orthodox’, to emphasise convergences with the dominant approach to development management and with conventional
management generally. While acknowledging the emphasis on issues such as participation, learning, empowerment and social change, I do not consider these to be distinctive features of development management, since they have long been addressed by conventional business management. With this regard, it is worth noticing orthodox perspectives’ silence on the critiques which suggest that issues such as participation, empowerment and learning are sometimes deployed to prevent opposition and often concern micro-aspects, while leaving unquestioned overarching inequalities within organisations and the aid industry (see for instance Cooke and Kothari 2001). Another crucial feature which orthodox perspectives share with conventional management is instrumentalism. Drawing on critiques of business management (Adler et al. 2007, Spicer et al. 2009), I refer here to two distinct issues. First, instrumentalism refers to the ambiguity of the emphasis on the ‘developmental’ orientation of development management, insofar as concerns about participation, empowerment and learning are unproblematically matched with those about impact, effectiveness and efficiency, hence blurring or overlooking the distinction between means and ends. For instance, is participation a value in itself or only if it contributes to the achievements of results? And what about when participation provokes contestations, resistance and conflicts? Should we consider this ‘ineffective’ participation? These questions are especially important considering the value attributed to ‘performance culture’ by mainstream development management, according to which development actors, from governments to NGOs, should shape their decisions and actions according to their contribution to visible and measurable results (see section 3.2).

Secondly, orthodox perspectives seem to be driven by the instrumental goal of providing solutions, seeing development management research as valuable only insofar as it drives and guides actions/practice and improvements.56 This is crucial for me, given the practice-led orientation of the present research, and my interest in a research approach that is meaningful to those involved in the research and in development work more generally (see next chapter). However, I also think that an appreciation of the diversity of actors and interests involved in development work requires scrutiny of the link between research and practice, strongly advocated by Edwards (1989): Whose practices? Whose interests? Who are the beneficiaries? My view is that concern for pragmatic issues, associated

56 This stance has been clearly advocated by Edwards, in his influential contribution on the ‘irrelevance of development studies’ (see Edwards 1989).
with the orthodox perspective, might silence the competing views and interests that make up the development industry, as I discuss in the following sections.

3.3.2 The Reformist Position

Other scholars take a more critical stance in the development management debate, exploring the detrimental consequences of what can be called the ‘managerialisation’ of the NGO sector, so to highlight the pervasiveness of management principles and techniques in NGO work (Wallace et al. 2007, Wallace 1997, Bornstein 2003, 2001, 2006). Their distinctive contribution is based on rich empirical material, while their focus on Uganda and South Africa makes them particularly interesting for this research. They address two particularly interesting issues: the constraining impact of management thinking and practice on NGO work, and the furthering of inequalities within the NGO sector, especially between Southern and Northern NGOs. These are considered below.

Narrowing the NGO Agenda

Reformist researchers have been much concerned with the pervasiveness of ‘rational’ management thinking and tools (such as logic models and project cycle management) and their depoliticising impact on development work. Development is seen as linear and rational, so that if the right management technique is employed, reality can be carefully predicted, managed, measured and oriented towards a predefined result. It is argued that the predominance of this thinking implies the progressive silencing of concerns that do not fit a linear perspective, while it also turns the attention of development actors including NGOs toward a micro-level of analysis and intervention, thus losing sight of the bigger picture (Wallace et al. 2007). Furthermore, the predominant concern with results seems to have weakened the operational autonomy of African NGOs, insofar as funding is usually constrained by the predefined plans, goals and priorities of donors (CDRN 2004b, Bornstein 2003).

Asymmetries and Divisiveness

Research suggests that the managerialisation of the NGO sector has contributed to further inequalities between Northern and Southern NGOs and to divisiveness within the NGO sector in the South (Wallace et al. 2007, Bornstein 2003, 2001, Mowles et al. 2008, CDRN 2004b). There are four issues to be considered here.
Firstly, an important consequence of the progressive managerialisation of the NGO sector is the marginalisation of those NGOs unable to keep pace with the fads and fashions of management jargon and techniques (Bornstein 2003). In Uganda, for example, there seems to be an extensive rural “hidden sector”, progressively obscured by urban-based, “sophisticated” NGOs (CDRN 2004a: 23-29). Thereby management capacity, as understood within the aid industry, seems to be a factor determining the prominent role played in Uganda by a small circle of Kampala-based NGOs (see section 2.5.1).

Secondly, research into British NGOs reveals that their adoption of management procedures and approaches has “been driven more by the desire for financial growth, for maintaining access to large donors, for meeting bilateral and trustee demands” (Wallace 2000: 27) than by the search for better development practices. It appears not only that none of these managerial approaches was the result of pressure from partners or staff in the South (Wallace 1997: 48), but rather that donors and INGOs had not yet explored their impact on the NGOs which had implemented their development programmes in the South.

Thirdly, the adoption by INGOs of the dominant management approach has meant that like all other donors, they have started to require African NGOs to adopt specific management approaches, tools and techniques. These include logframes and project cycle management, which – despite the rhetoric of partnership – are hardly ever negotiable (Wallace et al. 2007, CDRN 2004b).

INGOs, as already mentioned, have redefined their role as building and developing the capacity of their southern counterparts. Yet research suggests that these programmes do not focus on the capacity needs and aspirations identified by Southern NGOs. Instead, Northern NGOs tend to transmit to their southern ‘partners’ management knowledge on, say, strategic planning rather than on financial accountability, logframes or reporting (Mowles et al. 2008). This is done without investigating whether Southern NGOs consider it appropriate (see also Lewis 2008).

British NGOs are especially relevant to this research because the UK has been a crucial donor to Uganda since independence (see Nabudere 1981, Uganda National NGO Forum 2009c).
Research in Uganda and South Africa indicates that sometimes NGOs struggle to appreciate the usefulness and meaningfulness of the management approaches they have to adopt or the validity of the CB programmes delivered by INGOs and other donors (Mboizi et al. 2004, CDRN 2004b). It appears that the content, process and approach of such programmes are usually identified unilaterally by donors or INGOs, so that NGOs can meet donors’ requirements regarding management systems (such as reporting, financial accountability and project cycle management). An example is provided by a study of the CB programmes of Transform Africa (Mboizi et al. 2004), a consortium of Northern NGOs including Oxfam, CAFOD and Christian Aid. These INGOs are committed to enhancing the effectiveness of local communities and organisations through capacity building, advocacy and research (Transform Africa 2007). Transform Africa does not directly carry out CB programmes, believing them to be more effective and relevant when provided by local NGOs, although it provides the Transform Approach to guide the process. Central to this approach is the Excellence Model, a tool for assessing NGOs’ progress toward excellence. Yet the Ugandan NGO involved in the delivery of capacity building programmes on behalf of Transform Africa reports that its Excellence Model and other tools were considered hardly relevant to the NGO ‘beneficiaries’. They struggled to understand the tools and, especially, to see how they could enhance their work (Mboizi et al. 2004).

I have labelled the perspectives above as ‘reformist’, insofar besides highlighting the detrimental impact of management tools and practices, they also invite NGOs to reform their management practices and identify new ways of working (Wallace et al. 2007: 176-177).

I find the reformist perspectives interesting, for two reasons. Firstly they suggest that technicist nature of development management, epitomised by the heavy deployment of standard tools and model, might detrimentally impact on social change agendas. This is a central issue for this research, insofar, as introduced in the first chapter, social change is (or should be) a central aspect of OD processes, especially relevant for NGOs.

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58 The model has three parts: enablers (leadership, people management, donors’ relations); processes (financial management, planning, monitoring and evaluation systems); and results (outcomes and impact). According to the model, the CB process develops around the assessment and monitoring of these three parts (Mboizi et al. 2004: 21).
Secondly, reformist perspectives highlight the dominant role of Western actors in the conceptualisation and dissemination of management practice. Hence they invite reflection on the contribution of management to the reproduction within the aid industry of existing North/South and urban/rural divides and other asymmetries. However, I also think that these perspectives could be further deepened by considering the epistemic foundations of the dominant management approach, whose relevance is sometimes mentioned by authors such as Wallace and Bornstein, but without further exploration. I agree that there has been too heavy a reliance on techniques and tools, these criticisms cannot be answered simply by loosening the management requirements associated with development programmes. But I would prefer to argue that the constraining dimension of development management goes well beyond the tools deployed, to its epistemic foundation and the worldview it sustains. The next subsection details this argument.

3.3.3 The Radical Position

The so-called radical position should not be seen as homogenous, but rather as an ensemble of diverse perspectives sharing a tendency to problematise development management and to challenge its largely unquestioned beneficial contribution to development (Cooke and Dar 2008a). Drawing on these critiques, my intention is to reflect on the continuities between Enlightenment thinking and development management, focusing on two aspects. First, following critiques of Western management (Alvesson and Deetz 2000, Alvesson and Willmott 1996), I shall question claims for the neutrality and universality of development management knowledge and practice. By tracing their roots in the Enlightenment, I shall argue that such claims depend on distorting social and historical realities. Secondly, drawing on postcolonial and post-development perspectives (Dar and Cooke 2008, Prasad 2003b), I shall pursue the analogy between the Enlightenment and development management, critically analysing their shared notions of progress and civilisation, underpinned by assumptions of Western superiority and universality. By situating this exploration on the African continent, where history has been profoundly shaped by ideas such as the universality of Western science, civilisation and progress, it will be possible to unfold the epistemic foundation of current development management and the worldviews it sustain. This analysis will therefore help me to further deepen the critiques on development management introduced by the reformist perspectives.
Critiques of western management (Alvesson and Deetz 2000, Alvesson and Willmott 1996) help us to unravel the positivist and modernist assumptions which underpin development management, according to which social realities can be known fully and objectively, nurturing societal progress. My focus is on questioning the scientific character and neutrality attributed to development management, portrayed as able to mirror objective reality accurately, while also furthering human betterment. From this perspective, development management’s faith in universally valid knowledge seems firmly rooted in the Enlightenment.

The continuities between the Enlightenment and development management are illustrated by means of the four distinctive features that Bloor (Bloor 1991: 62-63) attributes to Enlightenment thought:

It conceives of *wholes and collectives* as being unproblematically equivalent to sets of individual units […] *Historical variation* is subordinated to a concern for the timeless and the universal […] *Abstract deductivism* [is one of its characteristics and its has a] strong *prescriptive and moralising* flavour (Bloor 1991: 62-63)

All four characteristics – the atomisation of wholes and collectives, universalism, abstract deductivism and the prescriptive stance - are evident in the dominant approach to development management as analysed in the previous section. In fact, we have seen that the atomisation of social realities is a pillar of the MfDR approach: results are taken to emerge from the summing of discrete micro-events, linked hierarchically and causally. Borrowing principles from physics and biology, development management explains social realities and human behaviour in mechanical terms. It divorces them from their social fabric (Townley 2002). A clear example is the MDGs, the “apotheosis” of development management (McCourt, 82), where development is measured by counting individuals in discrete categories, whose sum is assumed to trustfully mirror the social phenomena (such as poverty).

With regard to the second and third features (universalism and abstract deductivism), we have already seen development management is considered valid for any organisation, in any country, at any level of development intervention. The claimed universality and generalisability of the approach are built upon an ideal “abstract management” (Townley 2002, 2001); this is divorced not only from socioeconomic and political contexts but also from a
historically situated cultural and relational texture. Such abstraction reduces management to a set of “technical portable skills” (Townley 2001: 304), ignoring the distinctiveness of the location where they are applied. Shijvi writes of “laptop consultants” with the rhetoric of participation and ownership who fly from one country to another to package “carbon copy” development programmes and national policies (Shivji 2006a: 23-24). Variations (historical rather than economic, cultural rather than political) are obscured or manipulated to reflect the claimed universal validity of the model. But the universality of development management can be claimed only by neglecting the distinctiveness of the contexts where it is deployed. This might help us to better understand the difficulties reported by Ugandan NGOs in making sense of the management tools bestowed upon them by their donors (see section 3.2): the erasure of the contexts - implicit in mainstream development management - might make it problematic its meaningfully deployment in everyday practice.

I suggest that the technocratic dimension of development management is better understood not only with reference to the techniques and tools focused upon in earlier sections, but also by considering the scientific pretension embedded in its epistemic foundation. However, we have seen above how such a scientific aura can be claimed, paradoxically, only by neglecting distinctive features of social phenomena themselves, their social, economic, historical and cultural fabric. So it is argued: development management – rather than being neutral and universal – serves to portray a particular and interested worldview.

The above leads us to the final point, which for Bloor subsumes all the previous ones: the prescriptive and moralising stance of Enlightenment thinking through which “a reforming ‘ought’ can be made to confront the recalcitrant ‘is’ of society” (Bloor 1991: 63). This is a crucial critique within our analysis, because of its relevance to the past and current history of Africa. The ‘reforming ought’ is the foundation-stone not only of the dominant paradigm of development management, taking results as its driving force and core principle, but also of the whole development industry as well as of colonialism. Hence, in the next sub-section I deepen further the notion of the ‘reforming ought’, enlightening the continuities between colonial discourse and development management.
The Civilising Mission

As noted above, a crucial component of the Enlightenment and of development management is the tendency to adopt "a reforming 'ought' [that] can be made to confront the recalcitrant 'is' of society" (Bloor 1991: 63). However, this seems not to be limited to development management. As mentioned in the introduction, it has been argued that general management, as conceptualised in the West, can be recast as a civilising mission which embodies the cult of modernity, where social and economic progress is virtually equated with the ability to control, predict and master the world around us, including human beings themselves (Parker 2002: 1-16). This understanding of progress/management as control, prediction and mastering is also embedded in the MfDR approach, which as discussed previously, assumes that social phenomena can be reliably known, measured, predicted and steered towards predefined results. Thus it could be argued that development management shares significant features with generic management, having largely uncritically adopted Western theories and practices (Dar and Cooke 2008, Wallace et al. 2007, Nuijten 2005).

Notwithstanding such similarities, Cooke notes development management is distinctive from Western conventional management in assuming its subjects (countries and organisations of the Third World) are yet to achieve modernity. It therefore has a distinctive role as a "modernising change agent" (2004: 625). However, the modernisation effort in Africa did not start with the introduction to the development industry of management knowledge and practices, but had its roots in the Enlightenment thinking of the colonial period (Lushaba 2009). There was at that time a notion of progress as linear, evolutionary and universal, unfailingly centred on the Western subject, coupled with a belief in universally valid knowledge and its contribution to progress. This allowed Africa to be categorised as evolutionarily and/or historically retarded compared with Europe. In the context of African history, the Enlightenment and colonialism were thus mutually constitutive projects, giving shape to the civilising mission through which the pre-modern and irrational Africa had to develop, to become rational and modern, guided and directed by the superior and advanced West (Lushaba 2009, Loomba 1998, Mudimbe 1988).

Evolutionist ideas of progress and the underpinning assumption of Western superiority continued in the post-independence era. Development was envisaged as a transition from traditional to modern society, symbolised by the
industrialised West\textsuperscript{59} (Leys 2005: 8-17, Six 2009, Ake 1996, Rist 1997: 93-108, Hettne 1983, Chambua 1994, Mazrui 1992). While the modernisation paradigm is said to have been superseded, critics of development argue it remains at the core of current development policies and practices (Crush 1995, Cowen and Shenton 1995). They note its Eurocentric nature, by which European intellectual and economic traditions are taken to constitute a superior universal model by which to assess, compare and produce knowledge about Africa’s underdevelopment: “African civilisations or culture are perceived as a blockage to progress to be crusaded against at every level by every means” (Nyamnjoh 2000, see also Shivji 2009c).

Against this backdrop, we now explore how development-management knowledge and practice continue to nurture and construct an idea of progress emblematised by the superior West, which in turn perpetuates global power asymmetries within the development industry.

\textit{Orientalism and Occidentalism in Development Management}

The link between Enlightenment, civilization and management is well explained by Peter Drucker:

Management will remain a basic and dominant institution perhaps as long as Western civilization itself survives. [...] Management is not only grounded in the nature of modern industrial systems and in the needs of the modern business enterprise [...] Management also expresses basic beliefs of modern Western society. It expresses the belief in the possibility of controlling man’s livelihood [...] the belief that economic change can be made into the most powerful engine for human betterment and social justice [...]. This belief that the material can and should be used to advance the human spirit [...] is something new, distinctly modern, distinctly western. [...] Prior to, and outside of, the modern West, resources have always been considered a limit to man’s activity [...] rather than an opportunity and tool of his control over nature. They have always been considered God-given and unchangeable. [...] Management [...] reflects the basic spirit of the modern age. It is in fact indispensable – and this explains why, once begotten, it grew so fast and with so little opposition. [...] That the United States is the leader today, economically and socially, will make management performance decisive [...] And whether the formerly colonial and raw-material producing countries will succeed in developing their economies as free nations or will go Communist, depends to a larger extent on their ability to produce competent and responsible managers in a hurry (Drucker 2007: 3-5).

\textsuperscript{59} This is typified by Rostow’s influential theory, according to which economic growth passes through five stages: traditional society, preconditions, takeoff, drive to maturity and age of mass consumption (Rostow 1990). The length of each stage may vary from country to country, but the overall path remains the same across the world. While beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse Rostow’s theory, we note the clear statement if evolutionist assumptions and references to biological science to explain Rostow’s approach (see for instance Rostow 1990: 179-181).
This long citation evokes a number of now familiar themes regarding the current development management debate. First, it shows management is embedded in modernity, where progress is equated to control, prediction and mastering of the world. Secondly, management seems to provide a measure of the level of civilisation, allowing, in this case, the USA to sit at the pinnacle of civilisation, an unquestioned model for the rest of the world. Thirdly, Drucker stresses the universal validity of management knowledge and practice and the contribution it has to offer for the betterment of the world. Drucker’s words, then, reveal both Orientalist and Occidentalist dimensions of management discourse present in development management knowledge and practice. Drawing on Said, I use the term ‘Orientalist’ to characterise the way in which knowledge produced by the West about management in Africa rests explicitly or implicitly on a dichotomised and polarised definition of East and West. Binary thinking like this rests on the assumption that the West is the norm and the definition of the non-Western (the Other) based in what it lacks in comparison. Generic management and development management allow non-Western forms of organisation to emerge only with reference to the ways in which they differ from Western models, which generates mainly pejorative descriptions and labels (‘traditional’, ‘corrupt’, ‘backward’) (Prasad 2003a: 32, Nuijten 2005: 5). We have already seen how the good governance agenda rests on the assumption that Africa lacks management capacity, is inefficient and is not performance oriented, unlike the West, which is legitimised to provide technical assistance and take the lead in programmes to develop Africa’s managerial and governance capacity. From this perspective, then, the discourse of development management is Orientalist, portraying Africa as in dire need of guidance from the West and perpetuating the latter’s supremacy and domination.

Development management can also be seen as an Occidentalist discourse. Drawing on Frenkel and Shenhav (2003), I refer here to how management knowledge seems to be constructed by ignoring the Other yet embracing universalism and objectivity. If the Orientalist stance in development management serves to stress the differences between Africa and the West, the Occidentalist affirms for management knowledge a universal and objective validity. It is notable that management knowledge has been produced predominantly in North America and the United Kingdom, rarely having a non-Western organization as its object of study (Cooke 2004, Kiggundu et al. 1983, Jaya 2001, Gantman and Parker 2006, Ibarra-Colado 2006). It is nonetheless
acceded universal validity, applied not only to African organisations, but even to entire countries. Its validity is taken to transcend both geographical borders and units of analysis: scholarship designed to explain and guide the development of business organisations in the USA and the UK is deployed to do the same for entire countries, such as Uganda or the Congo.

It may thus be argued that development management maintains and reinforces unequal relations, through the domination of knowledge, tools and techniques created and controlled by Westerners (Kothari 2005, Parpart 1995, Escobar 1997). Given Europe’s efforts to subjugate its colonies not only economically but also culturally (Prasad 2003a, Mudimbe 1988), the neo-colonial dimension of development management can be traced within the apparently tireless effort to establish, under the guise of capacity development, the universality of Western worldviews and values at the expense of hindering and undermining possibilities for the development of alternative views.

The foregoing arguments also illuminate the political nature of the dominant management approach, which is often overlooked in the dominant debate. As mentioned earlier, the technocratic and managerialist nature of development management has been acknowledged and criticised by many scholars. Yet the proposed solutions revolve around ‘better management’, which often means considering the political nature of development and of development management (see for instance Wallace et al. 2007). It seems to me that these perspectives place the technical and the political as opposing poles, as if a technicist understanding of management could be improved by loosening its formalist requirements and adding an assumedly absent political agenda. While I share those criticisms regarding the heavy reliance on techniques and tools, following the above arguments I wonder whether technocratic management tools lack a political agenda. More precisely, I would argue that those management techniques and tools and their foundations, presented by their architects as scientific, neutral and thus already depoliticised, are inherently political. They serve to sustain not only the unequal global relations mentioned above, but also the dominant neoliberal regime. Development management, with its emphasis on results, individual measurements and performance, contributes to naturalise values, views and practice which underpin the neoliberal (market) ideology, and, simultaneously to silence issues such as power, justice and solidarity, just to name a few. The foregoing suggests also that NGOs, through their adoption of results-based management, have embraced – intentionally or otherwise – the
values and practices that sustain the neoliberal regime (notwithstanding their opposition to marketisation/privatisation policies).

Another political aspect of dominant development management results from the parcelisation of reality it advocates and implies (see section 3.2.1): the focus on micro-activities, micro-performances and micro-results, effectively discharges NGOs from analysing and reflecting on the history and the macro-level of international relations and political-economy where development takes – or should take – place. While this issue has been highlighted also in reformist perspectives, the background offered in this section allow us to emphasise the political dimension of this marginalisation, and more generally of development management.

3.4 Concluding Reflections

This chapter has begun by illustrating how management is conceptualised within the development industry. By analysing official development policies we have seen that NGOs are required to adhere to an overarching management approach, which places high value on results, performance measurements and linear causality reasoning. The pervasiveness of such approach at all levels of the aid chain invites me to consider whether and how it informs, or shapes, how OD is understood by Ugandan NGOs, which is what I shall do when addressing the first and second research questions.

This chapter has also critically reviewed the debate on development management and OD in the NGO sector. We have seen that, while contestations over development management are recognised along a spectrum, what changes is partly the extent to which such contestations are considered and partly how they are addressed. At the orthodox pole, a problem-solving approach prevails which aims to advance the status of development management knowledge and practice. At the opposite pole, the debate is more oriented towards a radical critique of the pervasiveness of management thinking and practice in development, illuminating its continuities with Western colonialism and imperialism.

The orthodox position, by broadly supporting the primacy of effectiveness, seems to hinder NGOs’ efforts at social transformation. The focus on results belittles the role of history and of the geopolitical context in which NGOs
operate, thus narrowing opportunities to question who is served by development, who decides what the results are, how they are decided and what relevance these priorities and results have, locally and globally.

The radical perspective, by placing development management within the context of history and of global power asymmetries, provides the inspirational lens for this research, especially considering my commitment to place NGO management and OD in the broader socio-historical-political context, as discussed in the previous chapters. In addition, radical perspectives offers interesting insight on how development management might contribute to the expansion of the neoliberal agenda, for instance by naturalising certain values, views, and practices and simultaneously discouraging analysing beyond the micro-level. In this sense, radical perspectives offer interesting lens to continue, through the empirical investigation, the analysis presented in the previous chapter regarding NGOs role, caught between ‘organiser’ of the neoliberal hegemony and counter-hegemonic force (see Chapter Two). More precisely, with the third research question, I intend to specifically address this aspect, namely whether and how development management shapes the role of NGO in development.

My attraction to the radical view is, however, accompanied by a healthy scepticism towards much ‘post-development’ thinking, on which the radical position draws explicitly (see Cooke and Dar 2008a). I share Mkandawire’s eloquently expressed concern:

> For those who seem to suggest we have passed “development” and entered “post-developmentalism” without our knowing it, I can only say that their views, when imported into the contexts of extreme material deprivation, sound like a cruel joke. [...] Reading some of the recent descriptions of the development debacle, you would be made to believe that the whole thing was a “discourse” that took place in Northern capitals or aid missions with some spill-over to an African intelligentsia who drew inspiration and ideas uncritically. In most cases this has involved well-meaning paternalism, which invariably fails to take African agency seriously in the development saga, or is a reflection of the ignorance of how “development” entered our respective national agendas (Mkandawire 2003: unpaged).

Thus I enter the field with a twofold curiosity. Firstly I am to seriously investigate Ugandan NGOs’ agency by questioning views that tend to portray them as victims of western domination. How do Ugandan NGOs articulate mainstream development discourse? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis the effectiveness and social change agendas? Secondly, Mkandawire’s disillusionment over western paternalism invites me to engage with long-standing African struggles for development and self-determination, which, run
the risk of being marginalised focusing only on critiquing westocentric dimension of mainstream development and development management. Hence, my interest is that of investigating whether and how the OD process with Ugandan NGOs might support NGOs to develop their own agenda and nurture development thinking and practices which address the needs and aspirations of the communities they work with.
CHAPTER 4 - Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores methodological issues that confronted the enquiry and guided the research project. It addresses three main questions: How did I generate the data? What is the link between data and findings? How do I account for methodological choices? The first question focuses on the methods I used during the research process, while the second and third address theoretical themes that helped me to forge my analysis and links between empirical material, the process of knowing and the presentation of text, thus shaping an overall research framework.

As stated in Chapter 1, the research originated from my work as Organisation Development (OD) advisor with two Ugandan NGOs between 2007 and 2009. The research thus took shape through an iterative process of hands-on immersion as an OD practitioner - focused on the specific dimensions of the action scene I was involved in - and of reflexive inquiry as a theoretical researcher. I repeatedly swapped lenses: What do I see and feel is happening? How do I understand and interpret what is happening? What is the wider context of scholarship influencing the research? At this point it might be useful to recall the research questions so as to anchor our discussion to the specifics of this inquiry:

1. What are the distinctive features of the OD processes of NGOs in Uganda?
2. How do contextual factors shape the OD processes of NGOs?
3. How do the discourses of NGO management and organisational development shape the role of NGOs in the ‘development’ process in Uganda?

With the simultaneous orientation toward practice and reflection that characterised this research (as well as other features to be explored in the following pages), I privileged action research (AR) as the approach to address the above research questions. AR is not a unitary approach, but is understood in many different ways and includes a variety of methods, levels of analysis and philosophical stances (Cassell and Johnson 2006, Chandler and Torbert 2003,
Kemmis 2001). Hence, in the following pages I analyse the specifics of the methodological framework. The chapter has four sections: the next delineates the overarching research approach, examining key characteristics of AR and qualitative inquiry. The third section explains the methods I used to generate empirical material, while the fourth focuses on the interpretative process. A final fifth section summarises the chapter.

4.2. Research Approach

This section illustrates distinctive features of my methodological approach and is divided into three parts: the first explores core characteristics of AR, the second analyses the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative investigation and the third addresses methodological issues specifically concerned with research in and about Africa.

4.2.1 Action Research

AR is central to this study, not only because it strongly shapes the theory and practice of OD (French and Bell 1990: 98-111), but also because of its distinctive orientation towards research and practice: AR challenges the dualism of traditional western academic approaches, including researcher and researched, theory and practice, practical and academic knowledge (Reason and McArdle 2006: 3). According to Frisby, Maguire et al (2009: 14), AR “aims to bring together theory, method, and practice as people work collaboratively towards practical outcomes and new forms of understanding” (2009: 14). This description represents well my idea of both AR and OD, referring to three important dimensions that characterize my approach to this study: the interplay between theory and practice, the notion of change and the nature of participation.

A distinctive feature of AR is that it helps to overcome the divide between theory and practice by emphasising their interlocked nature. AR has been highly influenced by Kurt Lewin, who pioneered the link between theory and practice more than half a century ago and emphasized the need for social theory to be based on and inform social changes (Lewin 1947). Lewin’s focus on action and change was both an ethical and an epistemological stance: he envisaged a social theory able to address real social problems, but was also convinced that the best way to understand a social system is to try to change it. In AR (and OD),
everyday practices become the privileged focus of inquiry and action. AR and OD address problems faced by a social system such as an NGO and aim to develop knowledge about the system and its problems and to “act” on them (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002: 10). With regard to the second crucial dimension above, then, AR is a research approach that conceives knowing and changing as interlocked processes. The third key dimension, participation, indicates that in AR the traditional division between researcher and researched is superseded by a collaborative form of inquiry that engages the researcher and the members of the social system involved. Participation needs to be understood within AR’s wider commitment to democracy and social justice, not only within the research process itself, but also in relation to the changes at which the research aims (Frisby et al. 2009, Reson and Bradbury 2001, Fals Borda 2001).

These three dimensions of AR – the interplay between theory and practice, leading to a focus on everyday experience and practice, the notion of change and that of participation – seemed particularly relevant from the outset to this research, which originated from and developed through my practice as an OD advisor with Ugandan NGOs. Yet despite these three unifying dimensions within AR (and OD), AR is not a unitary approach. Practice, change and participation in AR are neither unequivocal nor unproblematic. What does practical knowledge mean? What kind of change can AR involve? What kind of participation does AR imply? While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse such diversity, I find it important to explore how I have addressed these questions in my research.

AR’s focus on generating practical knowledge, change and participation relevant to people in their everyday lives (Reson and Bradbury 2001) is shared among different AR emphases, such as cooperative inquiry (Heron 1996), participatory rural appraisal (Chambers 1994) and Developmental Action Inquiry (McGuire et al. 2008). The focus on practical knowledge is also a crucial dimension of OD processes (French and Bell 1990, Schein 1999), yet significant differences exist as to how such a focus can be interpreted. Kemmiss differentiates between technical, practical and critical AR (Kemmis 2001: 92-93). Technical AR focuses on problem solving, aiming to resolve obstacles and problems which have been identified; practical AR addresses practical problems, but also involves reflexive work by the participants themselves to raise their awareness of practice and thinking; finally, critical AR places practical outcomes and participants’ self-awareness in the wider social context, aiming to develop a critical and self-critical way of looking at and acting in the social system within which the
research takes place. Kemmis also calls critical AR emancipatory, for its effort to link the personal and the political in terms of change and participation with broader social issues of alienation, injustice and oppression (Kemmis 2001: 92).

Hence, while the focus on practical knowledge and change is a shared feature of different AR approaches, there are substantial differences between those which consider practical knowledge as an end of the research process, as in the case of technical AR, and those which see it as a means to achieve emancipation. The various approaches also differ in how they understand emancipation, in how they link it to practical knowledge and especially in their political and philosophical stances. For instance, Brown and Tandon (1983) suggest that while they share the same values (a focus on practical knowledge, change and participation), there are significant differences in their underlying ideologies. Contrasting North American and Latin American approaches, they argue that the former draw mainly on consensus social theories “marked by attention to common values, social integration and incremental social reform” (Brown and Tandon 1983: 281). While the latter are built on social conflict theory, which assumes that different social groups have competing interests. Thus, while the North American approach assumes common interests and sees change as beneficial for the overall social system, Latin American approaches assume conflict, resistance and difference, viewing change as oriented towards the benefit of oppressed groups (Brown and Tandon 1983: 281-283).

Having acknowledged that AR, with its competing understandings of the research process itself, is not a unitary approach, in the following pages I explore in more detail the distinctive features of my overarching approach, while the following section (4.3) provides a detailed account of how I have understood AR along this research process.

4.2.2 Research as a Qualitative and Interpretative Process

This research has developed from and through a qualitative and interpretative approach, with reference to both methodology and methods. Although qualitative and interpretative research generally stands in clear opposition to the

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60 Here ideologies are defined as “sets of beliefs that explain the world, bind together their adherents and suggest desirable activities and outcomes” (Brown and Tandon 1983: 280).
61 Methodology is the “broad theoretical and philosophical framework” (Brewer 2000: 2) of the research, while methods are the practices involved in generating and analysing the empirical material.
positivistic\textsuperscript{62} paradigm\textsuperscript{63}, the terms ‘qualitative’ and ‘interpretative’ are far from univocal, with many different ways to conceive and do qualitative research. A single definition of qualitative inquiry is elusive, but I shall start by identifying some general characteristics usually attributed to qualitative research as they underpin my study.

Bryman (2001: 20) identifies three main characteristics of qualitative research: constructionist ontology, interpretative epistemology and an inductive approach. The constructionist ontology perceives social realities as the outcome of human interaction (Bryman 2001: 264). It is also often described as a relativist position, seeing realities as multiple constructions, locally determined and based on social experience (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 110). Social realities are neither fixed nor stable and cannot be univocally defined. Rather, they are fluid and dynamic, continuously engaged in and determined by processes of negotiation and redefinition. From this follows the second characteristic of qualitative research, an interpretative epistemology: if knowledge is socially constructed, local and fluid, there must be many truths, with various possible ways to understand and interpret social phenomena. Thus, the social researcher’s aim is to understand both the meanings that people use to make sense of their realities and the processes through which this happens. The involvement of the researcher is clearly acknowledged, as her/his role is to interpret and reflect on the empirical material she/he has generated (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 112-114). Finally, the inductive approach refers to the relationship between data and theory: theory development typically follows and is guided by the empirical material already generated. This is in contrast to deductive reasoning, where the empirical phase serves to test hypotheses generated from theory (Blaikie 2007: 9).

My research project shares these three characteristics of qualitative research. In fact, it was guided by the events and demands emerging from the field, which have been scrutinized and interpreted through theoretical and reflexive analysis, during the fieldwork itself and since. My interest lay in understanding the meanings attached to management and OD in the specific NGOs I worked with, in learning how knowledge about management and development is constructed

\textsuperscript{62} In the social sciences, positivism is a research tradition which assumes that social reality is external and independent from the researcher and that it can be objectively studied and measured (Easterby-Smith \textit{et al.} 2002: 28)

\textsuperscript{63} Generically, ‘paradigm’ refers to the set of shared beliefs, techniques and values shared by a scientific community (Kuhn 1996: 175) and based on specific ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 107). However, the term is frequently used in a loose sense as a synonym of ‘perspective’, ‘theory’ or ‘school’ (Hassard 1993: 75).
and in exploring the factors and dynamics that influence such understandings and shape their socially constructed and ever-changing nature. In this process of understanding and interpreting, I strove to recognise my active role as a researcher, as well as the role of the contexts in which the research took place (discussed in the following pages). Thus, this action research on OD practice is concerned with understanding, constructing and naming – rather than applying – concepts and ideas (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 30) related to NGO management and OD.

As outlined above, the field of qualitative inquiry is highly heterogeneous. For each of the three features identified – ontology, epistemology and reasoning – there are several possible nuances of understanding, according to different theoretical perspectives. Rather than adhering to one of them, this research is committed to respecting multiple perspectives and drawing on diverse intellectual streams, especially those that have influenced me to address questions which have arisen in vivo during the research process. The role of theories in the present research process is thus well represented by the lens metaphor: lenses help the researcher to direct attention, to organise experiences and to enable useful responses (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 37-48, Adler et al. 2007).

While the decision to draw on multiple perspectives could easily be rejected from a positivist perspective, I see this research strategy as somehow inevitable, almost as if it were the only possible way to approach my research, considering the complexity of my task and current tensions within the field of social studies, including those critical debates regarding the study of Africa. I shall now examine each of these factors in turn.

4.2.2.1 The Complexity of the Task

My task was complex because I was trying to make sense of management and OD issues in actual NGOs in Uganda. Driven as much as possible by the field, I followed issues and questions as they arose during the work, inevitably selected and filtered through my own perspective and interests. These issues quickly came to span questions of management, OD, NGOs, development, race, south-north global relations, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The complexity of the action scene and the simultaneous presence of different realities and of competing views of them demanded an approach open to multiple perspectives. In fact, my approach became more open-ended during the research process
itself. I cannot deny that I passed through stages where I strove to find a theoretical perspective that would at a stroke resolve the muddle of my research setting and data. Yet this inevitably vain endeavour helped me both to sharpen my focus and to reinforce my orientation towards multiple lenses. The more I realised that no single theory could embrace my whole AR experience, the more clearly I was able to identify a specific lens as valuable for a particular aspect, while other areas needed different lenses.

4.2.2.2 Tensions in Qualitative Research

Pluralism was also warranted theoretically to avoid a reductionist and unethical embrace of a single research framework, given the tensions in the field of qualitative research as I explain below.

Disenchantment with reliance on a single theory characterises current qualitative research: a clear centrifugal force away from grand narratives or single overarching paradigms, with a correspondingly increased commitment to locally and historically situated perspectives (Lincoln and Denzin 2003: 612). Such a commitment is the result of the multiple challenges that qualitative research has addressed in recent decades. Postmodernism, poststructuralism, black feminism, postcolonialism and others have relentlessly challenged the once unquestioned validity of western scientific science and its assumed objectivity, neutrality and universality.

Central to many of these critiques is Foucault’s groundbreaking work on truth, knowledge and power (Foucault 2009, Rabinow 1991). Foucault argues that “the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power [...] It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (1980: 52). Thus, Foucault argues, power and knowledge are mutually constitutive and together shape the ‘regime of truth’ of a certain historical period and/or society, sanctioning which discourses are true, apportioning the authority to speak about them and setting the validation criteria for truth (Foucault 2009). Hence truth, rather than being an intrinsic property of certain ideas and notions, is determined by the exercise of power. In this sense, knowledge is neither innocent nor neutral, but rather a product of specific historical and political contexts.

Against this backdrop, grand theories are increasingly seen as privileged discourses that silence and marginalise alternative worldviews (Parpart and
Marchand 1995: 1-11). Western features of rationality, universality and objectivity, normally used to elevate modern science above other systems of knowledge, are now recognised as locally constructed, not intrinsic attributes of any truly scientific knowledge, having become dominant as a result of European expansion (Harding 1997). In order to achieve their self-declared superior status, western knowledge systems have systematically silenced dissident voices and suppressed alternative knowledge systems. Such censorship has been “neither accidental nor benign” (Collins 2000: 3). It has been instrumental in creating the myth of western superiority and maintaining the unequal power relations, such as those between the west and the rest of the world.

The central concern here is with how knowledge embeds and nurtures power relations and as such privileges certain interests while obscuring others, (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 35). For instance, with regard to management studies, the presumed value-free and neutral stance of mainstream approaches has increasingly come under attack. Scholars stress its significant role in perpetuating and reproducing the capitalist core of our society and its prevailing patterns of domination, exploitation and divisiveness (Adler et al. 2007, Alvesson and Willmott 1996).

Similarly, there is a core commitment across the heterogeneous field of postcolonial studies to revealing how knowledge about the global south embeds and embodies global power asymmetries, thus contributing to their perpetuation (Prasad 2003a, Loomba 1998, Said 2003, Mudimbe 1988). For instance, the work of Said (2003) and Mudimbe (1988) shows how western knowledge about the Other, mainly the Middle East for Said and Africa for Mudimbe, has served to legitimize western domination. Looking at western literary, artistic and scientific production since the first encounter with the Other, Said and Mudimbe analyse the systematically derogatory nature of knowledge and its role in backing western colonialism and imperialism. Analysing the "colonial library" (Mudimbe 1988: 175), namely the degrading representation of Africans in the texts of anthropologists, missionaries and explorers, portraying Africans as incapable of managing their own lives64, Mudimbe argues that these representations provided

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64 For instance, the influential work of Levy-Bruhl on primitive mentality and native thinking explains the savage’s mind as childish, pre-logical, ontologically different from that of Europeans (Kebede 1994: 1-9, Ogot 2009, Mudimbe 1988: 135-136). Similarly, Mannoni argues that colonisation was the answer to an intrinsic need of certain populations suffering from a ‘dependence complex’, which means that they were in dire need of their colonial masters: thus, the difference between coloniser and colonised can
an ideological legitimisation for colonising Africa (Mudimbe 1988: 20). Likewise, Said contends that “an unbroken arc of power and knowledge connects the European or Western statesman and the Western Orientalist⁶⁵ ... the scope of Orientalism exactly matched the scope of the empire” (Said 2003: 104). Such distorted representations “responded more to the culture that produced [them] than to [their] putative object” (Said 2003: 22): the constructed ideas of the Other as backward, lazy and irrational allow the construction of a broad idea of western superiority as well as of the Other’s need of salvation and tutorship. This has legitimised westerners’ invasion of other parts of the globe and their domination of its inhabitants⁶⁶, often in the guise of a saving or civilising mission (Kebede 1994: 1-12).

Critiques of the oppressive dimensions of western science are highly relevant to this research. In the previous chapter I analysed the “westocentric” (Prasad 2009) dimensions of mainstream development management, focusing on its evolutionist, occidentalist (universalising) and orientalist (othering) facets. I highlighted how these serve to reproduce the myth of western superiority and western agencies’ dominant position in the aid industry (see section 3.3.3). My decision to draw on multiple perspectives is thus one of the strategies I have adopted to question dominant perceptions of development management and widen my viewpoint in order to engage with positions and views silenced or marginalised by orthodox perspectives.

More generally, the choice to draw on multiple theoretical lenses is part of a wider commitment to develop a research approach and practice as free as possible from westocentric dimensions, as I explain in the following section.

4.2.3 Research as Disengagement from the Colonial Syndrome

My attempt to free the research approach from westocentric dimensions can be understood as a "process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome" (Loomba 1998: 21), an expression that Loomba deploys with reference to postcolonial studies. Cautioning against uncritical and decontextualised use of the term ‘postcolonialism’, she prefers to limit it to a process which addresses

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⁶⁵ According to Said, western Orientalists are those writers, intellectuals and scholars with the recognized authority to study, speak of and explain the east to a western audience.

⁶⁶ To have an idea of the reach of European colonialism it is interesting to note that by the 1930s it affected over 84.6 per cent of the world’s land surface (Loomba 1998: 47).
the legacy of colonialism and decolonisation in both the coloniser and colonised, in the metropolis and in the colony. In the present research context, this would mean considering how colonialism and decolonisation shape the process of knowledge production. Throughout this research, my process of disengagement from the colonial syndrome has entailed paying attention to analytical focuses, to research practices and methods and to issues of identities and positionalities. I now address each of these in turn, explaining how they have shaped my epistemological and ethical stances.

4.2.3.1 Analytical Focuses

With regard to theoretical and analytical lenses, a key methodological quandary concerns “the legitimacy of Africa as a unit of analysis” (Mamdani 2004: 8). In previous chapters and sections, I have discussed orientalism, occidentalism and the evolutionist assumptions that have shaped knowledge about Africa, development and development management. Besides nurturing the myth of western superiority, their common thread is a failure to consider Africa as the unit of analysis inasmuch as the continent is explained only with reference to the west. Mamdani calls this “history by analogy”, according to which in the binary oppositions commonly used in Africanist texts (such as traditional/modern), the western (modern) pole is considered both an analytical concept and a universal value, while the other (traditional) pole is residual and makes sense only with reference to the western/modern pole (2004: 9-11). Zeleza calls this “the alterity of negative differences” (Zeleza 2005: 2), whereby western knowledge about Africa is constructed uniquely on the basis of what it lacks compared to the west.

A crucial argument here is that the continued deployment of western epistemologies and perspectives, besides perpetuating (cultural) dependence and global asymmetry, has significantly hampered the production of knowledge engaged with and responsive to local realities, as Mamdani explains:

[W]e had nurtured researchers and educators who had little capacity to work in surrounding communities but who could move to any institution in any industrialised country, and serve any privileged community around the globe with comparative ease. In our failure to contextualise standards and excellence to the needs of our own people, to ground the very process and agenda of learning and research in our conditions, we ended up creating an intelligentsia with little stamina for the very process of development whose vanguard we claimed to be. (Mamdani 1993: 15)

67 I use ‘positionalities’ to refer “to the way in which the individual identity and affiliations we have are positioned by others” (Franks 2002: 5).
This critique illuminates the complexities of developing a socially responsive and politically engaged research agenda in the face of western assumptions regarding universalism and neutrality and of global academic hierarchies and asymmetries. This is relevant to this study insofar as it resonates with issues raised in earlier chapters, such as the ahistorical and decontextualised conceptualisation of civil society in mainstream development and the abstractness and universalist pretensions of development management.

In an attempt to disengage from the colonial syndrome, I have therefore oriented my research towards a “radical contextuality” (Escobar 2008), i.e. a continuous attention to both the historical and the emergent dimensions of the context I was involved in. I am thus committed to engage with African and Ugandan history, addressing the denial and/or disregard of African history in western narrative generally and mainstream development discourse specifically (Reid 2009: 4-7, Crush 1995: 8-9, Shivji 2009c: 20). I have found it crucial to place my research in its political, economic and historical contexts (see Chapter Two and Appendix One), considering NGOs (and their perspectives on management and OD) as socio-historical constructions that can be best comprehended in that context. As to the second dimension, radical contextuality, for me has meant a primary engagement with local and emergent meanings, interpretations and views, acknowledging that social constructions are continuously in the making. As my research questions show, I am interested in how OD is understood by the NGOs I worked with and how such understandings are constructed, shaped and contested.

‘Radical contextuality’ also means considering two levels: the micro and meso (the NGOs I worked with) and the macro (the broader historical, economic and social contexts). Following Alvesson and Deetz (2000), it could be argued that what happens within a certain organization (in relation to its actions and thinking, say with regard to OD) tells us not only about that specific organization, but also about the broader socio-political system in which it

68 The effort to rescue Africa’s history is a crucial feature of perspectives such as Negritude and Pan-Africanism, which nurtured the intellectual debate around Africanness in the 1950s-60s and beyond. Mudimbe points out that these debates represents the search for a new epistemic foundation of the discourse on Africa, which puts at its centre history and African historicity (Mudimbe 1988: 175-200). In this sense, their focus on authenticity, tradition and the “usable past” (Ochwada 2003: 2) expose the will to rescue history, systematically denied in western narratives, where Africa “was a mere object within European historiographies” (Mudimbe 1988: 177, see also Nkrumah 1964: 62, Irele 1991: 59-62, Reid 2009: 5-7).
operates (2000: 18). Methodologically, this invites us to contextualise micro-practice in the broader context, thus to use the micro to understand the macro and vice versa. This does not imply deterministic reasoning; rather it invites us to pay attention to how meanings (in our case in relation to NGO OD and management) are continuously produced, sometimes perpetuating dominant discourses, sometimes resisting them.

4.2.3.2 Research Practice and Methods

The second principle that has shaped this research in my effort to disengage from the colonial syndrome is a broad open-ended stance. This has meant freeing the research from rigid design or methods, to minimise the risk of imposing categories and of constraining thinking and actions, for example embracing a specific OD/AR approach, structuring moments of action and of reflection, or pressing towards coherence and consensus in order to validate the research. I have therefore interpreted AR and OD loosely, valuing negotiation of meaning and practice over adherence to a specific design.

Hence, my approach differs significantly from those studies concerned with the transferability of management thinking and practices to Africa (on OD’, see for instance’, Johnson and Golembiewski 1992, Golembiewski 1991). The main problematic aspect of these studies, in my view, is that while claiming to question western management, they continue to use it as an authoritative lens through which to view organisations around the world. For instance, with regard to OD in Africa, some studies (see for instance James 2004, Lewis 2002, Jackson 2003), acknowledging OD’s north American origin, seem driven by questions such as whether OD can work in African organisations or whether it fits within African organisations and culture; thus they use OD, a western artefact, as the analytical lens through which to investigate Africa. Furthermore, these cross-cultural management studies (Golembiewski 1991, James 2004, Lewis 2002, Blunt and Jones 1997) rely heavily on Hofstede’s\textsuperscript{69} work, overlooking its fundamentally westocentric perspective, which emerges from its binary nature (Fougère and Moulettes 2005) and from its underlying representationalist logic\textsuperscript{70}. This, by imposing given categories and dimensions on the realities being studied,

\textsuperscript{69} Hofstede examines differences among organizational cultures and individual behaviours through the lens of the national culture (Hofstede 2001). In particular, his work rests on five key dimensions through which he describes and accounts for international diversity: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individuality, masculinity, long vs short-term orientation.

\textsuperscript{70} Drawing on Kwek (2003), I use the term ‘representationalist logic’ to refer to the belief that representations mirror reality.
perpetuates the construction of the Other through the western gaze (Kwek 2003).

Contrary to the perspectives concerned with the transferability of OD practices and methods, my choice of an open-ended stance puts at the forefront of my methodology my interest in learning how the NGOs I worked with understood OD, in identifying methods to suit the research context and in finding ways of negotiating meanings and practices.

4.2.3.3 Identities and Positionalities

The third principle which has informed my disengagement from the colonial syndrome is the acknowledgment that our (constructed, multiple and shifting) identities and positionalities play a role in knowledge production, so I find it crucial to reflect critically on them. In doing this, I cannot ignore the ambiguity I sometimes perceived in my position, being committed to critiques of the 'western gaze on the Other’, yet being a white western woman studying a Ugandan organisation.

Debates on African identity and its role in knowledge production processes continue to be crucially relevant among African social scientists. These debates have contributed to an understanding of (African) identity as "multiple, fluid, historically and institutionally constructed along various dimensions of difference (Mama 2007: 15), while emphasising the relevance (or necessity) of

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72 Here Mama is differentiating current debates on ‘Africanness’ from the essentialist thinking deployed in perspectives such as Negritude, Black Consciousness, Pan-Africanism (Mudimbe 1988, Kebede 1994, Irele 1965b, Young 2001: 217-292, Appiah 1992) which, in their efforts to subvert the colonial notion of alterity, have fiercely endorsed, celebrated and constructed an African collective identity in distinct opposition to western and white identity. For instance, central to the Negritude movement is the rehabilitation of the image and self-identity of Africans, which Senghor (one of its main exponents) accomplishes by describing Africans’ distinctiveness in terms of qualities clearly opposed to those attributed to the westerner (such as African intuitiveness versus western rationality) (Irele 1965a: 517-520, Kebede 1994: 51-59, Mudimbe 1988: 94). Here, essentialism refers "to the idea that any specific group […] is marked, identified, and defined by pure, immutable and transhistorical characteristics and essences that inhere in
endogenous and independent African knowledge (Anyidoho 2008, Mkandawire 1999, Adesina 2008, Nyamnjoh 2004, Murunga 2005, Nesbitt 2002, Mama 2007, Zeleza 2002, Public Culture 2002a). These debates also make it clear that to subvert the westocentric aura of knowledge about Africa it is essential to tackle the long-standing marginalisation of African scholarship. For my part, disengaging from the colonial syndrome has implied a critical engagement with African scholars, especially those who question the received wisdom of dominant perspectives on development and management. I understand this engagement as a bridge, acknowledging differences (of histories, backgrounds and positions) while nurturing academic and political alliances, as elucidated by the idea of “imagined communities” (Mohanty 2002: 196):

The idea of imagined communities leads us away from essentialist notions [...] suggesting political rather than biological and cultural bases for alliance. Thus, it is not color or sex which constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the way we think about race, class, and gender – the political links we choose to make among and between struggles. [...] However, clearly our relation to and centrality in particular struggles depend on our different, often conflictual, locations and histories. (Mohanty 2002: 196)

In these terms, the struggle against the dominance of westocentric epistemologies and research practices in African studies can be understood as the basis for an alliance among diverse persons and communities, where the different contributions, their relevance and centrality are also shaped by the identities, locations and positions of the allies. Furthermore, the notion of alliance invites us to think beyond difference, to common ground and intersections. While reflecting on how differences shape knowledge generation, I have therefore acknowledged that Africa and the west are much more intermingled and internally diversified than assumed by orientalism and the original formulation of Africanness (Zeleza 2005, Prasad 2003a: 30-31, Appiah 2007). As Quayson suggests, African and western ways of knowing are both tainted by their encounter and neither of them can claim to be completely pure (Quayson 1997). My attempt to disengage from the colonial syndrome is thus not a search for a pure indigenous knowledge, but rather for perspectives and practices that help to generate knowledge that makes sense of the research context, in that context and for the persons concerned.

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the specific group in question and that determine the fundamental and unique nature of that group” (Prasad 2003a: 25).
4.2.4 Concluding Reflections

This section has illustrated some core features of the approach to the research: its qualitative orientation, its focus on lived experience and its commitment to participation and change. It has also introduced problematic aspects of the western knowledge system, particularly its assumed universality and neutrality. In doing so, it has highlighted epistemological issues beginning with the denial of “the legitimacy of Africa as a unit of analysis” (Mamdani 2004: 8). I have discussed my commitment to disengaging from the colonial syndrome, decolonising my thinking, approach and methodology. The next section explains how these reflections have shaped my approach to working with NGOs in Uganda.

4.3 Defining my Research Approach and Methods

In this section I explore how the above analysis and reflections have shaped my approach to the field and the methods deployed in this research, which originated from my work as OD advisor with two Ugandan NGOs, Karibu and Agandi, over 20 months between 2007 and 2009. Both were small NGOs, each having four members of staff including the director, and both operated in rural areas, although in different regions.

I have mentioned that this research approach was inspired by action research and explained the three key features that I have borrowed from the heterogeneous AR family, namely the focus on everyday experience and practice, the notion of change and that of participation. I shall now explain in greater depth how I shaped my approach, what I did during the research and how I generated and analysed my data. I shall begin with my work with Karibu and Agandi (4.3.1 and 4.3.2), then discuss the interviews, which I did at the end of the fieldwork, (4.3.3) and finally provide a summary of the empirical material generated (4.3.4).

4.3.1 Defining my Approach to Participation

My research approach and methodology have been deeply shaped by my commitment to participation, which, as explained in the first section, is a core feature of both AR and OD processes. There are four reasons for this
commitment. First, the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this research, discussed above, have directed my attention to the plurality of meanings and interpretations of social realities and the processes through which these are constructed. I have thus sought to make sense of my colleagues’ understandings of OD and management, which meant actively engaging with them. Secondly, OD, despite the heterogeneity of approaches, places high value on participation (Cooke 1996) as both a means and an end. A crucial principle of OD, which I share, is that OD should not only unfold through participatory thinking and decision, but also aim to enhance an organisation’s ability to work participatively and democratically. Thirdly, participation in this research is a political stance, for it asserts the right of people to shape the knowledge about them and their organizations or communities (Reson and Bradbury 2001: 2). Finally, I see participation as a key to decolonising my approach, inasmuch as it has provided repeated opportunities for adjusting my lenses and practice throughout the research.

Yet participatory methodology is not unproblematic and several researchers have exposed its contradictions and unintended consequences (Cooke 1996, Mosse 2001, Sanderson and Kindon 2004, Cornwall and Brock 2005, Arieli et al. 2009, Dagnino 2007, Hickey and Mohan 2005, Cooke and Kothari 2001, Rahnema 1990). Among these I have found especially relevant those referring to the “cooptation critique” (Cooke 2006, see also Taylor 2001, Mosse 2001), for they show how participatory approaches can have manipulative intent and consequences, serving to obscure and sustain existing power relations, especially when associated with consensus-building strategies. These critiques are relevant to AR in general and OD in particular.

Starting with OD, its commitment to equality and democracy is tempered by the crucial role often attributed to senior management. Indeed, authors as influential as French and Bell define OD as a “top-management supported, long-range effort to improve an organisation’s problem solving and renewal processes” (French and Bell 1990: 17 emphasis mine). Some scholars have pointed out OD’s consequent limitation in addressing power imbalances within organisations (Holvino 1996, McKendall 1993, Chesler and Worden 1974). They warn us that a narrow understanding of participation and democracy might result in OD interventions that reaffirm and reinforce such imbalances, promoting compliance instead of emancipation and democracy.
Similarly, it has been noted that the ostensible egalitarian stance of AR practitioners has often obscured the asymmetry of power relations between them and the other people involved (Healy 2001, Rahnema 1990). Indeed, there are some accounts of AR projects where the researcher transparently acknowledges the inevitable imbalance of power. For instance, Marshall and McLean, reflecting on one of their experiences of co-operative inquiry, clearly acknowledge that “they (we) were asking [the participants] to play their (our) game” and that throughout the project they took an increasingly “central and expert role” (Marshall and McLean 1988: 219-220). Some have acknowledged that the survival of their AR projects relied strongly on their own initiative and motivation (Maguire 1987). Others again have exposed divergent understandings and needs of researchers and participants in relation to participation (Busza 2004, Arieli et al. 2009). These views draw attention to the antagonism between an egalitarian stance and adherence to a structured research design, where participants are unable to influence the definition of participation.

More generally, because my stance was one of radical contextuality, I was aware that I could neither take participation for granted nor impose it, attributing to it a dogmatic value based on my own supposedly superior expertise. Notwithstanding my commitment to participation, I chose to negotiate my understanding of participation with my Ugandan colleagues, thus shaping the participative dimension of this research according to its specific spatio-temporal contexts.

Following the open-ended stance described in the previous section, in both the NGOs I worked with, I started my research/practice by ‘living the organisation’, without rigidly structuring my time or activities. I thought that this role, which focused more on listening and understanding than on proposing and acting, would be helpful in keeping at bay the ‘outsider-expert ghost’ and in creating an equal and participatory working environment. I then progressively took all opportunities to participate in the life of the NGO, genuinely valuing how each of them could contribute to the OD process and support me in my research/practice. I went to the office or the field every day and when invited, attended and participated in board meetings, team meetings and meetings with donors, communities and government officials. I actively sought conversation with different people, shared my views and systematically asked for feedback on them; in particular, I took every opportunity I had to enable open and
participatory conversations and decisions. Yet, in doing this, I also endeavoured to recognise, respect and understand reluctance, resistance and disinterest towards participation and/or the OD process in general.

This leads us to the second issue to be considered with regard to participation, which directs our attention within the organisations themselves, to understand how the local political, cultural and social contexts shaped participation. In other words, while it has been crucial for me to reflect on my role and relations with my colleagues, it has been equally important to place such reflections within a pre-existing web of relations with its own history, asymmetries, rules and dynamics. My reflections here resonate with those critiques that have addressed the romanticising of local communities by AR practitioners and their failure to seriously consider power issues within them (Cleaver 2001, Hildyard et al. 2001, Henkel and Stirrat 2001, Mohan and Stokke 2000).73

In both Agandi and Karibu, the staff were far from homogeneous: there were competing interests, different levels of commitment and multiple roles embedded in power relations shaped by social, gendered and cultural identities and norms. I became part of this complex social web with my own interests and motives (personal, political, ethical, academic and so forth), multiple identities (woman, white, European, advisor, volunteer etc) and indeed positionalities, all of which shaped relations, conversations and actions. Thus, with regard to the role of participation, it has been crucial for me throughout to place my participatory aspirations and beliefs within the specific context where I was working and to adjust or negotiate them accordingly. For instance, I noticed that in both NGOs the team meeting was certainly not the best forum for open discussion, especially at Karibu, whose director seemed uninterested in staff input and contributions, in the sense that she rarely asked for these and staff seemed very careful never to contradict her. For instance, at the only team meeting during my four-month placement (admittedly held at my request), in a discussion of internal communication, one of the three members of staff proposed that an anonymous suggestion box be placed in the office to enhance

73 For instance, according to Henkel and Stirrat (2001), Chambers’s idea of local community reflects the binary opposition that underpins his (highly influential and globally spread) approach to participatory development, where the south is “morally good” and the north is “morally bad” (2001: 175-176). Thus, the micro (good) is set against the macro (bad), local knowledge (good) against experts (bad), local people (good) against elites (bad). On the basis of these underpinning dichotomies, power, oppression and domination are collocated to the macro/elite level, thus outside the micro/local, and the community is assumed to be free from social control (Kothari 2001: 140).
communication between staff and director. Despite the director’s astonished reaction and her claim that staff were free to talk to her, this suggestion exposed how difficult it was for staff to engage openly with her. This is only one example of many events leading me to reflect on how to make participation sensitive to the contexts and the people I was working with.

However, my commitment to negotiating meanings and practices of participation was not without challenges. My experience with Karibu revealed the complexities and the limits of participatory approaches in autocratically managed organisations; in Chapter Seven I shall return to this issue, providing a more detailed account of the challenges I faced and the decisions I took.

4.3.2 Defining my Approach to Everyday Practice and Change

As already mentioned, the other two key dimensions of my approach have been a focus on everyday experience and a leaning towards emancipatory change. My understanding of them can be explained by considering the distinction between pragmatic and critical AR (Johansson and Lindhult 2008), as my approach has drawn on both of these.

In pragmatic AR, empowerment is understood as increased practical knowledge (knowhow) in the sense that it enhances participants’ ability to intervene in their world according to their needs and aspirations. From this viewpoint, AR aims to generate knowledge and a system of knowing which “increase the effectiveness of our actions in real time” (Reason and Torbert 2001: 2) and which deepen the understanding of the world, helping to “find out how to do things better” (Heron and Reson 2001: 179). Thus, AR is considered emancipatory because it enhances practical knowledge and because through the AR process participants learn new ways of knowing and strengthen their ability to generate knowledge (Reson and Bradbury 2001: 2).

In critical AR, the focus on practice assumes a different meaning. Practice can be seen as an object systematically constructed by dominant discourses (Foucault 2009) which delimit and legitimize certain ways of acting and thinking. Thus, the aim of AR is to reveal the coercion and oppression resulting from discursive practice which constrain how people think and act (Goodley and Parker 2000: 170). It follows that what is more valuable is not finding answers to problems, but rather “problematising” answers, in the sense of linking answers to how the
problem was earlier structured (Jennings and Graham 2003: 170). In this sense, the goal of the research is not necessarily an improvement of practice, but rather a critical reflection on how people act and think in order to free their possibilities and alternatives. Such critical reflection is more driven by “the ‘why’ of things and fact” (Freire 2004: 90) than by ‘how’ questions.

My own understanding of the primacy of practice is similar to that associated above with critical AR, but it also encompasses a pragmatic approach. In fact, during my work with Ugandan NGOs, some of my time and intellectual resources were spent on improving practices, especially with reference to management tools and techniques which, as discussed in Chapter Three, are usually attached to NGOs’ funding. Yet, as we shall see in more depth in the following chapters, such a focus on management practice inevitably entailed reflections on and analysis of the broader context, especially with reference to western agencies’ role in shaping development practice (defining what good management is) and thus heavily influencing the NGOs’ OD agenda.

Yet such work to improve practice can also be considered a strategic means rather than an end in itself – a step towards a political engagement with the institutions of power in order to open possibilities of change. The reflections of Goodley and Parker on critical psychology are instructive here: they indicate that even if the goal is a “more humane and better society in which psychology was entirely unnecessary... we will not be taken seriously unless we speak psychology’s language” (Goodley and Parker 2000: 10). Correspondingly, my research needs to be framed within the current context of development, where if NGOs do not speak a certain language they are not heard or even cannot exist. It is important to remember that NGOs in Uganda depend almost entirely on funding by northern donors and that a number of conditions are always attached to this funding, as noted in Chapter Three. Those I worked with considered it critically important to adopt a certain language and follow particular practices, simply because these were the conditions that enabled them to exist, so making it possible for them to change those same requirements.

Improvements in practice can therefore be seen as strategic devices creating opportunities for autonomous redefinition and even subversion. Management systems and practices are never wholly rational or consistent. Rather, such systems of domination always present contradictions and ambiguities (Alvesson and Willmott 1996). Critical learning and reflection on those practices which
(supposedly) need improvement then provide the opportunity for transformative redefinition (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 139-165), in a process which encompasses both the direction of change and the means to achieve it. This strategy does not renounce changes to the status quo, but rather than monumental and linear changes, aims at “microemancipation” (Spicer et al. 2007, Voronov 2005, Alvesson and Willmott 1992). These are understood as the creation of spaces of autonomy for critical redefinition of everyday practice with the intent of opening up broader transformative scenarios. Thus, my employment of this notion does not mean disregarding the broader context or the possibility of its transformation, but it draws attention to the precarious, partial and even contradictory nature of emancipation. For instance, it invites us to see it not as simply liberatory, but as a “trade-off between certain gains and certain losses” (Alvesson and Willmott 1992: 448), where the meaning and value of gains, losses and indeed emancipation are neither given nor stable. Thus, the notion of emancipation requires sensitivity to its multiple and shifting meanings and invites me, as researcher/practitioner, to understand it as a concern throughout the research rather than its goal.

4.3.3 Interviews

During my last two months of fieldwork, while winding up my work with Agandi, I interviewed twenty-four persons from the Ugandan NGO sector (see Appendix IV for details). Interviews are a privileged method in qualitative research, with considerable variations in how they are conceptualized and approached (Gubrium and Koro-Ljungbe 2005: 692). Here I explain my own understanding.

During my work with Agandi and Karibu, I had many opportunities to conduct informal interviews with colleagues and people from other organizations. These were often related to a specific (micro or macro) event that I wished to understand better or to discuss with other people. Thus they were somewhat field-driven and highly context-bound, at least at the beginning. By contrast, the interviews which I conducted during the last phase of the fieldwork were motivated by two main intertwined aims. The first was that of widening my perspectives, by conversing with people from different locations and organizations. I was interested in hearing other organizations’ stories with regard to NGOs in Uganda. In this sense, I saw interviews as a “human-to-human relation”, driven by the “desire to understand” (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 75). The second aim was to share some of my understandings with regard to
NGO development and management, allowing them to be moulded and negotiated with other people. In this sense, I saw each interview as an “inter view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (Kvale 1996: 14).

Given these aims, I opted for unstructured interviews, (Bryman 2001: 110), identifying only broad areas of possible discussion (rather than a structured sequence of questions) and privileging an informal style. Notwithstanding the consequent uniqueness of each interview, there was a certain degree of standardization in the process that preceded them. One was related to the criteria I used to select interviewees: I was looking for people with inside experience of Ugandan NGOs and it was important for me to identify people who would be interested in the research. This was quite a difficult criterion to judge and it had a crucial impact on the kind of people I had access to and on the interviews themselves. In fact, I knew more than half of the people I interviewed, inviting them to participate because I expected them to agree and to make valuable contributions. The others were contacted through common acquaintances and there were only three with whom I had no previous personal or professional link. I was quite flexible in terms of date, time, place and length of interviews, which were all decided according to the participants’ preferences.

All interviewees received in advance a sheet giving information on the aim of the interviews, their approximate length, confidentiality, how the data would be used and so on. I asked all of them for permission to make audio recordings, which all but one gave. I transcribed all the interviews and sent the texts to each participant for their comments.

The interviews themselves had three common features: the opening, the informal style and their open-ended nature. After briefly introducing myself and the research, I asked interviewees to introduce themselves and to describe their role in the NGO sector and the organization they were working with. I considered this opening a crucial part of the interview, because it set the tone with regard to both the content of the conversation and the relational aspect. Thereafter, I

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74 While the terms ‘structured’, ‘semi-structured’ and ‘unstructured’ are widely used to differentiate types of interview, their meanings are not universally agreed: for example, Robson sees the distinctive feature of semi-structured and unstructured interviews as being driven respectively by a pre-determined, though not rigid, set of questions and “a general area of interest and concern” (2002: 270). I prefer the definition provided by Bryman because it identifies the main difference between the two kinds of interview in the presence of a set of questions, in the case of semi-structured, or “a list of topics or issues” in the case of unstructured interviews (2001: 110).
mainly followed the flow of each interview, so that some focused on relations with donors, some on civil society-government relations, others on the history and critical moments of a specific NGO and so on. This was the result of an informed choice, not a lack of planning or of certain skills. As discussed above, this research developed from an interpretative and participatory framework that sees knowledge as a co-constructed social process. Thus, in interviewing I did not use predetermined strategies to seek to reveal existing truths. Rather, I saw it as my main responsibility to facilitate a dialogic interaction, where interviewer and interviewee felt comfortable with and trustful of each other, as well as interested in the conversation.

4.3.4 Empirical Material

This research draws on data from research journals, interview transcripts and documentation. Notwithstanding my open-ended approach to the study as a whole, I was rigorous and systematic in generating the empirical material, particularly in keeping two journals throughout the research process, providing more than a thousand pages of text. The first, a field notes journal, reports daily events and conversations and was written during the day. I had it with me on all occasions and tried to report as accurately as possible verbal exchanges, as well as non-verbal and descriptive data (silences, descriptions of places where the events occurred, physical arrangements during meetings and so on). The other journal takes a more reflexive stance and was written at the end of the working day or in the early morning. I used it to reflect more deeply on daily events, placing them in the institutional and political context of the research and relating them to the research questions. This journal is part of the wider reflexive stance that has characterised my research approach, to which I shall return.

The interview transcripts, described above, together constitute a text of just over 120,000 words.

I also gathered empirical data from documents of various kinds, from reports to newspaper articles. For instance, I consulted as extensively as possible Agandi’s and Karibu’s institutional documentation, such as constitutions, policies and annual reports. I had generally wide access to written documents, although in both cases it was quantitatively limited. I also searched for and collected documentation regarding the NGO sector in Uganda. Some interviewees provided material on their NGOs (such as reports, brochures and annual
reports). I sometimes visited information or resource centres, where I had access to further reports and studies regarding the Ugandan NGO sector. Finally, I collected articles from newspapers and magazines whose themes I considered relevant.

4.4. Interpretation of the Empirical Material

This section explains the process of analysis which has accompanied the whole research process. It should be clear at this point that my role as researcher has been far removed from that of a detached observer of external reality, spanning instead a process from active everyday engagement with NGOs to the production of this text. Starting from this acknowledgement, this research has taken seriously the call for reflexive practice coming from different intellectual streams, such as feminism, critical management studies and postcolonialism (Alvesson et al. 2009, Naples 2003, Chia 1996, Calas and Smircich 1999, Jackson 2006, Easterby-Smith et al. 2002: 59-71, Foley 2002, Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). Reflexive practice generally concerns the analysis of the complex relation between the process of knowing, the contexts where it happens and the role of the researcher, and implies a crucial attentiveness to personal, political, social and theoretical contexts and their influence throughout the research process.

Throughout the present research, interpretative processes and reflexive practice (in the sense of making and attributing meanings) have unfolded synchronically and diachronically, i.e. with reference to the ‘here and now’ and to the whole four-year research process culminating in the production of this written text. Thus, while each phase of the research has required a distinct attention, each has contributed to the continuous interpretative process. This processual dimension of interpretation is best explained through a multi-level interpretation framework (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000: 238-292) which distinguishes between reflective and reflexive practice. The former refers to a focus on one method and/or a specific interpretative level, while the latter’s distinctiveness resides in the endeavour to connect different interpretative levels. Drawing on this distinction, I shall now explain the fourfold reflexive interpretation which has characterised this work, in relation to the production of the empirical material, the analysis and interpretation of the context, the borrowed theoretical lenses and the self-reflexive practice (see Figure 4.1). Although these levels overlap conceptually and temporally, I shall address them separately for clarity.
The first level of interpretation concerns the empirical material, which required a twofold analysis: of process and content. The former meant reflecting, during and after the fieldwork, on how the material was generated. This is because it embodies and is the result of an interpretative process (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 112-114) through which I selected certain voices and events in preference to others. Analysis of the content required me to identify patterns, continuities and ruptures emerging from the raw data, in my case thousands of pages of text from journals, transcripts and other documents. While transcribing the interviews, which I did immediately after the fieldwork, I started to identify relevant themes in relation to my research question and to connect them with specific pieces of text from my sources.

The second level of interpretation concerns the contextualization of my data, both locally and globally. As discussed in the previous section, research does not happen in a vacuum, but in socio-historical contexts dominated by certain views, values and ideologies which inevitably affect it (Alvesson and Willmott 2003: 10, Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 130-134, Said 2003, Mudimbe 1988). Thus, this level of interpretation represents an attempt to engage with multiple readings of an event, voice, theme or category, especially linking micro and macro levels. For instance, when considering an event, say a meeting between Agandi and a donor, it was important for me to understand my colleagues’ views and interpretations in order to engage with its meanings and impacts from the NGO’s angle; yet the same meeting could also tell me something about the aid industry, its truths, practices and power relations. In this way, contextual reflection has meant using the micro to understand the macro and vice versa. Importantly, in engaging with the multiple interpretations and claims at both of these levels, I have also sought to reflect on power relations within and between them, i.e. their political nature (Kapoor 2008: xvi). Like the first, this second type of interpretation has accompanied the whole research process. During the fieldwork, because of my active engagement, I continuously tried to make sense of the events and the contexts around me while I was involved in them. Then, after the fieldwork, following the themes mentioned above, I engaged with a more detached (at least physically and temporally) interpretation, which has allowed me to place single events within a wider perspective and so to question previous understandings.

The third level of interpretation concerns the borrowing from theories and perspectives of lenses through which to interpret my data. As already
mentioned, I have drawn upon and been inspired by several intellectual perspectives that have helped me to illuminate and engage with the complex and multifaceted nature of social phenomena. Taking as an example the meeting referred to in the previous paragraph, postcolonial lenses invited me to reflect on the legacy of colonialism; critical management perspectives directed my attention toward instrumentalism and patterns of domination and resistance; development theories have helped me to contextualise the meeting within a wider perspective and thus to engage with competing interpretations of its motives, process and outcomes. This example shows how different intellectual streams have facilitated analysis and interpretation from several angles. In engaging with different theoretical perspectives I have paid special attention to whether they were broadly oriented toward sustaining or questioning the status quo. Following the discussions in Chapters Two and Three, I have found it important to deploy lenses sensitive and responsive to the contested nature of development, NGOs and management. Furthermore, a cross-cutting reflection has accompanied my engagement with different theoretical perspectives, in relation to the pervasiveness of assumptions regarding western scientific universalism and its legitimacy in theorizing on behalf of the entire world (Prasad 2003a: 7, Mir et al. 2003: 53, Kebede 1994: 125, Harding 1997, Okere 2005). We have already analysed this issue as well as the epistemic violence reproduced through the denial of conceptual autonomy to Africa, systematically studied through a comparative lens. In my search for theoretical lenses, besides keeping these issues clearly in mind, I have also privileged those that have challenged the dominance of western epistemologies in African studies, because they could crucially support my commitment to decolonise my research approach.
Fig 4.1: Self-Reflexive Interpretation

The fourth and final level of interpretation is that of self-reflexivity, which has meant reflecting on the working of my subjectivity during the research process. Beginning with an acknowledgment of my active role throughout the research process, from the construction of the empirical material to the production of the final text, it has been crucial for me to turn the investigative gaze on myself, with regard to both my practice and my analysis. Self-reflexive practice has thus helped me to bridge the divide between researcher and researched inasmuch as it has constantly required me to include myself in my investigation, with regard to my practices and analysis. Yet my understanding of self-reflexivity also softens the inner/outer dichotomy, inasmuch as it invites me to reflect not only on how my stances, assumptions and identities have influenced the whole research, but also on how they have been negotiated and reshaped by it, depending on the contexts I was involved in, the encounters I made and the events that occurred (Coffey 1999).

Self-reflexive practice has entailed a critical analysis of the assumptions, values and interests underpinning and guiding my actions and thinking, implying not only self-awareness about them, but also a readiness to question them (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 112-113). This critical analysis does not aim to reach a neutral perspective, disengaged and detached from my own subjectivity. Rather it signals a commitment to minimise the manipulative intents and effects of any given lens (see for instance Wray-Bliss 2003) and to strengthen opportunities for a genuine engagement with the diversity of voices and perspectives that I have encountered. In this sense, self-reflexive practice has provided crucial support for my project of disengagement from the colonial syndrome, in that it has continuously invited me to problematise my own understanding. Drawing on Foucault’s notion of problematisation (Deacon 2000), I use the term here to indicate a curious attitude and scepticism of familiar interpretations and thinking, which has led me to investigate critically what I take for granted and why, what I consider relevant and why, and what I dismiss and why. This self-reflexive practice sheds light on the diverse set of dimensions (such as political views or theoretical points of reference) which inevitably shape the whole research process.

In addition, self-reflexive practice has entailed a continuous attentiveness to my identities, to those of the people I encountered (as I perceived them), to what
we disclosed about ourselves and how, to how we positioned each other and to how all these factors are intertwined in the process of knowing.

Among the various threads of thought regarding these issues, those related to my whiteness and westernness have occupied a central role. The analysis of the previous sections and the critiques of the construction of expertise in development (Parpart 1995, Kothari 2005, Escobar 1997) oblige me to consider my westernness and whiteness as relevant to endorsing/performing my role as OD advisor. They invite me to contextualise my role within a dominant development discourse which systematically constructs certain expertise as relevant for and needed by local NGOs; this perpetuates unequal global relations through the domination of knowledge, tools and techniques created and controlled by westerners. The hardcore technocratism of development management and the supremacy of western donors (and thinking) in defining good and bad practice (see Chapter 3) invite us to problematise the existence of the notion of OD advisor, in the sense that it requires us to scrutinise the claims, assumptions and truths that legitimise this role, both globally and locally.

Furthermore, my reflection on the role of advisor must consider my whiteness, not only because of my own interest in this dimension, which predates the research, but because it turned out to be a relevant issue for my Ugandan colleagues. For instance, in the first meeting I had with Agandi’s director, he said, “Our biggest advantage is that you are from Europe, so your impact is totally different from ours […] People [local communities] think that if there is a white person it must be something important. You add value simply by being there […] Donors are white and they trust white people more than Ugandans”. My own experience supports the argument that at all levels of the development industry there persist assumptions regarding the entanglement between knowledge, expertise and race and that its power relations are more generally racialised75 (White 2002, Kothari 2006, Crewe and Fernando 2006). Hence, while I acknowledge the risk of essentialist and static categorizations, as well as the difficulties of talking about race from a white background (Foldy 2005), I believe that to ignore asymmetries within the local context of the research makes it difficult to correct them and may even worsen them (Said 2003: 327, Naples 2003: 37).

75 I use the term ‘racialised’ to refer to “the historical processes that give ‘race’ its social and political meaning, and the ways such meanings are deployed through various practices, institutions, ideologies, and contexts” (Pierre 2008: 12).
Finally, reflections on my westernness and whiteness have touched on the powerlessness of experiencing, albeit from a privileged position, “the gaze of the Other” (Fechter 2005). Being a white woman working in rural Uganda has certainly provided me with the opportunity to reflect on fixed identities and the difficulties in overcoming them. In this sense, my otherness has stimulated plentiful reflections which have significantly shaped my role in the field and the overall research approach, hopefully towards more equal relations.

This section has explained the process through which I interpreted my data, making reference to four levels: the empirical material, the analysis and interpretation of the context, the borrowing of theoretical lenses and self-reflexive practice. The whole interpretative process can be understood as a continuous shuttling between micro and macro focuses and lenses. Importantly, while the relevance of each level varied with the stages of the research, all of them accompanied the whole process, influencing and building on each other.

I shall conclude this section by noting the situated and emergent nature of the knowledge generated in this research. It is situated inasmuch as it cannot be detached from my understandings and interpretations, nor from the spatio-temporal contexts of the research. This implies that I have privileged an engagement with the diversity of meanings and factors that make up social phenomena and knowledge generation processes over concerns of universality and generalisability. This methodological choice is consistent with my constructionist assumptions and the critique of universalist claims discussed earlier.

4. 5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has endeavoured to clarify the methodological approach of this research, including the analysis of relevant theoretical perspectives, of the methods deployed to generate the empirical material and of the interpretative process. An introductory section on action research and qualitative inquiry was followed by an exploration of the crucial themes of power and knowledge. I next explored the methods by which I generated the empirical material and then discussed its interpretation. The thread running through the chapter has been my search for lenses to facilitate my disengagement from the colonial syndrome, which has implied a critical analysis of analytical focuses and lenses, of practices and identities.
To sum up my methodological approach, I would focus on three intertwined features.

Firstly, it lies on the assumption that knowledge cannot be neutral, but rather is necessarily interwoven with ethical and political dimensions. Western requirements for “suprapolitical objectivity” (Said 2003: 10) obscure the political and ethical dimensions of research. It is not possible to detach knowledge from the circumstances where it is produced, from the necessary involvement of the researcher in a society, at whatever level and regardless of whether this involvement is conscious or unconscious. This had led me to investigate whom and what my actions and choice were serving, which truths and worldviews were sustaining, and their impact on the lives of those involved in the research.

Secondly, another key feature of this study is its open-ended orientation, with regard to both the empirical investigation and the theoretical analysis. Social phenomena, such as OD process or NGOs, are multi-layered and continuously in-the-making, hence open to a variety of interpretations. In this sense, my open-ended stance has been an informed choice aiming at widening my perspectives, learning from the persons I was working with and avoiding, as much as possible, to constrain the variety and unpredictability embedded in human actions and social phenomena.

Thirdly, this study has adopted a ‘radical contextuality’ orientation, paying simultaneously attention to both the historical and the emergent dimensions of the context I was involved in. More specifically, acknowledging the limitations of comparative, decontextualised and a-historical approach that have characterised much research on Africa and African NGOs, I have put at the forefront of my research agenda my commitment to learn about and engage with the distinctive context where the research took place.

I shall return to these matters in Chapter Seven, in a retrospective reflection on my methodological approach.
Chapter 5 - NGO Management and OD: Whose Results Count?

5.1 Introduction

This is the first of three chapters deepening the analysis of NGO management and OD. I focus on empirical material generated during my action research as an OD advisor with two Ugandan NGOs, as narrated in the previous chapter. We begin by recalling the questions that guide the research:

1. What are the distinctive features of the OD processes of NGOs in Uganda?
2. How do contextual factors shape the OD processes of NGOs?
3. How do the discourses of NGO management and organisational development shape the role of NGOs in the ‘development’ process in Uganda?

As explained in Chapter 1, sharpening my focus entailed a progressive widening of my gaze, from one limited to the micro-intra-organisational level of inquiry at the beginning of the fieldwork to a progressively broader one, reflecting critically on the overall aid system in Uganda. Yet throughout the research process, I have been primarily concerned with the OD of the two NGOs I worked with. The second and third questions above have therefore always complemented rather than superseded the first one. These chronological stages in the evolution of my focus are reflected throughout the following pages and chapters, where the investigation starts at the level of micro-organisational issues before progressively widening its reach.

This chapter addresses especially the first two research questions, while the third will be dealt with in Chapter 6. Below, after briefly introducing the two NGOs, Karibu and Agandi, I consider what they expected and needed from the OD process. The chapter provides vignettes and voices from the fieldwork to contextualise OD expectations within both NGOs’ lived experience and to articulate their in vivo perspectives on aspects of the construction and definition of the OD process. The final section presents a summary of the chapter and highlights key findings with regard to the first and second research questions.
5.1.2 Meeting Karibu and Agandi

This first section introduces the two NGOs I worked with, Karibu and Agandi, and provides an opportunity to start investigating the meanings of the term ‘NGO’, which, as discussed in Chapter One, is far from transparent. Thus, from the beginning of my research/practice I sought to understand the meanings attached to NGOs, in what ways Karibu and Agandi constructed and negotiated their identities as NGOs and how this process was shaped by their everyday social practices. In the following pages I introduce some of the key issues emerging since I began to work with them, which unveil the multi-layered and processual nature of Karibu’s and Agandi’s identities.

Karibu

I worked with Karibu for five months, in 2007. As explained in Chapter 4, I volunteered as an OD advisor and our encounter was mediated by an INGO.

A few months before my arrival, I had received a brief presentation of the organisation, sent by Karibu’s Executive Director (ED). It specified Karibu’s vision and its mission, both related to the enhancement of livelihoods of the poor. The brochure also highlighted Karibu’s programmes, which included ‘Group development and management’, ‘Entrepreneurship’, ‘Marketing’ and ‘Resource mobilization’ (Karibu brochure, May 2007).

The first encounter with Karibu staff happened in a restaurant in Kisiyo, the town where Karibu’s office was located. Kisiyo was a main town of a rural district, roughly 200 miles away from the capital. There I met Josephine, Karibu’s ED, Gadi, the programme assistant, Kath, the accounts assistant, and Mike, the office attendant. The lunch lasted roughly two hours and amongst various topics, we discussed Karibu’s work. We talked especially about ‘poverty resource monitoring’ activities. These were explained to me as ‘empowering communities to monitor and choose’; for Karibu it implied helping communities to identify their needs, make appropriate demands, contest when development projects did not meet their needs and monitor them when implemented. Throughout the lunch the ED led the conversation and Gadi, Kath and Mike, although rarely

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76 All names of persons, organisations and places have been changed to protect the anonymity of those involved in the research.
77 In the same period Karibu also received information about me, including my CV and a brief description of my work experience. The INGO acted as an intermediary and this exchange of information was meant to help Karibu and me to make informed decisions based on the compatibility of our aspirations.
intervening verbally, listened attentively and seemed to agree with and support her views. More precisely, their attitude towards the ED was very respectful and solicitous; for instance, whereas she called them by their first names, they called her ‘Madam’ and promptly answered her questions and requests. They used ‘Madam’ to refer to me as well, although, at my invitation, they all switched to using my first name within the first week of working together.

After lunch, we agreed to meet the next morning in the office. In the evening I recorded ambivalent feelings in my journal. On one hand I was quite impressed by how clear some of Karibu’s ideas were and by Josephine’s confidence and drive in explaining them as its executive director. I also enjoyed their accounts of poverty resource monitoring and was eager to learn more about how this was done. On the other hand, I did not really understand what they were doing in practice: ‘Josephine mentioned street children, farmers, capacity building of other NGOs, poverty monitoring and micro-finance, but I am not sure they are all active projects’ (Personal Journal). I also noticed the ‘strong presence’ of the ED, as I described it in my journal, and the little space that the other members of staff had or took during this introductory lunch.

The following morning I went to Karibu’s offices, two adjacent rooms rented in new premises just outside town, which also hosted two other NGOs, as was clear from the signs outside. Karibu’s larger room was the ED’s office, furnished with modern office equipment: a large desk, with an office chair behind it and two guest chairs in front, and a locked cabinet. The other office had two desks, a computer, a cabinet and four chairs. There was no telephone line and the electricity supply was erratic from the first day. (Karibu also owned a generator, which was, however, used only if there was a reporting deadline with the donor). There was nothing hanging on the walls or lying on the desks.

Soon after I arrived in the office I had a meeting with the ED in her office, while the others stayed in the other room. However, the doors of both rooms were open (as I learnt that they always were). Josephine explained to me that Karibu had three areas of operation: street children, farmers and capacity building for other organisations. At that moment only one project was active: BUILD, funded by a multilateral organisation and concerned with capacity building for other NGOs. The BUILD project had started thirteen months earlier and I later learnt that it had become a turning point for Karibu: it was the longest project Karibu had ever had, funded by the largest grant it had ever secured. Before the BUILD
project, Karibu had been involved in short-term projects, funded nationally (mainly by the government).

Josephine mentioned the difficulties of working with the government, especially because of widespread corruption and demands for bribes from government officials, mostly in the form of a percentage of the grant. We then turned to talk about Karibu’s beginnings. She explained that she had founded Karibu in 2003 with two others, a woman and a man. At the time she had been working in the business sector for a multinational organisation, where in roughly six years she had progressed from an assistant position to senior management level. She had also started doing consultancy work during her leave and at weekends. It is at this point that she realised that she could be doing the same job but through an NGO and thus decided, with two colleagues, to set one up. Since then, Josephine had been the executive director as well as secretary to the Board. The other woman founder was a member of the Board and also a part-time employee. I was told that she was on study leave and met her only once during my five months working with Karibu. With regard to the third founder, in the same meeting I was told that he had decided to leave to pursue his business abroad. Josephine seemed to be reluctant to go into this issue further and never mentioned him again. During the same meeting she also expressed her concerns regarding the sustainability of the organisation: ‘Sustainability is our challenge, we need to consolidate our programmes […] We don’t have enough funding to have full-time staff, we are still renting and the BUILD project is coming to the end’.

After the meeting with the ED, which lasted over an hour, I moved to the other room, while the accounts assistant and the programme assistant joined her in her office to work on the quarterly financial report that needed to be sent to the donor by the end of the week. I stayed there with Mike, consulting the folder that the ED had given me, which contained some of the documents that needed to be reviewed, such as the financial policy, the human resource policy, the constitution and the annual report for 2004. Mike was extremely kind and attentive, in a manner that left me slightly bewildered, especially when he said, ‘Tell me if I don’t please you. Maybe I am doing something to please you, but I make mistakes. I’m here to please you’. We talked briefly about our reciprocal expectations, a conversation that from the beginning made me painfully aware of the complexity of my planned participatory methodology. Was it likely, I wondered, that with a colleague like Mike I could ever supersede the division
between researcher and researched to privilege the collaborative form of inquiry (see Chapter Four) underpinning my chosen methodological approach?

Agandi

I was introduced to Agandi through the intermediation of the same INGO that had mediated my encounter with Karibu. I worked with Agandi for fifteen months between 2008 and 2009. As with the previous experience, before starting our work together, we had exchanged background information to explore the compatibility of our aspirations. This time I received a seven-page description of the organisation and the town, which I later learnt had been prepared by a previous volunteer and had never before been read. As noted in the presentation, Agandi’s vision and mission were described as promoting human rights and democracy. It was also explained that Agandi was a membership organisation set up in 2003 and operating in four districts. In addition, there was a detailed account of its management structure and governance.

I first met Agandi’s staff when they invited me to a ‘human rights event’ that they had organised just a few weeks before starting our work together. The event took place in Masiri, the town where Agandi had its office, which was a small town of a rural district, approximately 300 miles away from the capital. The parade started with a march from Agandi’s office to the public stadium, where a series of activities such as dance, theatre and speeches went on until late afternoon. The event involved ‘communities’ (the majority of whom were women), representatives of other NGOs and local government officials, including both political leaders and top senior administrative officers. I could understand only partially, as the language used predominantly was the local one, although a few speeches were in English. I was impressed, especially by the wide and active participation throughout the day and by Agandi’s capacity to mobilise such a large number of people (probably around a thousand). The only moment that left me perplexed was when I learnt that Agandi’s staff did not participate in the march that they had organised, but travelled to the stadium by car, because ‘the rain was too heavy’. However, because this was only my first day of work with them, in an entirely new context, I did not question this or delve into deep analysis or interpretations.

Agandi had four members of staff: the director, Fred, a retired civil servant in his sixties, the office secretary, Mary, the accounts assistant, Grace, and the project
officer, Abigail. While Fred and Mary had been involved with Agandi since its establishment, Grace and Abigail had not joined until nine and four months respectively before my arrival.

The first day of work with Agandi started with a long meeting with the director, Fred. Grace, Mary and Abigail were in the same room, but did not intervene during the meeting. Fred started by explaining to me that Agandi was set up in 2003, partly because of external pressures and opportunities. At the time, Fred chaired the board of the Kudimbe district NGO forum as well directing a local NGO involved in agriculture; during one public event on democratisation organised by FAIR, a national NGO, he and other local NGO leaders were invited to set up a regional NGO to work in the area of democratisation. Thus, Agandi was set up as a membership organisation of the NGO networks covering four different districts, with the specific objective of promoting human rights and democratization.

In other words, Agandi operated in four districts and in each of them implemented its activities through the local NGO network. Its governance reflected this four-arm arrangement: an equal number of representatives from each NGO network\(^\text{78}\) constituted both the executive committee and the annual general meeting. Thus, a distinctive feature of Agandi was that it was a network of four NGOs, each of which was in turn a network of local NGOs operating in the four districts of reference. This also meant that my work with Agandi implied significant interactions with four other NGOs, which offered me the opportunity not only to widen my perspective, but also to be engaged in the making of relations within the NGO sector.

Agandi had for six months enjoyed an annual core grant\(^\text{79}\) from a European government, which was due to last for another six months; this amounted to

\(^{78}\) The networks comprised four independent NGOs, each with its own constitution, staff, board and activities, which aimed to provide a common platform for all NGOs operating in their districts. Beside their own activities, they implemented Agandi’s activities in their areas of operation. In other words, Agandi’s projects were always implemented through the staff of the four NGO networks, while Agandi’s staff supported coordination among the four districts.

\(^{79}\) By ‘core funding’ I mean a grant that covers both project activities and administrative costs (such as salaries, rent and utilities). Core grants are usually given for the implementation of an NGO’s strategic plan; they can last from one year upwards. For instance, one of the NGOs I met with had been receiving core funding since its formation, i.e. ten years. Conversely, project grants are obtained for the implementation of specific projects. Their length is highly variable, from a month to several years, although one year seemed to me the most common. The majority of the NGOs I encountered during my research had only project grants. We shall return to this issue in the next chapter.
roughly 80% of its overall annual budget, while project grants constituted other minor sources of funding. One of these came from FAIR, the Ugandan NGO that had encouraged Agandi’s formation. I was informed that since then, FAIR had been providing small grants for the implementation of its projects in Agandi’s areas of operation.

Fred was enthusiastic about the one-year core grant, because after years of occasional and limited project grants, it allowed the organisation finally to implement the first year of its five-year strategic plan, which had been ready since 2005. In addition, it made it possible to have regular staff, all of whom had one-year regular contracts. He considered the donor who granted the core funding highly, especially because it did not interfere with Agandi’s strategic plan and funded it exactly as it was. He was proud of the first six months of implementation and explained to me the main activities they were carrying out: civic education with communities through a drama group, a radio talk-show, and the training of representatives of different sub-counties on democratisation and human rights issues. He explained to me that such activities were high on donors’ agenda: ‘The community approach to democratisation is welcome to the donor [...] Before, gender was the most important thing in rural development, then it was HIV, now it is democratisation and human rights. [...] We are now attractive for funding.’

Fred also explained to me the role of the other three members of staff (who remained in the room, working at their computers and without intervening) and gave me some hints on their working culture: ‘We are a team, we understand each other, we tolerate each other [...] We shall disagree, but not quarrel [...] Our main purpose is to produce results, to make an impact.’

Agandi’s offices consisted of two rooms rented in premises in town, which also hosted five other NGOs. The two rooms were separated by an internal door (usually kept open), but each had independent access. One room had four desks, one for each employee, two PCs (one for the secretary and one for the accounts assistant) and two laptops (one for the director and one for the project officer). In the other room (where I worked) there was a desk, a library with a wide range of documents, including the Ugandan Constitution, the NGO Act and various reports, and a cabinet with everything for tea breaks. In the office there was no telephone line, although there was an internet connection, which was
shared with the other NGOs in the premises. Agandi also had a 4x4 vehicle and a generator, both widely used.

5.1.3 Karibu’s and Agandi’s ‘In-Betweenness’

The above pages offer first impressions of Karibu and Agandi through the eyes and ears of their newly arrived, foreign, voluntary OD advisor. The background of each NGO will be progressively enriched in subsequent sections as more specific organisational dimensions and issues are addressed in relation to OD and management. In concluding this section, I wish to highlight a feature shared by Agandi and Karibu, which struck me from the outset as key in comparing them: what I call their ‘in-between’ nature. This descriptor is intended to emphasise the entangled and changing web of meanings and relations that made up both Karibu’s and Agandi’s everyday life and which eludes neat definition or simple categorisation.

One manifestation of this ‘in-betweenness’ was that the staff of both NGOs seemed to have a dual status as volunteers and employees. They usually introduced themselves as volunteers, yet simultaneously referred to their salaries as ‘peanuts’; and both NGOs made it a priority to secure resources to pay staff regularly. The coexistence of these two identities might be explained by considering the instability and unpredictability of funding experienced since their start-up by both NGOs (and by the great majority of small Ugandan NGOs). Thus it was considered normal that periods of hectic activity would alternate with others of latency. Periods of paid work would be juxtaposed with times when there were no funds, even for the office rent. All eight staff members came from rural villages: six were educated at university level and – aside from the directors – all were in their twenties (again, a common characteristic across the Ugandan NGO sector)\(^80\). My understanding was that the younger members of staff were caught between the need to gain work experience and the ambition to pursue career aspirations in a national labour market offering few other opportunities.

\(^{80}\) While there are no official national statistics on NGO staff, the fact that the NGO sector represents a privileged space, providing opportunities for young graduates, is indirectly confirmed by recent developments in North Uganda, where the end of the LRA war and the consequent termination of emergency and humanitarian programmes has resulted in the withdrawal of INGOs and a lack of funds for local NGOs, causing a sharp increase in unemployment among young graduates (The New Vision 2010).
Both directors also played in-between roles. Each had founded his or her NGO and had played a crucial role in shaping it. Each had a non-NGO professional background: private business in one case and the public sector in the other. Josephine was simultaneously Karibu’s ED and a freelance consultant, the divide between the two roles being far from clear to an outsider. Fred, a retired civil servant and Agandi’s director, was also the director of another local NGO, the chair of the board of an NGO network and the owner of a small private business, another instance of multiple overlapping roles. All Agandi’s board members were retired civil servants and some had been political candidates in elections. Staff and board member also had clan, ethnic/regional and religious affiliations. These multiple in-between identities further enmeshed the embedded webs of networks which, as I came to learn, influenced Karibu’s and Agandi’s decisions and actions above and beyond their status as NGOs.

Certain features of the NGO sector as a whole also stood out from these early encounters with two NGOs and highlighted the difficulty of demarcating it from other sectors. First, policy and regulatory frameworks require NGOs to cooperate closely with the government, often being involved in the provision of public services in rural areas. These relationships have the effect of making NGOs the government’s interface with local communities. Secondly, dilemmas such as NGOs’ dependency on donors’ funds and the sustainability of their organisations and programmes can push NGOs to consider commercial activities. Yet the challenges of identifying profitable activities in rural areas make it extremely difficult for NGOs to make a profit, especially keeping in mind the NGO mission. For instance, Agandi board meetings often discussed the idea that there is no money to be made from democratisation, as a way of criticising donors’ pressure toward sustainability and financial self-sufficiency. In Karibu there was a clear orientation towards income-generating activities. The director often spoke of the ‘need to sell Karibu and see if they buy’, referring to donors and to other organisations. As already mentioned, the director also did consultancy ‘on behalf of Karibu’, as she used to say, sometimes claiming that ‘Karibu survives only on my consultancies’.

These observations illustrate how the pressure towards sustainability blurs the boundary between the NGO and business sectors. More generally, these reflections on notes from my research journal make it clear that sharp distinctions between business and not-for-profit, government and civil society, activists and professionals, for example, might not be helpful in understanding
the realities of the NGO sector in Uganda. While this first conceptual caveat arose simply from sensitivity to the empirical source, the implications are relevant for the wider societal and political contexts in which these two NGOs operate. As Hilhorst (2003: 5) suggests, NGOs are better understood as processes, simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the discursive fields they engage with. The multi-pronged and multilayered nature of NGOs makes it intriguing to investigate how they make sense of their work, navigating their contested terrain. With this in mind, the research questions guiding this study are inspired by a desire to establish whose realities and discourses it is which influence the articulation of Karibu’s and Agandi’s OD needs and wishes – and ultimately their identity as NGOs.

5.2 OD and Management: Perspectives from the Ugandan NGO Sector

From the grounding established above we now explore further accounts of meanings and practices associated with OD in the Ugandan NGO sector. How is OD understood and practised? How do NGOs identify their development needs and wishes?

In both of the NGOs I worked with, I was often referred to as the technical advisor. This was the term my colleagues used to introduce me, whatever the context: activities with beneficiaries, meetings with government officials, consultations with donors – as well as in written documentation. Hardly ever was the term ‘organisational development’ used once I had begun my work, despite having been used in the official documentation of the INGO that facilitated my contacts with the NGOs. Thus, both NGOs easily switched the label from ‘OD’ to ‘technical’. But what did technical advisor mean? What did Karibu and Agandi ask of me? Each of the two subsections below responds to these questions in terms of the NGOs’ expectations of me as expressed in my initial meetings with their respective directors: Josephine wanted me to ‘change our face’, while Fred hoped that I would ‘act as a bridge with donors’. In each assignment, my role was dynamic rather than fixed, but throughout my time with Karibu and Agandi, these metaphors represented well the variety of expectations and activities associated with the OD process. Examining them now will help to address the first and second research questions.
5.2.1. ‘Change Our Face’: OD as Makeup

One of the strongest expectations I had to deal with in my role with each NGO was that of working on written institutional documents – in INGO language, ‘corporate documents’ (Oxfam GB 2010). These included strategic plans, annual reports and policies. This was especially important for Karibu’s director, whose main expectation of OD had to do with developing written documents. It was driven mainly by the impulse to meet requirements and demands external to the organisation, i.e. coming from donors, from the government and from elsewhere in the NGO sector. This expectation was instrumental in the achievement of other priorities, especially fundraising. More exactly, Karibu’s only grant was due to expire a few months after my arrival and therefore its main priority was to seek new funding opportunities, a process which revealed the persistence of specific donors’ standards. For instance, while I was working with Karibu, we came across the following:

Applicants should provide audited financial statements for the previous three fiscal years, an organization chart, and copies of applicable policies and procedures (i.e., accounting/financial management, purchasing, property management, travel, personnel) (USAID 2006: 7).

This reflects a widespread practice within the aid industry of assessing an NGO’s ‘capacity’ when deciding fund allocation, by relying upon an examination of its policies, procedures and annual reports as well as its financial audit reports. Karibu had a financial and human resource policy, developed when the NGO was constituted, which needed to be updated, while other documents needed to be developed from scratch (such as the strategic plan, the annual reports for previous years, the gender and fundraising policies).

In the same period, similar pressure regarding institutional documentation came from the NGO National Board. NGOs in Uganda are required to register themselves with the Board in order to be legally recognised and to renew their permits regularly (the first permit lasts twelve months, the second thirty six and the third sixty months) (Republic of Uganda 2006). The procedures for registration and renewal require NGOs to submit a number of institutional documents, such as organisational charts, annual work plans and budgets, annual reports, AGM reports and audited accounts (Republic of Uganda 2009). Five months before my arrival, Karibu’s application for the permit’s renewal was rejected, on the grounds of incomplete and unsatisfactory documentation, which
had made it essential for Karibu to produce the documents required before reapplying.

Karibu was also addressing requirements from within the NGO sector. As Josephine explained to me: ‘In Uganda, many NGOs are briefcase NGOs that eat government and donors’ money. So the NGO Forum proposed a certificate that can attest quality and transparency […] It is still in the pipeline and we have to get prepared for it’ (Josephine, August 2007). She was referring to the NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism (QuAM), a self-regulating and voluntary quality standard system, promoted by the Ugandan NGO forum, which assesses NGOs according to fifty-nine quality standards (NGO QuAM Working Group 2006a). Many of them call for documents, policies and procedures usually required either by the government and/or donors, as mentioned above.

Two interrelated critical distinctions can be noted: one regards the outward, compliance-driven orientation of NGO expectations to the OD process; the other concerns the value placed by the aid industry upon corporate documentation. Karibu’s view of OD seemed predominantly shaped by the need or wish to adhere to standards and requirements imposed by the aid industry upon the NGO sector. Its overriding emphasis on corporate documentation was legitimised and explained with reference to rules and mechanisms established by others – the government, donors and the QuAM committee – not to Karibu’s projects, staff, resources or plans. More precisely, the work on corporate documentation was seen by the director as detached from fieldwork or actual practice; for instance, policies needed to be in place because donors required them and not because they were considered tools to be deployed in practice. I shall return to this in Chapter Six; for now, it is important to note that the metaphor the

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81 The process is voluntary. NGOs can obtain a Provisional Certificate (when only the minimum standards are met), a Full Certificate (when all the normal requirements are met) and an Advanced Certificate (issued to those NGOs that meet both the minimum standards and those for improvement) (NGO QuAM Working Group 2006b). The certificate lasts for two years for the first time and then needs to be renewed every three years, although it can be revoked ‘if the agreed standards are breached [...] (e.g. diversion of resources, lack of accountability, engaging in corrupt practices, etc.)’ (NGO QuAM Working Group 2006b).

82 For instance, the standards require that the NGO documents its financial transaction transparently and effectively (standard 12), produces informative and accessible annual reports (standard 15), has an updated register of fixed assets (standard 21), has sound financial systems (standard 23), has and follows internal policies (standard 25), adheres to generally accepted accounting principles (standard 26), has independently audited annual accounts (standard 27), develops and uses management tools/practices (standard 29), has written programme plans (standard 30), has in place a monitoring and evaluation system (standard 39) and is able to define and measure its outcomes (standard 40) (NGO QuAM Working Group 2006a).
director used to express her expectations with regard to OD – ‘change our face’ – clearly conveyed from the start the essence of her understanding of the OD process; this was conceived as a way to raise Karibu’s profile or embellish its external image, without necessarily taking into account everyday practices. In other words, OD was a cosmetic process intended to beautify the organisation.

As already explained, Karibu had another facilitating role as part of the BUILD capacity-building programme, which involved many other Ugandan NGOs. It is worth noting that the BUILD programme revolved around a standard format (provided by the donor) consisting of sixty items (governance, human resources, financial resources, service delivery, etc), which was periodically used by Karibu to guide and monitor the NGOs involved in the project. Its standard format functioned as a sort of model against which one could assess these NGOs and their progress in terms of organisational capacity. In this sense, the BUILD project itself was underpinned by an understanding of OD as moulding organisations to an externally imposed ideal and universal standard, with no specificity to any particular NGO. Karibu’s own understanding of OD needs to be contextualised, therefore, within a discursive context of clear and established standards depicting the model NGO which Karibu, as a ‘compliant agent’, was itself helping to spread and reinforce.

The second crucial element of the analysis above concerns the consensus among development actors as to the value and importance of so-called corporate documentation. Two assumptions are revealed here: that corporate documents reflect the management systems in use and that they (or the lack of them) provide information about the NGO’s capacity, credibility and legitimacy. While the practical validity of these assumptions can be questioned (as it is in Chapter Six), here we acknowledge that both are translated into practice through the recurrent, externally stipulated management imperatives they reflect.

NGOs are required to produce corporate documentation in order to access grants, establish their credibility and operate legally in the first place. Insofar as such documents are necessary to obtain government recognition, donor grants and quality certification, they function as a requirement to ‘secure a condition of existence’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1994: 102-103) and thus underpin the rules of formation of an object – the NGO – in certain discursive contexts. Keeping in mind that ‘NGO’ has different meanings, socially constructed and always open to contestation, it seems that corporate documents are deployed within different
systems of rules in various contexts to construct a universally narrow meaning of the term and a cloned identity for each NGO. Ironically, these highly valued standards hardly make any reference at all to NGOs’ constituencies: it is entirely possible for an NGO having no relationship with local communities to be legally registered by the government, positively assessed by donors and granted a high level of quality certification by QuAM.\textsuperscript{83}

To emphasise that management requirements (in this case, corporate documentation) underlie a discursive formation does not imply an escape from the engagement of this research with lived experience. Rather, it invites us to consider discourses ‘as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault 2009: 54) and to contend that they do so through material acts of inclusion and exclusion. For instance, the government’s procedure for granting the legal status of NGO functions as a system of rules that establishes what NGOs are. It privileges certain meanings of ‘NGO’ over others. The same can be said of donors’ procedures for fund allocation and of QuAM certification: these are systems of rules which construct and circumscribe NGOs’ identity. In this analysis, corporate documents represent normatively sanctioned standards used to circumscribe membership of the NGO sector in Uganda. Thus, despite the impossibility of defining NGOs univocally (see section 1.2.3), one shared feature across the NGO sector seems to be the existence of a folder containing a strategic plan, a few policies and a set of audited accounts.

To conclude this section with regard to the research questions about the distinctiveness of OD in the Ugandan NGO sector and factors shaping the OD process, two interlocked points should be emphasised. One is the outward, compliance-driven orientation of OD, which resembles a process aimed at moulding NGOs according to externally given (and demanded) management imperatives. While having different origins (the state, funders, the NGO sector itself), these management imperatives remain highly homogeneous. Hence, it could be argued that OD seems driven by what Di Maggio and Powell call ‘coercive isomorphism [which] results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society’ (1983: 151). According to these writers, once an organisational field – understood as the totality of relevant actors – is established, organisations tend toward homogenisation or

\textsuperscript{83} In the QuAM mechanisms, only three of the sixty standards (34, 47 and 51) make reference to an NGO’s relations with its constituency/beneficiaries.
isomorphism, in order to secure legitimacy and ‘social fitness’ (Di Maggio and Powell 1983: 148).

Yet for NGOs, their organisational field is not only difficult to circumscribe but also constituted by such a diversity of actors (from rural farmers and local government to national and foreign governments and corporations) that notions of legitimacy and social fitness are open to contestation. In addition, actors making up an NGO’s organisational field are embedded in such asymmetric power relations that to paraphrase George Orwell, some are more actors than others. More precisely, recalling the discussion in Chapters Two and Three, Karibu’s expectations with regard to OD can help us to understand how the ideology of managerialism, sustained by dominant development agencies, spreads within the aid industry: it occurs sometimes through coercion (legal requirements and fund allocation procedures), sometimes through persuasion (voluntary quality procedures).

The second key point to emerge from the foregoing pages is that these management imperatives hardly differentiate between NGOs and private business. Note, for example, the low weighting attributed to NGOs’ constituencies and the primacy ascribed to their corporate documentation – tendencies typically associated with the private sector. The crucial question here is whether and how this steering of NGO management towards the corporate sector affects NGOs’ engagement with social change and their ability to nurture alternatives to mainstream development. This dilemma is well exposed by CDRN, a Ugandan NGO network, which asks, ‘Are we all becoming development technocrats? [...] Indeed, who are we if we do not juggle effortlessly with LFAs (or ZOPPs) and PRA? Is our strategic plan up-to-date? And what about our bidding procedures? And our impact indicators?’ (CDRN 2004a: 27). The CDRN report expresses concern in relation to the significant gap between urban NGOs, the most prominent and visible ‘but increasingly business-like’ and those NGOs, mainly based outside the capital, which ‘have proved extremely dynamic, resilient [and] are often firmly rooted in our culture (as opposed to NGOs mirroring a Western intent), but [whose] mode of operation presents real challenges for government and donors’ (CDRN 2004a: 28).

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84 LFA and ZOPP refer to logic frameworks models, while PRA stands for Participatory Rural Appraisal.
We shall deepen this analysis in the following sections and in Chapter Six, where we specifically investigate NGOs’ OD and management vis-à-vis their role in development. The next sub-section analyses Agandi’s expectations with regard to the OD process.

5.2.2 ‘A Bridge with Donors’: OD as Linking the Third World with the First

In my first meeting with Fred, Agandi’s director, he told me: ‘You are a workmate, but you are also a bridge to the donor community’. Indeed, the second common expectation of my role as OD advisor was that I would serve as a bridge between the NGO world and the donors’ world. NGOs in Uganda are dependent on donors’ funding. Their relations with them are crucially important. What kind of bridge is meant here? During my work with Agandi there was a recurring joke regarding the ‘translation into Muzungu’ language of projects and activities. This entailed the moulding of the NGO’s work to donors’ requirements, when applying for a grant, for instance, or reporting on a project already funded.

In other words, there was an expectation that the technical advisor would link the NGO’s work with the donor’s management systems and tools, thus translating into Muzungu language what happened during the project implementation. Muzungu language is that of inputs, outputs, outcomes, results, impacts, action plans, log-frames, strategic objectives, means of verification, value for money and so on; these are the names of some of the various matrices and tools through which NGOs have to communicate about their projects.

Agandi had four donors and interacted with many more in its perennial search for funds. Each donor has its own systems and tools for planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating. Donors’ systems are often similar, but rarely identical. This means that NGOs which have more than one donor are expected to use simultaneously a number of different systems and tools according to the activity being funded. To make things more challenging, while donors use a similar terminology, they sometimes attach different meanings to the same term. These might seem minor issues, but the cumulative impact on small

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85 Muzungu is a Swahili word meaning European, commonly used to refer to white people generally.

86 For instance, CIDA has recently announced that it has replaced ‘logical frameworks’ with ‘logic models’ (CIDA 2009: 32), while the OECD uses both terms interchangeably (OECD and World Bank 2007). The OECD provides a detailed explanation of the
NGOs is significant, not only in terms of the time and resources needed to juggle the diversity of donors’ tools, but especially in shaping how NGOs make sense of their work and roles. An example below communicates the pervasiveness of management imperatives and their influence in moulding NGOs’ identity and sense-making.

In 2008, Aid for All, a western government development agency, approved an Agandi project proposal which had been submitted a few months before in response to a call for proposals. Aid for All had issued a tender for grassroots anti-corruption projects which contained several formats and matrices needed for bidding. The grant application form consisted of twenty-two open-ended items, an activity-cost milestone plan, two detailed budgets (one according to the project’s phases, the other based on the typology of expenditure), all accompanied by explanatory documents called ‘instructions for completing the forms’. The project needed to be completed within six months and the budget’s roof was fifty million Ugandan shillings (approximately twenty thousand pounds).

At the end of the donor’s evaluation process, sixteen Ugandan NGOs including Agandi had their projects approved.

Immediately after the approval of the project and before the transfer of the funds, a meeting was held between Agandi and Aid for All, the latter represented by two Ugandan employees, Julius and Frank, to discuss monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting tools and requirements. It is important to specify that Julius and Fred, Agandi’s director, knew each other, as Julius had previously worked for FAIR, the Ugandan NGO that had encouraged Agandi’s formation.

Julius began with Aid for All’s cooperative approach:

Julius: We want to know what you have in place to see how it fits in our system [...] We always work in partnership to strengthen [what is already in place].... We ask what you are doing and we start from there.

Yet as the meeting progressed, it became clear that the M&E system for this project was already defined and not negotiable. Agandi was handed a fifteen-page detailed description of the terminology used, the indicators to be used and the various matrices that needed to be used during project implementation and for reporting. The problem that emerged during the meeting was the complete disconnection between the proposal approved and the M&E system, so much so

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87 A pseudonym.

differences between outcome, output and impact (OECD and World Bank 2007), while CIDA speaks of outputs and differentiates three levels of outcomes (CIDA 2009: 31).
that Fred asked the Aid for All representatives several times if they had actually read the project proposal. He explained in detail why, in his view, Aid for All’s M&E system could not work for the approved project and why it was not consistent with Agandi’s approach:

Fred: How can I accept this target on code of conduct if we don’t have this in our project? […] This indicator, ‘number of people that report corruption’… I don’t know, we don’t work in this way. Our aim is to empower people to report in the right place, not in our office […] Corruption is not one case, it’s a system. If you find a person that steals one million you have done nothing. You have to work on the system and on what feeds it.

Perhaps helped by his M’zee 88 status in front of the young donors’ team, Fred clearly expressed his lack of confidence, if not sarcasm, toward their system and directly questioned the legitimacy of the overarching, yet decontextualised, approach:

Fred: We have a unique situation here. Let me educate you about monitoring… we have indicators that you people in Kampala don’t know […] Who prepares these systems?… Like with STAR [a previous project]… whoever prepared M&E for STAR was such a genius that he knew everything was going to happen.

In the extract above Fred is questioning the rigid linear causality which underpinned the M&E tool (see also section 3.2), according to which each phase of the project can be foreseen, its results measured and causally linked to the successive phases.

During the meeting the divergences between the approaches of Agandi and Aid for All emerged clearly and provoked a lively – and at some points even heated – discussion. This revolved around the entirely quantitative approach underpinning Aid for All’s system and its short timeframe of six months. While Agandi was trying to locate this six-month project within the overall picture of its work and was expressing doubts regarding the exclusively quantitative indicators of the M&E system proposed, the donor’s team was focusing on this single project and on the need to show the impact of this specific grant. Throughout the meeting, the more clearly the gap between Agandi’s project and Aid for All’s M&E system emerged, the more the non-negotiability of the latter was exposed, making it difficult for Julius to sustain the initial partnership discourse, as is clear from the exchange below:

88 Fred was usually referred to as “M’zee”, a Bantu term used for mature man which usually implies deference and respect.
Julius: Your strategy is long term, but this project is short term, it won’t be here for ever [...]. If I go to the World Bank they are not interested in perceptions; they want to know the number of cases.

Fred: We have five projects. There is no way we can isolate what we achieve with your project [...] The problem is that with corruption you cannot measure it in six months [...] Why don’t you let us decide the indicators? How many times do we have to tell them that they [donors] have to involve us in planning? Here it is like if you are using me free of charge to collect this data for you.

Julius: The problem is that we are third world, they are first world.

The above exchange illuminates two issues at stake throughout the meeting: the meaning of the words ‘corruption’ and ‘impact’ and who has authority and legitimacy to define them. Beyond an initial shared belief that corruption existed and could be tackled, Agandi and Aid for All had significantly different understandings of what it was and of what was to solve the problem. One party, Agandi, held a systemic vision according to which corruption is nurtured by rooted social practices and the solution is social change. The other, Aid for All, held an essentialist vision according to which corruption results from corrupt individuals and can be solved by increasing the number of people who report corruption, case by case.

As the meeting was winding down, Fred stated, ‘We don’t have your focus, we have our focus, but we can adjust’. So despite divergences arising in the meeting, the result was that Agandi decided to adhere to the donor’s M&E system. In this case, providing a bridge to the donors meant that I was expected to support Agandi in deploying the various M&E formats provided by Aid for All; in other words, I was expected to translate Agandi’s actual work according to Aid for All’s jargon and templates, despite the divergences rehearsed in the meeting.

In Chapter Three we saw how results and impact are the cardinal features of mainstream development management and we critically reviewed their assumed universality and neutrality. Against this backdrop, the vignette above provides us with the opportunity to witness its impact at NGO level by focusing on two critiques: the objectification of social actors and actions underpinning Aid for All’s M&E system and development management more generally. From the politics of the meeting between Agandi and Aid for All one can evince how management imperatives serve western donors in sustaining and expanding their hegemonic position. These critiques are explored in the following two sub-sections. Then, in the next chapter, I shall provide a more nuanced picture of the level of adherence to the tyranny of results as displayed behind the scenes.
5.2.2.1 Management and Objectification

Knights’ (1992) critical analysis of strategy and strategic planning in management discourse unveils the objectification of social actors and actions implied in the dominant approach to development management. Adopting a Foucauldian approach, Knights offers a critique of the conventional representation of strategy as a rational management tool to enhance an organisation’s control over its activities and environment and ultimately to achieve its goals. Analysing Porter’s model of strategy, Knights argues that it objectifies business by detaching it from human beings (managers, workers and consumers) and focusing on the value chain, operations and objectives as if they were independent from human activity (Knights 1992: 525). Furthermore, he suggests that strategy discourses, rather than simply representing the world ‘out there’ as they claim, actually constitute through the exercise of power the subjectivity of managers and employers, who secure their identity through their involvement in the strategy itself (Knights 1992: 529).

In the above vignettes, this happens at two different levels. The first concerns communities and Agandi’s relations with them. In Aid for All’s M&E system, communities are detached from the human beings who constitute them and treated as objects to be counted as evidence of Agandi’s effectiveness. This entails a radical change in Agandi’s relations with its communities, whose members cease to be social agents to be empowered through a sustained relational engagement (as in Agandi’s original proposal), becoming objects to be counted. While neither romanticising NGO-community relations nor neglecting the objectification implied in social practice (even more when empowerment is involved), I would draw attention to how Aid For All’s M&E system discharges Agandi from the burden of engaging with and reflecting on the social. Aid for All provides Agandi with a new frame to make sense of its work: communities as a means to achieve short-term measurable targets. Importantly, this was never plainly suggested by Aid for All, which on the contrary approved Agandi’s empowerment project. Yet the lack of reference to Agandi’s original project in the M&E system indirectly and unmistakably detracts from its approach by providing clear guidance on what counts as a result: ‘The World Bank is not interested in perceptions; they want to know the number’.

The second level of objectification concerns Agandi itself: Fred’s irony in talking about the genius behind M&E and his cynicism in dismantling the partnership discourse (‘You are using me free of charge...’) can be read as a refusal to buy
into the role of grassroots endorser of a predetermined script that Aid for All was trying to sell. The M&E system, presented as a managerial tool to enhance Agandi’s focus on results and impact, was instrumentally used to divert its focus and to co-opt Agandi into a project which had already been written by the donor. The proposed M&E system would shift Agandi’s attention away from its project’s original focus – increased awareness and empowerment – towards counting corruption cases, despite Fred’s clear statement that Agandi considered this calculation ineffective. Paradoxically, in the name of results, Agandi was being asked to do something it considered fruitless. Aid for All’s M&E system was not a tool for Agandi to monitor its project, but a non-negotiable prescription of what had to happen for the project to be successful, regardless of incompatibility with Agandi’s own sense-making practices and ultimate goals.

Returning to Knight’s analysis, we can see how management discourse, rather than representing objective reality, constructs subjectivities. The example here is in the change in the priorities of Agandi’s staff which altered the sense they made of their own activity. Knights maintains that ‘although the constitution of subjects is an effect of the exercise of power […] it is not a one-way process in which individuals are passive victims […] for they frequently resist […]’ (Knights 1992: 529). As already mentioned, in the next chapter we shall analyse how NGOs resist externally imposed managerial truths and prescriptions.

5.2.2.2 Transformism at Work

An additional reflection on the meeting between Agandi and Aid for All concerns the role of mainstream development management in serving the hegemonic position of western donors. In Chapter Two, drawing on Antonio Gramsci’s writings, we examined two key features of hegemony, emphasising on one hand the pervasiveness of an ideology throughout all aspects of society (from the economic to the ethical) and on the other the role played by consensus, rather than coercion, in its expansion. By analysing the development industry’s path over the last three decades, we discussed the hegemonic position of the current neoliberal agenda and how its pervasiveness throughout Africa’s development agenda has secured its progressively wider endorsement.

The meeting between Agandi and Aid for All offers us the opportunity to contribute to this debate. We can analyse how management imperatives play a role in the unholy trinity’s hegemonic expansion, where ‘unholy trinity’ refers variously to the World Bank, IMF and WTO (Chang 2007) and to enlightenment,
progress and management (see section 3.3.3). To construct the argument I shall
draw on Gramsci’s concept of trasformismo (1975b: 41-42, 1975a: 962-964),
which refers to a historical and political process occurring in Italy since the
Risorgimento, through which the moderate party has absorbed the elites from
allied and opposed political forces, determining what he calls a decapitation of
the popular masses (Gramsci 1975b: 41). A key feature of transformism is the
rupture between leaders and their popular bases, in the sense that the inclusion
of the former in the dominant group is not followed by the incorporation of
popular masses’ interests into national policies and programmes, but rather by
the leaders’ convergence towards the dominant ideology. By extension,
transformism can be considered a strategy of domestication, neutralising
(potentially) antagonistic interests and making them conform to those of the
dominant group (Cox 1993: 182, Mouffe 1979). Transformism helps us to
contribute to the debate on the cooptation of NGOs (Edwards and Hulme 1996,
2006), which has at its core crucial questions around whether NGOs can embody
organic alternatives to the dominant market ideology, or are their long arm
operating at grassroots level, serving western government interests and/or state
despoticism (see also Chapter Two).

The meeting between Agandi and Aid for All reveals transformism at work and
the role that management imperatives play in shifting an NGO’s priorities,
neutralising some agendas and naturalising others. The vignette helps to
enlighten transformism in its twofold Gramscian understanding, molecular and
regard to the first, Aid for All’s representative, Julius, as a Ugandan who has
passed from the local NGO sector to a western government agency, can be
considered an example of molecular transformism, i.e. the absorption of a single
individual by the dominant group. Julius represents the wider trend of western
development agencies who increasingly employ Ugandans in their operations.
The official line is that this choice upholds their efforts to value local
knowledge and expertise and to promote local ownership, a reasoning similar to
the one that led INGOs to withdraw from the field, leaving room for national
NGOs. Gramsci’s concept of transformism invites us to question the official story
and to investigate the extent of the local (Ugandan) contribution to shaping
western donors’ agendas. This becomes important in our vignette when Julius,
able to understand Agandi’s views and concerns, does not seem empowered to
take actions accordingly and to mediate between his employer’s concerns
(numbers, cases reported, standardised methodologies) and those of Agandi. As a Ugandan formerly active in the national NGO sector, Julius seems split between his institutional role and identity on one hand and his individual role and identity on the other, as shown by his vacillating use of ‘we’. For instance, ‘we’ initially denotes Aid for All (‘We want to know what you have in place’) and then Ugandans and Africans (‘We are third world, they are first world’). In this instance, Julius displays the internal molecular transformation which Filippi suggests Gramsci uses to enlighten the internal war of positions that accompanies the phase preceding the transformist move.\textsuperscript{89}

The second level of composite transformism refers to groups rather than individuals. It emerges from the (apparently successful) attempt to persuade Agandi to engage in an agenda different from, if not in conflict with, its own. Agandi, caught between the ideological eulogy of results and its need for funds, seems unable to counter effectively the equation of results with numbers unless it puts at risk its own survival. The vignette offers transformism as a strategy that instrumentally invokes the unquestioned primacy of measurable results within the aid industry in order to alter Agandi’s system of references and sense-making, so much so that Agandi will end up endorsing a programme which conflicts with its own reasoning and understanding. In exposing significantly different views of what corruption is and how it can be tackled, the meeting illustrates how management imperatives are effectively used to establish and claim the superiority of one agenda over the other, determining Agandi’s endorsement of Aid for All’s truth.

This section has raised a crucial matter: while the principles and tools of development management are said to be neutral and universal (see Chapter Three), the above empirical observations and theoretical analysis invite us to seriously question such claims. A case example related to a donor’s monitoring and evaluation system has illustrated that adherence to certain management tools requires NGOs to alter significantly their focus, goals and value assumptions. Our analysis also supports the conceptual position that the assumed superiority of results-based management is instrumentally invoked to

\textsuperscript{89} According to Filippi (2008: 126), Gramsci also uses molecular transformism to explain the internal (introspective) process through which human beings deal with competing stances in the process of transformation; he draws on a letter in which Gramsci talks of a split personality: ‘one part observes the process, the other undergoes it […] until this [the part observing] exists there is self-control and the possibility of recovery […] then the whole personality will be swallowed by a new individual with urges, initiatives, thoughts different from the previous one’ (Gramsci’, Lettera a Tania 6 Marzo 1933 cited in Filippi 2008 translation mine).
promote certain agendas and to secure NGOs’ commitment to and involvement in development programmes at variance with their own.

5.3 Concluding Reflections

This chapter has addressed particularly the first and second research questions. It has investigated the peculiarities of OD processes with Ugandan NGOs and the factors influencing the OD process itself, as well as relevant underpinning expectations. We have observed that despite the diversity of the contexts, aims and histories of the two NGOs which are the subjects of the current study, Karibu and Agandi, it is possible to identify a significant shared feature of their understanding with regard to the OD process: its outward, compliance-driven orientation. My action research work with both NGOs was predominantly influenced by Karibu’s and Agandi’s wish and need to adjust their identities and programmes to suit management requirements coming first from donors, but also from the government and the NGO sector itself. A critical feature of the chapter is that while management is presented as a set of tools and techniques relating to how things should be done (i.e. how programmes should be planned, run or monitored), a case vignette of a meeting between one of the NGOs and a donor exposes management as especially concerned with what should be done (what the agenda is for programmes). Management requirements provided by donors actually imply a change in the focus and approach of the programme. We have also seen that management is about what NGOs are and the various tools and techniques that they use to secure their legal status and enhance their credibility in the eyes of donors and the wider NGO community.

A second observation relates to the peculiar character of the expectations and needs around OD as formulated by my Ugandan colleagues. We have seen these as highly technocratic, although imbued with ambiguity and contradictions, in the sense that they revolved around learning objectives whose validity and efficacy were often contested. Despite the contradictions, in both NGOs the learning agenda appeared to be strongly influenced by formalistic goals: mastering log-frames, matrices and other management tools and techniques. I initially interpreted the emphasis on professionalization, measuring impact and having management systems in place as a sort of ‘impression management’ performance (Goffman 1990) in the presence of an unknown white foreign OD advisor. This interpretation fitted closely with my assumption that building trust was a crucial element of my research/practice. However, while trust (or lack of
it) was certainly a salient dimension in terms of breadth of access to the organisation and involvement with its life (as discussed in the following chapters), standardised management requirements nevertheless played a significant role throughout my work with Karibu and Agandi.

Against this backdrop, the investigation continues in the next chapter, focusing on two issues. The first concerns social change, a crucial theme for both OD and NGOs. From what has emerged so far, Karibu’s and Agandi’s expectations and conceptualisation of OD rarely made reference to a social change agenda or to their relations with communities. Similarly, we have seen that management imperatives hardly consider NGOs’ constituencies – and when they do, it seems that they are considered as objects serving predetermined goals. Hence, the next chapter investigates the OD and management of NGOs vis-à-vis their roles in development, thus addressing the third research question. More precisely, through the analysis of NGOs’ management practices, we shall critically scrutinise their self-proclaimed role in promoting bottom-up social change.

The second issue to be investigated has to do with a more nuanced account of what OD entailed for both Karibu and Agandi. It exposes ambiguities and contradictions regarding the content of OD which emerged progressively during the fieldwork and analyzes competing views regarding management practices. In short, whereas this chapter has analysed NGOs’ tendency to comply with externally imposed management requirements, the next examines their tendency to resist them.
Chapter 6 - Compliance And Resistance: Whose Interests Matter?

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, focusing on the first and second research questions, analysed some peculiarities of the OD process within Karibu and Agandi and started to identify some of the factors that shaped it. This chapter continues the analysis of NGO OD and management to investigate whether and how these functions impact on NGOs’ agendas and their roles within the development system. Thus, we return to the third question:

How do the discourses of NGO management and organisational development shape the role of NGOs in the ‘development’ process in Uganda?

In engaging with this question we briefly recall our discussions in Chapters Two and Three with regard to the role of NGOs in development. We observed that despite their historical raison d’être in the development system of providing bottom-up alternative development thinking and practices, the space for alternatives has appeared to shrink progressively in the last decade (Bebbington et al. 2007b: 16), with the neoliberal ideology reaching a hegemonic status. This has prompted an increasingly broad questioning of NGOs’ role within the development industry (Shivji 2009c: 60, Hearn 2007, Igoe and Kelsall 2005, Neocosmos 2009, Chachage 2005, Edwards and Hulme 1995a, 1996, Kameri-Mbote 2000). As framed in Chapter Two, the central issue in this debate is whether NGOs are pursuing an alternative agenda or supporting neoliberal hegemonic expansion – in other words, whether they are pursuing bottom-up development thinking and practices or following the agendas of western agencies and elites. Posing these questions in emphatically polar terms allows us to keep at the forefront of our analysis the concern of competing claims as to the role of NGOs in Africa. This is a concern underpinned by Dagnino’s “perverse confluence” (2007), referring to the similarity of notions and concepts (social change, empowerment/ emancipation, democracy) which are employed simultaneously through antagonistic development agendas. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, NGOs seem to lie at the heart of such a perverse confluence, inasmuch as they play a crucial role in a variety of development discourses, from that of the World Bank to that of post-development.
Against this backdrop, the chapter aims to contribute to the debate on the role of NGOs in development; by looking at how NGOs set their agenda and at what they do, it investigates how management imperatives and contestations around them shape the role of NGOs within the aid industry.

We begin with a vignette illuminating the process of NGOs’ agenda-setting, which exposes the presence of competing expectations and demands upon NGOs. This reveals how NGO management discourses engage with NGOs’ contentious relational context and offers a critical analysis of the role of mediator as advocated for NGOs by conventional NGO management. The vignette also begins the process of exposing NGOs’ resistance and refusal to conform to externally imposed standards and ideas, a theme unfolded later in the chapter. The section concludes with a reflection on how NGO management contributes to shaping the space for and role of NGOs within the development system.

**6.2 OD and Change: In Whose Direction?**

As mentioned in Chapter 5, I joined Agandi in 2008 when it was implementing the first year of its strategic plan. A distinctive methodological feature of its work throughout this year was that of pilot projects: more precisely, the first year of the strategic plan consisted of implementing three pilot projects (focusing on schools, on local government and on women) to be scaled up in the following years. One of the key objectives of the pilots was to gather inputs and ideas from the communities involved so that Agandi could adapt its strategic plan according to their needs and aspirations and to what had been learnt during the pilot projects.

The European donor sponsoring the implementation of the first year of the strategic plan had informally expressed its interest in renewing the grant for a second year. However, at the end of May 2008 Agandi was informed that following the approval of a new strategic plan the donor would no longer operate in Agandi’s geographical area and hence was unable to provide further funding. After developing project proposals based on the pilots, Agandi therefore started the search for grants. It pursued a twofold strategy, seeking funding for the whole second year of activity while also eliciting separate funding for the three projects. Importantly, each project was defined by negotiations during the pilot
projects with representatives of communities, the local government and Agandi’s four members.

The following pages explore how NGOs set their agendas and define their roles, starting by analysing some key challenges faced by Agandi in its fundraising.

6.2.1 Community Plans vs. Marketable Products

This sub-section examines the process of agenda setting, which involved Agandi and local communities first and subsequently a donor. It exposes constraints and challenges that NGOs face in pursuing bottom-up social change initiatives and in thinking about alternative practices to those favoured by their funders.

In the period February-June 2008 Agandi involved four primary schools (in four districts) in a pilot project on civic education, intending subsequently to develop a full programme with the active cooperation of the communities. The pilot was developed on two simultaneous pathways: each school autonomously planned and implemented its own project and activities, while regular meetings were also arranged for representatives of the four schools, Agandi and its members to discuss progress and challenges, eventually developing a full shared programme.

The stakeholders involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the pilot were pupils, teachers, parents, headmasters and local government officials from the school sector. I followed the pilot project closely throughout and noted the development of a common agenda, despite differences in power and interests among actors such as parents and headmasters. The resulting full project proposal was responsive and accountable to the different interests which emerged, based on what had been learnt collectively during the pilot stage. To me this represented a sound example of a bottom-up approach. It was ‘owned’ by Agandi, by the schools involved and by the local governments, for it had grown organically from what the actors believed was important.

Once the programme was translated into a project proposal, the search for funding begun and the proposal was sent to several potential donors. One of them, an INGO called Effective Aid, responded positively and in August 2008 a meeting was arranged for the presentation and discussion of the project. It was attended by three Agandi personnel and three from Effective Aid, one of whom explained how the funding system would work:
We don’t have a regular income, we rely on you to get funding. [...] In order to enter into partnership, we tell you what is missing [from your proposal] so we can update it in our database and look for funding.

Effective Aid can be seen as establishing its relationship with Agandi as a partnership whose terms and conditions are immediately qualified in a way that portrays the work done by Agandi as falling short on a number of points. The Effective Aid speaker appears to position himself as qualified to tell Agandi “what is missing”. The use of the words “In order to enter the partnership...” indicates that Agandi must comply with this judgement and its solution as a condition of the very creation of the partnership itself.

Effective Aid’s members explained that it was necessary for Agandi to use a specific format for the proposal, which could then be uploaded to the database on its website so that donors could choose it from amongst many other proposals. Agandi was therefore asked to standardise its proposal and to purge it of references to its own approaches, views or experience of similar projects:

[Your proposal] doesn’t bring out the problem; it mixes Agandi with the problem. It should have its own identity and mission, ready to be implemented by any organisation. It’s like having a business. It should work even if the boss is not there [...] The staff [should be] project staff, not Agandi staff.

Thus, the invitation to transfer the proposal to a standardised format, initially presented as a minor technicality of compatibility for uploading to Effective Aid’s database, begins a process of pressure to transform Agandi’s proposal. This is evident in the way Effective Aid’s representative continued his contribution to the meeting:

You have chosen an empowerment approach, but in terms of marketing, it is difficult [...] Donors want to see results and the project closed. [...] You have to identify a school that can act as a model and show impact [...] Then we test the model and the three of us sit at the desk and we write the proposal and then we market it [...] 25% of our money is free, it comes from donations, [it] is where we can do genuine empowerment, but for the rest we have to follow donors’ conditions [...] We want to sell your project, but we need a marketable product.

Effective Aid is effectively saying here that Agandi fell within that 75% of funding where it is not possible to provide “genuine empowerment” due to the INGO’s need to accommodate donors’ preferences. Effective Aid representatives went on to suggest how the project should be structured, the best methodology to implement it and the importance of including ‘service delivery factors’ (rather than empowerment) plus quantitative indicators. In effect, they asked Agandi to
write another project, following their own methodology of setting up a model school in order to show impact. What Effective Aid was asking Agandi was to disregard the pilot project and to abandon the specific focus on the schools involved. Instead, a model school was to be used as a showcase so that further funding could be sought by virtue of the results achieved there. As the meeting progressed, it became clear that Effective Aid funding was conditional on its standardised approach being adopted.

Interestingly, as the meeting was winding down, one member of Effective Aid felt obliged to specify that its role was to support Agandi’s bid for funding, without further interference: “When we are used as a conductor for funding, we are really a conductor; we don’t use this money for our administrative costs”. Effective Aid’s attempt to downplay its role and to depict itself as a “conductor” is at odds with its effort to impose its tested and standardised approach – the model – and wholly overlooks the influence it deliberately exercised on the project’s activities, methodologies and objectives. As the meeting finished, Agandi’s director expressed his disappointment:

This model valid for anyone […] Is this what bottom-up planning is actually all about? Then, the issues of cleaning the proposal of our approach […] It means that once the proposal is ready someone else can implement it and not Agandi […] This is a very stupid thing.

After a few days’ reflection, Agandi decided not to accept such an unbalanced, subordinate position and not to send an amended proposal following Effective Aid’s suggestions.

Two crucial issues emerging from the above vignette will guide my investigation of how management discourse shapes the role of NGOs. First, the vignette highlights two apparently unbridgeable chasms, between ‘marketable product’ and ‘empowerment’ and between Effective Aid’s approach and the project which Agandi and the four schools had developed. In the following sub-sections I analyse these interrelated issues, then drawing on the interviews, I widen the perspective to discuss the relevance of these chasms for the NGO sector in Uganda. The analysis exposes how mainstream development management is deployed to push NGOs to align their agendas to those of the donors; this constrains their ability to promote bottom-up development alternatives. The second crucial issue emerging from the vignette is what we could call an NGO’s resistance to the managerialist discourse, typified by Agandi’s refusal to bow to Effective Aid’s requirements and conditions. This is addressed in section 6.3.
6.2.1.1 Effective Bottom-Up Change: An Oxymoron?

Effective Aid’s exhortation to Agandi to transform its project into a “marketable product” is based on a distinction made by Effective Aid staff between empowerment and service delivery. Empowerment was considered difficult in terms of marketing, because “donors want to see results and the project closed”. The goals identified in Agandi’s project proposal\(^\text{90}\), which answered the priorities of the schools involved, were considered unable to show impact. To do so, Agandi was asked to bolster service delivery factors,\(^\text{91}\) yet simultaneously underplay empowerment. Hence, Effective Aid’s suggested focus on a model school was legitimised by effectiveness imperatives and the need to achieve results, which seemed conditional on embracing Effective Aid’s standardised approach and purging the project of references to the distinctiveness of Agandi’s approach and contexts.

Effective Aid’s standard approach had three significant implications: first, for Agandi it meant disregarding its own mission and agenda, focused on social change and empowerment rather than service delivery. Secondly, by rejecting the pilot project, it implied the marginalisation of local voices and understandings, hence the interests of the actors and the goals they set following months of learning and negotiation. Thirdly, Effective Aid’s approach implied altering Agandi’s relations with communities and their roles in the development project: Agandi was to switch from an enabler (as depicted in the project proposal) to a service provider; the other actors (such as teachers, parents and pupils), envisaged in the original project as agents capable of setting and achieving their own goals, were to become beneficiaries of the

\(^{90}\) For instance, one of the issues emerging during the pilot was parents’ lack of information on the schools’ functioning, including the responsibilities of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) and more generally the working of Universal Primary Education (UPE). This was a government programme to promote free primary education, which abolished the user fees introduced under the SAP era but still required parents’ financial contributions (such as for uniforms, meals and examinations). However, during the pilot project, lack of understanding of schools’ responsibilities and financial contributions were considered key problems leading to abuse and mistrust. Hence the project proposal identified a number of activities aiming at facilitating information sharing, supporting cooperation among the actors and establishing a clear framework for the school functioning and rules.

\(^{91}\) During the meeting service delivery was not clearly defined, although references were made by effective Aid to training and workshops. These activities seem to be highly valued by donors and NGOs in Uganda, often representing the predominant methodology for implementing activities related to democratisation. In Chapter Two this was explained by NGOs’ preferences for safe (non-confrontational) activities (see section 2.5.2). However, looking at this issue from the perspective of management requirements, training and workshops are often privileged because they facilitate ‘results’, which are often defined in terms of days of training and number of people trained, as I observed in numerous project proposals and plans.
services provided and the development project in general. More broadly, Effective Aid, by invoking donors’ conditions, legitimised and normalised by presumed superior management imperatives (the need to show results) and tools (the standardised approach), effectively disregarded the right of self-determination of Agandi and the other actors, i.e. their freedom to decide the content and approaches of development projects involving them.

During the meeting the divergences between the agendas of donors and communities were partly recognised, although without any real attempt to negotiate among the interests and views involved. For instance, Effective Aid seemed to acknowledge the antagonism between a marketable product and genuine empowerment. However, survival motives and the funding mechanisms of the aid system seem to leave NGOs no choice but to adhere to funders’ conditions. Even Effective Aid, an INGO active across the globe for several decades with broad negotiating power and access to funds (much greater than those of Agandi and the great majority of Ugandan NGOs), stated that it could focus on “genuine empowerment” in only 25% of its projects, while for the rest it had to adhere to top-down funders’ conditions.

Considering Effective Aid’s role in this meeting as that of a donor, I argue that its disclosure of its own relationship with donors functioned as a normative act. By sharing with Agandi its own challenges in merging the social change agenda with donors’ conditions and by disclosing that these determined 75% of its remit, Effective Aid seems to advise Agandi to resolve such conflicts by compliance. Rather than questioning the power asymmetries of the aid industry, it apparently upheld the TINA\(^{92}\) stance, using its own experience to legitimise the primacy of donors’ conditions over bottom-up contributions in setting NGOs’ agendas.

To conclude, the vignette illuminates the difficulty of merging empowerment and social change agendas with donors’ requirements for timely results; and it shows how management standards serve to feed and legitimise power asymmetries within the aid industry, with detrimental impact on communities’ ability to influence NGOs’ agendas. The expression ‘effective bottom-up change’ can thus be seen as an oxymoron, insofar as bottom-up change requires a focus on community choice and perspectives, while effectiveness seems unfailing tied to adherence to donors’ perspectives and compliance with their stipulations. The relevance of this contradiction for the Ugandan NGO sector is better

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\(^{92}\) There Is No Alternative.
comprehended by widening our perspective beyond the vignette. We now analyse the place of Ugandan NGOs in the aid chain. The following sub-section draws on my work with both Karibu and Agandi to analyse the procedure through which NGOs access funding.

6.2.2 Funding Allocation: Enforcing Adherence?

During my work in Uganda, I became progressively more sharply aware of the inherent antagonism between the effectiveness agenda, with its associated management requirements, and the social change and emancipation agenda: the former tied to predetermined frameworks against which results are assessed, the latter requiring the nurturing of critical thinking and self-determination.

In this regard, two particular factors must be taken into account to understand the role of NGOs. The first is that Ugandan NGOs are hardly involved in the definition of donors’ development programmes. Instead, they are expected to contribute to the achievement of predefined results. During my twenty-month fieldwork in Uganda, only once did I hear of a donor having asked Ugandan NGOs for consultation or feedback on its strategic plan. Even then, the letter sent by the donor referred to its website for access to documents and for the feedback process, ignoring the fact that Internet access, especially outside urban areas, is limited and expensive. When we received the letter, Agandi’s director astutely remarked: “With this letter, you cannot complain that they did not consult you. Their work is done!”

Secondly, procedures and mechanisms for Ugandan NGOs’ access to funding are limited and limiting, predominantly either for project grants or proposals encased in donors’ strategies. During my work with Karibu, for example, an example of the former (project grant) was funding to implement specific projects. More precisely, Karibu won a tender (or ‘call for proposal’) put out by a multilateral agency. The tender had already defined the overall programme, including objectives, activities, budget and timescale (usually detailed in accompanying documents).

93 It could be argued that this statement ignores the participative and consultative processes which accompany the development of plans and programmes, such as the PRSPs. Yet, in Chapter Two we have already discussed the limits of such participatory processes, highlighting their consensus-bound nature and the lack of space for dissent and alternatives.

94 The level and extent of predefinition of tenders might vary, although it can be very high and demanding for small NGOs. For instance, while working with Karibu we came across a
The alternative is to seek a project grant through a so-called ‘unsolicited proposal’, yet even here, NGO projects have to adhere to overarching frameworks set out by donors, including specification of project contents, objectives and methodologies. Interestingly, this framework usually refers to the strategic plan of the donor, as in this example from a donor’s guidelines:

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the activity for which funding is being sought meets the priorities of one of the Foundation’s programmes. Reference should be made to the Foundation’s 2006/07 Annual Workplan and 2005/08 Strategic Plan (1) [...] In the application form, applicants should demonstrate how their activity meets the objectives of the most appropriate of the three programme areas. (Commonwealth Foundation, Overview and guidelines for civil society responsive grants, 2007/07, emphasis mine)

Thus, the funding available to NGOs in Uganda (through tenders or unsolicited proposal mechanisms) is largely based on priorities and expected results assessed by donors and their experts. Neither NGOs nor the communities they work with have a substantive role in designing such overarching frameworks.

The concern here is not the soundness of results and goals specified by donors, but their imposition of an agenda. Specifically, it could be argued that the lack of grassroots involvement in the definition of desirable or necessary results produces anti-emancipatory (anti-development) outcomes, as argued by Daniel (a director of an Ugandan NGO) in the extract below:

And they [I] told donors: “Why are you killing Africa? African democracy? You want to come and impose your democracy? You even commercialise it in such a bad manner. Did anyone bring manners to you to adopt a democratic culture? Was it money or it was a process that you had to go through? And you had to pay a heavy price for it. But you see now you come and you just pump money. You want political parties and you pump money. How will you have people understanding that and treasure that?” So for me I find it very strange, I just say “Are you deliberately trying to keep Africans in such a mess? You know, why should you ‘monetise’ principles and values?” (Daniel, NGO director, March 2009).

tender put out by the EU called ‘Support to Human Rights and Good Governance Programme’. Attached to the tender were the following fourteen documents: Guidelines for Grant Applicants (22 pages, with detail on objectives, priorities, eligibility criteria, assessment procedure and so on); Grant Application Form (27 pages, including 29 tables); Annex B – Budget; Annex C – Logical Framework; Annex D - LEF Private; Annex D - LEF Public; Annex E - Financial Identification Form; Annex F II - General Conditions; Annex F IV - Award Procedures; Annex F V - Request for Payment; Annex F VI - Interim Report; Annex F VI b - Financial Report; Annex F VI c - Final Report; Annex F VIII - Pre-financing Guarantee.doc (EU 2007).
This quote summarises in a few lines the working of the fund allocation (You want political parties’ and you pump money) and highlights the pernicious impact of top-down agendas. This denies local communities and NGOs the possibility of engaging with their own challenges and aspirations and of driving the development process accordingly.

Thus, fund allocation mechanisms and the primacy of predefined results seems detrimental to bottom-up initiatives, hence constraining NGOs not only in their ability to negotiate effectively between communities’ and donors’ agendas, but more generally to develop programmes responsive to their constituencies. Furthermore, the aid effectiveness agenda, by focusing on the imperative for NGOs to achieve (predefined) results, seems to marginalise agendas alternative to those of donors, as discussed in the next sub-section.

6.2.3 NGO Mission vs. NGO Survival

Agandi’s search for funding for its three projects, each developed to reflect the context where it had to be implemented, proved to be particularly challenging. With time, the task that Agandi’s director set me, to act as a bridge with donors (see Chapter Five), became increasingly conflict-ridden. The search for funding exposed the conflict between Agandi’s aspirational focus on bottom-up empowerment and its need to survive financially, requiring it to embrace top-down agendas. More precisely, Agandi’s (financial) survival required it to adjust its programmes to predetermined plans and master management tools and techniques in order to show the impact of its work within a limited timeframe. Yet Agandi’s democratising mission required a complex, demanding and long-term engagement with groups within communities, each with its own needs, interests, aspirations and struggles, as well as multifaceted engagement with various local authorities. Hence, in terms of OD, the pursuit of its mission

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95 Agandi had strong relations with the Local Government (LG) of the four districts where it operated. For instance, LG officials were often invited to Agandi’s activities (as participants or simply to open up a workshop/event), sometimes involved since the planning stage (for instance in the school project discussed above) and more generally kept informed of Agandi’s activities, either in writing or by visiting the officials concerned with a specific activity. In my second week with Agandi, the director and I spent an entire morning at the district and I was introduced to politicians and administrators. The stated stance of Agandi was that of open cooperation with the LG, which Agandi considered essential for its work on democratisation and human rights. However, the relation between Agandi and the various districts was also partly competitive and conflictual. For instance, an issue that commonly emerged was who best represented the communities and their interests, where politicians, civil servants and Agandi each had their own reasons to claim primacy. Another issue of contention was who controls whom. For instance, Agandi was involved in ‘public expenditure monitoring’, hence acting as an LG
seemed inimical to its very survival. Definitive decisions were postponed, but the more time elapsed without a grant, the more Agandi was inclined to compromise on its mission. The meeting with Effective Aid and the decision to reject its conditions occurred in August 2009, when Agandi’s core grant had just ended. However, after months without salaries, as rent arrears and utility bills accumulated, Agandi’s became increasingly inclined to accept donors’ conditions, despite contesting their usefulness and meaningfulness, as discussed in more detail in the following section.

Returning to the tension between Agandi’s mission and its survival, my interview data indicates that this challenge is widely shared within the Ugandan NGO sector. The following extracts from interviews illustrate further the frustration of NGO leaders arising from procedures which link grants with implementation of predefined projects and with priorities contrary to NGOs’ own agendas:

Donors kind of have an agenda and the NGOs just want to fit in that agenda. [...] [NGOs] simply respond to availability of funding, so donors have not helped the situation, because donors have the money and they have the ideas, so they come and say “Now, we have a fund for governance, call for proposal”. Maybe NGOs will apply to qualify for that fund. Tomorrow they have HIV/AIDS, the other day they have children, the other day they have gays and homosexuals... so NGOs are simply reacting to that, and when you are not clear where you are at, ... there is a lot of creep away from your mission simply because there is money available elsewhere (Augustine, Director of Programmes, March 2009).

So, [our] organisation is a network and needs to be addressing the needs of the member organisations. But because of financial constraints here and there, we find that we end up having some projects that are really focusing on how the organisation [can] continue in existence, and maybe place itself in a better position to be able to secure more funding, because if we are out of operation for a year or two it becomes difficult to convince donor agencies that you are sort of stable in order to handle different amounts of funding for whatever activities, even if you have good activities. (Dianah, Director, February 2009).

In terms of development partners, quite often CS in Uganda, but also in Africa, most of them have been responding to... carrying out interventions that are donor supported [...] So quite often, many NGOs have not developed in the areas of why they were formed because of limited watchdog (see also Chapter Two). However, LG officials claimed their right to supervise and control NGOs; in a meeting with me and Agandi’s director, one LG official directly read the order that attributed to his office the responsibility of monitoring NGOs. Finally, because many of Agandi’s board members had also been civil servants and/or political leaders, there was a sort of competition for profile. For instance, in one Board meeting a member said, “Now, when they see me with this big car [which had been bought by one of Agandi’s NGO members], they say ‘but he is not the one that we left out?’” More generally, while it is outside the scope of this research to analyse NGO-LG relations in detail, my aim here is to show that this relation was significant, demanding and multifaced.
opportunities that development partners have come up with. They have a specific focus they want to support (James, Director, February 2009).

The above extracts shed light on a key dimension of the Ugandan NGO sector, namely the perennial struggle between the pursuit of mission and the need to secure funding. In interview, many leaders of NGOs admitted to conducting projects detached from their mission, simply because they could not find funding in line with their own ideas and values. In this, Agandi seems broadly typical of the Ugandan NGO sector.

The tension between mission and survival illuminates not only the existence of multiple development agendas, but also the marginalisation of those that do not conform to donors’ priorities. It could be argued that mainstream development management, by focusing on the primacy of results yet simultaneously obfuscating who decides what results are and how, is actually silencing alternative agendas. The aid effectiveness imperative legitimises donors’ choice not to fund programmes which fail to match their strategic objectives, insofar as they would not contribute to the expected results. However, for Ugandan NGOs, almost entirely dependent on western donors96, it clearly hinders them from pursuing their mission to favour alternative bottom-up development thinking and practice.

6.2.4 What Role for NGOs?

With our third research question in mind, the previous sub-sections invite us to question the role of mediator envisaged for NGOs by orthodox development management. As discussed in Chapter Three, orthodox development management perspectives suggest that “much of the art of NGDO97 management lies in reconciling, or at least accommodating, (these) competing perspectives” (Edwards and Fowler 2003b: 6). This is based on the assumption that “NGDOs must negotiate with resource providers and the populations” (Edwards and Fowler 2003b: 4 emphasis mine). Mainstream NGO management calls upon NGOs to develop multiple accountabilities (Edwards and Hulme 2003: 140-161, Lewis 2001), to respond to changing pressure and conditions without losing focus on their missions and goals (Lewis 2001: 197, Fowler 2003b: 374, Lewis

96 According to recent research, almost 90% of Ugandan NGOs annual budget comes from donors grant (DENIVA 2006: 36-37, USAID 2010: 132).
97 Non-Governmental Development Organisation. As this thesis considers only NGOs working in ‘development’, NGDO and NGO are to be considered synonymous.
2003), and to merge effectiveness imperatives with social transformation goals (see Chapter Three).

I wish to suggest here that the role of mediator envisaged by orthodox development management, by assuming that different agendas and interests can be harmoniously reconciled, not only seems to underplay the competition among different agendas, but also seems to overlook and obfuscate the power asymmetries within the aid industry, these two issues having clearly emerged from the foregoing discussion. The vignette and the analyses of fund allocation mechanisms and of the tension between NGOs’ missions and survival show that the space for mediation of agendas between NGOs and donors is slim or nonexistent. I suggest that orthodox development management’s attempts to downplay these competing agendas and power asymmetries can be understood in terms of the politics of the neoliberal regime and its attempt to depoliticise the public arena. The core of the argument is that the emphasis on NGO negotiations and mediation might ultimately serve the expansion of consensus around the neoliberal hegemony. I shall now examine the creation of this consensus and the contribution of mainstream development management.

In the previous chapter we analysed objectification and trasformismo as strategies for hegemonic expansion; here we can add a third strategy, the depoliticisation of development through the negation of antagonism (Mouffe 2005, Santos 2005). This is symbolised by the widespread use of the word ‘stakeholders’ in the official language of development (UN 2006, Oxfam International 2004, OECD 2009a) and in NGO, OD and management literature (Zadek and Raynard 2003, Fowler et al. 1995, Tandon 1995). The term implies a “public sphere as a rather depoliticised arena of collaboration” (Santos and Rodriguez-Garavito 2005: 8), where different interests, if present, can be negotiated and harmoniously merged. A clear example is the current debate on multiple accountabilities, where mechanisms operating downwards towards communities are seen as unproblematically complementing those working upwards towards government and donors (see Chapter Two).

The empirical material presented in the previous pages suggests that such a harmonic vision of the public sphere is constructed through the silencing of voices and the exclusion of experience and interests which might weaken the unprecedented global consensus apparently reached within the development industry, as discussed in Chapter Two. From the previous pages we can identify
silencing strategies at two related levels, one regarding NGOs and the other local communities. First, the aid chain and fund allocation mechanisms clearly favour NGOs that share donors’ agendas or are more prone to comply with them (for whatever reason, including organisational survival or short-term financial gain), while excluding those NGOs which do not. Secondly, local communities, as emerged from the meeting between Agandi and Effective Aid and their exclusion from the definition of development results, are deprived of active participation in agenda-setting. They are conceived as beneficiaries or targets, sitting passively at the receiving end of development. Thus, results-based orthodoxy, as currently conceptualised and practiced within the aid industry, legitimises donors’ rejection of agendas alternative to their own: by officially and inflexibly prioritising (their own) results, donors usually fund only those projects that directly serve their own strategic goals (see section 6.2.2).

More generally, mainstream (results-based) development management, besides constraining opportunities for negotiation, seems to undermine NGOs’ ability to pursue development alternatives; more precisely, while NGOs’ involvement in development is said to promote bottom-up thinking and practice, the previous sub-sections indicate that their involvement in particular programmes is more the result of their adherence to a top-down agenda. Thus, NGOs’ progressive involvement in the aid industry, constrained as it is, seems to result mainly from the strategy of the inclusive neoliberal regime to neutralise potential and actual critics by incorporating them into the ‘global partnership’ (Ruckert 2006). This serves the legitimisation of western and elite interests rather than the emancipation of local communities (Chachage 2005, Shivji 2007, Hearn 2007, Manji and O’Coill 2002).

This suggests that development management orthodoxy has a pernicious impact on the right of self-determination not only of NGOs, but more widely of Ugandan citizens and communities. This effect is considered by certain authors (Neocosmos 2008, 2007, Shivji 2009c, Amin 2008, Wai 2007) to be a major impediment to development in Africa and to epitomise the neo-colonial character of the development industry (see Chapter Two). The denial of popular agency, legitimated by presumed superior management standards, marks a continuity in the western approach to Africa, evoking the justification of slavery and colonialism, namely that African citizens, not able to determine what is best for them, need western tutorship to decide on their behalf (see Chapters Two, Three and Four).
More generally, it could be argued that results-based management is effectively undermining NGOs’ counter-hegemonic potential. In Chapter Two, drawing on Gramsci’s work, it was suggested that this potential depends largely on NGOs’ ability to link their agendas organically to those they claim to represent and support and to provoke change accordingly. Results-based development management seems to impinge on both possibilities. Firstly because it requires NGOs to switch their attention from local communities’ aspirations and challenges towards donors’ priorities, as occurred in the meeting between Agandi and Effective Aid and as is implied in funding allocation procedures. Secondly, it seems to do so by rewarding compliance with established goals and programmes, emerging not only from funding allocation procedures but more generally from the difficulty NGOs experience in reconciling mission with survival.

This backdrop invites further questioning of NGOs’ role as mediators: rather than focusing on harmonising multiple stakeholders’ needs and being accountable to all of them, as currently professed by NGO management orthodoxy, for those NGOs committed to radical change and emancipation it seems crucial to reconfigure their environment and relations, discriminating among the different actors, unveiling their antagonistic agendas and making choices accordingly.

6.2.5 Concluding Reflections

This section has explored the debate on NGO roles through the lenses of OD and management. By examining NGO management thinking and practice, we have attempted to identify the underpinning role envisaged for NGOs. We have analysed in particular the mediator/negotiator role and its shortcomings. We have found that in the current aid system in Uganda, national NGOs have extremely limited opportunities to influence the development programmes they are involved in, in terms of either content or methodology. To argue that this problem arises from a lack of negotiating skills, preventing NGOs from fulfilling their intermediary role of connecting donors’ agendas with citizens’ wishes and expectations, is to obfuscate the unequal power relations within the aid industry and the antagonism among development agendas.

Indeed, OD and management literature and practice in relation to NGOs, predominantly embedded within the ‘aid effectiveness’ and ‘good governance’
agendas, seem to have contributed significantly to a glossing over of issues of social emancipation, active citizenship and political agency, or at best to their relegation to a perfunctory rhetoric, i.e. to the provision of even stronger support for the argument that higher management standards are needed. More precisely, conventional NGO management seems to confine NGOs’ thinking to the dominant neoliberal agenda, leaving them wholly unable to “[think] the impossible” (Neocosmos 2009). At the same time, it appears to oblige them to uphold the TINA assumption, with regard not only to the global economy, but also to the global order, to its asymmetries and to their power to decide what constitutes emancipation (or development, democracy, good governance and so on).

Yet, as anticipated in the introduction, NGOs do not seem to conform entirely to the management orthodoxy, nor to bow unconditionally to the aid industry’s asymmetries: during my research in Uganda I had many opportunities to observe and discuss acts and choices through which NGOs rearticulated externally imposed standards, moulding them to their local contexts, as discussed in the following section.

6.3 Disconnectedness and Unintended Consequences

This section aims to provide a more nuanced picture of the managerialisation of the NGO sector, casting light on acts and strategies through which NGOs rearticulate externally imposed management standards and requirements. For their part, Karibu and Agandi did not conform passively to the demands of donors and the government. Their outward compliance-driven initial formulation of OD was seen to have been progressively enriched by oppositional stances and aspirations; despite the power asymmetries that characterised their relational context, as explained in this and previous chapters, Karibu and Agandi did not fit the image of powerless actors sometimes portrayed in the literature (see for instance Wallace et al. 2007, Michael 2004). The vignette presented in section 6.2 exemplifies Agandi’s resistance and its refusal to bow to Effective Aid’s partnership terms. The director openly contested the universality of the model proposed by Effective Aid as well as the complete disregard of its bottom-up approach, much lauded in the official development rhetoric yet bluntly neglected in practice. Effective Aid’s invitation to be “like a business”, purging the proposal of its distinctiveness and local context, was not appealing to Agandi, which decided not to compromise its proposal, making a clear statement with regard
both to its own identity and autonomy and to the right of the communities
involved to determine their own development project.

Overall, this vignette shows what can be considered an act of resistance by
Agandi in the style of “Fordist clichés” (Fleming and Sewell 2002: 859), for its
direct exposure of antagonism and for its associated financial costs, inasmuch as
Agandi’s act of resistance meant a loss of funding. Yet the loss was more than
financial, because the lack of funding meant that the project was not
implemented at all. In the months following the meeting with Effective Aid, it
was presented to other donors, again unsuccessfully. To my knowledge it has
still neither secured funding nor been implemented. Agandi’s decision therefore
had a much wider impact than the organisation’s financial loss, impinging
directly on the communities involved and upon Agandi’s own survival. Thus,
while the vignette shows Agandi’s autonomy, it also exposes its dependence.

The issues of financial dependence, agency and opposition to donors’ conditions
were often debated in meetings I attended. Here, for instance, is an exchange
from an Agandi board meeting in February 2008:

Robert: I want to remind ourselves of our slogan: “With or without donors
we will survive”, and this is why we still survive today. We need to be able
to negotiate, possibly without conditions. For this we will be careful to
be selective, especially because there are situations that can kill you. If a
donor asks us for conditions that we know will kill us, we have to
say no.

Paul: You are right, but the problem is that if you are a widow, you take any
men around. Sometimes you cannot choose.

Leo: Sometimes you have to raise your voice. Today you have the
cheque and tomorrow they [donors] ask for accountability. They forge
corruption. How can I account for money that I have just received? Sometimes it is better to tell them honestly and also risk having to give the
money back.

This exchange features a range of views typical of Agandi’s board meetings,
from strong defence of Agandi’s right to set its own agenda to an emphasis on
the limited choices facing NGOs. Notwithstanding these discussions, the more
time passed without funding, the more willing Agandi became to accept donors’
conditions, even when these conflicted with its own sense-making and goals, as
discussed in the following pages.

More generally, when funding is involved, acts of manifest resistance seems to
be extremely rare in the Ugandan NGO sector, as Gilbert asserted in interview:
Sometimes they [NGOs] refuse money from donors simply because it is not aligned to their vision and mission. ... but those are very few, they are not the majority (Gilbert, Director of programmes, March 2009).

This does not mean that NGOs do not resist external impositions and prescriptions, but rather that their engagement with donors is more often than not in the form of a game of hide and seek, as indicated by Daniel:

You see all this tendency for one to think you are a beneficiary, I’m just providing you money... **You are a beneficiary so you must comply.** So it creates a very **sinister partnership**, because the partnership is not on mutual trust, is not on clear understanding of the interest, the passion, the drive that enables you to be called a partner; it is more about “I need the money, I have no choice, I have to accept the condition, this is life”. But then when in reality this is not what is followed, so you are always into the **hide and seek relationship**, so that’s the sort of things I see usually (Daniel, NGO director, March 2009).

In other words, NGOs seem to engage in a number of strategies underpinned by the principle of complying without conforming (Fleming and Sewell 2002: 864), where refusal and subversion take ambiguous and sometimes invisible shapes, as the following sub-sections reveal.

**6.3.1 NGOs’ Dual System: Paperwork and Fieldwork**

Despite their dissimilarity, Agandi and Karibu shared a distinctive organisational feature, which we could call ‘bifurcated identity’. I use this expression to emphasise the split between management systems and an NGO’s activities, or, in the words of my Ugandan colleagues, between paperwork and fieldwork. To make this point clearer, I shall focus first on corporate documentation, then on the management systems attached to donors’ grants.

With regard to the first point, the bifurcated identity was emblematic of Karibu. Its corporate documents (which needed to be reviewed) depicted an organisation very different from the one I encountered. For instance, Karibu had detailed financial and human resource policies (comprising 39 and 34 pages respectively) making reference to non-existent staff, departments and systems (such as the accountant, the computerised accounting system and payroll), which were thus impossible to implement in its daily work. Similarly, the work plan, the information about Karibu’s staff and structure presented to the national NGO Board, had no connection with the work that Karibu was doing when I joined it, nor with its staff. The equation of the OD process with corporate documents and
their detachment from day-to-day activities was so much taken for granted by Karibu’s director that she expected me, as indicated earlier, to develop such a set of documents on my own, because she was busy with fieldwork.

What I have called here ‘bifurcated identity’ emerged often also in the interviews. In other words, the gap between paperwork and fieldwork was said to be quite common among Ugandan NGOs, as exemplified here:

People can set up rules and policies but they’re often... even when they’re there, and often they’re not even there, but even when they are there, they are not really adhered to, they are set up for the donors. When it comes to reality, most NGOs would not take a lot of notice of the rules to do what they think it is best to do in the circumstances they are in. (Benon, February 2009)

And I want to tell you the way it happens. I’m also a consultant, when I go to develop a strategic plan for an organisation all I need is to ask them a number of questions, so I can get to see where their focus is [...] You put together a strategic plan that has the ideas but the way they have raised these ideas is in a very simple way, but you are using your skills to piece together these ideas into a strategic plan and using all your language. So when they [NGO staff] look at the finished product, some of them actually don’t understand those things. (Allan, March 2009)

In other words, Ugandan NGOs’ corporate documentation, so highly valued by the aid industry, as discussed in the previous chapter, seems to have little or no bearing on their everyday work.

Similarly, the management systems attached to donors’ grants, aimed at strengthening an NGO’s focus on results and accountability, were often dismissed as ‘paperwork’ by both Karibu and Agandi and rarely considered outside the relationship with donors. More precisely, in both NGOs where I worked, the various log-frames and matrices presented when applying for a grant were hardly ever taken into account during project implementation. Similarly, the various monitoring and evaluation forms and the final reporting matrices rarely gave a genuine account of what happened during implementation. Again, this disconnection appears to be widespread in the Ugandan NGO sector and was a recurrent theme in several interviews. As Benon, a board member and advisor of several NGOs, explained:

They [NGOs] end up giving lot of very beautiful technical reports, financial as well as non-financial, which look beautiful, which actually are fabrications of the truth. And I’ve seen that more and more in the last few years... and this is where this business of an external person coming in [the OD advisor], you know... it doesn’t automatically come with results on the ground. It may come with a change of the NGO... to make it more
workmanlike ... more on the surface looking beautiful, but in result it is often worse. (Benon, February 2009)

This suggests that the bridging role expected of the OD work was not driven by the question ‘How can we best use this system in our local context?’, but rather ‘How can we fit our work into this [donor’s] system without changing our practices?’

Paradoxically, it is precisely the hard-core technocratism of the management systems in use within the development industry that creates the space for its subversion. More exactly, the assumption of the universality and generalisability of the management approach, which legitimises donors’ management requirements, is necessarily built upon an ideal “abstract management” (Townley 2002, 2001), whose lack of adherence to the local context unexpectedly exposes its absurdities, making its sabotaging almost inevitable.

6.3.2 Unintended Consequences

To illustrate this point I take two examples of times when externally imposed management requirements showed clearly the poverty of their logic and their particular, rather than universal, value.

Procurement Policy and Effectiveness

The grant guidelines of one Agandi donor strictly required a procurement committee to analyze at least three competing quotes for any purchase above £100. This rule, motivated by the donor’s need to ensure transparency and efficiency in financial decision-making, appeared unworkable to Agandi. The problem was that Agandi was based in a small rural town, where it was not always possible to find three suppliers for the approved purchase (in one case, printing Agandi’s logo and slogan on t-shirts); thus, compliance with the rule meant a trip to the capital (above three hundred miles away). This required three days out of the office for a member of staff and expenditure of at least £60, which made little financial sense if the printing was to cost little more than £100. It also conflicted with local social and economic practices, where for instance bargaining is much more common than fixed prices, and with my colleagues’ views that they could get better deals with local traders than in the capital. Thus, the t-shirts were printed in town by the only available business,
and despite nobody having actually gone to Kampala, three fabricated quotes were attached to the accounts.

*Standardization and Effectiveness*

In November 2009 Agandi was involved in a four-month national project aimed at reducing child mortality. The donor, a European embassy, worked with a Ugandan NGO, FAIR, to develop the project, which was then to be implemented in thirty-two districts, through the cooperation of local NGOs selected directly by FAIR. A meeting was called in the capital to explain the project and was attended by Agandi’s project officer, Grace. On her return she explained that during the meeting strong emphasis was put on the need to show results and value for money, because the donor would “use this project to decide for funding in the future. [Funding] comes from taxpayers’ money, so [the donor] will monitor strictly, they want results”. In Agandi’s office, the requirement to show results in terms of reduced child mortality in a four-month project provoked ironic and cynical laughter. However, as Agandi had been struggling for months for lack of funding, donors’ requirements were not questioned and attention quickly passed to analysing the documents that Grace had been given at the meeting. These included a quite detailed work-plan, which nevertheless had to be tailored to its four districts of operation. Yet when the project was due to be launched, each of the NGOs involved received from FAIR the same very detailed budget, despite the variety of their projects and the number of districts where they had to implement them. When Agandi compared the budget with its project, a number of contradictions emerged, so Grace proposed to the national programme manager some amendments in the distribution of the overall grant across the different activities. The national programme manager replied that the budget could not be modified at all, adding, “I know it’s wrong. You [should] write in the final report that this was a challenge”.

The next day, the director said to me:

I have a dilemma, I don’t want to embarrass you because this time it will be different from before [when Agandi had core funding; see section 5.1]. Now, either we forge documents or we do exactly as they want and both things are wrong [...] If I already know that I have a challenge, why do I have to wait to write it down in the final report?

Needless to say, the documentation presented at the end of the project did not exactly mirror the actual implementation.
The conclusions of the vignettes above could be easily but instrumentally interpreted as manifestations of the corruption which is widespread in African countries and which does not spare the Ugandan NGO sector itself, as its integrity is widely questioned even from within (DENIVA 2009). Yet this interpretation, because it ignores the power/knowledge interplay as well as the power asymmetries within the development industry, obscures the political dimensions involved in constructs such as corruption (see for instance Harrison 2006, Polzer 2001). Thus, taking into account the working of the aid industry and the fact that power equates to knowledge calls into question the way in which the meaning of terms such as ‘effectiveness’, ‘value for money’ and ‘transparency’ are usually taken for granted and considered to be unchallengeable. Instead, the vignettes above reveal how such terms, when transposed from abstract rhetoric to the real lives of organisations and rearticulated according to specific interests, are open to a variety of meanings and understandings, obfuscated by the official discourse with the full complicity of the NGO sector.

Here I aim to emphasise that while dominant understandings of accountability, efficiency and results are recurrently contested and often subverted in the privacy of NGOs’ offices, they are also openly supported and embraced. For instance, in a recent meeting between the World Bank and Ugandan CSOs (mainly NGOs), the latter called on the World Bank to strengthen its involvement in promoting good governance and fighting corruption, which they felt was “the single biggest threat to development in Uganda” (ACCU 2010). However, there was no reference to their own daily struggles with the good governance/effectiveness agenda.

It can be seen how NGOs’ ubiquitous and invisible resistance, in the form of fabrications, hide and seek, bifurcated identity, cynical remarks and satirical laughter at donors’ demands, is often accompanied by apparent complicity and compliance. This recalls what Fleming and Sewell call “svejklism” (2002), to refer to forms of resistance fraught with ambiguity, where acts of sabotage and subversion coexist with collusion and complicity. Svejkism should be understood within a context of asymmetrical power relations and of an “ideological regime of commitment and unitary interests” (Fleming and Sewell 2002: 860), which the authors use with reference to contemporary corporations, but which nicely fits the development industry as well.
The interesting point for us is that these forms of invisible resistance, which have increasingly attracted scholars’ attention since the mid-1990s (Fleming and Spicer 2008: 302-303), have raised questions as to their ability to provoke any significant change in the asymmetric power relations from which they originate. More precisely, it has been suggested that this kind of “decaf resistance” (Contu 2008) ultimately sustains the status quo, on whose preservation the ‘tyrant’ depends as much as the resistant subject does (Fleming and Sewell 2002: 865). More precisely, by considering the dependence on the status quo of both NGOs and donors, it is possible to capture the precariousness of the power asymmetries between them, as proposed in the following two points.

First, Benon’s reference above to “beautiful reports” as fabrications invites us to reflect on the alliance between donors and NGOs in sustaining a regime of truth, needed by NGOs as much as by their donors, as highlighted in the following extracts:

When they [donors] see nice reports, they go away feeling very happy [...] You see, for instance, I’ve seen many international publications full of lies and a lot of those lies are because they got reports which are lies.... But they are very happy with them... because then they can fundraise, they can say that all their accountabilities are intact ... this and this has been achieved. They publicise it all and they can say they got all this from their partners and it makes them feel very happy. But actually the result on the ground is not there and you particularly see that with indigenous NGOs which are tight with international NGOs ... directly tight. You very very commonly see that. As [NGOs’] main aim in life is to please the donor, as a survival tactic ... so they please the donor by being more work ethic, more organised, more result orientated, call it what you want... and the donor will feel very happy about that, but frequently that is not reflected in what is actually happening. (Mary, February 2009)

There is such a competition for profile ... for claiming that you’ve done certain things ... You know, everybody is talking about impact, “What impact are you making?” But what impact can you make if you have a two-year project to do this? You cannot, you cannot make a long-term change. So everybody is buying into this cause, and everybody is saying “Yes, we made an impact”, and the donor itself will have to say “Yes, we are supporting this organisation and they are making this impact”... and all along the chain ... everybody is patting each other on the back but then you don’t see any change. (James, March 2009)

These extracts illustrate the co-dependency between NGOs and donors: donors need NGOs to prove their impact on the ground, while NGOs need donors’ funding to survive. Those “nice reports” feed the working of the aid industry and allow both NGOs and donors to secure a meaningful presence within it.
Secondly, NGOs’ dependence on the status quo emerges clearly if we consider another feature of the working of the aid industry, namely “participation by substitution” (Shivji 2004: 690), which accords to NGOs the status of representatives of the whole (rural) population, allowing the latter to be excluded (see also section 2.5.1).

NGOs’ embracing of the (technocratic) good governance agenda, the simultaneous invisible resistance and thus the lack of engagement in open contestation can therefore be seen as instrumental in the maintenance and reinforcement of the competitive advantage which they pursue to secure their survival. NGOs’ invisible resistance is thus made possible by northern aid agencies’ detachment (at all levels: physically, intellectually and politically) from the lived experience of rural realities and more profoundly by the inability of aid discourses to take them into account. On one hand, this void creates the space for the dismissal, derision and subversion of donors’ demands in the private sphere, while on the other it represents the foundation of NGOs’ involvement in the aid industry.

In other words, the paradox of such forms of resistance by NGOs lies in their very dependence on the status quo. Rather than challenging the black hole of official development, NGOs’ invisible resistance maintains and reinforces it, through the construction of accounts and reports which look beautiful exactly because they mask and silence the voice and the lived experience of the great majority of Ugandan citizens, thus contributing to the construction of the inclusive and consensual neoliberal regime of truth.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have analysed how the results-based management orthodoxy effectively shapes NGOs’ role and dramatically constrains their space and opportunities for alternative development thinking and practice, let alone for challenging the power asymmetries within the development industry. We have seen how the imperative of results is effectively used to secure NGOs’ commitment to agendas and programmes dislocated from their own sense-making, through the elevation of results to a universal, objective status. More specifically, we have examined how the managerialisation of the NGO sector and the heavy reliance on management procedures and tools have pushed NGOs to adjust their programmes and approaches to those of donors. This widens the
gaps between NGOs and local communities and between their stated mission and actual work. This line of argument has provided support for those critiques elucidated in Chapter Two which focus on the persistent denial of popular agency as evidence of continuities between SAPs and PRSPs and between development and colonialism. It also implies that the faith in the harmonisation of diverse agendas and interests which underpins much NGO management literature serves the neoliberal hegemony, in particular its desire to depoliticise the public arena in order to prevent or neutralise opposition, create an extensive consensus around the market ideology and maintain the status quo.

We have also seen that NGOs do not comply passively with external impositions and have identified several strategies through which they actively disengage themselves from the management orthodoxy. However, such strategies seem firmly anchored in the status quo and as such fail to offer possibilities for radically changing the working of the aid industry, including its silence and irresponsiveness to the great majority of Ugandan citizens. More precisely, if we understand NGOs’ agency as intrinsically linked to their ability to promote alternative thinking and practices, e.g. by putting popular sovereignty and socio-political emancipation at the core of their agenda, the prevailing understanding of NGO management and OD seems to provide little or no contribution. More precisely, NGOs’ fundamental acceptance of the good governance agenda seems to disguise a disregard of popular agency and sovereignty implicit in the aid industry’s practices in such areas as agenda setting. While conventional NGO management literature appears overly concerned with issues of effectiveness and accountability, thus making NGOs conform to the imperatives of the aid industry, what seems to me more important is to investigate whether and how OD can facilitate radical change, proposing locally meaningful conceptualisations of effectiveness and accountability, directly addressing the daily struggles of the current ‘beneficiaries’.
Chapter 7 - Concluding Field Perspectives

I close this thesis with some final ‘perspectives from the field’. I first summarise my main research findings and offer a series of reflections on my methodological approach to OD in NGO management in Uganda (7.1 and 7.2). I then conclude by highlighting the original contributions of this study and identifying directions for future investigation (7.3).

7.1 Main Research Findings

My research was centred around the following questions:

1. What are the distinctive features of the OD processes of NGOs in Uganda?
2. How do contextual factors shape the OD processes of NGOs?
3. How do the discourses of NGO management and organisational development shape the role of NGOs in the ‘development’ process in Uganda?

With regard to the first question, Karibu’s and Agandi’s expectations and understanding of the OD process focused on the development of management tools and systems, and on corporate documentation such as policies and strategies. More precisely, the findings suggest that in the Ugandan context, management standards and requirements can shape OD processes in three crucial ways.

The first is by playing a gatekeeping function: some of the requirements that NGOs must meet in order to be legally registered are derived from the management field (e.g. annual work plans and budgets) and need to be regularly reviewed and resubmitted to the government’s national NGO Board. Secondly, management requirements can have a reputational function: externally-driven management systems and corporate documents often provide a proxy for the credibility, capacity and legitimacy of NGOs in the eyes of donors and other stakeholders. Key examples are quality assurance certification mechanisms and the procedures for the allocation of funds, both of which rely heavily on the existence or production of corporate documentation (such as policies, strategic plans and annual reports; see for instance section 5.2.1).
Importantly, we also saw how management requirements deployed for gatekeeping and reputational purposes hardly make reference to NGOs’ constituencies: it is thus possible for an NGO to be legally registered, positively assessed by donors and awarded the highest level of quality certification without any evidence of relations with local communities.

Gatekeeping and reputational functions were crucial in shaping Karibu’s expectations of the OD process, as eloquently summarised by Karibu’s director in referring to OD as something that would “change our face”. More precisely, because Karibu was in the process of renewing its NGO permit and seeking new funding, its expectations with regard to the OD process revolved around meeting requirements set by the government and by donors, for instance by updating and developing policies and other necessary written documentation, such as annual reports and work-plans.

Thirdly, management requirements can also have a *communicative* function, whereby NGOs are asked to employ externally-supplied management systems and tools to communicate with donors about their projects. In this case, management requirements essentially constitute a vehicle through which donors scrutinize the definition and implementation of NGOs’ projects, especially by requiring them to formulate, monitor and assess their projects according to specified management tools. Importantly, the management systems and tools which NGOs are required to use in their work also tend not to be negotiable. Thus, Agandi’s director envisaged my role as OD advisor principally as providing a bridge with donors, enhancing Agandi’s capacity to communicate with them and in particular supporting its ability to deal with and master their management systems and tools.

The vignettes of meetings between Agandi and Effective Aid demonstrate this clearly: Effective Aid asked Agandi to deploy a specific (standardised) format for its project proposal to be considered for funding (see section 6.2.1). The vignette of the meeting between Agandi and Aid for All similarly showed the donor’s demands regarding monitoring and evaluation systems: Agandi was expected to deploy Aid for All’s tools and systems, despite considering them disconnected and inconsistent with the nature of its project, which Aid for All had already approved (see section 5.2.2).
My work with Karibu and Agandi revealed, in other words, that the OD and management processes of these organizations were fundamentally and deeply shaped by external pressures, coming from different actors, especially from the donors, and pushing both organisations towards the adoption of specific management systems and tools. In both NGOs, OD was thus characterised primarily by an *outward, compliance-driven orientation*, inspired by the need and the desire to comply with a number of externally-driven standards and requirements. This finding constitutes a partial answer to my second research question: we have seen that in both cases OD was strongly associated with the development of policies and management systems required by *different external actors*: the government, the NGO community and especially donors.

The key point here is that management emerges clearly as medium through which the power asymmetries that characterise the aid industry are nurtured and perpetuated, insofar as donors seem to play a key role in the definition of the management systems and tools employed by NGOs.

Importantly, the fact that management standards and practices are externally imposed makes it more difficult for NGOs to learn from their own practices and experiences, and to develop systems and practices accordingly. This may be especially true when NGOs work simultaneously with different donors, each having specific and potentially quite different requirements, with regard for example to monitoring and evaluation, or financial accountability and reporting. My experience with Agandi and Karibu revealed in particular that if donors exert significant pressure to adopt given and quite disparate systems, this can affect NGOs’ interest in engaging in inward-focused and autonomous OD processes and indeed their ability to do so. On one hand, having to meet multiple external requirements means that NGOs find it less meaningful or important to develop their own autonomous systems and tools; on the other hand, having to meet multiple requirements also absorbs significant time and resources. For instance, in the second half of 2009 Agandi had one project funded by Aid for All and another by FAIR, while also seeking grants to scale up the pilot projects; having a staff of only four, dealing with the varied requirements of the donors concerned consumed almost all of its time and resources, leaving very little opportunity to think beyond these constraints.

Another important issue that has emerged from this research is that these externally-driven systems and tools are usually standardised and
decontextualised; NGOs thus often find it difficult to make sense of them in the distinctive context in which they work, as they are disconnected from everyday practice. Indeed, the abstractedness and rigidity of many development management imperatives and requirements (discussed in Chapter Three) can actually work against their meaningful deployment in the context of NGOs’ everyday work (see section 6.4.2). This leads to what I have referred to as bifurcated identity: the chasm between the written documentation produced by NGOs and their everyday, lived practices. The practices and systems described in corporate documents or in project reports often do not correspond with those implemented in the field, indicating the existence of a certain resistance to the dominance of mainstream development management discourse.

As seen in Chapter Six, Karibu and Agandi’s eagerness to master management tools and techniques and have the ‘right’ management systems in place were accompanied in both cases by acts of invisible opposition and resistance, whereby they appeared to comply with external requirements, but never actually conformed to them. For instance, Agandi apparently made efforts to comply with a donor’s specific procurement policy, but at the same time covertly contested and sabotaged it, considering it disconnected from the reality of its work (see section 6.3.2). Importantly, Agandi’s response to what it saw as unreasonable requirements was not to develop an overt alternative procurement policy, appropriate to its context, but to hoodwink the donor into thinking its policy had been applied, in this case by providing three quotes as required, while subverting the request by fabricating them. A similar pattern of compliance without conformance (Fleming and Sewell 2002) occurred when FAIR imposed on Agandi a budget that was fundamentally disconnected from the nature of the project that had been approved. Field interviews suggest that this characterises much of the written documentation that NGOs provide to their donors: “there is a sort of war between the donor and indigenous NGO, who can play the game best, […] it is really frightening to watch it, very polite on the surface but underneath they are kicking each other” (Julius, March 2009; see also section 6.3).

Yet since their resistance to or sabotage of these management imperatives is predominantly covert, masked by ostensible compliance, NGOs ultimately fail to provoke any substantial changes to the status quo on which they depend. Crucially, Ugandan NGOs are almost wholly dependent on donor funding, including for the payment of staff salaries. As seen in Chapter Six, for example,
Agandi’s ‘contesting’ attitude towards donor-set conditions changed dramatically when its core grant ended, insofar as securing funds for salaries and office costs took priority over adherence to the organisation’s own mission and values. More generally, the dependency of NGOs on funds provided by western agencies seems to curtail their ability to provoke changes in the status quo and to think and act beyond the rules of the aid industry. This issue emerged often in the interviews, as illustrated by this extract:

I felt my personal survival should not be at the mercy of other people ... So I just felt that ... my conscience cannot be clear if I am purely dependant on donor aid for my survival. Then psychologically it wouldn’t give me the freedom that I cherish ... So I talked to two of my Ugandan colleagues, we founded a company and we have a business company which pays me much more than I earn here (Daniel, March 2009).

The dependency of NGOs on donor funding thus seems to represent a key impediment for NGOs to live up to their claims regarding the pursuing of alternative development thinking and practice – which leads to my third research question.

This research has also shown in fact that management imperatives and requirements not only significantly affect the OD processes of NGOs, but also shape the role of NGOs in the development process, by narrowing their possibilities of engaging not only with social change agendas, but also with bottom-up, transformative practice within the aid industry more generally. My research has illuminated the following three crucial aspects of this question.

Firstly, while mainstream, results-focused ‘development management’ discourse requires NGOs to provide evidence of the impact of their work, what counts as impact or results is usually defined by donors with little or no involvement of NGOs and even less of local communities – the latter often configured merely as ‘beneficiaries’ of development projects. We have seen for example that neither of the most common procedures through which NGOs have access to funding (bidding for a tender or presenting unsolicited proposals) involves NGOs or communities in the definition of goals and results. It could be argued that this lack of grassroots involvement in the definition of desirable or necessary results produces anti-emancipatory (i.e. anti-development) outcomes, insofar as it denies local communities and NGOs the possibility of engaging with their own challenges and aspirations, of driving the development process accordingly and of enjoying the results (see section 6.2). An interesting example is provided below:
In this village an international organisation constructed a gravity water scheme. The organisation left that area like ten years ago. But when you ask people “do you have water?” they say yes, we have like … maybe I should use your name … like Ema… they say “that is Ema’s water”, mentioning the organisation, because it came from outside not from them. Yes, well they have water, they needed water, but the organisation, the approach they used, … they just gave them water, they didn’t train them to own and when like a tap or a pipe breaks they just leave it, because it is not their water. They are actually the ones benefiting from it, but they look at it as external, not from them. So that’s why some NGOs don’t … they work, they have successes, but sustainability of them is another big challenge (Peace, March 2009).

Peace’s example invites us to question the meaningfulness of achieving results in development projects without the active involvement of communities, by exploring the detrimental long-term impact of envisaging communities as beneficiaries rather than actors. If this disempowering effect occurs for material results, such as the construction of a gravity water scheme, the meaningfulness of pre-established results must be questioned in areas such as democratisation and more generally in social change agendas.

Secondly, donors’ heavy reliance on predefined and standardised systems and approaches seems to impinge on NGOs’ ability to engage meaningfully with the distinctiveness of the contexts where they operate. We have discussed this with reference to the standardised project format proposed by Effective Aid and to Aid for All’s monitoring and evaluation system. The constraints resulting from the adoption of standardised models and formats also emerged as a key issue in field interviews, as illustrated by the extract below:

It happened to be in a donor training of gender mainstreaming, so we had a system called… I don’t even remember it… Stages, … and for me these stages I did not even understand …. I did not learn about gender until I engaged with local grassroots people. So what I am saying is that we have formats, we have questionnaires, we have … some people call it the twelve boxes, where we have to fit everything. It’s so mechanical, it’s not fluid. I think what we should have had is … we believe in this, we envision this, we see these are the main challenges, let’s go down and share with this people and see what would be the best road toward this vision. Let’s share what we think, what we believe, because the western donors believe… most of them believe in social justice. Wonderful, because that’s what we also believe in […] But the problem has been how to reach that […] Does everybody have to be in church, read the same bible, the same verse, convert? (Hope, February 2009).

The extract above sheds light on a crucial issue: that the adoption of a standardised approach seems to work against an effective engagement with local
communities. This is not only because lived experiences, challenges and aspirations hardly fit the mechanical reasoning that underpins development management tools and systems, but especially because the adoption of standardised models seems to be detrimental to meaningful bottom-up participation and contribution. In other words, rather than being universally valid, development management thinking and practice seem to contribute to sustaining the donors’ regime of truth, curtailing the possibilities of using other lenses and approaches, and more generally of revealing other possible truths.

Thirdly, we have seen that funding allocation procedures tend to reward NGOs which share donors’ agendas and conceptions of ‘results’ and which are more prone to complying with them (for whatever reason, including organisational survival or short-term financial gain). This hinders opportunities for the elaboration and implementation of bottom-up development projects and for the emergence of alternative agendas to those of donors. A good example is Agandi’s struggle to find funding for scaling up some of its pilot projects, which had been developed through bottom-up consultation and negotiation, such as one involving four schools and the local government. The vignette of a meeting between Agandi and potential donor Effective Aid showed how the latter considered Agandi’s project not to be marketable, because “donors want to see results and the project closed”. Effective Aid therefore invited Agandi to develop a new project proposal that would accommodate donors’ preferences and conditions, which implied the adoption of standardised models and importantly a complete disregarding of what had been learnt, negotiated and decided during the pilot project.

The exclusion of NGOs and communities from the definition of which results count seems in other words to significantly hinder bottom-up development thinking and practice, undermining the right of self-determination of communities and NGOs, intended to enable them to shape the development projects involving them. Related to this is the chasm identified between the stated mission and actual work of Ugandan NGOs: in field interviews, many leaders of NGOs admitted to conducting projects detached from their mission, simply because they could not find funding in line with their own ideas, values and projects.

Hence, far from being neutral and universal as maintained in much mainstream literature (see Chapter Three), dominant development management discourse
seems capable of altering quite significantly the focus, goals and methodologies of NGOs, as this research arguably demonstrates.

In particular, by adopting a neo-Gramscian perspective, this research has shown how the claimed superiority of results-based management is often instrumentally invoked to elevate specific externally-driven agendas and to secure the commitment and involvement of NGOs in development programmes not of their making. More generally, results-based management appears to effectively undermine NGOs’ counter-hegemonic potential. In Chapter Two, drawing on Gramsci’s work, I suggested that this potential depends largely on NGOs’ ability to link their agendas organically to those they claim to represent and support, and to provoke change accordingly. Development management imperatives seem to impinge on both possibilities, first by requiring NGOs to switch their focus from local communities’ aspirations and challenges towards donors’ priorities, as is implied in funding allocation procedures. Secondly, it seems to do so by rewarding compliance with established goals and programmes, emerging not only from funding allocation procedures but more generally from the difficulty Ugandan NGOs experience in reconciling mission with survival.

7.1.1 Concluding Reflections: Linking Findings from the Field with Academic Perspectives

In Chapter Three I analysed three main positions within the debate on development management, namely the orthodox, reformist and radical positions.

Taken together, these findings resonate with radical critiques aimed at illuminating the political nature of management and its embeddedness in the wider political and social context. My findings suggest in particular that management imperatives and requirements nurture the asymmetrical power relations that characterise the aid industry and that they are effectively deployed to elevate top-down agendas while marginalising bottom-up alternatives. In this sense, the technocratic aura of development management, rather than being a problem in itself, as suggested by reformist perspectives, effectively obfuscates which interests and agendas are privileged by the adoption of certain management systems and tools.

This study also invites one to question the role of mediator envisaged for NGOs in orthodox development management perspectives, and the latter’s
underpinning assumptions that different agendas and interests can be harmoniously reconciled. This assumption underplays the competition and possible conflict among different agendas and obfuscates the power asymmetries that characterise the aid industry, both issues that emerge clearly from this research. In Chapter Six I have discussed in particular the difficulties of merging bottom-up development practice and thinking with the ‘effectiveness’ agenda, for example, as this is currently understood in the development industry. The effectiveness agenda requires NGOs to comply with top-down, externally-set plans and to achieve (measurable) results according to priorities and timings established in London or Washington.

That said, it should be noted that there are also a few examples showing the possibility of alternative understandings of ‘good’ (or ‘effective’) development practice, such as Agandi’s pilot projects. Crucial among the conditions that make such bottom-up practices possible would seem to be the mutually beneficial partnership established during the process. Also crucial were the donor’s attitude and its willingness to let Agandi decide the approach, the agenda, the expected results and the timing of the projects. This arguably allowed Agandi to engage meaningfully with the local communities, in the sense that the latter had the opportunity to analyse their challenges, exchange views with counterparts operating in different districts and especially shape the project according to their own needs and aspirations. In turn, Agandi’s focus and its rooted relations with local communities were crucial in the partnership with the donor, insofar as it enabled Agandi to provide the donor with resources, cases, knowledge and experience that could be fed into its plans and goals regarding the Ugandan democratisation process. In other words, the donor had its own priorities and goals, which included promoting civic education, a goal it shared with Agandi. Thereafter, it was the actors directly involved in the project who negotiated and decided what civic education was and how to promote it, giving them the opportunity to articulate their own interests and goals.

This example suggests that the notion of effectiveness can be redefined, by putting at the forefront of development agendas and practices the right of Ugandan citizens and communities to determine their own development. Self-determination does not imply lack of negotiation; on the contrary, the diversity of Uganda’s social fabric (similar to that of Italy or the UK, for example), requires negotiation and mediation among the existing actors and interests. In this sense, the principle of self-determination invites us to unpick categories
such as ‘the poor’, ‘the marginalised’, ‘the stakeholders’ or ‘the beneficiaries’ and engage with the diversity of the human experience, which seems to be currently obfuscated by mainstream development management. From this perspective, it is important for development management to nurture thinking and practices that give voice and space to those increasingly silenced by the aid industry. Thus, rather than focusing on ‘harmonising’ multiple stakeholders’ needs and on being accountable to all of them, as currently professed by NGO management orthodoxy, for NGOs committed to radical change and emancipation it seems crucial to reconfigure their environment and relations, discriminating among the different actors, exposing their antagonistic agendas and making choices accordingly. Against this background, OD could be recast as a process which enables and supports NGOs in developing and nurturing their political projects, in adopting practices and approaches suited to their goals and missions and in linking these organically with the struggles and aspirations of those who currently have no space and no voice.

7.2 Reflection on the OD Processes

As explained in Chapter Four, my research approach focused on three key aspects of OD: participation, everyday experience and change. This implied a twofold focus on enhancing practical knowledge and stimulating critical reflection on it. In other words, while my work with both Karibu and Agandi was deeply shaped by their aspiration to put in place and/or master the management systems and tools required by the aid industry, I also found it crucial to open up possibilities for a critical redefinition of these practices according to what I and Ugandan colleagues considered locally relevant and meaningful. As discussed in Chapter Four, my approach was also fundamentally inspired by a commitment to disengage from the colonial syndrome. This I defined as an effort to free my analytical lenses from both orientalist (‘othering’) and occidentalist (universalising) constraints. It meant adopting a radical connectivity, contextuality and historicity (Escobar 2008), paying constant attention to the context of the research, taking in both its historical and its emergent, contingent dimensions.

In practical terms, this meant adopting an open-ended methodological stance, free from restrictions such as rigid research design or inflexible OD approaches. Similarly, my intellectual purpose required a strong commitment to negotiating
as many aspects of my work as possible, including my overall approach to OD, my role within the organization and my interpretation of particular events.

Below I offer some concluding reflections on how this approach fared in practice during my work in the field. I discuss some of the challenges I faced in the organisations I worked for and how these helped me to learn what my role and my overall approach actually meant. I begin with a field perspective on my experience with Karibu, followed by the same for Agandi.

7.2.1 Karibu

Working with Karibu prompted the recognition of a number of core contradictions in my initial assumptions and by raising my awareness of some of its possible limitations, helped me to refine my overall approach.

My initial agreement with Karibu was that I would volunteer for twelve months, potentially extendable. Given this relatively extended timeframe and in line with my research philosophy and approach, I began by explicitly considering myself a learner. In order to be able to support Karibu’s OD, I first needed to learn about its work, partners and environments, so I began my research/practice by ‘living the organisation’, without rigidly structuring my time or activities. I took all available opportunities to get to know Karibu better and to build relationships with the staff.

Within a few weeks, however, I experienced two significant challenges which led me to question some of my assumptions, especially my initial approach. The first of these challenges originated from the competing understandings of OD held by Karibu’s director and by me; the second related to the participatory dimension of my approach. Karibu’s director expected from the OD process the solution to specific needs that she had already identified, which she thought the organisation had neither the skills nor the time to address.\textsuperscript{98} This expectation was problematic for me, not only because it excluded other members of the organization from problem definition, but also because when I arrived, I saw my role more as enabling a building process than dispensing technical solutions. The idea of working on my own to produce corporate documentation, on the basis of a need identified solely by the director, was in other words profoundly different.

\textsuperscript{98} In Chapter Five (section 5.2) we saw that these needs revolved around the corporate documentation which Karibu needed to develop in order to meet donors’ and legal requirements.
from how I had envisaged my role and contribution, and more generally from how I had traditionally made sense of my work. This led me to start questioning my assumptions and commitments: to what extent was I willing to free my approach from predefined dimensions? To what extent was I willing to negotiate my role according to the director’s expectations?

I thus became more sharply aware of potential conflicts within my assumptions: was a commitment to free my approach from predefined dimensions constrained by what I now clearly recognise as a normative stance on my part? Could I choose to focus on providing readymade solutions, rather than enhancing the organisation’s ability to identify and address its own problems? Was my normative stance encroaching on Karibu’s right to determine its own needs and aspirations with regard to OD? The conflict between my understanding of OD and that of Karibu’s director highlighted the difficulties of balancing Karibu’s right of self-determination with my right to live up to my professional, ethical and political principles. Dealing with these questions helped me to reflect on the shifting line between emancipatory and patronising, if not neo-colonial, approaches: while on one hand I had started with the assumption that Karibu knew better than me what was needed for its development, on the other I was reluctant to accept or unable to value the director’s diagnosis and requests. Importantly, the issue at stake did not concern the content of OD, but the process: I could understand the director’s need to have ‘proper’ documentation in place, but I knew no way to help Karibu to achieve this goal without working with its members. How could I be helpful without understanding what they were doing, what their challenges, priorities and aspirations were?

The second set of challenges I faced related to the participatory dimension of my approach. I soon realised that Karibu was autocratically managed. Although it had only four members of staff, it was extremely hierarchical, seriously challenging my commitment to participation and equality.

The director simultaneously played the roles of founder, director, programme manager, field worker and accountant, while other members of staff seemed to have no clear roles or responsibilities, but simply did what the director asked them to do each day. If she was not in the office on a particular day (which happened quite often, as she was in charge of project implementation), they had virtually nothing to do, so spent their time reading the Bible and talking to each
other. This is not to say that they did not wish to contribute to developing the organisation; but they seemed to lack even the most basic information on what the organisation was doing or had done, which significantly hindered their ability to make meaningful contributions to its work.

The following example is a case in point. One day Josephine, Karibu’s director, asked the accounts assistant, Kath, to prepare the annual report for 2006, and asked me to support Kath, who needed “technical knowledge on how to write an annual report”. However, it emerged that Kath had not worked with Karibu in 2006, that she knew virtually nothing of what Karibu did in that year and that there were no written records of 2006 activities. In response, the director complained of “poor record keeping, poor documentation. We don’t have [a] record of what we do”. The discussion ended without a clear way forward. A few days later, the director asked Kath about the annual report and when told that Kath had not written it she complained that “here everything must be my initiative. Staff should start owning the organisation … Karibu survives only on my work … You know very well I can get another job, even with the UN, but before [that] I want this organisation to grow”. This pattern – of setting staff tasks that they could not accomplish, then reproaching them for their lack of initiative and poor contribution to the organization – occurred several times. My approach to it was threefold. First, I had to deal with my own discomfort: I found the devaluing attitude towards the staff that I perceived in the director’s behaviour embarrassing at best and humiliating at worst. My perception was that these events, rather than encouraging staff to own the organisation, allowed the director to restate her authority and nurture the power asymmetries within the organisation. Secondly, I tried to understand how the staff felt about these situations and more generally about their work with Karibu. This meant stepping back and questioning my own perceptions, acknowledging that how we feel and interpret the world around us depends on factors including individual, social, cultural and political assumptions. Thirdly, I tried to understand the director’s expectations of the staff and whether and how, beside the work on corporate documentation, the OD process could address the working of Karibu.

My perception from talking with the three members of staff was that they alternated between a desire to change the way Karibu worked and to protect its status quo, which provided (although irregularly) a salary in a context where

99 The director seemed to be aware of this, lamenting that “these people, they do not work if I am not around […] I have to control staff … I’ll do surprise visits to check on staff”.

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other job opportunities were very scarce. While they progressively opened up and shared with me their discomfort, lamenting the “arrogance” of the director and her tendency to “overreact for small mistakes”, they also showed little faith in the possibility of changing the working of Karibu. In fact, one of them clearly told me: “In Karibu it is like this, you can only agree with the director”.

This autocratic culture and the junior staff’s reluctance to alter it challenged from the start my orientation towards participation and equality. Since I had approached my research mainly as self-reflexive practice, i.e. first-person action research on the practice of OD (see section 1.4.1), I found the NGO’s way of working challenging, at times unpleasant, yet also somewhat stimulating. I spent weeks going to the office, reflecting on what was happening, questioning my perceptions and interpretations and trying to understand how I could work with Karibu. With time, though, I started questioning whether I could work there. I found the director increasingly reluctant to share information and cooperate with me, for example. In one instance she did not come to the office for three consecutive weeks; nobody knew exactly why, or what they were supposed to do during that time. She also systematically postponed activities that she and I had planned to undertake together. Generally, she provided me with contradictory and ambiguous information regarding Karibu, in conversations that often left me quite bewildered.100

I initially attributed the conflicting information and Josephine’s reluctance to cooperate to her lack of trust in me, so I resolved to strengthen my engagement and to build meaningful relations with all Karibu staff. Over time, however, I concluded that the director’s main objective was simply to ‘put the organisation right’ vis-à-vis external requirements and that she had no interest in engaging in work that went beyond developing corporate documentation, despite other important issues which emerged, such as the distrust between the director and her staff. More precisely, with time it appeared to me that my assignment was confined to fabricating abstract policies and strategies, detached from Karibu’s work and practice and as such not implementable, but which needed to be displayed so that Karibu could renew its NGO permit and bid for funding. Directly or indirectly, this narrow focus implied my complicity with the working of Karibu,

100 For example, did the organisation have a board? I was initially told that it had a fully functioning one, only to be told later that due to lack of funds, board meetings only took place by phone, so the board could not function properly. According to the director, Karibu was also a ‘membership’ NGO: however, I could find no written documentation on membership, and every time I asked her about it, she gave me conflicting information (regarding the procedure, the cost, the benefits for members and so on).
which increasingly conflicted with my professional, ethical and political stance. I began to think that Karibu, rather than empowering the marginalised, as stated in its official documents, was actually creating marginalisation and social stratification. This was epitomised by Karibu’s salary structure: the office assistant, Gadi, was paid less than a twentieth of the director’s salary. This amount, which he received every 30-45 days, was so little (roughly the equivalent of twenty British pounds) that he struggled to meet his basic needs. Despite this, he was once suspended for two weeks without pay for failing to inform the director that a letter had arrived while she was away. He tried to tell her that he had no money to telephone her, but she did not consider this an adequate reason. Later that day I talked with Josephine, trying to address the problem of how staff could communicate with her while she was doing fieldwork, but this became another occasion for her to complain about their lack of responsibility and ownership.

After several weeks seriously reflecting on my work and questioning my own approach, I decided that I should cut short my cooperation with the organisation. Given what I was learning about Karibu, the idea of working on my own to fabricate policies and strategies appeared less and less meaningful. I was five months into the assignment, so it was a costly decision emotionally, professionally and for its practical consequences. Having spent almost two years planning and organising my work in Uganda, which was expected to last between twelve and twenty-four months, by deciding to leave Karibu after only five months, I was calling into question my whole volunteering project, as well as my research. However, after a few weeks, the INGOs that had facilitated my contact with Karibu offered me the chance to work with Agandi.

In retrospect, my experience with Karibu was not entirely negative from a field perspective. It helped me to become more aware of certain aspects of my approach, particularly the difficulty of striking a balance between an open-ended orientation on one hand and a normative stance on the other. More generally, my experience with Karibu also offered me rich ‘ground level’ insights into management and OD processes within a small NGO. It exposed the fragile balance between OD’s commitment to participatory and democratic methodologies and the OD practitioner’s reliance on top management support. This is especially relevant when working with organisations with culturally embedded power asymmetries which are then institutionalised, as seemed to be the case with Karibu. I think my experience with Karibu might help to debunk
the romanticising of local communities or local NGOs (see section 4.3.1), while inviting us to consider seriously the political dimension of OD intervention. In this sense, my position clearly differs from that of Chris Argys, who maintains that OD is a neutral intervention, so much so that he envisages no ethical or political dilemma in undertaking OD with the Ku Klux Klan, for example (Argys cited in Woodworth et al. 1982: 313). On the contrary, I think that while negotiation and mediation are crucial in the OD process, it is a necessarily political intervention which, wittingly or unwittingly, both shapes and is shaped by power dynamics, values and ideologies (à la Gramsci).

Overall, I think that I was faithful to my commitment to be sensitive to the diverse agendas of Karibu (as in any social setting), and especially to those that might be silenced by those OD processes (or development projects) which overlook power asymmetries. I also think that I respected my Ugandan colleagues’ right to self-determination, especially the junior staff: I listened to them, talked with them and strove to understand whether I could be helpful, but did not feel myself to be their saviour. I understood and respected their interest in preserving the status quo and I believe that they understood and respected my decision to leave.

To conclude, perhaps a case of failed OD can provide constructive lessons, especially considering that most if not all mainstream OD literature is based on successful OD interventions (see for instance James 1998, Ubels et al. 2010). These lessons are not only personal; as indicated above, they also reveal the intricate dilemmas of OD interventions and the ethical and political decisions involved in undertaking OD.

7.2.2 Agandi

The challenges I experienced when working with Agandi were in some respects similar to those facing me at Karibu, being related to the internal hierarchy of the organization, largely in connection with my normative stance regarding equality and participation. In Agandi’s case, the peculiarity was that the organisation’s internal hierarchy was reinforced by age and gender differentials: the director was a sixty-year old man, while the three members of staff were all women in their late twenties. This difference, in my eyes, shaped internal relations and behaviour significantly. The staff of Agandi and its four member organisations showed respect, if not deference, for Agandi’s director. They
generally addressed him as ‘M’zee’, a Bantu term conveying consideration and respect for a mature person. He typically dominated meetings and public events, talking for hours without any interruption, intrusion or opposition.

In contrast to Karibu, however, at Agandi I was able to find ways to cooperate constructively with all members of staff. I could and did enhance opportunities for participatory reflection and decision-making for the organisation as a whole. In hindsight, crucial to this was the choice I negotiated during the first two or three months to differentiate my work and my role. Working with Agandi, I divided my time between shadowing colleagues as they undertook various tasks and activities, joining or facilitating team activities and accompanying colleagues on fieldwork. Below I illustrate in more detail how I dealt with these different roles.

Through shadowing, I became involved, particularly but not exclusively, with work meant to support the organisation’s relationships with donors, ranging from the preparation of reports and project proposals to attendance at and contribution to all the meetings Agandi had with actual and/or potential donors during my assignment. In this type of activity, my work with the different members of staff was shaped primarily by their roles and tasks. When I worked with staff involved in project implementation, the focus was on planning and monitoring activities and reports; with financial staff, we focused on financial reporting and budgeting; with the director, it was on collaborative, joint work on developing proposals, meeting actual and potential donors, and reviewing together all the reports that needed to be sent to donors. Two important caveats are needed here, however. First, individual responsibilities and tasks were not as clear cut as they may appear from the descriptions above: my shadowing had both individual and team dimensions. Secondly, I did not claim expertise in all the different areas of work I was involved in. In fact, I often felt as bewildered as my colleagues by certain M&E matrices or other requirements. What I did try to do, however, was to share as much as I could of my experience, knowledge and perspectives, paying constant attention to experiential knowledge and critical reflection. Importantly, I think, the reflection was not separated from practice. Rather, it was exactly this contextualisation of management requirements in Agandi’s local context that stimulated the critical reflections which led, where possible, to a redefinition of these requirements. In this way, practices such as monitoring or reporting were rendered meaningful for Agandi’s work.
My second role was to participate in team activities. Besides regular team meetings of different kinds, there were board meetings every two or three months and so-called technical meetings of all the staff in Agandi’s four member organisations who were involved in the implementation of Agandi’s projects. My role in these meetings changed with time and with the nature and objectives of the meeting: sometimes I facilitated team meetings, at other times I just listened (especially at the beginning) and sometimes I actively contributed. Finding the right balance took time. My active participation in board and technical meetings progressively increased during the 14 months of my assignment. At the same time, over the long run, increasing experience helped me to understand better when a contribution might be of use and when it would not.

Importantly, my efforts to decolonise my lenses and my approach also invited me to understand how decisions were taken, what factors were considered and what perspectives and worldviews they sustained and implied, rather than providing recommendations or solutions. In addition, my status as an outsider meant not only that contrary to all my colleagues, I was much less likely to be affected by the decisions taken, but also that I was less able to appreciate the impact of decisions and actions on the intricate web of relations between Agandi and local government, local communities and the wider social setting. I thus strove to adhere primarily to a facilitation and enabling role, which also meant limiting my participation to ensure that the responsibility for making decisions remained entirely with Agandi. This implied a tricky juggling of my identity as an insider, which legitimised my participation in and contribution to Agandi’s life, with that of an outsider, a transient foreign advisor who could not and should not claim responsibility for Agandi’s decision making.

The third type of activity I engaged in with Agandi was fieldwork, namely activities with the communities involved in its projects. Here, I never took an active role: I mainly observed and learnt from what my colleagues were doing. I found fieldwork extremely beneficial for three reasons: first, it helped me to understand the contexts in which Agandi was working and its activities, thus helping me with the overall OD process. Secondly, it contributed to building more equal relations with my colleagues, as during fieldwork in rural areas, they would answer my questions and share their knowledge with me, which greatly contributed to my learning process throughout the research. Thirdly, it allowed me to get to know a different side of Agandi: while its office work was significantly
shaped by the dominant figure of the director, fieldwork provided interesting insights into staff roles and responsibilities and gave me a more nuanced understanding of the extent of their autonomy.

In methodological terms, I found combining individual shadowing, teamwork and fieldwork quite beneficial. In particular, it helped me to engage in meaningful ways with the members of the organisation and to understand its different layers.

7.2.3 Concluding Reflections

The open-ended approach I chose for this research/practice presented both opportunities and limitations. In terms of opportunities, it allowed me to learn about and engage with the local context and shape my approach accordingly, balancing my orientation toward change, participation and emancipation with a constant attention to existing intra- and interorganisational dynamics, asymmetries, norms and interests. In this sense, my daily presence over several months was crucial to building meaningful relationships with my Ugandan colleagues and opening a space for genuine exchange and conversation. These in turn helped me to learn how to mould my role and shape my practice. The moulding and negotiation of my role was in fact a constant feature of my work in Uganda until its very end, insofar as the research took place in a social setting continuously in the making, about which I never stopped learning.

Beside dialogue with my Ugandan colleagues and extensive participation in the organisations’ life, my whole research was also accompanied by self-reflexive practice, a crucial aspect of my open-ended approach. Reflecting on my practice provided invaluable support for a critical review of my assumptions, actions and interpretations; it allowed me to nurture a “passionate detachment” (Haraway 1988) that supported my learning and informed my practice, as well as helping me identify and follow common threads of inquiry throughout the research. Thus, self-reflexive practice helped me to avoid an ‘anything goes’ stance and to maintain the ethical, professional and academic rigour required by my dual identity as practitioner and researcher.
Furthermore, self-reflexive practice was crucial in engaging with my multiple identities and positionalities\textsuperscript{101} during empirical work. In particular, my whiteness and westernness were objects of significant reflection. Contrary to the criticism of the development industry’s silence on race and colour (White 2002), these topics were not generally treated as taboo during my work with Ugandan NGOs. My Ugandan colleagues often spoke of black/white and African/western asymmetries and differences; they also referred to me explicitly as white and western. These conversations and my reflections on them not only contributed to wider reflections on power asymmetries, but also enhanced my awareness of my positionalities and guided my effort towards equal relations with my Ugandan colleagues. This effort implied not only questioning my assumptions and interpretations, but also those of my colleagues, especially when the colour of my skin allowed the unwarranted attribution to me of qualities such as expertise, credibility or integrity and of limitations such as an inability to appreciate or comprehend local values and practice. In this respect, and in line with my commitment to disengage from the colonial syndrome (discussed in Chapter Four), I strove to recognise and reflect on differences, while questioning fixed identities and the resulting unnecessary divides (see also section 4.2.3).

As far as limitations are concerned, as mentioned previously, my experience with Karibu in particular revealed some of the possible difficulties of adopting an open-ended, participative approach to OD in the presence of significant power asymmetries and the drive to preserve the status quo. In addition, an open-ended approach may also be less valuable when the time available is limited and when there is an urgency to achieve predefined results. In respect of such urgency, it is also important to note that the OD processes I engaged in with Karibu and Agandi were quite peculiar, in that they had not been requested and paid for by a donor, as is usually the case in the African NGO sector. This meant that donors’ expectations and pressures, often recognised as crucial in shaping OD processes in development contexts (Joy 1997), were not significant in this case, perhaps facilitating the adoption of an open-ended approach.

Going beyond the dichotomy of opportunities and limitations, I would like to offer another reflection on my identities as outsider, westerner, white woman and advisor. First, I have reflected at length on the impact these identities could have on the overall OD process, starting from the expectations formulated by

\textsuperscript{101} Following Franks, I use the term ‘positionalities’ to refer “to the way in which the individual identity and affiliations we have are positioned by others” (Franks 2002: 5).
Karibu’s and Agandi’s directors. More precisely, I wondered whether and how the technocratic aura of OD and the apparent lack of social change focus were influenced by my westernness. As I mentioned in Chapter One, my colleagues in both NGOs assumed from the start that I possessed specialist knowledge on how to ‘put the organization right’, where what was right had been defined somewhere else and was known to me. Furthermore, I perceived a distrust regarding my ability to comprehend what were often defined as ‘local things’, which might have played a role in excluding relational and social matters from the OD process. With Agandi I remarked in particular how, despite my background as an organisational psychologist, which I had shared with them, I was still expected to contribute predominantly to the mastering of technocratic formats, which, as I have mentioned, were sometimes as alien to me as to them. More generally, I felt that both Karibu and Agandi drew links between my western identity and my ability to handle donors’ requirements, and that this might have significantly shaped the outward, compliance-driven orientation of the OD processes in which I was engaged.

Furthermore, a remark by Agandi’s director that “Donors are white and they trust white people more than Ugandans” (see section 4.4) helps to explain the shape taken by the OD process. Was the ‘bridge with donors’ I was expected to provide another pathway for the perpetuation of neo-colonial relations? And what about the notion that local communities “think that if there is a white person it must be something important. You add value simply by being there”? The idea of adding value by virtue of my colour was certainly discomforting for me. Would Agandi’s director have engaged me as OD advisor if I had been black?

Notwithstanding my discomfort, I appreciated the candour of Agandi’s director in putting on the table an issue which we often discussed but which is rarely mentioned in the aid industry (White 2002, Kothari 2006). More generally, I could easily feel that my whiteness was a primary mark of my identity, deeply shaping my relations with Ugandans, not only within Karibu and Agandi. For instance, I cannot count the number and diversity of people who approached me, in whatever situation, telling me either that they intended to found an NGO or what their NGO was doing, to see whether I could help them, with funding or otherwise. Why should they think that I had something to offer to their NGOs?
In my work with Karibu and Agandi, I positioned myself as a learner in an attempt to reject the label of expert and my general status derived from my colour. With Agandi, it took me a few months to be completely discharged of any formal financial role. I believed that they were asking me to check the financial report partly because they thought that my name on it would be an asset in the eyes of their donors and partly because they expected it to deter malpractice; in both cases, I was asked to play a role which conflicted with my values and principles, for it would have reinforced bias and inequalities separating me from my colleagues and other Ugandans.

More generally, my overall experience of working with NGOs has led me to believe that there is something profoundly wrong in the Ugandan aid industry, where being European or Ugandan, white or black, does make a difference. It was clear to me that this difference was significantly outside my agency, i.e. beyond my stance, choices and acts. I was working in a context which had its own history and was indeed part of a broader social, economic and political context – one which I am certain can be changed, but only by engaging with it, rather than deleting it from the research or practice agenda, as is too often the case (White 2002).

7.3 Main Contribution and Further Research

I believe that this research provides original contributions to knowledge in four ways. First, it provides a detailed account of how development management discourse is interpreted and experienced from the point of view of two Ugandan NGOs. Accounts of how the managerialisation of NGO work has been experienced by NGOs in Africa are few and far between. This study helps to fill this gap.

The study also adds more generally to contemporary critical debates on development management. As discussed in Chapter Three, management is predominantly portrayed in the development industry as a technical and neutral discipline. Only in the last few years have critical perspectives emerged to question this apolitical stance. In this respect, this research provides further critical scope, by showing in some detail, through an extensive empirical study, how management can be deployed in favour of certain agendas over others within a specific context, ultimately sustaining the power asymmetries that characterise the contemporary aid industry.
Thirdly, this research has fruitfully deployed the Gramscian notion of hegemony as a heuristic lens for the interpretation of the managerialisation of the NGO sector. In this respect, contrary to dominant perspectives, which tend to portray African NGOs as helpless, passive victims of western domination, the study highlights how NGOs themselves may wittingly or unwittingly help to nurture and legitimise the expansion of dominant management agendas.

Finally, the research can be said to add to the stock of knowledge on methodology, by critically contending with the specificity of doing research and OD in Africa from a western background. Chapter Four recounts in particular the need to develop research practices committed to recognising and questioning neo-colonial and other oppressive dimensions and assumptions that might be embedded in knowledge production processes. This study constitutes an attempt to translate such a commitment into an empirical investigation, based on suggestions and inputs derived both from debates on postcolonialism and from the ambit of critical management studies, two fields currently dominated by theoretical investigation.

Further research in this area could take various directions. One would be that of integrating perspectives drawn from undertaking OD processes with NGOs of different sizes and resource bases from the limited ones of Karibu and Agandi. Clearly, Karibu’s and Agandi’s rural and wider geographical locations, their limited staffing, the precariousness of their funding and their overall instability have shaped the OD process in significant ways. These questions arise: How is OD understood and shaped in larger NGOs? What about NGOs with a broader funding base? What about NGOs located in the capital?

Another line of inquiry would be to investigate OD in NGOs in other sub-Saharan countries. In the first three chapters I have often made references to similarities between Uganda and other countries in the region, with regard to their history, their development policies and the NGO sector. Yet my field focus was on Uganda. To what extent are the OD and management themes and issues that emerged from my research applicable to NGOs in other African countries?

Finally, research with a more normative stance might investigate whether and how OD can support the de-linking of NGOs from the aid industry. For example, during my work in Uganda I came across a few NGOs that were making
conscious efforts to address their dependency on western institutional donors and the aid industry’s policies and practices. Their aim was to overcome the associated constraints in engaging with the development industry that have been analysed in this study. Would it be possible to investigate and give voice to these attempts, and by doing so contribute to developing auto-centric OD practices and perspectives that put the right of self-determination at the forefront of development research and practice? I believe that such research could provide interesting avenues, especially for those researchers and practitioners engaged in the search for alternatives to the current neoliberal orthodoxy in African development.
Appendix I - Political and Economic History of Uganda

Colonial History

The geographical borders of Uganda were defined by the British during their protectorate, which formally started in 1894 and ended in 1962 (Karugire 1980:102). The British arrived first in the Kingdom of Buganda103, the central region around the current capital Kampala, and after having ensured an alliance with the Kabaka and the support of the Baganda104, expanded their invasion towards the East, the West and the North, mainly following imperialist strategies and negotiations with other colonial powers (Karugire 1980: 49-98). Following almost three decades of negotiations and military interventions, in 1921 the British protectorate’s borders were eventually defined. The resulting country of Uganda is extremely diverse in language, economic activity and social and political arrangements.105

In the following pages I first analyse the colonial economic structure and then move to examine its administrative and political framework.

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102 However, the British, especially explorers and missionaries, had already been present in the kingdom of Buganda (the central region around the current capital Kampala) respectively since 1860 and 1877 (Karugire 1980: 56-62). Furthermore, in 1886 the Imperial British East Africa Company was set up and in 1980 Capitan Lugard arrived in Buganda, as representative of the company (Karugire 1980: 75-76).

103 ‘Buganda’ refers to the geographical area, ‘Baganda’ indicates the people of Buganda and ‘Kabaka’ denotes the king.

104 The colonial administration rewarded the Kingdom of Buganda’s support not only with a significant amount of autonomy, but also special gifts, such as land, and privileges, such as roles of authority. For instance, the Buganda Agreement of 1900 distributed 9000 square miles of land to Buganda’s members, while the remainder was declared Crown land; importantly, this agreement included large areas belonging to the Kingdom of Bunyoro, as a gift for Buganda’s support in the British invasion of Bunyoro (Mamdani 1999: 42-43, Karugire 1980: 66-84). This treaty, which changed existing rules of chiefship (partly hereditary, partly nominated by the Kabaka) also represents the first formal loss of independence of the Kingdom of Buganda (Karugire 1980: 81).

105 In particular, there were several independent kingdoms, especially in the southern region, (such as Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole), chiefdoms of varying dimensions and strengths and other polities such as the Karamojong, a nomadic and pastoral group regulated by the elders of the clans (Karugire 1980, Mamdani 1999: 17-39).
The Colonial Economic System

With regard to the economic sphere, this was unquestionably shaped according to the needs and ambitions of the coloniser. In pre-colonial Uganda there existed both feudal and communal social-economic systems, in both production was driven by consumption (and not accumulation) and trade followed the existing diversification in the production systems of the different polities. Colonial rule, by means of forced labour, forced crops as well as trade regulations, determined not only a drastic change in the overall mode of production, which was now to serve demands of raw materials (such as coffee and cotton) in the metropolis, but also in the nature of trade, transformed from internal to export-import (Mamdani 1999: 17-39; 138-146). More precisely, trade (export) became the driving force of production, thus laying the foundation of what Mamdani calls an underdeveloped and dependent economy, i.e. an import-export economy characterised by a gulf between production and consumption (“we do not produce what we consume, we do not consume what we produce”) (Mamdani 1999: 144). In this sense, colonialism has been aptly defined as “the midwife that assisted at the birth of European capitalism” (Loomba 1998: 10) insofar it not only provided raw materials and labour needed for the capitalist expansion of the metropolis, but it also secured captive markets for the export of European product.

Hence, in Uganda the colonial administration shaped the economy according to the needs of the British empire. It did so also through the introduction of ‘development programmes’. For instance, in 1929 the British government introduced ‘development’ programmes in the colonies, Uganda included, with the Colonial Development Act (Mamdani 1999:250, Barder 2005:3-4, Paquette 2007, Olutayo and Omobowale 2007). Consistently with the overarching colonial policy, at this time development was understood mainly in terms of developing agriculture and industry so to promote trade with the UK (Mamdani 1999: 138-146). Then in 1940 the Colonial Development and Welfare Act introduced the provision of welfare services, such as education and health, and it was claimed that it “once and for all placed the social and economic advancement of the peoples of the colonies in the forefront of Government policy and activity” (Jeffries 1943: 7). However, the welfare provisions were mainly at the service of the economic sector, insofar improvement in health rather than in education...
aimed at producing “a healthier and more efficient workforce, and above all a more predictable and less combative one” (Cooper 2008: 31). With regard to the economic development, it meant the enforcement of ‘progressive’ innovations in agriculture, which required a significant expansion of the colonial state in rural areas as well as a reinforcement of its authoritarian stance, needed to deal with peasants’ opposition and resistance toward the imposed ‘development’ programmes (Maxon 1994: 46-47).

Central to colonial policy in Uganda was ‘indirect rule’ (Wallbank 1934, Ormbsy-Gore 1935, Keane 1935), which became the dominant colonial policy in Africa in the early 20th century (Uzoigwe 2007, Oyebade 2007). Indirect rule rested on the establishment of ‘native authorities’, directed and controlled by colonial commissioners and officials; one of its architects, Sir Donald Cameron, explained that native authorities were designed to adapt for the purposes of local government the tribal institutions which the Native peoples of Africa have evolved for themselves, so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded and modified as they may be on the advice of British officers and by the general control of those officers (Sir Donald Cameron cited in Ormbsy-Gore 1935: 283-84).

However, despite the stated scope of preserving native traditions, indirect rule subverted, rather than enhanced, existing authorities and political arrangements (Karugire 1980: 118, Gartrell 1983), as I explain below.

Native Authorities

Native authorities, underpinned by the (inaccurate) belief that each African belongs to a tribe and that each tribe has a chief, incorporated traditional chiefs into the colonial administration, while keeping them under the control and supervision of colonial officers. However, if existing chiefs were reluctant to accept order from the colonial administration, as they often were, being unaccustomed to receiving orders, they were easily replaced with others more compliant, chosen by the British officials (Karugire 1980: 118). Where existing social and political arrangements did not imply a clear chiefship, the colonial

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106 For instance, with regard to education in Uganda, mostly provided by missionary schools largely funded by the colonial government, Mamdani notes that it was both technical and ideological (1999: 161-164): on the one hand it focused on technical skills needed by the colonial administration, on the other on values, such as loyalty and self-sacrifices, necessary to maintain the existing order (see also Manji and O’Coill 2002).
authority appointed ‘warrant chiefs’, i.e. collaborators willing to act as representatives of the colonial administration in the local government or native authority (Korieh 2007). Furthermore, the colonial administration often appointed chiefs from privileged ‘tribes’ and imposed them upon other tribes: for instance, as the British invasion expanded beyond the Kingdom of Buganda, Baganda chiefs were moved into many of the newly conquered areas (Mamdani 1999: 43).

The Native Authority Ordinance, promulgated in Uganda in 1919, accorded to chiefs extensive powers (judicial, administrative, legislative and executive), a status unknown in several of the different social arrangements (Mamdani 2004:23, Karugire 1980:124, Kabwegyere 1972, Gartrell 1983). Furthermore, while in pre-colonial Uganda there was a variety of societal arrangements (such as the clan and the elders) that ensured popular checks and the accountability of the chiefs, within the native authority chiefs had to be accountable to the colonial administration, which recruited them, trained them and paid them a salary (Mamdani 2004: 35-179, Gartrell 1983). Importantly, insofar as the chiefs ensured order, the supply of labour107 and the collection of taxes, they could enjoy wide autonomy, which more often than not was turned into abuse and further exploitation of the constituencies under their control (Gartrell 1983).

Notwithstanding some common features (such as the extensive power accorded to chiefs, forced labour and tax collection), the organisation of native authorities varied from area to area; the colonial administration signed ‘treaties’ with existing kingdoms108 and with independently organised native authorities in the other areas. Following the infamous colonial strategy of ‘divide and rule’ (Dicklitch and Lwanga 2003:487, Manji 1998:18, Mkandawire 2009, Mulinge and Lesetedi 1998), not only did each native authority have its own rules and mechanisms (supposedly following existing tribal customs), but they were also carefully kept separated by the colonial authority and often put in opposition

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107 For instance, in 1925 the commissioner of the (Ugandan) Western province received a telegram from the central state which stated: "Natives to be informed that three courses are open, cotton, labor for the Government, labor for planter [...] Only one thing to be made clear that they cannot be permitted to do nothing, and can be of no use to themselves or the country" (Mamdani 2004: 158).

108 Beside the 1900 Buganda agreement, the same year a treaty was signed with the Kingdom of Toro, in 1901 with the Kingdom Ankole and in 1933 with the Kingdom of Bunyoro (Adimola 1963: 328).
through the distribution of powers and privileges to certain tribes while excluding others.\textsuperscript{109}

The colonial administrative framework began to change in the mid-1940s. In 1947 the British Secretary of State for the Colonies invited all Governors of African colonies to establish “efficient” and “democratic” local government (Makara 2009: 96). Consequently, in Uganda in 1949 the Local Government Ordinance established district councils and standing committees, responsible for the administration of local affairs, which were progressively (but not exclusively) constituted by Africans, partly elected by the chiefs and partly nominated by the colonial officials. However, as far as democracy was concerned, the new ordinance brought little innovation. Firstly, the councillors being elected by the chiefs meant that the latter’s power if anything increased. Secondly, local governments lacked decisional power and were merely consultative, rather than true governing bodies, while the governor reserved for himself the right to dissolve the councils at any time (Karugire 1980: 123-142, Makara 2009: 98-99). More generally, Ugandans were systematically excluded from roles of governance and decision making processes. For instance, the Legislative Council, established in 1922 to support the governor, excluded Africans until 1954, when three of its fourteen members were Ugandan, albeit chosen by the colonial administration. Ugandan representation increased progressively (as did the overall membership) and in 1958, for the first time, elections were held for 18 African representatives within the Council (Adimola 1963: 328-329).

Finally, consistent with the principles of the native authorities, the local various governments were “tribally-oriented” independent entities (Karugire 1980: 127) with nothing in common but the governor, whom the masses hardly ever saw.

The divide and rule strategy was augmented by the special treatment reserved by the colonial administration for the Asians who were brought to Uganda from 1895, partly as indentured labour for the construction of the railway and partly to support the establishment of the colonial machinery (Mamdani 1999: 69). Those who remained after the railway was completed turned to trade, because they did not own land. The colonial administration, through specific regulations, strove to keep Ugandans in the agricultural sector, while promoting commerce among Indians, who soon had a monopoly of the trade sector (Mamdani 1975, 109).

\textsuperscript{109} Emblematic in this sense was the appointment of Baganda chiefs in the kingdoms of Bunyoro and Toro as well as in Kigezi. In addition, beside the distribution of land and positions of power, fragmentation and discrimination concerned other aspects such as education: schools were overwhelmingly concentrated in Buganda and completely absent from certain areas, such as the north (Karugire 1980: 134-142).
Karugire 1980: 146): in 1953, Indians controlled 97.5% of the trade in Kampala (Makara 2009: 108). In addition, among government employees, the salary of the African was inferior to that of his Asian counterpart (and the Asian salaries were inferior to those of the Europeans) (Mamdani 1999: 156-164). At independence, there was a remarkable disparity between Asians and Africans, with regard to both economic wellbeing and living standards (see Ramchandani 1973).

Races and Tribes

The above leads us to the second crucial dimension at the heart of colonial indirect rule, which concerns the divisions between races and tribes and that between civil law and customary laws (Mamdani 2004, 2002). Races were understood hierarchically, according to their supposed levels of civilisation, with white Europeans at the top, followed by other ‘non-native’ groups such as the Indians in East Africa (including Uganda) or the Tutsi in Rwanda. By contrast, natives were considered to belong to the realm of ethnicity (tribe) and were thus segregated horizontally accordingly to presumed pre-existing boundaries.

Importantly, while the other races were to different extents governed by civil law, administered in courts presided over by magistrates, natives were regulated by customary laws enforced by chiefs (who, as noted above, were accorded extensive powers) and colonial officials. This distinction was said to be in the natives’ interest:

Native tribes, as a whole, in East Africa cannot be expected to understand or appreciate the standards of a highly developed system of foreign law, and to impose it upon them is apt to give rise not only to misunderstandings but tends to produce in the native mind a bewildered sense of injustice (Hone 1939: 180).

Consistently with the overarching ‘indirect rule’ policy, native courts were said to respect rooted traditions and rules, “unless repugnant to natural justice and morality or to specific law of the Protectorate” (Hone 1939: 188). In other words, customary laws were accepted insofar as they complied with colonial rule. Two caveats are important here. Firstly, customary law was highly fragmented, as there existed as many native courts as native authorities (for instance’, on the diversity of native courts see Morris 1967). Secondly, while the definition of customary laws was strongly contested throughout the colonial period, with divergent claims on what was customary and what was not (Vincent 1989), the
enforcement of law usually lay within the remit of the chiefs, which further consolidated their power (Mamdani 2004: 122).

Thus, civil law, imported from the colonial homeland, was said to guarantee citizens’ rights and regulate relations between civil society and the state; by contrast, customary laws were about the imposition on natives of customs which were defined and often fabricated from time to time and from case to case. Rather than rights, they were concerned with taxes, punishment and labour (Mamdani 2004: 109-137). As Manji notes, when in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, it largely excluded Africans, most of whom were still under colonial rule and as such outside the realm of rights (Manji 1998: 19).

The British protectorate in Uganda witnessed several revolts, against the imposed chiefship, the system of taxation, trade regulations and racial discrimination (Kabwegyere 1972, Bowles 1975, Karugire 1980). As the colonial administration was highly fragmented and the native authorities rigidly separated, these protests were usually geographically limited. It was only in the mid-1940s that protests against colonial rule took a wider dimension, as explained in the next subsection.

**Toward Decolonisation**

In January 1945 and in April 1949 strikes and riots spread through both towns and rural areas, involving domestic servants, government workers and peasants, protesting against wages and working conditions. These were violently repressed by the colonial administration (Thompson 1992, Mamdani 1999: 178-180). The riots targeted especially compradorial chiefs and Asians traders, seen as the symbols of the colonial state. Beside the violent repression of the riots, the colonial administration introduced minimum wages for workers on one hand, while on the other subduing the trade union and cooperative movements, both key actors in organising the revolts. The Cooperative Society Ordinance in 1946 and the Trade Union Ordinances in 1952 severely curtailed the independence

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110 As Mamdani (2004) explains, the domain of ‘customs’ had been highly contested, for colonisers’ assumptions about a homogeneous, static and agreed framework, directed hierarchically by one chief, hardly represented pre-colonial arrangements. Thus, the (non-customary) extended powers attributed to the chiefs, including that of defining customs, coupled with colonial administration’s instrumental understanding of customs, made possible the enforcement of laws which were unknown in pre-colonial times (such as the payment of school fees, the imposition of certain agricultural methods and of taxes) and often opposed by ‘native’ communities (see also Apter 1999: 181-182).
and autonomy of these organisations (Mamdani 1999: 189-192, 197-199, Godfrey and Wilfred 2006: 20).

The Cooperative society Ordinance introduced a number of regulations so to direct and control the cooperative movement and channel them toward politically safe avenues; it also introduced financial assistance from the government, which in turn legitimised further government involvement, in the form of monitoring and assistance, in the cooperatives’ affairs (Mamdani 1999: 197-200, Godfrey and Wilfred 2006: 17-20). The Trade Union Ordinance declared illegal general unions, thus forcing existing unions to divide themselves according to their sector, established the activities for which the Unions’ fund could be used and made it mandatory for the unions to present financial statement to the colonial government (Mamdani 1999: 189-192).

In the 1950s the growing discontent, Britain’s economic difficulties following the Second World war and international pressure led the colonial government to start the slow process of decolonisation. For instance, we have already mentioned that the Legislative Council (Legco), established in 1922 to support the governor, opened its doors to Ugandans in 1954, initially with three (nominated) members, which rose to 30 in 1955; in 1957 for the first time an African woman became a member of Legco (Tamale 1999: 10). In 1958 the first elections were held for Ugandans to choose 18 representatives (Adimola 1963, Karugire 1980: 164-165).

District Councils were also increasingly ‘Africanised’ and from 1955 some districts were able to vote for a number of representatives, while in others Ugandan members continued to be nominated. In the Kingdom of Buganda, following pressure from the Governor, the parliament underwent significant changes: the Lukiko (Baganda parliament), then composed mainly of nominated chiefs, increased the number of its elected members to sixty out of eighty-nine (Mamdani 1999: 194). The civil service also underwent rapid Africanisation, so that in 1961, just before independence, 28% of the officers in the higher levels of the state apparatus were Ugandans (Mamdani 1999: 204). Similarly, a number of initiatives were taken to support Africans engaging in trade and business (see Mamdani 1999: 195-204).

The beginning of the 1950s also saw the formation of several political parties, such as the Uganda National Congress (UNC, formed in 1952), the Progressive Party (PP, set up in 1955), the Democratic Party (DP, constituted in 1956), the
Ugandan People’s Congress (UPC, 1960) and the Kabaka Yekka (KY, 1961) (Karugire 1980: 144-169). Not surprisingly, the political parties formed in Uganda before independence all had strong ethnic and religious dimensions (especially pro or contra Buganda and either Christian or Protestant) (Karugire 1980: 144-169, Mamdani 1999: 205-220, Sathyamurthy 1975). However, while the ethnic/religious stance was certainly significant, Mamdani argues that these parties were also divided by economic and class interests: for instance, the UPC leaders were mainly members of Legco (state bureaucrats), while KY was led by Buganda’s rich farmers (kulaks).\(^{111}\) We shall analyse this in the next subsection.

**Independence**

Uganda became an independent state on 9\(^{th}\) October 1962, a few months after the elections in April, which were won by the UPC (Karugire 1980: 168). The first Ugandan Constitution was based on a federal agreement, which accorded federal status and wide autonomy to the Kingdom of Buganda and semi-federal status to the other kingdoms, while the remaining parts maintained district administrations which were directly under the central government (Makara 2009: 110). This was the result of negotiations between the UPC and KY which, despite their divergences, such as the republican orientation of the former and the monarchism of the latter (Sathyamurthy 1994: 504), shared a desire to defeat the DP\(^{112}\) (Karugire 1980: 168). Thus, independence was not based on national unity; rather, there were two states, Buganda and Uganda, each with its parliament, dominated respectively by the kulaks of the KY and the state bureaucrats of the UPC.

Besides the political and ethnic divisions, the challenges at independence were enormous. As a 1962 World Bank report (IBRD 1962) observed, Uganda had a mainly agricultural economy, clearly dependent on exports, especially with regard to coffee and cotton, which represented 80% of Uganda’s export earnings. There were seven commercial banks, all foreign, and only one

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\(^{111}\) Kulaks is used with reference to rich farmers who supplement their household labour force with hired labour (Mamdani 1999: 151)

\(^{112}\) The DP was a catholic party formed in 1956, with the aim of subverting the power and privileges held by protestants (Karugire 1980: 159-162); however, although the majority of Baganda were Catholics, the party did not manage to secure a base among them, because the Baganda population was already politically organised around the parliament (Lukiko) and its federalist /secessionist agenda (Mamdani 1999: 218). The DP won the general election of March 1961, but this victory followed a boycott of the election by Buganda, which wanted to postpone it until federal status for the kingdom of Buganda was granted.
Ugandan bank, set up in 1950 to finance African business. At the top of the public sector, despite the above mentioned drive to Africanisation, in June 1961 there were still 1700 Europeans, while the majority of Africans were still at the lower grades. Finally, the bulk of the population was illiterate (IBRD 1962: 1-113).

The first Development Plan (1961-1966), developed hand in hand with the World Bank, focused on the expansion of export production, on one hand supporting ‘progressive’ farmers through credit schemes, on the other hand encouraging industrialisation by means of tariff protection and other incentives to attract foreign capital (Nabudere 1981: 111-117). Almost three-quarters of the budget of the Plan relied on foreign assistance and investment, although only 59% actually arrived (Nabudere 1981: 115).

Politically, the alliance between the KY and the UPC soon showed its shortcomings; the conflict between Prime Minister Obote (UPC leader) and President Mutesa (KY)113 reached its climax in 1965 with the referendum on the 'lost counties’, i.e. those counties of Bunyoro Kingdom given by the British to the Baganda in 1900. The vote was 75% in favour of a return to Bunyoro, thus reducing the territory and revenues of Buganda. At this point, the UPC-KY coalition ended. Meanwhile, Obote became progressively more repressive and authoritarian (Karugire 1980), while his party, being constituted by local leaders (former Legco representatives), began to show its weakness and lack of cohesion, reflecting the tensions (ethnic, religious and economic) among the districts (Sathyamurthy 1975: 453). In 1966 Obote unilaterally abrogated the 1962 constitution and imposed a new one, known as the ‘pigeonhole constitution’, because this was where Members of Parliament found it. This was passed without debate (Oloka-Onyango 1995: 16-17, Mukholi 2004), granting Obote extensive powers and de facto outlawing all kingdoms. It was followed by military intervention in Buganda which forced Mutesa into exile.

The 1967 Local Administration Act evoked significant features of the colonial period: for instance, it attributed to the chiefs, now formally incorporated into the state apparatus, virtually unrestricted powers (Makara 2009: 113). However, the same act also significantly decreased the autonomy of district councils and

113 In the 1962 Independence Constitution, Uganda was a monarchy with the Queen of the United Kingdom as Head of State; this changed with the 1963 constitutional amendment, which provided for a constitutional President; the national Assembly elected Mutesa, the king of Buganda (Mukholi 2004: 13-15).
increased the power of the Minister of Local Government, for instance by the introduction of key roles, such as Secretary-General and Chairman, appointed directly by the central government (Makara 2009: 110-112). In other words, while local governments were emptied of effective administrative and decisional powers, the chiefs embodied at local level the dictatorial tendency of the central government. Finally, in 1969 Obote banned all political parties except the UPC (Mbazira 2008: 15).

Meanwhile, the second development plan (1966-1971), like the previous one, focused on agricultural diversification and industrialisation, although the latter was given greater emphasis than before. The important novelty was that while the first plan relied heavily on financial assistance from the UK and the World Bank, the second was supported by twenty-five different sources (Nabudere 1981: 111-117).

In 1970 Obote, announcing a ‘move to the left’, decided on the nationalisation and Africanisation of the economy (including oil companies, banks and mines), an ambiguous and contradictory project, implemented through state-controlled institutions (Sejjaaka 2004: 101-102). According to Mamdani (Mamdani 1999: 260-281), the nationalisation strategy, rather than being based on socialist principles as Obote claimed, attempted to give state bureaucrats control over the economy; nationalisation was in fact implemented through partnerships with existing corporations, which maintained 50% of ownership and were financially compensated for the nationalised half. Other enterprises were expropriated and managed by newly created parastatal agencies (Okuku 2006: 142). Thus, nationalisation created new positions in the economy for the governing bureaucrats, which, furthermore, were predominantly occupied by northerners (Mamdani 1975: 291).

Meanwhile, following an assassination attempt, a quasi-military government emerged (Karugire 1980: 196): a paramilitary organisation, the General Service Unit, was established with the task of spying on the whole state apparatus including the army, which was ‘tribalised’ and divided by the granting of promotions to certain ethnicities, especially the Alcholi and Langi. Significantly, in 1969 61% of the army came from the North (as did Obote), despite representing only 19% of Ugandans (Mutengesa and Hendrickson 2007: 9).
**Amin’s Regime**

In 1971 Obote was overthrown in a coup by general Idi Amin, a key army officer whom Obote had progressively isolated. The new regime was immediately recognised by the British government (Mamdani 1999: 294) and initially applauded by the population (Karugire 1980: 197, Saul 1981: 31). However, Amin suspended the constitution and soon established a terror regime, which killed hundreds of thousands of Ugandans, expelled all Asians (Ullman 1978) and militarised state functions (Mbazira 2008). Uganda became a pariah state, western multilateral and bilateral support was withdrawn and the Ugandan economy collapsed in virtually all sectors (Sejjaaka 2004: 102), although Amin continued receiving support from other countries such as the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia and Libya (Sathyamurthy 1994: 511)

**Obote II**

Amin’s regime ended in 1979, as a result of a military campaign which involved the Tanzanian army (in response to Amin’s invasion), the Uganda National Liberation Front (constituted mainly of exiles) and the Uganda National Liberation Army (a Ugandan military force) (Mutengesa and Hendrickson 2007: 12). There followed a period of “chaotic interregnum” (Sathyamurthy 1994: 513) consisting of two short-lived governments and ended by the elections of 1980, won by Obote, who thus started his second period of office. The electoral process was highly contested and provoked a rebellion, led by Yoweri Museveni, one of the defeated candidates. Obote soon sought the help of the IMF and World Bank, which resumed their operations in the country in 1981 with so-called stabilisation programmes (Nabudere 1990). They imposed tight economic conditions (such as devaluation of the Ugandan shilling, trade liberalisation and price deregulation) and required the return of expropriated businesses to their original owners, mostly Asians (Okuku 2006: 147). In this period the reliance on external financing increased steadily; for instance, by 1983 the development plan (now called a recovery plan) was 80% reliant on external finance (Nabudere 1990: 41) and the external debt doubled from US$ 4568 million in 1980 to US$ 1 billion in 1985 (Sejjaaka 2004: 104). However, the years 1981-86 were another period of harsh repression and economic decline. After a few years of cooperation and generous loans\(^\text{114}\), foreign donors could not ignore any longer

\(^{114}\) For instance in 1982 the World Bank granted 557 million dollars and in 1984 further 430 millions were added for the development plan (now called a recovery plan)
the Obote’s repressive regime, and more in general what is usually define the Ugandan “state collapse” (Makara 2009: 126-128), both economically and socially, characterised by anarchy, abuse and repression. Thus in 1984 foreign support to Uganda ceased (Sathyamurthy 1994: 517). In the mid-1980s Uganda underwent a “state collapse” (Makara 2009: 126-128), both economically and socially, characterised by anarchy, abuse and repression.

The Museveni Era

In 1986 Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) seized power after five years of bush war, promising to bring a “fundamental change” (Mukholi 2004: 26, Mamdani 1988: 1167). The NRM’s political manifesto, summarised in its Ten Points Programme, focused on democracy, national unity and economic independence (Museveni 2007: 221).115 The NRM government announced its intention to stay in power for an interim period of four years, which was however extended until 1996, when the first national elections were held (Mukholi 2004: 27). The NRM introduced the no-party system, since political parties were seen as sources of tribal and religious sectarianism and thus obstructive of the key goal of building national unity (Carbone 2005). It established throughout the country Resistance Councils (RCs), which had already been in place in some districts since the guerrilla war (Makara 131-135).116 Importantly, the RC system was based on place of residence, whereby all persons living in a village, regardless of ethnicity or nationality, had the right to participate in its political life and vote for their representatives at village level (Makara 2009: 131, Mamdani 2004: 208). In this sense, the RCs marked a significant change from the previous two decades of military and repressive

(Sathyamurthy 1994: 517). More in general in the first half of the 1980s reliance on external financing increased steadily; for instance, by 1983 the development plan was 80% reliant on external finance (Nabudere 1990: 41) and the external debt rose from US$ 4568 million in 1980 to US$ 1 billion in 1985 (Sejjaaka 2004: 104).

115 The ten points are: 1) democracy, security of all persons in Uganda and their property; 2) consolidation of national unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism; 3) defence and consolidation of national independence; 4) laying a basis for building an independent, integrated, self-sustaining national economy; 5) restoration and improvement of social services and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged areas; 6) elimination of all forms of corruption in public life; 7) resettling the peasants who had been rendered landless by erroneous “development” projects or outright theft of their land through corruption; 8) resettling the long-suffering Karamojong and ensuring a decent living wage for salaried workers in the light of the cost of living; 9) encouraging co-operation with other African countries and 10) defending the human and democratic rights of our long-suffering African brothers (Museveni 2007: 221).

116 RCs had a pyramidal structure, from the village up to the national level; at the village level RC councils were directly elected by males and females and had reserved seats for women, young people and workers (Mukholi 2004: 26-27); then representatives at each level elected those for the upper level (apart from the National RC, which was composed of so-called ‘historical members’.
regimes; however, the NRM’s claim that they were a form a popular democracy and represented people’s power was highly contested.  

In 1998 the government appointed a Constitution Commission, with the aim of consulting citizens, gathering their views and formulating proposals for a new constitution; after a wide consultation across the country and the direct election of a nationwide Constituent Assembly (of 284 delegates, 50 of whom women), tasked with discussing the draft, the new constitution was enacted by the government on 22nd September 1995 (Benshop 2002: 53, Mukholi 2004: 28-57). From this long period of debate and consultation, three issues emerged as particularly relevant: unitary government versus federal arrangements, the movement system versus the multiparty system and finally land ownership, especially with regard to the 'lost counties'.

The resulting constitution introduced four systems of land tenure (customary, freehold, ‘mailo’ and leasehold), which however did not solve the problem of the conflicting interests of customary tenants and registered owners (such as in the lost counties); it was decided to make a specific law on the matter, thus de facto postponing the problem (Mukholi 2004: 56-57). With regard to the debate on the federal/unitary system, the new constitution established unitary government, but restored the traditional kingdoms and leaders which had been abolished in 1967 by Obote. These were disbarred, however, from any political, administrative, legislative or executive function (Republic of Uganda 1995 see chapter sixteen). With regard to the political system, article 69 of the constitution established the right of ‘the people of Uganda’ to decide on their political system, either in elections or by referenda (Republic of Uganda 1995: article 69). A referendum on the political system was held in 2000 and the no-party option won.  

However, this referendum was highly contested. For instance, in 2004 the Constitutional Court declared that the Referendum Political System) Act 2000 was ‘null and void’; the Supreme Court intervened following the government’s appeal, and while confirming that the Act was unconstitutional, upheld the result of the referendum on the basis of political considerations (Carbone 2005: 11, Bussey 2005: 2, see also Bratton and Lambright 2001).
Museveni started his second period of office. However, following international pressure from donors, another referendum was held in 2005 and the multiparty option won. Since then, there have been two presidential and parliamentary elections (in 2006 and 2011), both won by Museveni and the NRM. In the last presidential elections, held in February 2011, Yoweri Museveni was reconfirmed as Ugandan President, winning with 68.38% of the vote, cast by 59.29% of registered voters (Electoral Commission Uganda 2011).

Meanwhile, the RCs underwent significant changes following a policy of decentralisation, embodied in the Local Government Statute of 1993, in the Local Government Act of 1997 and in the Local Government (Amendment) Act of 2001. They introduced five levels of Local Councils (Ahikire 2007: 48-59): district (LC5), county (LC4), sub-county (LC3), parish (LC2) and village (LC1). Those at district and sub-county levels are legal governments, directly elected, vested with planning and legislative functions. The other three are administrative units whose role is to assist the implementation of policy, enhance participation and communication and maintain order. The chairperson at LC1 level is directly elected and then nominates the Executive Committee (EC). The LC1 EC constitutes the electoral college for the LC2 EC, while the directly elected LC3 ECs elect the EC at county level (LC4). At all five levels, there is a structure of appointed civil servants. Through these reforms, most services, such as primary education, water services, agriculture and health, have been decentralised at local level and a separate personnel system has been introduced which differentiates between central and local government employees.

The decentralisation policies are said to be key steps in the democratisation process insofar as they allow for the decision-making processes to occur as close as possible to the people affected, thus enhancing participation, accountability

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119 The electoral process was highly contested. The Supreme Court, following an appeal by a defeated candidate, the Supreme Court found several shortcomings in the work of the electoral commission and its failure to ensure fairness and transparency of the overall process (Makara et al. 2008: 4).

120 Also this election attracted many criticisms, especially regarding the fairness of the Electoral Commission and the advantages enjoyed by the NRM (Gloppen et al. 2006, Makara et al. 2008).

121 The election was judged generally fair by both the AU and EU observers (AU 2011, EU 2011), notwithstanding a number of weaknesses observed, such as the heavy deployment of armed forces across the country during the voting process, concerns on the composition of the Electoral Commission, administrative and logistic failures and the distribution of money and gifts by candidates (U.S. Department of State 2011, EU 2011, AU 2011). In additions, as reported by the two main national newspaper – New Vision and Daily Monitor - the weeks following the electoral process have witnessed protests and riots in different areas of the country, some culminating in violent repression by the police and the military forces and the arrest of leaders of the opposition parties.
and efficiency with regard to both the political and the technical arms of local
government (Ahikire 2007: 23-47). However, the official version has been
questioned from several angles. Firstly, decentralisation has been accompanied
by a dramatic increase in the number of districts, from 34 in 1986 to 80 in 2011;
it has been noted that since the 1996 election, in newly established districts
Museveni and the NRM have systematically obtained a higher percentage of
votes than the national average (Tumushabe and Gariyo 2009: 21-22).
Considering that a new district implies the establishment of the five-layer
political and administrative structure (thus the distribution of jobs, roles of
prestige and material resources), it has been suggested that decentralisation has
allowed the NRM to secure and enlarge its support through “administrative
engineering” (Tumushabe and Gariyo 2009: 21-22) and patronage (Larok 2008,
Carbone 2005). Secondly, it has been argued that decentralisation has actually
enhanced “elite capture”, i.e. the tendency of key players (both political and
technical) to divert resources for their own benefit, through alliance and
compliance (Makara 2009: 193-194, see also UGMP 2004: 46-50).

With regard to the economic sphere and more in general Uganda development
since the late 1980s, a detailed analysis is provided in Chapter 2.
## Appendix II - The Millennium Development Goals

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<th>Goals and targets</th>
<th>Indicators for monitoring progress</th>
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<td><strong>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Target 1** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day | 1a. Proportion of population below $1 (PPP) per day<sup>a</sup>  
1b. Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below the national poverty line)  
2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]  
3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption |
| **Target 2** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger | 4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age  
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption |
| **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education** | |
| **Target 3** Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling | 6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education  
7a. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5  
7b. Primary completion rate  
8. Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds |
| **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women** | |
| **Target 4** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015 | 9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education  
10. Ratio of literate women to men 15–24 years old  
11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector  
12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament |
| **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality** | |
| **Target 5** Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate | 13. Under-five mortality rate  
14. Infant mortality rate  
15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles |
| **Goal 5: Improve maternal health** | |
| **Target 6** Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio | 16. Maternal mortality ratio  
17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel |
### Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

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<th><strong>Target 7</strong></th>
<th>Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</th>
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<td>18. HIV prevalence among 15–24 year old pregnant women</td>
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<td>19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate(^b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex</td>
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<td>19b. Percentage of population aged 15–24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS(^c)</td>
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<td>19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate</td>
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<td>20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Target 8</strong></th>
<th>Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures(^d)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)</td>
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### Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

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<th><strong>Target 9</strong></th>
<th>Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</th>
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<th><strong>Target 10</strong></th>
<th>Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</th>
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<td>30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural</td>
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<td>31. Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation</td>
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<th><strong>Target 11</strong></th>
<th>By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</th>
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<td>32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure</td>
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### Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

#### Target 12
Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally

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<td>33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors’ gross national income</td>
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<th>Market access</th>
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<tr>
<td>41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</td>
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#### Target 13
Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota free access for least developed countries’ exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

#### Target 14
Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debt sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development (cont)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Target 16**  
In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth | 45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year-olds, each sex and total |
| **Target 17**  
In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries | 46. Proportion of population with access to affordable, essential drugs on a sustainable basis |
| **Target 18**  
In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications | 47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population  
48a. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population  
48b. Internet users per 100 population |
Appendix III - Performance Framework

The figure below is an example of a logic model (and the results chain) discussed in Chapter Three. It summarises Oxfam work in Uganda for the period 2008-2011.

Summary baseline data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific indicator in country context</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>By when?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the per cent of governments at district, sub-county and parish levels within the programme areas that are monitoring producer / processor groups</td>
<td>District: 0%</td>
<td>Jan 2009</td>
<td>District: 100%</td>
<td>Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bundibugyo: Sub-county: 20% Parishie: 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 60% Parishie: 30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kasese Sub-county: 0% Parishie: 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kasese Sub-county: 60% Parishie: 30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the per cent of parishes within the programme area supporting community-level projects on natural resource management including adapting to the effects of climate change</td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 18% Kasese: 15%</td>
<td>Jan 2009</td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 30% Kasese: 30%</td>
<td>Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the per cent of parishes within the programme area implementing livelihood diversification initiatives</td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 18% Kasese: Not available</td>
<td>Jan 2009</td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 30% Kasese: 30%</td>
<td>Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the per cent (i) subcounties and (ii) parishes in the programme area having involved communities in disaster preparedness planning</td>
<td>No plans in place at either sub-county or parish level</td>
<td>Jan 2009</td>
<td>Sub-counties: 60% Parishie: 40%</td>
<td>Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bundibugyo: 0% of parishes Kasese: 0% of parishes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of (i) subcounties and (ii) parishes in the programme area that hold a budget for disaster prevention and preparedness activities including community capacity-building</td>
<td>0% of sub-counties Bundibugyo: 0% of parishes Kasese: 0% of parishes</td>
<td>Jan 2009</td>
<td>80% of sub-counties 30% of parishes</td>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (Oxfam GB 2008: 43)
## Appendix IV - Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Role and Organisation</th>
<th>Place and Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benon</td>
<td>Board member of several NGOs</td>
<td>His house, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 19’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 02/09</td>
<td>33’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>Director of a national NGO</td>
<td>His office, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 29’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prossy and Aron</td>
<td>Directors of a regional NGOs</td>
<td>My house, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 17’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Board member of two national NGOs</td>
<td>Café, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 12’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>Senior manager in a regional NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 15’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dianah</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 02/09</td>
<td>59’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Project officer in a regional NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 02/09</td>
<td>1h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Project officer in a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 02/09</td>
<td>46’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert</td>
<td>Programme Director (international NGO)</td>
<td>His office, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 29’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 02/09</td>
<td>1h 7’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa</td>
<td>Senior manager in a international NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 02/09</td>
<td>40’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Director of a national NGO</td>
<td>Her office, 03/09</td>
<td>1h 7’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine</td>
<td>Director of a national NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>1h 12’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>My house, 03/09</td>
<td>50’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Project officer in a national NGO</td>
<td>Cafe, 03/09</td>
<td>40’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent</td>
<td>Project manager in a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>44’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>1h 38’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey</td>
<td>Senior manager in a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>1h 10’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>41’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan</td>
<td>Director of a national NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>39’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Director of a regional NGO</td>
<td>His office, 03/09</td>
<td>1h 17’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Board member of a regional NGO</td>
<td>His house, 03/09</td>
<td>40’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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