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**THE DILEMMA OF DECENTRALIZATION:
A STUDY OF LOCAL POLITICS IN UGANDA**

VOLUME I

By

Gina Margaret Somodevilla Lambright

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science

2003

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ABSTRACT

THE DILEMMA OF DECENTRALIZATION: A STUDY OF LOCAL POLITICS IN UGANDA

By

Gina Margaret Somodevilla Lambright

Decentralization has recently risen to the top of many governments' political agendas throughout the developing world. The stated goals of these programs reflect the idea that decentralization cultivates grassroots democracy and development by shifting political power and financial authority to local levels. In Africa, decentralization is also seen as a remedy for the problems of the centralized political systems adopted by many African governments shortly after independence. Decentralization necessarily increases the importance of local political institutions and local elites. The question remains, however, whether local governments that have historically been poorly funded and politically marginalized under authoritarian rule can actually fulfill new responsibilities given to them with decentralization. This research project sheds light on this important question by identifying factors that contribute to good performance among local governments in Uganda. Uganda provides an excellent case in which to explore these issues given its adoption of a comprehensive decentralization program beginning in 1993. This study combines two principal research strategies. First, I created an aggregate dataset that allows me to examine my hypotheses across 45 local governments in Uganda. Second, I conducted in-depth research in three Ugandan districts to explore the impact of different explanations for performance in these three districts.

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Other studies of institutional performance, most notably Putnam's work in Italy (1993), point to societal factors, such as social capital, civil society and political participation to explain differences in performance. I argue, however, that *political variables* are critical to understanding differences in local government performance. The central government in many countries continues to play an important role in local politics even after decentralization. I supplement existing explanations for performance by identifying the various ways in which central-local relations and features of the local political context affect the performance of local governments. I distinguish between administrative linkages that offer opportunities for critical instruction and mentoring by the center and political linkages that may provide the center with increased opportunities for meddling into local government affairs. Political linkages include varying levels of district support for the center and central government support to districts.

I present evidence to show that central-local relations matter for successful local government performance. I find that political linkages between the center and Uganda's districts influence the performance of district councils. District support for the central government is positively related to council performance. Opposition to the center has costs that are often paid locally. The influence of central government support to districts on performance is less certain and depends on existing levels of support for the center among local populations. There is little evidence, however, that tighter administrative linkages are associated with better council performance. Contrary to existing literature, societal factors, such as participation or the density of civil society, are not found to be important influences on council performance. Yet, there is some evidence that local governments perform better where local elections are more competitive.

This dissertation is dedicated to Chip and Linda with love.

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A great many people made this project possible through their valuable support, encouragement, advice and assistance. First, I would like to thank all of my family and friends, both old and new, for all of their support and for believing in me throughout this long and difficult process, including my mother, Lori, Darbie, Diane, Jennifer and Chip. I also thank J.D., Maggie, Katie Sue, Wyatt and Andrew for reminding me why these questions are important to me, why it matters what the world looks like tomorrow, and that life always continued outside of this dissertation. I am also greatly indebted to many friends made while at Michigan State who helped in so many ways, both personal and academic, especially Sara Pashak, Michelle Kuenzi and Wendy Martinek.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my committee members (Nicolas van de Walle, Michael Bratton, Brian Silver and Mark Jones) who offered valuable advice and guidance during all of the stages of this process. Without their help along the way, this project would not have been possible. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the help and support of my advisor, Nic van de Walle, who was always willing to read multiple drafts of these chapters, often on extremely short notice, to offer critical feedback, and most importantly, to encourage me by listening and also by sharing with me his thoughts on and experiences during graduate school and writing a dissertation. In addition, I would like to thank several organizations that provided valuable funding that made this research possible, including the Social Science Research Council, the Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation Program, and the National Science Foundation.

Finally, this project would have been considerably more difficult, if not impossible, without the valuable assistance of numerous individuals in Uganda. I would

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like to acknowledge the assistance of numerous individuals at the Makerere Institute of Social Research who helped me organize the logistics of the research. Most importantly, I am forever indebted to Ruth Nalumaga for all of her generosity and help, for keeping me current on news from Uganda long after I returned to the U.S., and for her friendship in general.

I would also like to acknowledge the help of numerous political and administrative leaders in Lira, Mpigi and Bushenyi districts who were extremely generous in their time and willing to answer so many questions. Equally important are all of the survey respondents and focus group participants in these districts who gave of their time to share with me their thoughts on local government in Uganda. Numerous individuals within Uganda's central government also provided valuable assistance and were also extremely patient with me and my requests for information, including: Martin Olaa; MPs from Bushenyi, Lira and Mpigi; numerous representatives from the Ministries of Local Government, Education, Finance, Health, Water, Works and Agriculture; and representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, Office of the Inspector General of Government, Local Government Finance Commission, and Office of the Auditor General. I also thank the research assistants who helped me conduct the research for this project and often laughed with me about the joys of research in rural Uganda, including: Adelline Twimukye, Innocent Tuhairwe, Eunice Kyomugisha, Rosette Kyohangirwe, Jonathan Ngobi, Allen Tushabe, Aliziki Semakula, Margaret Akidi, Florence Abesigye, Grace Akello, William Onyango, and Irene.

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CAO
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GOU
HDI
HIPC
IGG
LCs
LC1
LC2
LC3
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PAF
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SFG
ULAA
UPC
UPDF
UPE
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KEY TO SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
DDHS	District Director of Health Services
DP	Democratic Party
GOU	Government of Uganda
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IGG	Inspector General of Government
LCs	Local councils
LC1	Village local council (administrative unit)
LC2	Parish local council (administrative unit)
LC3	Sub-county local council (local government)
LC5	District local council (local government)
LG Act	Local Government Act
LGDP	Local Government Development Program
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoAg	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MoE	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoH20	Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoWks	Ministry of Works, Housing and Communication
NEC	National Executive Committee
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SFG	School Facilities Grant
ULAA	Ugandan Local Authorities Association
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPE	Universal Primary Education
Ush	Ugandan Shillings

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Chapter One: Introduction

Decentralization has recently risen to the top of many governments' political agendas throughout the developing world. Many countries have begun to implement comprehensive decentralization programs, which are intended to promote democracy and development at the grassroots by empowering local governments (see, e.g. Hyden 1983; Manor 1998; Rondinelli 1981; Smith 1979; UNDP 1993). Decentralization is defined as:

the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organizations (Rondinelli and Nellis 1986, 5; cited in Rondinelli 1989, 81).

The popularity of decentralization is problematic given the complexity of this concept. Decentralization is often imbued with various, and often quite contradictory, meanings and interpretations. For example, a distinction can be made between horizontal and vertical decentralization. Horizontal decentralization distributes power among political institutions within the *same* level of government, while vertical decentralization distributes power to political institutions between *two or more* levels of government (UNDP 1993; Regan 1995).

One can further distinguish between different types of vertical decentralization. For example, deconcentration or administrative decentralization merely shifts representatives of central government ministries to branch offices at the local level (Manor 1998; Regan 1995; Rondinelli 1981). With deconcentration there are *limited* changes in the distribution of power. Local administrators can make few decisions without consulting the central government ministries. In such circumstances, the central

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government maintains full discretionary power over the decisions of local administrators.

Fiscal decentralization concerns the transfer of limited influence over budgetary and financial decisions to lower levels (Manor 1998). On the other hand, devolution shifts full decision making and financial authority to local levels and thus, is often referred to as democratic or political decentralization (Hyden 1983; Regan 1995; UNDP 1993). Because devolution limits the extent to which local governments must consult with the central government in making decisions, it constitutes “the strongest form of decentralization” (UNDP 1993, 67).

The current emphasis on decentralization by African governments and donors appears to be a hopeful response to the problems and failures of the centralized political systems adopted by African countries shortly after independence. Most observers of African politics recognize that centralized decision-making failed to deliver the promises of economic development and democracy to countries that pursued such methods. Instead the result of extreme centralization of political decision-making has most often been the marginalization and further impoverishment of African populations. Many observers also believe that centralized decision-making sustained and facilitated patronage and corruption which are commonly viewed as impediments to economic development in Africa. The stated goals of recently adopted decentralization programs reflect the idea that decentralization cultivates both grass roots democracy and development by shifting political power and financial authority to local levels (Smith 1979; Rondinelli 1981; UNDP 1993). Proponents of decentralization appear quite optimistic about its impact, arguing that these reforms will lead to efficient, effective and responsible government. At the same time, some scholars remain cautious or even

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skeptical about the impact of decentralization. In particular, studies of the effects of fiscal federalism raise concerns about the impact of fiscal decentralization on macroeconomic performance and reform.¹

Decentralization necessarily increases the importance of local political institutions and local elites. Given the fact that the capacity of most governments in Africa is quite limited², one can only imagine the problems facing local governments that tend to be inadequately funded and often politically marginalized. It remains unclear whether local governments are equipped to handle new responsibilities and whether the record of local government performance will be better than that of central governments in Africa.

In African countries and likely other countries with historically strong central governments, I argue that central governments continue to play a key role in local level politics even after decentralization. Central governments certainly have plenty of skills and experience to transfer to local governments in the form of critical instruction. Yet, the evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that critical instruction is less common than political meddling by the center, which negatively affects the effectiveness and certainly the responsiveness of local governments.

As discussed thoroughly in Chapter Three, Uganda provides an excellent case in which to explore these issues given its adoption of a comprehensive decentralization policy in the 1990s. A recent study of the extent of decentralization among 30 African countries characterizes Uganda's policy of decentralization as among the most advanced on the continent (Ndegwa 2002). In fact, Uganda earned among the highest scores on the indices of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization (Ndegwa 2002). District

¹ See e.g. Prud'homme 1995; Wibbels 2000; and Treisman 1999.

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councils in Uganda are now responsible for decision making and policy implementation in several important policy areas, including: education policy through secondary school; health policy especially concerning hospitals in the district; water policy; road policy, excluding major roads for travel between districts; and agricultural extension (Uganda 1997). Similarly, local administrators are now appointed, supervised and answerable to locally elected officials. Local councils have also been given the responsibility to monitor and supervise the activities of NGOs in their areas (Uganda 1997). Moreover, district councils have substantial financial authority, including the power to “levy, charge and collect fees and taxes, including rates, rents, royalties, stamp duties, personal graduated tax, and registration and licensing fees” (Uganda 1997, 35). Thus, it is possible to compare the performance of Uganda’s district councils and identify those factors that are associated with good performance. This is the principal aim of this research project.

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter Two reviews existing literature related to local government performance and provides the theoretical framework for the study. Chapter Three reviews the history of local government in Uganda and describes the current system of local government. Moreover, the chapter describes the current political context in Uganda and highlights those features of Uganda’s political system that likely influence local government performance.

In Chapter Four, I detail the methods used to carry out this research. This project is divided into two separate inquiries. I created an aggregate dataset to allow me to explore my research questions across 45 local governments in Uganda. Chapter Four includes a thorough discussion of the operationalization of key concepts, such as local

² See e.g. van de Walle 2001, Brautigam 1996, Ndulu and van de Walle 1996.

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government performance, in the aggregate dataset. Secondly, I conducted fieldwork in three districts in Uganda to explore these issues in much greater detail. A discussion of the methods of selecting the three case study districts and the methods of data collection undertaken in these districts is also included in Chapter Four.

Using multivariate analysis, I test the various explanations for local government performance across 45 district local governments in Uganda in Chapter Five. The results presented in Chapter Five support some of my hypotheses concerning the expected impact of central-local relations on the performance of district councils in Uganda. Equally important, the analysis raises questions about the importance of societal factors, such as citizen participation or the density of associational life, to explain variation in council performance.

Chapter Six introduces the three case study districts and thoroughly assesses the performance of each district. I argue that Bushenyi performs better than either Mpigi or Lira. Chapters Seven and Eight then evaluate the factors that may explain Bushenyi's better performance. In Chapter Seven, I examine how political and administrative linkages between the Movement government in Kampala and each of the three districts influence the ability of the district council to perform effectively and respond to the needs of the local community. Finally, Chapter Eight focuses on society-centric explanations for performance as well as features of the local political context I hypothesize to be important, while Chapter Nine summarizes the main findings of the project and suggests areas for future research.

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Chapter Two: Theory

2.1 Introduction

Proponents of decentralization are quite optimistic about what such policies can achieve. Improved service delivery and the promotion of democracy and economic development are common goals of many decentralization programs. The fulfillment of these stated goals depends on the performance of newly empowered local governments. Yet, important differences exist in the capacities of local governments to fulfill new responsibilities and in how well local governments perform under decentralization. Thus, the principal aim of this project is to explore the factors that influence local government performance.

Various theories have been put forth to explain differences in institutional performance, incorporating social, cultural and economic variables. Government performance is a complicated phenomenon and determined by a variety of different factors, including political, social, economic, institutional and historical factors. Yet, many scholars have focused primarily or even exclusively on characteristics of society to explain local or regional government performance (e.g. Putnam 1993; Crook and Manor 1998). The explanatory power of society-centric variables, such as levels of social capital and political participation, remains uncertain in the developing world (see discussion below).

This chapter will review the relevant literature and assess the sufficiency of existing theories in explaining institutional performance of local governments in Africa and propose several alternative explanations. Section 2.3 includes several sub-sections

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where I discuss the existing theories of institutional performance and present my suggested alternatives. Section 2.3.1 discusses structural explanations for [performance], while Section 2.3.2 discusses [society-centric explanations]. In Sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4, I lay out my central arguments regarding the expected influence of *central-local relations* and [local politics] on institutional performance.

In Section 2.3.3, I argue that it is important to remember the center and the influence of central government officials over political and administrative matters throughout the country, even at the local level. Central governments and presidents, in particular, have dominated politics in Africa. In Uganda and throughout Africa, central governments continue to wield considerable political power and influence despite decentralizing reforms. Central government leaders also continue to exert considerable personal power despite recent trends toward democratization and efforts to increase the power of political institutions. Ignoring the continued influence of the center, despite decentralization, potentially ignores the most important and influential set of political actors in these countries.¹ Central governments—their power, influence, political strategies and present and historical relationships with local governments—are vitally important to the success of local governments and decentralization in Africa. I agree with scholars, such as Tendler (1997) and Hommes (1995), who see a crucial and continuing role for central governments following decentralization. Certainly central governments do have a great deal to offer local governments given the central government's previous experience with policymaking and implementation and the

¹ As will be discussed below, I recognize that central and local governments most often do not act as unitary political actors, but instead contain numerous actors with diverse interests, goals and strategies. I attempt to disaggregate both central and local governments and consider the varying relationships different central government officials may have with local governments.

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concentration of human resources and skills in the center. However, the record of central governments in Africa raises serious concerns about their ability and willingness to mentor local governments and share the knowledge and experiences that may improve local government performance rather than use such relations to further their own political goals. Thus, I argue that the political motivations of the center must be considered and the possibility exists that linkages between the center and local governments may be used to further the political interests of the central government at the expense of local concerns and priorities.

In addition, I argue in Section 2.3.4 that we *must also consider local actors and the political arena in which they operate* in order to fully understand local government performance in Africa. Decentralization is about the shifting of political resources and power to local administrative and political actors. Consequently, their actions, ideas, attitudes and strategies have significant impacts on local government performance. Examining political dynamics at the local level and across levels of government is crucial to understanding how local governments, situated between society and central government, actually perform. The practice of politics at the local level, including patterns of political competition, meaning of local elections and viability of other mechanisms to hold local leaders accountable, determine when influences from society are able to penetrate and direct political decision making within local political institutions.

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Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature on decentralization in several important ways.

First, the findings of this study provide an accurate and realistic interpretation of the factors that may hinder the process of decentralization in Africa and may pose barriers to the achievement of the goals of many of these policies. Much of the academic and policy literature tends to be overly optimistic about the potential benefits of decentralization and portrays decentralization as the solution to many of the problems of governance and service delivery in developing countries. This study problematizes decentralization and recognizes that the process of decentralization operates differently in different contexts. My discussion of the role of the center and the potential influence of tight central-local linkages highlights the importance of the political context in which decentralization is adopted and some of the very real roadblocks to successful decentralization in Africa.

Second, this study is important because it provides a careful analysis of the constraints facing society in its efforts to check the power of local leaders and thus, highlights the potential weakness of societal factors in explaining good government in Africa. The explanatory power of [societal factors], such as participation and social capital, is mediated by the relationship between the [local area and the center and by the local political context]. I believe this study furthers our understanding of when and how society is able to influence local leaders and tempers expectations of changes in governance and service delivery likely to result from decentralization.

Third, I believe another contribution is that this project considers the important role of institutional legacies and the extent to which the operation of formal and informal institutions influences the outcomes of decentralizing reforms. Many scholars assume

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that mechanisms to hold local leaders accountable, like elections, function as expected. Yet, this assumption is not necessarily correct. The local political situation and strategies of the center determine whether these mechanisms of accountability are meaningful, functional and viable. Similarly, the ways in which certain areas have historically related to the central government not only affect how local governments in these areas relate to the center today, but also influence how these local governments operate generally. As will be discussed in more detail below and in subsequent chapters, local governments in historically opposition areas bear scars of their opposition status that have important impacts on local government performance.

My proposed explanations are not intended to be substitutes for existing structural or society-centric explanations, but instead are intended as supplements to shift attention to the major political actors and their influence on local governments. In the final section of this chapter, I will lay out several hypotheses about how central-local relations and local politics influence local government performance. These hypotheses drive the analysis carried out in Chapters Five through Eight. I will discuss the conceptualization and operationalization of government performance and variation in performance among Uganda's district local governments more thoroughly in Chapter Four, but I would like to briefly describe here how I conceptualize local government performance.

2.2 Conceptualizing Government Performance

I conceptualize institutional performance in similar fashion to other scholars who seek to explain variation in performance of local political institutions, especially Putnam (1993), Crook and Manor (1995, 1998), and Stoner-Weiss (1997). The concepts I use are quite

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similar, although at times my operationalization is considerably different. This study recognizes that institutional performance is multidimensional and includes both of the critical conceptual dimensions found in the literature: responsiveness and effectiveness. Responsiveness refers to the extent to which government output responds to the expressed needs and preferences of the population. Government effectiveness is the extent to which policy outputs correspond to previously set targets (Crook and Manor 1995, 1998).

2.3 Explaining Local Government Performance

This section is divided into three main parts. In the first two sub-sections I discuss and evaluate the adequacy of structural and society-centric explanations for local government performance in Africa. In the third sub-section I propose an explanation based on central-local relations and local politics.

2.3.1 Structural Explanations

① *Level of Economic Development*

Various structural factors have been offered as alternative explanations for institutional performance, including level of economic development and the political and institutional experience of local governments and officials in an area. For example, Fried and Rabinovitz, in a study of urban areas in the US, conclude that modernity is the single cause of good performance (1980; cited in Putnam 1993, 66).

For a number of reasons, local governments in more developed areas are likely to be somewhat advantaged and thus perform better than their counterparts in less developed areas. For example, the principal sources and amount of revenue available to

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local governments differ according to the structure of the local economy. Increased economic development provides local governments with a larger resource base, thereby potentially increasing the flexibility and capacity of governments in more developed areas. More revenue clearly could lead to better performance, but only if local governments are able to put the money to effective use, which is not guaranteed. Moreover, there is still the issue of revenue collection and collection of available revenue is also not always guaranteed. In fact, the ability to raise money is itself an indicator of performance (Olowu and Smoke 1992). Nevertheless, the financial and human resources of local governments in developed areas are likely to be greater than what is available to governments in less developed areas.

The level of economic development in an area also affects the “incoming workload” of the local government (Hatry et al. 1979, 1981). The authors use the term, “incoming workload,” to draw attention to the necessity of categorizing the level of difficulty of local government tasks based on circumstances beyond their control. They argue that “For most services, the time and effort required by a government to achieve a specific level of output will be greatly affected by the degree of difficulty of the incoming workload” (Hatry et al. 1979, viii). Thus, councils in economically depressed areas will likely face much more arduous tasks than councils in areas where the standard of living and amount and quality of infrastructure are already quite high, and may perform poorly as a result. Similarly, Evans argues that a principal characteristic of *successful* states is that they are selective in the tasks they undertake (1992). In contrast, he argues that most states in developing countries are not at all selective and attempt tasks they have no capacity to fulfill (Evans 1992). This reasoning seems quite applicable to the

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performance of many local governments, especially local governments that are faced with difficult problems and lack the capacity to fulfill these tasks, but also do not have the luxury to bypass such problems through careful selection of the tasks they feel capable of handling.

For the reasons discussed above, level of economic development is likely to be an important factor in understanding quality of local government performance. Yet, I argue that differences in development, while important, do not explain all of the variation in performance. Politics also matters and thus, I include level of economic development as an important control variable to allow me to explore the impact of political variables on performance across districts at similar levels of economic development.

Institutional design is a common explanation for performance. Like Putnam (1993), this study holds institutional design constant and is thus, better able to explore the impact of other explanatory variables on performance. Today districts throughout Uganda are governed by a uniform system of local councils at various levels. Despite the constancy of *current* local government institutions, political institutions in the pre-colonial and even colonial period varied across different parts of Uganda. This historical variation in institutions must be explored as a possible explanation for good government.

Institutional Legacy

Findings from a variety of research strands point to the importance of political and institutional experiences or legacies and suggest that the experience of local political institutions and local leaders may influence performance of current political institutions.²

² See Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 1997 for a discussion of the impact of institutional legacies on democratization in Africa and see van de Walle 2001, 2002 for thorough discussions of the impact of

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For example, Stinchcombe's "liability of newness" thesis raises attention to the importance of time and experience to the success of organizations (1965). Stinchcombe argues that younger organizations are more likely to fail and die than their older counterparts, while older organizations may benefit from institutional learning over time, which may increase capacity to solve existing problems (1965). Thinking about newly decentralized local governments, Stinchcombe's thesis suggests that areas with a longer history of autonomous local political institutions and therefore, greater experience may perform better than those areas where local political institutions were only created with decentralization. In many African countries the extent to which different communities practiced some form of self-government and exercised autonomy varied considerably during both pre-colonial and colonial times. The liability of newness thesis suggests that such differences may be important in understanding why some local governments perform well following decentralization while others do not.

Pre-colonial political structures certainly varied across different communities. Political institutions in some areas, such as the former kingdoms of the inter-lacustrine region, tended to be more centralized or bureaucratic, thereby more closely resembling the political institutions characteristic of modern forms of local government. Similar differences existed under colonialism. The extent to which colonial powers left pre-colonial governance structures in place, thereby reinforcing and maintaining the institutional legacy, or eliminated these structures and consequently began to erase local institutional history, is also important to understanding the performance of local governments today. For example, the Kingdom of Buganda in central Uganda had a lengthy experience with hierarchical government structures and local level chiefs, while

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still giving local populations some control over their lives prior to the arrival of British colonialism. This may affect the way in which the local councils are viewed, but more importantly, how the policy of decentralization is understood in these areas. Wunsch notes that establishing local leaders and institutions through which decentralization can be implemented is not costless (2000). He suggests, therefore, that relying on existing institutions reduces the costs associated with empowering local governments (Wunsch 2000). Taking a similar approach, Englebert argues that differences in economic performance of African governments is explained by the extent to which post-colonial political institutions are incompatible or “clash” with previously existing institutions (2000, 7). I agree with both Wunsch and Englebert and expect that local areas with a political institutional history that more closely resembles the political institutions that are being used for local government today may have an easier time with decentralization than their counterparts who lack such an institutional history.

The importance of institutional legacies and political experience is enhanced when one considers the difficult process of reforming political institutions. For example, studies in public administration and public policy, in particular studies of the US bureaucracy, have traditionally described the extremely slow process of change and learning that occurs within large organizations. Scholars argue that large organizations, most notably government bureaucracies, are characterized by “bureaucratic inertia” and a “stickiness of institutions”, indicating a resistance and perhaps inability to change (see e.g. Downs 1967). New ideas, innovations, and technologies are believed to filter slowly through such organizations as organizations learn, evolve and improve extremely slowly. Thus, decentralization and the ideas of self-governance and autonomy intertwined with

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such reforms are likely to move more slowly and meet more resistance in areas with no or only limited historical experience to use as a reference. For example, in their study of the role of NGOs in the provision of social services in post-communist Hungary, Osborne and Kaposvari argue that the use of informal, personal relationships to allocate resources was a legacy from life under the communist regime (1998). This is an extremely important point because it shows that policy changes do not necessarily change culture or institutions overnight and once embarked along a path, institutional changes are difficult and almost always slow (North 1991). Thus, the performance of political institutions appears to be at least partially determined by the performance of the institution historically.

2.3.2 Society-centric Explanations

③ Participation

As noted above, much of the literature concerning successful local government performance focuses on characteristics of society as the most important explanatory variables. For example, many scholars contend that decentralization increases participation at the local level. Citizen participation in decision making, made possible with decentralization, is assumed to be the trigger to improving government performance (Korten 1980; Esman and Uphoff 1984; Montgomery 1988; Rondinelli 1981; Smith 1985; UNDP 1993; Crook and Manor 1998). Participation in decision making theoretically improves performance because it enables local populations to oversee the activities of their local government and hold government officials accountable. But the evidence that participation improves performance is not clear. First, the evidence is

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mixed as to whether decentralization even increases citizen participation—the proposed trigger to better performance in society-focused explanations. Even if new opportunities for citizen participation do emerge following decentralization, it is not evident that such participation will be meaningful, but instead only serve as a consultative device, while important decisions continue to be made or controlled by political elites (Hyden 1983; Bienen, Kapur and Riedinger 1990; Slater 1997). Research in Nepal indicates that political elites envisioned decentralization as a way of permitting local participation without opening up the political system to multiple parties (Bienen, Kapur and Riedinger 1990). This seems highly likely in Uganda given the NRM government’s stringent denunciation of political party activity in Ugandan politics.

Questions can even be raised about the nature of citizen participation at the local level within Western democracies. It is unclear whether community participation or activism is an important influence on local government performance within these countries. For example, research indicates that citizen participation in much of Western Europe and the United States, has been declining steadily for several decades (e.g. Lijphart 1997; Stanley and Niemi 1995; and Teixeira 1992).³ In fact, Morlan’s research in seven developed countries confirms the often-cited finding that voting, the simplest and most common mode of participation, is universally lower in local elections than in national elections (1984).⁴ It is certainly not guaranteed that citizens are eager and willing to participate simply because the opportunity exists.

³ There is still some debate about the observed decline in participation in developed countries. Some scholars report conflicting results. See Norris 1996 for a discussion of these issues.

⁴ See also Lijphart 1997 for a discussion of the impact of low voter turnout generally and in midterm, regional and local elections.

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The role of participation in improving government performance in developing countries is also unclear. Participation in African countries may likely follow the patterns established in Western democracies where citizens with higher standards of living and education tend to participate much more frequently.⁵ While Bratton, Lewis and Gyimah-Boadi find no evidence of social distinctions in electoral participation in Ghana, they report differences based on gender and level of education for other forms of participation, such as contacting political leaders (1999).⁶ Evidence of a class or gender bias in voting and other modes of participation has important implications for political representation and whose interests are reflected in policy outputs, and also raises questions about the influence that participation may have on overall local government performance, but responsiveness of local governments in particular.

Even when participation does increase as a result of decentralization, the impact on local government performance may be limited or even nonexistent. For example, Ayee finds in Ghana that decentralization provided the anticipated outlets for citizen participation (1996). Yet, participation only increased demands for development that local governments were unable to meet due to insufficient administrative and financial capabilities. Blair also examines the extent to which decentralization policies in six developing countries increased participation among previously marginalized groups and enhanced popular control over government action by holding local leaders more accountable to local interests (2000). He finds some evidence of increased participation, but few, if any, changes in the actual empowerment of marginalized groups or in the

⁵ Lijphart reviews an extensive literature that finds evidence of class bias in participation in which more educated and more well-off individuals participate at much higher rates than others do (1997). While voting tends to be less unequal than other forms of participation, such as contacting legislators, Lijphart notes that the systematic class bias remains (1997).

distribution of benefits resulting from local government decisions (2000). Similarly, in a study of the effect of decentralization on institutional performance in four developing countries (two Asian and two African), Crook and Manor find that decentralization did, in fact, result in greater popular participation in all four cases (1995, 1998). Yet, they are unable to make the link between increased participation and their dependent variable, improved institutional performance, based on their evidence (Crook and Manor 1995, 1998).

A great deal of existing literature on political participation, as well as more recent studies of participation rates in newly democratizing countries, reveal that populations in different countries may differ in the extent of participation and in the forms of participation that tend to be most common. It seems reasonable, therefore, to expect the *impact of participation* to also vary in different contexts. Where local governments are subject to important political influences from sources *other than society*, I expect the impact of citizen participation and the influence of society to be less significant in understanding variation in local government performance. For example, in her study of the impact of decentralization on voter participation, Meguid finds that instead of increasing participation, decentralization in Western European countries is associated with a general decline in voter engagement (2002). Meguid finds evidence of differential effects of decentralization—levels of participation differ across contexts and in particular, the individual characteristics of voters matter (2002). The attitudes and behaviors of voters affiliated with regionalist parties, such as the Scottish National Party in Scotland,

⁶ Bratton, Lewis and Gyimah-Boadi report that more highly educated men were much more likely to contact political leaders than women at any level of education (1999).

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are more strongly influenced by decentralization than are those voters who are part of a mainstream nationalist party (Meguid 2002).

This is extremely important when considering how decentralization may affect public participation in Africa. I would argue that an area's relationship with the center certainly matters. I would expect participation to vary across areas with different levels of support for the center. Participation in local elections and local government may vary whether someone sees themselves as a supporter or an opponent of the central government. Individuals in opposition areas may welcome decentralization as a way to express and pursue their political interests. In such cases, voters who do not identify closely with the ruling national party may see decentralization as a single opportunity to influence the government and thus, may in turn participate at higher rates than others do. On the other hand, citizens in opposition areas may participate less than those in government political strongholds, which might suggest that local governments in opposition areas are subjected to less public scrutiny and less accountable for their actions.

(4) Civil Society and Social Capital

In addition to theories about the positive effect of citizen participation on government performance, other research, most notably Putnam's study of the performance of regional governments in Italy, focuses on civil society and social capital, in formulating explanations of institutional performance (e.g. Putnam 1993; Boix and Posner 1998; Widner 1998). Social capital is often indicated by higher levels of trust among community members as well as a more active civil society, measured by the density and

variety of voluntary associations that exist within civil society. Putnam finds a strong correlation between the performance of regional governments in Italy and his cultural variable, civic community—which combines measures of social capital and the density and activism of civil society.

The characteristics of the decentralization process in many developing countries raise doubts about the power of explanations based on civil society activism. In many developing countries, Uganda included, decentralization programs are top-down programs, in which the initiative for the policy came from the central government and donor community and not from below. Such circumstances prompt Manor to conclude that decentralization can succeed without an active civil society at the local level. The current situation in many decentralizing countries seems to offer some preliminary support for his argument (1998). In many of these countries, individuals, citizens and organized interest groups are unable or unwilling to actively oversee the work of local governments. In some respects, it appears unwise to set expectations so high about the effect of participation by citizens and civic associations in countries with long histories of authoritarian rule and exclusion of such groups from any real political involvement.

Despite the increase in funding to and activity within civil society, the pluralist model of organized interest groups competing with one another in order to gain access to political leaders and thereby influence political decision making does not accurately depict the political reality in African countries.⁷ First, I believe that there are reasons to doubt whether linkages between local governments and civil society exist as would be necessary for societal factors to explain variation in performance on their own. In

⁷ For a more thorough discussion of the pluralist model of policymaking, see Dahl 1956, Truman 1955, and Bentley 1908.

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Uganda and other countries with political regimes with little tolerance for opposition, political leaders attempt to co-opt and control civic organizations (see e.g., Tripp 2000; Dicklitch 1998) rather than cooperate to achieve similar goals. In fact, Tripp, in her analysis of women's organizations in Uganda, strongly argues that associational autonomy, not cooperation with local government officials, is necessary for these organizations to be successful and achieve established goals. Tripp's case studies provide examples of instances in which local council officials actually blocked or undermined the activities of local women's organizations (2000).

Second, I question whether linkages that do exist between the private and public sectors produce the expected improvements in institutional performance. I agree with scholars who recognize that civil society is not homogeneous and not always seeking communal goods, such as better government.

As Young points out, the boundaries of family, civil society, and state tend to be blurred in Africa unlike the situation in Western democracies (1994; cited in Yoder 1998). Yoder suggests that the state and family occupy so much of the space available for political action that there may not be enough room for civil society in Africa to function and produce results that might be expected from civic activism in Western democracies (1998).

Moreover, interest groups in Africa tend to be weakly organized and inadequately funded to finance the difficult and expensive task of effectively lobbying government for change (van de Walle 2001, 28-29). The effectiveness of organized interest groups is further limited by the political reality in most African countries. As van de Walle points out, interest groups in nondemocratic regimes must operate outside the

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electoral process in order to express their preferences (2001, 30). He notes that for interest groups in Western democracies “only a minimal degree of mobilization is enough for an interest group to unseat an elected official” (van de Walle 2001, 30). Yet, in Africa’s “nonelectoral regimes...preferences cannot be expressed through the ballot, and interest groups are less likely to have influence unless they can mobilize their members for strikes, demonstrations and other shows of strength” (van de Walle 2001, 30). Despite political reforms that have dramatically reduced the number of nonelectoral regimes on the continent, I believe van de Walle’s point remains relevant even in those countries that regularly hold elections. For example, Dicklitch, citing Molutsi and Holm (1990), notes that “Even in multiparty democracies that are considered success stories like Botswana, civil society is relatively weak and NGOs are often co-opted and dominated by government” (1998, 98). These problems are likely to be heightened in nondemocratic or only weakly democratic environments.

For example, Grindle also doubts the applicability of the pluralist model to developing countries and points out that in most developing countries the policymaking process tends to be quite closed with decisions made by the executive or a narrow group within the executive branch (1989). Such a process would certainly limit the access and ability of interest groups to try to influence government decisions. Likewise, van de Walle argues that African states are much more autonomous than the application of the pluralist model would lead us to believe (2001). Rather than being captured by societal interests or subject to multiple competing demands, African states are relatively autonomous and able to make decisions free from societal influence. Grindle and van de Walle describe policymaking at the national level, although their observations are

certainly relevant, perhaps more so, to the local level where fewer organized interests groups exist and the likelihood is enhanced that executive will hold monopoly rights in decision making.

There is also a tendency to idealize civil society within the decentralization literature and to assume that individuals and actors in civil society are motivated to serve the public interest rather than their individual or personal interests. Even if NGOs are able to gain access to government and influence policy, the extent to which such groups truly reflect the views and needs of the general population remains a concern. The ability of NGOs and civic associations to represent the interests of African populations is exaggerated and made worse by the tendency within the literature to view these populations as homogeneous with similar needs and problems. Recent debates within the literature on civil society raise questions about the extent to which social actors and groups within civil society are truly democratic.⁸ For example, Fatton, Jr. notes with concern the tendency for the literature to be overly optimistic about what the resurgence of civil society can do for the growth of democracy in Africa (1995). He explains that “civil society is not the all-encompassing movement of popular empowerment and change portrayed in the reveling and exaggerated celebrations of its advocates. It is simply not a democratic *deus ex machina*” (Fatton, Jr. 1995, 72; quoted in Yoder 1998, 489).

Such organizations may represent the views of a narrow, often elite group and push for particular benefits for group members rather than demanding accountable and responsive government. Thus, it remains uncertain whether linkages between NGOs and the local councils will improve or positively impact local council performance. Chabal

and Daloz argue that the increase in numbers of civil society organizations has less to do with the effectiveness and influence of such organizations and more to do with the realization by political elites in Africa that resources are now channeled through such organizations (1999, 22). Like the resources of the state, the resources now going to civil society have become useful tools through which state elites can achieve personal goals (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Tandler further notes that proponents of decentralization exaggerate the extent to which civil society seeks to curb rent seeking tendencies and points out that often the activities of civic associations may reinforce such tendencies (1997, 157).

In order for linkages to positively affect performance, it matters which groups are linked to local government and for what reasons. In his discussion of “embedded autonomy”, Evans carefully emphasizes the importance of characteristics of the particular group with whom the state links (1992). While there are benefits to state insulation, isolation from societal interests robs the state of necessary information and intelligence that exists in society, which could prove useful to the fulfillment of state goals. Evans’ solution to this problem is “embedded autonomy” which emphasizes a particular blend of careful and controlled state linkages with select groups in society combined with a certain degree of state insulation to enable the state to carry out its decisions (1992). Yet, the group’s interests and goals matter. Groups that may gain access to the state may not act with the broader goals of the state in mind and instead promote decisions that advance the narrow interests of the group or the group members. Evans’ notion of embedded autonomy requires that groups must have appropriate goals and must be able to be reshaped by the state as necessary.

⁸ See e.g. Fatton, Jr. 1995; Patterson 1998; Yoder 1998.

The other component of these societal arguments focuses on attitudinal variables believed to be representative of social capital, such as levels of generalized trust. Yet, the relationship between these attitudinal variables and responsive and effective local government remains unclear in Africa.⁹ Previous research has found little evidence of the same relationship in the African context (Widner 1998). Widner tests the relationship between social capital and institutional effectiveness in two African countries, Botswana and Uganda, yet finds no relationship. In fact, Widner finds that “norms and behavior typically included in the concept of social capital do not cohere in the two African contexts the way they do elsewhere in the world” (1998, 37). Booth and Richard reach similar conclusions in their study of civil society, social capital and democracy in Central America and find that the measures of civil society and social capital do not always produce the expected impact on democratization and, in fact, the impact of social capital and civil society varies somewhat across context (1998).

Scholars, such as Crook and Manor, who focus on participation hypothesize that higher levels of individualized forms of political participation, such as through voting or contacting local government officials, increase accountability of local politicians, thereby increasing local government performance. Similarly, scholars studying the effects of civil society and social capital hypothesize that higher levels of social capital, commonly indicated by higher levels of generalized trust and a dense network of voluntary associations, should force local leaders to be more accountable and increase performance. In addition to testing my principal hypotheses, which will be discussed below, I will test these alternative hypotheses. The operationalization and measurement of these concepts

⁹ See Boix and Posner 1998 for a discussion of problems in specifying the mechanisms through which social capital impacts government performance generally.

will be discussed at length in Chapter Four. I expect, however, that measures of political participation, civil society activism, and social capital, will be less important in explaining differences in local government performance in Uganda.

2.3.3 Explanation based on Central-Local Relations

Arguments for Central Government Involvement and Cooperation

Explanations for local government performance focused only on characteristics of society have questionable explanatory power in developing countries where society-focused variables—e.g. participation, civil society activism, and social capital—may not have the expected impact on government performance. Alternatively, I propose that society-centric explanations be supplemented by explanations which consider the political context and dynamics that shape local governments in developing countries.

As noted above, some scholars raise concern about the capacity of local governments to fulfill all that is required of them following decentralization. In most cases, local governments are ill prepared for success. Given the limitations and inexperience of most local governments, Hommes argues that “the paradox of decentralization is that it demands more central government and more sophisticated political skills at the national level to guide the process...” (1995, 331). Manor makes a similar argument and points out that while the World Bank sees benefits of decentralization arising from competition between levels of government, it is, in fact, *cooperation* between levels of government that leads to the benefits of decentralization (1998). Tendler also argues that the assumption that successful decentralization demands a unidirectional transfer of power and funding from the central government to local

governments is false (1997). She argues instead that successful decentralization demands a continued and important role for the central government. For example, the successful municipal health program in Brazil was not purely a product of decentralization and local control, but more the response of mayors and constituents to the inducements and penalties from the central government (Tendler 1997, 149). In important respects, the central government took power away from the local governments, although these actions ultimately strengthened the capacity of the local government to carry out its new responsibilities (Tendler 1997). In each of the cases studied by Tendler, the central government did not perform fewer tasks following a reform to shift power and responsibility to local governments, but carried out new and different tasks, such as taking on responsibility for hiring and firing municipal health workers. Through decentralization, central governments enable local governments to make choices regarding policies for their area, while, at the same time, the central government needs to maintain some role in the process to ensure appropriate choices are being made and that decisions are being implemented. Quite often in newly decentralized countries, central governments must be primarily responsible for holding local leaders accountable as society has not yet adopted this important role. For example, in their study of the determinants of local government success in Africa, Olowu and Smoke argue that central government oversight can help ensure good performance (1992).

Central governments in Africa have historically performed quite poorly and the problems of the state in Africa have been well documented. African governments are described by many scholars and donors as corrupt, even predatory.¹⁰ The political

¹⁰ See e.g. Evans 1995; also see Chabal and Daloz 1999 for a discussion of the political logic and uses of corruption in Africa.

strategies that these governments have historically employed to maintain power, such as patronage and clientelism, are considered counterproductive to development efforts and seen by some as contributing to the economic crisis that devastated many African countries since the early 1980s (van de Walle 2001). Despite this, there is still reason to believe that central governments have something to share with local governments that could be beneficial to local government efforts to fulfill their new responsibilities. Most African governments have monopolized political and administrative responsibilities since independence and provided very little opportunity for policymaking or even implementation at lower levels of government. Over four decades of experience provide a wealth of knowledge upon which local governments could draw. Local governments can learn from the previous successes, and most especially, from the mistakes made by central governments during this time. Moreover, there has been tremendous donor investment in building and improving the capacity of the center during the last few decades. Despite donor pressure to shrink the size of the state, donors have also commonly targeted resources for capacity building projects. These experiences and lessons can and should be shared with local governments as well. While critical of central government oversight of local governments, Ribot recognizes that good performance by local governments requires that central governments fulfill their roles and responsibilities (2002). He argues that local government performance is “as much a function of central government and donor accountability as local capacity per se” (2002, 11). Similarly, Onyach-Olaa and Porter’s findings based on research in Uganda suggest that the activities of central government continue to be important even after decentralization (2000). They argue that it is “...increasingly evident that local government performance

is greatly dependent on and is actually constrained by the inability of central government agencies and their donor partners to deliver on their mandated responsibilities” (Onyach-Olaa and Porter 2000, 3; quoted in Ribot 2002).

Administrative versus Political Linkages

Linkages between central and local governments do not always produce the cooperative relations that are believed to enrich local government performance, nor are they always motivated by benign reasons on the part of either actor. In fact, the nature of these linkages ultimately determines whether tight linkages between central government officials and local elites improves or undermines local performance.

To understand when interactions and “tight relations” between the central and local governments will yield cooperation and thus, better performing local governments, it is necessary to disaggregate the central government into different sets of actors. Attributing a single set of motives to the central government is problematic. Governments are not uniform and even actors with purely political interests can have quite varying motives. It likely matters whether contact is between the President or another representative of the central government and the local government, or between representatives from a ministry, such as the Ministry of Health, and the local government. Therefore, I distinguish between political and administrative linkages.

Administrative linkages

Administrative linkages describe interactions or contact between central government officials and local governments for policy related or administrative matters. For example,

government ministries in many developing countries, like line ministries in Uganda, are obliged to “inspect, monitor, and where necessary offer technical advice, support supervision, and training within their respective sectors” (Uganda 1997). Ministries in countries with decentralized governments are not supposed to control local governments, but merely supervise and inspect their activities. A ministry that is particularly aggressive in its role as supervisor and inspector can have a tremendous impact on improving the performance of local governments within a particular policy area or sector. Likewise, many ministries organize training workshops to pass on knowledge specific to the delivery of a particular service from those with experience to the new staff at the district levels. Ministries vary according to how they reacted to the decentralization process and consequently, how they have worked with local officials to transfer policy responsibility to local governments.

While it seems likely that such administrative linkages positively influence the ability of local governments to do their jobs well, assessing this relationship is far from straightforward. The potential benefits of contact between central government ministries and local governments are likely to vary depending on the reason for the contact. For example, ministry officials may be responsible for training local government officials on the latest policy tool, but may also be responsible for intervening in local conflicts or crisis situations. In some instances, a ministry official may be called in to investigate allegations of corruption or mismanagement. In these latter examples, ministerial involvement is still likely to positively impact performance, but differently than when ministry officials go into a well functioning local government to train or monitor.

While I recognize that the relationship between central government administrators and local governments is not devoid of politics, such relations tend to be driven less by politics than by established administrative procedures. A great deal of what central government administrators offer local governments in the way of mentoring, training or supervision is offered universally or uniformly across local governments. Yet, there is the possibility that linkages may vary. Some local governments will have more frequent contact or "tighter linkages" with ministries. Such variance may result from differences in the demands for central government involvement or assistance, or differences in the willingness of local governments to utilize or accept ministerial advice.

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As noted above, the relationship between central and local governments is not purely administrative and also encompasses important political dimensions. Yet, many African leaders have shown a commitment to the use of patronage to garner political support. This distinction draws attention to the fact that political linkages or contact for purely political purposes do not positively, and may even negatively, affect the performance of local governments.

The political relationship between central governments and local governments has two important dimensions, each I would argue with different impacts on local government performance. First, political linkages can be seen in the level of support, for example electoral support, provided by an area to the central government, e.g. support for the ruling party or political organization. High levels of support for the center within an area might indicate tighter linkages between the center and the local government in that

area. Second, political linkages between these two levels of government can be seen in the nature and level of support provided to an area by the central government, e.g. ministerial positions or financial resources. Tighter political linkages are reflected in greater central government support to an area. Although I am disaggregating political linkages and looking at district support to the center and central government support to local areas, in many instances the two are inextricably linked. Areas that are politically friendly to the center are likely to benefit considerably when the central government is allocating resources, whether in the form of ministerial positions or government funded projects. While this is often the case, it is not guaranteed.¹¹

The level of support within an area for the central government may have no or only a limited effect on the work of local governments, except as it may increase the resources from the center. But there are also reasons to expect that local support for the central government may enhance local government performance, apart from merely increasing goods and services received from the center. For example, local governments operating in areas that support the center will not face the substantial challenges faced by their counterparts in opposition areas, and likely perform better as a result. In many African countries, opposition to the central government or the party in power takes the form of armed conflict or insurgency. Thus, local governments operating in opposition areas are likely to face the constant threat of violence and must deal with the humanitarian and social problems that result from prolonged insecurity in an area. Similarly, local leaders in these areas may feel compelled to reject any ideas or policies that originate in the central government based solely on political opposition. Supportive

¹¹ For example, Treisman (1999) argues that central governments may pursue a political strategy of shifting resources to regions where political opposition is concentrated, i.e. those areas that may likely challenge the

local governments may, thus, receive more of the benefits of administrative linkages precisely because they are open to suggestions or advice from the center. Local governments in opposition areas may also spend considerable amounts of time and resources wrangling with the central government over political or even policy related matters and thereby have fewer resources and time to spend on substantive issues. Finally, such governments may be able to use political opposition as an excuse for bad governance, directing residents attention away from local problems and issues by focusing on the poor relations with the center.

The political relationship between central and local governments is also characterized by central government support to different parts of the country. Central government support to local areas may impact local governments in a couple of ways. First, benefiting areas may grow dependent on the center for resources and services. In such cases, local governments may pay little attention to service delivery. Reliance on the center may focus the energy of local government officials on nurturing and protecting its relationship with the center, rather than concentrating on building local capacity or fulfilling the needs of their constituents. Where the political strategies of the center are focused on the distribution of patronage resources, vestiges of central government support to a local area may prove even more harmful to the functioning of local governments. Patrimonial or neopatrimonial patterns of political interaction are likely to be replicated at the local level, thus affecting and corrupting decision making processes and the allocation of resources by local government officials. Where patronage is common and additional resources from the center are viewed as a reward for political support, local government officials in areas with low levels of electoral support for the

center or attempt to secede, in an effort to buy political support.

ruling party may feel extremely vulnerable. Local officials in such situations may seek at all costs to prove their loyalty to the center despite the political views and wishes and development needs of the people they have been elected to represent. The political strategies and motivations of the central government in allocating resources to local governments, including the prevalence of neopatrimonialism, will be discussed at length in the next section.

The dilemma of decentralization in Africa is that in order for decentralization to be successful local governments need central government guidance and oversight, at least initially until local populations take on the task of forcing leaders to be accountable for their decisions and actions. Yet, the political needs of central governments in most African countries are such that linkages between central government and local governments serve only to undermine the performance of local governments and undermine the policy of decentralization.

With the expected impacts of administrative and political linkages in mind, it is possible to conceptualize central-local relations as following three patterns: cooperation, central dominance, or local autonomy. While the patterns will be discussed and considered to be distinct, it is understood that relationships are highly variable and central-local relations may evolve across time, perhaps even rapidly in response to a particular event, and they may vary across activities and actors. For example, local government officials may give in to central government control in a particular area, say education, while challenging the central government in other areas. This conceptualization provides an analytical tool that is useful in not only understanding the

different forms that central-local relations may take, but also understanding the impact of different forms on local government performance.

Three Patterns of Central-Local Relations

Cooperation

First, central and local governments may work together, hand in hand, to fulfill the needs of the population. Such cooperation between the local government and central government is perhaps the ideal relationship and likely to have the most promising impact on local government performance. Cooperative relations between these two levels of government loosely resembles Evans' concept of "embedded autonomy" (1995).¹² Evans describes embedded autonomy as a situation in which the state is autonomous enough from society to be able to implement its own decisions, but connected enough to benefit from the vast experiential and informational resources within society (Evans 1995). The decisions and policies of the state are influenced by society, but the state is not captured. Moreover, the state exerts influence over society and has the capacity to reshape societal preferences and activities.

Applying the concept of embedded autonomy to the study of central-local relations would suggest that central and local governments are tightly connected, but these linkages are used constructively to enhance local government performance. A cooperative relationship between these two levels of government implies an equality of influence or a healthy balance of center and local influence. Local governments would

¹² I recognize that Evans uses the term "embedded autonomy" to describe relations between the state and society. Yet, I contend that it is possible to use this concept to understand relations between levels of government. In doing so I consider the descriptive features of embedded autonomy and analyze the extent to which these features describe the relationship between the central government and different local

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be autonomous from the central government and thus, have significant decision making control and influence over policy decisions, but these decisions will be informed and influenced by the knowledge and experience within the central government. In such instances, well-developed linkages between the central and local governments, either formal or informal, will provide information and oftentimes resources to local governments. Through such linkages, the central government can transfer the skills and knowledge essential to the successful delivery of goods and services that local governments are responsible for providing following decentralization. Such a situation would include central government training of local government officials, mentoring and guidance of local governments on policymaking and implementation strategies, and monitoring and oversight of how local governments perform certain functions. Yet at the same time, local governments must be able to influence the center. Local preferences, needs and also experiences should inform and adapt the policies, guidelines, and the allocation of resources at the center. For example, policy guidelines would be mutually agreed upon and based upon the experiences and preferences of both levels of government.

As noted above, I argue that administrative linkages are likely to positively influence performance. In situations of cooperative relations between central and local governments, contact between the two levels of government over policy related matters is frequent and central government officials contact local government officials for training, guidance, mentoring and even monitoring purposes. Feedback is also an important feature of cooperative central-local relations, in that local governments not only receive valuable feedback from ministry representatives, but are also able to express their

opinions, reactions and preferences to the ministry as well. Finally, cooperative relations certainly entail some political linkages between the center and local governments. Yet, local governments maintain leverage and bargaining power. Thus, I expect cooperative relations to emerge where popular and elite support for the central government within a district is high, or at least moderately high, and the dependence of a local government upon the center is low. The latter may be indicated by limited central government support to the area.

Central Dominance

Another possibility is central government dominance over local governments, despite decentralization policies intended to empower local governments. Formally within a decentralized system, local governments retain substantial decision making authority and perhaps even financial responsibilities. Yet, in practice, central government representatives may exert tremendous control and influence over local governments, and thus, weaken them considerably. Central dominance runs directly contrary to the logic of and justifications for decentralization. As such, many of the goals of decentralization are not met when central government officials, regardless of whether administrators or politicians, exert too much control over local councils. Olowu and Smoke warn against the problem of too much central government control, especially if such control appears arbitrary or as a form of political manipulation (1992). Excessive central government control can undermine administrative and economic efficiency of local government provision (Smoke 1989 cited in Olowu and Smoke 1992). More importantly, however, central government control can undermine the extent to which local politicians are

accountable or responsive to local residents. Local politicians may instead serve the interests of the center. In such cases, the influence of society to direct and improve government performance is certainly diminished. Makumbe finds evidence of central dominance and argues that the tendency with decentralization in Africa has too often been excessive control of local governments by the center (1998).

Central dominance may take the form of more traditional hierarchical control by the center or it may be exerted through more informal channels, such as strategies of political co-optation. In the former situation, local governments may be forced to follow strict and detailed policy dictates and guidelines provided by central government officials. Hierarchical control is often exerted by central government line ministries that were previously responsible for service delivery and may retain substantial policymaking responsibilities, as is the case of Uganda. Officials in line ministries may intentionally or even unintentionally subvert the legal authority of local governments by the restrictions they place on local government actions or the limited policy options and tools they make available to local governments. For example, Ribot notes, with respect to environment and natural resources management, that decentralization in most African countries has been done through a constitutional clause (2002). Yet, often the specific powers to be decentralized are qualified through legislation or executive branch decree (Ribot 2002). Ribot notes that decisions about the allocation of powers for environmental management are made by “ministerial or administrative decree” in a number of these countries (2002).¹³ While frequent contact between central government administrators or ministry

¹³ According to Ribot, the powers for environmental management allocated to local governments are determined by executive branch decree rather than specified in the constitution in the following countries: Mali; Cameroon; Senegal; Gambia; Burkina Faso; South Africa; and Zimbabwe (2002, 7). This is not the case in Uganda where decentralization is included in the 1995 constitution.

officials is believed to enhance local performance, if central administrative involvement is excessive or if local governments do not have the ability or opportunity to adapt central government programs to meet local needs, control from the center is likely to result in poor performance by local governments.

A lack of local capacity has often been given as the leading rationale for central government involvement in local government activities even after decentralization. Ribot doubts the motivations of the center in such instances and argues instead that claims of limited local capacity really mask conflicts between local and national preferences and reveal central government unwillingness to relinquish control or allow local populations to pursue their own objectives (2002). This is certainly possible, although one cannot deny that the capacity of local governments in Africa is extremely limited and, as I have argued, I see a need for central government involvement as long as relations between the central government and local governments remain cooperative.

As noted, central dominance may also be exerted more informally and through established political linkages in the form of co-optation or political meddling in local affairs. Tight political linkages may provide the center with mechanisms through which to co-opt and control local political institutions and officials. For example, high levels of central government support to an area are likely to increase local dependence on the center or at least the political importance of the center. Similarly, such support may provide opportunities for central government political control and co-optation of local officials. For example, Bratton's research on Zambia revealed that the allocation of resources from the center to districts quite often reflects efforts by the center "purchase political control" (1980, 24). On the other hand, high levels of district support for the

center are less likely to open doors for political control and may instead indicate that the center already has sufficient control over local political institutions and leaders in the area. At times the central government may try to hijack local governments for its own uses. Informal control may be exercised through formal organizations, such as political parties, or through more informal institutions, such as patronage or clientelistic networks. Co-optation or political influence may even occur through influential politicians, such as the President or his appointed representatives. Clearly a situation of co-optation would have few positive effects on local government performance, and may instead be quite harmful.

Moreover, co-optation implies that the central government needs the support of local government officials. If this is the case, central government officials will probably be less interested in overseeing or monitoring the general developmental activities of their newly co-opted local institutions. Instead central officials will tend to focus their supervisory attention more narrowly on how local governments fulfill the political goals established for it by the center—e.g. inducing the public to vote a certain way, etc.

Of the two possible forms central dominance may take, traditional hierarchical control by central line ministries may be less harmful to local government performance and to the provision of the goods and services. While policies decided upon in the capital will not always match the needs of local populations, it is still possible that goods and services will be provided and may be provided in an efficient manner. On the other hand, co-optation can be much more harmful to institutional performance. Co-opted local governments may focus on appeasing the center rather than local populations. Such strategies may emphasize patronage or clientelism in order to increase political support

for the center among key or strategic populations rather than an allocation of resources based on need. Regardless of the nature of central dominance, excessive central government control or oversight weakens local governments and erodes their legitimacy in the eyes of the local population, further weakening local government performance (Ribot 2002).

In his study of decentralization in Zimbabwe, Makumbe finds that the central government's influence and control over local governments damaged the public's view of the local governments (1998). Equally alarming, the power of the center serves to erode the relationship between local governments and their communities. Makumbe notes that local people in Zimbabwe have not resisted unacceptable policies from the center for fear of repercussions from the party or from the central government (1998). In this case, citizens are not working to check the power of their local governments precisely because of the powerful center. Local governments may choose or be forced to submit to central dominance for a variety of reasons, which will be discussed below.

Local Autonomy

A third possible pattern of central-local relations is what I will call local autonomy. Local autonomy describes situations in which local governments successfully challenge the center or simply ignore and subvert directions that have been given to them by central government officials. Local governments may challenge the center openly, as was the case when the governor of Okinawa in Japan told the national government in Tokyo that the US base in the area had to go (Smith 2000), or local officials may silently work around the central government. Local autonomy occurs when linkages, whether

administrative or political, between the central and local government are weak or nonexistent.

Weak administrative linkages between these two levels of government may result from the fact that central government officials are simply incapable of fulfilling a mentoring role due to limited capacity and resources. It could also be the case that central government officials are simply uninterested in mentoring local governments. There are a variety of reasons why a central government may not attempt to exert political influence or control over a local government, or political linkages between the center and local governments may be weak. It may be that the center feels certain about the level of political support in a particular area, and thus, the need to exert such control or influence is lessened. Lastly, local autonomy may be an indication of the weakness of the central government and the strength of local actors. I argue, however, that full autonomy from the center is unlikely in countries with a history of centralized political power. It is much more probable that local governments are only able or seek to challenge or subvert the central government in certain areas and not others.

The impact of local government autonomy from central control or guidance on the performance of local institutions is uncertain. Local government officials may base their decisions and actions on their own preferences or the preferences of the people they represent. Decisions about whether to challenge or cooperate with the central government may be based upon the political needs of local leaders and the political desires of the local community. The extent to which local officials act according to their own interests or act to advance the interests of the community depends greatly on the

nature of the relationship between the local government and society and the dynamics of local politics, which is explored more fully in the following section.

2.3.4 Explanations based on Local Political Context

The motivations and decisions of local leaders will certainly be influenced by the extent to which local leaders are downwardly accountable to voters through elections or other mechanisms of accountability, the level of political competition at the local level, and the meaningfulness of local elections. How do voters view local elections? How competitive are local elections? What are the principal sources of cleavage? Do elections serve to sanction poorly performing leaders and reward those who perform well? Local politics influences how local governments use any independence gained from the center. Local politics determines whether local elites, once empowered, serve the broader public interest, or as some scholars argue, instead respond to particular interests of groups at the local level with the ability to influence local politics (Slater 1989; Bienen, Kapur, Riedinger 1990).

In his study of rural development in Zambia, Bratton advances a similar argument and noted the political and material importance of local politics and local leaders (1980). Bratton notes that the implementation of policies from the center in rural areas is often quite different from what was envisioned by political leaders at the center (1980, 7). He contends that local leaders have considerable influence over the distribution of resources and thus, their political interests certainly matter (Bratton 1980, 8). I agree with Bratton and expect that the political needs and motivations of local leaders and also constraints on their behavior are important to understanding the performance of local governments.

Thus, examining the nature of local politics and identifying some of the key determinants of local political dynamics is crucial to understanding the activities and performance of local governments, especially when local governments are only weakly linked to the center.

An examination of the local political context necessarily turns our attention back to the relationship between local state structures and society, and turns our attention back to some of the society-centric explanations discussed above, such as the levels and nature of citizen participation and involvement in local government. The extent to which society actively participates and attempts to hold local leaders accountable critically influences whether local government freedom from central control results in good government. Yet I argue that we must examine local politics in the context of central-local relations and recognize that linkages between a local government and the center certainly affect the relationship between that local government and the community.

As discussed above, there are a variety of reasons to be suspect of the extent to which local leaders are, or are at least perceived to be, subject to the control or influence of local populations. As noted above, participation has not necessarily increased with decentralization. Remmer and Wibbels cogently point out that much of the literature on decentralization in the west assumes that citizens are knowledgeable about the activities of the newly empowered local governments and are able to assign responsibility for performance, whether good or bad, to a particular level of government (2000). Much of this literature takes as a given the fact that local populations will be willing and able to force accountability from local governments and local leaders. Manin et al. explain that “Governments are ‘accountable’ if citizens can discern representative from

unrepresentative governments and can sanction them appropriately, retaining in office those that perform well and ousting from office those incumbents who do not” (1999, 10). Yet, this is not always the case. Manin et al. conclude, based on a study of elections in developed countries, that citizens “just do not know enough” to tell the government what to do and judge what it has done (1999, 23). Certainly this problem is likely to be heightened in Africa, especially rural Africa, where citizens are less knowledgeable and have more limited access to information about the activities of local government. Quite often citizens are unaware of the powers and responsibilities of elected leaders at different levels of government. Nevertheless, along with the new powers granted to them with decentralization, local governments and their activities tend to receive greater media attention following these reforms. Increased reporting of local government activities should enhance the ability of communities to check the behavior of their local representatives, at least to some extent.

Political Competition and Meaning of Elections

Elections are commonly viewed as the principal mechanism by which citizens can hold their leaders accountable and a necessary, albeit insufficient, component of democratic governance. The transitions to democracy that occurred throughout the developing world, including parts of Africa, during the 1980s and 1990s brought elections back onto the political landscape. Since 1990 there has been a rise in the number of contested, multiparty elections held in Africa (see e.g. Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Regularly conducted elections are believed to provide an important link between citizens and political leaders and offer citizens the opportunity to express their opinions regarding the

performance of elected leaders. Citizens can reelect political representatives who are performing well, and can sanction poorly performing leaders.

Still there are reasons to doubt the effectiveness of local elections to actually sanction poorly performing leaders. For example, the return of elections, even multiparty elections, in Africa has brought little in the way of vertical accountability and almost no horizontal accountability at the national level (van de Walle 2002). The infrequency of elections also limits the power that communities have in sanctioning poor performers in the local government. Mathew argues, however, based on his research on decentralization in India, that elections have been successful mechanisms of accountability (2002). He notes that since decentralization there has not been a single year without an election in at least one level of local government in India. Yet, this has not been the case in many decentralized countries, such as Uganda where citizens have only had two opportunities to vote for local council officials, in 1998 and again recently in 2002.

Moreover, voters certainly face difficulties in obtaining information necessary to evaluate the performance of their elected officials (see e.g. Manin et al. 1999). Given such difficulties and information asymmetries, the Tiebout model of local governments, which posits that citizens are mobile and can “vote with their feet” to choose the community where the services offered most closely match their individual preferences and willingness to pay through taxes for these services, is not relevant to the situation in most developing countries (Tiebout 1956; discussed in Stevens 1993).¹⁴ It is unlikely

¹⁴ Inman notes that the conditions of the model are particularly stringent and thus, unlikely to hold outside urban metropolitan areas within the United States (2000). He describes the conditions of the model that must be met for the model to predict when governments services will be efficiently provided (2000, 12). The list includes: 1) goods provided by governments are congestible—not public goods; 2) the supply of

that citizens in African countries are informed enough and mobile enough to truly be able to exercise the option of voting with their feet. Moreover, there are likely to be social and cultural constraints against mobility that further inhibit Africans from moving from community to community until they find the area with the mix of services they desire.

Elections must also be fair and genuinely competitive if they are to be effective instruments for holding leaders accountable. Higher levels of political competition are often associated with better and more responsive government. For example, Coppedge argues that political competition leads to better outcomes and cites the example of Venezuela, where he argues political competition led to more responsive government (1993). Similarly, research on local elites in South Africa found that conflict between local elites had a positive impact on development in the area.¹⁵ The presence of conflict increased competition among elites and in fact, appeared to spur political elites to work hard to provide development projects for the area.

In many African countries, elections at any level are not truly competitive and the quality of many elections in Africa tends to be quite low, despite recent moves toward democracy across the continent. For example, Diamond classifies the regimes in 43 of the 48 sub-Saharan African countries as “hybrid regimes”—where democratic political institutions coexist with authoritarian features (2002). In fact, 21 of these regimes are considered “competitive authoritarian” or “hegemonic electoral authoritarian” (Diamond 2002). Competition is limited intentionally in many of these countries, such as those with one-party or even a no-party system, as in the case of Uganda. Yet, even in countries

new communities is perfectly elastic; 3) households are fully informed about the attributes of different communities; 4) households are mobile; and 5) there are no spillovers across communities (Inman 2000, 12).

¹⁵ Oral communication with Fikeni 2002.

where competition is not formally restricted, the rules of the game are often structured or manipulated in such a way as to favor a single dominant party. Levitsky and Way note that in such regimes “incumbents frequently abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters and in some cases manipulate electoral results” (2002, 53).

The weakness of the majority of political parties in Africa’s new multiparty systems further limits competition and has reinforced the pattern of a dominant party system. In other instances, however central government or party officials seek to use elections as a mechanism of control. For example, Beck discusses the various ways in which *Parti Socialiste* (PS) in Senegal maintained control of local governments through electoral rules that increased the power of the PS in the outcome of these elections (2001). Central control over local elections in Senegal resulted in the deconcentration of power *within* the PS rather than decentralization and increased the relevance of upward accountability, rather than downward accountability to voters (Beck 2001). Yet, Beck further argues that upward accountability does not preclude the possibility of downward accountability if there is political competition at the local level (2001). This was the case in Senegal where competition ensured some degree of local control over the election process and local leaders once elected.

In the absence of genuine competition, it is questionable whether elections are actually a meaningful way to hold leaders accountable. It seems likely that only competitive local elections would allow citizen participation to affect local government performance in the expected ways. The existence of political opposition appears to be crucial. Moreover, research seems to suggest that where participation is not meaningful

or an effective tool for getting individual or group needs addressed by the local government, future participation is unlikely to increase and may even decline from existing levels despite decentralizing reforms. For example, Scarritt associates the decline in voter turnout for the 1992 local elections in Zambia with the trend of declining effectiveness of participation during the one-party state from 1973-91 (1996).

There are reasons to be suspect about the degree of competitiveness of local elections in Uganda. As discussed further in Chapters Three and Eight, the no-party system that gives the Movement an unfair advantage in electoral contests, central government efforts to manipulate and interfere in LC elections and even electoral malpractice and violence all work to reduce the competitiveness of local elections in Uganda.

As discussed above, Morlan finds that the “sharpness of societal cleavages” influences citizen willingness to participate (1984, 469). I agree with Morlan and expect that the presence of a politically charged societal cleavage in a local area will increase political competition and, thereby increase the importance of local elections and the interests of citizens in local politics.

Political Strategies of Local Leaders

In the absence of a particularly strong and active local community, or when participation and elections are not truly meaningful, the interests of local leaders become increasingly important in understanding how local governments perform without involvement from the center. The experiences of most African countries certainly provide little reason to be optimistic regarding the motivations of politicians and the extent to which serving and

representing the needs of their constituents is an important determinant of decisions made while in office.

Much of the literature in Africa, which highlights the neopatrimonial nature of the regimes in Africa, recognizes the desire of politicians to stay in office, but points out just how differently they pursue that goal based on the political context in which they exist. The nature of politics in Africa suggests that politicians may act in ways to promote their own personal or political interests rather than serving the public good. For example, in his examination of the reasons for the persistence of the economic crisis in Africa, van de Walle argues that:

The absence of a development project is not due to extensive kinship or societal pressures on decision makers, however, but to the lack of discipline, vision and patriotism of a ruling elite that has always viewed its own material enrichment as the primary objective of political power (2001, 124).

Neopatrimonialism and the tendency for politicians to engage in “personal politics” (Clapham 1982) affects local government performance in several important ways. First, personal politics results in ineffective and unresponsive government. Corruption and misallocation of scarce resources ensures that local governments will be unable to meet the goals that might have previously been established and will certainly be unable to meet the demands of the majority of its constituents.

Schatzberg’s recent study of political legitimacy in Africa identifies some of the cultural characteristics of African society that support and perhaps encourage patrimonialism (2002). He notes the predominance of metaphors of father and family in political discourse in Africa and argues that “power in middle Africa has much to do with ‘eating’ (in both literal and figurative senses) as well as other forms of consumption”

(2002, 26). African communities, according to Schatzberg's analysis, recognize that a "father-chief" will "eat" while in office, although he contends there are socially determined limits on the amount leaders can consume, especially at times of economic hardship in the broader community (2002). Bayart (1993) similarly describes "the politics of the belly" and notes that the struggle for power in Africa is in essence a desperate struggle for resources that can then be allocated to political supporters.¹⁶ Chabal and Daloz make a similar argument, but contend that representation in Africa is *purely* instrumental, where citizens evaluate political leaders based on what the individual can do or did for the community (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Politicians lose legitimacy when they lose access to resources to be used for redistribution and thus, are no longer able to provide (Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Much of this work suggests that neopatrimonialism has an extremely long history in African political culture. For example, in his analysis of traditional political culture among the Kanyok people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yoder finds that Kanyok myths indicate that the origins of politics and political power are linked to utility and the ability of an individual to provide to the people (1998, 497-98). Yet, there is certainly evidence that political culture in Africa is not immutable. For example, Yoder also finds evidence of values that would be extremely supportive of democracy alongside the values that support and encourage patronage politics (1998). This suggests that, despite persistence, there is evidence of cultural change. Some of this change results directly from the reforms that are being adopted at both the national and local levels. For example, Beck sees the tax revolt in Touba as indicating a major change in state-society relations where clientelism and patronage from the center is declining and instead local

¹⁶ See also Joseph 1987 and Sandbrook 1985.

governments are using tax revenue to provide services, rather than allocate patronage resources provided by the center (2001).

On the other hand, recent work by both van de Walle (2001) and Chabal and Daloz (1999) highlights the *adaptability* of neopatrimonialism, which is extremely important in the current climate of ongoing political and economic reform throughout Africa. Both of these studies point to various ways in which patrimonial strategies have been adapted to new political realities. I expect the same with decentralization. Politicians at both the center and local levels will most likely figure out how to maintain existing patronage networks or reform these networks to operate within decentralized systems.

While neopatrimonial rule is antidemocratic in that it is based on arbitrary decision making and the private appropriation of public goods, van de Walle argues that there are differences in neopatrimonial rule across countries (2002). For example, clientelism persists even in democracies, such as Western democracies and even the longstanding Africa democracies of Botswana, South Africa and Mauritius, but it occurs “within increasingly tighter boundaries” and no longer constitutes a system of rule (van de Walle 2002, 69). In the less democratic states in Africa, clientelism and patronage occur unbounded (van de Walle 2002). I expect to that the importance of neopatrimonial rule will also vary across areas *within* a country.

Bratton and van de Walle argue that there are three institutions that may be capable of undermining neopatrimonialism in Africa, and these include the legislature, judiciary, and civil service (1997). Their argument draws attention to the importance of horizontal accountability in democratic governance (O'Donnell 1994; 1998) and the

positive ways in which checks on the power of the executive may improve overall governance. It seems likely then that local governments may be less apt or less able to pursue personalistic or patrimonial strategies in areas where the legislative branch of the local government is strong enough to actually check the power of the executive. Similarly, a stronger, more professional local administration may be able to perform the same task and thus, foster better government at the local level. The extent to which local legislative councils are equipped and powerful enough to hold executives accountable certainly varies across countries in Africa and within countries. The institutional framework may provide some indication of the level of horizontal accountability. Yet, this study holds the institutional framework constant and finds that the power of the legislature *vis à vis* the executive still varies.

As discussed above, central governments in Africa often practice neopatrimonial rule and thus, I expect that when central-local relations are based upon personalized rule and the distribution of patronage resources to secure support, the same sort of practices will be reproduced at the local level. Given that local governments relate differently to the central government, they may be influenced differently by central government tendencies to resort to personal rule. Local governments outside of the network may be able to escape these anti-democratic and anti-development influences from the center, while local governments that relate to the center in a personalized way are also likely to rely on similar strategies when relating to their constituents.

2.4 Hypotheses

In this dissertation, I test the following hypotheses:

Ceteris paribus,

HYPOTHESIS 1: I expect that tighter administrative linkages between central and local governments will positively affect local government performance.

HYPOTHESIS 2a: I expect that district support for the central government will have no impact on local government performance.

HYPOTHESIS 2b: I expect that central government support for districts will negatively affect local government performance.

HYPOTHESIS 3: I expect local governments to perform better where there is greater political competition for local elections.

HYPOTHESIS 4: I expect local governments to generally perform better and be more responsive when politics at the local level is less personalized and local leaders are less inclined to resort to patronage or patrimonialism to gain or maintain political support.

In addition, I will include control variables to test the following alternative rival hypotheses based on the existing literature on local government performance:

Ceteris paribus,

HYPOTHESIS 5: I expect local governments in economically developed areas to perform better than local governments in less developed areas.

HYPOTHESIS 6: I expect older, more experienced local governments to perform better than their newer counterparts. Similarly, I expect local governments to perform better in areas where traditional political structures more closely resembled the current local government structures. Finally, I expect local governments to perform better in areas where colonial administration was carried out through political institutions that resembled indigenous institutions rather than those imposed from the outside.

HYPOTHESIS 7: I expect local governments to perform better when local populations are active participants, such as through voting or contacting local government officials.

HYPOTHESIS 8: I expect local government performance to be better in areas where civil society is vibrant and actively linked to local governments.

HYPOTHESIS 9: I expect local governments to perform better in areas with a greater reserve of social capital that may facilitate relations between local governments and their constituents.

Chapter Three: Decentralization in Uganda: Opportunities and Constraints

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the historic and current state of local government in Uganda, paying particular attention to the details of decentralization reforms instituted by the Movement government since the mid-1990s. In addition to providing a history of local government in Section 2, Section 3 provides a thorough description of the process and features of decentralization in Uganda. Section 4 then describes the current political context in which Uganda's decentralization policy exists and offers some analysis of ways in which features of the broader political system may affect prospects for successful decentralization and well-performing local governments.

3.2 History of Local Government in Uganda

This section briefly describes the history of local political institutions in Uganda focusing on both the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Any discussion of pre-colonial political institutions in a nation as ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse as Uganda is certain to neglect important features and differences or characterize common trends across communities with too broad a brush. My effort to describe differences in traditional political institutions in different parts of Uganda is certainly victim of both errors. Nevertheless, looking at the nature of political institutions before colonialism enables us to understand the changes that accompanied colonialism in different areas and to evaluate the extent to which current local political institutions resemble these traditional institutions that existed before colonialism.

3.2.1 Pre-colonial Political Institutions

One of the first things to note with regard to traditional political institutions in Uganda is the tremendous diversity that existed. A second and important point is the extent to which what came to be commonly viewed as the traditional political systems for a given society often bore little resemblance in many areas to what had existed before the British arrived in Uganda. The role of the British in reformulating “traditional institutions” in different parts of Uganda, what Kabwegyere calls the “artificial tribalization of Ugandan societies” will be discussed in greater detail below (1995, 19).

Scholars tend to agree that environmental conditions, such as the primary economic activity of an area, had a large impact of the type of institutions that developed within a society. As such there is some geographical variation between societies in which political authority took the form of a centralized or bureaucratic state and those societies in which political authority was on a much smaller scale and much more diffuse, even decentralized and egalitarian.

Many of the examples of “stateless societies” in pre-colonial Uganda existed in northern and eastern Uganda among the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic peoples (Burke 1964). Within this group of stateless societies, there was still variation in the methods of social and political organization. Burke describes the political organization in such societies, “The unit of authority was generally an integral part of the kinship, or other segmentary system, and authority over people was determined not only according to shared territory, but on kinship and other non-spatial lines as well” (1964, 11). The Langi in what today constitutes Lira and Apac districts provides an example of a stateless society.

In the early 16th century, Karugire notes that groups throughout northern Uganda began to establish simple political systems organized around the clan. He states that, “In this system of political and social organisation, each clan managed its own affairs, settled disputes between its members and recognised no other authority beyond this unit” (1980, 8). In such societies, the tradition of a single, all-powerful chief did not exist. For example, Karugire contends that despite the creation of larger political organizations or states among some societies in northern Uganda, such as in Acholi following or in response to the Luo migrations of the latter half of the 16th century, the “fundamental philosophy upon which Luo political organization rested” was never abandoned (1980, 11). He argues that the societies continued to pursue “the belief and practice that all important decisions affecting the community could only be arrived at, not by a single person, but by the consensus of the elders representing the different clans constituting the particular community” (Karugire 1980, 11). He notes that even when more structured forms of political organization did emerge, the leader “acted as a spokesman for the elders among whom he was *primus inter pares*—he himself being a clan head of his own clan and hence its spokesman” [emphasis in the original] (1980, 11).

Karugire perhaps overstates the degree to which these societies embraced egalitarianism and shunned individual leadership. For example, Tosh, in his analysis of clan leadership in pre-colonial Langi, notes that many important “areas of Lango life were conducted in a very egalitarian spirit” (1978, 65). In particular, he cites the example of the *wang tic*, which is a communal work group (Tosh 1978). Yet, he also cites two examples in Langi society in which individual leadership was quite important: dispute settlement and the organization of military activity (Tosh 1978, 65).

The second group of societies are those which were ruled by centralized and often highly specialized political systems. These kingdoms found in southern and western Uganda contrast sharply to the smaller stateless societies described above. Buganda and Bunyoro were the two largest kingdoms in Uganda during the period before colonialism. Kabwegyere contends that the populations of these two kingdoms "...may have numbered millions at the height of their power" (1995, 19). The political institutions in Buganda have received considerable attention since the British first arrived in Uganda in the late 19th century and were astonished at the level of sophistication of the kingdom's hierarchy of chiefs and sub-chiefs. Karugire describes Buganda as having "developed the most efficient bureaucracy in pre-colonial Uganda" (1980, 11). Fallers explains that "By the middle of the 19th century the kingdom was governed by a corps of chiefs who owed their positions largely to the personal grace of the *Kabaka*¹, who might appoint, dismiss and transfer them at will" (1964, 6).

Diversity in the political organizations certainly existed even among the societies described as kingdoms. For example, in Ankole, which today includes districts such as Bushenyi and Mbarara, there was also a network of chiefs to carry out and enforce the authority of the *Omugabe*². Yet, Karugire notes that because the principal economic activity in Ankole was cattle there was less of a need for an administration as centralized as existed in Buganda (1980, 24). The system of administration that developed in Ankole was somewhat "loose", however rulers ensured that administrative agents had a stake in the economy in an effort to hold the system together (Karugire 1980). As such the requirement that an individual must own cattle in order to hold public office soon

¹ *Kabaka* refers to the king of the Buganda Kingdom.

² *Omugabe* refers to the king of the Ankole Kingdom. The Ankole kingdom was commonly called Nkore

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emerged. Doornbos even questions whether one can describe Nkore as a single political system and argues that the agriculturalist Bairu and the politically powerful Bahima cattle-keepers appeared to be distinct groups rather than a united kingdom (1978). In fact, he argues that

...except for the cardinal fact that there was a Bahima-based political organisation operating in their immediate surroundings, the Bairu's position may in fact not have been altogether different from that of the nearby Bakiga (in the adjacent Kigezi District) where such central political institutions did not exist (Doornbos 1978, 48).

In fact, Doornbos argues that the political system more closely resembled two types of political organization, rather than "a system in which Bairu and Bahima were basically united in a mystical identification with [Nkore's] kingship" (1978, 51).

Despite the varying degrees of centralization, the kingdoms in southern and western Uganda differed dramatically from nonkingdom areas. And yet, several of the societies characterized as kingdoms did not fully take shape until the arrival of the British, such as Busoga and Ankole, which were both formed or consolidated from several smaller kingdoms with British assistance and pressure. Again Ankole kingdom provides a telling example. Kabwegyere describes how the British brought independent kingdoms, such as Igara, Buhweju, Buzimba, into Ankole kingdom (1995). Quoting historian B.H.F. Morris, Kabwegyere explains, "Thus by 1901, '...the district was nearly twice the size of the Omugabe's traditional kingdom of Nkore as it had existed in 1898'" (Morris 1957, 10; quoted in Kabwegyere 1995, 29).

3.2.2 Local Government during the Colonial Period

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British interest and activity in Uganda began in the 1860s and 1870s. By the 1880s traders with the East African Company and missionaries, representatives of both the Church Missionary Society and the Catholic White Fathers, were operating in the area of what is today Uganda, although most of the activity at this time was concentrated in Buganda Kingdom. Uganda was formally declared a British Protectorate in 1894 and a treaty was signed with Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda Kingdom.

In 1900 the British signed another important agreement with Buganda Kingdom. The 1900 Agreement recognized the political institutions of the kingdom, in particular the role and leadership of the Kabaka concerning the governance of Buganda, and left these institutions intact. The agreement formally made Buganda “a state within a state,” thereby assuring the preeminence of Buganda relative to other regions (Uziogwe 1982). Burke contends that the special status awarded to Buganda Kingdom by the 1900 Agreement has influenced the development of local government in other parts of the country and especially complicated the “integration of the constituent districts into a unified nation state” (1964, 13). The political implications of the concessions Britain made to Buganda in the 1900 Agreement resurfaced during the negotiations over the most appropriate constitutional arrangements for an independent Uganda and have continually posed a challenge to central-local relations in the country. Every post-independence government in Uganda has struggled to resolve the Buganda issue.

Outside of Buganda Kingdom British control at this time was quite limited. The subsequent extension of British authority relied heavily upon assistance from the kingdom. Burke describes the process as involving “a combination of Baganda mercenaries and administrative agents, localized military forces, and agreements with

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petty chiefs and clan leaders” (1964, 13-14). He notes that “the Baganda, who were the first to adopt Christianity and to sign an agreement with the English, became, in effect, a favored tribe and a privileged junior partner of the British in the subjugation of the remaining portions of the country” (Burke 1964, 13). Uziogwe similarly describes the situation as one of “Buganda imperialist expansion” (1982, 9). At times this process entailed increasing the size of Buganda kingdom to the detriment of its neighbors, such as when the British gave Buganda several counties that had been part of Bunyoro kingdom.³

As noted above, the British were highly impressed with Buganda’s centralized political system consisting of various layers of hierarchy. Where such a system did not exist, as in the stateless societies of northern and eastern Uganda, “an administrative system patterned on that which the British had first observed and learned to admire in Buganda was super-imposed over the traditional polities” (Burke 1964, 13). Baganda agents were sent to serve as chiefs and administrators in these areas and thus, the colonial state was viewed by many as merely an extension of Buganda (Uzoigwe 1982). Governance through the institution of African chiefs was established permanently and formally in the 1919 Native Authority Ordinance. The ordinance constituted a formalization of a process that had been ongoing for several decades—the establishment of the Buganda model of government throughout the protectorate. While the British policy of indirect rule prompted the practice of using existing traditional political institutions for colonial administration, in areas where institutions were not as the British

³ The Lost Counties issue refers to four counties from Bunyoro that were given to Buganda from the British. The British took the counties from the Kingdom of Bunyoro after its defeat. Throughout the colonial period and after independence Bunyoro lobbied for the return of their lands. The Lost Counties issue was politically contentious because both Buganda and Bunyoro felt that the lands were rightfully theirs.

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expected or where they felt existing institutions were not adequate, the policy of indirect rule became more of “an indirect style of indirect rule” (Burke 1964, 34).

Fallers’ classic study of the evolution of political institutions in Busoga highlights some of the conflicts inherent in Britain’s policy of indirect rule and the pressure to transform traditional political institutions into examples of modern bureaucracy. He describes how colonial administration in Busoga was carried out through traditional political institutions and yet throughout the colonial period “administrators have attempted to modify the indigenous political institutions in the direction of a bureaucratic civil service” (1965, 18). Yet, Fallers notes that the new institutions did not replace older institutions, but rather the two sets of institutions existed simultaneously, often in conflict (1965). For example, he notes that the personalism on which authority relations were based in traditional Busoga persisted in the new political institutions (Fallers 1965).

Numerous scholars note that the chiefs of the colonial administration in those areas that had not had such positions before held more power than any individual had held previously. In the kingdom areas, chiefs were still subject to the traditional political system, and thus, accountable not only to the Kabaka, but also accountable to clan leaders to a certain extent. This was not the case in the more decentralized political systems where the position of chief had been imposed from outside. In these areas, colonial chiefs were not subject to popular accountability and were accountable to no one but the British colonial administration. Interestingly, the process of removing Baganda agents and putting in place individuals drawn from the local population was accompanied by some degree of political chaos in the north (Burke 1964). Burke notes that local

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populations were reluctant to allow a local official to hold the degree of authority to which colonial chiefs were entitled.

After World War II, there was a shift in British colonial policy and a recognition that it was the responsibility of the colonial administration to “guide colonies to responsible self-government” (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982, 301). These policy changes resulted in changes in the practice of local government in Uganda. For example, the African Local Government Ordinance of 1949 “aimed to ‘develop local councils and their functions to enable African themselves to take a greater part in the administration of their own local services and local affairs generally which affects their community’” (British colonial government 1949; quoted in Ocaya-Lakidi 1982, 302). For example, the ordinance provided for a district council with limited power. The councils were granted the authority to pass relevant by-laws, although any by-laws had to be approved by the Provincial Commissioner (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). Moreover, the ordinance provided for chiefs, although the chiefs continued to be appointed by and responsible to the colonial administration rather than the people they governed.

A subsequent ordinance in 1955, the District Administration Ordinance, introduced greater autonomy to local governments in Uganda and consequently gave district councils more control over the administration of the district and local chiefs (Burke 1964; Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). The ordinance transferred select services that were to be provided by local governments and also introduced the graduated tax as a way in which local governments could finance the provision of these new services (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). District councils:

were authorized to carry out as many as twenty substantial services and functions covering the primary fields of agriculture, veterinary, law and

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order, forestry, famine relief, medical, education, buildings, water supplies, and local industries (Burke 1964, 40).

Secondly, the ordinance created a District Appointments Board that had the power to appoint and dismiss civil servants working in the district.

While the ordinance certainly increased the power of local governments, there were still limits and exceptions to the exercise of that power. Many important activities, such as the selection of members of the Appointments Board, remained in the hands of the colonial administration and other activities carried out by district councils were subject to approval by the Governor or other colonial administrators (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). As discussed below, this has been an ongoing trend in Ugandan politics. On the one hand, the center empowers local governments, while simultaneously creating various mechanisms through which to check or curtail the exercise of that power.

By the early 1950s the end of British colonial rule in Uganda was inevitable. To prepare for withdrawal, the British undertook negotiations with Uganda's key interest groups to design the political institutions that would be in place at independence. Buganda was recalcitrant to accept a subordinate position for the Kabaka, or the kingdom for that matter, in an independent Uganda. Thus, the period up to Uganda's independence in 1962 was marked by an intense struggle between the Protectorate government and Buganda. Within Buganda there were even attempts to block Uganda's independence in order to protect the kingdom's position (Turyahikayo-Rugyema 1982). For example, in January 1960, Buganda declared its independence from British colonial rule, a declaration that received little, if any, response from the colonial government (Turyahikayo-Rugyema 1982, 255). The following December, Buganda attempted once

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again to secede from the Protectorate government. Not surprisingly, however, the colonial government forcefully rejected Buganda's efforts (Mutibwa 1982, 259).

During the negotiations over Uganda's independence and the political institutions that should have been established in the country's first constitution, Buganda pushed for a constitution that would sustain the monarchy and the political autonomy to which the kingdom had grown accustomed under colonial rule (Mudoola 1993). As expected, Buganda forcibly opposed any constitutional arrangements that seemed to indicate that the role of the Kabaka would be diminished even in the slightest (Mutibwa 1982). Laying the groundwork for an electoral alliance between itself and the Kabaka-Yekka (KY) party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) convinced Britain to accede to Buganda's demands for federal status under an independent constitution (Mudoola 1993, 25).

The Munster Report, which provided the framework for Uganda's 1962 constitution, gave Buganda direct control over the affairs of the kingdom. It also denied the Parliament of Uganda any jurisdiction over Buganda and any proposed legislation that concerned, even marginally, the kingdom required the approval of the *Lukiko*⁴. (Uzoigwe 1983, 255). Buganda was also granted permission to directly elect members to the Lukiko and indirectly elect members from the Lukiko to the Ugandan National Assembly (Mudoola 1993). Like previous agreements between Buganda and Britain, Uganda's other kingdoms (Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole, and Busoga) received far fewer concessions and only a semi-federal status. These kingdoms, quite unlike Buganda, were

⁴ *Lukiko* refers to the Parliament of the Kingdom of Buganda.

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denied concurrent powers with the Parliament of Uganda and given only minimal control over affairs within their respective kingdoms (Uziogwe 1983).⁵

Uganda's government at independence was formed by a parliamentary alliance between the KY and UPC parties. The Kabaka held the office of President and four Baganda held various ministerial posts, thereby legitimizing the independent government (Mutibwa 1982). The UPC/KY alliance satisfied the needs of both parties. The alliance provided Milton Obote, the leader of UPC, with sufficient seats in parliament to capture the position of Prime Minister (Southall 1975). Buganda's intentions, as with most of its political maneuverings before independence, sought to protect the kingdom's position.

The likelihood of any alliance between the UPC and KY at independence seemed quite low. The UPC sought KY simply to secure its hold on power. These two parties clung to vastly different visions of how the political situation in Uganda should be structured. Most notably, Obote and the UPC were not committed to the preservation of traditional society and traditional rule (Southall 1975). In an effort to limit the influence of Buganda, Obote began "to rule Uganda as if the Presidency did not exist, and [Kabaka] Mutesa was practically shut off from major policy decisions" (Uzoigwe 1983, 260).

3.2.3 Local Government after Independence

As noted above, Uganda's independence constitution provided different levels of autonomy to different regions, giving Buganda federal status and semi-federal status to other kingdom areas, while all other regions did not receive such benefits. Doornbos

⁵ Doornbos notes that Busoga lobbied for "inclusion among these lesser kingdoms" (1978, 13). He notes that "In the end this was granted with the status of 'Territory' and its Kyabazinga on a par with the

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notes, however, that the nonkingdom areas desired positions comparable to the kingdoms and in fact, all of these areas, except Teso and Karamoja, created a position of a “Constitutional Head who could perform essentially the same ceremonial functions for them that the rulers of the kingdoms did” (1978, 13).

The weakness of the center and the consequent power of local governments at independence, most especially the kingdom areas, created “centrifugal tendencies” (Uganda 1987). A pattern emerged in which local authorities struggled for greater autonomy and as described below, the central government sought ways to secure and maintain its hold on power relative to local authorities and other potential challengers at the national level. As it happened, efforts by the center to exert its power have over time taken authoritarian or nondemocratic forms.

Although the constitution provided for greater autonomy for the kingdom areas relative to the nonkingdom areas, Burke argues that the differences in power between these two groups was “more procedural than substantive” (1964, 41). Ocaya-Lakidi also agrees that “these other local (District) authorities differed from the kingdom governments not in kind, but in degree” and contends that local governments in nonkingdom areas had similar interactions with the central government (1982, 300). The principal difference in the relationship between the central government and the kingdom areas, especially Buganda, and the relationship between the center and local governments in other areas was that the latter were considerably weaker and thus, less able to challenge the center, while the kingdoms were better equipped to resist the central governments’ efforts at control (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982).

hereditary rulers of the kingdoms” (Doombos 1978, 13).

Shortly after the UPC gained control of the government, the Local Administration (Amendments) Bill, 1962 was passed. The legislation began the process of increasing the power of the center and weakening the power of local governments, a process which culminated in the complete centralization of power in the 1967 constitution following the constitutional crisis in 1966, which is discussed at greater length below. Several features of the Local Administration (Amendments) Bill, 1962 limited the power of local governments. For example, the law changed the procedures for calling district council meetings and in effect, made it more difficult for members to call meetings (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). Similarly, the law increased the power of the minister responsible for local government considerably, such as the inclusion of a provision that the minister had the right to attend and participate in any district council meeting without giving notice or waiting for a formal invitation (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). Moreover, the District Commissioner, who was the representative of the central government in each district, was awarded the right to attend in place of the minister (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982). Finally, the minister was given the power to appoint the chairman and vice-chairman of the council in the event of a deadlock during the election for the positions (Ocaya-Lakidi 1982).

Subsequent legislation continued to increase the power of the center and increase the ways in which the center could check the power of local governments, most especially in areas such as Buganda and other kingdoms. Ocaya-Lakidi argues that through the various pieces of legislation passed between 1962 and 1966, the central government sought to make local administrations a mere “administrative appendage of the central government” (1982, 310).

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By August 1964, the UPC/KY alliance had broken down and Buganda's influence in the central government was all but gone. Relations between Buganda and the Obote government deteriorated rapidly, especially after Obote held a referendum on the "Lost Counties" of Bunyoro. The Battle of the Palace marked the complete breakdown of relations between Buganda and Obote's government. The Battle of the Palace erupted in 1966 shortly after Obote unlawfully dissolved the 1962 constitution and assumed supreme power. Buganda immediately protested Obote's behavior and demanded a reinstatement of the 1962 constitution. On May 20, the Lukiko passed a motion requiring the central government's immediate withdrawal from Buganda by May 30 (Southall 1975). Obote's response was to send troops led by Idi Amin to storm the palace of the Kabaka at Mengo. The Kabaka and several of his ministers narrowly escaped and fled into exile. Buganda ceased to exist and was parceled into four administrative districts, each of which was under a state of emergency and the direct control of the central government (Mudoola 1993). The constitution Obote introduced in 1967 eliminated all forms of federalism and abolished monarchies and all other forms of traditional rule. The 1966 crisis and subsequent unitary constitution in 1967 reflect the culmination of the central-local conflict that began at independence (Uganda 1987). By 1967 Obote had succeeded in his efforts to make local governments simply extensions of the central government. The Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System concludes that with the 1967 constitution:

Not only did the Centre establish effective control over Local Authorities, it did this in the context of an increasingly dictatorial system that put an end to all local-level democratic institutions that could give form to local initiatives (Uganda 1987, 9).

The center's power relative to local governments was laid out in the Local Administrations Act 1967. The act gave the Minister of Local Government "control...over the number of members of the Council, elections of senior officials of the Council, elections of the Councils themselves, and the by-laws that they may pass" (Uganda 1987). Moreover, the act authorizes the minister to take control of a local administration if "he is satisfied of its inability to function for lack of either staff or facilities" (Uganda 1987, 9).

Local governments fared even worse under Amin's dictatorship (1971-79). With military rule, district councils ceased to exist, and once again, centrally appointed chiefs served as local administrators. During this time, however, chiefs became more powerful with fewer, if any, checks on their behavior and use of power. The Commission reports, "The deterioration in the cadre of chiefs has in turn been a direct consequence of the erosion of the social base of the political rulers in the country over the same period" (Uganda 1987, 15). Moreover, the Commission continues that "the tendency was still to blend absolute powers of a chief with a militarist style of administration, a mixture of which gave birth to grave excesses" (1987, 15). During the second Obote regime (1980-85), chiefs were even recruited from among UPC "party sycophants" and functioned "more as security agents than they did as administrative officers" (Uganda 1987, 15).

3.2.4 Movement Government and Evolution of the Local Council System

As noted above, much of Uganda's post-colonial history is marked by civil war, authoritarian rule, and economic decay. The institutional decay under the Amin (1971-1979) and Obote (Obote I, 1962-1971; Obote II, 1980-1985) regimes meant that political

institutions no longer provided basic services; rather these institutions engaged in the extraction of resources from powerless populations (Brett 1994). Moreover, the dictatorial tendencies of Uganda's post-independence regimes successfully excluded and marginalized the majority of the population. Previous political regimes in Uganda used the coercive instruments of the state to oppress and terrorize their opponents in particular and the public generally. Uganda's recent history, however, is best described as a period of reconstruction. President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement government (NRM and today commonly referred to simply as the Movement)⁶ has demonstrated a firm commitment to the goal of social, political, and economic reconstruction. Important among these reforms is a comprehensive program of decentralization.

The NRM promoted a form of decentralization as early as 1981 during their guerrilla war against the Obote regime. Decentralization was included as one of the principal objectives in the NRM's Ten Point Programme along with other complementary objectives, such as an expressed commitment to improve governance through citizen participation and democratization. The resistance council (RC) system, originally established during the war in areas under the control of Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), provides the institutional foundation for Uganda's current system of local government and the decentralization policy.

The RCs began as primarily administrative institutions and were originally organized "to enlist sympathetic civilians in the acquisition of food, recruits and intelligence for the NRA's war effort" (Kasfir 1998, 55). Kasfir, quoting Museveni who

⁶ I use the names NRM and Movement interchangeably, although I have tried to use NRM for historical references when the Movement government still referred to itself as the NRM.

explained that it was only later "...we made them [the RCs] elective", commends the NRM for "taking the risk of introducing a degree of democracy while it was fighting a war" (1998, 55). The NRM shifted the membership and focus of the RCs toward broad-based citizen participation at the village level and introduced the election of resistance council leaders to make the councils more democratic. Once elective, the RCs were responsible for maintaining security and law and order in their area and providing a few critical services to local residents (Apter 1995). These institutions functioned as self-help organizations and relied primarily on voluntary contributions from the community in order to accomplish these tasks (Brett 1994). Nevertheless, in many parts of Uganda during the war, they constituted the only functioning government.

After seizing power in January 1986, the NRM formalized the RC structure through the National Resistance Council and Committees Statute of 1987 and RCs were instituted across the country. Support for the RCs was increased by the government's tendency to use the RCs for the distribution of important goods, such as sugar, salt, soap, and paraffin, especially in parts of the country where RCs had not existed during the war (Tidemand 1994). The statute was designed to formally transform the RCs into Uganda's new local government institutions as well as to empower local communities, secure local participation in decision making and development, and improve service delivery (Lubanga 1996, 51). The 1987 Resistance Council Statute represented the NRM's first attempt to implement decentralization.

Despite these intentions, the statute failed to empower the new local governments and instead actually reinforced the power of central field administrators. Several contradictory features of the statute explain this result. While the RC statute established

the RCs across the country with locally elected political leaders and gave the councils “extensive political powers to oversee civil servants and guide the local development process”, the statute denied RCs any real authority over personnel and staffing decisions as well as any control over finances (Lubanga 1996, 50). Moreover, district administrators, directly appointed by the president, served as “the political heads of districts” rather than the elected representatives of the people within the RCs (Lubanga 1996, 52). While the statute claimed to support decentralization, it denied the RCs any revenue generating authority. Thus, the 1987 statute was contradictory, claiming to promote devolution, while in reality empowering central government representatives and resulting in further centralization. Despite extensive revisions, which shaped the way Uganda’s decentralization policy looks today, current legislation and the political context still provide opportunities for the central government to undermine the powers of local governments.

The failures of decentralization under the 1987 statute prompted the Ugandan government to rethink its decentralization policy. In 1987 a Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System proposed various corrective measures to address the inconsistencies of the previous statute and to accomplish the primary objective of the decentralization program: the transfer of real power to the local level (Regan 1995). The Local Government Statute of 1993 resulted from this inquiry. Decentralization efforts before 1993 resulted in a type of deconcentration or delegation rather than devolution. On the other hand, the Local Government Statute of 1993 created the institutional and legal framework for a more genuine and complete transfer of power, responsibility, and

resources to the local governments and served as a reassurance of the importance of local government until the adoption of the new constitution in 1995 (Regan 1995; Apter 1995).

In 1995 the resistance council system evolved into the present structure of local government, the local council system. At this time, the resistance councils officially became local councils (LCs). Like its predecessor, the LC system is a five-tiered hierarchical system of local councils from the village (LC1) to the district level (LC5). The five levels include: district (LC5); county (LC4); sub-county (LC3); parish (LC2); and village (LC1). The pyramidal LC structure is designed to aggregate, systematize, and present citizen priorities to district LCs in order to ensure that citizen demands are effectively addressed. All persons 18 years and older residing in a village are automatically members of the village council (LC1). The inclusiveness of the village councils is designed to enable the community to meet monthly to discuss concerns of an individual and communal nature. Direct participation at the village level seeks to guarantee every citizen an opportunity to participate in political decision making. On the other hand, LCs in the higher levels of the local government system are formed by a number of elected representatives, including directly elected councilors and a chairperson who heads the local government and leads the executive in the implementation of council decisions.⁷ Only the district, sub-county and urban councils are local governments and,

⁷ The local council at the district level consists of a district chairperson, one councilor to represent each sub-county, one female councilor to represent each designated constituency (usually a sub-county, but often a constituency may include several sub-counties), one male and female councilor to represent youth, and one male and female councilor to represent persons with disabilities. The chairperson and the councilors, except the youth councilors, are directly elected by universal adult suffrage through secret ballot.

The local council at the sub-county level consists of a sub-county chairperson, one male and female councilor to represent each parish, , one male and female councilor to represent youth, and one male and female councilor to represent persons with disabilities. The chairperson and the councilors, except the youth councilors, are directly elected by universal adult suffrage through secret ballot.

Councils at the county level consist of all of the members of the sub-county council executive committees

therefore, benefit from the enhanced powers and authority given to local governments under decentralization. Local councils at all other levels are considered administrative units and are only minimally affected by the decentralization policy.

Since 1993 Uganda has made considerable progress in the devolution of power and authority down to local governments. Uganda's 1995 Constitution and, more recently, the Local Government Act of 1997 (LG Act) both deepened the policy of decentralization and substantially strengthened the LCs and ensured a more permanent, legal basis for their authority. The LG Act of 1997 is based on the provisions regarding local government in the 1995 Constitution found in Chapter Eleven, and is intended to implement these provisions fully (Uganda 1997b). For example, Article 176 (2b) states that:

Decentralization shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government and in particular, from higher to lower local government units to ensure people's participation and democratic control in decision making (Uganda 1997).

Similarly, Article 176 (2c) states that the "system shall be such as to ensure full realisation of democratic governance at all local government levels" (Uganda 1997).

The LG Act of 1997 confirms that the local governments now hold legislative and executive powers, serve as the primary planning and budgeting authority in their jurisdiction, are responsible for supervising, hiring and firing local administrative staff, and hold revenue generating authority. For example, the chairperson and the executive committee elected by the council are responsible for overseeing the work of the local administrators—the implementers of council decisions.

in the county. The councils at the parish level consist of all of the members of the village executive committees in the parish. At the county and parish level, the chairpersons are elected by the councils.

3.3 Uganda's Policy of Decentralization

The 1995 Constitution and the LG Act of 1997 formalized Uganda's policy of decentralization. This section will describe the details of that policy and highlight problem areas as they relate to issues explored in subsequent chapters. While district and sub-county councils (and their urban equivalents) are the only councils that are considered local governments, the policy of decentralization initially concentrated on increasing the resources and responsibilities at the district level. Today the current trend in Uganda's decentralization policy is to shift more power, resources and responsibilities to the sub-county level. This has important implications for the goals of the policy, especially the goal of greater involvement of citizens in decision making.

3.3.1 Local Governments' Roles and Responsibilities

Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the LG Act details the powers and services that remain under central government control. Subsequent parts detail the services that are the responsibility of district councils (Part 2) and urban councils (Part 3) and also describes the services that may be devolved from district or urban councils to lower level local government councils (Parts 4 and 5).

Some of the responsibilities of district councils listed in Part 2 include, but are not limited to: 1) education services at various levels (secondary and below); 2) medical services especially primary health care, district hospitals and area health centers; 3) construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads not taken care of by the center; and 4) provision and maintenance of water supplies in coordination with the appropriate ministry. District councils are also given the task of development and physical planning,

budgeting, agricultural and veterinary extension services, and community development. While all of the activities for which district councils are now responsible are not listed above, those that are listed begin to provide a picture of all that districts must undertake. Given the diversity of tasks and the immense financial and human resources required to carry out different tasks, it is not surprising that local governments vary in their capacity to perform these activities.

As noted above, Part 4 of the Second Schedule of the LG Act authorizes district councils to devolve responsibility for some tasks to sub-county councils. For example, community based health care services and smaller health units are the responsibility of the sub-county council. Likewise, sub-county councils are also likely to be responsible for the provision of nursery and primary education.

The executive committee is given responsibility for formulating council policies and overseeing the work of district administrators who are the implementers of council policies. The executive committee includes the district chairperson, vice-chairperson and up to five secretaries.⁸ The chairperson nominates the vice-chairperson and secretaries. The vice-chairperson must be approved by two-thirds of the council, while the secretaries must be approved by only a majority of the council. Executive committee members are considered full-time council employees and thus, are expected to work closely with the district administrators.

Unlike previous statutes governing the local councils, the LG Act gives the district council power over district employees, although indirect, through the District Service Commission (DSC). The DSC has the power to hire and fire district employees. The members of the DSC are “appointed by the District Council on the recommendation

of the District Executive Committee with the approval of the Public Service Commission” (Uganda 1997, 44). The existence of the DSC increases the district council’s power over the administration, although the fact that members are subject to central government approval weakens this power somewhat. Nevertheless, the fact that decisions about employment are made at the local level where individuals are most knowledgeable about the district’s staffing needs is quite significant.

The DSC is also responsible for appointing the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who serves as the “head of the Public Service in the district and head of the administration of the district council and shall be the Accounting officer” (Uganda 1997, 49). The law states that the CAO is responsible to the chairperson and the district council.

The LG Act provides for the removal of the CAO for the following reasons: abuse of office; incompetence; misconduct; and physical or mental incapacity. Yet, as in the case of removing a district chairperson, the procedures are extremely complicated and time-consuming. Despite these cumbersome procedures, CAOs in Uganda are regularly investigated for corruption or other abuse of office and occasionally removed from office, as was the case recently in Lira. Likewise, the council in Mpigi recently voted to interdict their CAO as directed by the Inspectorate General of Government in early June due to “abuse of office and misuse of Electoral Commission funds” (*New Vision* June 13, 2003).

Although the procedures are similar, the removal of a district chairperson has been less frequent. For example, as described in Chapter Six, Chairman Zimbe in Mpigi was presented with a petition to remove him from office and threats of censure and yet,

⁸ One of the secretaries must be a female and one must be responsible for health and child welfare.

he persisted to the end of his term in office, often with the mediating help of Movement officials, however.

Apart from removing a chairperson, the LG Act also provides for other mechanisms for district councils to check on the power of the executive committee. For example, the district council must approve executive decisions about appointments of members to important boards and commissions, such as the District Tender Board (DTB) and the nominees for the executive committee. Yet, in the day to day implementation of council policies, the executive committee operates quite apart from the council that is only required to meet once every two months and often meets less frequently. Thus, it is often difficult for councilors to follow up on executive decisions. Participation in sectoral committees does help to increase councilors' knowledge of the day to day activities of the executive committee and district administration. Yet, often important decisions about the use of funds or the delivery of service are made by the executive committee and/or technicians without council approval. The lack of academic qualifications for district councilors only serves to exacerbate this problem.

Other mechanisms to ensure accountability of LC officials are the Local Government Public Accounts Committee and the Internal Audit department, which districts are required by law to establish. Both are responsible for verifying the proper use of funds and accounting procedures, however limited funding reduces the effectiveness of these institutions.

The LG Act also includes procedures for the recall of district councilors, as an additional mechanism of holding LC officials accountable. Part 2 of the Third Schedule of the act states that a councilor can be recalled for neglect of duties or actions that are

not in line with the position of district councilor if a third of the electorate signs a petition and presents it to the Electoral Commission (EC). Interviews with EC officials, however, indicate that by 2001 no councilor had been recalled by their constituents. A petition for recall was presented for two councilors, but the EC reported that the petitions did not go through.

Uganda's decentralization policy also increases the revenue that local governments have at their disposal for carrying out their newly assigned tasks. While the LG Act provides local governments with revenue generating authority and expresses a commitment to fiscal decentralization, most local government remains highly dependent on central government transfers. The LG Act gives LCs the power to levy and collect various fees (licenses, rates, rents, graduated tax, property taxes), but local revenue comprises an extremely small percent of district revenue. On average less than 10 percent of district revenue comes from local sources compared to other African countries, such as Senegal and Swaziland, where over half of the local government budget is from local revenue (Steffensen and Trollegaard 2000).

In Uganda, the percent of district council budgets made up by central government transfers ranges from a low of 48 percent in Moroto to a high of 93 percent in Soroti. On average, LCs depend on these grants for almost three-quarters of their annual budget. The central government block grants that are transferred to the districts also comprise the largest pool of resources that the Uganda's central government controls and allocates that could be distributed based on politics rather than need. Equally important, is the fact that *conditional* grants, which come with strict requirements on planning, spending and accounting for the funds, make up about 77 percent of the transfers to the districts in

1998/99. The LG Act makes local governments responsible for formulating, approving and executing their own budgets (Part 78 of LG Act). However, the budgeting and planning powers of Uganda's local governments tend to be constrained by the extremely small amount of revenue actually at the full discretion of the LCs.

For example, a district receives certain grants for primary health care, primary education, rural roads, among others and the amount of each grant is determined ahead of time by the appropriate ministry, with some, albeit limited, consultation with the local government. Local councils are involved in national budgeting through the annual Local Government Budget Framework Paper conferences and workshops. This process involves local governments in ministry planning for a few days a year and provides the only opportunity for LCs to influence the central government budget process where the ministries determine the amount of the conditional grants that will be transferred to each district. Local councils are given their budget ceilings from ministry officials and presented with the guidelines for planning for that amount. Principally districts make decisions about the allocation of the services to be provided by a particular grant. For example, if the district is told that they will receive a certain amount of money under the School Facilities Grant (SFG), the district decides which areas will benefit, and ideally, the decision will be based on the need for schools within different areas. Likewise, districts cannot use the money from one grant for any another use. According to the present method the ministries use to determine how much districts receive for each of the different conditional grants, a district council, which may prefer to focus solely on the improvement of rural roads, is not able, even if requested to do so by the local population. While some grants, such as the UPE grants, still detail exactly how much of

the grant can be used for specific expenditure categories, a Ministry of Finance official explains that there are positive changes:

It's an improved step. For example, the PHC grant used to say 10% on this, 20% on that, 30% on that, now there are no percentages. The guidelines just say these are the functions or areas you can use the money for. The UPE grant has not gone so far, but [it] has some flexibility in the percentages.

A considerable amount of the grants districts receive today are part of the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF). PAF is a program to ensure that funds made available through Uganda's participation in the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Relief Initiative are used exclusively for poverty reducing activities. The funds are transferred to district and sub-county councils. The planning, reporting and accounting procedures are quite stringent on paper. These extensive reporting requirements, however, limit both the extent to which LC officials are out in the field actually monitoring work being done and the ability of ministry officials responsible for reviewing these reports to verify information included in each report. Nevertheless, PAF grants have not only increased the funds available to local governments, but also created a greater awareness among LC officials of the need to monitor and verify the use of such funds. There is one PAF grant specifically to provide funds for monitoring projects funded through other PAF grants and this has certainly increased the amount of monitoring that is actually carried out.

Nonetheless, the fact that a large percent of district council budgets comes from the central government exacerbates the problem of establishing *downward accountability*, so important to the success of any decentralization policy (Agrawal and Ribot 1999). Downward accountability refers to the extent to which local politicians are accountable to

the people they represent, rather than accountable to the political actors above them, such as central government ministries. The conditional grants distributed to Uganda's districts have detailed reporting requirements, which represent an important effort to try to limit mismanagement or the corrupt uses of these funds. However, districts report and account for their actions to the sectoral ministry in charge of each grant; local populations at times have only limited knowledge or control over how these funds are used. There is some effort through the PAF program, especially among donors, to increase the level of external monitoring, in particular NGO monitoring, of how local governments utilize conditional grant resources. Similarly, ministries vary in their efforts, but some ministries, such as education, have tried to increase the public's knowledge about how much the district receives and for what purposes through a requirement of mandatory public notices.

There does not *appear* to be much room for discretion in the allocation of these grants. Each of the conditional grants has a specific and detailed allocation formula and monthly releases to each district are published in the newspaper and district councils are instructed to post the amount received in a public place for accountability purposes. When interviewed, representatives from each of the sectoral ministries that send grants to the local governments insisted that the formula for each grant is the sole basis on which decisions are made about how much a district will receive. Similarly, district councilors in the three case study districts did not complain or accuse the central government of unfairly distributing such resources.

Initial bivariate analysis is consistent with these responses, and reveals that the amount a district receives from the central government in the form of transfers is

positively correlated with the size of the district population.⁹ More heavily populated districts receive more money. This is not at all surprising given that most of the allocation formulas take district population into consideration.

Aside from central government transfers, the central government—the Office of the President, in particular—has considerable resources at its disposal that can be allocated according to criteria that best suit its purposes. Visits from influential Movement officials, an important form of political linkage, are often accompanied by such resources for the district. The informal allocation of resources often based on patronage needs of the center exacerbates problems of dependence and thus, undermines council performance. This is explored more fully in Chapter Seven.

As noted, local councils have the greatest power and discretion in decision making with local revenue, which is unfortunately quite limited. The graduated tax is the most common source of revenue for Uganda's local governments, comprising nearly 80 percent of local revenue. There are, however, numerous problems with the district's administration and reliance on the graduated tax. The graduated tax is extremely difficult to administer, assess, and collect. Because assessment and collection is localized, the process is susceptible to corruption (Livingstone and Charlton 1998). The amount that an individual is assessed and that is actually collected from him or her may vary depending on the relationship between the individual being assessed and the assessor or the individual's ability to influence the outcome of the assessment by "buying tea" for the assessor.

The Uganda Local Authorities Association (ULAA) and individual LC officials regularly complain about the fact that they are not authorized to collect other taxes, such

⁹ Pearson's correlation coefficient = .820; p value .000.

as the VAT or income taxes, which they feel would increase the amount of local revenue they are able to collect and dramatically reduce their dependence on central government transfers. Agrawal and Ribot point out that an examination of what is not devolved reveals “the hidden politics of decentralization” (1999). In the Ugandan case, it is quite telling that the decentralization policy is designed so that LCs are dependent upon the central government for most of their revenue and their only substantial source of local revenue is the politically and administratively difficult graduated tax. The move toward the decentralization of the development budget will likely increase the power of the LCs considerably, giving them greater discretion of a larger pool of resources to enable them to be more responsive to their constituents.

The World Bank in coordination with the MoLG began the Local Government Development Program (LGDP) in 1999. The LGDP has begun the process of decentralizing Uganda’s development budget—the large portion of the government budget designated for development expenditure—and systematizing its allocation. Previously, districts only received money from the central government to cover recurrent costs, such as teachers’ salaries and operational costs. Districts did not receive any of the large stock of donor funds designated for development projects. These funds and, consequently, development expenditure have historically been the responsibility and at the discretion of the central government.

3.3.2 Central Government’s Roles and Responsibilities

The nature of Uganda’s decentralization reforms follows closely many of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Local Government (1987). Due to

historic problems of central-local relations, the Commission called for a system that would involve citizens and local governments in planning and service delivery, while also maintaining a strong center to establish national plans and guidelines and coordinate activities of local governments to meet these plans. Today the central government remains strong in Uganda, despite decentralization reforms as the discussion above indicates. Yet, decentralization is enshrined in the 1995 constitution, which suggests a degree of permanence. Nevertheless, there are repeatedly efforts by the center to influence and control local governments, such as through structural features of the LC system and more informally through actions of government officials, most clearly exemplified by Movement involvement in the electoral process for LC elections.

While the local governments are more autonomous and powerful than ever in Uganda's history, a gap exists between the purported goals of the LG Act and the powers that local governments are able to exercise in reality. On the one hand, the importance of the local level as a political arena is indicated by the vigorous struggle in parliament during the debate on amendments to the LG Act as a significant number of MPs struggled to carve out a role for themselves in the district councils. Yet, for a variety of reasons, discussed below, local government are not always fully autonomous, a situation that has clear implications for their performance, in particular the extent to which they are responsive to local concerns.

Not surprising functions, such as defense, tax policy, foreign relations, national standards, and the judiciary, remain under the control of the central government. Likewise, the central government is responsible for making policy in a variety of social sectors, including education, health, agriculture, and for "making national plans for the

provision of services and coordinating plans made by Local Governments” (Uganda 1997, 114). Central government line ministries are also given responsibility for ensuring that local government activities conform to national policies and meet national performance standards (Uganda 1997). As such, ministries are directed to “inspect, monitor and...where necessary, offer technical advice, support supervision and training within their respective sectors” (67). Section 99 of the LG Act authorizes representatives from line ministries to carry out activities, such as inspecting local governments’ books of accounts, as necessary to fulfill monitoring and inspection duties. Finally, the act empowers ministries to conduct such inspections upon their own initiative or following a complaint from a member of the public.

These activities of central government ministries constitute some of the clearest examples of administrative linkages between Uganda’s central government and its local governments. Interactions for training, technical advice, and monitoring create opportunities for local governments to improve their performance. Ministries certainly vary in the extent to which they nourish these administrative linkages. Likewise, districts vary, often for political reasons, in their openness to ministerial advice or involvement in district activities. The impact of administrative linkages on the performance of Uganda’s district councils is explored more fully in Chapter Seven. However, the fact a ministry as large as the Ministry of Education did not access its share of funds from a grant to finance monitoring and inspection of local governments raises questions about the extent to which local councils are linked to the center administratively. Likewise, as far as an interview respondent from the Ministry of Finance could tell, no local governments had ever formally complained about the lack of ministry advice, guidance or mentoring.

In addition to supervision and inspection from the line ministries for each sector, a variety of other institutions exist to assist the center in monitoring the activities of local governments in Uganda. For example, the Inspector General of Government (IGG) in Uganda has been given the responsibility to fight corruption in all levels of government. Article 225 of Uganda's constitution describes the mandate of the IGG and states that it is:

...[T]o fight corruption, promote fair, efficient and good governance in public offices, promote the [r]ule of [l]aw and [p]rincipals of natural justice in administration, stimulate public awareness about the values of constitutionalism and the activities of the office and to supervise the enforcement of the Leadership Code of Conduct (Uganda 2000c, 1).

The IGG is also authorized to carry out investigations into local government activities and has been quite active in recent years. In addition to the IGG, the Office of the Auditor General is required to audit the books of accounts for each local government. Unfortunately, central government ministries and these other institutions are constrained not only by limited resources and manpower, but also the sheer distance between the districts they are supposed to monitor and their headquarters in Kampala.

There are other ways in which local governments in Uganda interact with the central government. Yet, these linkages are not administrative as just described above, but political. Political linkages between the center and local government in Uganda are characterized by interactions between Movement officials or political representatives and local governments and are not intended solely to train, supervise, monitor or oversee the local council in service delivery related matters so as to improve their capacity. The examples of political linkages discussed below and more fully in Chapter Seven are often intended or have the direct consequence of increasing the Movement's influence or

control over a local council or its officials. As noted above, some of the linkages apply uniformly to all LCs and constitute structural features of the local government system. Others are more informal and thus, the extensiveness of the linkages varies across districts.

For example, the existence and role of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) is an important way in which the Movement not only monitors LC activities, but also seeks to influence the councils. The RDC is the central government's representative in the district and is appointed by President Museveni. The RDC is responsible for reporting to the central government any problems or concerns about the performance of LCs in the district. There have been numerous instances of political struggles between the RDC and the LCs and political interference in council affairs by RDCs across the country.

Another example includes the tight structural linkages between the Movement and LC system. These linkages are *partially historical*, based on the origin of the LCs and their role in the NRA's war against Obote, and *partially designed* by the Movement through legislation, such as the Movement Act described below, its electoral support for Movement candidates, and even through the RDCs stationed in each district.

The political system in Uganda is based at present on a "movement" political system. The movement system of government is described as a broad-based political organization. In conjunction with the ban on political parties, discussed below, the movement system provides Ugandans an opportunity to participate, as all Ugandans are technically members of the Movement. According to the Movement Act, the LCs and LC officials are part of the structure of the movement political system. Articles 16 through 19 of the Movement Act 1997 create Movement committees at various levels of

the LC system (Uganda 1997c). The act stipulates that LC chairpersons and councilors at these different levels are automatically members of the Movement committee at that level. Such linkages between the Movement and the LCs raise questions about whether LCs exist as autonomous political institutions or merely serve as channels through which the present government can further entrench its power. Dicklitch even contends that the movement system steers local populations in the direction of central government plans and policies through the co-optation of local councils (1997). Many Ugandans themselves do not seem to be clear as to whether the local councils are the same thing as the Movement or independent and autonomous political institutions.

For example, over 70 percent of survey respondents said that the LCs are the same as the Movement. Almost two-thirds agreed with the idea that the LCs exist to promote Movement interests compared to 37 percent who disagreed. Another 70 percent disagreed with the statement that LCs are independent of the Movement. Interestingly, respondents in Lira district were most likely to believe that the LCs are independent of the Movement—46 percent of the respondents in Lira compared to only 30 percent and 15 percent in Mpigi and Bushenyi, respectively. This is likely because multipartyists have been able to gain representation in the LCs in this district. In fact, Lira is one of a few districts in which the chairperson is not a Movement supporter. Finally, respondents were split on whether the LCs will remain when the Movement leaves power. Clearly confusion exists about the differences between the LCs and the Movement, but responses likely reflect the political reality on how LCs are able to operate and the influence the Movement has over Uganda's local governments in many parts of the country. Yet, evidence presented in subsequent chapters suggests that the Movement exhibits varying

levels of control and influence over LCs, which likely has implications for local councils' ability to respond to the needs of their constituents rather than concerns of the center.

In addition, Movement officials have made many policy decisions that, in fact, serve to weaken local councils. For example, President Museveni, while campaigning for the presidential election in 2001, announced 'graduated tax vacations' during the elections and promised to lower the graduated tax rate once re-elected. His announcement and promise resulted not only in much lower revenue than expected for all local councils, but also subordinated the LCs in reality and, most importantly, in the eyes of their constituents and likely also undermined their autonomy to some extent. Museveni's tax vacation and promised reduction in graduated tax rates made it impossible for LC officials to continue collecting the local revenue they needed to meet their budget estimates, despite the fact that they have the legal authority to collect this tax. Councils across the country were unable to collect any revenue for months after the election as Ugandans delayed payment of the tax until they learned what the new lower rate would be. For LCs with already limited revenue, a lowered graduated tax rate simply adds to their burden.

Another set of policy decisions by the center that have weakened LCs and hinders their performance is the creation of new districts. The creation of new districts is closely related to the electoral cycle, occurring prior to important elections. New districts were created in 1993, 1997 and most recently in 2001. In fact, groups within the divided districts tend to be the ones clamoring for division and the fulfillment of these requests is part of the government's desire to increase its electoral support. The division of districts exacerbates problems of ensuring that all local governments have adequate resources to

perform their duties. The Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System recognized the same problem in 1987. They aptly explain:

In principle, we were hesitant to recommend the creation of new and additional administrative units, bearing in mind that these would increase unproductive costs of administration, both in terms of creating an administrative infrastructure and payment of personnel (Uganda 1987, 122).

Given the linkages between the LCs and the Movement and the government's efforts to influence these councils, it is not surprising that generally the LCs tend to be quite supportive of government decisions and policies. However, this support is certainly not uniform or guaranteed, as will be explored further in Chapters Seven and Eight. For example, multipartyists do win seats, prompting Kasfir to conclude that the Movement does not hold as tight control over LCs as it did initially (1998). Kasfir is optimistic about the increasing autonomy of the LCs and feels the LCs are evolving into organs of the states and becoming less organs of the Movement. Yet, he fails to consider adequately the influence of the Movement Act or the sheer institutional and peer pressure on the LCs in many parts of the country to support the Movement. For example, regardless of their own political views, LC officials in many areas were expected to serve as campaign agents for President Museveni and Movement endorsed parliamentary candidates. On the other hand, a recent Human Rights Watch report argues that all the LCs support the Movement, which clearly leaves little room for autonomous action on the part of the LCs (1999). In reality, the situation is somewhere in between. Most LCs tend to support the Movement. For some of the LC officials, however, this support is not genuine, but institutionally induced. The LC5 chairperson in a district in central Uganda

explained that once elected, individuals have little room to maneuver politically, even if his or her views differ from the Movement or the general public.

3.3.3 Motivations for Decentralization Reforms

Some observers might be prompted to conclude from the preceding description of the decentralization process in Uganda that the Movement is fully committed to decentralization and has been since its days in the bush. The Movement has clearly vocalized a commitment to decentralization and made serious steps toward the implementation of that stated goal, however, the motivations of the Movement government for embracing decentralization are quite complex and possibly even contradictory. Movement support for decentralization is almost certainly motivated, at least partially, by important political goals that have not been discussed openly. An exploration of the motives for decentralization is important because the motivations for reform influence the success of the policy of decentralization and the ability of local councils to perform well.

The Movement government's official justification for decentralization couples political and administrative goals. The government's stated aims for the decentralization policy are clearly expressed in the speeches delivered at the official launching of Uganda's decentralization policy where:

President Museveni and Minister of Local Government, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali, talked of giving power to the people to move further on the path to democratisation; promoting equitable distribution of resources between and within districts; improving public sector performance through less centralised decision-making and local political control; increased transparency and accountability in handling of public funds (Uganda 1993, cited in Regan 1995).

It would be shortsighted to discount the government's commitment to the stated goals of the decentralization policy it designed and implemented. The extensiveness of the reforms clearly indicates that there is support by President Museveni personally and among the Movement leadership generally for decentralization and increasing the opportunities for Ugandans to participate in their government, the development of their areas, and the delivery of social services.

While the Movement leadership may be committed to its stated goals there are quite possibly political goals of equal or greater importance. Grindle argues that "motivations of politicians are complex, reflecting both personal ambition and enduring political conflicts in their societies" (2000, 198). She notes that "Reform agendas are best explained as the result of elite projects in which elites were called together in each case by political leaders to make recommendations about how best to respond to problems of governance" (Grindle 2000, 198). This description of the reform process is appropriate to understanding Uganda's process of decentralization. The Movement's commitment to these reforms fits into its overall political strategy and desire to maintain power, and can be understood as a rational response to a politically difficult situation.

While donors play an important role in Uganda, funding nearly 50 percent of the annual budget, donor pressure does not fully explain why the government implemented decentralization initially. International donors, such as the World Bank, and even bilateral donors with an interest in decentralization, such as DANIDA¹⁰, have actively promoted decentralization throughout the developing world and in many African countries, provided the primary motivation for governments in these countries to even pursue decentralization policies. Governments may undertake decentralization reforms,

sometimes halfheartedly, in response to pressure or policy conditions attached to loans. Yet, this has not entirely been the case in Uganda. Donors are certainly encouraging and facilitating decentralization in Uganda and have provided substantial support to the MoLG and to individual districts, but I argue that donor pressure did not likely provide the impetus for the reforms. The impetus for reform lies within the Movement leadership. On the other hand, donor pressure certainly helps us to understand why the policy of decentralization looks the way that it does now. Donors in Uganda have clearly shaped the process and been instrumental in changing the decentralization policy to meet their design. For example, donors have been instrumental in pushing the Ugandan government to decentralize the development budget, a key instrument through which the central government had maintained control of the purse strings in the country.

A rational choice interpretation would posit that decentralization reforms are undertaken to secure electoral advantage and gain support of key constituents. Thus, decentralization is best understood as a trade off made by politicians between long-term institutional changes in exchange for immediate electoral advantage (Grindle 2000, 24). Yet, there is limited evidence to support this hypothesis in Uganda. For example, in an interview the Minister of Local Government, Bidandi Ssali, offered an explanation of why the government chose to decentralize and argued that the decision was based largely on demand from below. He discussed the potential for conflict if the government had tried to centralize power at the end of the war. The Minister explained that centralizing power *back into* the central government line ministries, as had been the case under the previous regimes, entailed stripping powers *away from* the LCs they had enjoyed and had

¹⁰ DANIDA stands for the Danish Agency for Development Assistance.

grown accustomed to during the war.¹¹ The Minister argued that conflicts erupted after the NRM took power and the councils were made subject to ministerial approval for any decisions they wanted to make. For example, the councils were required to get approval from the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) for their annual budgets. After listening to complaints from several LC officials, the President told Minister Ssali to come up with a law to introduce in Parliament to put devolution into effect. Minister Ssali contends that the historical situation in Uganda, in which elected councils exercised some degree of autonomy and power during the war and were not happy with the prospects of giving up these powers, differentiates Uganda's decentralization policy from decentralization policies in other African countries. He explained that "In those countries, decentralization is a legislative decision, but here elements of the policy were dictated to the government from the people."

Minister Ssali's argument that the Movement had no choice but to move forward with decentralization suggests that there was grassroots pressure for devolution and that perhaps the Movement's decision to decentralize was based on electoral calculation. This interpretation conflicts with much of the academic work on Uganda's decentralization process. Most scholars contend that decentralization in Uganda "has been a top-down process, largely spreading power without pressure to do so from the local communities" (Makara 1998, 36). Moreover, scholars, such as Makara, argue that decentralization "can easily be withdrawn without provoking resistance from the grassroots" (Makara 1998, 36). Those who see decentralization in Uganda as a top-down process focus on the fact that there was little demand from the general population for such reforms or participation in the design of these reforms. This description of the

¹¹ Based on an interview conducted in September 2001.

reform process closely resembles what Grindle found in the three Latin American countries where decentralization reforms were also top down in nature, with little public debate or demand for such reforms (2000). Rather the institutions created to implement decentralization were the output of influential and elite “design teams” closely linked to the executive in each country (Grindle 2000).

If there was any grassroots pressure for decentralization, it was most likely to take the form of informal, individual requests rather than organized lobbying by LCs or other groups. In fact, Uganda’s local councils had not even organized their lobby group at the time decentralization was initially introduced. According to the Secretary General of the Ugandan Local Authorities Association (ULAA), which is the only organization to promote the interests of LC officials, ULAA did not come into operation until 1994—after decentralization was already underway—and did not begin “effective operation” until 1998.¹²

While Uganda’s decentralization process began in the early 1990s, the LG Act passed in 1997 represents the most detailed and complete version of the country’s devolution policy. This act was passed shortly before the LC elections in 1998, but *after* the politically important presidential and parliamentary elections in 1996. The 1996 elections were important because they served as a mechanism through which the Movement government could legitimate its authority through a popular election for the first time since it had come to power by force in 1986. Given that substantial decentralization reforms *followed* these elections, it seems unlikely that the passage of the LG Act was a strategy to garner electoral support. Similarly, there is little evidence to suggest that the Ugandan public was at all active in requesting decentralization or even

aware such reforms were underway; also indicating that the reforms were unlikely to translate into any immediate or substantial electoral advantage for the incumbent NRM. The process of instituting decentralization has important implications for citizen participation and their eagerness to follow up on the activities of the LCs.

The explanation offered by Minister Ssali, which clearly represents an important part of the government's *official version* of Uganda's decentralization story, focuses on the possible reaction by *LC officials* if power was to be centralized again. Despite such populist validation for the reforms, most evidence suggests that the Government of Uganda's decision to decentralize and its commitment to decentralization is based *less* on the government's efforts to satisfy demands from interested groups below or likely beneficiaries, than on fulfilling goals important to President Museveni and groups within the Movement close to Museveni.

Because the Movement came to power through violent, illegitimate means, the leaders of the Movement most likely felt a strong need to make their authority legitimate. Popular or participatory democracy and decentralization through the LC system was one important way they were able to legitimize their rule and increase support for their regime (Regan 1995; Kasfir 1998). This parallels Ayee's analysis of decentralization in Ghana. Ayee argues that decentralization was simply a tool utilized by the PNDC to resolve "the legitimacy crisis inherent in military regimes" (1996, 51). Whether decentralization has increased the legitimacy of the central government in Uganda is difficult to establish.

There does appear to be a strong correlation between satisfaction with the government's decentralization policy and evaluation of the performance of Museveni

¹² Based on an interview conducted in November 2000.

personally. Individuals who gave Museveni a high performance evaluation also tended to be quite satisfied with the policy of decentralization.¹³ Given the varying levels of support for the government across regions, it is not at all surprising that significant differences are found in the average level of satisfaction with decentralization across regions.¹⁴ Lira district in northern Uganda expresses the highest level of *dissatisfaction* with decentralization at 22 percent compared to only 15 percent in Mpigi (central region) and 11 percent in Bushenyi district (western region). On the other hand, over 77 percent of the respondents in Bushenyi were satisfied with decentralization, while just under 70 percent was satisfied in both Mpigi and Lira.

The LC system and decentralization reforms most likely represent President Museveni's and the Movement government's concession toward *limited* democratization. The Movement government is not open or tolerant of full democratization, but interested only in partial political reform. Decentralization is the most important example of partial democratic reform in the country. The Movement government made the decision to allow participatory or popular democracy at the local level in exchange for limited democratic reforms at the national level and tight restrictions on competition at all levels of politics.

3.4 Political Context

Uganda's policy of decentralization sits precariously with other features of Ugandan politics generally, such as the movement system of government and the Movement's

¹³ Pearson's correlation coefficient = .299; p value .000.

¹⁴ Cross-regional analysis is based on comparisons of survey respondents from three districts. Each of the three districts included in the survey sample area was chosen based on a number of important criteria, one of which was region. Lira district was selected from the northern region. Mpigi district was selected from the central region. Bushenyi was selected from the western region. While each of the three districts is not entirely representative of other districts in their region on all important criteria, districts within a region tend to have similar political views and beliefs.

activities and behaviors. Many features of Uganda's decentralization policy are undermined by the political context in which they are being implemented. Nonetheless, local councils in some areas exert their independence from the Movement and still manage to perform well.

Uganda is characterized by Diamond as a "hegemonic electoral authoritarian regime;" indicating that electoral and other 'democratic' institutions exist, but they are "largely facades" because there is little real competition or opportunity for the opposition to "seriously criticize or challenge the regime" (2002, 26). The Ugandan government's intolerance of competition is best exemplified in the persistence of strict regulations and a practical ban on political party activity in Uganda since the Movement came to power in 1986. The Movement instituted a ban on political party activity shortly after it came to power. The government initially justified the ban as the only way to avoid the sort of sectarianism and violence associated with political party competition in the past. Restrictions on competition are most likely, however, intended to weaken or even eliminate potential competitors.

While the restrictions on political party activity were renewed with the controversial passage of the Political Parties and Organizations Act in May 2002, recent events increase optimism that the Movement may open up the political system to pluralism. In March 2003, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Movement voted to open up the political space to allow parties to operate, however changes in the political system were to remain subject to a public referendum (*The East African* March 31, 2003).

The no-party system and the limits it places on political competition have important implications for decentralization and local government performance, most important being the possibility that marginally free and fair electoral contests are unlikely to provide viable mechanisms through which citizens can hold local leaders accountable. Despite the ban on party activity, as discussed in Chapter Eight, local elections remain competitive and are becoming increasingly more so in parts of Uganda. It is certainly not clear what impact open political competition will have on council performance.

Under the current no-party system, competition in all elections, LC elections included, is based on individual merit, not party affiliation. It is not clear whether this translates into policy differences or debates about substantive topics that voters can use to judge alternative candidates. Many candidates, however, are defeated by outside organized interests, such as the Movement or even organized multiparty interests, which undermines the validity and effectiveness of the elections. For example, the Movement worked extremely hard during the last LC elections to ensure that council positions would be filled with Movement supporters. The Movement Secretariat endorsed certain candidates over others, violating the rules of its own no-party system which prohibit candidates promoting or being promoted by political organizations. The Movement also encouraged some candidates to step aside when a particular local council race included multiple Movement candidates, thereby deciding which candidate should or could represent the interests of the population. With endorsement also came logistical support, especially financial resources, from the Movement Secretariat for Movement approved LC candidates to use to fund their campaigns. Given the rules against party support,

candidates without the backing of the Movement usually lacked substantial resources to finance adequately his/her campaign.

Given the Movement's involvement in the recent LC elections, a local election monitoring group in Uganda, the NEMGROUP-Uganda, concluded that these elections contained substantial evidence of electoral manipulation, raising questions about the extent to which the elections constituted free and fair democratic elections.¹⁵ The *New Vision* also reported that over 50 people were arrested across the country charged with violence and election malpractices during the LC elections in 2002, evidence that local elections were not immune to the rise in political violence affecting Uganda since the lead up to last year's presidential elections. Similarly, the army and state security agencies, such as the Internal Security Organization, attempted to influence the outcome of the LC elections through extralegal means as they did in the last presidential and parliamentary elections.

Nevertheless, the results of the LC election offer evidence that despite Movement influence and state involvement in the campaigns and voting, opposition candidates were successful. While the backing of the Movement is certainly important to a candidate's success, it is not guaranteed. For example, the incumbent LC5 chairman in the northern district of Gulu, a strongly supported Movement candidate, was defeated by a multipartyist candidate. Multipartyists and other Movement opponents do win seats and turnover does occur, both of which suggest that LC elections may be somewhat competitive, in spite of the ban on political party activities and Movement attempts to control the process. In 26 districts for which election results for the race of LC5

¹⁵ *The East African*, "Local Elections Revealed Political Immaturity" January 21, 2002.

chairperson were available in the *New Vision* and where the incumbent competed in the election: 10 incumbents were defeated and 16 won the elections. These figures suggest a fairly high rate of turnover in the last elections—almost half of the incumbents were defeated. Despite the possibility of competition, the fact that any outside actors, Movement or otherwise, can influence the process to such an extent is not promising for citizens to hold local leaders accountable. The reaction of the government, investing so much time and energy in the LC elections, implies that the Movement felt that losing control of the councils was a real possibility. The Movement claimed to have won 80 percent of the contested seats in the LC elections. This could mean that at least 80 percent of the councils are now more concerned with pleasing the Movement leadership rather than those who elected them.

What is equally troubling for the successful implementation of decentralization are many of the political reforms promoted by the Movement and recent actions of key Movement officials, most especially President Museveni, that have the effect of centralizing political power and are antithetical to further political liberalization. Unfortunately, recent actions of the central government indicate that Uganda more closely resembles its neighbors than previously thought and the trend noted by van de Walle (2001) to centralize power in and around the presidency seems to be ever present in Uganda as well.

For example, another reform supported by the NEC sought to take the power to censure and remove cabinet ministers away from Parliament (*The East African* March 31, 2003). Even more troubling, however, has been the recent debate about possible constitutional reforms to eliminate the two-term limit for presidents to allow President

Museveni to run for a third term in 2006. Key Movement officials and long time political allies of Museveni who dared speak out against a possible third term, such as Minister of Local Government Bidandi Ssali, Minister of Ethics and Integrity Miria Matembe, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs Eriya Kategaya, were recently publicly punished as they were all pushed out of the cabinet in Museveni's May 2003 reshuffle. Somewhat promising, however, is that there is indeed a debate. Within the Movement there is generally support for a third term. Nonetheless, as the experiences of the three ministers mentioned above demonstrate, there are Movement officials who are reluctant to support a move that so clearly pushes efforts to build a democracy in Uganda off the table. Museveni's power and influence within the Movement and over the central government generally, however, erodes hopes that opponents could effectively challenge Museveni if he desires a third term.

While political party activity is still tightly restricted, existing parties, such as the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and Democratic Party (DP), have been quite vocal and useful as government watchdogs at the national level. Repeatedly these groups have charged the government with corruption, mismanagement, and most especially, the violation of the rights of Ugandans. But the existing ban prohibits party activity or organization below the national level. The restriction diminishes the usefulness of political parties as a means of holding local leaders accountable to their voters. Should the Movement move further along the path toward political pluralism, open competition between political parties will likely ignite greater activity at the local level and serve to check the actions of local council officials.

The tremendous growth in the number of non-governmental organizations and even local media sources that air in local languages throughout the country also increases the possibility that such organizations can be active in monitoring local government activities, informing local populations about LC activities, and helping to enforce accountability. Moreover, NGOs are well positioned to oversee LC activities and inform populations because many of these groups are organized and operate at several levels, such as maintaining a district office, while field workers are posted in different sub-counties. However, the recently passed NGO Registration Bill may limit the ability of these organizations to serve as independent checks on local council activities. The government justifies the bill as necessary to protect the population from “briefcase NGOs” that are not working to better the lives of the local people, but instead only looking to make money from local and foreign sources. The new law certainly enables the government to clamp down on NGOs whose ideas or activities may be viewed as working against the regime.

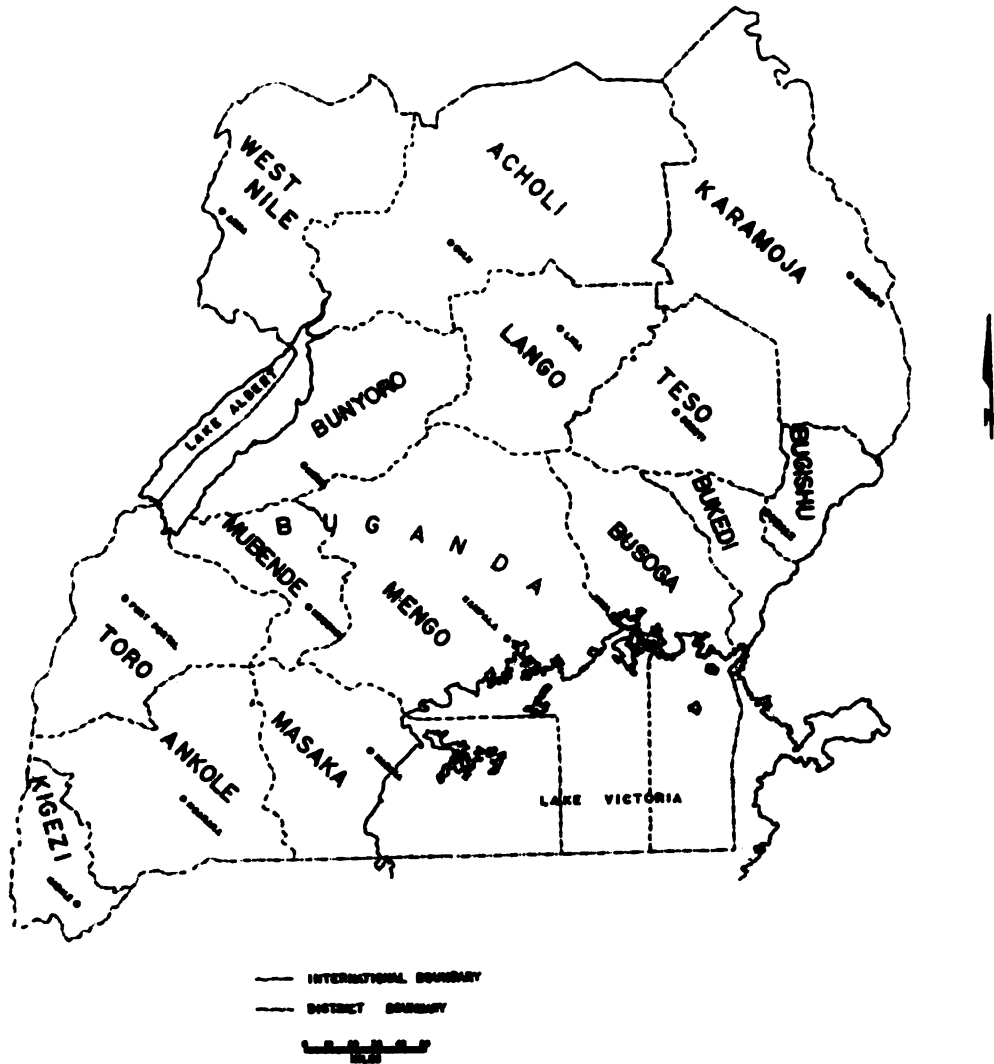
The extent to which NGOs are performing the role of watchdog is quite limited apart from select organizations, such as the Poverty Monitoring Committee, which was created specifically to oversee local governments’ use of PAF resources. Although there is variation across districts, NGOs seem quite independent of LCs and the linkages between the two groups that could promote better LC performance do not exist.

3.5 Conclusion

The above discussion raises several questions related to the possibility for successful decentralization in Uganda and responsive and effective local government. For example,

what is influence of society on government performance after many years of political marginalization under dictatorial regimes? Also, what is the impact of the center in a no-party, center-dominated political system, such as exists in Uganda today? The chapter described some of the ways in which the Movement government, through political linkages with local councils and more generally through the structure of the LC system and policy decisions, has sought to reduce the autonomy of local government. Can local governments perform well under such circumstances? Finally, given the limits to democracy in Uganda, how do local governments manage to respond to the needs of their constituents? The subsequent chapters offer some preliminary answers to these questions and also point the way for future research.

UGANDA'S DISTRICTS
INDEPENDENCE



Source: Local Government and Politics in Uganda.
(Burke 1964).

[illegible]

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Chapter Four: Research Methods, Operationalization and Description of Variables

4.1 General Research Strategy

I have adopted a variety of research strategies in my efforts to explain apparent differences in the performance of local governments. As noted in the introduction and Chapter Three, this project is situated in Uganda because the extensiveness of the decentralization reforms under President Museveni since the late 1980s make it an excellent case in which to explore my research questions. While the research addresses specific questions and issues related to the Ugandan case and the performance of local government in Uganda, it also raises broader theoretical concerns that are applicable to other developing countries in Africa and in other regions, as well as countries at all stages of development that are undertaking extensive political and economic reforms. The lessons from the Ugandan case regarding the importance of the local political context and linkages between local governments and the central government to successful decentralization and to the performance of local governments are important lessons with universal application.

The project employs two principal research strategies. Throughout the analysis, the principal unit of analysis is the district local government, the highest level of government in Uganda's five tiered local council system. First, I created an aggregate dataset to examine my hypotheses and several competing alternative hypotheses across 45 of Uganda's local governments.¹ The aggregate dataset includes over 200 variables that serve as measures of local government performance and indicators to operationalize

the administrative and political linkages between Uganda's district councils and the central government and the nature of local political dynamics, including the level of local political competition. The dataset also includes numerous control variables, reflecting economic, social, cultural, and other political characteristics of these 45 districts to enable tests of alternative rival hypotheses, such as the society-centric and structural explanations, listed above and thoroughly discussed in Chapter Two.² I compiled the dataset during two years of fieldwork in Uganda, relying on a variety of sources.³ The first portion of this dissertation will be based on analysis of this aggregate dataset.

In addition, I also carried out intensive fieldwork in three case study districts: Bushenyi in western Uganda; Lira in northern Uganda; and Mpigi in central Uganda. Within each of these districts I conducted a survey of local residents (n=204 in each district; total n=612), conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with local government political and administrative officials, Members of Parliament from each district, and other community leaders, observed as much as possible the activities of the local government, and carried out archival research using local government documents, such as annual budgets, three-year development plans, and minutes of LC meetings. I

¹ The number of districts in Uganda increased from 45 to 56 between 2000 and 2001. My analysis does not include the 11 new districts and is instead focused only on the 45 districts that existed when this project began and for which data are widely available.

² The aggregate dataset includes the following control variables by district: region; Human Development Index scores; district household expenditure per capita; date district was created; road distance from Kampala; date district was decentralized; population; size in square kilometers; population density; percent of district population rural and urban; percent of district population literate; percent district population whose livelihood is subsistence agriculture; tenure of Chief Administrative Office (CAO) in years; levels of generalized trust; voter turnout in national and local elections; number of registered NGOs in a district.

³ Sources for aggregate data included, but are not limited to: various GOU ministries, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, including the Statistics Department within that ministry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, Ministry of Works, Housing and Communication, and the Office of the Prime Minister; the United Nations Development Programme Uganda office; the World Bank; the Policy Management Unit of Local Government Development Program; the New Vision and Monitor newspapers; the Afrobarometer project for both data and survey design and questions; and the Electoral Commission.

carried out similar methods in the capital city with representatives from central government ministries and other agencies. The methods of selecting the three case study districts and the implementation of the survey of local residents will be discussed in detail below. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey questionnaire.⁴ The data collected in these case study districts serve as an important complement to the aggregate dataset and enrich my understanding and interpretation of the relationships that have been identified using the aggregate data.

4.2 Aggregate dataset: Operationalization and Description of Variables

This section will discuss the major concepts used in this study and the operationalization of these concepts in the aggregate dataset. The following section will discuss the operationalization of these concepts in the case study material. In compiling the aggregate dataset, I encountered general data limitations and problems with availability. In some cases, the operationalization of key concepts in the aggregate dataset is less than optimal. However, the rich case study material overcomes many of these problems.

4.2.1 Dependent variable: Institutional performance

Building on the work of other scholars studying institutional performance, I have employed a definition of local government performance built on two conceptual dimensions: responsiveness and effectiveness (Putnam 1993; Crook and Manor 1995, 1998; Stoner-Weiss 1997; Widner 1998). Responsiveness can be defined as the ability of

⁴ I used the questionnaire from the first round Afrobarometer survey in Uganda (2000) as the basis for my questionnaire. As will be discussed below, the organization, format, and many of the questions used are taken directly from the Afrobarometer questionnaire or slightly revised.

the government to respond to the needs of the citizens it represents, specifically it refers to the extent to which *government output* responds to the expressed *needs and preferences* of the population. The second dimension of local government performance, government effectiveness, is the extent to which policy outputs correspond to previously set targets (Crook and Manor 1995, 1998). In order to fully understand the effectiveness of local government institutions, measures of effectiveness will focus on two important stages of policy making: the process of decision and policymaking, and policy output and implementation. Like Putnam, I consider three aspects of the policy process: [executive cabinet stability, budget promptness, and statistical and information services (1993)].

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work

Accurate and complete measurement of responsiveness would require a comparison of the population's needs and preferences with the outputs of the local councils (LCs). Aggregate data for all 45 districts on citizens' needs and preferences and LC outputs were not available, thus I was unable to make explicit comparisons between needs and government outputs. I was, however, able to collect data to proxy such comparisons for all 45 districts, such as the various indicators used to create the responsiveness index discussed below. Again, aggregate data across 45 districts on policy outputs and government targets were not available, but a variety of measures, to be discussed below, provide similar information and allow me to assess the effectiveness of district councils.

Performance Measures based on LGDP Performance Evaluations

LGDP Total Scores

One of the primary ways in which I was able to operationalize local government performance in the aggregate dataset was by utilizing data from a recent project and accompanying project assessment focused on decentralization and the performance of Uganda's local governments. In 1999, the World Bank, in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in Uganda, began a project to study and make recommendations on the most effective way to decentralize the capital budget—the large portion of the government budget designated for development expenditure. Previously districts only received money from the central government to cover recurrent costs, such as teachers' salaries and operational costs. Districts did not receive any of the large stock of donor funds designated for development projects. These funds and, consequently, development expenditure were the responsibility and at the discretion of the central government.

The Local Government Development Program (LGDP) has focused on the decentralization of these funds to district and sub-county local councils to enable local governments to control and plan for capital and development expenditures. The program was first carried out in four pilot municipalities (Lira, Masaka, Mbale, and Fort Portal municipalities). In 1999, the MoLG began the long process of scaling up the program to cover all local governments. In order to participate in the program, and thus, receive the additional financial resources that can be used for capital expenditures and development projects, districts must meet certain minimum conditions. In order to assess which

districts met the minimum conditions and were qualified to participate, the MoLG conducted an assessment of Uganda's local governments in 1999. These "minimum conditions" criteria, which formed the basis of the 1999 assessment, are based on a determination of the skills and resources a district must possess in order to successfully plan for and utilize any development funds they might receive under LGDP. The criteria are also based on the Local Government Act of 1997 and the rules and regulations established by that act for the appropriate operation of local government in Uganda following decentralization (Uganda 1997, 1998). Each district was evaluated by a team from the LGDP offices in Kampala and scored according to its performance on the various criteria.⁵ The principal sections of the minimum conditions assessment include: functional capacity for development planning; functional capacity in internal audit and financial management; functional capacity in engineering; and program specific conditions. Each of these sections includes numerous indicators, for a total of 19 indicators. Scores for each district on these 19 indicators were combined to create an aggregate score to measure district performance on the minimum conditions criteria. In my dataset, I use these aggregate scores as an overall measure of district performance. My dataset includes aggregate scores for all but one of Uganda's 45 administrative districts—no report was available for Mukono district.⁶

⁵ The LGDP assessment was carried out by a National Assessment Team (NAT) and members of the NAT divided into four regional groups. Each regional team was responsible for conducting assessments of all of the districts within a particular region. Thus, the same team members evaluated all of the districts in one region. All of the NAT team members attended an orientation "to ensure standardisation of the assessment process" (Uganda 1999, 2). According to the initial assessment report, the team members met daily to review the data collected and complete the various parts of the assessment report together. The initial report explains that "Since information regarding the same indicators was collected from different sources there was a need to reconcile the findings before filling the reporting formats" (Uganda 1999, 2). Thus, the team worked together to determine a district's score on particular items.

⁶ I would like to acknowledge the tremendous assistance provided to me by Martin Onyach-Olaa and his entire staff at the Policy Management Unit of the Local Government Development Program. Despite a

This is a useful measure of performance for theoretical and practical reasons. Practically, these aggregate scores are useful because the LGDP teams calculated a single numeric score based on a clearly defined scoring process. These scores were available for most districts. In instances where a final score was not available, I replicated the LGDP team's scoring process as precisely as possible and calculated final scores for these districts.⁷ Theoretically, the minimum condition criteria are all good measures of district performance. Most of the indicators included in the aggregate score capture either district responsiveness or effectiveness, and some indicators capture both. Some individual indicators may be less relevant to my definition of local government performance, but overall the total score provides a good way of gauging where districts perform well and where they perform poorly.

The maximum possible score for the minimum conditions assessment total score is 97 points. Districts can earn up to 34 points for their performance in development planning, 44 points for their performance in internal audit and financial management, and 19 points for their capacity in engineering. The LGDP total scores for the minimum conditions assessment for Uganda's districts range from a low of 48 in Kalangala, the small island district in Lake Victoria⁸, to a high of 91 in Masaka in central Uganda. The average total score is 72.4, which is considerably below the maximum of 97 points (see Table 1).

Table 1 about here.

tremendous workload, Mr. Olaa took time to answer all of my questions and made all of the LGDP district reports available to me.

⁷ This was the case for the following five districts: Hoima, Kasese, Kibaale, Lira and Masindi.

⁸ Kalangala is the least populated district with only 16,371 residents (Rwaboogo 1998).

Most districts (36 of 45) fall between 61 and 90 points (see Table 2). As shown in Table 3, I classify districts receiving over 80 percent of the possible points (approximately 78 points) as good performers overall. Fifteen districts are considered good performers. Districts earning between 60 and 80 percent of the possible points are considered moderate performers. The performance of the majority of the districts (52.3 percent) is classified as moderate. Any districts receiving less than 60 percent of the points possible are considered poor performers. Only six districts fall into this category.⁹ Districts clearly exhibit differential abilities. Some districts easily met the minimum conditions and became part of the LGDP. Others, which did not meet the minimum conditions, failed to qualify for participation.

Tables 2 and 3 about here.

As Table 4 shows, regional differences exist in the LGDP aggregate scores for minimum conditions. These differences, however, are not statistically significant.¹⁰ Districts in the western and central regions earn on average higher scores than their counterparts in the northern and eastern regions. The average score for districts in the west is 75.1, while the average for the districts of the central region is only slightly lower at 73.3 points. The averages for the northern and eastern regions are quite similar and considerably lower than the means for the other two regions. These apparent regional differences, and even more important are the large *within* region differences that

⁹ These six districts include: Adjumani, Kalangala, Kasese, Moroto, Rukungiri, and Sembabule.

contributed to an insignificant F statistic for the ANOVA test, make multivariate explanations for performance more important. Other variables that may explain these differences can be substituted for proper names as suggested by Przeworski and Teune (1970).

Table 4 about here.

LGDP Scores for Development Planning

There are 12 separate indicators on which districts' performance in development planning is evaluated for the minimum conditions assessment. (For a complete discussion of these indicators, please see Appendix B.)¹¹ As noted above, the maximum score districts could receive for development planning is 34 with a minimum score of zero. Again districts exhibit considerable variability in their planning abilities (see Tables 5 and 6). The mean score for development planning is 23.5, which is approximately 69 percent of the total points possible. Scores range from a low of 8 in Kiboga to a high of 32 in three western districts of Bundibugyo, Bushenyi and Mbarara districts. A quarter of the districts receives a score between 11 and 20, while only two districts (Kiboga and Sembabule) score less than 10. Over two-thirds of the districts (70 percent) received scores higher than 20.

¹⁰ The value of the F statistic from the ANOVA test for statistical significance for differences of means is only .416 (sig. level .743 when total degrees of freedom = 43).

¹¹ There are other indicators that are included in the development planning section of the assessments that are not, however, used in calculating district scores. These include: whether the development plan includes a situational analysis reflecting poverty trends in the area for the past five years; whether the plan highlights "geographical poverty pockets and categories with[in] the LG [local government] with key characteristics

Tables 5 and 6 about here.

As seen in Table 6, the distribution of districts across the three performance categories is less concentrated than it is for the total assessment score. Thirteen districts are considered poor performers when it comes to development planning compared to only six for the total score. A district's performance in development planning is extremely important because it illustrates a district council's ability to assess the problems of its constituents and then devise viable strategies to deal with these problems. Almost a third of Uganda's districts are unable to meet this important challenge.

For example, Sembabule earned a score of only 9 out of the 34 possible points and is therefore among the 13 districts classified as poor performers. This extremely low score was based on the poor quality of the district's first three-year development plan and the insufficient staffing in key departments, such as the finance and planning department. Generally the development plan failed to provide for the integration of lower local council investments and did not provide a clear plan for mentoring lower LCs. This is clearly important given the emphasis within Uganda's decentralization strategy on ensuring that some resources and power are shifted to the sub-county level rather than stopping at the district level. Equally important, evaluators concluded that Sembabule's development plan did not adequately provide for poverty eradication and gender specific issues as required by the Local Government Act.

Another 36.4 percent, the moderate performers, are able to do this, but not completely and not consistently. For example, Kotido's score of 25 for development

and specific strategies..."; and whether development plans highlight "district/municipal specific poverty priority areas in light of PEAP priorities"(Uganda 2000a).

planning puts it into the moderate performance category. While Kotido district employs sufficient staff to ensure development planning meets all of the government's guidelines, the district's development plan is not complete, in fact the most recent plan (2001-2004) was not approved by the district council at the time of the LGDP assessment in November of 2001. Similarly, many important features of development planning were not completed. For example, the development plan did not include an analysis of the particular problems and challenges facing the local government, nor strategies chosen to address these problems (Uganda 2001). A slightly smaller percentage of districts perform well in development planning—34.1 percent (n=15) are considered good performers.

LGDP Scores for Financial Management and Audit

There are 7 separate indicators on which districts' performance in internal audit and financial management is evaluated. (Please see Appendix B for a detailed discussion of these indicators). As noted above, the maximum score districts can receive for this section is 44 and a minimum score of zero. Internal audit and financial management performance scores range from a low of 10 in Kasese to a high of 43 in both Masaka and Nakasongola (see Tables 7 and 8). The mean score for this section is 34.5 points, equal to about 78 percent of the total points possible. Table 8 reveals that the performance of the districts in the area of internal audit and financial management is considerably higher than the districts' performance in development planning. Only five districts are classified as poor performers, while 21 are considered good performers.

Tables 7 and 8 about here.

The financial management indicators measure tasks that are more straightforward and somewhat easier for a district to implement. For example, maintaining a limited purchase order is considerably easier and requires skills more likely to be present in existing administrative staff than a cross-sectoral integrated analysis of the problems of the local areas, as required under the development planning minimum conditions. But the difficulty of the tasks included in the section on development planning is precisely the reason many concerns arise about the potential impacts of the policy of decentralization. Such tasks are a requirement for local governments following decentralization and it is important to understand why some districts, such as Apac, Kabarole, Mbale and others, perform better than others.

Responsiveness Index

In addition to carrying out the minimum conditions assessment in 1999, during 2000-2001 the LGDP conducted another assessment of every district in Uganda and this assessment included a section with the original minimum conditions criteria, but also included a section with a more thorough performance evaluation for each district. Because my conceptualization of performance focuses on two specific components (responsiveness and effectiveness), I decided to select indicators from among those included in the performance evaluation that would serve as valid operational measures of responsiveness and effectiveness. There is some conceptual overlap between the items discussed in the performance evaluation and the items contained in the minimum

conditions assessment. The performance evaluation, however, covers most of the concepts scored in the minimum conditions assessment, but does so in much greater detail and also includes many more indicators that are relevant to my definition of performance. Likewise, the reports of the performance evaluations provide individual scores for each indicator. Evaluators provided comments in response to each item and then scored districts, most often using a dichotomous scale—0 for no and 2 for yes.

There is, however, a problem of missing data for some indicators in which the performance assessments are incomplete or the data is simply missing for a particular item. The problem of missing data complicates my analysis. Nevertheless, these indicators are an important part of my analysis because they allow me to assess district performance across a variety of tasks and responsibilities, but also to look at how well districts perform across conceptual dimensions—responsiveness and effectiveness—which is not possible with a single measure of performance. Similarly, the items that make up the total minimum conditions assessment scores, the scores for development planning and the scores for internal audit and financial management do not all measure a single conceptual dimension of local government performance, but instead combine multiple dimensions into a single score. This fact may explain the findings from the multivariate analysis discussed in the subsequent chapter. Measuring and attempting to explain variation across districts on a single dimension of performance, such as responsiveness, may prove more fruitful, than attempting to explain variation in general performance.

From among the many performance indicators included in the performance evaluations, I selected seven indicators to measure district council responsiveness.

These include:

- 1) Whether district development plans include a clear objective to mentor lower level local governments;
- 2) Whether district development plans include recurrent cost implications of lower local government investment plans and previous year capital investments;
- 3) Whether a district has made a statement of agreement to integrate sub-county investments that have a budgetary implication for the district into district development plans;
- 4) Whether there is horizontal and vertical communication between and among local governments at different levels and departments of the district government;
- 5) Whether the district council is knowledgeable of key decisions arrived at by various levels of local government;
- 6) Whether district development plans show increased attention to poverty issues specific to the district;
- 7) Whether district development plans show increased attention to gender and other vulnerable groups.¹²

→ need to develop own standard of FC

Items 1, 2, and 3 evaluate the extent to which district development planning considers and incorporates plans of lower level local governments, especially those which have an impact on district budget allocations. The inclusion and incorporation of plans made at lower levels of government is an important measure of the extent to which district councils are focusing their activities on the expressed needs of the people. This is especially true of plans made at the sub-county level, which is the only level of the LC system below the district that holds the status of local government. Given the nature of life and transportation in rural Uganda, most citizens' needs are never expressed to district council representatives directly. Instead, the needs of a sub-county population are revealed to the district through sub-county plans as well as through the information district councilors, who represent a particular sub-county, receive from the corresponding sub-county local council. Thus, items 4 and 5 are also extremely important. In order to make policies at the district level that respond to the needs and the priorities of the people

they represent, district officials must be aware of decisions made by lower level local governments. Given the importance of sub-counties in recent reforms to Uganda's decentralization policy and the increased levels of funding sub-county local governments receive, districts must be aware of the activities of these councils in order to provide services that support and supplement activities already in place, instead of replicating these activities. Adequate communication between the district council and the administrators that implement its decisions, as well as between the district government and lower levels of government, is critical to ensuring that worthwhile projects get funded, are adequately monitored and evaluated, and that the needs of the district population are met.

Items 1 through 5 are not the best measures of responsiveness and assume that lower local councils are, in fact, working to respond to the needs of the people. Items 6 and 7 are more direct measures of responsiveness of district councils to their constituents. Despite problems, I argue that the first five items are still useful in assessing overall levels of responsiveness across Uganda's district councils.

Item 6 evaluates the extent to which development plans present strategies to attempt to address the specific poverty issues facing the community. This requires that a district council be aware of the problems or needs of its population and then focus its planning on how to solve these particular problems.

Item 7 deals directly with the groups that local politicians are elected to represent. This indicator considers whether districts pay particular attention to marginalized groups, including women and other groups, such as youth and disabled persons, in their policies

¹² The description of these items is drawn closely from the discussion in the Ministry of Local Government's LGDP district assessments.

and the allocation of resources. One would expect that districts that try to respond to the needs of marginalized groups would be better able to respond to the needs of society generally. This item, like some of the others already discussed, is somewhat problematic in that it looks at whether district councils include a discussion of gender needs in its planning. The item does not measure the extent to which districts actually follow through with these plans and increase funding to marginalized groups and the services they need.

The scores for districts on each of these seven items were added together to create a single index of responsiveness.¹³ Because scores on each item range from 0 to 2, the maximum number of points possible on the index of responsiveness is 14 and a minimum of zero (see Table 9). The LGDP reports failed to provide data on all seven indicators for some districts, which created a problem of missing data. To address this problem, I calculated the proportion of possible points each district earned and used these proportions in place of raw scores. I calculated the possible number of points for each district based on how many of the seven indicators it received a score. For example, if a district was missing data on a single indicator, the maximum number of points possible for that district was only 12. In that case I would divide the total points earned on these six indicators by 12 to calculate the proportion of possible points the district had earned. Over two-thirds of the cases had data on all seven indicators (n=31), while another four districts received scores on all but one indicator. Kitgum had two missing data points so had a maximum only 10 points possible. Nine districts were not scored on any of these

¹³ Each of the indicators is correlated with the others with two exceptions: items 2 and 6 are not correlated; and items 2 and 5 are not correlated. Cronbach's alpha for these 7 indicators is .8493 and an average factor loading score of .724. All seven variables are part of a single component, and thus, included in the index. Only one variable had an eigenvalues greater than one. This was the variable to measure whether the district council development plans include a clear objective to mentor local governments. The factors scores are positively and significantly correlated with the index of responsiveness (based on proportion of possible points earned); $r=1$; $p<.00$.

seven indicators, and therefore, are not included in any of the analysis using the responsiveness index.¹⁴

Tables 9 and 11 about here.

One thing that stands out in Tables 9 and 11 is that most districts perform quite poorly on the index of responsiveness, indicating that these districts are not responsive to the groups they represent. Of the 36 districts scored on this index, 22 districts earn less than half of the possible points. Of these, 12 districts earn 3 or fewer points. Despite the concentration of districts in these lower categories, there are cases in the top two categories, which underlines the large variations in performance that exist among Uganda's district councils. In fact, seven districts (15.6 percent) earned at least 12 points.

Table 10 provides information on how districts performed on the various indicators that are combined into the single responsiveness index. District performance on the first item is fairly evenly divided. Over half of the districts for which data are available did not make explicit the objective to mentor lower level local governments. Five districts did so partly, while 12 districts scored a 2 on this indicator, meaning the development plans included objectives and strategies related to mentoring lower local governments.

Table 10 about here.

¹⁴ These include: Hoima, Iganga, Kalangala, Kampala, Lira, Mukono, Nakasongola, Rakai, and Sembabule.

Looking at the indicators of responsiveness that deal directly with districts' willingness to consider and incorporate the plans of the lower local governments, overall performance is worse. For example, 23 of the 35 districts earned a score of 0 on item two, indicating that the district development plans did not include plans of lower governments that have cost implications for the district. In fact, only eight districts performed well on this indicator. Similarly, district councils in 25 districts (73.5 percent of the 34 districts coded on this item) did not sign a statement of agreement to include sub-county council projects and investments that have budget implications into the district development plan. Neglecting such an agreement means that many projects and investments decided upon and planned for by sub-county local councils may not receive funding necessary for completion or continuation. Districts also performed poorly on the item that assesses how knowledgeable districts are about decisions made by local governments at other levels. Only 16 of 34 districts were coded as being knowledgeable, while the councils in 14 districts were not aware of decisions reached at other levels. In another four districts there was at least some attempt by the district council to stay afresh of what other local governments in its area was doing.

It is somewhat surprising that almost half of the districts were not aware of the activities and decisions of other local governments, especially given that communication between the district council and lower local councils and even with administrative departments within the district local governments was considered satisfactory in 27 districts (N=36). Horizontal and vertical communication in only 9 districts was unsatisfactory. This suggests that there is some feedback between levels of the LC system and between the political and administrative wings of the local government. This

is important because the LC system, and consequently, Uganda's policy of decentralization, hinges upon the successful upward and downward flow of information through the LC system. If this is lacking, it seems unlikely that politicians at the district level (and certainly not at the national level) can be aware of the needs of the people and what particular sub-counties are doing to meet these needs.

The results on these indicators suggest problems in the flow of communication within the LC system and especially between local government officials and their constituents. In only 16 of 40 districts for which data exists did LC officials exhibit social accountability or make an effort to provide feedback on council decisions to beneficiaries.¹⁵ There appears to be some communication between levels of the LC system, but most district councils, at least half, were not aware of the decisions made by lower local councils in their area. This further suggests that information is passed, but the flow of information is mostly top-down, in which district councils inform lower local councils of their decisions without receiving or acknowledging similar information from the sub-county council. Most likely, communication from the district council is passed through councilors representing different sub-counties. Even more likely, however, is that district communication is transmitted through the assistant CAOs who pass the information to the sub-county chiefs in particular areas, bypassing elected officials and instead passing through administrative officials at different levels. Unfortunately, local communities are ignored in this process. There is very little feedback to communities from either political or administrative officials. This may indicate that district councilors do not spend enough time with their constituents and also suggests that sub-county and

lower councils are also not very good at passing information down. Similarly, very little feedback goes up, and as a consequence, the needs and solutions decided upon by sub-counties are never communicated to the district council.

Most districts performed well on the item which considered whether the district increased attention to issues related to gender and other vulnerable groups. In fact, 23 districts (N=35) received a 2 on this item, indicating that there is greater attention paid to these issues in district planning. Only 9 districts received a zero. District performance on a similar item, the indicator of whether district development show increased attention to poverty issues specific to the area, was more evenly divided. Exactly half of the districts' development plans did not specifically address local poverty concerns and problems. The remaining districts showed at least some consideration for poverty problems specific to their area. Only 13 districts received a 2 on this indicator. The other 5 only received a 1, indicating that there is some attention, although not sufficient or consistent, to local poverty issues. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether evidence in the development plan of an awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups translates into real efforts to target district activities to meeting the needs of these groups. Mpigi, for example, received a two in this indicator, and yet, the district only allocated .12 percent of the budget to the Gender and Community Services department.

Effectiveness Index

From among the many performance indicators included in the performance evaluations, I selected five indicators to measure district council effectiveness.

¹⁵ I had hoped to include this measure of social accountability into the index of responsiveness, but factor analysis indicated that it was not part of the same component as the seven variables that were finally

These include:

- 1) Whether the district administration has sufficient and qualified staff in all head of department positions;
- 2) Whether the district prepared and submitted the final accounts for the previous financial year to the Office of the Auditor General;
- 3) Whether the District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC) met at least four times in the current financial year;
- 4) Whether the Finance Committee meets at least quarterly;
- 5) Whether the district prepared at least two quarterly audit reports.¹⁶

Several items in the development planning and financial management sections of the performance evaluation operationalize the three aspects of the policy process identified by Putnam as key aspects of government effectiveness: budget promptness, statistical services, and quorum. First, part one of the development planning section addresses whether key positions are filled with qualified staff. This provides an important measure of the quality of a district's statistical services and policy process. Second, the development planning and financial management sections of the evaluation each include an item evaluating the existence and functioning of key committees. For example, the development planning section assesses whether the district maintains a District Technical Planning Committee, how regularly this committee meets, and what items are discussed (see item three above). Item four assesses whether the finance committee meets at least quarterly. These items operationalize Putnam's concept of quorum quite well and also provide good proxies of districts' ability to translate policy decisions into outputs.

The section on financial management also includes two indicators that provide good operational measures of the effectiveness of a district council. While these two items do not as clearly allow for comparison of policy targets to policy outputs, they provide indication of the extent to which districts are able to put plans into action and

combined to create this index.

accomplish planned and required tasks, an important component of effectiveness. For example, item five evaluates whether the district's final accounts for the previous financial year have been submitted to the Office of the Auditor General. Item two, whether district carries out internal auditing, is also a good measure of the effectiveness of a district council.

The scores for districts on each of these five items were added together to create a single index of effectiveness.¹⁷ The index was constructed in the same manner as discussed above for the responsiveness index. While missing data is less of a problem for the indicators of effectiveness, there are still missing data points, and thus, district scores on the effectiveness index are based on the proportion of possible points earned by the district. Because scores on each item range from 0 to 2, the maximum number of points possible on the index of effectiveness is 10 and a minimum of zero (see Tables 12 and 14). As Table 14 reveals, district performance on the effectiveness index is quite good. Seventy-five percent of the districts scored on this index earned over 50 percent of the points possible.

Tables 12, 13, and 14 about here.

¹⁶ The description of the effectiveness items is drawn closely from the discussion in the Ministry of Local Government's LGDP district assessments.

¹⁷ These five indicators are highly correlated with each other with two exceptions: item 2 is not significantly correlated with items 1 and 4. Cronbach's alpha for these 5 indicators is .6855 and an average factor loading score of .683. These five variables are part of a single component, and thus, included in the index. However, only one variable had an eigenvalues greater than one. This was the variable to measure whether the district administration has sufficient and qualified staff in all key positions. The factors scores are positively and significantly correlated with the index of effectiveness (based on proportion of possible points earned); $r=.902$; $p<.00$.

Table 13 reports how districts performed on each of the indicators of effectiveness. District performance is considerably higher for these indicators than it is for the measures of district responsiveness. For all five indicators, over 40 percent of districts scored a two, indicating that the district fulfilled the criteria (see Table 13). In fact, over 80 percent of the districts perform well on items three and four.

Not surprising, the component parts of the LGDP minimum conditions assessment—the scores for development planning and financial management—are both highly correlated with the total scores received by districts (see Table 15). However, district scores for development planning are not correlated with scores for financial management and audit. This is surprising because one would expect that districts that perform well on one section would also perform well on the other. This is not the case, however. Only 19 of 44 districts received the same ranking (good, moderate, or poor performance) on both development planning and financial management and internal audit. The remaining 25 districts received different rankings, indicating different levels of performance for these different activities. As noted already, districts perform more poorly in development planning than in financial management. Of the 25 districts whose rankings differed across these two components of the minimum conditions score, only nine districts performed better at development planning than they did in financial management and audit. Sixteen districts performed worse in development planning than they did in financial management. In fact, seven of these 16 districts performed *much worse* in development planning. These seven districts exhibited “good performance” in financial management, but “poor performance” in development planning.

Table 15 about here.

Similarly, none of the LGDP measures are correlated with the responsiveness index. In fact, many districts that did considerably well on the LGDP measures performed *dismally* on the responsiveness index. For example, Masaka earned the highest score on the LGDP total scores, but only earned 14.3 percent of the possible points on the responsiveness index. Likewise, Ntungamo's LGDP total score is quite high at 82, but the district earned less than 10 percent of the possible points on the responsiveness index. On the other hand, the effectiveness index is correlated with three of the four other measures of district performance. More effective districts tend to be better overall performers, do well in financial management, and also be more responsive.

Given these differences in general performance, responsiveness, and effectiveness, and the fact that districts exhibit differential abilities to perform key tasks, e.g. development planning and financial management, it becomes more important to disaggregate performance in order to understand the factors that may explain performance. Chapter Five will report the results from multivariate analysis using these five variables (LGDP total, development planning, and financial management scores, and scores on the responsiveness and effectiveness indices) to operationalize the dependent variable, local government performance.

4.2.2 Explanations for Variation in Institutional Performance

Central-local Relations

As noted in Chapter Two, I consider two aspects of central-local relations: administrative and political linkages between local governments and the center. Narrowly defined, administrative linkages refer to the interactions and connections between local governments and central government line ministries that deal specifically with matters of public administration and the delivery of a particular service. For example, districts interact with representatives from different ministries to inquire about levels of funding they can expect to receive under a particular conditional grant. Ministries are also required to visit districts to monitor district provision of services and provide feedback that may improve such performance. Political linkages, on the other hand, capture interactions between the center and districts that are inherently political or determined by politics. Political acts, such as voting in national elections, visits to districts by important central government political leaders, or the gift or provision of resources to districts by political leaders at the center are examples of political linkages. Political linkages encompass both abstract resources, such as political support or legitimacy, as well as crucial material resources.

Administrative Linkages

I hypothesize that tighter administrative linkages result in better performance. More specifically, I expect greater central government oversight and/or mentoring by line ministries to be associated with better council performance. In the aggregate dataset, I measure administrative linkages by the frequency of official written correspondence

between districts and various central government ministries. Central government line ministries, such as the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Agriculture, were previously responsible for the complete provision of services associated with their sector throughout the districts. Therefore, sectoral ministries should be able to provide important information to assist and educate districts in their new role as service providers. The extent to which ministries have accepted this role certainly varies. Some ministries have taken seriously their role as mentors, while others continue to resist the process of decentralization and provide as little information to the districts as necessary.

As Table 16 indicates, ministries vary considerably in the extent to which they communicate with districts through letters. Correspondence data were collected from ministry registries for incoming and outgoing correspondence for a specified period of time. With the exception of the Ministry of Local Government, the data were collected for a three month period (April, May and June) in 2000. Data on correspondence between the Ministry of Local Government and districts were collected for an eight-month period (May to December) in 2000. The frequency of communication between ministries and districts is certainly affected by the budget cycle. During the months covered (April-June), districts are busy preparing their annual budgets and communicating with the ministries to inquire about revenue estimates for the coming year. The period covered, because of the importance of the budget making cycle, provides a good indication of the strength of administrative linkages between the center and Uganda's local governments. This period of time provides an excellent opportunity for a proactive ministry to mentor local governments about budget making and attempt to

transfer to the local governments any skills they might need to draft a complete and accurate budget.

A problem with this measure, however, is that it does not distinguish between letters for different purposes, and thus, considers any communication of equal value. This is certainly problematic as a notice sent to all districts is less significant than a letter sent to a district in response to an inquiry from the district, or to provide feedback from a recent ministry visit to the district. Data collected in the case study districts attempts to deal with this problem.

Table 16 about here.

Differences in total number of official written correspondence between the MoLG, the parent ministry of the district councils, and the basic service ministries are not surprising given the longer time period covered by the MoLG data. During the eight months investigated, the minimum number of letters exchanged between the MoLG and districts is 50 letters and the maximum is 109 letters. The number of letters from districts to the MoLG is considerably lower, ranging from 0 to 25 letters during this same time period. Given the historic role the MoLG has played as a mediator between the central government and local governments, I would expect greater communication between this ministry and Uganda's local governments even if the data were collected over similar time periods. Actors in both levels of government continue to expect the MoLG to fulfill this role, and thus, direct their communication to the ministry that is then expected to handle the problem accordingly.

Given the differences in the time period covered and the unique role of the MoLG in assisting local governments, I decided to focus only on correspondence between districts and the ministries which oversee the provision of basic services—education, agriculture, water, and health. Differences in correspondence with these ministries are more likely to reflect efforts by district officials to obtain information necessary to the successful delivery of services that had previously been the responsibility of the parent ministry. Such differences are also likely to capture any variation across ministries in the level of attention given to mentoring, educating, overseeing, and building the capacity of district councils. I created a summary measure of the total number of letters exchanged between districts and the ministries of health, water, education and agriculture.¹⁸ The mean number of letters exchanged between districts and these four ministries is 33. Districts' communication with these ministries ranges from a low of seven letters in Kampala to a high of 54 in Mpigi. It would be incorrect to attribute the low number of letters exchanged between Kampala and the basic service ministries simply to the fact that district officials in Kampala have no need to write letters when they can quite easily call or even visit ministry officials also based in Kampala. Proximity does not explain the level of communication, as Mpigi district, which surrounds the capital city, had the highest number of letters sent and received more letters than any other district. As evident in Table 17, most districts (over 75 percent) exchanged between 21 and 40 letters with these ministries.

¹⁸ The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture do not keep records of incoming letters, so the data for these ministries only reflect letters sent by ministry officials to different districts. Totals for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Water reflect both outgoing and incoming letters. Because the number of districts writing letters to ministry officials is quite small, including incoming letters for these two ministries has little impact on this measure or its significance in multivariate analysis in Chapter Five. In fact, this summary measure is highly correlated ($r=.962$; $p<.00$) with an alternative that only includes the number of letters sent by these four ministries to the districts.

Table 17 about here.

Political Linkages

I argue in Chapter Two that purely political linkages between the central government and districts are unlikely to improve performance. Political linkages between the central government and districts are operationalized using a number of indicators, including: 1) the number of cabinet ministers from a district; 2) the number of donor and GOU projects; and 3) an index of district electoral support. The first two variables operationalize political linkages, but focus on central government support to districts. The index of district electoral support also operationalizes political linkages, but emphasizes district support for the central government.

In order to facilitate analysis, I created an index of district electoral support for the Movement government by combining three variables that measure the percent of the population in each district that supported the Movement in recent national elections. These three variables are: 1) the percent of the district population that voted for President Museveni in the 1996 presidential election; 2) the percent that voted for Museveni in the 2001 presidential election; 3) and the percent of the district that voted for the Movement in the 2000 referendum on political systems. Each of the three variables was transformed into a dichotomous variable, indicating whether the percent of the district population voting for the Movement reflects a high or low linkage between the district and the central government. For example, the variable, the percent of district population voting for Museveni in 1996, was recoded so that districts received 0 if less than 85 percent of

the population voted for Museveni in that election, while districts in which 85 percent or more of the district voted for Museveni received a 1. Thus, districts in which the percent voting for Museveni exceeded the median (81.94 percent) were seen to exhibit higher than average support for the government on this variable.

Similarly, I recoded the percent of the district population that voted for the Movement in the 2000 referendum into a dichotomous variable with 0 indicating weak linkages and 1 indicating strong linkages. For this variable, because the median is quite high (92.60 percent), I divided districts using 95 percent as the cutoff point. Districts in which less than 95 percent of the population voted for the Movement were coded as 0, indicating weak linkages between the district and the central government. Those districts in which 95 percent or greater voted for the Movement system of government received a score of 1.

Finally, I recoded the percent of the district population that voted for Museveni in the most recent presidential election in 2001 into a similar dichotomous variable (0 or 1). President Museveni's support slipped somewhat from the previous presidential election, and consequently, the median percent voting for Museveni in 2001 is only 76.8 percent—still quite high by international standards. Districts in which less than 80 percent of the population voted for Museveni in 2001 were coded as 0, while those districts where he received at least 80 percent were coded as 1.

Table 18 about here.

Districts' scores on these three variables were combined into a single index.¹⁹ The scores on the index can be seen in Table 18. Over half of the districts received a score of 0 on all three of the voting variables, which suggests weak linkages with the central government. Interestingly, 18 of these 23 districts lie in northern or eastern Uganda, where Museveni's support has been the lowest since taking power in 1986. The other five districts that received a zero on the index are in central Uganda, including Kampala, Kalangala, Masaka, Mpigi and Mukono. All of these districts, except Kalangala, are urban or peri-urban areas where opposition to Museveni's regime seems to be strongest. On the other hand, 14 districts received a 3 on this index, suggesting that linkages between these districts and the government are extraordinarily strong, or at least that popular support for Museveni's regime in these districts is extraordinarily strong. Not at all surprising is that eight of the 14 districts are in western Uganda, the stronghold of Museveni's support. Four of these districts are in eastern Uganda, while only one is in each of the other regions.

As noted above, I rely on two variables to operationalize political linkages that originate from central government. These are the number of cabinet ministers from each district after the reshuffle of July 2001 and the number of donor and GOU projects operating in each district. Table 19 presents the data on the number of cabinet ministers from each district after Museveni's cabinet reshuffle in July 2001. Over half of Uganda's districts have only a single cabinet minister. Six districts do not even have a single minister. With the exception of Mubende in central Uganda, all five of the other districts

¹⁹ Factor analysis confirms that these three indicators comprise a single component. All three variables are positively and significantly correlated. The average factor loading score is .936 and Cronbach's Alpha = .9005. The index is highly correlated ($r=.718$; $p<.00$) with the factors score. Note: only one variable had an eigenvalue > 1.

that are not represented on Museveni's cabinet are from northern and eastern Uganda. The median number of cabinet ministers from a district is 1 and over a third of Ugandan districts have more than one cabinet minister. Two districts, both in Museveni's political stronghold in western Uganda, have as many as four cabinet ministers. These are the western districts of Mbarara and Rukungiri

Tables 19 and 20 about here.

I collected the data on the number of donor and GOU funded projects operating in each district from the Ministry of Finance. I had hoped to gather evidence on the total amount of discretionary funds that the central government provides to each district. This information was not available from either the Office of the President or the Ministry of Finance. While many donor and even GOU funded projects are likely allocated according to nonpolitical criteria, there is still a number of such projects that are distributed to reward political supporters or encourage support from opposition areas. The GOU cannot dictate where donors locate, but opposition groups complain that Movement officials recommend and even encourage donors to locate in some areas rather than others. This will be explored further in Chapter Seven, but results of multivariate analysis (presented in Table 1, Chapter Seven) reveal that HDI is not a statistically significant predictor of the number of GOU and donor projects within a district, providing some evidence for opposition complaints. On the other hand, both the number of cabinet ministers from a district and district population are, in fact, statistically significant, and the coefficients are positive in this regression. While it is not possible to

rule out non-political considerations, the results discussed in Chapter Seven suggest that political criteria are quite important.

The number of projects operating in Uganda's districts varies quite dramatically across the country (see Table 20). The minimum number of projects is 4 in Bugiri and Sembabule, while the maximum is 21 in Mpigi district. On average districts have 9 donor and/or GOU funded projects, although a large percent of Ugandan districts are lucky enough to have more than 9 projects. In fact, 21 districts (47.7 percent) have 10 or more different projects currently in operation.

Local Political Context

As noted in Chapter Two, I hypothesize that two features of the local political context—local political competition and the dominant political strategies of local leaders—are vitally important to understanding if and when society-centric explanations are important predictors of local government performance. I use three variables to operationalize the local political context of Uganda's 45 districts. These include: 1) the share of the vote won by successful candidates in elections for district chairperson; 2) the total number of corruption charges against elected and nonelected LC officials; and 3) a measure of whether the district tender board (DTB) announces important dates for meetings or when Requests for Proposals (RFPs) must be submitted. The first variable provides an indication of the level of local political competition. Local elections are likely to be more competitive where winning district chairpersons secured a low percent of the overall vote. The other two variables serve as indicators of the dominant political strategies in a district. Where fewer corruption charges are leveled against local officials, and where the

DTB publicly announces important dates in the process of submitting bids for the supply of goods and services, politics is likely to be less personalistic and local governments will likely perform better as a result.²⁰

I also look at the percent of the vote won by the successful candidate for LC5 chairperson as another measure of the local political context, focusing on the level of political competition for local elections. The vote share won by successful candidates for the election of the district council chairperson ranges from 28 percent in Moyo and Nebbi districts to 100 percent in Sembabule and Mukono districts where candidates faced no competition. The mean percent of the vote received by winning candidates was 54 percent. In two-thirds of the districts (n=30), successful candidates won between 40 and 70 percent of the total vote (see Table 23). Winners in only nine districts slipped through the LC5 election with less than 40 percent of the vote.

If district officials announce the important dates for meetings and when potential contractors must submit bids, they are less likely to use a contractor selected because of his/her political connections and more likely to allow all viable contractors, even those without preferential access to political leaders, an opportunity. Publication of important deadlines for submission of requests for tender is an important indicator of the transparency of the tender process, and because of the significance of tendering to district activities, an important indicator of the transparency of district operations generally. While problems with the tender process may, at times, result from non-political factors,

²⁰ It is possible that powerful politicians are able to protect themselves from corruption charges, and thus, only weaker politicians face such charges. I conducted bivariate analysis on the number of corruption charges and the percent of the district satisfied with the performance of the district chairperson (Afrobarometer 2000). The variables are not significantly related. Likewise, the number of corruption charges is not correlated with the share of the vote received by the successful LC5 candidate. Thus, I would conclude the many politicians, some strong and some weak, face allegations of corruption. As the

such as a lack of resources, most of the reports of problems with the tender board in a district are explicitly political. Moreover, this variable is not significantly correlated to HDI in bivariate analysis.

Table 21 about here.

Districts are almost evenly divided in their ability and perhaps willingness to follow the procedures established by the central government for awarding local government contracts for the delivery of goods and services. An extremely slight majority (51.2 percent) of the districts makes no attempt to meet the criteria established for how the tender board should operate. On the other hand, district tender boards in 19 districts (46.3 percent) operate in consistent and transparent ways.

Corruption is a clear indicator of ineffective and unresponsive government, yet also may provide keen insight into the principal political strategies employed by local politicians and administrators. As noted in Chapter Three, the Inspectorate General of Government (IGG) in Uganda performs a watchdog function and is responsible for fighting corruption by elected and nonelected officials in all levels of government, including local governments. The headquarters of the IGG is in Kampala, however there are regional offices throughout the country. The IGG conducts investigations based on its own information and also conducts investigations to follow up on public complaints.

I obtained data on the total number of public complaints against LC officials in each district for two quarters during the financial year 2000-2001 from the IGG

case Mpigi described in Chapters Seven and Eight indicates, often outside interference is more important for political survival than an individual's own power.

headquarters in Kampala. Only information on complaints reported to the IGG headquarters was available. Unfortunately, the frequency of complaints against local councils and administrators reported to the various regional offices was not available. The headquarters does not have this information and logistically it was not possible to travel to each office to collect this data.

Table 22 about here.

Few Ugandan districts were immune to charges of corruption (see Table 22). Only three districts—Nebbi, Kotido, and Sembabule—had no charges brought against them and reported to the IGG headquarters. The overwhelming majority, 42 districts, was charged with at least one instance of corruption. Of these, 36 districts received between 1 and 10 complaints. Only six districts had more than 10 complaints reported to the IGG. Interestingly, the total number of corruption charges is not significantly related to a variety of measures of public participation, including voter turnout in LC elections, regular attendance at community meetings, political interest and listening to news on the radio.²¹

Table 23 about here.

As discussed in Chapter Two, I test alternative explanations for local government performance in addition to testing the variables I hypothesize to be important influences

on performance. Thus, I collected data to test the effects of explanations that focus on structural factors, societal factors, and policy experience and institutional legacy.

Society-centric Explanations

The aggregate dataset measures political participation by looking at voter turnout in each district for three recent elections: 1996 presidential election; 2001 presidential election; and 1998 LC elections. Voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections is a good measure of the extent to which citizens in a district participate in the LC system. Therefore, I used it as the principal measure of political participation in the multivariate analysis in Chapter Five. In the 1998 LC elections, voters elected political leaders to the district and sub-county levels of the LC system, such as the district chairperson and the chairperson for their sub-county council. Voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections is especially relevant to test the hypotheses put forward by other scholars that local governments function better in areas where citizens actively participate.

Table 24 provides some indication of the importance of local elections in Uganda and reveals important differences in turnout between the LC elections and the two presidential elections. Generally, voter turnout is remarkably low for the LC elections, providing some support for critics of Uganda's decentralization policy and LC system who argue that Ugandans are no longer interested in participating in the local councils. Mean turnout for the LC elections is only 46 percent of registered voters compared to 70 percent for both presidential elections. The minimum turnout for local elections is 19 percent compared to a low of only 51 and 53 percent in the 1996 and 2001 presidential

²¹ The last three variables are drawn from the Afrobarometer 2000 dataset and are measures of the percent of respondents in each district that reported attending community meetings often or sometimes, listening to

elections, respectively. On the other hand, the maximum voter turnout for the LC elections is only 66 percent, while the turnouts for the 1996 and 2001 presidential elections are 98 and 89 percent, respectively.

Table 24 about here.

It is hard to gauge the reliability of this turnout measure and how it compares with other African countries, although comparisons with recent survey data suggest that either the aggregate measure severely underestimates turnout in Uganda's 1998 LC elections or Ugandans overreported voting in this election. For example, while the average turnout in the 1998 LC election based on aggregate turnout data is 46.5 percent, almost 79 percent of respondents in three case study districts reported voting in the LC elections.²² Nevertheless, the percent of the population that reported voting in my survey is close to the percent of Ghanaians and Nigerians that reported voting in local elections in recent Afrobarometer surveys. For example, 79 percent of respondents in Ghana and 82 percent of respondents in Nigeria reported voted in local elections in 1998.²³

Because of potential problems with the reliability of turnout data in Uganda, I supplement this measure with two alternate measures of participation—attendance at community meetings and contacting local leaders, both based on Afrobarometer data.²⁴ I

news on the radio frequently, or expressed an interest in politics.

²² In all three districts, the percent of respondents who reported voting in the LC elections in 1998 is considerably higher than the voter turnout based on available aggregate data.

²³ This data is from the Afrobarometer survey in Ghana in 1999 (survey question 636) and in Nigeria in 2000 (survey question 130).

²⁴ The Afrobarometer project carried out by three core partners: Michigan State University, Dept. of Political Science (contact Michael Bratton), Institute for Democracy in South Africa (contact Bob Mattes) and Center for Democracy and Development in Ghana (contact Gyimah-Boadi). The Afrobarometer has

used the percent of respondents in each district that reported engaging in such activities “sometimes” or “often” to create a district level measure of these alternative forms of participation. I include these alternate measures in multivariate analysis in Chapter Five.

I use the number of NGOs operating in a district to operationalize the activism of civil society. Simply counting the number of registered NGOs in each district is certainly an imperfect measure of civil society activity in these districts. The measure is based on the number of NGOs that registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) in Kampala and reported operations in particular districts. Thus, smaller, indigenous NGOs that may be providing important services, but did not register, would not be counted. While some of the registered NGOs operating in a district will not be indigenous to the area, many will be local, grassroots organizations. However, I argue that the existence of NGOs provides individuals with an important opportunity for participation that would not exist otherwise.

Similarly, I argue in Chapter Two that in order for civic associations to positively impact government performance, the linkages and interactions between these groups and local governments must be explored. Unfortunately, an adequate measure of LC-NGO linkages was not available for use in the aggregate dataset. I collected data on these linkages in each of the three case study districts, however, and this will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Districts vary considerably in the number of NGOs operating within their borders (see Table 25). The number of NGOs in a district ranges from five in Sembabule to 356 in Kampala. In no district does the number of NGOs come even close to the number

conducted public opinion surveys in numerous African countries, including surveys in Uganda in 2000 and 2002. For more information, see <http://www.afrobarometer.org/index.html>.

operating in the capital city. Mpigi district has the second largest number of NGOs at 147—less than half the number operating in Kampala. When Kampala is excluded from the analysis, the mean number of NGOs in a district drops from 51 to only 44 and the standard deviation drops from 55 to only 30. In order to provide a more representative picture of NGO activity for the multivariate analysis in Chapter Five, the number of NGOs operating in Kampala was replaced with the median (Md=39).

Table 25 about here.

Research by Tripp (2000) and Dicklitch (1998) provide reason to be wary of this measure of associational life. Both Tripp and Dicklitch found that many small organizations did not formally register with the MoLA in Kampala. Tripp (2000) also notes that many organizations simply registered with their parent or umbrella organization rather than with the central government. Given the potential problems with this aggregate measure, I used the Afrobarometer 2000 data to create an alternative measure of civil society activism. I created an index of organizational membership based on survey responses to Afrobarometer questions about membership in a variety of different types of civic organizations. I calculated the average number of memberships reported by respondents in each district. These averages were then used as a district level measure of civic activism and are included in multivariate analysis presented in Chapter Five.

Many scholars, such as Putnam (1993) and Widner (1998), also point to social capital as the key to better institutional performance. These scholars argue that

governments in areas characterized by higher levels of social capital will perform better. One definition of social capital and its measurement has commonly focused on levels of interpersonal trust. Higher levels of trust has been viewed as a characteristic of a higher level of social capital. In my aggregate dataset, social capital has been operationalized in the same way, as the general level of trust in an area.

The Afrobarometer survey includes questions about levels of generalized trust and about trust in the district council. I used this data to create two district level variables—one based on the percent of respondents in a district saying that most people can be trusted and the other based on the percent of respondents in a district responding that they trust the LC5 “somewhat” and “a lot.” These variables must be viewed with some caution given the small number of respondents in a few districts.²⁵ Table 26 reports descriptive statistics for the trust variables. The percent of Afrobarometer survey respondents in Uganda’s districts responding that generally most people can be trusted ranges from a low of 0 percent in both Jinja and Busia in eastern Uganda to a high of 34 percent in the northern district of Lira and the western district of Ntungamo. On average, 17 percent of the Afrobarometer survey respondents expressed the feeling that most people can be trusted.

Table 26 about here.

²⁵ The number of survey respondents in 17 of the 45 districts is less than 50 and in three districts the number of survey respondents is less than 20.

Structural Explanations

The aggregate dataset includes a variety of measures of economic development, including district scores on the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI),²⁶ which range from 0 and 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of development. Districts differ dramatically in the level of economic development (see Table 27). Among Uganda's districts, scores on the human development index range from .16 in Moroto district and .18 in Kotido—both geographically isolated in Karamoja in northeastern Uganda—to .64 in Kampala. The mean HDI score is .37. The HDI score for half of the 38 districts for which data were available is less than the mean. Regional differences in HDI are significant, and as would be expected given the political and economic history of the country.²⁷ Average HDI scores for the four regions in Uganda are as follows: .28 for northern Uganda; .37 for eastern Uganda; .38 for western Uganda; and .44 for central Uganda.

Table 27 about here.

In addition to economic development, I also include district population as a key control variable given that many of the other explanatory variables vary, at least to some extent, according to population. There is considerable variation in the size of the population in Uganda's districts (see Table 28). District populations range from a low of 16,371 in Kalangala to over 900,000 in Mpigi, Mbarara, and Iganga districts.

²⁶ District level HDI data was obtained from the *Uganda Human Development Report, 1998* (UNDP).

²⁷ F statistic = 9.677; sig .00

Table 28 about here.

Policy Experience and Institutional Legacy

The institutional experience of districts is measured in three ways: the year districts were created; the date districts entered the decentralization program; and an ordinal measure of the level of hierarchy and centralization of pre-colonial political institutions. The frequency distributions for these three variables are presented in Tables 29, 30 and 31. The dates of creation range from 1962 to 1997. Determining the age of Uganda's older districts was an extremely difficult process. At the end of the colonial period, Uganda was divided into only 18 districts. Most of the country's districts were carved from these districts in the 1970s, with many created in 1974 following local government reforms instituted by Idi Amin. But some of Uganda's districts were formed as recently as 1997 and then 11 more—not included in this study due to the timing of data collection—were created in 2000-2001. Concerning experience with decentralization, districts entered the decentralization process in stages, as indicated in Table 30. The districts included in the first phase tended to be the older and larger districts. While the time between the first phase and the final phase was not considerably long, three years is certainly a long time in terms of experience and repeated attempts to perform complex tasks, such as designing a district development budget or auditing district projects. Thus, the districts in the first phase may have gained some advantages over their neighbors.

Tables 29, 30 and 31 about here.

As Table 31 reports, Uganda's districts are fairly evenly divided between those that were historically governed under the more centralized political kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, and Toro, and those governed under the sort of decentralized political institutions common in northern and eastern Uganda. Only four districts, which are all part of Busoga kingdom, were coded as having semi-centralized systems. At the end of colonialism, Busoga kingdom was much more hierarchical and centralized than the political institutions common in the north and other parts of the east, but less so than the other kingdoms.²⁸

4.3 Case Study Districts: Methods and Operationalization

4.3.1 Selection of Case Study Districts

The case study districts were purposively chosen to reflect variation on several important characteristics. These include region, distance from the capital city, the date on which the district was decentralized, level of economic development, rural/urban status, and the degree of support for the Movement government. As noted above, the three districts selected represent three of Uganda's four regions and exhibit high degrees of variation on the variables of interest.

For example, Bushenyi district in western Uganda represents a predominantly rural district that lies 350 kilometers from Kampala. The population of Bushenyi, like that of the other districts in western Uganda, tends to support strongly President Museveni and the Movement. Of the three districts studied, Bushenyi is also the smallest district—only 4,026 square kilometers. Nevertheless, diversity still exists within the

²⁸ See Fallers 1965 for a thorough discussion of the transformation of the Busoga Kingdom under British colonial rule. Also, Chapter Three addresses these issues more directly.

district. For example, the two northernmost counties of Bunyaruguru and Buhweju are among the poorest parts of the district and the most isolated. Assessments of local government performance in Bushenyi must acknowledge the disparities in social service provision and opportunities between these two counties and their southern counterparts of Ruhinda, Igara, and Sheema.

Unlike Bushenyi and other districts in the western region, Lira district provides a good example of the sentiment towards the central government among the ten districts of the north and serves as a district with weak support for the central government.²⁹ Historically, the districts in northern Uganda have opposed the Museveni regime. Following the announcement of the contentious results of the 1980 presidential election, in which Museveni and numerous others felt that President Milton Obote and his Uganda People's Congress (UPC) had stolen the election, Museveni organized and led the National Resistance Army against the Obote Regime. Obote was a Northerner from the former Lango district that included Lira district and neighboring district, Apac. Museveni's guerrilla war resulted in the ousting of Obote in a coup organized by generals in the Ugandan Army from another northern part of the country. Less than a year later Museveni took Kampala and has held power since, being reinstated twice in the presidential election of 1996 and 2001. The sentiment among many Ugandans from the north is anger and frustration focused on Museveni as the individual who stripped the north of political power and control.

²⁹ The districts included in the three regions I am studying are as follows. The districts of the northern region are: Adjumani, Apac, Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Kotido, Lira, Moroto, Moyo, and Nebbi. The districts in the west are: Bundibugyo, Bushenyi, Hoima, Kabale, Kabarole, Kasese, Kibaale, Kisoro, Masindi, Mbarara, Ntungamo, and Rukungiri. The districts in the central region are: Kalangala, Kampala, Kiboga, Luwero, Masaka, Mpigi, Mubende, Mukono, Nakasongola, Rakai, and Sembabule.

Lira, like Bushenyi, is predominantly rural and lies approximately 360 kilometers north of Kampala. With over 7000 square kilometers, Lira is one of the geographically largest districts in Uganda. The size of the district and the poor quality of the transportation network ensures that the sub-counties of the western part of the district, in Otuke and Moroto counties and in Kyoga county, are extremely isolated, which complicates the work of the district council and even sub-county councils within these areas. Moreover, much of Lira district has been plagued by insecurity from either the rebels of Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) or the cattle-raiding Karamojong. The constant insecurity, and what Lira residents see as the inability or lack of desire by the central government to ensure their safety, has further eroded the government's support in Lira. In an interview in Awelo sub-county in Kyoga county in far southeastern Lira, numerous individuals complained that the cattle raiders had recently marched in from the districts of Karamoja and stole their cattle without any intervention or attempts to stop them from the Ugandan army.

In addition to insecurity, local governments in northern Uganda face an additional challenge of low levels of economic development in their areas. Districts in northern Uganda are considerably less developed than their counterparts in other parts of the country, especially in the western and central regions. For example, the HDI score for Lira district is only .3496 compared to .4145 in Bushenyi and .4972 in Mpigi district (UNDP 1998). Much of the disparities across regions in Uganda can and have been traced to the inequitable strategies of development instituted by the British colonial government, but perpetuated under post-colonial governments. Moreover, the lack of concern for anything related to economic development or provision of public services by

most of the regimes in Uganda's post-colonial history combined with decades of fighting has meant that imbalances that emerged at independence were institutionalized and are today difficult to erase.

For all of the reasons discussed above, Lira was selected and provides an interesting counterpoint to the high levels of stability, security and development in Bushenyi, and its close political allegiance to not only the Museveni government, but to most of Uganda's regimes since independence. While Lira and other northern districts have tended to be marginalized politically since Obote was forced from power, Bushenyi has a history of close political alignment with whatever government happens to be in power. To characterize much of what interview respondents said to describe this unique political position of Bushenyi in Uganda's history—the district seems to have played the role of true politicians extraordinarily well, linking closely to those in power, regardless of the ethnic group, religion, or region from which the leader was drawn. In response to queries that perhaps Bushenyi benefits from its close political ties to the NRM and President Museveni, some individuals contended that Bushenyi was as close to the Obote government in the past as it is today with the current regime.

In some ways, Mpigi district falls neatly in between these two districts—in the level of political support for the current administration and its linkages to previous regimes. Yet, in other ways, Mpigi is certainly unique. Mpigi is one of the peri-urban areas of the country, surrounding Kampala on almost all sides. Many parts of Kampala outside the city center lie within Mpigi district. This peri-urban status raises interesting questions and issues about the work of local governments and the potential constraints on their performance. As noted above, Mpigi's HDI score is much higher than scores for

either Bushenyi and Lira. The urban setting and nearness to Kampala would suggest that the issues facing local governments in Mpigi and the services being demanded of their constituents might make Mpigi somewhat unique. For the urban areas, this is true. In fact, during the last two years Mpigi district council has been battling with the Kampala city council regarding the disposal of waste. Politicians in Mpigi were not happy that Kampala residents and businesses, and even the local government routinely deposit their trash in Mpigi district. The source of this dispute is, in fact, somewhat unique to the urban parts of the country, but the politics are universal and such political struggles determine and are influenced by the performance of local governments around the country—whether the dispute concerns urban waste or agricultural extension in rural communities.

Like Lira, Mpigi is also an older and larger district with over 6000 square kilometers spread across 5 counties and Entebbe Municipality. The district had the extremes, urban and rural areas. In 2001, Mpigi district was divided into two separate districts: Mpigi and Wakiso. The predominantly rural counties of Gomba, Butambala, and Mawokota remained in Mpigi district. The urban counties of Busiro, which includes Entebbe Municipality, and Kyadondo formed the new Wakiso district. The politics of the split will be discussed in subsequent chapters, however the impact that these obvious differences between the two parts of the former Mpigi district had on local government performance are enormous.

Finally, all three of these districts have had almost a decade of experience with decentralization. Lira and Mpigi were among the first 13 districts brought into the decentralization program in 1993-94. Decentralization was introduced to Bushenyi the

following year in 1994-95, during the second phase of implementation. Thus, all three districts have approximately the same level of experience with these reforms. While the case studies do not provide much variability on this factor, the aggregate dataset includes districts at all levels of experience.

4.3.2 Survey Methods

The survey of local residents in each of the case study districts provided an opportunity to collect data on all of the important concepts to enable me to test my hypotheses about the relationship between local council performance and the council's relationship with the central government and features of the local political context. In designing the survey instrument, I followed closely the questionnaire and question formats from the Afrobarometer questionnaire. I used as many of the Afrobarometer's questions as possible for a number of reasons. First and most importantly, these survey questions have been tested numerous times and refined to eliminate confusing language and to ensure the validity of the measure. Second, I wanted to collect data on as many measures as possible that would allow me to make comparisons between this Ugandan sample and the existing Afrobarometer data for Uganda and the other African countries, but also the countries included in similar projects in other regions.³⁰ I tried to follow the format and wording of the Afrobarometer questions as closely as possible when I wrote questions to operationalize concepts not previously covered in the Afrobarometer surveys. In addition, I included several questions from a previous survey on decentralization in

³⁰ As noted, the Afrobarometer is operating in Africa, while the Latinobarometer is conducted in Latin American and the Asiabarometer and Eurobarometer are conducted in Asia and Europe, respectively.

Uganda by the IRIS Center.³¹ The survey questions provide measures of the following concepts:

1. Local council performance

- a. Performance
- b. Citizen needs
- c. LC outputs

2. Political and administrative linkages between the central government and districts

- a. Frequency of contact with central government officials
- b. Political inclination of the district
- c. Relationship between MPs and district
- d. Autonomy of LCs

3. Local political context

- a. Distribution of economic and political resources
- b. Social structure (ethnic diversity; language diversity; religious diversity; political diversity)

4. Control variables

- a. Participation (in local councils; in decision making; meaningfulness of participation; organizational membership; voting)
- b. Social capital (trust; organizational membership)
- c. Civil society (organizational membership and lobbying activity)

The sample size was 204 respondents within each of the three case study districts for a total sample size of 612 respondents. The sampling procedures consisted of a combination of random, stratified, and cluster sampling. The primary sampling unit was the parish, or the LC2 administrative level. Care was taken to ensure that the sample reflected the geographic diversity of the district, specifically the distribution of the population across rural and urban areas. All of the parishes in the district were stratified as either rural or urban based on population density. Once categorized, I sampled parishes from each category to reflect the actual distribution of the district population. In Bushenyi, because the district is 98 percent rural, all nine parishes selected were rural

³¹ Survey questions (41, 55, 56, 99-100, 107 and 116) are based on the following questions from the IRIS Center's Household survey: H277-285; H299-308; H319-321; and H344-51. In some instances I used the exact wording of the question from the IRIS survey, while in other instances I revised the question slightly to better match my objectives. I would like to thank Asiimwe Delius for sharing the questionnaire with me

parishes (n=204). In Mpigi and Lira districts, the number of urban and rural parishes was determined based upon the percentage of population in each district living in urban and rural areas. Mpigi district is 15 percent urban, thus, two urban parishes (n=36) and seven rural parishes were selected (n=168). Lira district is five percent urban, and therefore, I selected one urban parish (n=24) and eight rural parishes (n=180). Please see Appendix C for a list of the selected parishes.

The parishes were ordered in descending order by population within the two categories—rural and urban. The parishes were then numbered and numbers were selected using a random number table. Within each of the selected parishes, two villages were randomly selected from a list of villages within that parish. In order to select two villages, I obtained the names of all of the villages within the parish from a LC or administrative official, numbered the villages, and then using numbers on slips of paper, randomly chose two numbers. The villages whose number corresponded to the selected numbers were included in the survey. Given the desired sample size in each district was 204 respondents, and 12 surveys were conducted in each village, nine parishes were sampled within each district. In eight of these parishes, two villages were chosen at random. In one parish, only one village was sampled. Thus, in eight parishes 24 questionnaires were completed, totaling 192 returns and then in one parish only 12 interviews were conducted for a final total of 204 returns in a district.

Within selected villages, a list of households was obtained from the LC officials. Care was taken to ensure that the LC1 officials included *all* households, not just a list of taxpayers, but also included female-headed households, widows/widowers, and other

and discussing the IRIS Center's decentralization project. The IRIS Center is located at University of Maryland. Please see <http://www.iris.umd.edu/> for more information.

households that may not pay taxes or may not fit the traditional definition of what a household is. Using the list of village households, I employed systematic sampling techniques to select 12 households. At the household level, enumerators were responsible for selecting a respondent within each household. Enumerators asked for a list of names of all qualified individuals living in the household. These names were numbered and the corresponding numbers were written on slips of paper and folded. A household member assisted enumerators to randomly select one individual from the household by selecting a slip of paper from among the folded slips of paper in the enumerator's hand. The individual whose name was next to the chosen number was asked to participate in the survey. To ensure gender balance in the sample, I instituted the same policy used in the Afrobarometer survey, in which enumerators alternated male and female respondents from one interview to the next.

Table 32 presents the characteristics of the sample for each district. The sample in each district is evenly divided between men and women and quite close in age with the median age between 30 and 35 years. Differences in the social and economic characteristics of the populations of each district are quite apparent from Table 32. For example, almost 30 percent of Lira respondents reported having no formal schooling, compared to less than 20 percent of respondents in the other two districts. Similarly, almost 85 percent of Lira residents described themselves as farmers, while only 60 percent of respondents in Bushenyi and Mpigi gave a similar response. In fact, almost 10 percent of Bushenyi respondents characterized themselves as a businessperson. Looking at the personal income and wealth of respondents in these three districts, differences in the levels of development are quite apparent. Many more respondents in Bushenyi and

Mpigi reported having a radio and owning animals compared to the number who reporting owning such items in Lira. In fact, less than 30 percent of survey respondents in Lira reported that they owned a radio.

Given the ethnic composition of these three districts, the distribution of language speakers is as expected. While the majority of Bushenyi residents are Banyankole, there is a considerable degree of ethnic diversity, evident in the 30 percent of respondents who reported speaking a language other than the three listed in Table 32. On the other hand, Lira is a fairly homogeneous district and most residents are Langi.

4.3.3 Additional Research Methods

In-depth Structured Interviews

I carried out numerous interviews within each case study district and in Kampala. In each district, I conducted interviews with as many of the ten members of the executive committee as possible, councilors from a selection of the sub-counties from which survey participants were drawn, administrative officials from each of the major departments within the district local government, such as the District Education Officer and the District Medical Officer, many of the Members of Parliament for the district, and representatives from NGOs operating in the district, if possible. While interviews were structured to allow similar questions to be posed to each of the different individuals interviewed, I also allowed a certain degree of flexibility to ensure that important ideas and information were thoroughly discussed, even if it meant departing from the established interview guide.

In addition to the interviews conducted in Bushenyi, Mpigi and Lira districts, I carried out many interviews with representatives of the central government, including officials at each of the major sectoral line ministries. The material obtained in these interviews, in conjunction with the district interviews and survey responses, provided a more complete picture of the performance of the local government, but also the relationship between the district and various actors in the central government. Comparing district interview material with survey responses of district residents also helped illuminate the nature of the relationship between the LC and local communities.

Archival Research

Concerning the archival research, I tried to obtain a variety of documents that I thought would provide information about local government outputs and priorities. Such documents included: copies of the minutes from district council and executive committee meetings; copies of proposed and approved annual budgets; annual reports for the district and different sectors within the district; letters or other correspondence with government ministries or other central government representatives; records of visits by central government representatives to the district; records of training workshops, both those held within the district and those held outside the district, but attended by district officials; and newspaper accounts of district council activities and events. Not surprising, many sources were not consistently available across the three districts.

Table 1: Local Government Development Program Total Scores on Minimum Conditions Assessment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LGDP Total Minimum Conditions Scores	44	48.00	91.00	72.43	11.38
LGDP Score Development Planning	44	8.00	32.00	23.52	6.40
LGDP Score Financial Management and Audit	44	14.00	43.00	34.57	6.32

Table 2: LGDP Total Minimum Conditions Scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	41 through 50	2	4.4	4.5	4.5
	51 through 60	5	11.1	11.4	15.9
	61 through 70	10	22.2	22.7	38.6
	71 through 80	16	35.6	36.4	75.0
	81 through 90	10	22.2	22.7	97.7
	Over 90	1	2.2	2.3	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 3: District Performance based on LGDP Total Minimum Conditions Scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Over 80% --Good performance	15	33.3	34.1	34.1
	Between 60 and 80%--Moderate performance	23	51.1	52.3	86.4
	Less than 60%--Poor performance	6	13.3	13.6	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 4: Regional Comparison of Mean LGDP Total Scores

LGDP minimum conditions score

Region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
North	70.90	10	12.47	49	87
East	70.33	12	7.95	58	82
West	75.08	12	11.77	51	90
Central	73.30	10	14.06	48	91
Total	72.43	44	11.38	48	91

Table 5: LGDP Scores for Development Planning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 through 10	2	4.4	4.5	4.5
	11 through 20	11	24.4	25.0	29.5
	21 through 30	25	55.6	56.8	86.4
	Over 30	6	13.3	13.6	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 6: District Performance based on LGDP Development Planning Scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Over 80%--Good performance	15	33.3	34.1	34.1
	Between 60 and 80%--Moderate Performance	16	35.6	36.4	70.5
	Less than 60%--Poor performance	13	28.9	29.5	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 7: LGDP Scores for Financial Management and Audit

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	11 through 20	1	2.2	2.3	2.3
	21 through 30	8	17.8	18.2	20.5
	31 through 40	28	62.2	63.6	84.1
	Over 40	7	15.6	15.9	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 8: District Performance based on LGDP Financial Management and Audit Scores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Over 80%--Good performance	21	46.7	47.7	47.7
	Between 60 and 80%--Moderate performance	18	40.0	40.9	88.6
	Less than 60%--Poor performance	5	11.1	11.4	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 9: Index of Responsiveness: Points Earned out of 14 Possible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 to 3 points	12	26.7	33.3	33.3
	4 to 7 points	10	22.2	27.8	61.1
	8 to 11 points	7	15.6	19.4	80.6
	12 to 14 points	7	15.6	19.4	100.0
	Total	36	80.0	100.0	
Missing	System	9	20.0		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 10: District Performance on Various Indicators of Responsiveness

	0 = No attempt is made by district	1 = District makes an attempt	2 = District fulfills criteria	Number of Districts Scored
Whether district devt plans include clear objective to mentor lower level LGs	19 (52.8%)	5 (13.9%)	12 (33.3%)	36
Whether district devt plans include recurrent cost implications of lower LG investment plans and previous year capital investments	23 (65.7%)	4 (11.4%)	8 (22.9%)	35
Whether district devt plans show increased attention to poverty issues specific to the area	18 (50%)	5 (13.9%)	13 (36.1%)	36
Whether district made a statement of agreement to integrate sub-county investments that have a budgetary implication for the district into its plans	25 (73.5%)	2 (5.9%)	7 (20.6%)	34
Whether horizontal and vertical communication exists between and among LGs at different levels and departments of the district government	9 (25%)	10 (27.8%)	17 (47.2%)	36
Whether district council is knowledgeable of key decisions arrived at by various levels of LG	14 (41.2%)	4 (11.8%)	16 (47.1%)	34
Whether district devt plans show increased attention to gender and other vulnerable groups	9 (25.7%)	3 (8.6%)	23 (65.7%)	35

Table 11: Index of Responsiveness: Percent of Points Earned out of 14 Possible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 to 10 percent	5	11.1	13.9	13.9
	11 to 20 percent	5	11.1	13.9	27.8
	21 to 30 percent	4	8.9	11.1	38.9
	41 to 50 percent	8	17.8	22.2	61.1
	51 to 60 percent	3	6.7	8.3	69.4
	61 to 70 percent	2	4.4	5.6	75.0
	71 to 80 percent	2	4.4	5.6	80.6
	81 to 90 percent	4	8.9	11.1	91.7
	91 to 100 percent	3	6.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	36	80.0	100.0	
Missing	System	9	20.0		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 12: Index of Effectiveness: Points Earned out of 10 Possible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 to 2 points	3	6.7	6.8	6.8
	3 to 5 points	10	22.2	22.7	29.5
	6 to 8 points	16	35.6	36.4	65.9
	9 to 10 points	15	33.3	34.1	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 13: District Performance on Various Indicators of Effectiveness

	0 = No attempt is made by district	1 = District makes an attempt	2 = District fulfills criteria	Number of Districts Scored
Whether the district administration has sufficient and qualified staff in all head of department positions	7 (15.9%)	9 (20.5%)	29 (63.6%)	44
Whether the district prepared and submitted the final accounts for the previous financial year to the Office of the Auditor General	10 (23.8%)	14 (33.3%)	18 (42.9%)	42
Whether the District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC) met at least four times in the current financial yr.	4 (11.1%)	1 (2.8%)	31 (86.1%)	36
Whether the Finance Committee meets at least quarterly	1 (2.3%)	7 (15.9%)	36 (81.8%)	44
Whether the district prepared at least two quarterly audit reports	16 (36.4%)	5 (11.4%)	23 (52.3%)	44

Table 14: Index of Effectiveness: Percent of Possible Earned out of 10 Possible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 to 10 percent	3	6.7	6.8	6.8
	21 to 30 percent	1	2.2	2.3	9.1
	31 to 40 percent	1	2.2	2.3	11.4
	41 to 50 percent	6	13.3	13.6	25.0
	51 to 60 percent	5	11.1	11.4	36.4
	61 to 70 percent	6	13.3	13.6	50.0
	71 to 80 percent	6	13.3	13.6	63.6
	81 to 90 percent	10	22.2	22.7	86.4
	91 to 100 percent	6	13.3	13.6	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 15: Correlation Matrix for Measures of Local Government Performance

		LGDP Scores				
		for Development Planning		for Financial Management and Audit		
		LGDP Total Scores			Responsiveness Index	Effectiveness Index
LGDP Total Scores	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.750**	.705**	.052	.247
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.764	.106
	N	44	44	44	36	44
LGDP Scores for Development Planning	Pearson Correlation	.750**	1.000	.144	.161	.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.350	.348	.446
	N	44	44	44	36	44
LGDP Scores for Financial Management and Audit	Pearson Correlation	.705**	.144	1.000	-.075	.322*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.350	.	.665	.033
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Responsiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.052	.161	-.075	1.000	.361*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.764	.348	.665	.	.031
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Effectiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.247	.118	.322*	.361*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	.446	.033	.031	.
	N	44	44	44	36	44

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 16: Measures of Correspondence between Districts and Central Government Ministries

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Total number of correspondence between MoH and districts	16.16	16	4.40	1	24
Number of letters from MoH to districts	14.73	15	4.16	0	22
Total number of correspondence between MoH20 and districts	5.00	5	3.90	0	14
Number of letters from MoH20 to districts	2.36	2	2.38	0	9
Number of letters from MoE to districts	5.09	5	3.04	1	11
Number of letters from MoAg to districts	6.58	6	3.16	0	14
Total correspondence between districts and basic ministries only	32.82	33	8.76	7	54
Total number of correspondence between MoLG and districts	63.84	62	10.47	50	109
Number of letters from MoLG to districts	58.20	57	8.32	45	84

Table 17: Total Number of Written Communication between Districts and Basic Service Ministries

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0 to 10 letters	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
11 to 20 letters	1	2.2	2.2	4.4
21 to 30 letters	16	35.6	35.6	40.0
31 to 40 letters	18	40.0	40.0	80.0
41 to 50 letters	8	17.8	17.8	97.8
over 50 letters	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 18: Political Linkages: Index of District Electoral Support for Movement

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid .00	23	51.1	51.1	51.1
1.00	3	6.7	6.7	57.8
2.00	5	11.1	11.1	68.9
3.00	14	31.1	31.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 19: Number of Cabinet Ministers from each District in July 2001

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	6	13.3	13.3	13.3
	1	23	51.1	51.1	64.4
	2	9	20.0	20.0	84.4
	3	5	11.1	11.1	95.6
	4	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 20: Number of Donor and GOU Projects in each District

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	2	4.4	4.5	4.5
	5	7	15.6	15.9	20.5
	6	3	6.7	6.8	27.3
	7	5	11.1	11.4	38.6
	8	4	8.9	9.1	47.7
	9	2	4.4	4.5	52.3
	10	7	15.6	15.9	68.2
	11	4	8.9	9.1	77.3
	12	1	2.2	2.3	79.5
	13	3	6.7	6.8	86.4
	15	2	4.4	4.5	90.9
	17	2	4.4	4.5	95.5
	20	1	2.2	2.3	97.7
	21	1	2.2	2.3	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 21: Whether District Announces Key Dates for Meetings and when RFPs are due

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No attempt is made by district	21	46.7	51.2	51.2
	District makes some attempt	1	2.2	2.4	53.7
	District fulfills criteria	19	42.2	46.3	100.0
	Total	41	91.1	100.0	
Missing		4	8.9		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 22: Total Complaints of Corruption against District Elected and Nonelected Officials

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 complaints	3	6.7	6.7	6.7
	1 to 5 complaints	16	35.6	35.6	42.2
	6 to 10 complaints	20	44.4	44.4	86.7
	11 to 15 complaints	2	4.4	4.4	91.1
	16 to 20 complaints	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 23: Vote Share of Winning Candidate in 1998 Election for LC5 Chairperson

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21 to 30 percent	3	6.7	6.8	6.8
	31 to 40 percent	6	13.3	13.6	20.5
	41 to 50 percent	12	26.7	27.3	47.7
	51 to 60 percent	10	22.2	22.7	70.5
	61 to 70 percent	8	17.8	18.2	88.6
	71 to 80 percent	2	4.4	4.5	93.2
	81 to 90 percent	1	2.2	2.3	95.5
	91 to 100 percent	2	4.4	4.5	100.0
	Total	44	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		45	100.0		

Table 24: Voter Turnout in Recent Elections

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Voter turnout 2001 Pres Election	45	.53	.89	.7009	.0818
Voter turnout 1996 Pres Election	44	.51	.98	.7013	.1033
Voter turnout 1998 LC election	43	.19	.66	.4587	.1003
Valid N (listwise)	42				

Table 25: Number of NGOs Operating in a District

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0 to 10	3	6.7	6.7	6.7
11 to 20	7	15.6	15.6	22.2
21 to 30	8	17.8	17.8	40.0
31 to 40	6	13.3	13.3	53.3
41 to 50	4	8.9	8.9	62.2
51 to 60	4	8.9	8.9	71.1
61 to 70	5	11.1	11.1	82.2
71 to 80	3	6.7	6.7	88.9
81 to 90	1	2.2	2.2	91.1
91 to 100	1	2.2	2.2	93.3
Over 100	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 26: Levels of Trust

	Percent in district feel that most people can be trusted	Percent within district trust LC5 somewhat and a lot
Number of cases	45	45
Mean	16.66	74.64
Median	15.30	73.20
Std. Deviation	9.41	8.15
Minimum	.00	56.30
Maximum	34.40	100.00

Table 27: Levels of Development

Human Development Index	
Number of cases	45
Mean	.369
Median	.366
Std. Deviation	.079
Minimum	.165
Maximum	.647

Table 28: District Population

District population	
Number of cases	45
Mean	397713
Median	343601
Std. Deviation	257110
Minimum	16371
Maximum	945783

Table 29: Year District was Created

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1962	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	1967	2	4.4	4.4	6.7
	1974	17	37.8	37.8	44.4
	1975	1	2.2	2.2	46.7
	1979	5	11.1	11.1	57.8
	1980	8	17.8	17.8	75.6
	1991	4	8.9	8.9	84.4
	1993	1	2.2	2.2	86.7
	1997	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 30: Date District was Decentralized

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First phase--1993/94	13	28.9	28.9	28.9
	Second phase--1994/95	14	31.1	31.1	60.0
	Third phase--1995/96	12	26.7	26.7	86.7
	After 1996, when created	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 31: Precolonial Political Institutions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Decentralized political structures	21	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Semi-centralized political structures	4	8.9	8.9	55.6
	Centralized political structures	20	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 32: Sample Characteristics by District							
	Bushenyi	Lira	Mpigi		Bushenyi	Lira	Mpigi
Sample Size	204	204	204				
Gender				Language			
Male	51.5	52.0	50.0	Luganda	1.0	0.0	75.0
Female	48.5	48.0	50.0	Runyankole	68.6	0.0	4.9
Mean Age	35.0	38.3	39.5	Lango	0.0	86.3	0.0
Median Age	32	35	35	Other	30.4	13.7	20.1
Education				Religion			
No formal schooling	13.2	27.0	17.2	Anglican (COU)	49.5	29.1	27.9
Primary only	53.4	53.4	50.0	Catholic	45.6	62.3	50.5
Secondary only	26.5	14.2	26.5	Muslim	2.0	1.5	10.8
Post secondary	6.9	5.4	6.4	Other	3.5	7.1	10.8
Rural/Urban Status				Electricity in area			
Rural	88.2	94.1	82.4	No	88.9	93.6	75.9
Urban	11.8	5.9	17.6	Yes	11.1	6.4	23.6
Occupation				Own land	88.6	80.3	60.3
Farmer/Fisherman	60.3	84.8	59.8	Own bicycle	47.8	52.2	46.8
Unemployed	4.9	4.9	7.8	Own radio	78.2	29.9	70.9
Business person	9.3	1.5	4.4	Own animals	70.2	57.4	64.5
Homemaker	2.5	2.0	8.8				
Student	4.9	1.5	2.9				

Chapter Five: Explaining Local Government Performance across 45 Districts

5.1 Introduction

To assess the validity of my hypotheses concerning political variables and their influence on local government performance, I conduct multivariate analysis using OLS regression techniques and five alternative measures of the dependent variable, local government performance. As noted in Chapter Four, I use alternative measures of the dependent variable because different measures capture slightly different aspects of government performance. These include: 1) the Local Government Development Program (LGDP) total scores; 2) LGDP scores for development planning; 3) LGDP scores for financial management; 4) an index of council responsiveness; and 5) an index of council effectiveness.¹ The LGDP total scores tap into overall performance and this aggregate score includes indicators of both district responsiveness and effectiveness. The scores for development planning and financial management also include both of the important conceptual dimensions of performance—responsiveness and effectiveness—but importantly these two measures track district performance across key tasks. Finally, I use the responsiveness and effectiveness indices because each index taps one of the conceptual dimensions of performance.² Responsiveness measures how well government output responds to people's expressed needs and priorities. Effectiveness, on the other hand, measures how well governments are able to translate policy decisions into tangible outputs. The results of the regression using these alternative indicators of local government performance are discussed in the following sections.

¹ See Chapter Four for a thorough description of each of these variables.

² Also see Chapter Four for a discussion of the indicators included in the responsiveness and effectiveness indices.

I include seven independent variables to test my primary hypotheses about the impact of central-local relations and features of the local political context on institutional performance. In Chapter Two, I argue that there is a continued role for central governments following decentralization. Central governments not only have many of the skills local governments need to perform their new responsibilities, but central government ministries also have tremendous experience providing these same services. Thus, I expect local government performance to improve if central-local relations are used to transfer this knowledge between levels of government. Specifically, I expect administrative linkages, in which policy or administrative information is exchanged, will positively affect local government performance.

On the other hand, political linkages, particularly relations that provide greater opportunities or facilitate central government political interference in local council affairs, will negatively affect performance. I distinguish two sides of the political relationship between central government and local governments—district support for the center and central government support for districts. I expect central government support for districts to do the most harm and hypothesize that it will be negatively related to LC performance. As districts receive more resources from the center, I argue that greater attention will be paid to national leaders and less attention will be paid to local concerns and, as a consequence, I expect local governments to perform worse. Because district support for central governments does not provide or guarantee the same sort of opportunities for meddling from the center, I hypothesize that it will not have a significant effect on government performance.

The measures of central-local relations include: 1) the number of cabinet ministers from each district (X_1); 2) the number of GOU and donor funded projects in each district (X_2); 3) an index of electoral support (X_3); and 4) the total number of written communications between districts and central government ministries in major policy areas (X_4). The first three of these variables capture political linkages between the center and Uganda's 45 districts, while the number of written communications measures administrative linkages.

I also argue that local politics may pose challenges not only to local governments' ability to perform well, but may also limit the impact of societal factors commonly held to improve performance. In political environments that are not competitive, participation will be less effective. Similarly, where politics is extremely personalized, contact between local leaders and individuals or organized interest groups may not result in more responsive or effective government, but will instead reflect efforts by these individuals to secure private benefits from public resources. I use three measures to capture features of the local political context that may affect local government performance. These include: 1) the share of the vote won by the successful candidate for the position of district chairperson (X_5); 2) the number of corruption charges brought against LC elected and nonelected officials (X_{11}); and 3) whether the District Tender Board (DTB), which is responsible for awarding contracts and the procurement of goods and services requested by the district and lower local councils, publishes the dates of meetings and the dates on which potential contractors and suppliers must submit bids (X_{12}). The share of votes won by successful LC5 candidates provides a sense of local political competition, while the latter two variables provide some indication of the nature of political interactions between

local leaders and the community and serve as proxies for the degree to which politicians and administrators in an area may resort to personal politics.

In addition, my analysis includes several variables to test the validity of alternative hypotheses based on society-centric and structural explanations of local government performance, which argue that participation, social capital, economic development and/or policy and institutional experience affect performance. These variables include: 1) voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections (X_6); 2) the number of registered NGOs with operations in each district (X_{13}); 3) levels of generalized trust in each district (X_7); 4) the year districts were created (X_8); 5) a measure of the degree of hierarchy and centralization of pre-colonial political institutions (X_{14}); 6) district scores on the Human Development Index (HDI) (X_9); and 7) district population (X_{10}). Please see Chapter Two for a theoretical discussion of the expected impacts of these variables on performance. These variables also serve as control variables to control for the effects of factors, such as economic development, in order to uncover the effects of the political variables on performance.

The results are presented in Tables 1 through 5. Regular and robust standard errors for each model are presented in each table. The robust standard errors are given in parentheses below the regular standard error. Due to space constraints only the specifications from the OLS regression using robust standard errors (e.g. R squared, F statistic, and significance of the F statistic) are presented. All of the models presented in Tables 1 through 3 reach overall significance levels of at least 95 percent using regular OLS regression techniques. On the other hand, OLS estimates for the responsiveness and

effectiveness indices (Tables 4 and 5) are significant only if robust standard errors are used. These models are not significant if regular OLS techniques are used.

The results from this quantitative analysis are quite informative. I must add a note of caution, however, because the results are not always robust. For example, I ran the analysis with and without the control variable “district population” included in the model. When district population is excluded or other variables, such as the size of the district in square kilometers, are substituted for population, the models are insignificant unless robust standard errors are used or outliers are excluded. When district population and outliers are excluded from the model, the results are similar to what is presented in Tables 1 to 5 for some of the variables, although not all. Some of the coefficients for variables that are significant in the full models are not significant when district population is excluded. For example, the number of cabinet ministers is not significant in estimates of LGDP total and financial management scores when population is excluded. Similarly, voter turnout is not significant in any of these models, despite significant, albeit contradictory, results in Tables 1 to 5. I would argue, however, that it makes theoretical sense to include district population as a key control variable given that many of the other independent variables, such as the number of cabinet ministers or the number of projects, vary according to the overall population of a district. Therefore, the results of OLS regression when district population is included with the other independent variables are those presented in Tables 1 through 5 and discussed below.

Given the extremely small sample size, there is also a potential problem of collinearity, which is discussed much more thoroughly below. Eliminating variables is not always the best solution to the problem of collinearity given the much more

problematic risk of misspecifying the model. I included all of the variables that are theoretically important to local government performance, therefore, in order to assess and compare the explanatory power of my hypotheses and proposed alternatives. This chapter reports the various specifications of the model tested and I base my conclusions on a comparison of these various models. I ran each of the different model specifications on all five indicators of local government performance. Therefore, Model 1 in Table 1 which estimates the model on LGDP total scores corresponds to Model 1 in Table 2 using the LGDP development planning scores as the dependent variable and so on. As discussed below, however, I ran a variety of diagnostics and different models excluding variables that tend to be correlated with other explanatory variables in order to assess the effects, if any, collinearity may have on the results reported in Tables 1 to 5.

This chapter is organized into sections based on the explanatory factors discussed in Chapter Two. These factors and their impact on local government performance will be discussed in order of their importance in explaining variation in performance.³ The results of this analysis are quite interesting and contribute to our understanding of local government performance in a number of ways. Many of the results described below run contrary to my own expectations and contrary to expectations derived from existing literature. Section 5.2 will discuss the impact of the structural factors, HDI and district population. Section 5.3 will discuss the variables I use to operationalize central-local relations, detailing those that are found to be significant and providing some possible interpretation for those that are not. Section 5.4 discusses the society-centric explanations. As will be discussed below, the results for some of these variables are

³ Given the small number of cases, I report and discuss results that are significant at the .10 level in addition to reporting results significant at .05 and .01 levels.

quite unexpected and even contradictory across alternative measures of the dependent variable. Section 5.5 presents a discussion of the influence of measures of local political context on the various measures of the dependent variable. Finally, section 5.6 discusses the results based on the political and institutional variables.

The results presented in Tables 1-5 provide some support for my hypothesis concerning the expected impacts of political variables on local council performance. For example, there is evidence to support my hypothesis about the negative impact of central government support on district council performance, while the results also reveal an unexpected, but quite interpretable, positive relationship between district popular support for the central government and LC performance. More supportive districts perform better, as will be discussed below. Similarly, the results support my hypothesis about the positive impact of local political competition and the negative impacts of personalized politics on councils' abilities to perform well.

On the other hand, there is less support for society-centric explanations for performance, such as participation. Participation, measured by voter turnout in LC elections, has a mixed effect on performance across different measures of the dependent variable, while alternative measures of participation are not significant at all in explaining variation in performance. Levels of generalized trust do appear to be important in certain cases, although the results are mixed. On the other hand, measures of the activism of civil society, whether aggregate or based on Afrobarometer survey questions about organizational memberships, are not significant predictors of district council performance. As discussed below, these measures fail to track the nature of linkages between LCs and civic organizations, which I argue is the crucial component through

which an active civil society can improve the performance of their district council. Finally, structural factors, perhaps not surprisingly, are extremely important predictors of variation in local council performance.

5.2 Impact of Structural Factors on Local Government Performance

As noted above, results in Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide *substantial support* for structural explanations of institutional performance. District population (X_{10}) and HDI scores (X_9) are significant across various model specifications and both positively impact local council performance for three of the five measures of performance used in this analysis. Local government councils in more developed and more populated districts tend to perform better than their smaller and poorer neighbors do.⁴ These councils tend to earn higher LGDP total scores, higher scores for development planning and also financial management, and a higher score on each measure of the dependent variable is indicative of better performance (see Tables 1-3). Yet, neither of these two variables is significantly related to the indices of responsiveness and effectiveness.

The fact that more developed and more populous districts are better able to fulfill their responsibilities regarding development planning is not really surprising, especially when one considers the activities that are included in the LGDP evaluation of district performance in this area, such as writing a comprehensive development plan or ensuring that there is adequate staff in key departments responsible for planning. Structural factors are sure to affect the skills and resources available to local governments to perform these tasks. In developed urban and peri-urban areas, local governments encounter fewer

difficulties in attracting skilled and educated workers and are certainly more likely to have equipment necessary to successfully design and implement a three-year development plan, such as computers and even writing utensils, such as paper and pens.

The LGDP performance evaluation includes several measures to evaluate the logistical and facilitation needs of Uganda's districts. The level of development in a district is highly correlated with a measure of the fulfillment of district facilitation and logistical needs.⁵ More developed districts had more of their logistical needs met and had fewer issues related to facilitation of their staff than less developed districts. For example, the performance assessment for Soroti district in eastern Uganda notes that the district has a problem of transport. Staff lack vehicles or fuel for existing vehicles. Certainly a lack of transport poses a serious constraint on a district's ability to provide services to its constituents, but also inhibits planning. District planners are unable to travel to different sub-counties to get necessary information about the needs of the people in those areas. This suggests that development plans in poorer districts may not adequately reflect the most pressing needs of people in more remote and distant parts of the district given the constraints to obtaining such information. All district councils in Uganda have problems with adequate transport or meeting other important logistical needs. Yet, these problems are significantly more pronounced in less developed districts within the country.

Larger and more developed districts also perform better in financial management than their smaller and less developed counterparts (see Table 3). This is likely the case

⁴ HDI and district population are positively correlated; $r = .3371$; $p > .05$. HDI and the logarithm of district population are not correlated. I used the log of district population to limit the effects of the extreme variability on this indicator.

⁵ Pearson's correlation coefficient = $.4026$; $p > .02$ level.

for many of the reasons just described. While a lack of technology may not guarantee poor financial management, certainly today, accounting is made easier with the help of calculators and computers and a staff skilled in using such equipment. Poor districts face greater challenges in hiring and keeping qualified Chief Finance Officers (CFO), accountants, and auditors. A highly trained staff is an essential component of good financial management, and yet poor and remote districts struggle continually to recruit capable employees. For example, one MP from Lira district explained that decentralization in the district is hampered by the fact that many district employees who are required to work at the county level refuse to do so. He explains:

The CAO is in charge of the whole district and below you have the Assistant CAOs [ACAOs] in charge of each county....The ACAOs are extremely important in the success of decentralization. Because of the lack of modern facilities—water, electricity, accommodation, communication, roads—these people refused to go there.

Certainly the fact that ACAOs refused to work at the county level has a negative impact on performance in Lira, but other districts, especially poorer districts, such as the districts of Karamoja, are unlikely to attract highly trained or qualified staff even to the district headquarters. Moreover, Mpigi district headquarters, only a short drive from Kampala, even struggled to keep many qualified staff members when the district divided in 2000. Many staff members who lived in Kampala wanted to transfer to the new urban Wakiso district rather than remain in Mpigi.

As noted above, unlike the other three measures of local government performance, HDI scores (X_9) and district population (X_{10}) are unrelated to variation in district scores for responsiveness or effectiveness in any of the models in Tables 4 and 5. The fact that HDI and population are not significant in any of the models in Table 5 is

unexpected and hard to reconcile with the significant and positive relationship between these structural factors and scores for development planning and financial management. More so, however, is the fact that the effectiveness index is not even correlated with HDI (X_9) or population (X_{10}) using simple bivariate analysis. This could possibly indicate a problem with the measure. While several of the indicators included in the effectiveness index could be expected to vary with levels of development, others likely have less to do with available resources and more to do with the commitment of leaders to carrying out these important tasks. I would argue that a local official's commitment or interest is likely influenced by political variables, rather than purely structural. For example, two variables included in the index measure the regularity of meetings of important committees, such as the Finance Committee or the District Technical Planning Committee. Unfortunately, districts with limited resources are going to face additional challenges in meeting requirements about how frequently these committees should meet simply because the district council is unlikely to have the resources to pay allowances committee members are entitled to with each meeting. This is a serious problem in many Ugandan districts and limits the frequency of meetings of not only committees, but also councils in some areas. Other indicators, such as the preparation and submission of final accounts to the Office of the Auditor General, are not linked as *directly* to levels of development and a district's resource base.

The results in Table 4 run quite contrary to many of my expectations about the factors that are likely to compel local governments to make the fulfillment of the developmental needs of the local community their top priority. Clearly something else is driving LC officials to respond to the needs of their constituents rather than simply the

level of development. Having resources may enable a district to provide more services and to generally carry out more activities, yet increased resources are not a guarantee that district councils will focus their efforts on fulfilling the needs of the people they represent. For example, the responsiveness index includes indicators that are likely to be influenced by politics, such as whether the district development plan shows increased attention to the needs of women and other vulnerable groups. In order to better understand factors that may spark greater responsiveness, we must turn to political and society-centric explanations for performance.

5.3 Impact of Central-Local Relations on Local Government Performance

The results presented in Tables 1 to 5 provide clear evidence that central-local relations affect the performance of local governments and, thus support some of my hypotheses about the impact of central-local relations on local government performance. As discussed above, I argue that political linkages between the center and local governments in Uganda can be divided into two main components: 1) district support for the Movement government and 2) central government support to districts. My hypothesis that central government financial and political support to districts, operationalized by two variables—the number of cabinet ministers from each district (X_1) and the number of GOU and donor funded projects in each district (X_2)—would negatively affect local government performance is partially supported by these results. As hypothesized, the number of cabinet ministers from each district (X_1) is negatively and significantly related to two of the five measures of the dependent variable: the LGDP total scores and scores for financial management. Districts with greater representation in the cabinet earn lower

LGDP total scores and scores for financial management than do those district with fewer ministers. The number of cabinet ministers (X_1), however, is not related to scores for development planning, the responsiveness index, or the effectiveness index.

At first, one might think that a negative relationship between cabinet representation and local government performance is a curious relationship. After all, greater representation on the cabinet certainly brings with it increased access to resources for those districts lucky enough to secure a spot on the cabinet. For example, the *New Vision* reports that Museveni, while campaigning for Sam Engola, the Movement backed candidate for MP for Lira Municipality, discouraged residents from voting for the incumbent Ogwal, whom he compared to a blocked straw that could not deliver the goods (June 26, 2001). According to the article, Museveni:

...likened Engola to a hallow ajono straw that could drink beer from agwata (calabash) without any problem. 'You have nice beer but the straw is blocked, why don't you get a hallow straw so that you drink well for these five years?'

Yet, the results in Tables 1 and 3 clearly suggest that such representation and the increased access to the center's resources, which accompanies cabinet representation, do not help local governments perform their duties. I argue that this is the case because local politics is given *less attention* and there is *less demand* for well performing local governments in those districts with a number of powerful cabinet ministers or even a few extremely prominent Members of Parliament. Cabinet ministers and others with preferential access to central government resources can provide goods and services to their districts, which can may make local government provision of such goods less important and even unnecessary. Residents and even local government officials in districts with preferential access to central government resources through their cabinet

ministers may focus their attention on increasing the goods from the center rather than improving the capacity of the district or sub-county councils. Central government resources and provision of social services, like road or bridge repairs, may, as a consequence, weaken local governments, undermine their legitimacy, and render them politically useless.

Likewise, the greater the number of cabinet ministers from a district, the greater the opportunities for political meddling by the center. Influential cabinet ministers serve as useful tools through which central government control may be exerted. Cabinet ministers may seek to use the local council or at least local government officials to further the political interests of the central government.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, interference in local council elections is one of the clearest examples of how the Movement government, but also cabinet ministers, meddles in local affairs. Ministers spent considerable time before the 1998 and 2002 LC elections campaigning for Movement endorsed candidates and decampaigning candidates that were either multipartyists, reformists, or simply Movement supporters who were not fortunate enough to have secured the endorsement of key Movement leaders.⁶ Ministers and MPs are well financed for the task. For example, the Movement Task Force for the local council elections released 400 million Ush to ministers and MPs to “facilitate Movement LC3 candidates” during the most recent elections (*The Monitor* January 2, 2002). The impact on local council performance of such interference in local elections by outsiders is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Eight, yet provides a clear example that cabinet

⁶ See *New Vision* editorial, “To Back or Not to Back Candidates” (April 23, 1998) which reports that Museveni “criticised senior Movement figures who got actively involved in supporting particular candidates for the local council elections.” The 2002 elections and significant financing for MPs and

ministers and MPs certainly do not hesitate to use or attempt to use local councils to further goals of the central government.

Similarly, ministers and MPs have often been influential in pushing for the creation of new districts, as occurred in Kabarole and Mpigi where MPs played a large role in pushing for the split of the districts. In both instances, district chairmen opposed the split of the district, but the division went through nonetheless as a result of lobbying and pressure from influential politicians in the central government from each district. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, MPs and cabinet ministers from Mpigi have, on occasion, intervened directly into political struggles between the district chairperson and the council.

Yet, the relationship between central government support and local government performance is far from clear cut. The second measure of central government support to districts, the number of GOU and donor projects operating in each district (X_2), is not significant across most of the models (see Tables 1 and 3-5), but is, in fact, positively related to scores for development planning.

The finding of a positive relationship between the number of projects and scores on development planning is unexpected. One factor that may contribute to the positive relationship between the number of projects and development planning is the fact that many projects, whether GOU or donor funded, have detailed planning requirements. Thus, districts with more projects learn over the life of the project how to be better planners.

ministers to campaign for Movement candidates indicate a shift in thinking and Museveni's support for active involvement by MPs and ministers in LC elections.

Yet, this finding may also provide evidence to support arguments made in Chapter Seven that the impact of central government support is difficult to determine independent of levels of district support. Central government support on its own may not be necessarily bad for local council performance. Instead it is the increased opportunities for central government influence over local council officials that often accompanies such support that undermines local council performance. In Chapter Seven, I argue that dependence on the center or central government influence over local council officials is heightened when high levels of central government support are combined with low levels of popular support for the Movement government. To test this interpretation and push the multivariate analysis further, I am exploring the use of interaction terms that would allow me to explore how differing levels of district support for the center and central government support to districts in *combination* influence local government performance.

On the other hand, this variable was insignificant for the other measures of local government performance, which provides additional evidence that the independent impact of central government support on local government performance is difficult to establish. This could also be due to problems with the measure, however. While the number of projects is certainly a measure of central government resources to a district, it is only a measure of *formal projects* and does not include *informal transfers* that may occur. The possibility exists that some projects carried out by the center in different districts are not included in this count. Likewise, this measure does not indicate the dollar amounts associated with these projects, nor does it track resources that district councils receive through visits or contact with ministers or other influential national level politicians. This information was simply unavailable from the Ministry of Finance or the

Office of the President despite all of my efforts to obtain it. Yet, allocations to State House and the Office of the President indicate that a substantial amount of resources are under the control of the President and his closest advisors. For example, during the 2001/2002 financial year, allocations to State House and the Office of the President comprised 15 percent of total expenditure on public administration and almost 3 percent of Uganda's total budget allocations (Uganda 2002).

As noted above, I hypothesized that district support would have little or no effect on council performance. Tables 4 and 5 reveal that this is not the case. Higher levels of support for the Movement are associated with more responsive and more effective local governments. The fact that this measure is positively related to these measures of performance was unexpected, and yet is fully supported by the material drawn from the three case studies discussed in Chapter Seven. There are clear challenges that local governments in opposition areas face, such as increased insecurity as a result of rebel activity, that pose challenges for well functioning local government. And yet, the evidence from Lira presented in Chapter Seven suggests that the attention given by local leaders to the district's opposition status may be equally, if not more, damaging to good government performance. Not only are local councils less important as attention is directed to the activities of the central government, but Lira's leaders, and likely LC officials in other opposition districts, use opposition as an excuse for bad performance.

Finally, I hypothesized that the measure of administrative linkages, the total number of written communications between central government ministries responsible for basic services and districts (X_4), would positively impact performance. I expected tighter administrative linkages to positively affect performance as increased interaction

between ministries and local government would provide greater opportunities for the transfer of important skills and information from the center to local governments that are learning how to perform new roles. Yet, the measure of administrative linkages is negatively related to some measures of government performance, positively related to another and unrelated to scores for financial management. These contradictory findings require some interpretation.

As noted, the measure of administrative linkages (X_4) is negatively related to LGDP total scores and scores for development planning (see Tables 1 and 2). The fact that central government mentoring does not appear to affect districts' abilities in development planning is especially surprising. The Ministry of Local Government has aggressively promoted programs to instruct and train local legislators and administrators in development planning. Nevertheless, this finding raises questions about the success or effectiveness of these efforts.

Equally surprising is the fact that the measure of administrative linkages (X_4) is also not significantly related to variation in LGDP financial management scores (see Table 3). This result is quite surprising given the detailed financial accounting rules contained in the Financial Accounting Regulation Act (1996). Most local governments require a great deal of training and capacity building to fulfill all of these requirements. I would expect districts that seek and benefit from increased communication with central ministries to perform better. This does not appear to be the case.

One explanation for the negative relationship between the LGDP total scores and scores for development planning and the measure of communication between central government ministries and district governments is the fact that this measure does not

adequately operationalize the concept of administrative linkages. Simply counting the number of letters provides no information about the *nature of these linkages*. This measure does not capture whether letters sent to districts from a ministry are intended for mentoring and cooperation or for other purposes, such as investigating instances of corruption or poor performance. Similarly, the number of letters exchanged between local governments and central ministries does not measure the extent to which relations between these two levels of government are cooperative or whether one level dominates the other. Chapter Two thoroughly discusses my expectation that cooperative relations are likely to have the most positive effect on local council performance. This measure is simply unable to recognize and account for such distinctions.

The measure also ignores other types of interactions, such as face to face meetings, between ministry officials and district staff. Several interview respondents noted that personal interaction is an important part of their relationship with different ministries. For example, one MP from an area close to Kampala explained that ministry officials do not often visit the district but, "...My constituency is special because it is so close to Kampala. We can go into the offices. We have an active mayor. Other constituencies are not so lucky. It takes time and money to get something from the central government." Similarly, respondents in the case study districts noted that they often turn required reports in personally and are thus certain to receive immediate feedback.

Despite the inadequacies of this measure, the seemingly negative result may actually provide some evidence of ministry activity and efforts to improve local government performance. In fact, this negative relationship suggests that ministries

communicate more frequently with the worst performing districts. Increased communication with poor performers may indicate ministry efforts to assist districts whose performance is substandard or those in crisis, such as districts with ongoing corruption scandals or political wrangles. My measure of administrative linkages may simply capture ministry reactions to such crisis situations rather than longer term mentoring relationships.

To explore this relationship further, I separated the data and created two variables: 1) letters sent by districts to the basic service ministries (“letters up”); and 2) letters sent from ministries to districts (“letters down”). Substituting the new “letters down” variable for the total number of written communications in Model 1 produces the same result. The total number of letters sent by ministry officials to districts is negatively and significantly correlated to the total LGDP scores, and provides further evidence that Uganda’s ministries tend to respond to bad performance rather than mentor districts in order to improve performance.⁷

The “letters up” variable, on the other hand, is not significant in a regression estimating the total LGDP scores or any of the other measures of the dependent variable. Nevertheless, this variable is positively correlated at the .10 level to the total LGDP scores in the bivariate analysis.⁸ This provides some preliminary evidence that administrative linkages, like political linkages, can be further divided into those initiated by the district and those initiated by the center. Linkages initiated by districts may actually have the positive effect on council performance that I expected administrative linkages to have generally, as the district council is seeking advice and assistance to deal

⁷ This is not surprising given that the total number of written communications is comprised mostly of letters down. Most districts sent only a few letters to the ministries for which data was available.

with a particular problem or just to improve service delivery generally. On the other hand, linkages initiated by the ministry are tighter in the case of poor performance as ministry officials attempt to resolve conflicts or solve problems in a council's delivery of a particular service. I also must note that the current measure of letters up is inadequate because data on the number of letters sent by districts to the center was only available for two ministries, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water. If data were available for a larger number of districts, perhaps a relationship between administrative linkages initiated by the district and council performance would be more apparent.

5.4 Impact of Societal Factors on Local Government Performance

Concerning the impact of society-centric explanations, the most significant finding is that these results offer *contradictory evidence* regarding the influence of society on institutional performance. The results suggest that the impact of societal factors on local government performance in Africa does not always meet the theoretical expectations based on the literature and likely varies depending on the type of local government activities under investigation. The impact of measures of participation, social capital and civil society are weak, at times, or not in the direction one would expect based on a reading of the literature. For example, the density of associational life or civic activism is not related to any of the five measures of performance. The impact of participation is, on the other hand, mixed. At times participation is associated with better performance, while participation seems to inhibit the ability of councils to perform other tasks. Finally, there is some support for the hypothesis that local governments perform better in communities with higher levels of generalized trust.

⁸ Pearson's correlation coefficient = .2856; $p > .06$ level.

Contrary to the work of Putnam and expectations based on the civil society literature, a larger number of NGOs does not appear to improve the performance of district councils in Uganda. This is one of the most interesting findings from this study. The measure of the activism of civil society—the number of registered NGOs in each district (X_{13})—is not significant across *any* of the alternative measures of local government performance (see Model 5 in Tables 1-5). Moreover, the sign of the coefficient for this variable (X_{13}) is negative, possibly suggesting that councils perform worse when there are a greater number of NGOs present in the community.

It is possible that NGOs establish operations in less developed areas, where local councils tend to perform worse already. The models control for this fact, however, by including HDI and population. Another possible explanation is that local councils may feel less pressure to perform well when there are a large number of NGOs in the area providing goods and services to the community. Like central government provision, NGO provision of goods and services may undermine the legitimacy of LCs, thereby weakening them considerably.

As noted in Chapter Four, the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and said to be operating in each district is an imperfect measure of civil society activism. Therefore, I created an alternate measure of the density of associational life in Uganda's districts based on survey responses to Afrobarometer questions about membership in a variety of different types of civic organizations. The average number of memberships reported by respondents in each district was used to create a district level measure of civic activism.⁹ Like the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of

⁹ Districts that were not included in the Afrobarometer survey in 2000 were assigned the appropriate regional average.

Internal Affairs, this measure of civic activism is not significantly related to any of the different measures of local council performance.¹⁰ Based on these results, civil society activism does not appear to improve or even influence local council performance. This finding is supported by evidence gathered from fieldwork in the three case study districts, which is discussed at length in Chapter Eight.

In order for the presence of NGOs and civic organizations to positively impact the performance of local governments, interaction between the two groups is necessary. Neither of these two measures of civic activism, however, provides any indication of the nature of work performed by existing NGOs, or more importantly, gauges the level of cooperation or interaction between LCs and NGOs. I would expect that only if NGOs and LCs cooperate, or if NGOs perform a watchdog function, would the presence of NGOs likely improve LC performance. While I found limited evidence of such interactions in the three case study districts, there is variation across the three districts and tighter LC-NGO linkages contribute to Bushenyi's better performance. Generally, however, most NGO activities are carried out with little LC involvement or participation.

Tukahebwa offered a similar analysis of the role of civil society, arguing that in rural Uganda "civil society hardly exists" (1998, 29). Moreover, he also argues that civil society has weak or nonexistent ties to local councils, stating, "A few local organizations that have emerged spontaneously are driven by survival strategies rather than the desire to influence public policy" (1998, 29-30). A representative from DENIVA, a national organization for NGOs in Uganda, offered some explanation for the limited ties between

¹⁰ Based on findings from case study districts, I created a second index based on the average number of memberships in three specific types of organizations: development associations; professional associations; and women's organizations. These three organizations were found to be slightly more active in their

civic organizations and local governments. He argued that the history of civil society in Uganda and even a lack of technical competence within civic organizations constrain NGOs in their efforts to influence LC activities or even transfer skills to LC officials that could improve the council's performance. The representative argued that civil society in Uganda emerged to address issues of implementation and fill in gaps in service delivery not to address political issues. At the same time, he questioned whether the technical skills exist within these organizations to critique local council programs or budgets, or to provide alternatives. The relationship between NGOs and LCs in the three districts is explored further in Chapter 8.

While there is limited evidence to support the hypothesis about the impact of civil society, there is some initial support for the hypothesis about the impact of generalized trust. As noted above, the results presented in Tables 1 and 3 indicate that levels of generalized trust (X_7) positively affect some aspects of local council performance—higher levels of generalized trust (X_7) are associated with higher LGDP total scores and higher scores on financial management.

On the other hand, OLS estimates for the responsiveness and effectiveness indices indicate that trust consistently has a negative relationship with these important measures of performance, albeit not significant at the .10 level (see Tables 4 and 5). The negative sign on the coefficients for the measure of trust in all of the models in Tables 4 and 5 suggests that more responsive and effective local government may actually be associated with lower levels of interpersonal trust. This certainly runs contrary to the literature. In a study of the impact of social capital on government effectiveness, Widner has a similar

interactions with the local councils. This second organizational membership index is also not statistically significant in OLS regression estimates for any of the measures of local council performance.

finding and proposes the “squeaky wheel” theory, positing that perhaps governments work harder in areas in which populations are more skeptical and less trusting (1998). Perhaps communities with high levels of trust do not challenge their local councils to provide the goods and services they need.

The conflicting results across different measures of local government performance presented in this chapter raise questions about the exact impact of trust on district council performance in Uganda. Likewise, evidence from the case studies to support the hypothesis that trust positively affects local council performance is mixed at best. Certainly this important relationship warrants further exploration in the future.

But what is the impact of citizen participation on local government performance? The results presented in Tables 1 to 5 are conflicting and thus, make interpretation of the impact of participation extremely difficult. Taken together, however, these results do not provide strong evidence to support the hypothesis that participation, so critical to the success of decentralization, is associated with better council performance. The evidence is mixed at best.

For example, participation, measured by voter turnout in the 1998 local council elections (X_6), is not significant in explaining variation in LGDP total scores across Uganda’s 45 districts (see Table 1). Even more surprising is that voter turnout (X_6) is not a significant predictor of variation in levels of political responsiveness by district councils (see Table 4). More responsive local government in Uganda does not result from the demands of the community.

Likewise, the results presented in Table 3 indicate that financial management is better where turnout in local elections is lower. Across all of the models in Table 3, the

coefficient for voter turnout (X_6) is negative and significant at the .01 level. Voter turnout tends to be lower in Uganda's urban or peri-urban areas, like Kampala and its surrounding areas and thus, it is possible that this finding of better financial management where turnout is lower is actually spurious. Turnout could simply be a proxy for urban areas. I tested for this by including the percent of the population of each district living in urban areas. When this variable is included in the model, the results are the same as reported in Table 3.¹¹

In addition, voter turnout in LC elections is negatively related to district council effectiveness, although the relationship is not as strong or as consistent as in the case of financial management. Yet, the impact of participation varies *dramatically* when one looks at scores for development planning (see Table 2). Voter turnout (X_6) has a strong and positive impact on LGDP developing planning scores. Districts in which local populations are more active in local politics, measured by a willingness to turn out to vote, appear to be better development planners.

But the difference in the effect of political participation across these two areas of local government performance is extremely interesting, although more easily understood when one considers that scores for development planning and financial management are not correlated. Districts that perform well in development planning are not necessarily the same districts that perform well in financial management. The components of the development planning score focus to some extent on districts' efforts to include and respond to the demands of lower local councils and by extension, the community. Thus, in communities in which there is a heightened interest and awareness in council activities,

¹¹ The results are even stronger if Kampala is excluded and Kampala has the highest percent of the population urban (100 percent) and the lowest turnout in the 1998 LC elections (only 18 percent of the

perhaps there is a greater focus on development planning because the community is mobilized and more active in promoting such concerns. This interpretation, however, does not explain why districts would not be good at both tasks.

Voter turnout, however, is certainly not a perfect measure of political participation. Turnout does not measure contact between local government officials and community members throughout the year or give any indication of the extent to which local residents actively seek to influence local leaders and hold them accountable. Elections are simply a tool through which residents may achieve these goals, but more accountable leadership is not guaranteed simply by voting.

Given these concerns and also problems with Uganda's Electoral Commission recently, and concerns about the unreliability of voter turnout data in Uganda, I also conducted analysis using alternative measures of participation. These alternative measures of participation are based on survey responses to Afrobarometer questions about regularity of attendance at community meetings and frequency of contacting local leaders, as noted in Chapter Four. Neither of these two variables is statistically significant at the .10 level in OLS estimates for any of the measures of the dependent variable.¹² The measure of regular attendance at community meetings comes close to being significant ($p > .110$) in OLS estimates for development planning scores. Recent studies of decentralization in Uganda report that citizen participation in local councils across the country is disturbingly low (Makara 1998; Nsibambi 1991; Tidemand 1994; Tukahebwa 1998), which may contribute to the fact that participation is limited in its ability to explain variation in district council performance.

eligible voters turnout out to vote).

5.5 Impact of Local Political Context on Local Government Performance

The results in Tables 1 to 4 offer little evidence to support hypotheses that district councils perform better where local politics is more competitive. I expected local governments to perform better in districts where local elections are more competitive and this is not the case for four of the five measures of performance. The measure of local political competition—the share of the vote won by the successful LC5 candidate—is, however, significant and negatively related to scores on the effectiveness index, which provides some support for this hypothesis. Where the district chairperson won by a small share of the vote and, I argue, politics is more competitive, district councils earn higher scores on the index of effectiveness. Increased competition may increase turnover and one might expect higher turnover to contribute to poor performance, yet this is not necessarily the case. The results in Table 5 suggest that district leaders may actually work harder in districts where local elections are more competitive and the chance of being ousted is greater.

Local political competition is, however, not a strong factor pushing district councils to be more responsive (see Table 4). The share of the vote won by the successful LC5 chairperson (X_5) has a negative coefficient in OLS estimates of districts' scores on the responsiveness index, although the variable is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the negative sign for the coefficient indicates that greater competition tends to be associated with greater responsiveness. Like other aggregate measures, this measure of political competition is imperfect. Other features of the local political context

¹² I substituted these alternative measures for the measure of voter turnout in Model 1 for all five measures of local government performance.

certainly shape political competition, including the existence and nature of important political cleavages. The case study material, discussed in Chapter Eight, provides further evidence that greater political competition is indeed associated with better performance.

On the other hand, the two measures of the dominant political strategies of local leaders are statistically significant across several different model specifications and alternative measures of the dependent variable. This suggests that local governments perform better where politics is less personalized and local leaders are less reliant on strategies of patronage.

For example, the variable measuring the nature of the tender process (X_{11}) is positively related to two of the four measures of local government performance. In both cases, greater transparency in the awarding of tenders and contracts is associated with enhanced performance (see Tables 1 and 2). LGDP total scores and scores for development planning are higher in districts where the tender process is more open and consistent. This measure of the local political context (X_{11}) is not related to other measures of district performance—the district scores for financial management and scores on the indices of responsiveness and effectiveness (see Tables 3-5). Yet, the second measure of the political strategies of local leaders, the number of corruption charges brought against local elected and nonelected leaders (X_{12}), is negatively and significantly related to district responsiveness and effectiveness scores (see Tables 4 and 5). As expected, district councils tend to be more responsive and effective where there is less corruption. Certainly governments are less responsive to the needs of the community when politics is highly corrupt.

Looking at the other three measures of the dependent variable there is some additional, albeit limited, support for the idea that Uganda's district councils perform better when politics is less personalized. For example, the coefficient for the number of corruption charges (X_{12}) is negative for these three measures of the dependent variable. While this variable is not significant at the .10 level, the negative coefficient suggests that there is a tendency for districts to perform better where there is less corruption. Nevertheless, the fact that this variable does not hold more explanatory power is quite unexpected. For example, I expected that levels of corruption would be vitally important to understanding district performance overall, but in particular, I expected that corruption would be related to district performance in internal audit and financial management. While the number of corruption charges (X_{12}) is close to being significant at the .10 level in Model 3, Table 3, it is not, although, as noted, the sign of the coefficient is certainly in the expected direction.

It is certainly possible that clients benefit from corruption and thus, have a vested interest in the perpetuation of such activities. When councilors secure district resources or goods and services for their communities, the community likely benefits, despite the fact that other parts of the district may be in greater need. I used Afrobarometer 2000 data to create a measure of the public's perceptions about the importance of personal contacts in individual success. This variable may provide further indication of the extent to which personalism is an important strategy of local politicians within a district. I used the percent of the respondents to the Afrobarometer survey within each district that "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that contacts with people in high

places are necessary to get ahead in life. This variable was not significantly related to any of the alternative measures of local council performance, however.

5.6 Impact of Policy and Institutional Experience on Local Government Performance

As discussed above in the case of other explanatory variables, the explanatory power of the institutional legacy and experience measures, such as the age of the district, operationalized as the year the district was created (X_8) and the type of pre-colonial political institutions (X_{14}), is inconsistent across alternative measures of performance. First, the variable measuring political institutional history (X_{14}) is not related to most of the indicators of performance. This measure is only significantly related to the scores for development planning. Districts that were formerly part of a hierarchical kingdom, such as Buganda, earned higher development planning scores than did those district that were part of a much more decentralized system, such as the Lango or Acholi in northern Uganda. The fact that this finding does not hold across any other measures of the dependent variable suggests that institutional history, while influencing district council performance, is less important than other variables.

Second, the age of districts (X_8) is significant in the OLS estimates for two of the five measures of the dependent variable. The length of time a district has existed (X_8) does appear to influence council performance, but once again, the results based on different measures of the dependent variable are *contradictory*. Older districts tend to be more responsive than their younger counterparts, while newer districts tend to perform better in financial management than their older neighbors.

As noted, results in Table 3 indicate that newer districts are better at financial management. This may be the case because these newer districts have not had the opportunity or experience of following other guidelines for accounting and have only operated under the Financial Accounting Regulations (FAR) of 1998. Newly created districts, such as the six districts that were created in 1997, have no precedents or previous ways of doing things that may be contrary to the detailed guidelines laid out in the FAR. New districts have new staff with perhaps greater, more advanced skills and who may be less entrenched and committed to preexisting bureaucratic routines.

On the other hand, district ages (X_8) are positively correlated with the responsiveness index, as indicated by the significant negative coefficient for the year districts were created. Older districts tend to be more responsive, even when I include important control variables. Politicians in older districts are certainly more experienced, but are also likely to be more aware of the vagaries of political life and the real possibility of being ousted in the next election and thus, may feel a greater need to meet citizen demands while in office.

Another explanation for the positive relationship between district age and responsiveness is that perhaps older, established districts are better able to focus on meeting constituent needs rather than struggling with the administrative and logistical issues of being a new district. The liability of newness theory (Stinchcombe 1965) would suggest that older districts perform better than their young counterparts, given that they have greater experience, are likely more established, and have the necessary infrastructure and equipment. Older districts, especially those that existed during colonialism, often have infrastructure left over from the colonial period or local

administration under a previous post-independence regime. Many new districts in Uganda must focus their resources and energies on building an office block, filling administrative positions with qualified staff, and acquiring all of the other items needed to carry out their regular tasks, such as vehicles.

These contradictory findings are difficult to interpret, but generally give me less confidence in the power of explanations based on the age or experience of the district local government to explain variation in performance. The case studies offer evidence as well that the age and experience of districts are less important in explaining variation in performance. For example, the above interpretation for the apparent positive relationship between age and responsiveness does little to explain Bushenyi's better performance. As noted in Chapter Seven, Bushenyi district was created after Lira and Mpigi and has spent considerable time and energy constructing a new district administration building, while also responding to the needs of local residents.

As noted above in the introductory section, the small number of cases and the large number of theoretically important explanatory variables raise the possibility that collinearity could influence the results previously discussed. Some of the independent variables are correlated with one another, and thus, given the small number of cases, these relationships can affect the explanatory power of each of the independent variables.¹³ As Table 6 reveals, however, the correlations between most of the independent variables are not large and certainly below levels that would raise alarms about the effects of multicollinearity. For example, the highest correlation coefficient is .651 (see Table 6) between the log of district population and the number of registered

¹³ See Table 6 for a correlation matrix of the 14 independent variables and five measures of the dependent variables.

NGOs. The correlation coefficients for most of the different pairs of independent variables are considerably lower.

Nevertheless, I conducted analysis without key variables in order to reduce concerns about the effects of collinearity. These results increase my confidence in the results reported in Tables 1 to 5 and suggest that there is less reason for concern about the potential impacts of collinearity. For example, I estimated OLS regressions for each pair of independent variables that had significant correlation coefficients in order to evaluate how much variance in one explanatory variable is independent of another explanatory variable. For the most part, despite correlations, the variance in the explanatory variables appears to be independent of other explanatory variables. In most cases over 75 percent of the variance in one explanatory variable is independent of the other variable.

Second, I conducted analysis on a number of restricted models. For example, I ran OLS regressions for Model 1 for each of the five measures of the dependent variable and excluded the number of donor and GOU projects variable, which is one of the independent variables correlated with several of the other explanatory variables. The results when this variable is excluded are quite similar to those presented in Tables 1 to 5. For example, the relationships revealed in Tables 1 to 5 persist for many variables, including: the number of cabinet ministers; the index of electoral support; voter turnout, levels of trust; HDI; and log of district population.

I also ran OLS estimates and included only the four measures of central-local relations and two control variables (HDI and district population). The results of this analysis are also similar to what is presented in Tables 1 to 5. In a few instances, however, a variable that is significant in the full model is not significant at the .10 level in

this restricted model, although the signs of the coefficients are consistently same. For example, the number of cabinet ministers is significant in Table 3, which reports OLS estimates for LGDP financial management scores, but is not significant in OLS estimates for these scores using the restricted model. Yet, the index of district support is positively related to the indices of responsiveness and effectiveness in Tables 4 and 5, and this relationship persists in the restricted model. The coefficient for the measure of administrative linkages, however, is not significant in any of the restricted models.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter offers some surprising findings. For example, results in Tables 1 to 5 indicate that the power of societal factors to explain variation in district council performance is limited. The impact of citizen participation is mixed, while the density of civic organizations is not significant in any of the models presented. There is, however, some evidence to support the hypothesis that local governments perform better where levels of generalized trust are higher. Yet, the negative sign on the coefficient for the trust variable for several of the measures of local government performance suggests that trust negatively affects performance of certain tasks and in certain instances.

There is some support for my hypotheses concerning the effects of central government support on local government performance. For example, the number of cabinet ministers is negatively related to some measures of performance. Yet, again the results are mixed as the number of projects is positively related to some measures of performance. These contradictory findings suggest that the relationship is more complicated than I hypothesized. Another important and also surprising result is the

positive impact of district support on council performance, which runs contrary to my expectations. This relationship is explored further in Chapter Eight.

Finally, the evidence presented in this chapter does not support my hypothesis about the positive effects of administrative linkages on council performance. In fact, evidence suggests the opposite, that there is greater contact between ministries and poorly performing districts.

Table 1: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Total LGDP Score

Model Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	-372.97 (375.76) (383.98)	-371.78 (373.94) (392.63)	-429.32 (331.39) (341.81)
Political Linkages			
X ₁ Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-4.85 (1.94)**	-4.71 (1.93)**	-6.83 (1.85)***
X ₂ Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.589 (.472) (.473)	.622 (.470) (.475)	.318 (.421) (.383)
X ₃ Index of district electoral support for Movement	1.09 (1.09) (1.00)	.932 (1.09) (1.00)	1.26 (.956) (.920)
Administrative Linkages			
X ₄ Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.297 (.210) (.167)*	-.208 (.223) (.184)	-.508 (.210)** (.164)***
Local Political Context			
X ₅ LCS share of vote in 1998 election	1.06 (12.89) (11.35)	4.67 (13.22) (11.11)	-1.37 (12.04) (13.78)
X ₁₁ Number of corruption charges against LC officials in district		-.415 (.365) (.399)	
X ₁₂ Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings & closing dates of RFPs			4.49 (1.44)*** (1.50)***
Societal Factors			
X ₆ Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-18.19 (19.78) (18.54)	-17.79 (19.69) (18.80)	-26.96 (18.11) (20.20)
X ₇ Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.390 (.189)** (.187)**	.399 (.189)** (.173)**	.516 (.187)*** (.163)***
Policy and Institutional Experience			
X ₈ Year district created	.140 (.185) (.187)	.136 (.184) (.192)	.158 (.164) (.170)
Structural Factors			
X ₉ Human Development Index	93.09 (30.87)*** (29.19)***	96.19 (30.84)*** (27.38)***	118.25 (30.15)*** (21.63)***
X ₁₀ Log of district population	11.51 (2.47)*** (2.60)***	11.76 (2.47)*** (2.55)***	13.29 (2.41)*** (2.14)***
Number of districts	41	41	38
R ² Adjusted	.5643	.5829	.6949
SEE	8.73	8.69	7.58
F statistic	8.35	7.67	12.47
Sig. of F statistic	.0000	.0000	.0000

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 72.43; Standard errors reported in parentheses.

For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 1 continued: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Total LGDP Score

Model Variable		Model 4	Model 5
Constant		-339.18 (379.96) (399.19)	-321.41 (375.40) (383.75)
Political Linkages			
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-4.27 (2.07)**	-5.02 (1.93)**
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.742 (.509) (.578)	.677 (.474) (.471)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.338 (1.42) (1.41)	.216 (1.30) (1.43)
Administrative Linkages			
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.269 (.214) (.159)*	-.265 (.210) (.187)
Local Political Context			
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	3.85 (13.39) (11.35)	.325 (12.81) (11.33)
Societal Factors			
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-18.19 (19.89) (18.75)	-8.34 (21.27) (21.72)
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.342 (.199)* (.192)*	.389 (.188)** (.189)**
X ₁₃	Number of registered NGOs operating in the district	-.080 (.097) (.107)	
Policy and Institutional Experience			
X ₈	Year district created	.117 (.188) (.194)	.115 (.185) (.186)
X ₁₄	Pre-colonial political institutions		2.57 (2.13) (2.65)
Structural Factors			
X ₉	Human Development Index	93.67 (31.04)*** (28.17)***	73.70 (34.60)** (41.44)*
X ₁₀	Log of district population	12.40 (2.71)*** (2.72)***	11.29 (2.46)*** (2.62)***
Number of districts		41	41
R ² Adjusted		.5743	.5851
SEE		8.78	8.67
F statistic		7.84	7.67
Sig. of F statistic		.0000	.0000

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 72.43; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 2: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: LGDP Development Planning Score

Model Variable		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant		105.82 (212.35) (231.39)	106.58 (209.96) (245.53)	95.79 (205.71) (219.09)
Political Linkages				
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.884 (1.10)	-.797 (1.09)	-.127 (1.15)
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.330 (.267) (.187)*	.351 (.264) (.189)*	.207 (.261) (.191)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.075 (.616) (.537)	-.026 (.614) (.526)	.169 (.593) (.502)
Administrative Linkages				
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.096 (.119) (.066)	-.039 (.125) (.070)	-.185 (.131) (.095)*
Local Political Context				
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-3.41 (7.29) (6.36)	-1.10 (7.42) (6.11)	-.615 (7.48) (7.61)
X ₁₁	Number of corruption charges against LC officials in district		-.267 (.205) (.180)	
X ₁₂	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings & closing dates of RFPs			2.35 (.892)*** (.964)**
Societal Factors				
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	22.36 (11.18)* (12.49)*	22.62 (11.06)** (12.87)*	22.15 (11.24)* (12.93)*
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.041 (.107) (.088)	.047 (.106) (.088)	.030 (.116) (.114)
Policy and Institutional Experience				
X ₈	Year district created	-.075 (.105) (.111)	-.078 (.104) (.118)	-.073 (.102) (.106)
Structural Factors				
X ₉	Human Development Index	31.92 (17.45)* (16.96)*	33.92 (17.32)* (15.89)**	36.34 (18.72)* (14.75)**
X ₁₀	Log of district population	3.73 (1.40)*** (1.36)***	3.89 (1.38)*** (1.45)***	4.10 (1.50)*** (1.34)***
Number of districts		41	41	38
R ² Adjusted		.5189	.5453	.6080
SEE		4.93	4.88	4.71
F statistic		5.55	4.96	10.93
Sig. of F statistic		.0001	.0003	.0000

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 23.52; Standard errors reported in parentheses.

For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 2 continued: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: LGDP Development Planning Score

Model Variable		Model 4	Model 5
Constant		110.51 (217.09) (235.36)	151.21 (204.42) (203.67)
<i>Political Linkages</i>			
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.803 (1.18)	-1.03 (1.05)
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.351 (.291) (.198)*	.407 (.258) (.175)**
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	-.029 (.814) (.729)	-.695 (.709) (.683)
<i>Administrative Linkages</i>			
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.093 (.122) (.067)	-.069 (.114) (.069)
<i>Local Political Context</i>			
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-3.02 (7.65) (6.67)	-4.06 (6.98) (6.36)
<i>Societal Factors</i>			
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	22.36 (11.36)* (12.75)*	31.04 (11.58)*** (13.57)**
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.034 (.114) (.091)	.041 (.102) (.090)
X ₁₃	Number of registered NGOs operating in the district	-.011 (.055) (.038)	
<i>Policy and Institutional Experience</i>			
X ₈	Year district created	-.078 (.108) (.113)	-.097 (.101) (.098)
X ₁₄	Pre-colonial political institutions		2.26 (1.16)* (1.33)*
<i>Structural Factors</i>			
X ₉	Human Development Index	32.00 (17.74)* (17.13)*	14.86 (18.84) (23.79)
X ₁₀	Log of district population	3.86 (1.55)** (1.49)**	3.54 (1.34)*** (1.37)**
Number of districts		41	41
R ² Adjusted		.5195	.5746
SEE		5.01	4.72
F statistic		4.86	7.05
Sig. of F statistic		.0003	.0000

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 23.52; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 3: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: LGDP Financial Management Score

Model Variable		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant		-441.85 (223.13)* (230.83)*	-441.13 (221.79)* (225.84)*	-471.50 (228.36)** (236.33)*
Political Linkages				
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-3.28 (1.15)***	-3.20 (1.15)***	-4.09 (1.28)***
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.119 (.280) (.292)	.138 (.279) (.291)	.045 (.290) (.276)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.401 (.647) (.698)	.304 (.649) (.696)	.382 (.658) (.714)
Administrative Linkages				
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.169 (.125) (.150)	-.115 (.132) (.142)	-.233 (.145) (.185)
Local Political Context				
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-.778 (7.66) (6.29)	1.42 (7.84) (6.60)	-3.64 (8.30) (7.45)
X ₁₁	Number of corruption charges against LC officials in district		-.253 (.217) (.331)	
X ₁₂	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings & closing dates of RFPs			.947 (.991) (1.04)
Societal Factors				
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-34.95 (11.75)*** (11.22)***	-34.70 (11.68)*** (10.90)***	-40.31 (12.48)*** (13.31)***
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.238 (.112)** (.120)*	.244 (.112)** (.113)**	.316 (.129)** (.124)**
Policy and Institutional Experience				
X ₈	Year district created	.201 (.110)* (.113)*	.199 (.109)* (.110)*	.212 (.113)* (.116)*
Structural Factors				
X ₉	Human Development Index	61.41 (18.33)*** (16.54)***	63.30 (18.29)*** (17.16)***	71.90 (20.78)*** (20.18)***
X ₁₀	Log of district population	6.05 (1.47)*** (1.85)***	6.20 (1.46)*** (1.82)***	6.94 (1.66)*** (2.13)***
Number of districts		41	41	38
R ² Adjusted		.5044	.5267	.5405
SEE		5.18	5.15	5.22
F statistic		9.17	6.79	5.52
Sig. of F statistic		.0000	.0000	.0002

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 34.57; Standard errors reported in parentheses.

For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 3 continued: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: LGDP Financial Management Score

Model Variable		Model 4	Model 5
Constant		-418.23 (224.60)* (231.01)*	-444.84 (228.38)* (242.55)*
Political Linkages			
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-2.88 (1.22)**	-3.27 (1.17)***
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.225 (.301) (.379)	.114 (.288) (.302)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	-.126 (.842) (.873)	.451 (.792) (1.02)
Administrative Linkages			
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.150 (.126) (.140)	-.171 (.128) (.160)
Local Political Context			
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	1.17 (7.92) (6.75)	-.735 (7.79) (6.34)
Societal Factors			
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-34.95 (11.76)*** (11.20)***	-35.52 (12.94)*** (14.16)**
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	.205 (.118)* (.108)*	.238 (.114)** (.122)*
X ₁₃	Number of registered NGOs operating in the district	-.056 (.057) (.076)	
Policy and Institutional Experience			
X ₈	Year district created	.186 (.111)* (.112)*	.203 (.113)* (.118)*
X ₁₄	Pre-colonial political institutions		-.149 (1.30) (1.66)
Structural Factors			
X ₉	Human Development Index	61.82 (18.35)*** (16.74)***	62.54 (21.05)*** (23.29)***
X ₁₀	Log of district population	6.67 (1.60)*** (2.05)***	6.06 (1.49)*** (1.93)***
Number of districts		41	41
R ² Adjusted		.5202	.5046
SEE		5.19	5.27
F statistic		8.18	8.00
Sig. of F statistic		.0000	.0000

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: 34.57; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
 For two tailed *t* tests: *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .109$

Table 4: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Responsiveness Index

Model Variable		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant		23.59 (13.64)* (11.22)**	23.68 (12.96)* (12.48)*	25.60 (14.22)* (12.46)**
Political Linkages				
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.011 (.074)	.006 (.071)	-.018 (.077)
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	-.014 (.017) (.015)	-.011 (.016) (.016)	-.017 (.018) (.017)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.068 (.040)* (.040)*	.060 (.038) (.039)	.065 (.041) (.042)
Administrative Linkages				
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	.009 (.008) (.007)	.014 (.008)* (.007)**	.006 (.009) (.009)
Local Political Context				
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-.605 (.483) (.459)	-.368 (.476) (.477)	-.623 (.506) (.449)
X ₁₁	Number of corruption charges against LC officials in district		-.023 (.012)* (.009)**	
X ₁₂	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings & closing dates of RFPs			-.007 (.060) (.053)
Societal Factors				
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-.245 (.787) (.791)	-.184 (.749) (.716)	-.389 (.829) (.821)
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	-.010 (.008) (.007)	-.010 (.008) (.007)	-.008 (.008) (.008)
Policy and Institutional Experience				
X ₈	Year district created	-.011 (.007)* (.006)**	-.011 (.006)* (.006)*	-.012 (.007)* (.006)*
Structural Factors				
X ₉	Human Development Index	-.288 (1.34) (1.16)	-.094 (1.27) (1.05)	.028 (1.42) (1.14)
X ₁₀	Log of district population	-.026 (.115) (.077)	-.046 (.109) (.084)	.004 (.124) (.086)
Number of districts		35	35	34
R ² Adjusted		.3475	.4353	.3467
SEE		.2959	.2812	.3042
F statistic		2.16	2.32	2.01
Sig. of F statistic		.0593	.0426	.0791

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: .455; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
 For two tailed t tests: *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .109$

Table 4 continued: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Responsiveness Index

Model Variable		Model 4	Model 5
Constant		23.78 (14.09)* (10.35)**	23.23 (14.10) (11.49)*
Political Linkages			
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.008 (.084)	-.010 (.076)
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	-.014 (.018) (.021)	-.014 (.017) (.016)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.065 (.054) (.051)	.072 (.049) (.043)*
Administrative Linkages			
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	.009 (.008) (.008)	.009 (.008) (.007)
Local Political Context			
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-.588 (.525) (.459)	-.598 (.495) (.464)
Societal Factors			
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-.240 (.806) (.814)	-.285 (.843) (.859)
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	-.010 (.009) (.009)	-.010 (.008) (.007)
X ₁₃	Number of registered NGOs operating in the district	-.0003 (.004) (.005)	
Policy and Institutional Experience			
X ₈	Year district created	-.011 (.007) (.005)**	-.011 (.007) (.006)*
X ₁₄	Pre-colonial political institutions		-.012 (.078) (.062)
Structural Factors			
X ₉	Human Development Index	-.299 (1.37) (1.17)	-.217 (1.44) (1.25)
X ₁₀	Log of district population	-.023 (.121) (.088)	-.024 (.118) (.082)
Number of districts		35	35
R ² Adjusted		.3478	.3482
SEE		.3022	.3021
F statistic		1.93	1.87
Sig. of F statistic		.0894	.0985

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: .455; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 5: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Effectiveness Index

Model Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	-5.63 (10.21) (9.38)	-5.57 (9.59) (8.84)	-6.49 (10.84) (9.34)
Political Linkages			
X ₁ Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.034 (.053)	-.027 (.050)	-.043 (.061)
X ₂ Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.006 (.013) (.011)	.007 (.012) (.011)	.003 (.014) (.012)
X ₃ Index of district electoral support for Movement	.088 (.030)*** (.032)***	.080 (.028)*** (.028)***	.091 (.031)*** (.034)***
Administrative Linkages			
X ₄ Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.005 (.006) (.007)	-.0003 (.006) (.006)	-.006 (.007) (.008)
Local Political Context			
X ₅ LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-.628 (.350)* (.265)**	-.446 (.339) (.272)	-.588 (.394) (.308)*
X ₁₁ Number of corruption charges against LC officials in district		-.021 (.009)** (.014)	
X ₁₂ Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings & closing dates of RFPs			.052 (.047) (.044)
Societal Factors			
X ₆ Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-.974 (.538)* (.579)*	-.954 (.505)* (.524)*	-.959 (.592) (.691)
X ₇ Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	-.005 (.005) (.006)	-.004 (.005) (.006)	-.005 (.006) (.007)
Policy and Institutional Experience			
X ₈ Year district created	.003 (.005) (.005)	.003 (.005) (.004)	.004 (.005) (.005)
Structural Factors			
X ₉ Human Development Index	.184 (.839) (.575)	.340 (.791) (.560)	.228 (.987) (.756)
X ₁₀ Log of district population	.078 (.067) (.062)	.091 (.063) (.054)	.078 (.079) (.076)
Number of districts	41	41	38
R ² Adjusted	.3445	.4406	.3761
SEE	.2372	.2229	.2480
F statistic	2.00	2.33	2.00
Sig. of F statistic	.0695	.0336	.0714

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: .723; Standard errors reported in parentheses.
 For two tailed t tests: *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .109$

Table 5 continued: OLS Estimates of Local Government Performance
Dependent Variable: Effectiveness Index

Model Variable		Model 4	Model 5
Constant		-4.78 (10.34) (9.44)	-5.42 (10.46) (9.97)
<i>Political Linkages</i>			
X ₁	Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	-.019 (.056)	-.034 (.054)
X ₂	Number of donor and GOU projects operating in district	.009 (.014) (.012)	.006 (.013) (.012)
X ₃	Index of district electoral support for Movement	.069 (.039)* (.039)*	.084 (.036)** (.039)**
<i>Administrative Linkages</i>			
X ₄	Total correspondence with basic service ministries	-.004 (.006) (.007)	-.005 (.006) (.007)
<i>Local Political Context</i>			
X ₅	LC5 share of vote in 1998 election	-.558 (.364) (.272)**	-.631 (.356)* (.267)**
<i>Societal Factors</i>			
X ₆	Voter turnout 1998 LC elections	-.974 (.541)* (.599)	-.934 (.592) (.658)
X ₇	Percent of district population felt that most people can be trusted	-.006 (.005) (.006)	-.005 (.005) (.006)
X ₁₃	Number of registered NGOs operating in the district	-.002 (.003) (.002)	
<i>Policy and Institutional Experience</i>			
X ₈	Year district created	.003 (.005) (.005)	.003 (.005) (.005)
X ₁₄	Pre-colonial political institutions		.011 (.059) (.056)
<i>Structural Factors</i>			
X ₉	Human Development Index	.198 (.845) (.568)	.104 (.963) (.827)
X ₁₀	Log of district population	.101 (.074) (.074)	.077 (.068) (.065)
Number of districts		41	41
R ² Adjusted		.3574	.3452
SEE		.2389	.2411
F statistic		1.92	1.79
Sig. of F statistic		.0782	.1025

Notes: Mean of dependent variable: .723; Standard errors reported in parentheses.

For two tailed *t* tests: *** *p* < .01; ** *p* < .05; * *p* < .109

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Index of district electoral support	Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Number of corruption charges against LC officials
Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.417**	.046	.083	-.124	.242
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005	.765	.587	.423	.109
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Pearson Correlation	.417**	1.000	-.008	.380*	-.259	.287
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.	.958	.011	.093	.059
	N	44	44	44	44	43	44
Index of district electoral support	Pearson Correlation	.046	-.008	1.000	.140	.040	-.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.765	.958	.	.357	.799	.491
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	Pearson Correlation	.083	.380*	.140	1.000	-.074	.375*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.587	.011	.357	.	.632	.011
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Pearson Correlation	-.124	-.259	.040	-.074	1.000	.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.423	.093	.799	.632	.	.589
	N	44	43	44	44	44	44

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Index of district electoral support	Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Number of corruption charges against LC officials
Number of corruption charges against LC officials	Pearson Correlation	.242	.287	-.105	.375*	.084	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.059	.491	.011	.589	.
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.	Pearson Correlation	.306	.377*	-.026	.171	-.286	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.016	.874	.285	.074	.488
	N	41	40	41	41	40	41
Voter turnout 1998 LC election	Pearson Correlation	-.248	-.273	.192	.175	-.276	-.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.081	.218	.262	.077	.364
	N	43	42	43	43	42	43
Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted	Pearson Correlation	.041	.029	.149	.085	-.393**	-.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.789	.853	.329	.577	.008	.481
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Year district created	Pearson Correlation	-.293	-.508**	.010	-.172	.064	-.223
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.000	.950	.260	.681	.141
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Human Development Index	Pearson Correlation	.350*	.043	-.075	-.017	.288	.346*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.780	.626	.909	.058	.020
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Index of district electoral support	Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Number of corruption charges against LC officials
Log of district population	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.484**	-.142	.244	.004	.348*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.350	.106	.982	.019
	N	45	44	45	45	44	45
Total LGDP scores	Pearson Correlation	.177	.414**	-.015	.166	-.005	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.250	.006	.925	.282	.977	.352
	N	44	43	44	44	43	44
LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	Pearson Correlation	.198	.411**	-.021	.260	-.274	.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.197	.006	.894	.088	.075	.585
	N	44	43	44	44	43	44
LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	Pearson Correlation	.064	.195	-.090	-.012	.229	.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.679	.210	.563	.937	.139	.733
	N	44	43	44	44	43	44
Responsiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.049	.077	.321	.256	-.136	-.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.777	.655	.056	.132	.437	.354
	N	36	36	36	36	35	36
Effectiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.120	.206	.321*	-.028	-.131	-.303*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.436	.185	.033	.858	.402	.046
	N	44	43	44	44	43	44

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.	Voter turnout 1998 LC election	Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted	Year district created	Human Devt. Index	Log of district population
Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Pearson Correlation	-.248	.041	-.293	.350*	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.789	.051	.018	.001
	N	41	45	45	45	45
Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Pearson Correlation	-.273	.029	-.508**	.043	.484**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.081	.853	.000	.780	.001
	N	40	44	44	44	44
Index of district electoral support	Pearson Correlation	.192	.149	.010	-.075	-.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.218	.329	.950	.626	.350
	N	41	45	45	45	45
Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	Pearson Correlation	.171	.085	-.172	-.017	.244
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.285	.577	.260	.909	.106
	N	41	45	45	45	45
LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Pearson Correlation	-.286	-.393**	.064	.288	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.008	.681	.058	.982
	N	40	44	44	44	44

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.	Voter turnout 1998 LC election	Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted	Year district created	Human Devt. Index	Log of district population
Number of corruption charges against LC officials						
Pearson Correlation	.111	-.142	-.108	-.223	.346*	.348*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.488	.364	.481	.141	.020	.019
N	41	43	45	45	45	45
Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.						
Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.124	.132	-.215	.026	.227
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.445	.409	.177	.872	.153
N	41	40	41	41	41	41
Voter turnout 1998 LC election						
Pearson Correlation	-.124	1.000	.412**	.165	-.219	-.093
Sig. (2-tailed)	.445	.	.006	.289	.158	.554
N	40	43	43	43	43	43
Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted						
Pearson Correlation	.132	.412**	1.000	.082	-.432**	-.118
Sig. (2-tailed)	.409	.006	.	.593	.003	.440
N	41	43	45	45	45	45
Year district created						
Pearson Correlation	-.215	.165	.082	1.000	-.204	-.353*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.177	.289	.593	.	.179	.017
N	41	43	45	45	45	45
Human Development Index						
Pearson Correlation	.026	-.219	-.432**	-.204	1.000	.170
Sig. (2-tailed)	.872	.158	.003	.179	.	.265
N	41	43	45	45	45	45

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

	Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.	Voter turnout 1998 LC election	Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted	Year district created	Human Devt. Index	Log of district population
Log of district population	.227	-.093	-.118	-.353*	.170	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.554	.440	.017	.265	.
	N	43	45	45	45	45
Total LGDP scores	.423**	-.038	.038	-.289	.175	.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	.809	.057	.257	.000
	N	43	44	44	44	44
LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	.409**	.328*	.111	-.404**	.095	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.474	.007	.539	.001
	N	41	44	44	44	44
LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	.155	-.327*	-.122	-.032	.237	.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	.431	.835	.121	.008
	N	41	44	44	44	44
Responsiveness Index	.010	-.070	-.224	-.311	.168	.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.953	.190	.065	.328	.816
	N	35	36	36	36	36
Effectiveness Index	.241	-.246	-.158	-.068	-.071	.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.306	.659	.647	.401
	N	41	43	44	44	44

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Total LGDP scores	LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	Responsive- ness Index	Effective- ness Index
Number of cabinet ministers after July 2001 reshuffle	Pearson Correlation	.177	.198	.064	.049	.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.250	.197	.679	.777	.436
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Number of donor and GOU projects in districts	Pearson Correlation	.414**	.411**	.195	.077	.206
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.006	.210	.655	.185
	N	43	43	43	36	43
Index of district electoral support	Pearson Correlation	-.015	-.021	-.090	.321	.321*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.925	.894	.563	.056	.033
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Total number of written com. with basic service ministries	Pearson Correlation	.166	.260	-.012	.256	-.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.282	.088	.937	.132	.858
	N	44	44	44	36	44
LC5 chair share of vote in 1998 election	Pearson Correlation	-.005	-.274	.229	-.136	-.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.977	.075	.139	.437	.402
	N	43	43	43	35	43

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Total LGDP scores	LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	Responsive- ness Index	Effective- ness Index
Number of corruption charges against LC officials	Pearson Correlation	.144	.085	.053	-.159	-.303*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.352	.585	.733	.354	.046
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Whether DTB publishes dates of meetings, etc.	Pearson Correlation	.423**	.409**	.155	.010	.241
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.008	.333	.953	.130
	N	41	41	41	35	41
Voter turnout 1998 LC election	Pearson Correlation	-.038	.328*	-.327*	-.070	-.246
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	.032	.032	.687	.111
	N	43	43	43	36	43
Percent in district responding that most people can be trusted	Pearson Correlation	.038	.111	-.122	-.224	-.158
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.809	.474	.431	.190	.306
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Year district created	Pearson Correlation	-.289	-.404**	-.032	-.311	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.057	.007	.835	.065	.659
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Human Development Index	Pearson Correlation	.175	.095	.237	.168	-.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.257	.539	.121	.328	.647
	N	44	44	44	36	44

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of 14 Independent Variables and 5 Measures of Local Government Performance

		Total LGDP scores	LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	Responsive- ness Index	Effective- ness Index
Log of district population	Pearson Correlation	.598**	.498**	.393**	.040	.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.008	.816	.401
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Total LGDP scores	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.750**	.705**	.052	.237
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.764	.122
	N	44	44	44	36	44
LGDP Devt. Planning Scores	Pearson Correlation	.750**	1.000	.144	.161	.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.350	.348	.634
	N	44	44	44	36	44
LGDP Fin. Mgmt. Scores	Pearson Correlation	.705**	.144	1.000	-.075	.363*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.350	.	.665	.016
	N	44	44	44	36	44
Responsiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.052	.161	-.075	1.000	.440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.764	.348	.665	.	.007
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Effectiveness Index	Pearson Correlation	.237	.074	.363*	.440**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.122	.634	.016	.007	.
	N	44	44	44	36	44

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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THE DILEMMA OF DECENTRALIZATION:
A STUDY OF LOCAL POLITICS IN UGANDA

VOLUME II

By

Gina Margaret Somodevilla Lambright

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science

2003

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Chapter Six: Performance of Three Districts in Uganda

"In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."

Desiderius Gerhard Erasmus (1465-1536)

Adagia (III, IV, 96)

6.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the performance of three case study districts. While the differences in performance across these three districts are not great, I argue that Bushenyi performs better than either Mpigi or Lira. Bushenyi is significantly more effective at translating policy decisions into outputs. For example, district council meetings in Bushenyi are held regularly with a quorum of councilors present. Similarly, Bushenyi collects more of its local revenue estimates than Lira or Mpigi. Like Mpigi, Bushenyi district council prepares and passes its annual budget before the end of the financial year. Finally, the quality of staffing, infrastructure, and equipment also contributes to Bushenyi's effectiveness.

Determining which district is most responsive is certainly not an easy task. Considering all of the different sources of data on district responsiveness—scores on responsiveness index, citizen perceptions of council performance, and comparisons of district outputs with citizen priorities—I argue that Bushenyi is more responsive than Mpigi or Lira. For almost all of the activities survey respondents were questioned about, respondents in Bushenyi rated their district council's performance better. Similarly, while there is a tendency among politicians in all districts to shift expenditure away from previously determined activities toward expenditure that meets personal or political needs, my fieldwork shows this was *less* of a problem in Bushenyi.

For example, records of discussion in council meetings reveal that politicians in Bushenyi were less likely to complain about the amount of allowances that they received than did councilors in Lira or Mpigi. Despite the lack of open complaints about the inadequacy of allowances or salaries, politicians in Bushenyi behaved in a way that suggests concern for their material well-being is not absent. The *New Vision* reports that in July 2001 Bushenyi district council passed a resolution to increase salaries of the district chairman, councilors, and the CAO, much to the chagrin of civil servants (July 15, 2001). Yet, Bushenyi district also comes much closer than their counterparts in Lira, and especially Mpigi, to meeting regulations regarding how much local revenue can be spent to pay salaries, allowances, and other emoluments of district leaders. Politicians in Mpigi seem much more likely to divert funds away from approved policies and toward other expenditures. Similarly, Lira district officials were charged with corruption and investigated on several occasions during 2000. As will be discussed below, the CAO, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), and the District Engineer were charged with corruption.

A comparison of the problems citizens identified as the most urgent and the top expenditure categories of each district reveals discrepancies in all three districts, even Bushenyi. In none of the districts did the sector associated with the most serious problem identified by respondents receive top priority. In fact, at first glance, Lira and Mpigi do a slightly better job of matching expenditure to citizen's priorities. Yet, the tendency to divert funds away from policies and evidence of corrupt activities in Mpigi and Lira raise questions about whether this measure accurately portrays responsiveness of the district council. The budgets in Mpigi and Lira do not likely reflect the reality of how funds are used in these districts.

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Expenditure in Mpigi and Lira seems to be focused on achieving short-term goals rather than longer-term development goals, as seems to be the priority of the district council in Bushenyi. While the goals of Bushenyi district council do not perfectly match the problems survey respondents rank as the most important, the priorities of the council are, nevertheless, to reduce poverty and promote development in the district. This may not always be the case with actions and decisions of councilors and executive committee members in Lira or Mpigi.

Because of the quality of its government, high levels of economic development, an educated population and astute politics, which has secured the district a favorable position with most Ugandan governments, many Ugandans within and outside Bushenyi describe the district as “unique.” One Member of Parliament (MP) from Bushenyi responded to a question about Bushenyi’s “uniqueness” this way, “That’s an exaggeration. Bushenyi’s obviously better than most places, but it’s a *one-eyed man among blind men*” [emphasis added]. This statement aptly characterizes the differences between Bushenyi district and other districts in Uganda. Bushenyi experiences many of the same problems and limitations that challenge other districts, yet the district still manages to perform at a higher level.

In Chapter Seven, I test my hypotheses about the impact of political and administrative linkages to explain Bushenyi’s better performance. Chapter Eight tests the various hypotheses about the impact of society-centric factors, including participation, social capital and civil society, as well as testing hypotheses about the effect of features of the local political context to explain Bushenyi’s better performance. The analysis of the case study material supports many of the findings from Chapter Five. Many of the

factors theorized to explain institutional performance, such as participation and social capital, are less important in understanding differences in performance across these three districts. Instead, I argue that Bushenyi's better performance is explained by its relationship with the central government (described fully in Chapter Seven) and a number of features of the local political context, including greater political competition in local elections and more developed linkages between the district council and area NGOs (discussed fully in Chapter Eight). All of these factors serve to make Bushenyi's district council more effective and more responsive.

6.2 Citizen Perceptions of Performance¹

6.2.1 Questions about General Performance of Local Councils

Citizens' evaluations of the performance of political institutions and government officials provide a rough measure of district responsiveness and effectiveness. Putnam found a significant correlation between his index of performance and citizen evaluations of regional governments in Italy (1993). There is some preliminary evidence that Ugandan's evaluations of their local councils are related to LC performance. A measure of citizen satisfaction with the performance of the district council is positively related districts' scores on the index of responsiveness.²

This survey also asked citizens to rate the performance of LCs and chairpersons at the village, sub-county and district level. The results are summarized in Table 1. Respondents in Lira rated the performance of the village councils higher than councils or

¹ All statistics in this section, because of the nature of the questions, exclude respondents who answered "yes" to the question, "Are you currently a LC official?"

² The variable is based on the percent of survey respondents in each district who responded that they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the performance of the LC5 in the first round of the

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chairpersons at other levels. Over 75 percent of the respondents in Lira said the performance of their village council was “good” or “very good” compared to only 63 percent in Mpigi and 61 percent in Bushenyi.³ Differences across the three districts in evaluations of the performance of the sub-county council and sub-county chairperson are not as large and consequently, not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 1 about here

On the other hand, respondents in Bushenyi were more likely to evaluate positively the performance of their district chairperson and council. For example, a larger percent of respondents in Bushenyi rated the performance of the district council and district chairperson as “good” or “very good” than did respondents in either Mpigi or Lira. The differences are quite large and statistically significant at the .01 level.⁴ For example, 66 percent of respondents in Bushenyi felt that the district council was performing well. Fewer than half of the respondents in the other two districts gave similar answers. Similarly, 62 percent of Bushenyi survey respondents said the performance of the district chairperson was “good” or “very good” compared to 42 and 48 percent of respondent in Lira and Mpigi, respectively.

6.2.2 Questions about Performance in Different Sectors

Afrobarometer Survey in Uganda in 2000. This variable is significant at the .10 level; coefficient = .005, robust standard error = .003. *F* statistic = 3.15, Prob > *F* = .087.

³ Significant at the .05 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi = .148 and Cramer's V = .105, sig .00

⁴ The differences across all three districts are statistically significant at the .05 level based on the value of the Chi-square and the values of the Phi and Cramer's V.

Respondents in each district were also asked to evaluate the performance of the district council for a variety of activities across four main sectors: 1) health care; 2) education; 3) roads and transport; and 4) agriculture and production.⁵

More respondents in Bushenyi said that the quality of educational services provided by the district has improved since 1997. In fact, 85 percent of Bushenyi respondents said that the provision of these services has gotten “better” or “much better” compared to 73 percent in Lira and only 66 percent in Mpigi who gave a similar response.⁶ Respondents in Bushenyi are also considerably more positive about the overall work that the district council is doing in education than are respondents in other districts (see Table 2). For example, half of the respondents in Bushenyi said the work of the district council in providing education generally is “good” or “very good”, compared to 44 percent who felt the same in Mpigi and only 37 percent in Lira.⁷ Bushenyi respondents also evaluated the performance of their district council significantly higher across five different activities in the education sector (see Table 2).⁸

Tables 2 and 3 about here

Like education, survey respondents in Bushenyi also saw more improvement in the district council’s provision of health care than did respondents in either Mpigi or Lira (see Table 3). Around 70 percent respondents in Bushenyi said that the provision of

⁵ See Appendix A, questions 29, 32, 35 and 38 in particular.

⁶ Significant at the .00 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi = .215 and Cramer’s V = .152, sig .00

⁷ Significant at the .10 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi = .137 and Cramer’s V = .097, sig .077

⁸ The difference in the percent responding “good” or “very good” across the three districts is statistically significant at the .01 level for the five different activities presented in Table 2 based on Chi-square values, and the values of Phi and Cramer’s V.

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health care has gotten “better” or “much better” since 1998 compared to almost 55 percent of respondents in Mpigi and Lira.⁹

Generally district councils’ performance in health care was rated much lower than education, which is likely a result of the fact that education has been the top priority of the Ugandan government during this period. But again, respondents in Bushenyi were still more positive in their assessments of the council’s work in providing health care than their counterparts in Mpigi or Lira. Over a third of respondents in Bushenyi said that the district was performing well in providing health care services. A significantly smaller percent of respondents in both Mpigi and Lira (only 20 and 23 percent in Mpigi and Lira, respectively) rated the provision of health care as “good” or “very good.”¹⁰

Looking at Table 3, which reports the evaluations of district council performance for different activities in the health sector, Bushenyi district was rated higher than the other districts for most activities. Even when the majority of respondents in all three districts rate the district council’s performance as “bad” or “very bad”—as is the case with the construction of new health units—fewer respondents in Bushenyi express such an opinion. For example, 63 percent of respondents in Lira and 59 percent of respondents in Mpigi felt that their district council was doing a poor job of supplying drugs to health units. Only 43 percent of respondents in Bushenyi rated their district council’s performance in supplying drugs as “bad” or “very bad”. All three districts were perceived to be falling short in the construction of health units, the supply of drugs, and

⁹ Significant at the .01 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi = .171 and Cramer’s V = .121, sig .01. The differences in the percent citing improvement in the provision health care are statistically significant at the .01 level for only Bushenyi and Lira *or* Bushenyi and Mpigi. The difference in responses to this question for Lira and Mpigi are not statistically significant.

¹⁰ Differences across these three districts for all but one of the activities listed in Table 3 are statistically significant at the .01 level based on values of Chi-square, Phi and Cramer’s V. There is not a significant

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ensuring equal access to water, but still variation exists, and Bushenyi is perceived by respondents in that district to be performing better than the others.

Other activities, such as immunization, brought much more positive assessments. Over 90 percent of respondents in all three districts rated the district council's work as "good" or "very good" for mobilizing residents for immunization. This is not really surprising given that mobilization is an easier task than providing water to remote parts of the district. This is the only health-related activity in which the assessments by respondents in these three districts are not significantly different.

Respondents in each district evaluate the performance of their district council in caring for roads quite similarly. All three districts are evaluated lower for their performance in this sector than any of the other sectors, evident in a comparison of Table 4 with Tables 2 and 3. The differences in the percent of respondents across the three district who said that the district council's performance was "good" or "very good" are not statistically significant at the .05 level for three of the four activities in this sector (see Table 4). Only the difference in how respondents in the three districts assessed council performance in rehabilitating existing roads is statistically significant at the .05 level.¹¹ Slightly more respondents in Mpigi felt that the district is doing a "good" or a "very good" job at rehabilitating roads. Yet, Bushenyi district council received a slightly better assessment for its work in the construction of new roads, maintenance of existing roads and ensuring all parts of the district have equal access to good roads.¹²

difference in respondents' evaluations of performance in mobilizing the public for immunization across these three districts.

¹¹ Significant at the .05 level based on value of Chi-square, Phi and Cramer's V.

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Tables 4 and 5 about here

Respondents in Bushenyi are also positive in their evaluations of the district council's performance in production and marketing (see Table 5).¹³ In most districts the production sector includes the agriculture, veterinary, and marketing departments. Survey questions, however, focused on district activities in the agricultural and veterinary departments only. Evaluations of district performance vary across these different activities. For example, more respondents in Bushenyi said that the district is performing each of these tasks well, but the council's performance in "assisting farmers in dealing with major diseases" or even "assisting farmers to market their products generally" is viewed by respondents to be worse than for the other activities listed in Table 5. Councils in Mpigi and Lira are also perceived by respondents to be performing poorly in these activities. Respondents in Lira and Mpigi also feel that the councils are not doing enough to provide training for farmers. Across all of the questions about council performance in the provision of agricultural or veterinary services, less than 20 percent of respondents in Lira said the district's performance was "good" or "very good." Poor performance in this important sector poses a serious challenge to Lira district council given the importance of agriculture to the livelihoods of the local population. Over 75 percent of Lira residents engage in subsistence agriculture.

6.3 Effectiveness

¹² The percents are not significantly different at the .05 level using a Chi-square test. Differences across the three districts in the percent saying that their district is performing well or very well at maintaining existing roads are statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹³ The differences in percents for all activities listed in Table 5 are significant at the .01 level.

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As noted above, Bushenyi district is also more effective than Mpigi or Lira. The discussion below provides evidence of the greater effectiveness of Bushenyi district council for several indicators of government effectiveness.

6.3.1 Scores on Effectiveness Index

First, a review of the scores on the index of effectiveness suggests that Bushenyi is more effective than either Mpigi or Lira.¹⁴ Bushenyi earned 100 percent of the possible points on the index (10 out of 10 points), while Mpigi district earned only 80 percent of the possible points (8 out of 10 points).¹⁵ Lira fared even worse, earning only 67 percent of the points possible (4 out of 6 points). The average score on this index is 72 percent of the possible points.¹⁶ Lira's score falls slightly below the mean score and Mpigi's score just above the mean, while Bushenyi's score is greater than the mean plus one standard deviation.

Bushenyi earned the maximum score of 2 for each of the five indicators included in the index. Mpigi received no points for the indicator of whether the district prepared at least three quarterly reports. Mpigi's assessment reports that only one brief quarterly audit report was available for review by the evaluators and they had to read it on the computer screen.¹⁷ A lack of commitment to auditing is important and will be discussed below for all districts. Yet, the problem of diverting funds is perhaps made easier in Mpigi because auditing is so infrequent. On the other hand, it is possible that audit

¹⁴ See Chapter Four for a complete list and description of the indicators included in this index.

¹⁵ Lira's performance evaluation unfortunately had a number of missing data points. Data was missing for two of the five indicators that I combined into the effectiveness index. Thus, the maximum number of points possible for Lira was only 6 points, rather than 10.

¹⁶ The standard deviation for scores on the index of effectiveness is 25 percent.

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reports are not written or made available to external auditors because of problems in how funds are used.

Lira had missing data for two indicators: whether the district carried out at least one quarterly internal audit and whether the District Technical Planning Committee met at least four times during the financial year. The LGDP evaluation team also described Lira's performance as unsatisfactory for two of the three indicators for which it was scored. Staffing the head of department positions with qualified persons was a problem area for Lira. At the time of the LGDP assessment, the CAO, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and the District Engineer were all three on interdiction after being accused of mishandling district funds. Subordinates in an acting position carried out the duties of these posts at the time. Likewise, the LGDP evaluation noted that the finance committee in Lira met irregularly and failed to meet at least quarterly. In fact, the committee met on October 21, 2000 and the LGDP assessment notes that this was the only meeting held during the first half of the 2000/2001 financial year.

6.3.2 Policy Process

Quorum

As Putnam explained, "An institution's effectiveness depends, first of all, on how well it manages its essential internal affairs" (1993, 65). The regularity of council and committee meetings and the level of attendance are good indicators of the effectiveness of district councils in Uganda. I collected data on the frequency of council meetings and records of attendance for these meetings. The regularity of meetings varies across these

¹⁷ As noted in Chapter Four, I collected the effectiveness and responsiveness data from the LGDP minimum conditions and performance evaluations. The discussion of the indicators of effectiveness is

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districts. Bushenyi district council held six full council meetings in 2000. Lira and Mpigi, on the other hand, each held only four council meetings.

Regular attendance at council meetings was also not a problem in Bushenyi, but a clear problem in both Mpigi and Lira. For example, in five district council meetings in Bushenyi in 2000 there was only one councilor *absent with an apology*—indicating that the absence was excused—and only one councilor *absent without an apology*—indicating that the absence was unexcused. On the other hand, in five council meetings in Mpigi there were numerous absences without apology and in some instances the District Chairman even missed the meeting. For example, at a meeting held on March 2, 2000, eleven councilors were absent and did not offer an excuse for their absence.

Attendance at council meetings in Lira district falls between the performance of Bushenyi and Mpigi. For the five meetings held in the financial year 1999/2000, there were usually at least two or three councilors absent, some with and some without an apology. Yet, more damaging to Lira's effectiveness than absences is the lack of preparation of councilors and others who are required to present reports to the council. For example, the Local Government Act (LG Act) stipulates that district chairpersons should report to the council on the state of affairs in the district at least once a year (Section 14(5)). In April 2001, the minutes from a district council meeting in Lira report that Chairman Otoa was unable to "make a report last year (2000) for a number of reasons and due to circumstances beyond control" (Lira April 21, 2001). The chairman then presented a report on the state of the district covering almost two years.

Similarly, for several consecutive council meetings none of the sectoral committees were prepared to present reports about district activities in their sectors.

based on information included in these evaluations for each district.

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Committee representatives explained that the reports were incomplete. This may be due to a lack of committee meetings or may provide evidence of a lack of commitment on the part of the political leadership, or even a lack of skills necessary to complete such reports. Conducting meetings was also certainly a problem for Lira district council. The District Speaker complained during the April meeting about the poor time management of the councilors and cited this as the primary reason that the budget conference did not start on time. One donor explained:

The district council, I've attended a meeting. It should start at 9AM, but it started at 10:15, [was] not useful and only about half of the people were there.

Lira is not alone in the problem of time management. I observed a council meeting in Mpigi that also started several hours late, and even then many councilors did not arrive until the meeting was well underway. Several meetings during 1999/2000 were delayed for several hours until a quorum was realized. There is some discussion of the same problem in the minutes from a few of the Bushenyi council meetings. For example, the minutes to the August 29, 2000 meeting begin by noting that "The Speaker called the meeting to order at 11:20 am. He requested Honourable Councillors to always come in time" (Bushenyi August 29, 2000). Yet, time management does not appear to be as habitual a problem in Bushenyi as is the case in Lira and Mpigi. For example, the minutes to the Bushenyi council meeting on December 21, 2000 begin this way, "The Speaker welcomed Honourable Councillors and Heads of Departments to the last Council meeting in the year 2000 and thanks them for coming on time."

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Preparation of the budget and submission to the council by the legal deadline—the end of the financial year (June 30)—provides another way to assess district effectiveness. In Mpigi and Bushenyi, budgets were drafted by district administrators and executive committee members and then submitted to the council for approval before the June 30 deadline. Lira district, on the other hand, missed this deadline three years in a row. In fact, the district passed the 2001/2002 budget as late as August 28, 2001. At the district budget conference on June 29 and 30, 2001, councilors passed a vote on account for 25 percent of the estimated annual expenditure because budget preparations were still underway. The minutes report:

The speaker called the house to order....He noticed with concern the disorganization in the budget process making by the heads of departments and sections. Up to the morning of the council [meeting], photocopying of the budget document were still going on....This clearly shows a lack of commitment to work. [The Speaker] appealed to the CAO and CFO to take note (Lira, June 29 and 30, 2001).

Statistical Services and Facilities

Facilities and statistical and information services are vitally important to a local government's ability to carry out basic tasks whether making policy or implementing approved plans. These three districts vary in the quality and availability of key infrastructure, equipment, and even, staff.

The facilities in Mpigi, aside from the brand new building for the health department, were in fairly poor condition. Some of the secretaries on the executive committee appeared to have their own offices, but none of these offices were used on any sort of regular basis during the time I conducted fieldwork in Mpigi. Several executive secretaries scrambled to find an open office when it was time for our appointment.

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Usually there was not enough furniture or even office supplies (paper or pens) in case they wanted to take notes. Chairman Zimbe had an office that appeared to be used more regularly, but as discussed below, the district had made purchasing furniture for his office a priority. The administrative staff in Mpigi appeared to be working much of the time. Their offices were certainly used more regularly than the offices of the political leaders. I only observed one computer in all of the Mpigi district headquarters, although others might have existed in the individual departments. Workers in the agricultural department, however, described how the lack of resources negatively affected the performance of the department. One worker explained, “If there was one computer, one person could do the work that we two do in two weeks.”

There were also a few staffing problems in Mpigi district. Many key staff members held multiple positions at the same time. For example, one Assistant CAO also served as the district’s NGO coordinator. Likewise, the head of the district planning unit also served as the secretary of the District Tender Board (DTB) and secretary of the District Technical Planning Committee.

The facilities in Lira appeared somewhat better maintained than the office facilities in Mpigi. There was plenty of office space and the executive committee secretaries had their own offices. Each of the secretaries I interviewed seemed pretty settled into their offices. Papers, books, and other materials were apparent and suggested that people actually conducted work in the offices. The administrative staff was around and appeared to be working at all times. As noted above, Lira district also faced issues related to staffing. During 2000 three key positions were vacant after the officials had been arrested.

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Bushenyi district was constructing a new district administration building, Bushenyi House, which will be discussed more thoroughly below. The completion of the administration building in 2003 and the fact that it has been constructed using locally raised revenue or funds raised through fundraising efforts provide additional evidence of the district council's effectiveness. A great deal of the office block was completed prior to my fieldwork in the district and being new, the offices were quite nice. Like Lira, the offices of the administrators and politicians appeared to be used frequently and showed evidence of use, such as papers, books, and reports. Similarly, Bushenyi and Lira had computers for a variety of staff. For example, I observed that the administrative assistants to the chairmen in both districts had a computer for their own use, which was quite different from the situation in Mpigi.

Bushenyi district also faced challenges related to staffing and minutes from district council meetings indicate that councilors were well aware that vacancies in the district administration could negatively affect service delivery and sought ways to solve the problem. Councilors noted the need to recruit new staff, especially primary school teachers, to ensure high quality service delivery. Moreover, the district encouraged staff to seek further education and training.¹⁸

Despite differences in the staff capabilities and basic facilities, these three districts also shared some of the same constraints. For example, all three districts faced serious challenges with staff transport. Workers in the agriculture department in all three districts expressed serious concern over the limited transport available and complained that a lack

¹⁸ See minutes from June 26, 2000 council meeting, for example.

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of transport was one of the major constraints on fulfilling district workplans in their sector. For example, a veterinary officer in Lira district stated:

We have a problem of transport....For example, at the sub-county level only half the staff have motorcycles. At the district here, there is no specific transport for this section. There are two vehicles for the whole of this department with nine sections.

Agricultural workers in Mpigi and Bushenyi offered similar complaints. Veterinary workers in Bushenyi explained that the departmental vehicle had “been down for four months.”

6.3.3 Cabinet Stability

Politicians and administrators in Bushenyi also have more experience than their counterparts in either Lira or Mpigi. For example, executive committee members in Bushenyi have spent on average 9.75 years on the LC and 8.5 years on the executive committee. On the other hand, most executive committee members in Mpigi and Lira were serving their first term on the LC5. For example, executive committee members in Mpigi have spent only 7.2 years on the council and only 2.3 years on the executive. The political experience of leaders in Lira is lower still. As a result of a recent cabinet reshuffle, executive committee members in Lira have only been on the council an average of 6.6 years and on the executive only 1.2 years. Chairman Yowasi Makaaru in Bushenyi has been active in politics since 1963 and has been a member of the LCs since 1989. Before retiring from politics in 2002, Makaaru served three four-year terms as Bushenyi’s district chairman. The chairmen in Mpigi and Lira both served only one term (1998-2002). Lira’s district chairman lost his reelection bid in the 2002 LC5 elections and Zzimbe in Mpigi decided not to run, a decision influenced by the Movement

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leadership, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight. James Obua Otoa had previous political experience, serving as an ambassador under a previous government. Levi Zimbe, on the other hand, had never held an elected government position before successfully ousting Mpigi's chairman in June 1998.

While Chairman Zimbe in Mpigi had not reshuffled his cabinet since his election in June 1998, the division of the district in February 2000 brought many new, inexperienced councilors onto the executive committee. On the other hand, Chairman Otoa reshuffled his executive committee twice, both times political differences between him and some of the members of the committee prompted the reshuffle (see Chapter Seven for discussion).

Administrators in Bushenyi also have considerably more experience in the public service and more experience at their current posts than the administrators in Mpigi or Lira. The average length of time in the public service for administrators in Lira and Mpigi is 16.2 and 13.3 years, respectively, while the average tenure in the current post in Lira and Mpigi is 5.5 and 8.4 years, respectively. On the other hand, administrators in Bushenyi have been in the public service quite a long time (15.2 years on average), but have also been posted in Bushenyi for quite some time (12.4 years on average).

6.4 Responsiveness

6.4.1 Scores on Responsiveness Index

In Chapter Four, I define responsiveness as the extent to which government output matches the needs of its citizens. Scores from the responsiveness index suggest that Bushenyi's district council is more responsive than Mpigi, but the difference in scores is

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not great. For example, Bushenyi earned 11 of the 14 possible points (79 percent) on this index, while Mpigi district scored slightly lower and only received 9 of the 14 possible points (64 percent). Data was missing from Lira's performance evaluation and as a result, it did not receive a score on the responsiveness index. While the scores on the index for Bushenyi and Mpigi are higher than the average scores on the index for 36 districts (46 percent), only Bushenyi's score is more than one standard deviation above the mean.

Both Bushenyi and Mpigi districts earned a 0 on the indicator that assesses whether district development plans incorporate sub-county plans and projects that will have budgetary implications for the districts. There was little evidence in both districts that development plans included such investments, thus indicating that sub-county plans are unlikely to receive the funding they need to succeed. Similarly, LGDP evaluators found only limited evidence that Mpigi even includes recurrent expenditures by sub-counties into its annual planning.

In Bushenyi district, there was also limited evidence of mentoring of lower local governments by the district council. Personal interviews with district and sub-county officials suggests that the district not only fails to mentor lower LCs, but attempts to control sub-county council expenditures as well. For example, the CAO in Bushenyi explained the ways in which the district involves sub-county councils in district decision making.

We are trying to cultivate support for what we are going to do and be appreciated. For example, the purchase of the grader. We were asking the sub-counties to contribute. The [sub-county] chairmen said that they had to go back and consult the councils because it was not in their plans. The fact that the leaders must consult shows that they are accountable to their councils. We must do a lot of lobbying, but the grader was purchased

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after a lot of persuasion. We can't dictate. Even if we want something good, but if we do not involve them, they won't accept.

The efforts to persuade or even force sub-county chairmen to shift expenditure away from planned activities and toward the purchase of a new road grader for the districts indicates that the district administration is willing to overpower sub-counties to get what it wants.¹⁹ Such activities contribute to district council effectiveness, but certainly do little to increase the responsiveness of councils at either the district or sub-county level.

Equally, if not more troubling for responsiveness in Mpigi, is the fact that the district fell short on two other indicators. First, Mpigi's attention to poverty issues facing the district was viewed by LGDP evaluators as less than satisfactory. This is an extremely important finding. Given the level of poverty in each district, including Mpigi, ignoring the most pressing poverty issues facing the district certainly means that the district council is not focused on responding to the needs of the population.

As evident from a comparison of the problems most commonly cited by local residents with the priorities of district councilors, it is obvious that Mpigi district council is less concerned with poverty alleviating expenditures than expenditures that serve the personal and political needs of the local councilors. Two examples—a trip by the District Chairman and the Secretary of Finance to the United States and United Kingdom and expenditure on the “Mpigi Loop”, 1.1 kilometers of road between the district headquarters and the main road to Kampala—will be discussed at length below. Yet, Mpigi is not alone. Interviews and minutes for district council meetings reveal that similar problems plague Lira and even Bushenyi. As will be discussed below, in all three

¹⁹ Minutes from district council meeting on August 29, 2000 indicate that the district council requested sub-county councils to contribute 50 percent of the total cost of the grader (Bushenyi August 29, 2000).

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districts, councilors questioned the chairman and the executive committee about how money was spent.

Second, communication between the local government's political and administrative wings was also an area of concern for Mpigi district identified in the LGDP evaluation. Numerous interview respondents also expressed concern over the nature of the relationship between the political and administrative branches of the district local government. One respondent described the relationship as one of "mistrust", yet noted that within sectoral committees the relationship between administrators and politicians "is not so bad." She continues:

The technicians in committee work closely with the other people in the committee, but at the council, the bridge between the group disappears. For example, the engineer is only close to those that he interacts with, but not the general council. Those in the committee understand the workings of the department. Others do not know the hurdles we face. They are suspicious. You hate them because they do not appreciate you. But there is some semblance of harmony.

The response to the same question from Mpigi's clerk to council, however, suggests that committee meetings are not regularly held, and thus, a key link between these two groups of local leaders is weakened. He explained that problems arise between the politicians and technicians when politicians want to hold meetings and administrators discourage meetings because the resources do not exist to pay allowances and provide lunch to those who attend the meeting.

While many officials indicated that there was tension between these groups, there was little consensus as to whom was responsible for the problems. Where an official laid blame seemed partly driven by which group she or he was a member. One respondent complained that the technicians do not fulfill the work plans, while another argued that

the relationship fails only when the politicians interfere in the work of the technical staff. Political interference certainly seems to be a problem in Mpigi. But technicians in the district are certainly not blameless, although key reasons often discussed for the failure to fulfill workplans are the problems of limited resources and the redirecting of resources at the request of the political leadership.

While the majority of interview respondents in Lira described the relationship between politicians and administrators in Lira as good or cordial, comments suggest that this relationship is also tense or problematic at times. Most respondents who cited problems in the relationship blamed politicians for any difficulties. For example, one official responded to the question about the nature of the relationship between administrators and politicians, "I think it's fair. Although it's hard to work for them. Some of their thinking is against the guidelines. You find yourself tired and out of work if you go against them." The official continues,

You are forced to do all things because you fear for your job. If you are fired, you cry to the mother ministry, the Ministry of Education, but the MoE can do nothing to help you. We live under perpetual fear because you must dance to the tune. If the head of the civil service is strong, you have someone to support you. Programs suffer abuses. With schools, councilors say you must give to my area. The whole thing is political. You find one area getting so many schools.

Another official in Lira district explained that:

The relationship has not been so good because some politicians do not know their roles. They try to cross into what technicians are supposed to do and that causes conflict...Politicians crave for power. Also technocrats tend to look down on politicians because they feel they are more highly educated.

Yet, some of these same respondents stated that the sectoral committees they are associated with are performing quite well and presented this as evidence of a good

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working relationship between these two groups. For example, the respondent who despaired about the fear civil servants in Lira have of losing their job if they oppose the demands of local politicians, also quite surprisingly, evaluated the performance of the social services sectoral committee as quite good, with a strong committee chair and stated that the executive committee member responsible for the sector was performing well.

In Bushenyi, on the other hand, none of the district officials interviewed had any complaints about the nature of the relationship between district administrators and politicians. For example, one respondent stated:

The technical people and the politicians are well coordinated. Even when they make policies to implement, we hold meetings with them. We put our way forward and if they consent, we go ahead. There is nothing we do without their consent.

The CAO explained that the two sets of actors work together quite well. Previously, politicians had a limited role in planning and were not involved in the early stages of the process, but the CAO explained:

I invited the executive committee to the initial meetings of planning. It evolved into our planning process together. They asked us if we got allowances and I told them no. We worked hard and were not even taking lunch. After three days of serious thinking the politicians were tired.

After such exposure, the CAO argued that local politicians now have a much greater appreciation for the work done by the administrators, evident in the fact that they included provisions for lunch and allowances for district planners in the budget for the following year. This example provides some evidence of good working relations between these groups in Bushenyi, likely contributing to better performance. Yet, providing allowances for administrators is also contrary to the laws governing local governments. In fact, Mpigi's administrators, including the CAO, who were receiving

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allowances were admonished by the Minister of Local Government, Bidandi Ssali, and directed to return the money at once (*New Vision*).²⁰

Regardless of the exact nature of the problem, a strained relationship or a lack of communication between these two groups poses significant challenges to effective and efficient service delivery and certainly can make responding to public demands more difficult. Tension between politicians and administrators, as in Lira and Mpigi, likely indicates more serious problems, such as serious differences in the priorities between these two groups of actors. For example, many administrators in Mpigi lamented the short-term perspective of local politicians, and as discussed below, their concern for their own welfare above that of their constituents.

6.4.2 District Priority Areas versus Citizens' Priority Areas²¹

The measures of responsiveness available for use in the aggregate dataset, while extremely useful, did not allow me to make exact comparisons of district output and the needs of the public. The case study material allows for such comparisons. One way to evaluate how responsive the district councils are in these districts is to compare the problems identified by local residents with areas that receive priority in district expenditure, as reflected in the 1999/2000 budget estimates. Respondents' answers to the question, "What is the most serious problem in this area that you feel the district council should address?", are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 about here

²⁰ See *New Vision*, December 24, 1998, page 5. Article title was unavailable.

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As noted above, all districts have a problem of spending on activities that have no or only a limited impact on the alleviation of poverty in the district. I characterize such expenditure as unresponsive, as it is not intended to meet the needs of local people. Fieldwork in these three districts suggests, however, that this tendency is greater in Lira and Mpigi where systemic corruption and a proclivity toward the diversion of funds are commonplace. In Mpigi, numerous officials interviewed complained of the tendency of local politicians to shift funds away from planned activities and redirect these funds toward other purposes without the consent of the council or the population. Most recently, Mpigi district was identified by President Museveni as one of the eight most corrupt districts in the country (*New Vision* May 7, 2003). The situation in Lira is somewhat different. While few respondents offered direct complaints of diverted funds, there were numerous references in interviews, newspaper articles, and minutes of district council meetings to the high levels of corruption in the district. Several scandals were under investigation during the period of study. Bushenyi is certainly not immune to such problems, but there appear to be fewer instances of corruption and such instances seem to be more individualized rather than routinized or systemic.²² Moreover, administrators in Bushenyi were not critical of local politicians and were, in fact, quite complimentary, which was certainly not the case in Mpigi or Lira. Questions may be raised about the exact impact on the alleviation of poverty of some expenditures by the district council, such as a plan to provide car loans to councilors, but the decision making process appears to be much more transparent and involves elected councilors. This differs from the

²¹ Percents reported in this section include respondents who answered “yes,” they are currently a LC official.

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situation in Mpigi where the chairman alone or with a few executive committee members makes important decisions about redirecting funds. In Lira, it is not clear who is involved in corruption either actively or through complicity.

General Trends in District Expenditures

Despite these and obvious differences in planned district expenditure apparent in Table 7, there are several general trends across these three districts that influence the responsiveness of districts. These trends are also certainly characteristic of the spending priorities of district councils across all of Uganda's districts.

Table 7 about here

First, education was the largest expenditure category in all three districts, comprising over two-thirds of the district budget in Bushenyi and Mpigi and almost half in Lira. However, education was not ranked among the top three most pressing problems in any of these districts (see Table 6). This provides some evidence that continued central government control undermines local government performance. Central government transfers, which make up the bulk of district budgets, reflect the priorities of the central government. The tendency to allocate these funds through conditional grants, which can only be spent for activities specified by the center, robs local governments of the flexibility needed to respond to the priorities of their citizens. For example, in 1999/2000 conditional grants comprised over 7.5 billion Ush of Bushenyi district's total budget of 13.3 billion Ush. Thus, the district could exercise discretion over less than half

²² The few instances of corruption in Bushenyi will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

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of the revenue it received that year. An administrator in one of the districts explained it this way, “When the central government has health and education as its first priorities, that feeling filters down. The local government follows what the central government is prioritizing.”

For example, conditional grants for education constitute 15 percent of district total expenditure in Bushenyi and well over 65 percent of all conditional grants received. Included among these grants are funds to support Museveni’s program of Universal Primary Education (UPE), which allows four children from each family to attend government primary schools free of charge.²³ UPE emerged out of President Museveni’s campaign promises during the 1996 presidential campaign, and despite some problems in its implementation and unexpected consequences, he promised during the campaigns for 2001 presidential election to expand the program to cover secondary education. Despite clear accomplishments, such as increasing the number of children in school, in particular increasing enrollment rates for girls, the UPE program has also exacerbated the problem of classroom overcrowding and caused the number of students assigned to each teacher to skyrocket.

In addition to conditional grants, many districts receive funding directly from donors. Donor funds are important because they provide an alternative source of revenue to local governments, and until recently, had fewer strings attached than central government transfers. The level of donor financing certainly varies by district. For example, an estimate of the amount of donor revenue sent to Lira in 1999/2000 suggests

²³ The UPE program covers the basic costs of tuition at a government-sponsored primary school. Parents are still responsible for paying for books, uniforms, meals, and other expenses that may arise during the year. This has been a serious point of confusion, as many Ugandans refuse to pay any aspect of their children’s primary education, arguing instead that Museveni promised them “free education.”

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that donor funds accounted for almost 8 percent of Lira's annual revenue that year.²⁴ Both Bushenyi and Mpigi districts received fewer donor funds. In Bushenyi district, donor contributions to the budget comprised only 5.7 percent of the total revenue, while Mpigi only received 3.8 percent of its revenue from donors. Local leaders in Bushenyi repeatedly complained of the limited number of donors operating in the district. The number of donor and GOU funded projects operating in each district is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Seven.

Third, local revenue, important for its impact on discretionary spending by local governments, tends to comprise only a small percent of total district revenue.²⁵ Using local revenue for service delivery provides local governments with greater discretionary power and an enhanced ability to allocate resources according to the needs and desires of the people they represent. One politician in Mpigi explained that "When somebody else is feeding you, you do not have the power to say what you will take. All our money is from the center. About 90 percent comes from the center." Yet, there is some variation across the three case study districts, with Bushenyi district raising more local revenue than either Mpigi or Lira. In fact, local revenue constitutes 16 percent of Bushenyi district's revenue, while local revenue was less than 7 percent of Mpigi's revenue and less than 5 percent of revenue in Lira for the 1999/2000 budget year.

²⁴ Figures on Lira district council's revenue or expenditure must be considered rough estimates given that the budget from which they are drawn is only a draft and incomplete. Figures presented in Table 7 are a mix of estimated expenditures from the 2000/2001 budget and actual expenditures from the 1999/2000 financial year. Thus, analysis based on these figures must be interpreted carefully.

²⁵ Data on local revenue collection for the three case study districts are based on the 1999/2000 budget estimates for these districts. Data on local revenue collection for the other 40 districts in Uganda are drawn from budgets for each of these districts on file at the Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC) offices in Kampala. I would like to thank Nagadya and Adam for allowing me to sit in their offices and copy budget figures from the 43 budgets they had on file. The dates for the other 40 districts are inconsistent and vary depending on what year happened to be on file with the LGFC. I would also note that these figures are based on a single budget year. It is possible that these estimates reflect unique

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The aggregate dataset discussed in Chapters Four and Five includes several measures of local revenue collection for all 45 districts. An examination of local revenue throughout the country reveals that these three case study districts are quite similar to their neighbors. Generally, locally raised revenue constitutes an extremely small percent of funds used by district councils in Uganda. On average district councils receive only 10.5 percent of their annual revenue from revenue collected locally. However, this figure distorts the true picture of local revenue collection and expenditure across the country. In 30 Ugandan districts, local revenue comprises less than 10 percent of annual district expenditure. In 16 of these 30 districts, including Lira, local revenue makes up less than 7 percent of expenditure.

These three districts also vary in their abilities to collect local revenue that is included in budget estimates for a particular year. Bushenyi exhibits the greatest ability to collect local revenue and collected 91 percent of the local revenue the district included in its budget estimates. Mpigi only collected 72 percent of its local revenue estimates for budget year 1999/2000, while Lira district proved able to collect only 49 percent of its expected local revenue.

Bushenyi and Mpigi district performed better than average when one compares these three districts with the rest of Uganda's district local governments. On average, Uganda's districts collected 65 percent of the local revenue estimated in their budgets. The percent of budgeted local revenue that is collected by district councils ranges from a low of 2.2 percent in Adjumani to 104 percent in Kisoro. Only eight districts collect less than 50 percent of their local revenue budget estimates and Lira falls into this group. The

circumstances, such as a poor agricultural yield, which could affect the local revenue collected in a district. An average over several years would be preferred, although data for several years was unavailable.

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other 33 districts prove able to collect more than half of their local revenue estimates. Only seven districts collect over 80 percent of their budgeted local revenue and Bushenyi district is included among these districts. Bushenyi's district council's commitment to trying to increase local revenue collection is evident in two programs that were instituted by the district. The district adopted an incentive program that provides a one percent bonus to reward sub-counties for their collection efforts. Similarly, the district instituted a deadline for payment of graduated tax and a surcharge for late payment, both designed to discourage taxpayers from delaying in paying their graduated tax.

Given the conditions on spending for most central government grants to the districts, local revenue constitutes a pool of money over which district councilors have full discretion. Unfortunately, a large percent of local revenue is often used to provide for the salaries and allowances of district councilors and executive committee members, as well as the allowances of other required local government committees, such as the District Tender Board (DTB) or District Service Commission (DSC). For example, executive committee members are considered employees of the local government and are paid a salary and provided additional benefits, such as lunch and travel allowances. The LG Act of 1997 lays out strict guidelines about how much districts can spend to pay salaries, allowances, and other emoluments of councilors, executive and other committee members. Part 4 of the First Schedule of the LG Act, "The Local Governments Emoluments and Allowances Regulations", specifically states:

The expenditure of a Local Government Council in a financial year on emoluments and allowances of Chairperson, Councillors, members of the District Service Commission, the District Tender Board, the Local Government Public Accounts Committee and other District Council committees, shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total local revenue collected by that Local Government Council in the previous financial year (Uganda 1997, 113).

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A district's violation of this legal regulation is clearly an indicator of poor performance. Specifically, if a district council is spending large amounts of local revenue on politicians, little local revenue remains to try to meet the needs of the people. I recognize that local revenue in most districts is a small amount of money and that the salaries and allowances paid to local councilors are often quite low, even in areas where the district council is exceeding the legal regulation. Some might argue that local revenue is too small in most districts to be used to address the needs of the population. However, I think adherence to this regulation is still an important indicator of responsiveness because it gives some indication of council priorities.

Table 7 reports the percent of local revenue spent by the district councils in Mpigi, Bushenyi, and Lira on allowances and salaries for the councilors, executive committee members, and all other committees. All three districts violated the 15 percent legal limit with the amount they spent on allowances and salaries during 1999/2000. Bushenyi just barely missed the limit and spent 16 percent of its local revenue on these expenditures. Lira spent slightly more of its local revenue (22.4 percent), while Mpigi spent over 40 percent of local revenue on allowances and salaries of political leaders. The estimate for Lira may, in fact, be too low given the problems with the draft budget used to calculate these estimates. The *New Vision* reports that Lira spent over 80 percent of its local revenue on emoluments for councilors during the 1998/99 financial year (June 24, 1999).

Moreover, local leaders often push for increases in their allowances and complain if allowances are not paid promptly. For example, the *New Vision* reports that the Mpigi

district council increased councilors' allowances by 30 percent in July 2000.²⁶ In fact, this increase came at a time when LCs across the country were struggling to collect graduated taxes following a campaign promise by President Museveni to lower the minimum paid to 3,000 Ush. One district worker described it this way, "Most councilors see the council as a source of income and are not in it for community service, but to earn a living....the district's expenditure on the council is too high. This depletes the funds that would be used to run development programs."

A local politician explained that "Politics is temporary," and he needed outside employment to feed his family and send his children to school. When asked if his colleagues agree that they need a source of revenue beyond politics, he further explained:

Some may not, but I am aware that politics is temporary. Today people may like you. Another day they may have picked someone else...Those who serve one term after they get elected, they get so fat. At church they will not sit except right up on the front and they get upset if they are not called the 'Honorable'.

Politicians in Lira made similar complaints about their salaries and allowances. Minutes from council meetings recorded Chairman Otoa complaining about the "inadequacy of the 15 percent rule" because it restricts the salaries of district politicians (Lira July 30, 1999). Similarly, during a meeting in October 1999, another councilor "raised concern for their payments [of allowances] as to how they were not happy with part[ial] payments made" (Lira October 27, 1999).

Using data from the aggregate dataset, one can compare the performance of these three districts with other district councils.²⁷ The average percent of local revenue spent

²⁶ See *New Vision*, July 2, 2000, page 5. Article title was unavailable.

²⁷ It must be noted that the measure included in the aggregate dataset is based on calculations that do not include all of the committees and commissions included in the regulation above, or included in the calculations for the three case study districts. Thus, the estimated percent spent in the other districts is

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for district council allowances alone is approximately 9 percent—below the 15 percent legal limit. The percents range from 1 percent in Jinja to 28 percent in Katakwi. As noted in a footnote, this measure far from includes all of the emoluments and allowances paid out by the district council to support its officials. Including the salaries of the executive committee members, which can be somewhat costly to poor districts, provides a clearer picture of the burden that emoluments and allowances place on already tight budgets in many district councils. For example, monthly salaries for the LC5 chairperson, the vice-chairperson, and the secretaries of the executive committee in Mpigi district were 780,000 Ush, 517,000 Ush and 435,000 Ush, respectively in 1999. Using an average exchange rate of 1490 Ush to \$1, these figures are \$523, \$347, and \$292, respectively.²⁸ In comparison, annual local revenue expenditure per person by the district council is only 20,730 Ush (\$14) and Uganda's annual GDP per capita is \$1,167 (PPP).²⁹ The increase in salaries for the district chairman, councilors, and CAO in Bushenyi raised salaries for executive committee members to 960,000 Ush from 660,000 Ush and increased the chairman's salary to 2 million Ush from 1.2 million (*New Vision* July 14, 2001).

Local leaders in all three districts, although not always to the same degree, place emphasis on expenditures that meet political or even personal needs. Such expenditures are similar to the “sovereignty expenditures” or “regal expenditures” discussed by van de Walle (2001). For example, local politicians in many districts use scarce resources to finance trips abroad. In 1998, Mpigi's district chairman, Levi Zimbe, and the Secretary

somewhat lower than we would expect if calculations included all the commissions and boards listed above. If these were included, the percent for all districts would be higher and more districts would be found in violation of this rule.

²⁸ The average of 1490 Ush to \$1 is based on average bureau rate from July to December 1999 reported in the Bank of Uganda's January 2000 economic profile (Uganda 2000b).

²⁹ GDP per capita data is from UNDP, 2001. *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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for Finance, Joseph Nsereko, traveled to the United States and the United Kingdom; a trip that sparked tremendous controversy among district councilors. The exact amount of district money spent on the trip is unknown. Councilors complained that they had not approved the 10 million Ush that was used to finance the trip (*New Vision*).³⁰ One councilor complained:

Corruption has been the main problem. We asked the IGG to come. Like the American trip, the chairman and another went to the US for a conference without consulting the council. They claimed they consulted the finance committee, but the finance committee only passed 9 million Ush, but they took 23 million. We weren't given feedback. They talked about bringing back 100 computers for Kabasanda, but they still haven't come.

The minutes from the September 1998 council meeting report that several councilors “emphasised the need to follow the budget in order to develop Mpigi” (Mpigi September 28, 1998). In their defense, Chairman Zimbe “explained that the money for the trip was used so as to make fruitful contacts outside the Country,” while the Secretary for Finance justified the expenditure because they had been introduced to many investors in the US and UK (Mpigi September 28, 1998). The *New Vision* account of the incident reports that Chairman Zimbe contended that because the executive committee had approved the funds, he was not in the wrong.³¹

Lira's district chairman, Obua Otoa, also made several trips abroad. In 2000, he traveled to Namibia to attend a summit on African cities and planned to lead a delegation to Russia later that year (Lira June 30 and 31, 2000). One key difference between the situation in Lira and Mpigi is that no controversy erupted in Lira related to district expenditure to finance these trips abroad. This may be a result of the extent to which the

³⁰ See *New Vision*, September 29, 1998, page 5. Article title was unavailable.

³¹ See *New Vision*, September 29, 1998, page 5. Article title was unavailable.

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executive in Lira was able to use funds at its discretion with few questions from legislators, or more likely, the conference sponsors in Namibia or the delegation he was to head to Russia may have foot the bill for these trips, rather than the district council.

During the course of my fieldwork in Mpigi, the district hosted an event to honor a retiring bishop from the Church of Uganda. Chairman Zimbe recognized the occasion by offering a gift of a cow to the Bishop on behalf of the council. One district official described the decision making process this way:

For example, the cow for the bishop. It was not approved by the council, but it was done. The chairman will tell us, 'We bought him a cow.' He's done it on behalf of the council, but the council did not sit and decide.

While certainly less significant due to the amount of money involved, the gift of the cow exemplifies the nature of political decision making in Mpigi and the willingness of the chairman to make decisions about how scarce resources should be used without consulting the council or adhering to plans administrators prepared previously.

A great deal of the discussion during the council meetings in Mpigi shortly after the June 1998 LC elections also focused on the need to purchase furniture and a computer for the Chairman's office and a car for the Office of the District Speaker. Such equipment might be deemed necessary for the district executive to function, yet also exemplifies the sort of expenditure that address the political and personal needs of the leaders rather than the immediate needs of residents. During the period in which I conducted fieldwork in Mpigi, I never observed the Speaker in her office or working in the district. According to comments made by other interview respondents, she is a professor at Makerere University in Kampala and infrequently returns to Mpigi district.

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This is despite the fact that the position of the Speaker is considered a full-time position with a comparable salary.

In 1999, the Mpigi Inter-Gombolola Association (MIGAAS) was formed with the goal to reduce corruption and “strengthen transparency in the management of funds by local councils” (*New Vision*).³² The association is comprised of representatives from sub-county councils and primarily focuses its attention on oversight of the district council. Since its formation, MIGAAS has raised attention to possible instances of corruption and challenged the district on a number of its decisions and activities. For example, in November 2001, the group lobbied the Minister of State for Primary Education, Hon. Bitamazire—also a MP from Mpigi district representing women—because they felt the process of awarding tenders for the construction of schools in Mpigi was corrupt and resulted in sub-standard work (*New Vision* November 8, 2001).

Lira district council has been embroiled in a similar scandal related to the process of awarding tenders for important district contracts, such as constructing schools throughout the district. During interviews, several officials reported that potential contractors had to pay a bribe in order to win a contract. One official explained that the former vice-chairman was accused of involvement in this illegal process and that was the reason he was replaced in the reshuffle. Yet, the vice-chairman also stood to be a clear challenger to Chairman Otoa in the LC5 elections in 2002 and it is possible that the chairman made these accusations to discredit him prior to the election. The former vice-chairman, Odwe, later won the election, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

A second corruption scandal rocked Lira district and resulted in the arrest of three top administrative officials—the CAO, CFO and District Engineer—by the Inspector

General of Government (IGG). The three officials were charged with embezzlement of over 9 million Ush that was to be used to service and maintain the district's bulldozer (*New Vision*).³³ The CAO was cleared of charges and returned to work for the district, only to be interdicted again and forced to leave over further allegations of abuse of office, financial impropriety, incompetence and general mismanagement (*New Vision* January 11, 2003).

A similar controversy erupted in Bushenyi as a group of councilors calling themselves the *United Councilors' Group* accused Chairman Yowasi Makaaru of a variety of illegal activities, including awarding himself tenders to construct schools in the district, spending over 10 million Ush on a single service of his vehicle, and using district funds obtained illegally to purchase properties in Kampala (Bushenyi October 4, 2000). Interestingly, none of the district officials interviewed discussed this incident, not even the councilor for Bushenyi Town Council, Odo Tayebwa, who was also the leader of the United Councilors' Group. In an extraordinary council meeting called by the chairman to present his case, Chairman Makaaru argued strongly against every accusation and provided considerable evidence of his innocence. For example, the chairman cited the report of a Finance Committee investigation into the expenditure for servicing his vehicle. The Finance Committee concluded that the 10 million Ush covered the costs of servicing the vehicle over a three year period and not a single instance as alleged by the councilors (Bushenyi October 4, 2000).³⁴ Another accusation of the group focused on the fact that Chairman Makaaru's son received a bursary to help alleviate some of the costs of his university education. The United Councilors' Group claimed that his son received

³² See *New Vision*, January 25, 1999, page 9. Article title was unavailable.

³³ See *New Vision*, September 8, 2000, page 3. Article title was unavailable.

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800,000 Ush, while the program provided only 110,000 Ush per student. Chairman Makaanu denied this claim and evidence for his position is provided in the minutes from a district council meeting on August 29, 2000. The minutes state that:

...members defended the award of a bursary to Mr. Yoasi Makaanu's son as genuine since he is a privately sponsored student and was qualifying to get the bursary, because all students who applied and had the required qualifications were given scholarship" (Bushenyi August 29, 2000).

The evidence presented by the chairman was quite convincing and the district council unanimously adopted a resolution denouncing all of the accusations.

While much less controversial, Bushenyi district also instituted a loan program in 2000 that enabled councilors to borrow money in order to purchase a car. Minutes from a district council meeting in May 2000 indicate that the Finance Committee recommended that 15 councilors who had not yet received a car loan should be given a loan immediately (Bushenyi May 9, 2000). One could argue that enabling councilors to purchase cars through a car loan scheme, as well as a plan to provide mobile phones for executive committee members, could increase district effectiveness and responsiveness. Better access to transportation may increase the opportunity councilors have to visit their constituents and learn their needs. It is certainly not clear, however, whether councilors in Bushenyi who have benefited from the car loans are now more accessible to their constituents.

Aside from the construction of the new office building, Bushenyi district has a program to recognize good work by district employees. For example, the CAO explained that the district performed highest in the secondary school leaving exams and "We are having a day to celebrate the work of the teachers." These programs are just a few

³⁴ Equal to \$6711 at an exchange rate of 1490 Ush to \$1.

examples of the variety of programs carried out by the district with the intention of improving the work environment and as a consequence, increasing the morale of workers.

Auditing and other efforts to increase accountability are an extremely low priority in all three districts. This is unfortunate given the problems with corruption and the diversion of funds in Mpigi and Lira. For example, all three districts spend very little of their revenue on the internal audit section of the finance and planning department. In 1999, Bushenyi and Mpigi allocated only .3 percent of their total expenditure for internal audit. Lira spent even less—1/100th of 1 percent was allocated to internal auditing.

Another important trend in district expenditure is a focus on recurrent expenditure. Any development expenditure is usually tied to a conditional grant from the central government. For example, in most Ugandan districts, these three included, the construction of schools, roads, health units, and water sources is funded with PAF grants. While these grants come with detailed guidelines about how funds can be used and accounted for, districts have opportunities for innovation, an important indicator of good performance according to Putnam (1993).

Bushenyi district council provides an excellent example of a district that sought ways to improve service delivery through innovation. For example, the district adopted an innovative road contract system that had been developed in Mubende district. The Secretary for Works explained that “this system is successfully working in Mubende and if adopted would be easier to supervise, result oriented and cheaper than the old system” (Bushenyi June 26, 2000). The willingness to experiment and to seek out and adopt new programs that might be successfully working in other districts provides further indication of Bushenyi’s good performance.

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On the other hand, the performance of Lira and Mpigi districts appears to be much more reactive. These districts struggle to perform basic tasks and devote little energy and few resources to find new strategies that may improve service delivery. For example, one executive committee member in Mpigi complained about the district council's unwillingness to try new things. The politician had suggested that:

[T]he council try to purchase land and build business parks to attract investors... There were facilities to borrow money, but they said no. They could not see the value of urban planning. The government purchased the land along the road to Mukono, and it became an industrial zone. We could have had it. We lost that opportunity.

District Responsiveness to Key Problems

Mpigi

Survey respondents in Mpigi felt that agriculture and health care are the district's two most serious problems (see Table 6). The production and health departments rank fourth and second, respectively, in the amount of resources allocated to them in the budget. Mpigi district council planned to spend 3.0 percent and 15.0 percent for agriculture and health care, respectively. Such allocations suggest that the council is fairly responsive to citizen needs. Yet, as noted already, the tendency for district council to reallocate money away from planned activities raises doubts about the commitment of district officials to expenditures to address citizen concerns.

Looking at the frequency with which different sectors were discussed during district council meetings suggests that the district is aware of local concerns and somewhat responsive. For example, problems with health care were the second most commonly mentioned problems by survey respondents in Mpigi. Health care was also discussed quite frequently in district council meetings (14 times), second only to

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education, which was discussed 15 times. On the other hand, agriculture, which was viewed by respondents as having the most serious problems, was mentioned less frequently than any department (9 times). Interestingly, although agriculture is discussed in a number of meetings, none of the discussion focused on the district's activities in production, instead councilors simply complained of agricultural problems in their areas.

Mpigi respondents identified some of the same problems in production and marketing that were identified in the other two districts. Like Bushenyi, an extremely small percent complained of a need for more training and agricultural extension. Few respondents complained of problems in agriculture that district officials have much ability to influence. For example, marketing problems were considered the most pressing problem facing agricultural producers in Mpigi (see Table 7). A lack of necessary agricultural inputs, such as seeds, fertilizer or agricultural tools, was the second most urgent problem. Most respondents complained of the lack of markets and the decline in prices for agricultural products. District councils are ill-equipped to redress such problems. Based on the nature and levels of human and financial resources available to them, local leaders are best prepared to provide the following services: agricultural extension and other forms of training; distribution of high-yield or new varieties of seeds; and distribution other agricultural inputs. The agricultural staff in Mpigi district focused their efforts on such activities.

Agricultural workers reported that they distributed seeds and plantings to farmers and also trained farmers on new farming methods and the control of agricultural diseases. In 2000-2001, the district focused on distributing cassava plantings to replace those that were destroyed by the cassava mosaic disease. Farmers who received the plantings were

trained in how to protect the plants from the disease. During the financial year, the department trained about 20 to 30 farmers who were then expected to share the information with their neighbors. The small number of farmers trained is quite surprising, yet not so unexpected when one sees that the district only spent 165,000 Ush on local agricultural training. This is considerably less than the 3.05 million Ush that was originally budgeted for such training. The difference is explained partially by changes in the amount spent on “staff welfare.” The budget only allocated 939,000 Ush for this expenditure category, but the department spent almost 4.5 million Ush. In addition to the amount spent on local training, the district also spent over 3 million Ush for shows and exhibitions and another 43.8 million Ush for nonwage costs of agricultural extension. This additional spending suggests that there was a focus on trying to teach local farmers techniques and methods that may improve the production.

In addition to distributing cassava plantings, the agricultural department also relied on demonstration plots as another tool for training the local population in new agricultural methods. Similarly, a report of activities in the production sector mentioned district plans to sell beans, maize and clonal coffee seeds to sub-counties within the district as an additional way to improve production and hopefully the income producers received. The report also listed activities, such as creation of demonstration plots, to demonstrate the latest techniques for banana and coffee production and efforts by the district to increase the number of fish ponds.

One respondent described district efforts to create a “Poverty Alleviation Program” to increase the income people received from agriculture. The goal of the program, as described, was to provide seeds and make demonstration gardens. However,

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the district was able to accomplish very little because “the program is funded from local funds which is very minimal.”

Generally individuals outside government in Mpigi raised many of the same concerns regarding the problems with the district’s provision of agricultural extension services that were mentioned in the other districts. For example, a member of Mpigi’s Poverty Monitoring Committee (PMC), the district committee responsible for monitoring the use of debt relief monies through the Poverty Action Fund grants explained that:

Agricultural extension work is not all that good. Here at the sub-county we are employing university extension workers, but they have not helped us. Those workers don’t want to work in villages. They want white-collar jobs. Our graduate agricultural officer was posted, but had gone for further studies. But he just returned.

In response to the question about whether the worker was on a leave of absence, the PMC member responded, “No, he was just outside for one year.”

Although money was shifted within the production department, the amount of money the department received was closer to what was set out in the budget than was the case for Bushenyi district. Whereas the production department in Bushenyi only received 74 percent of the budget allocations for the department, the production sector in Mpigi received 83 percent of its budget allocations. Given the problems with Lira’s budget, it is more difficult to determine differences between budget estimates for a department and actual expenditure.

Nevertheless, interviews with agricultural and veterinary officers in Mpigi suggest that district political officials do not hesitate to divert funds away from agriculture if other priorities emerge. For example, one officer described the situation this way,

There is a difference in priorities, except for conditional grants. Agriculture is not a priority...The district priorities in writing are first

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health and water, then education, then roads, and last agriculture. But when it comes to the allocation of funds, one finds that priorities change. Agriculture is pushed further down. The allowances of councilors moves to the top.

Similarly, another politician noted the serious problem of diverting funds away from intended projects and toward priority expenditures of politicians. The respondent explained, “When it comes to resource allocation, when you make a draft budget, you set priorities. But assessing the inherent value of priorities is not there. Things that are technical are dissolved by vote.” These remarks highlight to power of politicians in Mpigi and their willingness to overpower technical decisions and divert funds away from projects previously identified by administrators to be necessary and useful. The respondent complained that many newly elected councilors enter local government “with a short-term perspective” and “see it as an opportunity to improve on his lot.” Moreover, new councilors “see it [political office] as an opportunity to get where they always wished they would be. Then it makes the short-term perspective a real problem for local government decision making, especially resource allocation.” The councilor referred directly to the tendency to ensure that councilors’ sitting allowances are paid first and foremost, regardless of whether money is left to fulfill district priorities and meet the needs of the people.

Interestingly, roads were not identified as one of the most serious concerns facing Mpigi district. Yet, information gathered from interviews in the district suggests that roads might have benefited considerably from the diversion of funds. The district leadership made repairing the “Mpigi Loop”—the 1.1 kilometers of road between the main road to Kampala and the district headquarters—one of its top priorities. The budget included 53.2 million for the construction of the Mpigi Loop, yet the true level of

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expenditure has been a source of tremendous controversy, and another example of ways in which district officials diverted funds away from intended purposes toward projects they deemed to be more important. For example, the district engineer explained how the construction of the Mpigi Loop transpired:

It is part of a contract for periodic maintenance for Mpigi-Kibibe road (23 km). Part of it (1.1 km) was funded by the district and cost 253 million Ush. For another 1.8 km, 600 million Ush was spent by the central government and 20.1 km of gravel [road] from a bit past the headquarters to Kibibe was 800 million Ush and funded by the central government. It is a trunk road. We got some assistance from the Ministry of Works and Housing Corporation. They decided to end the gravel in Kibibe instead of continuing as originally planned. Originally tarmac only went to the bank in Mpigi town. The district said that although this is not our road, let's try to tarmac all the way to the headquarters, and try to do the 1.1 km ourselves. It was supposed to be under Mpigi town council and the Ministry of Works.

The district chairperson described it this way:

In June, Museveni visited the district. He was looking for votes for the referendum. I asked him about the main road and told him it was a give and take relationship. The road was never fixed in successive governments. We got money from the Ministry of Works to repair the road from the headquarters to the roundabout. From the roundabout to the main road was left unfinished. The council voted money for that and made some adjustments to the budget. Some councilors hit the ceiling and questioned my powers. They forgot that the council had agreed.

The chairman referred to a motion introduced by the district councilor for Budde sub-county, Kabandwa. In his motion, Kabandwa questioned the expenditure on Mpigi Loop and argued that the expenditure on the Loop took funds away from other sectors without the permission of the council, despite the fact that the Loop was supposed to be the responsibility of the center. He explained that the 235 million Ush that had actually been spent far exceeded the amount approved by the council. Kabandwa charged that Zimbe had spent 54 percent of the annual budget in two months! (*New Vision* October 2, 2000).

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In his defense, the chairman contended that the increases in the amount spent were a result of increases in expected local revenue. Yet, as noted above, Mpigi's performance in collecting local revenue is not good. The district collected only 72 percent of the local revenue estimates in the 1999/2000 budget. It is hard to reconcile the chairman's claims in October 2000 that the district expected increased revenue when only months before he had allowed graduated tax payers in some areas to pay in installments rather than in lump sum and justified this by that fact that people were poor. This suggests that the district was unlikely to have earned so much by October that almost 200 million Ush in unexpected revenue was available to enable Zimbe to increase the expenditure on the Mpigi Loop from 53.2 million to 235 million Ush.

A *New Vision* article from December 1999 provides some support for the chairman's contention that the council agreed to increase the level of expenditure. The article explained that over 200 million Ush had been approved by the Mpigi district council to tarmac the Mpigi Loop with the Ministry of Local Government providing technical support and supervision (*New Vision*).³⁵

While problems with roads were not even considered by survey respondents in Mpigi to be one of the most serious problems facing the district, the poor condition of the roads was cited quite frequently as one of the main transport problems in the district (see Table 10). Other problems included: limited availability of transport; high costs of transport; lack of transport; and long distances. Although the construction of the Mpigi Loop focused expenditure in the roads sector, the nature of this expenditure did little to solve the transport problems listed above and only increased access to roads for a small percent of the district population, residents of Mpigi town and those traveling to the

district headquarters, in particular. Some also suggest that the road was repaired because it leads to President Museveni's ranch in Gomba, but there is no way to confirm such assertions.

Beyond the work on Mpigi Loop, the district engineer reported completing rehabilitation of 74 km of road and periodic maintenance of another 92 km of road. Much of this work was funded through PAF conditional grants and donor funds. The district engineer explained that acquiring a new motor grader and loader from the MoWks was another of the key accomplishments of the department.

As noted above, health care was considered to be the second most serious problem facing Mpigi district and interestingly, a review of Mpigi's budget for 1999/2000 reveals that it figures prominently among district priorities. In fact, health care was second only to education in the level of expenditure planned in the budget. Looking at the particular health problems respondents considered most important, the top four health problems were the following: 1) lack of a government hospital in area; 2) lack of proper sanitation; 3) lack of transport to medical care; 4) high costs of medical care; and 5) malaria.

When asked about the district's major accomplishments in health during the last year, the District Director of Health Services (DDHS) explained:

...all health sub-districts are operational with money to start them off and have a workplan. We are carrying out integrated outreaches. We constructed theaters in all health sub-districts. Some construction is still ongoing. We recruited staff. Another achievement is this [office] block. We came here in June.

³⁵ See *New Vision*, December 7, 1999, page 3. Article title was unavailable.

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The district recently built a new set of offices to house the office of the DDHS and other health administrators. The district also upgraded and rehabilitated several existing health units and constructed new units.

Finally, education was the largest budget item in Mpigi's 1999/2000 expenditures, comprising 66 percent of the total. Like their counterparts in Bushenyi and Lira, Mpigi respondents complained most often about the high cost and difficulties in paying school fees. Second, respondents expressed concern over a lack of government schools in the area, which means parents are unable to take full advantage of the UPE policy. The remaining three problems are closely related: problem of low standards in schools; poorly trained teachers; and too few teachers.

The focus of Mpigi district's activities in education centered, as in all districts, on school construction. One report indicated that the district constructed 100 classrooms through the central government's classroom completion grant (CCG) and school facilities grant (SFG). While the most common complaint concerning education by survey respondents in Mpigi was the high cost of school fees, the district made little progress in easing this burden on its citizens. In fact, a bursary program that was adopted by the council in 1998 was later cancelled due to a lack of funds. The program was resumed by 2000, but councilors grumbled over the fact that the payment of bursaries and scholarships could only be achieved by diverting funds away from a program to provide furniture to schools. District efforts to improve standards were quite limited. The school inspectorate department was one of the most understaffed departments in the district. This reflects a lack of commitment to trying to improve schools long term performance.

Lira

Survey respondents in Lira also identified health care and agriculture as the two most pressing problems. Health care and agriculture rank third and second, respectively, in district spending. In fact, the district council spends the following to try to address these problems: 11 percent for health care and 2.5 percent for agriculture. On the other hand, these sectors are not discussed as frequently as education in district council meetings. My analysis of the minutes from council meetings reveals that health care and agriculture were discussed less than ten times during five meetings, while education was the most frequently discussed item (11 times).

Local leaders felt that a severe financial crisis, which resulted from poor revenue collection, posed a serious constraint on the ability of the district council to respond to the problems of its residents (*New Vision*).³⁶ According to the CAO, over 300 employees were not paid for six months during 1997-8 because of the financial crisis confronting the district.³⁷ Problems remitting the requisite 65 percent of tax revenue to the sub-counties provide evidence that the financial crisis persisted through 2000 and also suggest continuing problems for the district in meeting the needs of its citizens. For example, during a council meeting in 2000, the CAO admitted that the district owed the sub-counties about 300 million Ush (Lira April 8, 2000).

Survey respondents viewed health care as the most serious problem, and it receives some attention from the district council. Health care is, in fact, the third highest priority of the district administration. Within the district, the top five health problems identified by respondents were: 1) malaria; 2) lack of transport or poor transport to

³⁶ See *New Vision*, April 9, 1998, page 8. Article title was unavailable.

³⁷ See *New Vision*, April 9, 1998, page 8.

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medical care; 3) other personal health problems; 4) lack of a government hospital in the area; and 5) poor nutrition. At first glance, it appears as though some of these problems, such as malaria, poor nutrition, and even personal health problems, fall outside the jurisdiction of the district council. Nevertheless, district representatives can deal with such problems effectively through programs to sensitize the public about controlling these diseases, such as recommending the use of mosquito nets or clearing any standing water from within housing compounds as ways to fight malaria. During the five council meetings for which minutes were available, there was no discussion of such strategies and none of these activities were mentioned by the DDHS. One of the executive committee members did, however, mention that the district has been “fighting against malaria” and had supplied Kyoga county with mosquito nets.

Minutes from council meetings and interviews with all other district officials, however, reveal that expenditure on health care focused on the “improvement in health infrastructure” and the construction of health units and living quarters for medical staff at these units, in particular. The DDHS explained that the district constructed 11 new health centers, recruited 102 new staff members, purchased drugs for health units, and began construction of theaters in the district’s seven health sub-districts. He explained that at the time of the interview the district had started construction of theaters and doctors’ houses in three of these sub-districts. Such activities bring health services nearer to the people and help to deal with the problem Lira respondents cited about the lack of transport to medical care or a lack of government hospital in the area.

While respondents in Lira did not often mention the problem of a lack of drugs in government health units, many officials discussed the problems the district faces in

ensuring that drugs are available. For example, one official explained, “I think the procurement of drugs is a problem. It’s distributed to the sub-county slowly. Some reach, but it can be misused at the health unit.” Similarly, another official noted the problem, but placed responsibility for the lack of drugs on the center rather than corruption within the health units. He stated, “In health, a problem with drugs. The President banned cost-sharing and for sometime there’s been no drugs.” Despite such negative assessments, the DDHS in his comments indicated that there has, in fact, been an increase in money coming to the district for the supply of drugs.

As noted, many respondents in Lira viewed agriculture as an area of serious concern. The production sector receives over 13 percent of Lira’s budget, while agriculture accounts for only a small percent of this amount. Unlike Bushenyi and Mpigi, respondents considered a lack of agricultural inputs to be the most serious problem within the agricultural sector. Over 60 percent of respondents in Lira expressed this concern. Most explained that they no longer had bulls or oxen for plowing or even hoes and seeds. Without such tools, residents are forced to rely on manual labor, which reduces the area cultivated and thus, limits yields. Others complained about the lack of markets for their goods. Both problems are captured in this response: “Most of us don’t have bulls to plow and even then, though we dig and harvest well, due to poor roads or no roads, we don’t have a market for our products.”

Responses from district officials suggest that the district has been active in trying to meet these particular needs. Comments from administrators within the production department about the tendency of politicians to divert funds away from the sector to pay allowances and other expenditures, however, suggests that some planned activities do not

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actually occur. One district official described the council's efforts to implement correctly and fairly the government's restocking program. Interestingly, however, officials in the production department did not mention the implementation of the restocking program among the district's main accomplishments in their sector. Similarly, one MP from Lira was critical of the way the program has been implemented. He explained:

The restocking program has been distributed well. There is a problem because it's being done by the LC system. They are the ones taking priority. They make sure they receive and then what's left goes to people. But currently this is a new phase. We talked about it during the last phase and we hope it won't be a problem.

In addition to implementing the restocking program to address the problem of limited oxen, agricultural officers mentioned other programs to address residents' concern about a lack of agricultural inputs generally. The district has carried out seed multiplication activities to make improved seeds available to farmers. There have also been training programs for farmers and extension staff and demonstrations of improved technology. District officials tabled a bill during a council meeting to introduce income-generating projects in agriculture, but there was no resolution or adoption of such a program in any subsequent meetings for minutes were available.

Education ranks fifth among the problems identified by residents in Lira, falling closely behind corruption. As in both Bushenyi and Mpigi, education is the top priority when it comes to district expenditure in Lira. Likewise, the high cost of school fees was the most common problem mentioned when respondents were asked specifically about the problems facing the district in the education sector. There is some evidence that Lira district council sought to alleviate this concern, at least partially, through a bursary program.

There has also been some effort by the district to deal with the shortage of classrooms. For example, funds from the LDDP program enabled the district to construct 20 schools and the district likely benefited equally or more from CCG and SFG grants from the central government. Yet, concerns with how these funds have been used raise questions about whether reported outputs reflect reality. Generally the level of responsiveness within Lira's education sector can be questioned in light of the tremendous controversy surrounding the district's use of central government conditional grants for UPE and the construction of classrooms. Lira was penalized by the central government for misuse of funds and a lack of accountability for central government grants in education.

Roads were not cited as a serious problem in Lira. Instead respondents felt that the lack of water or the poor quality of the water was a more pressing issue. According to administrators in the works department, the district has made significant progress in the provision of clean water. For example, one official explained, "We made a number of water points and increased clean water coverage from 60 to 75 [percent]." Another official explained that the district has been actively drilling boreholes and shallow wells, and protecting existing springs. Yet, again other respondents were critical about the allocation of these goods and services, suggesting that areas in the most need are not necessarily the ones that benefit. This is a serious problem in Lira that is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

The responsiveness of Lira district council is certainly impeded by instances of corruption or the misuse of funds, but in addition, the financial state of the district poses serious challenges. For example, the district has been sued by both road contractors and

teachers for nonpayment. As noted, council records indicate the district does not remit funds back to the sub-counties as legally required and district employees are often not paid for long periods of time. Yet, other problems certainly exist. For example, the district failed to use funds received through various PAF conditional grants and the Netherlands' LDDP program and these funds had to be returned.

Bushenyi

Bushenyi residents cited problems with roads and agriculture as the most serious problems facing the district. Yet, these are not the top priorities of the local government in spending (see Table 7). Spending for the works and production departments is quite low, and the departments rank fourth and sixth, respectively, in levels of overall spending. For example, the production department only receives 2.4 percent of the total budget with agriculture receiving less than 1 percent. While the works department accounts for 5.5 percent of district expenditure, only a small portion of this amount (2.6 percent of total expenditure) is allocated for roads. That means that over 92 percent of the remaining budget is allocated to other purposes.

An analysis of the frequency with which different sectors were discussed during district council meetings reinforces the idea that the production and marketing sector, of which agriculture is only a part, receives limited attention from district councilors. This sector was mentioned less frequently than any other sector. On the other hand, the technical services and works department was mentioned quite frequently. During six district council meetings in 2000, 13 issues related to the work of this department were

raised and discussed by councilors. The education department was discussed most frequently (14 times), while health care was only discussed five times.

The extremely small percent allocated toward agriculture, and the limited attention given to this department during council debates, are quite surprising given Bushenyi's reputation for agricultural production, specifically milk and matooke production. I would expect the district government to make this important sector a high priority. Yet, an interview with a member of Bushenyi's PMC revealed that the district has spent very little of these resources for agriculture. When asked why the district has not focused PAF resources on agriculture, the respondent explained:

Agriculture had bad administration right from the top. But now this is gone. Even when you see the money, agriculture is given the least. They put conditions that the money go to graduates from Makerere University, but these people are not interested in going to villages. Ordinary people are not interested in having graduates at the sub-county...PAF requires that graduate agricultural extension workers from Makerere University must be at the sub-county, but they were not facilitated. But also agricultural products are not selling. Coffee, a tin was selling for 6000 Ush. Now you are lucky if you get 2000 Ush.

Administrators in the veterinary department characterized the situation a bit differently and noted that the production department is "among the district priorities" and gets "a fair share from the district funds", but the problem is that there are few donors interested in production. In fact, the respondent noted that "Donor funds are targeting community based projects and within production we have few community based projects, so donors don't go for production." It is true that the production department receives extremely little outside funding beyond central government conditional grants. The bulk of these grants is earmarked for salaries of agricultural extension staff, rather than other goods and services. In 1999/2000, Bushenyi received 10.3 billion Ush in central

government transfers, but less than 1 percent of this money was allocated to agriculture and over a third of these funds was used to pay the salaries of the agricultural extension staff. Nevertheless, it is quite telling that the 41,981,000 spent on agriculture in 1999/2000 was less than half the amount the district had budgeted for that year (Bushenyi 2001). Of this amount, only 4.4 million Ush was spent on agricultural goods and services, e.g. herbicides and insecticides (Bushenyi 2001).

In response to a question about the district's priorities, a local politician explained:

We are working on national priorities. Most of our resources go to education. Second to health and third to communication. By our nature, we have to manage the organization. The next goes to organizational/administrative set-up. We also had wanted production and marketing.

Respondents in Bushenyi district complained of 1) a lack of markets for their produce, 2) reduced prices for their products, 3) lack of land, and 4) various agricultural diseases and pests. Less than 3 percent of survey respondents stated that the need for training and agricultural extension was the most serious problem facing that sector. The problems identified, such as lack of markets, low prices or lack of land, are things that the district council has limited capacity to ameliorate. Agricultural officers can provide education about how to combat agricultural diseases and pests, such as cassava mosaic or coffee wilt. Moreover, they can also provide hybrid seeds that are disease resistant or even distribute insecticides or pesticides. Minutes from council meetings reveal that the council attempted to carry out some activities that might solve the problem of agricultural diseases and even the more general problems with marketing produce identified by respondents. For example, one report presented to the district council detailed activities

related to production, including the establishment of micro-finance projects in some sub-counties, dip sample analysis, cattle vaccination, artificial insemination, and meat inspection. Similarly, in another meeting a local councilor submitted a proposal to create clonal coffee nurseries in all coffee-growing sub-counties. I found no evidence, however, that the project was ever initiated during the year.

As noted above, the poor quality of roads in the district was the most common response to the general question about the most serious problems facing district. Yet, only 2.6 percent of Bushenyi's expenditure was allocated directly to road construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation. The responses were quite similar to the more specific question about the main transport problems in the district (see Table 11). Some of these problems district councils are unable to solve directly, such as the high cost of transport and the lack of available transport. For example, districts can only address the cost and availability of transport indirectly by easing licensing requirements and lowering fees charged to transporters. The limited number of local revenue sources and the importance of revenue collected from licenses and fees suggest that these types of remedies are unlikely to be embraced by district councils. A review of the minutes of various council meetings in Bushenyi reveals that there was some discussion of local taxi service. The discussion was not in relation to the availability of transport or the fees charged to these transport providers, however. Councilors instead complained that local taxis were disturbing the peace at local taxi stands.

District councils can deal with the problem of poor roads or the lack of roads. Local governments can allocate revenue toward the construction of new roads and the rehabilitation and maintenance of old roads. Bushenyi district has made an attempt to

perform such tasks. The district allocated 7.5 million Ush (only 2 percent of funds allocated to roads) for the maintenance and opening of rural roads. While this figure seems quite small, the district also spent almost 230 million Ush to pay for road contract services. The district contracts out road maintenance throughout the district to small companies and individuals. The district engineer described it this way:

Then we rehabilitated 5 kilometers of feeder roads using labor-based methods. It's a new technology that's being encouraged because there is so much labor. It takes more time [and is] also expensive, but acquiring machines is costly. We started a pilot, but next year we got another project [using labor-based methods] for 10 kilometers.

Generally describing the accomplishments of the works department during 2000, the district engineer explained, "We've been able to maintain 760 kilometers of feeder roads under routine maintenance." Given that the entire district road network is only 770 kilometers, the level of maintenance described by the engineer sounds quite impressive. Not only did the shift to labor-based maintenance facilitate repair of district roads, but the arrival of several key pieces of equipment for road construction and maintenance also helped. The district obtained a new grader through a combination of district and central government revenues. Local government records also indicate that the district received a bulldozer and water bouncer from the Ministry of Works.

The policy guidelines created and imposed on districts by the Ministry of Works poses a key challenge to meeting public's expectations concerning the maintenance of old roads and the construction of new roads. For example, the engineer explained how the ministry's policy guidelines limit what districts can and cannot do with the funds they receive from the center.

We have a road network of 770 kilometers. The district council would like to maintain all. The Ministry of Works says not all roads are in

maintainable condition. They saw [we can] only maintain roads that have been rehabilitated. It might only be 400 kilometers that have been rehabilitated. For us, we think all roads are important and need maintenance. If we put money on maintenance of unrehabilitated roads, it serves a purpose. If we left them unattended, these areas are inaccessible...They say if you say you are maintaining all of the network, you can't say you are doing any rehabilitation.

The construction of Bushenyi House, the new office building for the district council and administration, has been a top priority of the district. The CAO explained that before decentralization, "There was no office space, except in the old districts. We had a small building and small rooms and no equipment...The money for building this office is from local revenue." The construction of the new office block was a principal political goal of Chairman Makaaru. The chairman's goal of completing three stories of the administration building was unfulfilled when he left office in 2001. He explained:

I'm happy to inform you I've registered a number of development programs...extension of the former administration block and this new council block. It's supposed to have three stories. [Interviewer: How many does it have now?] Just one. I had the intention to leave the house finished, but I don't know if I will see it finished.

Almost 10 percent of Bushenyi's district budget was spent on health care (9.7 percent). The large percent allocated to health care suggests that district priorities are somewhat out of line with citizen needs. In fact, a lack of drugs was the most often cited problem in health care in response to the general question about the most serious problem the district council should address. However, in response to a more specific question about the main health problems facing the community, survey respondents raised the very serious issue of access to health care. Behind malaria, which was by far the most common answer provided, respondents complained of a lack of transport or even poor quality of transport to reach medical care. Respondents also cited the problem of a lack

of government hospitals in their area. To respond to these problems, district expenditure must focus on building health units and sensitizing local populations about malaria prevention.

District expenditure for health has focused primarily on the construction of new health centers and living quarters for doctors and other health workers. In a report presented by Chairman Makaaru to the council in June 2000, the chairman stated that five health sub-districts are now operational, the construction of the theater at Nsiika is complete, and construction is ongoing at two additional sites. It is important to note, however, that during the year there was almost no discussion of the health sector—either the problems in the health sector or the district’s efforts to supply health care to local residents.

In addition to discussing the construction of health facilities, a health administrator mentioned that the district has also provided “a steady supply of drugs” to district health units and hospitals. Other interview respondents in Bushenyi also pointed out that the district council has been successful at stocking drugs in health units across the district. In fact, the district spent over 56 million Ush on the purchase of drugs. But looking ahead at the projections for the 2000/2001 budget, the level of expenditure for drugs is likely to increase from 56 million Ush to 157 million Ush. Yet, the costs of health administration far outweigh this small percent. Maintaining the office of the DDHS costs Bushenyi district 65 percent of its entire health budget, while Primary Health Care only receives 1.6 percent of the total expenditure. In fact, almost 50 percent of district expenditure for health cover employee costs, while another 13.7 percent covers transfers to NGO hospitals operating in the district.

Summarizing the district's accomplishments in the health sector during the previous year, an administrator in the department said:

We constructed theaters in these health sub-districts. They are not complete. Also constructed doctors' houses. We put up some maternity and general wards. Also some manpower recruitment. Now about 80 health workers have been recruited. Some people were confirmed in service and a few have had promotions. And a steady supply of drugs besides the malaria epidemic.

As discussed above, education was the top priority of the district based on overall expenditure. The main problems in the provision of education identified by respondents in Bushenyi were: 1) difficulties paying school fees (29 percent); 2) low standards in schools (19 percent); 3) few teachers (17 percent); and 4) poorly trained or untrained teachers (7 percent).³⁸ A review of the district budget and minutes from LC meetings reveals that district councilors have attempted to respond to these problems. For example, Bushenyi district councilors passed a school bursary and scholarship program (see May 9, 2000 minutes). During the 1999-2000 financial year, Bushenyi district allocated 37 million Ush to paying school fees for students in the district. These bursaries comprised .4 percent of the district total expenditure. Councilors decided that the bursaries should be allocated evenly across the sub-counties within the district, with 20 students in each sub-county receiving an award. The district also allocated 45 million Ush to assist 194 students in institutions of higher learning.

Concerning the other problems identified by residents, Bushenyi, like Mpigi and Lira, has done less to respond to complaints of poorly trained teachers, a lack of teachers, and the overall low standards in district schools. The minutes from Bushenyi's June 2000 council meeting indicate that there was some discussion of the problem of inadequate

staff and the need to recruit more teachers. The Secretary for Education for the district reported that the teacher-student ratio in Bushenyi had improved from a ratio of 130 students to every teacher to only 80 students per teacher (Bushenyi June 26, 2000). Central government transfers, in particular grants for the construction of classrooms, such as the school facilities grant (SFG) and classroom completion grant (CCG), have enabled all three districts to build classrooms. During the 1999/2000 financial year, Bushenyi district constructed 80 rooms under the CCG and 66 rooms under the SFG. An important part of the SFG allows for the construction of latrines at schools. In addition to the classrooms constructed, Bushenyi district also constructed 66 pit latrines with the SFG and 140 with the help of the Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES) project. Lira and Mpigi benefited from similar programs.

In response to a question about what the district has accomplished in the education sector in the last year, respondents did not mention any council activities that would ensure that qualified teachers are in the district's classrooms or that the standards of education are high. In fact, the 1999/2000 budget does not provide funds for the recruitment and training of new teachers or the retraining of existing staff. There is almost 550 million Ush allocated to teacher education, but it is unclear how exactly that money is used. On the other hand, the district has worked hard to ensure that all teachers have appointment papers and that they get paid in a timely fashion, which likely contributes to improving educational standards. Bushenyi district officials are extremely proud that the district pays teachers' salaries by the 28th of each month.

³⁸ These are the top four answers given. However, 9.8 percent of Bushenyi respondents gave alternative answers that were combined into an "other" category.

6.4.3 Questions about Local Council Responsiveness³⁹

What do citizens have to say about local council performance? A survey question asked respondents to choose between the following two statements:

- A. The local councils do not spend money on things to meet our needs.
- B. The local councils spend money on things that the people here need.

Obviously this is a general question about the responsiveness of LCs and does not specifically mention the district council. This is a problem in trying to understand whether citizens feel that the district council responds to their needs. Yet, the question is useful because it may highlight trends in a district and reveal public attitudes about government responsiveness in each district. Less than 50 percent of all survey respondents (n=513) chose statement B. Almost half of the respondents felt that the expenditures and outputs of their LCs do not meet the needs of the community. Differences exist across these three districts in how well citizens perceive their local councils' spending meets their needs. For example, 55 percent of respondents in Mpigi agreed with statement B,⁴⁰ while only 49 percent of Bushenyi respondents agreed to this statement and an even smaller percent of Lira respondents selected statement B (31 percent).⁴¹

Another survey question asked respondents to choose between two statements to gauge whether citizens feel that their opinions are considered in decisions made by local councils.

³⁹ Percents reported in this section exclude those respondents who reported being a LC official at the time of the survey.

⁴⁰ Percentages reported are based on calculations excluding respondents who said that they did not know or that they did not agree with either statement. The results are similar when these respondents are included in the analysis.

⁴¹ The differences across the three districts in response to this question are statistically significant at the .01 level based on the value of Chi-square; Phi = .250, Cramer's V = .177, sig .01.

- A. Local leaders consider my opinion and views when making important decisions.
- B. It does not matter what I think, local leaders do not consider my opinions when making important decisions.

This is a less direct measure of responsiveness and could even measure feelings of political efficacy. Nevertheless, responsiveness requires that political leaders are aware of and consider the problems and concerns of local people when making important decisions about the allocation of goods and services.

The majority of respondents in all three districts agreed with statement A. In fact, almost 75 percent of respondents in Lira selected statement A and agreed that the LCs in their area consider the opinions of residents when making important decisions.⁴² Slightly smaller majorities in Bushenyi and Mpigi agreed with this statement. Despite apparent differences in all three districts between the problems survey respondents identified as being the most serious and the spending priorities of district councils, the fact that so many respondents felt as though their voices do matter in decision making suggests decentralization is having intended effects. Yet, evidence reported in Chapter Eight reveals that individuals in all three districts do not embrace all of the different opportunities for participation provided to them with decentralization.

The preceding discussion indicates that Bushenyi's district council is more effective and more responsive than its counterparts in Lira and Mpigi. The following chapters will assess the explanatory power of various factors theorized to account for such differences in local government performance.

⁴² Percents reported are based on calculations when "don't know" responses are excluded. Differences across the three districts are statistically significant at the .01 level based on values of Chi-square, Phi and Cramer's V.

Table 1: Citizen Perceptions of Local Council Performance

	Bushenyi	Lira	Mpigi
Village council	60.7	75.9	62.8
Sub-county council	56.9	52.5	45.0
Sub-county chairperson	60.2	56.5	51.2
District council	65.7	42.4	48.6
District chairperson	61.5	42.4	48.4

(Percent responding “good” or “very good”)

Table 2: Performance in Education

Percent responding that performance for key tasks was good or very good	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Providing education in this district generally	50.0	44.4	36.7
Staffing existing schools with trained and qualified teachers	60.5	40.9	50.0
Inspecting schools in the district	67.1	50.4	34.0
Providing desks for students in existing schools	65.2	30.7	22.1
Providing textbooks in existing schools	64.6	30.6	40.8
Constructing classrooms	65.9	38.6	47.7

(Percent responding “good” or “very good”)

Table 3: Performance in Health

Percent responding that performance for key tasks was good or very good	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Providing health care in this district generally	35.3	20.0	23.4
Constructing new health units	34.8	15.2	15.5
Ensuring an adequate supply of drugs are available	32.1	15.9	8.3
Providing health education	39.0	19.7	21.2
Mobilizing people for immunization	96.4	90.7	89.8
Increasing access to proper sanitation	44.2	39.3	22.6
Rehabilitating existing health units	57.2	34.2	22.0
Staffing health units with trained and qualified staff	64.7	36.9	30.3
Increasing access to clean water	38.0	21.8	19.2

(Percent responding “good” or “very good”)

Table 4: Performance in Roads and Transport

Percent responding that performance for key tasks was good or very good	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Rehabilitating existing feeder roads	25.8	29.3	17.8
Constructing new feeder roads	20.6	13.3	15.8
Maintaining existing feeder roads	27.2	22.7	14.4
Ensuring that all parts of the district have equal access to well maintained roads	24.7	20.0	20.7

(Percent responding “good” or “very good”)

Table 5: Performance in Production and Marketing

Percent responding that performance for key tasks was good or very good	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Assisting farmers in the production and marketing of their products generally	25.8	5.1	6.8
Providing training in modern farming techniques	48.1	17.6	8.7
Providing new varieties of seeds/plantings to farmers	48.8	14.6	15.9
Vaccinating livestock	39.9	34.1	19.3
Providing treatment of sick animals	38.9	31.2	11.9
Assisting farmers in dealing with major diseases that threaten production	13.3	4.6	13.2

(Percent responding “good” or “very good”)

Table 6: Most Serious Problems Identified by Local Residents

Bushenyi N=200	Mpigi N=202	Lira N=203
1. Roads Poor roads: 26% Lack of roads: 2.0%	1. Agriculture Crop diseases: 18.8% Lack of markets: 12.9%	1. Health care Lack of health care: 15.8% Lack of drugs: 13.3%
2. Agriculture Crop diseases: 10.5% Lack of markets: 8.5%	2. Health care Lack of health care: 13.4% Lack of drugs: 5.4%	2. Agriculture Lack of markets: 12.8% Crop diseases: 1.5%
3. Health care Lack of drugs: 11.5% Lack of health care: 3.0%	3. General poverty Lack of capital: 14.4%	3. Water Lack of water: 11.8% Poor water: 2.5%
4. Education Too few teachers: 7.5% Lack of schools: 4.5%	4. Education Lack of schools: 8.4% Too few teachers: 3.5%	4. Corruption Corruption: 12.3%
5. Corruption Corruption: 10.5%	5. Corruption Corruption: 9.4%	5. Education Lack of schools: 5.9% Too few teachers: 5.4%

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Table 7: Summary of Budget Statistics for Case Study Districts

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
	Estimated Actual Expenditure 1999/2000	Estimated Actual Expenditure 1999/2000	Actual Expenditure and Budget Estimates 1999-2001
1. Management Support Systems	594,311,431	1,006,574,000	847,823,077
2. Finance and Planning	754,467,911	328,462,000	858,190,787
<i>Internal Audit</i>	39,438,415	51,110,000	880,100
3. Production and Marketing	304,056,800	776,720,000	2,195,097,370
<i>Agriculture</i>	41,981,000	522,986,000	408,389,796
4. Technical Services and Works	692,276,845	775,932,000	646,125,207
<i>Roads</i>	330,524,513	706,032,000	425,007,569
5. Education and Sports	8,607,245,517	11,954,457,000	7,886,683,014
6. Health and Environment	1,231,015,022	2,716,378,000	1,763,097,077
<i>Primary Health Care</i>	198,487,204	976,689,000	580,449,734
7. Gender and Community Welfare	157,216,640	22,491,000	1,321,000
8. Council, Commissions, etc.	337,997,281	520,105,000	150,282,474
<i>All Political Committees</i>	223,981,040	478,290,000	119,513,074
<i>Executive Committee only</i>	73,180,520	150,114,000	51,307,974
Total Expenditure	12,678,587,447	18,101,120,000	16,458,515,390
Total Revenue	13,264,967,092	18,944,248,000	16,313,398,865
<i>Local Revenue</i>	<i>2,119,254,251</i>	<i>1,287,277,000</i>	<i>669,423,439</i>
Local Revenue as percent of total revenue	16.0	6.8	4.1
Committees as percent of local revenue	16.0	40.4	22.4

Table 8: “What are the main agricultural production and marketing problems in this community?”

Bushenyi N=184	Mpigi N=195	Lira N=198
1. Lack of markets or lack of transport to markets (40.8%)	1. Lack of markets or lack of transport to markets (30.3%)	1. Lack of agricultural inputs (63.1%)
2. Prices for products too low (17.4%)	2. Lack of agricultural inputs (22.6%)	2. Lack of markets or lack of transport to markets (19.2%)
3. Lack of land (14.7%)	3. Agricultural diseases and pests (16.9%)	3. Prices for products too low (10.1%)
4. Agricultural diseases and pests (10.3%)	4. Prices for products too low (11.3%)	4. Poor climate (2.5%)
5. Lack of agricultural inputs (6.5%)	5. Poor climate (5.1%)	5. Agricultural diseases and pests (1.5%) 5. Poor quality soil (1.5%)

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Table 9: “What are the main education problems in this community?”

Bushenyi N=164	Mpigi N=169	Lira N=168
1. Paying school fees (29.3%)	1. Paying school fees (30.8%)	1. Paying school fees (17.9%)
2. Low standards in schools (18.9%)	2. Lack of government schools in area (18.9%)	2. Lack of desks (14.3%)
3. Too few teachers (17.1%)	3. Low standards in schools (13.0%)	3. Too few teachers (12.5%)
4. Poorly trained teachers (7.3%)	4. Poorly trained teachers (10.1%)	4. Lack of accommodation for teachers (9.5%)
5. Lack of classrooms (5.5%)	5. Too few teachers (7.7%)	5. Poor roads to schools (7.1%)

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Table 10: “What are the main health problems in this community?”

Bushenyi N=194	Mpigi N=189	Lira N=200
1. Malaria (34.5%)	1. Lack of a government hospital in area (34.4%)	1. Malaria (28.5%)
2. Lack of transport to medical care (17.0%)	2. Lack of proper sanitation (22.2%)	2. Lack of transport to medical care (20.0%)
3. Lack of a government hospital in area (14.9%)	3. Lack of transport to medical care (10.1%)	3. Other personal health problems (18.5%)
4. Lack of proper sanitation (8.8%)	4. High costs of medical care (6.9%)	4. Lack of a government hospital in area (11.5%)
5. High cost of medical care (5.2%)	5. Malaria (5.3%)	5. Poor nutrition (8.0%)

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Table 11: “What are the main transport problems in this community?”

Bushenyi N=171	Mpigi N=159	Lira N=192
1. Poor roads (62.0%)	1. Poor roads (46.5%)	1. Poor roads (30.7%)
2. Few cars or taxis in area (15.8%)	2. Few cars or taxis in area (32.7%)	2. Few cars or taxis in area (23.4%)
3. High transport costs (8.8%)	3. High transport costs (12.6%)	3. No bicycles (17.7%)
4. Lack of roads (5.3%)	4. No transport available (2.5%)	4. No transport available (16.7%)
5. Available transport is dangerous	5. Must travel long distances (1.9%)	5. High transport costs (5.7%)

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Chapter Seven: Political Meddling or Critical Instruction?

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the extent to which district relations with the center explain differences in the performance of local governments in three districts—Bushenyi, Lira and Mpigi. These three districts exhibit some similarities, but many differences in how they interact with the center, which makes them useful cases in which to explore my hypotheses about the central government's effect on local government performance. In Chapter Two, I suggested that central governments have an important role to play even after decentralization. I distinguished, however, between administrative linkages, which offer opportunities for critical instruction, and political linkages, which provide opportunities for meddling by the center. This chapter seeks to identify the impact of the central government's interactions with district councils on the performance of these councils. Unfortunately, the weakness and perfunctory nature of administrative linkages between line ministries and districts means that critical instruction in all districts is limited. Central-local relations are instead most defined by political linkages and attempts by the center to gain control and influence over council officials and activities. Political meddling is all too common.

In Section 2, I describe the prominent features of the political linkages between Bushenyi, Lira and Mpigi and the center. I describe both aspects of the political linkages between these two levels of government: district support for the central government and central government support to districts. As noted in Chapter Two, the level of district support for the center is based primarily upon popular support for the Movement in recent

elections, although I also consider levels of elite support for the Movement as expressed by local council officials. Central government support to districts is based primarily upon material resources or *greater access to* material resources provided to a district by central government officials. I analyze some of the ways that district support and central government support independently affect council performance. Yet, this research indicates that these two aspects of political linkages must be viewed in concert in order to get an accurate picture of what central-local relations really look like. An analysis of *both* levels of district support and central government support is necessary to answer the following questions: Which level of government is more influential and in what ways? What is the impact of this relationship on the ability of local council officials to effectively respond to the needs of the people in the district? Differing levels of district support have important implications for the ways in which resources from the central government affect council performance.

Contrary to my theoretical expectations, multivariate analysis reveals that district support is positively related to council responsiveness. The case studies reinforce this finding. While evidence of the negative effects on performance of low levels of district support—i.e. being an “opposition district”—is much clearer and easy to interpret, the impact of central government support is much more complicated than I hypothesized. It certainly seems likely, as in the case of Mpigi, that an influx of resources from the center, especially those received informally, through patronage relations, will in the long run foster a greater dependence on the center and thus, undermine performance. On the other hand, one could argue based on the experiences of these three districts that resources from the center have a positive impact on LC performance in the short run, often

providing a boost in available resources that can be used to provide services to the community. Thus, it is not possible to say definitively that greater central government support undermines local government performance. Instead we must examine how the district receives and uses such support. I argue that this is certainly influenced by levels of district support for the center.

In a situation of political imbalance, such as exists in Mpigi where district support is considerably below levels of central government support, central government support undermines performance. On the other hand, the experience of Bushenyi suggests that medium to high levels of central government support in combination with high levels of district support are less likely to negatively affect performance. Finally, low levels of central government support should have little impact on local government performance. Thus, in the case of Lira, the influence of low levels of district support for the Movement is, thus, the dominant influence on LC performance.

Section 3 analyzes the administrative linkages between these districts and the central government, exploring how differences in districts' relationship with central government ministries influence the performance of the district councils. In Chapter Five, I reported that administrative linkages have an unexpected, but not uninterpretable, negative relationship with two of the four measures of local government performance. The evidence presented below also does not support my hypothesis that tighter administrative linkages are associated with better performance. Yet, analysis of interactions between the three districts and selected line ministries supports the findings of the multivariate analysis. Most ministries are not proactive, but reactive, responding to instances of negative performance.

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I would point out that central-local relations explain many aspects of local government performance. Yet, this is still only a partial explanation. As apparent from the outcome of multivariate analysis in Chapter Five, structural factors are an important factor in understanding variation in performance and these three case studies reinforce this finding. Moreover, features of the local political context, such as the patterns of political competition and strength of LC-NGO linkages, in particular, also influence district council performance and will be explored in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Six describes the differences in the performance of the district councils in these three districts. Using the analogy of the “one-eyed man among blind men,” I argue that, relative to other Ugandan districts, Bushenyi performs quite well. While Bushenyi district is not perfect and is host to some of the same problems that handicap councils in other districts, the district council is more responsive and certainly more effective than councils in Mpigi and Lira. The district pursues long-term development goals and exhibits an ability to achieve such goals. Likewise, the district is more innovative than either Lira or Mpigi, picking successful ideas from other districts and experimenting with alternative ways to improve service delivery. In this chapter, I argue that the nature of the district’s relationship with the center helps explain these differences in performance.

Mpigi district receives more from the center (ministerial positions, projects, gifts) than it provides in the form of political support, as measured by levels of popular support for the Movement in recent elections. I argue that this imbalance creates a politically precarious situation for district leaders who benefit from the center, but represent a public that is divided in its support for the Movement government. Mpigi’s local leaders, who depend on the center for their material survival, both through formal transfers and also

informal “gifts” to political insiders, are not delivering on their side of the political bargain. Mpigi, thus, provides a good example of *central dominance*, which results directly from the imbalance in central government support to the district and popular support for the Movement among the population of Mpigi. Local leaders in Mpigi are less autonomous from central government control and direction than leaders in either Lira or Bushenyi, by choice, circumstance or a combination of the two. One indicator of Mpigi’s dependence on the center and central dominance is the extent to which leaders in Mpigi, like their counterparts in Lira, direct their attention to the activities and politics of the central government instead of focusing on local concerns. Both of these characteristics of Mpigi’s relationship with the central government, I argue, undermine the performance of the district council.

On the other hand, I argue that the nature of the relationship between Bushenyi district and the center more closely resembles a *cooperative relationship*, as described in Chapter Two, although not exactly. Bushenyi district exhibits a high level of political support for the Movement government and relative to many other districts receives less from the center. Most importantly, however, political support for the Movement in Bushenyi at present exceeds or equals levels of central government support. This fact contributes to the cooperative relations between the district and the center. The relationship between Bushenyi district and the center appears more balanced with both levels of government exerting influence on the other. Thus, district leaders in Bushenyi are better able and appear to be more willing to exert their own preferences and shape the nature of central government involvement in district affairs, while also remaining open and willing to accept some degree of central government oversight. Given the district’s

relationship with the center, local leaders are less concerned with wooing the center or securing favor, and thus focus on local politics and local concerns. The cooperative relationship between Bushenyi and the center greatly contributes to the district's high level of performance at present. However, this relationship is evolving, as will be discussed at greater length below and in Chapter Eight, and any changes will have important impacts on council performance. Increasing central government support to the district may undermine the effectiveness and responsiveness of Bushenyi's district council.

Finally, Lira district does not neatly fit into either of the three patterns laid out in Chapter Two, but comes closest to an example of *local autonomy*, in which local leaders, for political and ideological reasons, seek to exert their autonomy from the center. Nevertheless, in Uganda's political climate Lira, not unlike other districts, is unable to exert full autonomy from the center. The Movement's influence is hard to overcome, although local and national political leaders in Lira certainly try.

Lira district exhibits some of the lowest levels of popular support for the Movement. Despite claims to the contrary, Lira benefits from *certain* types of central government financial support, such as nationwide or donor-funded programs, at levels comparable to other districts, even those considered to be political strongholds of the regime. Lira's low levels of political support and opposition status certainly limit, albeit not eliminate entirely, the district's access to other more informal types of central government support, such as gifts or other promised resources. In this chapter, I also argue that Lira's role as an opposition district actually diverts the attention of local leaders away from local concerns and instead local leaders spend considerable time and

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energy watching and criticizing moves made by the center, which only serves to lower government performance.

The evidence to show the impacts of these patterns of central-local relations on LC performance is not direct. I am able to present evidence to support my arguments about the differences in how these districts relate to the center, and I am able to posit ways that these varying relationships affect performance. As noted in Chapters Two and Five, there are a variety of explanations offered for local government performance. In order to be more confident that the patterns of central-local relations described in this chapter contribute to different patterns of performance, it is necessary to rule out some of these alternative explanations. In Chapter Eight, I test society-centric explanations and am able to rule out many of these explanations for Bushenyi's good performance.

Below I will discuss two additional, alternative explanations: structural factors and institutional legacies. Structural factors, such as population and economic development, were tremendously important explanatory factors in Chapter Five. While I do not feel that structural factors are the *most* important explanations for differences in performance, economic development is certainly part of the story of Bushenyi's good performance. Numerous interview respondents attributed Bushenyi's success to overall economic performance and the willingness of the population to work hard. Likewise, there was also widespread recognition that the population in Bushenyi is highly educated and more interested in education than may be the case in other districts. One respondent explained, "In some districts, people emphasize polygamy—the more wives, the better. But in Bushenyi, the thinking is on education—the more education you have, the better and you're valued in the society." Yet, Bushenyi is not more developed or more highly

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educated than Mpigi according to HDI scores and literacy rates. Mpigi district, where the district council tends to be unresponsive at times to the most pressing needs of its residents, has the highest HDI scores at .4972 of these three districts. Bushenyi's score is slightly lower at .4145, while Lira's is considerably lower at .3496. UNDP reports literacy rates for the three districts as follows: Mpigi 74.1; Bushenyi 54.2; and Lira 50.4. HDI and literacy rates are higher in Mpigi than in Bushenyi. Yet, there are still differences, which support the idea that structural factors contribute to Bushenyi's performance. For example, Bushenyi collects a higher percent of local revenue budget estimates than Mpigi or Lira. Despite differences in HDI, there may well be higher incomes in Bushenyi, which translate into greater resources for councils to use. Moreover, increased revenues for the local council is vitally important to establishing economic independence, which reduces political and economic dependence on resources from the center. A degree of economic independence certainly contributes to Bushenyi's cooperative relations with the center.

Chapter Two offers several hypotheses about institutional legacies. First, I hypothesized that older districts will perform better than their younger counterparts. The age of these three districts does not explain apparent differences in performance. In fact, these three districts are quite close in age. Lira was created in 1979 from the former colonial district of Lango. Bushenyi was created in 1974, after being carved out of Ankole district, while Mpigi district was cut out of West Mengo around the same time.

Second, I argued that districts with a political institutional history that more closely resembles Uganda's current political institutions are likely to perform better than those districts that lack such a history. The measure of political history included in the

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multivariate analysis in Chapter Five is not significant in most of the models. Similarly, the experiences of these three case study districts do not provide much support for this hypothesis. Mpigi district, which by far had the most centralized political history as part of Buganda Kingdom, is not the star of this small group. While Lira district does perform worse than others and is based in a region with traditional political systems that were quite decentralized, I would argue that this does not explain the poor performance of the district council. As will be discussed further in Chapter Eight, other scholars, such as Ottemoeller (1998), actually argue that the decentralized political system in Lango may have quite positive effects on politics today. Ottemoeller finds, in particular, greater feelings of political efficacy among the Lango in Lira than populations in districts in central and western Uganda. The traditional political system in Bushenyi, formerly part of Ankole Kingdom, falls in between the highly centralized Buganda and the more decentralized political organizations in Lango. Ankole Kingdom was certainly not as politically centralized as Buganda and constituted a “looser” form of political organization found among kingdoms (Karugire 1980), and yet Bushenyi still outperforms Mpigi district.

7.2 Political Linkages

Political linkages between a district and the center are important for the direct impact they exert on district council performance. The political side of central-local relations is also important because it influences administrative linkages between the district and central government ministries. A great deal of ministerial support to districts is uniformly given, yet politics certainly influences districts’ willingness to seek and even

accept advice offered from central government representatives. Similarly, politics affects how and when central government representatives intervene in district affairs.

7.2.1 District Support for the Center

Political linkages between the central government and local governments are comprised of two main components: district support for the center and central government support to districts. This section will describe the level of elite and popular support for the Movement government in Bushenyi, Lira and Mpigi. As noted above, the levels of support for the Movement in these three districts vary with performance in ways that confirm the finding reported in Chapter Five that district support is positively related to district responsiveness. Bushenyi district, which outperforms Lira and Mpigi, also exhibits the highest levels of support for the Movement when one considers popular support in recent national elections and elite support as revealed in council behavior and decisions.

For example, in the referendum on political systems in 2000, over 90 percent of the populations in Bushenyi and Mpigi voted for the Movement system of government.¹ The percent supporting the Movement in both districts exceeded the mean of 88 percent for all districts. The percent of eligible voters in Bushenyi and Mpigi that voted for Museveni in his reelection bid in 2001 was smaller than it had been for the referendum in both districts, but *substantially smaller* in Mpigi. Over 80 percent of voters in Bushenyi voted for Museveni in 2001, while his main rival, Colonel Besigye, won only 16.9 percent of the vote. Despite the high levels of support for the Movement in 2000, voters

¹ 95 percent of eligible voters in Bushenyi and 91 percent of Mpigi's eligible voters voted to maintain the current Movement system of government.

in Mpigi certainly were much less supportive of Museveni in 2001 and more politically fractionalized. Only 58.1 percent of Mpigi voters supported Museveni's candidacy, while an overwhelming 40.2 percent supported Besigye. The level of popular support for Museveni in Mpigi in the 2001 election falls well below the mean level of support for all 45 Ugandan districts (71.3 percent), and is considerably less than the 72 percent of Mpigi voters who voted for Museveni in 1996. Bushenyi witnessed a similar, albeit smaller, decline between the 1996 and 2001 election, where the percent voting for Museveni dropped from 97 to 80 percent. Yet, as discussed in below and in Chapter Eight, support for multipartyists at least at the local level has continued to rise in Bushenyi, evident in the 2002 LC elections, and this has clear impacts on the district's relationship with the center and district performance.

One interesting point is the commitment of district leaders in both districts to the Movement, despite declining support among local populations. The district council in Bushenyi openly supported the Movement and President Museveni, in particular. For example, Bushenyi's district council passed a resolution to endorse President Museveni's selection as the sole candidate to stand for the Movement in the 2001 presidential election (Bushenyi December 21, 2000).

The level of support for the Movement among district leaders in Mpigi is less clear. The *New Vision* reports that Chairman Zimbe in Mpigi "begged residents in Mpigi to vote for the Movement" in the 2000 referendum (February 22, 2000). My fieldwork in Mpigi district coincided with the presidential campaigns and I observed many district politicians who spent inordinate amounts of time and resources campaigning for President Museveni. Offices were used to store campaign posters and district officials

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were recruited to oversee the distribution of posters to lower levels. For example, one meeting I had with Chairman Zimbe was cut short when he excused himself because he had to attend a campaign rally for President Museveni. Yet, my interviews did not include many of the leaders who transferred to the newly formed Wakiso district when Mpigi was divided. The division of Mpigi district coincided with preexisting political divisions within the old district. Urban counties close to Kampala that tend to support opposition candidates formed the new Wakiso district, while the rural counties that tend to be a strong base of Movement support remained in Mpigi district.² Given the differences in public support for the Movement across these different areas, I would expect elite support to vary somewhat as well.

In sharp contrast, only 61.2 percent of Lira voters supported a continuation of the Movement system of government, and a much smaller percent (19.9) voted for Museveni the 2001 presidential election. Councilors in Lira also supported multiparty candidates in the 2001 presidential election and many openly opposed the referendum. Despite unity in opposition to the Movement government, there was tremendous controversy in the district local government over which multiparty candidate to support in the 2001 presidential election. This controversy, and its impact on local council elections in 2002, will be discussed below and in Chapter Eight.

Not surprising given varying levels of popular support for Museveni, these three districts also vary considerably in their evaluation of his performance as president. Respondents in Lira offer the most negative evaluation of Museveni's performance, yet still just over 60 percent said that his performance was "good" or "very good." On the

² 73.8 percent of voters in Mpigi and only 51.4 percent of voters in the new Wakiso district voted for Museveni in 2001.

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other hand, 87.6 percent of Mpigi respondents and an overwhelming 95.5 percent of respondents in Bushenyi offered a positive evaluation of the president's performance.

The relationship between the district council and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) offers another window into the relationship between the district and the center, especially the level of support for the Movement among district leaders.³ This relationship is especially indicative of the extent to which local politicians welcome central government efforts to advise local councils and influence local affairs. During the time period covered by this study, Mpigi district council had a good relationship with the RDC. For example, the *New Vision* reported that Zimbe welcomed the new RDC, Serapio Karashani, and assured him that the people in Mpigi would be "moving with the Movement."⁴ Interviews, minutes of council meetings and newspaper reports of activities in Mpigi district provide no evidence of any conflict between the RDC and Mpigi's district council, and in fact, the records of council meeting suggest that the RDC maintains a very low profile and only infrequently addresses the council.

In contrast, Lira district council has an extremely conflictual relationship with the RDC. The district council openly criticized the RDC for his role in initiating an investigation into allegations of corruption against the CAO, CFO, and District Engineer. The RDC called the IGG to Lira to investigate these and other allegations of corruption by district officials and even went so far as to nullify a contract for the construction of several schools because he felt that the process of awarding the tender had been illegal. Councilors and administrators alike in Lira opposed the RDC's intrusion into council affairs, and consequently, supported the accused district administrators, insisting on their

³ See Chapter Three for a discussion of the RDC position and role as central government representative in the districts.

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innocence, and proclaiming that the corruption investigation was politically motivated. Lira district officials' unwavering support for the accused district administrators, despite some evidence of their guilt, provides evidence that the district's opposition to the Movement affects its willingness to accept assistance from central government representatives, and thus, limits the extent to which administrative linkages with the center may improve performance.

Another example of a conflict between Lira's council and the RDC involved accusations by the RDC that district leaders were involved in rebel activity (Lira October 27, 1999). During a council meeting in 1999, the RDC insisted that some district leaders were participants in a rebel group called Citizens' Army for Multiparty Politics (CAMP) that operated in Lira district at the time. The accusation prompted serious controversy as many councilors denied the charges and claimed the accusations were meant only to intimidate local politicians. District councilors took the opportunity to criticize the central government vehemently for its poor handling of the security situation in the north.

For the most part, Bushenyi district council has a cooperative and good relationship with the RDC. Yet, the district is also willing to challenge the RDC. The relationship has not been one in which the RDC can direct or order the district council to do certain things. District officials exert their ideas and preferences and are often reluctant to take the RDC's ideas or suggestions. For example, at a council meeting in 2000, the RDC suggested that the district needed to do more to support the Local Defense Units. The council brushed aside his recommendations and argued that they do enough already. Similarly, in June 2000, the RDC presented a report to the council on the security and rebel activity in the district and asked the council to create a position on the

⁴ See *New Vision* February 3, 2000, page 6. Article title was unavailable.

executive committee for a Secretary for Defense. Councilors refused to create a new position, claiming that there was no need. These examples of the council exerting its autonomy from the RDC are tremendously important given the RDC's role as a direct representative of President Museveni in the district and provide evidence of the willingness of district leaders in Bushenyi to challenge the center.

The above discussion is intended to describe the levels of support, both popular and elite, for the central government within Mpigi, Lira, and Bushenyi. I believe the discussion demonstrates that Bushenyi district exhibits the most support for the Movement. Elites and district residents seem unified in their support, which has important implications for district performance, as will be discussed in Section 3. Yet, district leaders still feel comfortable disagreeing with the center, such as the examples of council challenges to the RDC. Additional examples of Bushenyi district challenges to the center will be discussed below.

On the other hand, Mpigi district offers only mixed support for the government in Kampala. Support for opposition to the government is increasing in the district, apparent in increasing number of votes for Besigye in 2001, and the district is becoming increasingly fractionalized, although the division of the district may alleviate this problem to some extent. Nevertheless, Mpigi district is certainly not among the government's strongest supporters. There also appears to be some discrepancy between district leaders' expressed support for the Movement and the public sentiment, which also has implications for district performance.

Mpigi's relationship with the Movement is complicated certainly by the fact that it is part of Buganda Kingdom. Englebert notes that the Movement has regarded Buganda

with a mix of co-optation and intimidation, seeking to ensure its political control over the kingdom areas, while maintaining high levels of Baganda support (2002). As noted in Chapter Three, throughout Uganda's history Buganda has struggled to maintain its autonomy from colonial and post-colonial governments. This struggle continues today and likely influences the levels of elite and popular support for the Movement. In 1993, the Movement allowed the restoration of traditional rulers with the condition that they exist only as cultural leaders and do not attempt to influence or intervene in political affairs. Englebert (2002) and Dicklitch (1998) argue, however, that the activities of the kingdom are, in fact, quite political, including what Englebert describes as the creation of a "quasi-state institution" and the establishment of "a dual structure of power in its own region" (2002, 347). The Kabaka appointed chiefs at the county, sub-county, and parish levels in May 2000 and thus, "created and staffed an administrative structure that shadows, overlaps and sections the official local state structure based on districts and local councils..., although the kingdom's positions remain largely honorary and devoid of substantial institutional powers" (Englebert 2002, 350). The establishment of these posts may likely challenge the authority of the Movement and undermine the legitimacy of the local councils in Buganda kingdom, which seems likely given survey results that indicate a high level of support among residents in Buganda for traditional and hereditary rule (see e.g., Ottemoeller 1998; Logan et al. 2002).

Finally, Lira district is a good example of an opposition district. A large percent of Lira's population voted against the government in key elections or expressed their discontent by withholding their vote altogether in the form of a "silent boycott" (Bratton and Lambright 2000). While district leaders are united in their opposition to the

Movement and Museveni, they are still quite divided and were unable to unify to support a single opposition candidate in the 2001 presidential elections.

In Chapter Two, I hypothesized that district support would have no effect on local government performance. Results from the multivariate analysis reveal, as does the analysis of the case study material, that district support is positively associated with better performance. In Section 7.3, I argue that different combinations of district support and central government support to districts have clear implications for district council performance. Nevertheless, taken independently levels of district support certainly influence councils' ability to effectively translate policy into outputs and to respond to the needs of their constituents. This is most clearly apparent in the negative impacts that being an *opposition district* has on council performance.

One serious by-product of opposition to the Movement government has been insecurity and armed conflict. Lira has suffered considerably from such conflict. The district has been a victim of both LRA and Karimojong violent incursions into the district. The LRA has been fighting against Museveni's government for over 17 years. While insecurity associated with Karimojong cattle raids into neighboring districts is not related to opposition to the government, many residents of northern districts who have suffered from these attacks certainly feel that politics influences the government's response and efforts to promote security.

The insecurity and rebel activity that can result from low levels of support for the central government is one of the clearest ways in which district support affects performance of local councils. Citizens in affected areas cannot engage in regular economic activities, let alone pay taxes to the local councils, and services cannot be

easily provided to these areas. Also, special circumstances related to rebel activity, such as the thousands of displaced persons who sought protection from rebels in Lira town last September, place additional strains on local councils struggling already. Local governments often must provide or coordinate donor efforts to provide food and water to the displaced groups, which is often extremely difficult logistically and financially. One MP from Lira described the impacts of insecurity this way:

When you look at counties, like Otuke, people settled in town. They don't have land to farm. They're doing petty jobs. They don't lead normal lives....In Erute North [county] people refused to run away from their homes. They farm during the day and hide at night in the bushes. This makes planning in town difficult. The places where displaced people settled, it's a really deprived lifestyle. Epidemics could break out anytime.

A MP from Bushenyi offered a different interpretation, but nonetheless, points out the strains on local governments of rebel activity:

Also some areas have insurgency. Even if the districts get funds, they don't put them to use because of the rebel activity. How would you construct buildings and make roads and take drugs to clinics when you know they're grabbed by people involved in insurgency?

Unsuccessful efforts by the Ugandan government to stop the violence that has been ongoing for 17 years only decrease district support for the center, increasing suspicion on both sides. In countries with a history of violence and warfare as a means of expressing opposition to the government, there are certainly benefits, such as political stability, to being a pro-government district. Many politicians from the north argue that the ongoing war is a conscious government strategy to weaken opposition districts in the north, such as Lira. One politician from the north put it this way:

He's [Museveni] using a scorched earth policy, using harsh and difficult situations to make it difficult for people to develop. He's done it through the perpetuation of war. The war ended in Buganda. The government

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The validity of such assertions is hard to evaluate, yet it is clear that almost two decades of fighting and insecurity have had a damaging effect on districts in the north, such as Lira, and their district governments' efforts to perform their tasks and responsibilities. Uganda's commitment of troops to the war in Congo, successful efforts to eliminate ADF rebels in western Uganda, increasing military expenditure, and even military aid in the form of training all raise serious questions as to why the Uganda's People Defense Forces (UPDF) have been unsuccessful in the north, and why the LRA rebels have been able to terrorize the population of the north for so long.

7.2.2 Central Government Support for Districts

The other side of political linkages is support given by the center to local governments. An analysis of central government support to Bushenyi, Mpigi and Lira districts reveals the complexity of central-local relations. A principal difficulty in assessing the impact of central government support is identifying the various ways, formal and informal or material and political, that Uganda's central government supports districts. Below I review the various types of central government support to districts in order to determine the level of support across these districts receive. Determining the level and type of central government support to these three districts is not an easy task, but based on the data I was able to gather and assess, I argue that Mpigi benefits from central government support more than Bushenyi, although these two districts both benefit and have greater access to resources from the center than Lira. The fact that Bushenyi performs well and receives a considerable amount of resources from the central government, perhaps levels

on par with Mpigi, runs contrary to my hypothesis that central government support undermines council performance. Yet, as noted above, it is difficult to make determinations about the impact of central government support on local government performance independent of an examination of district support for the central government. Levels of district support influence not only how much a district receives, but also how these resources are used and perceived.

The Movement can distribute resources to districts in a variety of ways. These include central government conditional and unconditional grants, cabinet posts, and GOU funded projects of varying size and visibility. As will be discussed below, often goods or resources are given to a district or district officials to fulfill a promise made during a visit to the district by an influential central government leader. Others are planned, budgeted for, and publicly disclosed. These different types of support vary in the extent to which allocation is subject to political considerations. Resources that are allocated according to political criteria can have a larger impact on local government performance because often distribution is informal or inconsistent. Such resources are meant to influence behavior. As Bratton's research on Zambia revealed, the allocation of resources from the center to districts quite often reflects efforts by the center "purchase political control" (1980, 24). The Movement has similar political motivations in distributing resources to districts in Uganda.

Many Ugandans, especially in opposition areas, feel that *most* of the resources from the center are distributed according to political rather than developmental criteria. For example, the dominant perception among interview respondents in Lira is that the "national cake is not shared equally" and that districts in the west, like Bushenyi, are

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benefiting more than those in other parts of the country. One executive committee member argued, “Some regions are benefiting more. Like roads in the west. Most roads are tarmacked. There are many universities in the west and few in the north. The sharing of resources is not even.” Only one interview respondent in Lira—a district administrator argued against this common complaint:

The district leadership believes in multiparty, [there’s] not a meeting of the minds, but [it’s] not stopping the district and the center from getting along...but up to this end, when we total up the figures...we get what we should get, like other districts. The Netherlands donor selected Lira. There was no way the government could have stopped it.

Lira MP and district officials alike repeatedly complained that the districts of the north, where Movement opposition is concentrated, receive fewer NGOs or donors and cabinet posts. Likewise, they also felt that the north is neglected in government efforts to tarmac roads and provide rural electricity. There is some evidence to support their claims, which will be discussed below.

All districts—opposition or otherwise—can count on a certain level of central government support in the form of conditional and unconditional grants that are allocated by central government ministries according to strict formulas. For example, Museveni was quoted as saying:

The NRM has shown you the tradition of tolerance. The LC5 chairman of Lira [James Obua Otoa], for instance, has not been a Movement person. We, however, send him billions of shillings to run his district (*New Vision* January 1, 2001).

Museveni’s quote highlights the fact that Lira and other districts with limited support for the government continue to receive at least some financial support from the center. Most interview respondents agreed that the Movement does not interfere with the allocation of these transfers. One MP described the center’s fulfillment of its responsibilities this way:

The political leadership in Lira professes orientation to multiparty politics. The central political leadership is Movement. The President has been open about it. When he comes to Lira, he says, 'We've invited all into the house, but you want to stay outside on the veranda and you want us to give to you here on the veranda. That's okay, we'll give to you here on the veranda.' The President says 'I won't forget to give to you outside on the veranda.' But these are for the structural things like conditional and unconditional grants and equalization funds, delegated funds.

Looking at the level of central government support in the form of transfers to these three districts provides some preliminary evidence that Lira and likely other opposition districts are not marginalized with respect to the allocation of central government conditional and unconditional grants.

For example, Lira district receives more in central government grants per person than either Mpigi or Bushenyi. In fact, Lira with transfers totaling 27,482 Ush per person receives almost twice the amount that Bushenyi receives. Bushenyi receives 14,112 Ush per person, which was slightly less than the mean for all 45 districts.⁵ Mpigi falls somewhere in between these two districts with transfers equal to 18,543 Ush per person.

On the other hand, it is quite surprising that neither Lira nor any other northern district received additional funds in 1999/2000 from the central government's program to provide "insurgency funds" to districts plagued by insecurity. As discussed above, Lira and its neighbors, such as Gulu and Kitgum, certainly felt the effects of insecurity and armed conflict, and it is difficult to explain why none of these districts benefited from this program. Only three districts benefited and all three are located in western Uganda: Kabarole, Kasese, and Bundibugyo.

Examining the factors that are related to how much districts receive from the center in the form of transfers, however, supports the idea that even these grants are not

⁵ The mean amount of central government transfers per person is 14,738 Ush.

entirely immune to political considerations. Regression results using the raw figures of central government transfers to districts as the dependent variable offer such evidence. First, population and HDI are both *positive* and significant predictors of the amount of money transferred to Ugandan districts (see Table 1). That more populous districts receive more funds is not surprising given that many of the formulas used to determine allocation levels are based on population. Yet, HDI is also positive, suggesting that grants are allocated with little consideration for poverty levels in each district. Even when controlling for population, more developed districts are getting more in the form of conditional and unconditional grants.

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The political variables offer somewhat conflicting evidence. The level of district support is significant and the sign of the coefficient is negative. Districts with higher levels of electoral support for the Movement receive less in transfers than districts exhibiting lower levels of support. On the other hand, the number of cabinet ministers increases the amount a district receives. Cabinet representation remains significant when the amount of funds a district receives is standardized by population.

Apart from transfers, there are a variety of other resources which are prey to politics. Cabinet representation is especially important for political and financial reasons. As Table 1 reports, cabinet representation offers increased access to resources. One cabinet minister explained it this way:

The president has executive power and appoints the executive to perform his duties. Budget allocation is done by the executive in consultation with

the president...The president is central in budget allocation. The president appoints ministers and gives them different responsibilities and in appointing ministers [he influences] where resources are allocated....For example, the Minister of Works, the president together with the minister will decide to support areas that have given him maximum support. [They] start by giving to areas that have provided support.

Thus, as argued in Chapter Five, the number of cabinet ministers from a district is vitally important for very real and material reasons. Dicklitch notes that during the early stages of the Movement government, cabinet appointments were an important part of the Movement's strategy to co-opt opposition and draw them into the government (1998). Over time, however, cabinet posts have been allocated so as to reward firm supporters rather than win support of opposition groups (Dicklitch 1998).

Until the most recent cabinet reshuffle in May 2003, individuals from Mpigi held three cabinet posts (see Table 2). This included the Minister of State for Primary Education—Geraldine Bitamazire, the Minister in Charge of the Presidency—Gilbert Bukenya, and the Minister of State for Agriculture—Kibirige Sebunya. Since May's reshuffle Mpigi's representation has increased qualitatively, not quantitatively, as Bukenya was named Vice-President and the two remaining ministers retained their posts.

The recent cabinet reshuffled also increased Bushenyi's cabinet representation. In addition to increasing the number of ministerial positions from two to three, the controversial Colonel Otafiire was promoted from Minister of State for Regional Cooperation to Minister of Water, Lands and Environment.⁶ Bushenyi's second minister, Richard Nduhuura, retained his post as Minister of State for Trade, while Taris Kabwegyere, was nominated to be Minister of Local Government, replacing longtime

⁶ Colonel Otafiire was recently implicated in the United Nations report regarding the alleged plundering of minerals from Congo.

Movement supporter Bidandi Ssali. Previously, Kabwegyere held an important post in the Office of the President.

Lira has held onto its single cabinet post through several cabinet reshuffles. Felix Okot Ogong, former Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, was, however, most recently demoted to Minister of State for Youth and Child Affairs. Minister Okot, a previously ardent campaigner for multiparty candidates raised eyebrows in Lira, especially among his constituents, when he switched his allegiance to the Movement (*The Monitor* March 1, 2000). Minister Okot and his colleagues will agree, however, that the conversion has resulted in clear material benefits for his constituents in Dokolo county.

Because the number of cabinet posts in Mpigi and Lira did not increase following the May 2003 reshuffle, the number of cabinet ministers per 10,000 persons has stayed the same for some time. The number of ministers per 10,000 persons in Mpigi is .032, while the comparable figure for Lira is only .019. Bushenyi's cabinet representation before the May 2003 reshuffle was .027, but increased to .040 per 10,000 persons with the addition of Kabwegyere as the new Minister of Local Government. The higher figure for Bushenyi suggests that individuals in the district are better represented in the cabinet than individuals in Mpigi or Lira. Yet, a simple calculation of the number of cabinet ministers per person or even the raw number does not indicate the power held by different ministers. Mpigi is surely well represented with Bukenya as VP.

Table 1 reports that cabinet representation is positively associated with the number of GOU and donor projects operating in a district. While many projects are donor initiated and funded, I argue that the GOU, however, has some, although certainly not full, discretion over the location of projects as is the case with roads and rural

electrification discussed below. Mpigi district has 21 ongoing projects funded by the GOU or donors, while Lira has 10 and Bushenyi has only 5 such projects. Given the varying size and populations of these districts, a standardized measure is necessary for meaningful comparison. Mpigi district with .230 projects per 10,000 persons still has more projects than the other districts, while Lira is close behind with .200 projects per 10,000 persons. Bushenyi, on the other hand, with .068 projects per 10,000 has significantly fewer projects. For all three districts, the standardized measure is less than the mean for all of Uganda's districts, which is somewhat surprising given that Mpigi district with 21 projects has more projects than any other district.⁷

Many Ugandans, especially those in the north, would be quite surprised that Lira has more projects than Bushenyi. As noted above, Lira respondents at the local and national level complained that many projects are sent to districts supportive of the Movement. On the one hand, the criticisms of discrimination appear unfounded as Lira benefits from numerous large-scale well financed projects, such as the Olweny Rice Project, the World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), and the GOU's program to restock livestock that were lost during previous conflicts or stolen by Karimojong cattle rustlers. Moreover, district leaders' complaint that the central government dissuades donors and NGOs from locating in the district is certainly unsubstantiated when one considers that Lira has more registered NGOs than Bushenyi and hosts other large scale donor projects, like DDP and DANIDA. Despite complaints by many respondents from Lira, the GOU is unable to keep donors from locating in opposition areas. One cabinet minister supported such allegations and argued that "NGOs are also interested in politics and want to be liked by the president and so go to

⁷ The mean is .315 and the median is .235.

areas that he likes.” In fact, Lira was selected as one of four districts to receive considerable aid from the Netherlands government and participate in the District Development Program (DDP). An interview with an official at the Netherlands embassy provides no evidence that the Movement tried to push DDP away from Lira, although as Table 1 indicates, cabinet representation is significant in explaining the number of projects.

On the other hand, available evidence suggests complaints are valid when it comes to rural electricity and roads, although DANIDA’s program in Lira does concentrate on rural roads in the district. For example, the Ministry of Works national road network summary indicates that while 42.4 percent of roads in the central region, 33.2 percent of roads in the east, and 21.9 percent of roads in the west are paved, *only 5.4 percent* of roads in northern Uganda are paved. Likewise, among the rural electrification projects listed on the Ministry of Energy’s website and discussed in the 2000 annual report, none of the projects include Lira as a participating or benefiting district. One project is specifically for the West Nile districts of northwestern Uganda, but the beneficiaries for all of the remaining projects are concentrated in Uganda’s other regions. While Lira benefits, it is evident that its opposition status limits access to many resources. Lira’s MPs, with the exception of Minister Okot Ogong, are less influential and, although they have a close relationship with many district leaders, they are unable to ensure that the district benefits from increased resources.

Looking at the number of GOU and donor funded projects in a district as the principal measure of central government support is problematic precisely because donors *are* able to locate projects in areas where they have identified a need, despite any pressure

from the government to locate elsewhere. Similarly, areas, such as Lira, where insecurity persists pose challenges for donors who are less willing to locate projects in these areas or unable to fulfill project goals and spend allocated resources because of the environmental conditions.

The discussion above has focused primarily on types of central government support that tend to be publicly disclosed. Yet, assessing the level of central government support demands an examination of all of the various types of financial support, including those that are not publicly disclosed. Obviously, estimating how much a district receives in the form of informal or impromptu gifts is not an easy task. Often the allocation of important resources is based on spontaneous requests from district residents and officials and equally spontaneous promises by important leaders. Thus, visits to a district by influential central government leaders are also important for material benefits they are likely to bring to the area. Visits from central government politicians bring promises of goods and services that can be delivered in the future. Visits from ministry administrative officials are important, not so much for the promises of material goods, although such promises are made, but because oversight, monitoring, or training are usually the primary purposes of such visits. This will be discussed more thoroughly in Section 7.4.

Table 2 about here.

From January to December 2000 Mpigi had considerably more visitors from the central government than either Lira or Bushenyi. During this period, Mpigi had 79 visits

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from central government ministry representatives, while Bushenyi had 32 and Lira had only 26 such visits. Looking at visits from MPs or cabinet ministers during 2000, Mpigi and Bushenyi both had considerably more visits than Lira. Bushenyi district administration had 23 visits from MPs or cabinet ministers, while Mpigi had 20 and Lira only had 10 such visits. The fact that Mpigi receives so many visitors is not surprising given that it lies only 31 kilometers from Kampala. On the other hand, Bushenyi receives more visitors than Lira, and yet, the two districts are equally far from the capital city. Bushenyi is 350 kilometers from Kampala, while Lira is slightly further at 361 kilometers from Kampala. In both cases, the road to the district headquarters is quite good. The fewer number of reported visits to Lira may be explained partially by the violence and insecurity in the area discussed above.

Interview respondents and records of council meetings in both Mpigi and Bushenyi mention promises that were made by ministers during visits to the district. For example, one politician in Mpigi noted that “The Minister of Works said that Mpigi was one of the best districts in maintaining roads and promised another [road] grader. It arrived a month ago.” Similarly, minutes from a district council meeting in Bushenyi reveal that the Minister of Works made equally, if not more, generous promises to Bushenyi. Minutes from the May 2000 council meeting report that the minister promised to assist in the construction of Kabukera bridge, to put a “telephone house” at Kitagata Town Council, and to construct Bihanga-Katerera-Kyabakara road. None of my interviews in Lira or records of council meetings included a similar discussion of promises of delivery of a particular good or service from ministers visiting Lira district. Nevertheless, several MPs from Lira complained that the Minister Okot was able to

provide considerably more to his constituency, Dokolo county, than they could provide to their own due exclusively to his support for the Movement government and his cabinet position. One multiparty MP from Lira complains about his inability to secure resources for his constituency:

I went to the Ministry of Education. There was a problem with a senior secondary school which the wind blew off the roof. For two years I've been going there [MoE]. I saw that 30 million Ush was transferred to the adjoining constituency, to 5 secondary schools in his constituency because he's a Movement supporter.

The president also visited or met with district officials from these three districts on numerous occasions, yet the frequency varies across the districts. Museveni visits Mpigi most frequently. Numerous interview respondents in Mpigi pointed out that the president has a farm in Gomba county in western Mpigi. One official described Museveni as a "son of Mpigi", suggesting a close relationship between Mpigi and the president. He responded to a question about the frequency of Museveni's visits this way:

The president, I don't know how many times, but we see him as a resident. He is a resident. He has a farm in Kisozi in Gomba and goes there every week and sees what is in Mpigi. And he can be invited on so many occasions. There's a university and he went there for graduation. There was a prominent man and he died. The President came for the burial. He really comes to Mpigi despite his busy schedule.

In addition to the president's frequent visits to the district, officials with the Office of the President and Movement Secretariat were also quite regular in the district during the period 1999-2001.

Given Bushenyi's tight relationship with the Movement and Museveni, the district receives visitors from Kampala quite frequently, but fewer visitors perhaps than Mpigi. The district chairman's and CAO's visitors' logs indicate that Museveni visited the district three times during 2000. Most recently, the *New Vision* reported that President

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Museveni would personally open the new district administration headquarters in Bushenyi because he was the single largest contributor with a donation of 10 million Ush.

On the other hand, the president made even fewer visits to Lira district and the CAO's visitors' log supports this. The CAO's visitors' log has no record of the President visiting the district headquarters. Lira district records indicate that the district hosted numerous visitors from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), however. The OPM is responsible for the implementation of the NUSAF and the government's restocking program. Thus, most of the visits from the OPM were likely to discuss the implementation of these programs.

Yet, President Museveni does visit Lira on occasion and likely visited as part of his countrywide tour campaigning for the referendum in 2000 and again for the presidency in 2001. The *New Vision* reports two such visits. In April 1999, the president addressed a camp for people displaced by the Karimojong in Lira district (*New Vision* April 18, 2000). In December 1999, Museveni was the chief guest at a fundraising ceremony organized by Lira Municipality MP Cecilia Ogwal and he gave 10 million Ush (*New Vision* December 13, 1999). The fact that these visits are not recorded in the visitors' log is quite important. In Bushenyi and Mpigi, where visits are recorded in district visitors' logs, it shows that the President was at the district headquarters and interacted with district elected and non-elected officials. Yet, this is not the case in Lira. Because Chairman Otoa was not the Movement district chairman, as tends to be the case in all but a handful of Uganda's districts, Museveni's visits to Lira were likely organized by the Movement district chairman at the time, Sam Engola, rather than district officials. One MP from Lira contended that the district chairman wants nothing to do with the

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Movement or the President. He explained that Chairman Otoa would not attend the Movement National Conference and “when the president is visiting the district, they [district leaders] don’t attend; make no preparation. They don’t want to be seen making preparations. They criticize Museveni even when the President is there.”

There is evidence, however, that district leaders were interested in Museveni’s visits to the district, despite their obvious political differences. For example, *The Monitor* reports of a controversy that erupted over who should offer the president “a vote of thanks” after he addressed a rally at Lira Technical College during one of his countrywide tours (May 16, 1999). Chairman Otoa had suggested that the vice-chairperson be allowed to offer thanks to the president, while the RDC instead selected the district Movement chairman, Sam Engola (*The Monitor* May 16, 1999). Another *New Vision* account of a visit by President Museveni to Lira also reported that the district chairman complained because he was not invited to address the rally that had been organized.⁸

Presidential visits most certainly bring immediate material benefits to an area, which likely explains any interest that Lira district leaders might have in such visits. As noted already, President Museveni, like cabinet ministers and local MPs, is often invited to fundraising parties and expected to contribute generously. Ugandan newspapers almost daily offer accounts of Museveni contributing 10 million or 15 million for the construction of this school or that church. Yet, even at events that are not organized primarily to raise funds for a local school or other development project, Museveni has a habit of passing out envelopes filled with money at public appearances.⁹

⁸ See *New Vision* June 1, 2000, page 8. Article title was unavailable.

⁹ See *New Vision* article, “Museveni Envelopes are Not about Votes,” September 14, 2002.

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President Museveni also makes a variety of different promises during his visits to an area. The majority of respondents in all three districts recalled a visit by President Museveni during the last year, but more survey respondents in Bushenyi district said that Museveni made promises to provide assistance or a particular service to the district during the visit.¹⁰ Most survey respondents across all three districts explained that the purpose of Museveni's visit was campaigning for either the referendum or presidency.¹¹ An overwhelming majority, at least 90 percent, in all three districts said that Museveni promised some form of assistance or service to the district.¹²

While many Ugandans complain about the tendency of politicians to promise "air", i.e. make empty promises, the perception that President Museveni's promises are not fulfilled is more prevalent among respondents in Lira. Almost 70 percent of respondents in Lira, who had answered positively to the question about whether Museveni had made promises of a good or service, said that the promise was never fulfilled. Only half of the respondents in Mpigi and 42 percent of respondents in Bushenyi said that promises had not been fulfilled.

Based on the material presented in this section, I argue that Mpigi receives more from the central government than either Bushenyi or Lira. Lira certainly receives central government financial support, even benefiting from some of the more informal allocations, such as Museveni's contribution to Ogwal's fundraising program. Yet, because of its opposition to the Movement, Lira district has less access to such resources than either Bushenyi or Mpigi districts. The fact that donors are able to influence the

¹⁰ Almost 90 percent of Bushenyi respondents recalled such a visit compared to about 75 percent of respondents in Lira and Mpigi.

¹¹ Almost 75 percent of all survey respondents (n=612) responded that President Museveni visited their district to campaign for the referendum, presidency or a parliamentary candidate.

allocation of many projects and locate in Lira may explain some of the “noise” in assessing levels of central government support to districts and its impact on local council performance. Given the number of cabinet ministers, its proximity to Kampala, and the numerous visits from the president and other central government politicians, Mpigi likely receives more financial support from the center than Bushenyi, despite Bushenyi’s high levels of support. As noted above, electoral support was less important in explaining the allocation of projects than the number of cabinet ministers.

7.2.3 Impact of Patterns of Political Linkages on Performance of Districts

The preceding sections describe the political linkages between these three districts and the Movement government in Kampala. This section will describe how varying levels and types of district support for the center and central government material and political support for districts combine into several distinct patterns of political linkages. These patterns, I argue, affect the performance of Uganda’s local governments in different and important ways.

Bushenyi

As discussed thoroughly above, Bushenyi district exhibits high levels of electoral support for the Movement, although recent events, such as the results of the 2002 LC elections and opposition to a possible third term for Museveni by district MPs, suggest support for the Movement may be in flux. The district also benefits from central government support, although the amount of financial support from the center is lower than might be

¹² 89.1 percent in Lira (n=101), 98.7 percent in Bushenyi (n=149), and 91.4 percent (n=116) in Mpigi remembered Museveni promising some form of assistance to the district.

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expected given the high levels of support for the government within the district. While the district had until recently fewer cabinet ministers than other districts, the relationship between Bushenyi and key Movement leaders, including President Museveni, ensures that the district does reap benefits from the center.

Bushenyi district relationship with the Movement government resembles *cooperative relations*, described in Chapter Two, in which the district government has some opportunity to influence and shape its interactions with the center, rather than a situation in which the district is forced to meet the demands of the center without any opportunity to influence such demands. There are a variety of factors that contribute to Bushenyi's more cooperative relationship with the Movement leadership. First, and most important, Bushenyi's district leadership does not face the sort of political imbalance that exists in Mpigi. The district's support for the center balances, or at present, may even exceed, the levels of support that the district receives from the central government.

A second factor contributing to cooperative relations between Bushenyi and the central government is history itself, or one could say path dependency. Bushenyi has historically had good relations with most post-colonial governments. One Bushenyi MP explained:

The good thing is Bushenyi has over time not worked against the central government. It always changed its whims. When Obote government, Bushenyi was the darling of Obote. The district was working well with Obote. It comes to Museveni and the district is working well with Museveni's government

The district's multiparty past combined with the resurgence in support for multiparty candidates in the LC elections increases the district power relative to the center. Moreover, because the district is part of Ankole, Museveni's own region and historic

base of support, Movement leaders are likely to be more desperate to keep Bushenyi among its supporters. Finally, as noted in the introductory section, Bushenyi's level of economic development also increases its political independence by reducing the importance of central government support. Thus, Bushenyi's leaders are not beholden to the central government.

As noted above, with respect to the district's relationship with the RDC, district officials in Bushenyi support the central government, but are willing to challenge the center and push forward their own ideas and preferences. District leaders are even willing to challenge political leaders, such as Museveni. Such examples do not indicate directly the positive effects cooperative relations have on council performance, but instead do more to establish that such cooperative relations exist. For example, following a cabinet reshuffle in 1999, in which several Bushenyi MPs were dropped from the cabinet, local leaders in Bushenyi presented a memorandum to President Museveni demanding to know why these ministers were dropped from the cabinet (*New Vision* June 29, 1999).

Yet, Bushenyi district leaders also question the center on items that have a direct impact on the council's ability to perform well and respond to the needs of local residents. Many interview respondents described instances in which the district made demands of the center, which suggests a level of boldness in Bushenyi district that is lacking on the other two districts. There is awareness among Bushenyi's leaders of what powers are prescribed to local governments by the Local Government Act and a willingness to capture that power rather than be the subject of central government whims.

For example, Chairman Makaaru described a situation with the Ministry of Education.

He explained:

There's been a victory. The accomplishment of securing 290 million. We are constructing school buildings which were contracted as part of the TDMS and Classroom Completion program. The structures had been contracted and the agreements made, but then the center said it was not going to pay the money. We fought hard. I wrote a letter to the Minister and copied the PS [Permanent Secretary]. In fact, I wrote to the PS. The PS invited those concerned and a delegation from here went. They agreed to give the 290 million and the work is going on.

Similarly, the CAO discussed how the district has been “demanding capacity building [from the central government] as part of any project, for technical and political leaders, so they can supervise and monitor.” The CAO's efforts to ensure the central government provides training will certainly improve performance. The CAO also explained how local governments “demanded” a larger role in the national budgeting process, and the result was the Local Government Budget Framework Paper.

In addition to pushing the center on items the council sees as important to its performance, the cooperative relations encourage greater policy innovation in Bushenyi, which spurs better performance. Because the district does exert greater political leverage over the center, leaders are less concerned with pleasing the center. Instead leaders are more focused on devising innovative strategies to meet their own needs. Unlike Mpigi or Lira districts, which beg the center for more resources, leaders in Bushenyi may seek to change policy or practices so as to improve the council's ability to delivery services to local residents. Bushenyi district, as a result, has introduced several policy innovations.

For example, the district adopted two different programs to try to increase local tax revenue. One program provides a one percent bonus to sub-counties in an effort to encourage them to collect more taxes. The district also adopted a surcharge for late

payment of the graduated tax. In addition to these programs in increase revenue to the district, Bushenyi also adopted a new road contracting program that they had seen successfully working in Mubende. These are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Six.

Finally, Bushenyi's relationship with the center reduces, but by no means eliminates, opportunities for central government interference in the district. This positively affects performance as such instances of political meddling certainly have the effect of reducing the influence of local populations over the elected leaders. Mpigi, unfortunately, has not fared as well.

Mpigi

As noted above, many factors contribute to Bushenyi's cooperative relations with the center, the most important is the balance between district support and central government support. Unlike Bushenyi, Mpigi district, on the other hand, exhibits moderate to low levels of district support for the Movement. Yet, Mpigi benefits considerably from the central government's willingness to provide goods and services to the district. Central government support to Mpigi outweighs district support, creating a dangerous imbalance. District leaders, dependent on the center for their material and political livelihoods, are not fulfilling their side of an unstated political bargain. Mpigi's district leaders, despite their campaigning efforts, are not delivering the votes. The imbalance increases the district's dependence on central government resources and creates a situation of central dominance. A significant result is the external focus of local leaders, a problem exacerbated by Mpigi's close proximity to Kampala, and increased central government interference in local affairs. Leaders defer to the center and seek various ways to please

the government and ensure that the flow of resources does not stop. Unlike Bushenyi, Mpigi's LC officials spent less time devising local solutions to local problems and instead look to the center for these solutions.

For example, the *New Vision*, in its account of the Mpigi district council's decision to approve funds for the completion of Mpigi Loop (see Chapter Six), also reports that the council said that the Ministry of Local Government would be responsible for supervising the project.¹³ The responsibility and importance attributed to the center is quite evident. Comments made by Chairman Zimbe also reinforce the idea that Mpigi's district council has yet to embrace decentralization fully and instead lacks any sense of ownership over projects that may be undertaken by the district. In response to a question about the district council's primary accomplishments, Zimbe explained, "These are government programs. We implement....The money and the policy come from the center. The district is only overseeing the implementation." Respondents in other districts complained about perceived limits to the decentralization policy, yet few suggested a lack of ownership or responsibility for the programs being carried out by the districts. One of Mpigi's executive committee members described the dependence on the center this way:

It is a father-son relationship. The law says we are self-reliant, but consciously we still feel that the center has to do something for us. The local governments haven't come to know that the center does not owe us anything. We have not seen it as our responsibility. People still feel the center has obligations to help.

The secretary was speaking generally of LCs in Uganda, but his description of the expectations that the center will and should provide, despite decentralization, accurately depicts the situation in Mpigi as a result of the political imbalance described above.

In addition to expecting the center to provide resources for the district to use in carrying out its activities, there is also an expectation among leaders that they should benefit personally from the relationship with the center. For example, another executive committee member, in response to a question about how Mpigi's close relationship with Museveni affects the councils' performance, responded this way:

Oh, you are asking how have we benefited. I threw up this question to him [Museveni] when we visited. I said, 'You are the son of Mpigi, but we haven't benefited.' His response was that I [Museveni] am also unhappy with the people in Mpigi, the leaders. When they come to me, they talk on their personal interest instead of the interest of the entire people. If someone comes to say I am fit to become a minister instead of saying my people need an investor to put a factory there. He [the president] felt some leaders were pursuing their personal interest.

Certainly councilors and executive committee members in Bushenyi and Lira have similar concerns, yet this seems to be a driving force in Mpigi politics, rather than a secondary concern.

The practice of getting resources through personal relations with influential leaders tends to routinize such behavior and off-record informal exchanges come to dominate. As discussed in Chapter Eight, this pattern of political exchange exists in Mpigi's local government. The tendency for district politicians to lobby technical staff and influential politicians for goods and services for their constituencies is influenced, at least in part, by observations of the Movement's relationship with the district.

In addition, I argue that central dominance in Mpigi is exemplified by increased political meddling by central government officials in local affairs with negative consequences on council performance. Chapter Six recounts the allegations of corruption against Chairman Zimbe in Mpigi. On several occasions, councilors upset with what they

¹³ See *New Vision* December 7, 1999, page 3. Article title was unavailable.

saw as off-budget expenditure by the executive committee, Zimbe especially, threatened him with a vote of no confidence and even censure.¹⁴ Rather than letting events in Mpigi run their political course, Movement officials intervened. Movement vice-chairman, Ali Hajji Kigongo, and several ministers held meetings in Mpigi with district councilors, Zimbe, his executive, and district MPs to defuse the situation (*New Vision*).¹⁵ Chapter Eight discusses the Movement's interference into Mpigi's LC elections, in particular its role in Zimbe's decision not to stand for reelection in 2002. Yet, the Movement's intervention in political wrangles in Mpigi and other districts damages LC performance. Not only are potentially corrupt leaders able to persist in office beyond the public's wishes with the assistance of the Movement, but such leaders can continue to misappropriate funds for the duration of their time in office. It is inconclusive whether Zimbe was guilty of the charges of corruption, yet Mpigi's electorate was unable to resolve the process internally through the use of a legislative check on the executive or the electoral process.

A second example of Movement interference in Mpigi with negative impacts on council performance relates to the division of the district. The division had little to do with the demands of the population in Mpigi and a great deal to do with the wishes of a small number of councilors who would serve in the newly formed Wakiso, MPs who might benefit by getting a ministerial position, and the President's own wishes. For example, the description of the process of dividing the district provided by one executive committee member indicates that the impetus for division did not lie with the public. He explained, "I personally liked the idea. The people I represent did not like it. They said,

¹⁴ See, for example, *New Vision* articles from April 28, 1999 (page 8; no title available) and October 2, 2000.

‘You will create problems. We’ll have to pay more taxes.’” Likewise, a former Mpigi councilor, now in Wakiso, describes the process and the role of the center:

I went to Kibaale district to do development education. I saw that they were a new district, but they were progressing. I came back and told some of my colleagues. We said our district is so big and service delivery is poor. Why should Mpigi not be divided? We, five people, lobbied the MPs and said that service delivery was really poor. [Interviewer: How did the MPs react?] The MPs reacted positively because they were also frustrated. One MP approached the Minister of Local Government. It was leaked to the president. He called us. We didn’t know why he was calling us and we went trembling. He thought it [the division] was a good idea. He wanted Mpigi divided into 3 districts. He wrote a letter to the Minister of Local Government and the Minister tabled it and then it was passed.

Another secretary aptly noted the negative impact that the division of the district would have on council performance, “The center is further weakening us—making us more dependent. Our capacity is progressively decreasing with each split of a district. Then there are two CAOs, etc. There should be a threshold.” In Mpigi and numerous other districts, the Movement’s practice of creating new districts harms local councils by reducing the size of the taxable population while maintaining necessary expenditure at existing levels.

As noted above, the Movement government’s relationship with Mpigi and Lira, as I argue below, has the effect of shifting political leaders’ attention away from local concerns and toward the activities of the center. Several survey questions gauge the importance of the local government relative to the central government in these districts. The importance attributed to LCs by local populations influences the extent to which local leaders also feel compelled to pay attention to local concerns. Yet, I would argue that the inverse is equally true. When local leaders, as is the case in Bushenyi, focus on local concerns and local institutions to solve these problems, the citizens recognize the

¹⁵ See *New Vision* April 30, 1999, page 8. Article title was unavailable.

significance of these institutions. I believe that these survey responses indicate just that—citizens’ reflections of the importance attributed to the district council by their elected leaders.

For example, respondents in Bushenyi expressed a greater interest in politics and are *considerably* more interested in the activities of the local government than are respondents in the other districts. Survey respondents in Bushenyi district were more likely than respondents in the other two districts to say that they were interested in decisions made at various levels of government, especially the local government. For example, 68 percent of respondents in Bushenyi expressed an interest in important decisions made by the district council, while only 55 percent and 50 percent of respondents in Lira and Mpigi, respectively, offered a similar answer.¹⁶

Survey respondents in Bushenyi also consider the local councils to be important political institutions. For example, when asked “Who is the most important politician in this district?”, almost 70 percent of survey respondents in Bushenyi mentioned a local council official. In fact, 30 percent of the respondents said that LC5 Chairman Makaaru is the most important politician in Bushenyi district. Just under 44 percent of Mpigi respondents mentioned a LC official in their response, and only 6.9 percent said that Chairman Zimbe was the most important politician in Mpigi. On the other hand, only nine respondents in Lira (5.8 percent) mentioned a LC official! The overwhelming majority of Lira respondents (85.2 percent) said that the most important politician in the district was one of the area MPs. About 20 percent of respondents in Mpigi and less than

¹⁶ Only the differences between the percent responding that they are “somewhat interested” or “very interested” in Bushenyi and Mpigi and Bushenyi and Lira are statistically significant at the .05 level. The difference in percents between Lira and Mpigi is insignificant.

10 percent of respondents in Bushenyi mentioned a MP or a parliamentary aspirant in response to this question.

Lira

In the introductory section, I noted that none of the three patterns of central-local relationships describes Lira district's relationship with Uganda's central government perfectly. Lira's relationship with the central government is complex, but also extremely interesting as evident from the discussion above and to follow. At times Lira's relationship with the central government exemplifies *local autonomy*, and yet, in other instances Lira's relations with the center more closely resemble Mpigi's central dominance or Bushenyi's cooperative relations. Moreover, different features of Lira's relationship with the Movement government have different effects on the performance of the district council. Some features positively affect LC performance, while others seriously undermine council performance. Lira's history as an area in opposition to Museveni and the Movement government is significantly important not only to how the district interacts with the center, but because it provides leaders with an important political tool that can be used, as necessary, to shift attention away from or as an excuse for poor performance.

Like Bushenyi, Lira's dependence on the center is lessened somewhat because levels of central government support do not exceed district support for the Movement, as is the case in Mpigi. Lira offers very little political support to the Movement government, nonetheless, as discussed above, Lira does receive financial support from the central government, albeit at levels lower than other districts more supportive of the

Movement and with greater cabinet representation. While Lira is dependent on central government transfers to finance the bulk of its activities, it is less dependent—by consequence of its limited access to such resources more than choice—on the sort of informal allocations discussed above. As a result, the central government is less able to use such resources to influence the behavior of LC officials as occurs in Mpigi. Thus, LC officials in Lira have some room to maneuver in their relations with the center, cooperating when it suits their interests, and often loudly opposing the center when that better serves their purposes.

Yet, the Movement government still struggles and quite often succeeds in exerting its influence over the LCs in Lira. For example, in his address to the council on October 7, 1998 Chairman Otoa

blasted the incumbent District Movement Chairperson for trying to bring the downfall of the elected councillors. He stated that Movement Chairperson has been telling higher authorities (President, Ministers, IGG and Permanent Secretary) adverse, unsubstantiated and negative stories about district council leaders, requesting the authorities to challenge the appointments of the Boards and Commissions approved by the council and also appealing to the authorities to revisit the councils' decisions.

At the same time, the chairman also accused the RDC of attending a sub-county council meeting at Lira sub-county headquarters that was organized to move a vote of no confidence against the LC3 chairperson because he is a multipartyist (Lira October 7, 1998). As Chapter Eight describes, Movement leaders have, however, been less successful at interfering in elections in the district. For example, despite serious campaigning by Museveni and substantial Movement resources, the Movement-endorsed candidate for MP for Lira Municipality, Sam Engola, was defeated by incumbent Cecilia Ogwal. The Movement has been equally unsuccessful in LC elections. The UPC Ad-

Hoc Committee, which includes powerful UPC politicians, such as Ogwal, has much greater influence over electoral outcomes in the district. The impact of such influence on district council performance is explored in Chapter Eight.

The RDC provides a key mechanism through which the Movement has intervened in Lira district council affairs. For example, the RDC has almost regularly raised alarms that rebels were operating or recruiting in Lira. The RDC's involvement in instigating an investigation of corruption within the district administration provides another example. Various examples of interference are important in that they weaken the authority of the district council. Residents in Lira are quite aware of the history of the councils and their historic and real connections to Movement structures. Involvement in LC affairs by Movement representatives may decrease the legitimacy of the council. Yet, on the other hand, one could argue that central government efforts to draw attention to mismanagement and financial impropriety by LCs serve to improve council performance.

As noted above, Lira's opposition to the Movement has important and I argue negative impacts on district council performance. Above I argued that local government performance suffers in the face of insecurity and conflict that often accompany opposition to the central government. For example, during a meeting with President Museveni to discuss the insecurity in Lira, district officials discussed such problems. District leaders argued that a "weakening of tax revenue collection" has been a key problem of the LRA's activity in the district (Lira June 29, 1998). Likewise, local officials also noted that the council had been unable to pay salaries of district workers for eight to ten months as a consequence of the rebel activity in the district (Lira June 29, 1998).

Yet, opposition has other negative effects on performance. For example, a MP, notably a strong Movement supporter, argued that Lira's district leaders tend to "sabotage" programs that come from the central government. He argued that:

The leadership of the district wants to undermine government policies. They sabotage the work of the government and don't want them [central government] to succeed, so the community hates the Movement and won't participate....Everything would be political. The president took people who wanted to buy Lira Spinning Mill...[District leaders] say not people, but the president is buying [the mill]. They know it's a good policy—good for Lira—but it would boost the image of the Movement and so they want to sabotage it.

The sale of the spinning mill did go through in 2000 as part of the government's privatization plan. A *New Vision* article recounts how multiparty presidential candidate Aggrey Awori pledged to buy back the spinning mill during a campaign rally in Lira. This offers preliminary evidence that the sale of the mill was politically charged. I found no further evidence to substantiate the claim that district leaders objected to the sale. Yet, a representative from ULAA made a similar argument about district leaders' tendency to reject ideas that come from the center:

When Lira is on the other side, it becomes significant. [Interviewer: In what ways?] It affects how they support government programs, including decentralization. In Bushenyi they went for decentralization. In Lira they went for it with mixed feelings and [think] maybe it's some Museveni program.

A representative from a large donor in Lira sees the district's opposition as an explanation for poor performance. He states:

Lira, a political opposition area, [it] might be that there's not a good sense of management of public funds because these funds are from the central government. And an opponent of the government could consider the money as a gift to use it anyway without accountability....Within the district, this opposition feeling means local officials don't feel responsible for the money. If Lira makes a mistake, you hear them saying government punishes them because of their opposition.

The image of Lira district actively subverting the policy of decentralization or other central government programs may be too simple. Certainly this occurs at times, but does not appear to be a concerted strategy. For example, Chairman Otoa was accused by the Movement government of using money transferred to the district as part of a PAF conditional grant to finance his efforts to campaign against Museveni. The Prime Minister referred to the incident in his response to a question about the impact of central-local relations on LC performance. He agreed that, in fact, the relationship between a district and the center affects performance:

It does because if a chairman is opposing the Movement government, as in the case of Lira, we move in opposite directions. There are instances in which they've been using local resources to fight us in national elections instead of for the delivery of services.

Yet, rather than simply fighting the center, I argue that LC officials in Lira often exploit the district's opposition to the center as a way of diverting councilors' and likely the public's attention away from instances of poor performance. A strategy of Lira's local leadership, and opposition politicians generally, seems to be—when all else fails, criticize the center. In Lira's district council opposition to the Movement is used, at times, to cloak corruption, mismanagement, and overall poor performance. The reaction of Lira's district leadership to the IGG's investigation into corruption charges against key district administrators serves as an important example of this tendency. For example, rather than probe the veracity of the corruption charges, the district council established a committee to evaluate the actions of the IGG in arresting three top district officers. It should be noted that the CAO, who was at the center of the controversy, was interdicted only a short time later by the district itself. District officials criticized the central government's

action because they felt it was politically motivated, and yet, at least two letters by Lira residents to the editor of the *New Vision* specifically asked the IGG to come to Lira to investigate the activities of the District Tender Board.¹⁷ These requests suggest that the investigation was not simply political meddling by the center, although this was likely part of the story.

In Lira this strategy also serves to override efforts by councilors to check the activities of the executive. For example, minutes to a Lira district council meeting (April 7 and 8, 2000) indicate that councilors pressed the executive committee to explain why the executive had not yet brought the financial accounts for 1995/96 and 1996/97 before the council for discussion. Several councilors even drafted a petition, in which they suggested that there were “illegalities...in the signatures” (Lira April 7 and 8, 2000). The Secretary for Finance in response raised the issue of insecurity and the central government’s inability to address the situation.

District officials do not trust the Movement government, and thus, cooperation between the two groups is limited, although not out of the question.¹⁸ Despite tremendous and vocal opposition, there is evidence that district leaders do, in fact, cooperate with the central government with mixed effects on performance. Evidence suggests that the district cooperates in implementing many central government policies. For example, many respondents in Lira, mostly administrators, distinguish between the political side of the district’s relationship with the center and the service delivery side. A number of

¹⁷ See “IGG, Please Probe Lira Tender Board,” *New Vision* (September 13, 2001) and “We smell some corruption,” *New Vision* (August 20, 2001).

¹⁸ Survey responses provide some evidence of low levels of trust for the Movement. While only 5.5 percent of Bushenyi respondents and 10 percent of Mpigi respondents reported not trusting the Movement, a third of Lira respondents said that they did not trust the Movement. The sentiments are likely mirrored or even magnified within Lira’s district council.

district officials argued that poor political relations do not affect service delivery. One official explained it this way:

Politically there have been some problems. The north has been dominated by multipartists. This government is a movement system. The political language is different. But as far as work, we've always been working with the government. The chairman said we should move together.

Another district official characterized the relationship between the district and the center as "cordial" as far as the delivery of services is concerned. She continued that, "Occasionally an expression of dissatisfaction. Trying to win people to the other side, but that has not affected service delivery."

There is also substantial evidence that district leaders are willing to cooperate in efforts to resolve problems of insecurity. For example, Lira district officials welcomed a visit from a group of ministers in 1998 organized to discuss the government's Amnesty Bill. Most recently, MPs and district leaders from Lira joined the President's peace team. The *New Vision* provides several accounts of Lira's chairman thanking Museveni and the central government for their efforts to restore peace. Similarly, Museveni also has on several occasions praised Lira district for its cooperation and for not resorting to violence. This runs contrary, however, to the accusations that reemerge regularly that rebels are recruiting in parts of Lira.

One Lira MP, however, recounted an instance of cooperation, that he argues, shows that Lira cooperates *excessively* and is unwilling to challenge even when it would mean better service delivery. Discussing the performance of the district council, he referred to the district's implementation of the central government's restocking program:

The district council is supposed to look at the priorities of the people. The secretaries don't have this mentality. They just do whatever comes from above. Whatever others do. For example, restocking with Ankole cattle

that are not local. There is a lack of vision. They [the executive] just do what others are doing.

The MP argued that Ankole cattle would be useless to Lira residents as they are not suited to the sort of plow farming common to the district.

Yet, politicians from Lira district have also demonstrated a willingness to criticize the central government and openly voice their opposition to most actions taken by the center, especially what they perceive to be the unfair allocation of resources, as discussed at length above. Interviews in Lira revealed a few examples of district challenges to the center that resemble actions of Bushenyi district council, and which may improve the council's performance. For example, one executive committee member explained that he complained to the Ministry of Water because the funds for monitoring were not enough and did not allow him to monitor every project. He explained, "I told the people in the Ministry of Water in Kampala that I need to see every water source." Similarly, an assistant CAO explained that he complained to the Ministry of Works because he was not satisfied with the method of contracting services and suggested eliminating the middleman. He argued that contracting directly with individuals doing the work would improve the quality of road maintenance and increase the revenue in the households of these individuals. The district has also challenged President Museveni directly on several occasions, apart from the vocal criticisms regularly offered by district politicians and discussed above. For example, in 1998 the district wrote a letter demanding a meeting with the President to discuss the security situation. The report of the meeting indicates that President Museveni respected the request and was quite accommodating. Similarly, the district chairman reported in a council meeting that he had written a letter complaining about the central government's infiltration into district activities.

7.3 Administrative Linkages

Analysis of data on the administrative linkages between the case study districts and the central government offers little support for my hypothesis that tighter linkages would be associated with better local government performance. Indicators, like the number of letters exchanged between ministries and these districts or the number of ministry officials that visit a district in a given time period, do not vary with performance as I expected.

Bushenyi district performs better than Mpigi and Lira, and yet, appears to have the weakest administrative linkages of the three districts. For example, as reported in Chapter Six, a higher percent of survey respondents in Bushenyi felt that there has been improvement in the local government's delivery of education, health, and agricultural services. Yet, a review of the visitors' logs for these three districts for 2000 indicates that Bushenyi district had fewer visitors from than central government ministries than Lira or Mpigi (see Table 3). From January 2000 to December 2000, only 36 visits from ministry officials were recorded in the visitors' log in the office of the District Chairman or CAO in Bushenyi.¹⁹ During the same time period, 79 such visits were recorded in the visitors' logs in the CAO's and Chairman's offices in Mpigi and 40 were recorded in the CAO's visitors' log in Lira.²⁰ It is possible that the districts vary in their adherence to the Ugandan tradition of having guests sign their visitors' logs, which would explain some of

¹⁹ Only 32 visits listed the individual's ministry affiliation. Four visits did not list the ministry name, but I was able to determine which ministry the individual represented based on the reason given for the visit.

²⁰ I was not given access to the chairman's visitors' log in Lira district. However, fieldwork in Mpigi and Bushenyi indicated that most ministry officials meet with the CAO who is the head of the district administration as well as than the chairman. Only 26 of the 40 visits deemed to be ministerial visits actually listed the name of the ministry. The other 14 did not list a ministry name, but the reason for visiting clearly indicated that the individuals were representing a particular ministry.

the variation in recorded visits by ministry officials. Yet, given that I was asked to sign the visitors' log in all three districts and that the logs were equally full suggest otherwise.

Table 3 about here.

Similarly, Bushenyi does not communicate more frequently with line ministries through written communication.²¹ Mpigi exchanged the most letters (45 total letters) with four sectoral ministries,²² while Bushenyi exchanged 37 letters and Lira only exchanged 28 letters with these ministries. Looking at the letters sent from these three districts to two important ministries—Ministry of Health and Ministry of Water—again Mpigi exhibits tighter administrative linkages than Bushenyi or Lira. Mpigi sent 9 letters to these two ministries during the second quarter of 2000, while Bushenyi sent 8 and Lira only sent 2 letters to these ministries. Mpigi also sent considerably more letters to the Ministry of Local Government during 2000. In fact, Mpigi wrote the MoLG 25 times compared to only 6 and 4 letters from Bushenyi and Lira, respectively. Mpigi's frequent correspondence with the MoLG is partially explained by the fact that the division of the district was ongoing at this time.

Bushenyi performs well, and as discussed above, has less frequent contact with ministry representatives. It may be the case that given higher levels of performance, Bushenyi does not need assistance from the ministries. This is certainly supported by interview responses from key district officials who expressed the opinion that contact with ministries is unnecessary as the district already knows what it should be doing and is

²¹ Based on number of letters during a three-month period (April-June 2000). See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of these measures.

capable of carrying out these tasks. For example, one executive committee member stated, “Under decentralization, even if they don’t come, we don’t care. Under decentralization, we don’t need to refer to the central government. We know what to do and how to do it.” Similarly, an administrator in the works department explained, “There is nothing so much technical that we can’t handle it or need their assistance.” Finally, another executive committee member expressed a similar sentiment when asked about the frequency of visits from Ministry of Education officials, “It is difficult to quantify. They come. *Not that their absence is felt*” [emphasis added].

Such comments and the quantitative evidence reviewed above suggest that, at present, the relationship between Uganda’s central line ministries and local governments is not the sort of mentoring relationship I theorized could improve the capacity of local governments for more responsive and effective governance. This is somewhat surprising given that Ndegwa (2002) reports that Uganda has one of the highest scores of 30 African countries on a measure of the degree to which local governments are upwardly accountable to the central government.²³ As will be discussed below, there are significant mechanisms in place to ensure upward accountability of Uganda’s local governments. Generally, however, ministries face many constraints in carrying out their duties of monitoring, oversight, support supervision, and training. There is variation by ministry, however, which is discussed more thoroughly below. In theorizing about the positive effects of interactions between ministries and local governments, I underestimated the constraints on Uganda’s central ministries, such as limited staff and resources due not only to decentralization, but also the economic reforms Uganda has

²² Includes Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Water.

undertaken since the 1990s that have included a large retrenchment component. Likewise, the sheer distance between ministerial staff in Kampala and district governments impedes efforts by ministry officials to verify accountability reports that LCs submit for approval. These reports, along with ministerial visits, serve as the principal tools ministries use for monitoring and inspecting district activities.

In all ministries there have been increased efforts to monitor how districts use funds they receive from the center. Many of these accounting mechanisms emerged following a World Bank report that revealed the extensiveness of the problem of leakage away from budgeted expenditure in Uganda.²⁴ The report revealed that *less than 30 percent* of non-wage expenditure sent to districts for education actually reached beneficiary schools (Ablo and Reinikka 1998). Heightened attention to monitoring is also certainly related to Uganda's debt relief program and donor concerns that debt relief monies are actually used for poverty alleviating activities.

As discussed in Chapter Three, PAF conditional grants to districts come with detailed guidelines for planning, reporting, and accounting for the use of the funds. PAF grants require districts to submit every quarter, a quarterly and cumulative workplan and an account of how funds were used in the previous quarter. The overseeing ministry is responsible for approving the workplans, verifying completion of previous workplans, and ensuring that funds were used appropriately. At the beginning of each quarter, the ministry sends the Ministry of Finance (MoF) a list of all districts that met the requirements and that should receive the next installment of the PAF grant. This is an extremely complicated and time-consuming process, and ministries certainly vary in the

²³ Ndegwa measures upward accountability as the "existence of enunciated service delivery standards and up to date auditing accounts" (2002, 8-9).

extent to which they have embraced and been able to successfully undertake this new responsibility.

Uganda's monitoring program also includes physical visits by ministry officials to districts to allow ministries to verify information included in districts' progress reports (Hauge 2001). Yet, Hauge argues that such visits are infrequent (2001). Similarly, numerous respondents in all three districts and at the national level, including MPs and even ministry officials, noted the problems with monitoring and inspection by central government ministries as carried out today.

For example, one MP from Lira described ministry monitoring this way:

They're doing it, but the way they are doing it is wrong. They arrive in the district and have these functions...with a program of who to talk, this LC and that LC, etc., with traditional dancing. The one to monitor gives a speech and then says they've done a monitoring activity and they've not even monitored anything! They come back to Kampala more ignorant than before. They might have better idea of traditional dancers and the meal...but that's it. And the venue chosen is an example of a successful project area, but in the other 50 or 60 project areas they don't visit and they don't know if it's successful.

While the description may seem unduly harsh, district administrators in all three districts agreed that the monitoring activities of most line ministries are often inadequate to enable ministry officials to truly know what is happening on the ground. For example, a district administrator speaking of the MoE complained "...They don't come and I don't know why. Monitoring is poor."

One donor noted the problems of relying too heavily on reports to ensure accountability. His comments concerned a donor-funded project, but are certainly relevant to mechanisms of upward accountability to the central government generally: "There is a problem with control mechanisms. People are creative. There are reports in

²⁴ See Ablo and Reinikka "Do Budgets Really Matter?" (1998).

practice, not reality. We are losing a lot of money.” He continued that “Some districts account and give the impression that things are going well. On paper things are okay.”

At the beginning of the financial year, districts and ministries sign “letters of understanding” that commit the local governments to implement the annual workplans. Guidelines to PAF grants detail when and how changes to letters of understanding can be made once letters are signed by both parties. An official with the MoF explained that changes never occur, and that “either local governments are implementing their workplans to the T or they are not reporting changes.” The reality of life in Africa suggests that local governments are often forced to adjust workplans, and the fact that these changes are not reported or reflected in revised letters of understanding raises serious concern that what is reported on paper does not always reflect reality. This certainly increases the importance of visits to districts to confirm reports, but such visits provide other opportunities for the transfer of valuable knowledge.

Ministry officials varied in their responses to a question about how they would evaluate the performance of the ministry in monitoring local government activities. Officials in several ministries noted that current efforts are simply inadequate. For example, an official with the Ministry of Works responded to the question this way, “It is not adequate. We lack facilitation. We are thinking of privatizing it...We lack the capacity here. We remain only for spot checks.” Similarly, when asked if inspection reports were publicly available, an inspector with the MoLG department responsible for monitoring local government activities and expenditure admitted that the ministry has produced a limited number of inspection reports. He explained, “We are thin on the

ground. The reports delay. There are a few here and there. Typing the reports is a problem.”

As noted above, there is variation across ministries. For example, administrators in health in all three districts were, however, considerably more positive in their evaluations of monitoring by the Ministry of Health than were administrators working in other sectors. Respondents in Bushenyi even complained that the MoH comes too frequently, which again provides evidence of Bushenyi district officials’ feeling that ministry oversight is unnecessary. MoH officials report that they make quarterly visits to each district. This is facilitated by recent reforms within the MoH that established a program of regional planners, each responsible for a small number of districts and expected to work closely with health administrators in each district. For example, the DDHS in Mpigi explained:

We [the district and MoH] have a good working relationship. All the guidelines we follow are from the MoH, although the money comes from the MoF. They have to follow the money. They come down and follow. They even visit the sub-districts to see if the money was released and used. The planning department in the MoH is zoned....If we have a problem, we contact this planner. All reports go through the planners. He forwards them to the MoF.

In other ministries, such as the MoWks, MoE and MoAg, a single official or a small number of officials is responsible for coordinating the activities of all of Uganda’s local governments, which limits the extensiveness of monitoring activities.

As noted in Chapter Three, ministries, such as the MoE, perhaps in recognition of the limitations they face in monitoring local government activities, have tried to increase public awareness of levels of funding to districts. The MoE has instituted a system of mandatory public notices, not only publicizing the amount of UPE and SFG grants to

each district in newspapers and on the radio, but requiring districts to display the amount sent to each school and a list of local contractors to be used to supply furniture or construct classrooms. Beneficiary schools are also mandated to display notices of the amount received under UPE and SFG grants, the amount paid out to local contractors, and the “amount and accountability of local community contribution towards school construction (where applicable)” (Uganda 2001, 20). The MoE even reports having a hotline the general public can use to alert ministry officials to potential problems (Uganda 2001, 23). Given that public involvement and participation, perhaps even awareness, of local government activities is limited, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight, the extent to which the public has embraced fully these monitoring opportunities provided by the MoE and others is uncertain. Nevertheless, respondents and focus group participants in Lira were aware that their district council had funds withheld from the MoE in response to the district’s mishandling of funds previously received.

Another problem with oversight and monitoring by line ministries is the fact that their power to discipline district officials found to be in violation of the law or policy guidelines is severely limited. As noted in Chapter Three, district administrators are now employees of the district and accountable to the district council, not the central government. Thus, ministry officials have no power to sanction poorly performing staff. Moreover, ministries control the release of funds to districts, but as several ministry representatives explained, withholding funds to a district hurts the intended beneficiaries much more than it does the district officials that the ministry hopes to punish. This point reinforces the extent of Uganda’s decentralization policy. Despite the presence of mechanisms to ensure upward accountability to the center and even detailed guidelines

for the use of funds, Uganda's policy is not merely deconcentration, which shifts power to central government representatives. In Uganda, popularly elected leaders bear responsibility for implementing these policies of the center.

Despite limited powers to sanction district officials for poor performance, ministries can provide feedback to districts based on their monitoring visits and their reactions to district workplans and accountability reports. Through such feedback ministry officials can inform districts where they are performing well and where their performance is falling short and why. Respondents in all three districts, however, complained that most ministries provide extremely little feedback that districts could use to gauge and improve their performance, although respondents again identified the Ministry of Health as an exception. Health administrators in all three districts argued that the MoH provides feedback based on observations during visits to the district or reactions to district workplans and progress reports. In contrast, officials working in other sectors, such as agriculture and education, said that they rarely receive feedback from ministry representatives.

Ministry officials, perhaps not surprisingly, offer a somewhat contrary, and certainly more positive, picture of their efforts to provide feedback to districts. Officials at the MoAg and MoWks explained that they have a worksheet they use when checking PAF workplans and reports submitted by districts, and they send the completed detailed worksheet to each district to highlight the areas in need of improvement or revision. Officials at the MoH and within the department of the MoE responsible for the School Facilities Grant (SFG) described a more informal process of providing feedback to districts. For example, an official at the MoH explained that if there are problems with

district reports, “we ring them and ask them to redo it.” Similarly, the MoE official responsible for overseeing district implementation of the SFG explained that he requests that district officials submit reports in person to allow him to “sit with them and give feedback.”

Ministry monitoring and oversight is focused primarily on districts’ use of PAF funds and pays little attention to other grants districts receive. Hauge reports that of the 23 conditional grants to Ugandan districts only 11 are under PAF (2001). Thus, a considerable amount of district resources lie outside the radar of ministry officials. Moreover, despite shortcomings, ministries concentrate on monitoring and oversight and give less attention to other activities, such as training or support supervision. For example, respondents in all three districts were quite critical of the training offered by a variety of ministries. Respondents’ complaints that training pulls people away from their desks leaving work to pile up indicate that training may, in fact, negatively affect performance. Related to this, some respondents complained that training is too focused on procedural issues rather than substantive. Ministry training workshops focus on training district administrators how to complete all of the paperwork the ministries require, and yet, even this form of training should benefit local governments with low capacity. Ministerial reporting requirements relate to planning, budgeting, and accounting for the funds districts receive. Simply learning how to follow ministry reporting guidelines correctly may vastly improve the ability of LCs to perform these three important tasks.

Ministry guidelines for how conditional grants can be used often include fairly detailed technical and even allocation requirements, although as noted in Chapter Three,

this is diminishing. For example, the MoE details exactly how classrooms should be constructed from the proper size of the classroom to specifications of the appropriate size of new desks.

Given that the portrayal of their interactions with different ministries were quite similar across the three districts, ministry support seems to be quite uniformly allocated, despite obvious differences in the number of visits and letters. Greater variation in the sort of interactions that can possibly improve local government performance exists across ministries than across districts. My hypothesis that variation in ministries' interactions with districts would explain differences in performance is not supported. The reaction of Lira district officials to the IGG's investigation, discussed at length above, indicates, however, that a district's political relationship with the center does affect its willingness to accept assistance from the center. Yet, this may be less pronounced for more routine interactions between district and ministry officials. Based on my analysis, political and administrative linkages seem to be unrelated.

An analysis of interactions between case study districts and separate ministries also does not support my hypothesis, but does, at least in the case of the Ministry of Education, furnish some evidence, albeit limited, to substantiate the negative relationship revealed in the multivariate analysis in Chapter Five. I focus on two ministries in particular, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. As discussed in Chapter Six, these two sectors together constitute a large percent of overall district expenditure and activities within these two sectors are critical for economic development.

As with the summary measures discussed above, there is no evidence that contact between district officials and the MoE explains Bushenyi's better performance. In fact,

the number of visits from MoE officials indicates that the ministry is not proactive in promoting good performance. Instead MoE oversight and monitoring activities resemble McCubbins and Schwartz's "fire alarm oversight" (1984), as ministry officials tend to respond to reports of mismanagement of funds intended to provide educational services within a district.²⁵ For example, Lira district administration received the most visits from MoE officials (9 visits), yet as discussed in Chapter Six, Lira also had the lowest performance rating for education according to survey respondents. Only 37 percent of survey respondents in Lira felt that the district's performance in providing education services was "good" or "very good." On the other hand, Bushenyi district was rated highest across all five activities in the education sector and the district also hosted fewer visits from MoE officials (6 visits) than either Mpigi or Lira. Lira's more frequent visits from the MoE were most likely prompted because the district experienced many more problems implementing MoE policies than Mpigi or Bushenyi. Ministry officials likely came to Lira to investigate numerous allegations of corruption in the use of UPE funds and tender awards for classroom construction under the SFG program. An education officer in Lira confirms this, arguing that ministry officials "...come physically when they see there is a problem."

On the other hand, the number of letters exchanged between the district administration and the MoE also does not support my hypothesis concerning administrative linkages, but neither does it provide evidence of the opposite—that contact is more frequent with districts that are performing poorly. For example, Mpigi district received the most letters from MoE (11 letters) compared to only 4 and 5 received by

²⁵ The term "fire alarm oversight" comes from work by McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) in reference to Congressional oversight of the federal bureaucracy, but aptly describes the tendency of MoE officials to

Lira and Bushenyi districts, respectively. Yet, 44 percent of survey respondents in Mpigi felt that the district was performing well in providing education services, compared to 50 percent of survey respondents in Bushenyi and 37 percent in Lira who answered similarly.

As noted above, ministries have limited capacities to fulfill their mandates and responsibilities concerning monitoring, inspection, oversight, and training. Thus, it is easier to understand why the Ministry of Education, for example, carries out dangerously little inspection of district activities in the education sector and seems to visit only in emergency situations. Ministry officials responsible for reviewing and approving district workplans for the use of the UPE grants explained that they focus their attention only on whether the district's proposed expenditure falls within the predetermined budget ceiling. One official explained, "We try to find that they don't go beyond the budget. We give them budget ceilings. That is point number one. No district should spend beyond its allocation." There is evidence that MoE officials will request that funds be withheld from districts that fail to submit a report accounting for previously dispersed funds. Yet, there is no evidence that funds are withheld because a district submitted an unsatisfactory account of how funds were used. In fact, it appears as though the MoE will recommend that the Ministry of Finance release funds to any district that submits the required report, regardless of the quality or veracity of such an account. Furthermore, there is little evidence that the MoE team responsible for UPE grants examines or questions any reports that are submitted by the districts. One MoE official offered this response to a question about whether ministry officials look to see if money is being spent in the schools that are supposed to benefit and follows up on how money is used by the district,

respond only when there are reports of misconduct within a district.

“Ideally yes, but nobody does that. Maybe at the district level.” Ministry officials explained that monitoring of how districts use the UPE funds occurs on a quarterly basis, but cautioned that the level of monitoring is “...not adequate. Visiting districts on a quarterly basis is not enough. We have to go to schools and the schools are very many.” District officials in all three districts tend to agree, noting that ministry officials visit infrequently and that visits are not always effective.

Many of the corruption scandals in districts, including Lira, concern the misuse of SFG funds. The MoE has made recent efforts to improve the monitoring of these funds, likely a result of the publicity of many of these scandals. A ministry official describe the reforms:

We’ve had problems with district engineers certifying from the office without going to the field and you get shoddy work. Because of this we’ve deployed engineering assistants—our employees on contract—based in every district to do the monitoring for us.

Evidence from other sectors, such as health, also offers little support for the hypothesis that more frequent contact between central government administrators and district officials has positive benefits to performance. Interactions between the MoH and district officials, however, do not provide evidence of the sort of “fire alarm oversight” that the MoE seems to undertake. For example, visits from MoH officials certainly do not explain districts’ ability to provide health care services when Mpigi and Lira, both evaluated as poor performers in this sector by survey respondents, had the *most* and the *fewest* visits, respectively. Mpigi had nine visits from MoH officials and yet only 22 percent of survey respondents said that the district’s performance in providing health care services was good or very good. On the other hand, Lira had only one visit from MoH officials and yet an even smaller percent of survey respondents in Lira (only 20 percent)

evaluated the district council's performance as good or very good. The number of letters exchanged between these districts and the MoH tell a similar story. Mpigi exchanged the most letters with the MoH (23 letters total), but Bushenyi and Lira were both quite close with 21 and 19 letters, respectively. A high volume of letters and frequent visits do not appear to have done much to improve Mpigi district's provision of health services, at least in the eyes of district residents.

Over time as ministries come to accept the permanence of decentralization and their roles in the process, the positive impacts of administrative linkages may begin to emerge. Once local governments and ministries are knowledgeable about and capable of carrying out the basic administrative procedures, perhaps ministries can focus on substantive training that improves the capacity of local governments to meet the needs of their constituents most effectively. Until then, tighter administrative linkages are not associated with instances of good performance in any systematic way. Interactions between ministries and districts are perfunctory and in the case of MoE, and likely other ministries, too reactive rather than proactive to serve as devices for mentoring and transforming Uganda's district councils into more responsive and effective local governments.

Model Variable	Model 1: Raw Figures for CG Transfers	Model 2: CG Transfers per Person	Model 3: Number of GOU and Donor Projects	Model 4: Registered NGOs in District
Constant	-3.44e+10 (5.46e+09)***	71343.7 (19866.73)***	-12.39 (9.74)	-170.64 (51.47)
Population (log)	2.81e+09 (4.61e+08)***	-5431.62 (1718.05)***	1.81 (.729)**	17.16 (3.53)***
Human Development Index	9.43e+09 (3.37e+09)***	32337.03 (12473.26)***	-7.84 (7.28)	-9.21 (57.46)
Index of District Electoral Support	-6.10e+08 (2.25e+08)***	-2076.7 (729.91)***	.017 (.435)	-8.80 (1.95)***
Number of Cabinet Ministers (before July 2001 reshuffle)	1.33e+09 (3.37e+08)	2318.06 (1055.76)**	1.42 (.798)*	8.85 (5.30)*
<i>Number of districts</i>	42	42	44	45
<i>R² Adjusted</i>	.7252	.3826	.3118	.6181
<i>SEE</i>	2.2e+09	6870.8	3.64	19.41
<i>F statistic</i>	34.28	5.13	4.18	17.79
<i>Sig. of F statistic</i>	.0000	.0022	.0065	.0000

Notes: Robust standard errors reported in parentheses.
For two tailed *t* tests: *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$

Table 2: Selected Measures of Central Government Support to Districts

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Number of GOU and donor funded projects	5	21	10
Cabinet ministers after July 2001	2	3	1
Cabinet ministers after May 2003	3	3	1
Visits from CG ministry officials	32	79	26
Visits from MPs and Ministers	23	20	10
Visits from Museveni	Frequent	Very frequent	Sporadic
Percent said Museveni promised goods or services during visit	98.7	91.4	89.1
Percent said Museveni's promises not fulfilled	42.0	50.5	69.1

Table 3: Performance and Ministry Letters and Visits

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Education			
Percent respond that district performance good or very good	49.8	44.1	37.1
Number of letters exchanged with MoE	5	11	4
Number of visits from MoE officials	6	8	11
Health			
Percent respond that district performance good or very good	34.5	21.9	20.2
Number of letters exchanged with MoH	21	23	19
Number of visits from MoH officials	4	9	1
Agriculture			
Percent respond that district performance good or very good	24	5.2	6.9
Number of letters exchanged with MoAg	5	11	7
Number of visits from MoAg officials	2	10	5
Works			
Percent respond that district performance good or very good	25.4	28.3	17
Number of letters exchanged with MoW	-	-	-
Number of visits from MoW officials	2	3	2

Chapter Eight: Silence from Below?

8.1 Introduction

Chapter Seven discusses the impact of central-local relations on local government performance. The chapter highlights how central government efforts to control local governments and even political and financial dependence among local elites on the central government explain why local leaders give less attention to local concerns. But local politics is another piece of the puzzle.

This chapter seeks to answer the following question: does good local government performance result from an active society? In doing so, this chapter assesses the ability of society-centric explanations, such as participation, civil society, and social capital, to explain differences in performance across three case study districts. I supplement these societal explanations by looking at more institutional aspects of local politics—1) patterns of local political competition and 2) the political strategies of local leaders. I look at these aspects of local politics to test hypotheses about the impact of local political dynamics on local government performance. In Chapter Two, I theorized that local governments perform better where there is greater competition for local elections and where politics at the local level is less personalized.

Society-centric explanations predict that Bushenyi's better performance will be accompanied by higher rates of citizen participation, higher levels of social capital, and a more active civil society. As will be discussed below, this is not the case for the most part. On certain indicators Bushenyi exhibits higher rates of participation. On most other indicators, however, respondents in Bushenyi are not significantly more active.

Likewise, most of the evidence to test the hypothesis that councils perform better where the population exhibits greater trust runs contrary to theoretical expectations. There is similarly a lack of evidence to support the hypothesis about the impact of having more civic organizations. Based on the case study material, areas with a larger number of civic organizations do not perform better than those districts with fewer such organizations. On the other hand, both quantitative and qualitative data measuring linkages between these organizations and LCs are in the hypothesized direction. In Bushenyi, the better performing district, the linkages between LCs and civic organizations are more developed.

I also hypothesized that local elections will be more competitive and politics less personalized in Bushenyi as well. There is some evidence to support the hypothesis about the impact of competition on government performance, although I would caution that the difference between the districts in the level of competition for local elections is not large. However, in combination with higher rates of participation in local elections in Bushenyi, greater competition may translate into greater influence on local government performance. The evidence presented in Section 8.4.2, however, is inadequate to allow me to test the hypothesis regarding the impact of personalized politics on LC performance.

8.2 Participation

Decentralization is supposed to increase participation, and through these new and expanded opportunities for participation, citizens should be better able to make their needs known to local government officials and hold these officials accountable. The end

result should be more responsive and more effective local government. Given that Bushenyi district council exhibits greater responsiveness and effectiveness than the district councils in Mpigi and Lira, societal explanations predict that citizens in Bushenyi would also participate at higher rates than their counterparts in Lira or Mpigi. I test this hypothesis by looking at several types of participation, including voting, contacting local leaders, and attending LC and other community meetings. There is some evidence to support this prediction, while there is also considerable quantitative and qualitative evidence that communities in the three districts participate at similar rates. Thus, I argue that participation does not explain the differences in performance between these three districts.

Formally Uganda's adopted policy of decentralization provides extensive opportunities for Ugandans to participate in their governance and influence the process of political decision making. The structure of the LC system itself provides opportunities for thousands of Ugandans to be involved in the local government as a representative at one of the higher levels of the LC system or to participate in their village council. For example, all Ugandans are automatically members of the LC1 in their village. Ugandans, however, have yet to utilize all of the opportunities for participation that are provided to them with decentralization, as will be discussed below.

As noted above, according to several measures of political participation respondents from Bushenyi do seem more active.¹ Voting for representatives to higher

¹ All of the data analysis reported in this chapter excludes respondents who answered "yes" to a survey question, which asked if the respondent was currently a LC official. Given that the percent of LC officials included in the sample from each district varies and that these officials by their very nature are more active and participate at a higher rate than others in the community, I felt that it was best to exclude individuals who held a LC position at the time of the survey. In most cases, the results change only slightly whether the LC officials are included or excluded from the analysis. Where the exclusion of these officials changes the substantive results or the significance of the results, I discuss these changes.

levels of the local council system is the most common form of citizen participation provided for in Uganda's decentralization policy. Although voting is an indirect form of participation, the local population in Bushenyi seems to utilize this form of participation more than do those in Mpigi and Lira. For example, a larger percent of the population in Bushenyi voted in the 1998 LC elections in Bushenyi than in Mpigi or Lira. Over 57 percent of registered voters in Bushenyi voted in this election compared to 49.1 in Lira and only 30.1 in Mpigi (see Table 1). Voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections in Bushenyi district is almost one standard deviation (11.3) above the median voter turnout (46.5 percent) for all 45 Ugandan districts.

Table 1 about here.

In addition to voting in local council elections, Ugandans may also participate by contacting LC officials at higher levels. Generally, this form of participation is not at all common. When asked if they had ever contacted a LC official to get help with a problem, 58.2 percent of all of the survey respondents (n=512) said that they had not. Nevertheless, respondents in Bushenyi district report contacting LC officials more frequently than their counterparts in either Mpigi or Lira. In fact, 53.6 percent of Bushenyi respondents said that they had contacted a local council official to try to get help with a particular problem. On the other hand, 58.4 percent of Mpigi respondents and an overwhelming 70.2 percent of Lira respondents said that they had *never contacted* a LC official.²

² Significant at the .01 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer's V = .193, sig .00

Similarly, respondents were asked about the number of times in the past year that they had contacted a LC official at each of the five levels. I created a summary measure by adding up the total number of times that a respondent reported contacting a LC official.³ District averages on this variable vary significantly. On average, Bushenyi respondents contacted LC officials 1.52 times, while respondents in Mpigi and Lira contacted officials on average .87 and .76 times, respectively.⁴

Yet, at the same time there is also considerable contrary evidence that raises doubts about whether the population in Bushenyi district is truly more active and eager to participate in the local government than their counterparts in Mpigi or Lira. For example, before they were asked about the *frequency of contact* with LC officials, respondents were asked basic questions about whether they had ever contacted a LC official at different levels of the local council system. Respondents in these three districts are quite similar in their willingness to contact LC officials at lower levels. For example, almost 95 percent of respondents in all three districts who had contacted a LC official reported contacting a LC official at the village level.⁵ In all three districts the percent of respondents who said they have contacted a leader at levels above the village level is substantially smaller. This is not surprising in rural areas where travel can be quite difficult.

Similarly, the percent of respondents within each district that reported contacting a local council official at the parish level (LC2) are quite similar and not statistically different from one another. Less than 25 percent of respondents in each district reported

³ Values on the summary measure range from 0 to 20. The median is 0 and the mean is 1.04, with a standard deviation of 2.19.

⁴ The difference in the average scores on this variable is statistically significant. ANOVA *F* statistic = 5.92, sig .01.

contacting a LC2 official. Nevertheless, contrary to theoretical expectations, slightly more respondents in Lira reported contacting a LC2 official (22.9 percent) than did their counterparts in Bushenyi (20 percent) or Mpigi (13 percent). The pattern is similar for responses to a question about whether respondents have ever contacted an official at the sub-county (LC3) level. Contacting a LC3 official is an extremely important form of participation given that the LC3 is the level of the local council system closest to citizens that is also empowered as a local government rather than an administrative unit. Almost 19 percent of respondents in Lira reported contacting a LC3 official, while only 17 percent of respondents in Bushenyi and 7 percent in Mpigi reported such contact.⁶

Likewise, Bushenyi respondents do not exhibit more community activism than their counterparts in Mpigi and Lira. More respondents in Mpigi said that their community had organized to request local officials to address a specific issue. In fact, 58 percent of Mpigi respondents reported such forms of community mobilization compared to only 42 and 41 percent in Bushenyi and Lira, respectively.⁷

In addition to community mobilization, Bushenyi residents do not appear more eager or willing to attend local council meetings. More people in Lira and Mpigi said that they “always” or “often” attend LC meetings in their area—38 and 33 percent respectively compared to only 23 percent in Bushenyi.⁸ Similarly, more people in Bushenyi district responded that they “never” attend LC meetings than did their

⁵ Neither the Chi-square value nor the Phi or Cramer’s V values are significant.

⁶ The differences in percents that reported contacting a LC3 official are statistically significant at the .10 level based on value of the Chi-square; Phi and Cramer’s V = .150, sig .091.

⁷ Significant at the .05 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer’s V = .158, sig .01

⁸ The percent of respondents in each district that reported frequently attending LC meetings is quite a bit higher when LC officials are included in the sample. The percents when LC officials are included are: 47.8 percent in Lira; 35.9 percent in Mpigi; and 33.9 percent in Bushenyi. While excluding LC officials reduces the number of respondents who said they attend regularly, the substantive results are the same. Fewer respondents in Bushenyi said they attend regularly.

counterparts in Lira or Mpigi. Almost 47 percent of respondents in Bushenyi said that they never attend council meetings compared to 44.4 percent in Lira and only 25 percent in Mpigi. Despite differences across these districts, the fact that 37 percent of the sample said that they never attend such meetings is quite significant.

Another way in which Uganda's policy of decentralization seeks to involve citizens in their own governance and enable them to identify projects that can best meet their needs is by opening up the planning and budgeting process to include all stakeholders. Sub-counties are supposed to organize meetings to allow local residents and representatives from each parish to voice their concerns and suggest programs to be included in the sub-county development plan that can best address these particular concerns. Likewise, district councils are required to organize an annual budget conference in which interested persons have an opportunity to influence budget allocations and expenditure for the upcoming year. The survey included several questions about respondents' participation in these activities. The percent of respondents in each district who recalled that the sub-county held a meeting to write the development plan varied significantly across the three districts. For example, 39 percent of respondents in Bushenyi recalled such a meeting compared to only 30 percent in Lira and only 21 percent in Mpigi district.⁹ Those that said "yes" were asked if they attended the meeting. The responses were quite similar across the three districts. The majority in all three districts said that they did not attend this meeting: 63 percent in Mpigi; 72 percent in Bushenyi; and 83 percent in Lira.¹⁰ Likewise, survey respondents in all three districts consistently reported not feeling involved in the process of writing the development plan

⁹ Significant at the .01 level based on the value of the Chi-square; Phi and Cramer's V = .161, sig .003.

¹⁰ Percents are not significantly different. Chi-square value = 3.89; sig .143.

for their sub-county. Almost 80 percent in each district answered that they were “not very involved” or “not at all involved” in this process.

The results were quite similar to questions about the annual district council budget conference. Slightly more respondents in Bushenyi (43.5 percent) recalled a district budget conference than did respondents from Lira (40.8 percent) or Mpigi (21.9 percent).¹¹ Those that said “yes” were then asked if they attended the budget conference and the overwhelming majority in each district did not attend: 85 percent in Mpigi; 90 percent in Bushenyi; and 97 percent in Lira.¹² Slightly more respondents in Bushenyi stated that they were “not very involved” or “not at all involved” in the process of writing the budget for the district. Over 92 percent of Bushenyi respondents did not feel involved in this process compared to 90 percent of respondents in Lira and 86 percent of respondents in Mpigi.¹³

Table 2 about here.

The reasons for attending local council meetings offered by respondents in each of the three districts are also quite similar (see Table 2). Few respondents in the districts reported attending meetings for personal reasons, such as settling disputes or to get assistance for a personal problem. Most respondents said that they attended meetings because it was their duty as a citizen, in order to unify their community or to bring services to the community. For example, over 95 percent of respondents in each district agreed that they attend LC meetings because they feel it is their responsibility as a

¹¹ Significant at the .01 level based on the value of the Chi-square; Phi and Cramer's V = .209, sig .004.

¹² Percents are not significantly different. Chi-square value = 2.13; sig .344.

citizen.¹⁴ As shown in Table 2, a small percent of respondents in Lira said they attend meetings to get help with a personal matter (4 percent). A similarly small percent in the other two districts offered the same response, however it is not among the top five answers given in Mpigi and Bushenyi and does not appear in Table 2.

The majority of respondents all three districts also feel that their attendance at council meetings makes a difference (see Table 3). Over 80 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “I attend LC meetings because I feel my attendance makes a difference.” Surprisingly, an overwhelming majority of respondents in Mpigi and Bushenyi also agreed with the statement, “When I attend local council meetings, I only attend because it is expected.” This is not the case in Lira where only 18 percent of the respondents agreed with this statement.¹⁵ Similarly, a large percent of respondents in Mpigi and Bushenyi (33 and 26 percent, respectively) acknowledged that there is pressure on local residents to attend LC meetings.¹⁶ A much smaller percent of respondents in Lira acknowledged a similar pressure on residents to attend meetings.

Table 3 about here.

This finding suggests that attendance at council meetings in Mpigi and Bushenyi is to some degree involuntary. Quite possibly the pressure on local populations to attend council meetings in Bushenyi, and especially Mpigi, reflects serious efforts by LC officials to secure support for the government and paint a picture of a supportive

¹³ Percents are not significantly different.

¹⁴ See question 74b, Appendix A.

¹⁵ Differences across the three districts in responses to statement A are statistically significant at the .01 level based on the value of Chi-square; Phi and Cramer's V = .596, sig .01.

population. There is likely greater pressure on residents in Mpigi to attend council meeting and appear pro-regime given that their political loyalties have tended to be much more divided in recent elections. A large percent of the population is not supportive of the Movement government, while the district continues to benefit considerably from various forms of central government support. This political imbalance, which produces a situation of central dominance, as discussed in Chapter Seven, also explains to some extent the greater pressure on citizens to participate in the LC system. Likewise, in Bushenyi, as described below, there are recently challenges to Movement support within the LCs in the district, which may explain pressure on citizens to participate in LCs.

Several survey questions also asked respondents to evaluate their level of involvement in the decisions made by different political institutions.¹⁷ An examination of respondents' answers to these questions raises additional questions about the level of citizen participation in Bushenyi and the hypothesis that greater participation spurs better performance. For example, a majority of respondents in all three districts responded that they felt "somewhat involved" or "very involved" in village council decisions: 60.9 percent in Lira; 62.6 percent in Bushenyi; and 69.9 percent in Mpigi. Not surprisingly, these percents are not statistically different from one another. Results to questions about involvement in sub-county council and district council decisions are quite similar. Over 30 percent of respondents in Lira answered that they were "somewhat involved" or "very involved" in decisions made by sub-county council, while 23.7 percent of Mpigi respondents and only 17.9 percent of Bushenyi respondents offered the same answers.¹⁸

¹⁶ Significant at the .01 level based on the value of Chi-square; Phi and Cramer's V = .135, sig .01.

¹⁷ See question 67a-e, Appendix A.

¹⁸ Differences in the percent from each district that felt involved in sub-county decisions are statistically significant at the .01 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer's V = .150, sig .01.



Almost 18 percent of Lira respondents felt that they were somewhat or very involved in district council decisions compared to only 11.7 percent in Mpigi and 10.2 percent in Bushenyi.¹⁹ I theorized in Chapter Two that citizens might be less willing to participate in opposition districts. Yet, the review of quantitative data on rates of participation and feelings of involvement does not indicate systematically lower participation in Lira as expected. Moreover, society-centric explanations for institutional performance would lead one to expect higher rates of participation, and consequently, higher levels of perceived involvement in local government decisions among residents in Bushenyi—the better performing district. This is not the case.

Finally, qualitative evidence from interviews with district officials also indicates that populations in Bushenyi, Mpigi, and Lira do not differ that much with respect to levels of political participation. For example, elected and nonelected officials in all three districts talk about “bottom-up planning” and the importance of citizen input in the planning process. Yet, the evidence described above provides little reason to believe that the process of bottom-up planning works as intended.

Survey respondents were asked the following question to gauge the frequency of village council meetings, “In the past two months, how many times has the village council in your village met?” Because administrative units, such as the LC1s, are not covered under Uganda’s decentralization policy and do not play a significant role in service delivery or political decision making, there is little decision making at the LC1 level. Most village councils make few decisions, the most important of which concern local security and dispute resolution among villagers. Research indicates that participation in the village council is somewhat limited, with less than half of the citizens

¹⁹ These differences are not statistically significant. Chi-square value = 3.917, sig .141.

regularly attending village council meetings—meetings that are not held frequently or regularly.

While the village council has little power or responsibilities, the logic of the council system is such that the needs of the local people are filtered upwards from the grassroots through the LC system to higher level councils that have greater power and responsibility, such as the LC3 and LC5. If village councils do not meet, this communication network breaks down and it becomes more difficult for councilors at the sub-county or district level to learn of the particular problems facing their constituents in different villages throughout the area. The reported frequency of meetings across the three districts does not differ significantly from one another. Values range from 0 to 9 meetings. Almost 70 percent of respondents in all three districts, however, reported that the village council had not met during the last two months. One respondent from Dokolo county, Lira district complained, “They have not yet held any meeting since we elected them!” Around 15 percent of respondents in each district recalled one council meeting during the last two months: 13.8 percent in Mpigi; 12.6 percent in Bushenyi; and 14.5 percent in Lira. Based on these survey responses, I calculated an average number of council meetings in the last two months for each district. While the calculated average for each district is less than one, indicating that most villages are meeting *at most* once every two months, the district averages are significantly different. Respondents in Bushenyi and Mpigi report meeting considerably more frequently than do respondents in Lira and the averages reflect these differences. Bushenyi and Mpigi both have averages close to 1, .81 and .76, respectively, while Lira’s average is considerably lower at .33. One member of the executive committee in Lira commented on the infrequency of

meetings at the lower levels of the council system, but also noted that the district council does not always meet as required by law. He explained, “By law we are supposed to have one meeting in two months, but rarely do we have it in two months. Sometimes meetings are every 3 or 4 months. We have to finance them with local revenue which is low.”

In their responses to questions about citizen involvement in the decision making process, officials described bottom-up or participatory planning, yet the same officials or their colleagues also lamented the limited role of citizens or even the apathy of the public toward local government activities. Differences seem to exist across sectors and these sectoral differences appear to be much more significant than differences across districts.

For example, the District Director of Health Services (DDHS) in Mpigi described the method of planning within the health sector through the grassroots Health Management Committees. The DDHS explained that each health unit in the district has a health management committee that is supposed to consult with the local population to set health priorities for that area. These priorities are combined into a single workplan for the health sub-district. She notes that “It is not possible to involve everybody,” and yet, “We assume that these people [members of health management committee]...the views that they bring out should represent the views of the people in that place.”

Interviews with health officials in Bushenyi and Lira present a similar picture of a process that should provide communities with an opportunity to have their most pressing health problems incorporated into district health plans. For example, a health official in Bushenyi described the process through which the district council decides which area receives a project: “We must consider the distance to the nearest health facility and the

road network and the demand definitely from the community. So in planning that comes from the bottom. Requests must come from the community.” Nevertheless, it is not clear from discussions with district officials in any of the three districts whether this process always works as intended.

Other sectors have not worked nearly as hard as health to ensure that citizen input determines the policy choices of the local councils. Officials in the production departments, which houses agricultural and veterinary officers, in each district emphasized the low levels of participation. For example, one official in the veterinary department in Bushenyi district complained:

The farmers expect us to come down and tell them what they need for development. But we want the farmers to say what their priorities are. We still carry the day. Farmers are not participating in planning. They have not been educated on this matter.

Similarly, an official in Mpigi’s veterinary department described some of the problems with the bottom-up planning approach:

When we now look at it, we are told they are supposed to have a part in the planning process, but because of the poor linkage at the sub-county, you find the participation of the population in most affairs and in decision making is very low. Because maybe the understanding of the issues is not very high. We seek out opinion leaders and get their input into whatever we would like to be done, but the general population because of illiteracy and poor comprehension of these issues, there is very little they can do to assist us, especially in our sector.

Nevertheless, one official in the production department in Lira described efforts by the department to change the behavior of citizens and encourage key stakeholders to participate:

...[W]e are trying to develop participatory planning methods to begin to encourage participation of target groups—farmers and farming communities—to carry out needs assessment and do planning with technical guidance from the district. Starting at the parish, then the sub-

county, and those plans come up. It's a bottom up approach to planning. At first it was difficult. People didn't understand and were illiterate, but they are beginning to catch up. The first time was difficult. This time we are getting better results.

Officials in other sectors, such as education, in all three districts offered similar analysis of the role of society in council decision and policy making. A school inspector in Mpigi explained it this way:

I don't think they have a very big stake, for example under UPE the conditions come from the center. Under the School Facilities Grant at the level on which classrooms should be taken over, they are consulted, but they are overtaken by technicians in everything. The government tries to discourage it [participation], not because they do not want them to be involved, but they would be overwhelmed. It tries to create a system that would be fair to all. It is not purposeful, but inevitable that they people are not involved. It is more like they are informed.

The description of citizen participation offered by many officials in all three districts did not resemble "bottom-up planning" as much as it sounded like citizens were simply told what projects were coming and what they must do to support and sustain the project. For example, a politician in Mpigi describes citizen participation this way, "...when we were deciding which schools to be constructed, we told the stakeholders what they were to do. After we decided where to construct, we went to the community and told them they had to contribute." A politician in Bushenyi district offered a similar description, "People at the grassroots are responsive. In most cases, they are very willing to participate. We request them to do A, B, C and in most cases, they do. They are very good."

Generally interview responses reinforced the idea that local council officials see an extremely limited role for the public beyond voting. Several officials in Lira complained about the expectations that the public has that everything should come from the center. For example, one executive committee member stated:

Decentralization is not in the rural areas. People don't know about decentralization. They think things should come from the central government. Their participation in the process is not there. We have to plan for them. We are trying to sensitize them so that they can participate and own these programs.

An administrative official in Mpigi summarized the extent and influence of citizen participation this way:

They are not involved...They don't participate. The structures are there to say they should participate, but they are not consulted. At the meetings the people who go are the elites. They are the ones to talk and make decisions. The councilors do not consult the people. The issues they bring are those they think are important issues. They people are not involved. People do not participate, but the machinery is in place. When they call meetings, the people do not come. They are tired of meetings.

Given the evidence presented above, it is likely that citizen participation does not explain Bushenyi's better performance. Bushenyi district does exhibit higher rates of voting in LC elections, greater frequency of contacting local leaders, and somewhat more frequent village council meetings. Yet, the population of Bushenyi is not more participatory in other areas, such as attendance at council meetings or other forms of community mobilization. And yet, local elections in Bushenyi do seem somewhat more competitive and more likely to reflect the interests of citizens. In that case, greater participation in elections could potentially be a strong influence on LC behavior.

8.3 Civil Society and Social Capital

8.3.1 Trust

As discussed at length in Chapter Two, scholars hypothesize that local governments perform better in communities with higher levels of social capital and more active civil societies. Results from multivariate analysis presented in Chapter Five offer some

evidence to support the hypothesis that communities with greater reserves of social capital, as measured by levels of generalized trust, also tend to have better performing local governments.

An analysis of data from the case studies offers similarly *mixed evidence*. On a few measures of trust, Bushenyi district exhibits much higher levels of trust than the other two districts. For example, as would be predicted given the high level of performance of Bushenyi's district council, respondents in Bushenyi district exhibit the highest levels of trust for the district council and administration, followed by Mpigi and then Lira. Over 85 percent of Bushenyi respondents said that they trust the district council "somewhat" or "a lot," while only 75.5 percent of respondents in Mpigi and 69.9 percent of respondents in Lira answered similarly.²⁰ Similarly, more respondents in Bushenyi said that they trust the district administration "somewhat" or "a lot." In fact, almost 84 percent of respondents in Bushenyi reported trusting district administrators, while 74.1 percent of respondents in Mpigi and 68.8 percent of respondents in Lira expressed similar feelings of trust for local administrators.²¹

Despite results in the hypothesized direction on these two measures, data from other measures of trust in these three districts do not follow the patterns predicted in the literature on social capital, as higher levels of trust are not associated with better institutional performance. For example, survey respondents in Bushenyi and Lira exhibit similar levels of trust for the sub-county councils (LC3) in their area. Approximately 85 percent of respondents reported trusting the sub-county council in Bushenyi and Lira,

²⁰ Significant at the .01 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer's V = .151, sig .01

²¹ Significant at the .05 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer's V = .141, sig .05

while only 77.5 percent of Mpigi's respondents expressed similar feelings of trust.²² Nearly 90 percent of respondents in each district reported that they trust their village council "somewhat" or "a lot."²³

Even more important is the fact that Lira district exhibits higher levels of generalized trust, as measured using the Afrobarometer survey data from 2000, than either Bushenyi or Mpigi.²⁴ Almost 35 percent of Afrobarometer survey respondents in Lira in 2000 felt that "generally most people can be trusted" compared to only 13.9 percent and 8.1 percent of the respondents in Bushenyi and Mpigi districts, respectively. The fact that the level of trust in Bushenyi is considerably lower than that for Lira district runs contrary to theoretical expectations.

Respondents in Lira and Mpigi districts also appear more trusting of other groups in Ugandan society. For example, 81.3 percent of respondents in Lira and 81.0 percent of respondents in Mpigi said that they trust Ugandans from other ethnic groups compared to only 50 percent of Bushenyi respondents. The high levels of trust for individuals of other ethnic groups among Lira and Mpigi residents are surprising. Given the feelings of discrimination and political alienation commonplace among most northerners in Uganda, I would not expect residents in Lira to be so trusting of others. These results resemble Ottemoeller's results from a study of civic values (1998). He found that residents in Lira were consistently more democratic and had higher rates of civic values than did respondents in Luweero in central Uganda or Hoima in western Uganda (Ottemoeller 1998). Likewise, the majority of residents in Mpigi are Baganda and certainly Uganda's

²² Significant at the .05 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer's V = .108, sig .05

²³ The percent responding that they trust the village council "somewhat" or "a lot" in each district is as follows: 90.6 (Bushenyi); 93.4 (Lira); and 87.7 (Mpigi).

²⁴ See Chapter Four for a discussion of the measure of levels of generalized trust.

political history is littered with efforts by Baganda to increase their power vis a vis their neighbors. Finally, respondents in Bushenyi also exhibit the lowest levels of trust for the police. Only 51.6 percent of these respondents said that they trusted the police, while 63.8 percent of Mpigi respondents and 78.4 percent of Lira respondents gave such an answer.

Generalized trust, the kind that fosters social networks and allows individuals from diverse social backgrounds to work together for a common goal, would likely have a greater impact on government performance. And yet, contrary to expectations, levels of generalized trust are greater in Lira than in Bushenyi, the better performer.

8.3.2 Density of Civil Society

The density and activities of civic organizations is another important indicator of Putnam's "civic community" (1993). While the density of civic organizations is expected to have an impact on government performance, the extent to which civic organizations are linked to local governments is also quite important. Through such linkages civic organizations can transfer expertise and knowledge gained through their work in the community to LC officials, with expected positive effects on council performance. Moreover, such linkages offer civic organizations an opportunity to observe and also monitor council activities, thereby serving as an external check on accountability of local leaders.

Logan et al. report that Uganda has one of the highest densities of associational life among the countries included in the Afrobarometer survey (2003). Yet, there are vast differences in the raw number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs

(MoIA) with operations in Bushenyi, Mpigi, or Lira. Yet, the numbers do not support the hypothesis that predicts better performing political institutions where there are more civic organizations. In fact, Bushenyi district, which as argued in Chapter Six performs better than Mpigi and Lira, also has fewer NGOs registered with the MoIA than Mpigi or Lira. Only 34 registered NGOs list Bushenyi as a site of operation. On the other hand, 67 registered NGOs list Lira as a site of operation, and an overwhelming 147 NGOs state that they operate in Mpigi district.

This measure of civil society—the number of registered NGOs—is problematic, however. Many small, local organizations are unlikely to formally register with the central government in Kampala (see Dicklitch 1998; Tripp 2000). For example, the MoIA lists only 34 NGOs in Bushenyi, but a Bushenyi district employee responsible for coordinating the activities of civic organizations stated that he registered 68 new organizations that year, and that the district has an inventory of over 500 NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs).

This survey included several questions about organizational membership and the linkages between LCs and local NGOs or CBOs, which provide additional and perhaps more accurate measures of the density of civil society within these three districts than the aggregate measure discussed above. Survey respondents were asked if they were members of a variety of different civic organizations and then asked about the relationship between the local council and any of the organizations of which they were members.²⁵ More than 40 percent of respondents from all three districts said that they were not a member of any organization (see Table 4). Reported rates of membership are similar across the three districts. Over a third of respondents in Mpigi and Bushenyi

(39.2 and 43.4 percent, respectively) are not members of any organization compared to almost half (49.1 percent) of Lira respondents. Similarly, approximately 30 percent of respondents in each district said that they were members of a single organization, while around 20 percent in each district were members of between two and four organizations.

Table 4 about here.

I also created a summary measure that totaled the number of organizations in which each respondent participated and then calculated an average for the district (see Table 1). The averages are quite close, however the differences are statistically significant at the .10 level.²⁶ On average, respondents in Mpigi were members of more organizations than were respondents in Bushenyi or Lira. Interestingly, when LC officials are included in the sample, the district averages on the index of organizational memberships are not significantly different from one another.²⁷ Yet, when LCs are excluded, the differences in civic activism across these three populations become more apparent, revealing that the level of civic activism does vary across these three districts, but not as hypothesized.

8.3.3 Linkages between Civic Organizations and Local Councils

What about the linkages between civic organizations that exist in these districts and the local councils? In order for the presence of NGOs to positively impact the performance of

²⁵ See question 94 (all parts), 95 and 96, Appendix A.

²⁶ ANOVA *F* statistic = 2.563; sig .078.

²⁷ When LC officials are included, the district averages are as follows: 1.29 Lira; 1.36 Bushenyi; and 1.40 Mpigi. ANOVA *F* statistic = .200; sig .819.

local governments, I argue linkages must exist between LCs and NGOs. Generally, I found limited evidence of such interactions, although as will be discussed below, there is some variation across these three districts in the extent and nature of linkages between groups in civil society and the LCs, as well as variation across sectors within each district. Quantitative data based on survey responses in the three districts indicate that the linkages between the LCs and NGOs are more developed in Bushenyi than in either Mpigi or Lira. On the other hand, qualitative evidence based upon fieldwork and interviews with district officials and representatives from NGOs suggests that the extent to which LCs and NGOs interact and cooperate in ways that would have positive impacts on LC performance is more similar across these three districts than the quantitative evidence suggests. For each district, there is evidence of cooperation between LCs and NGOs, but also evidence of weak linkages between the two.

Several survey questions probed the nature of the linkages between local governments and local civic organizations. One survey question asked respondents if representatives from the organizations that they are members of attend LC meetings. Responses to this question vary significantly across the three districts. More respondents in Bushenyi reported that members of their organizations attend LC meetings. Nearly 80 percent of respondents in Bushenyi answered “yes” to this question compared to 76.9 percent in Mpigi and only 43.7 percent in Lira district.²⁸ This evidence on its own suggests that civic groups in Bushenyi are more tightly linked to the local councils and thus, may contribute toward the better performance of the district council.

One important point to explore further is where these linkages might be occurring. Are organizations attending meetings at the district council or at the village level?

Overwhelmingly, most respondents in each district said that representatives attend council meetings at the village level. Of the 181 respondents from all three districts who were a member of a group that sends representatives to local council meetings, 167 stated that representatives attended meetings at the village level.

Comments from LC officials in all three districts indicate that NGO representatives *do not regularly attend* council meetings at the district level, although several officials in Bushenyi and Lira did say that NGOs attend council meetings, especially when invited by district staff. For example, a representative from COBS—a NGO operating in Bushenyi that assists the district council in environmental planning—explained, “...we’ve been interacting so much. They [the LCs] invite us to district and national functions and we invite them to our functions.” However, when asked if a representative from his organization attended the district budget conference, he explained, “No, I didn’t attend. I don’t think we got an invitation. I attend council meetings when invited.” Another respondent reported that only two NGO representatives attended the annual budget conference.

An administrator in the education department in Bushenyi also explained that NGO representatives are likely to attend meetings, “Yes, they attend meetings, hold meetings, do supervision. They’re doing good work. Last week we had a workshop by COPE²⁹ on girl children....They come advise us what to do and we do the work.”

Several Lira officials offered similar responses with respect to NGO attendance at council meetings. One executive committee member responded this way when asked whether NGO representatives attend district council meetings, “On invitation. We invite

²⁸ Significant at the .01 level based on the Chi-square value; Phi and Cramer’s V = .326, sig .01

²⁹ COPE is a NGO working in education, specifically providing educational opportunities to children that

relevant NGOs. If the council is discussing health, we invite NGOs working in health and they attend. Not regularly, but on invitation.” Another respondent noted that some NGOs attend, especially “if they are integrating their programs into the district programs, if that is happening and the plans are presented to the council, there is a component of NGO involvement and that NGO attends.” An assistant CAO argued, however, that NGOs often participate at the committee level rather than attending full council meetings.

On the other hand, responses to interview questions about attendance by NGO representatives at council meetings in Mpigi were less positive and suggest that NGOs attend less often. A NGO representative in Mpigi explained, “Very few NGOs get funds from the district. They don’t include us in their budgeting. They don’t call us for meetings. We have our workplans.” Yet, the same respondent stated that her organization attended two meetings at the district during the “last years.” An executive committee member offered a similar analysis of NGO-LC relations in the district:

We’ve been lacking that. NGOs don’t participate at all. They had a NGO meeting. The community based organizations want to come closer and they find that they are duplicating work....The NGOs don’t attend the council meetings, but it is not their problem. We haven’t called them....What is lacking is a connection.

Nevertheless, others appeared more positive and noted that NGOs in Mpigi alert area LCs when they are working in the area and invite LC officials to functions they organize. One executive committee member described the relationship between the district and NGOs in this manner, “The NGOs have a good relationship with the district. They consult the councilors in the areas where they are working and then mobilize the community. They invite us [the LC officials] to see what they’ve done.”

did not attend primary school earlier in life.

Generally, evidence seems to suggest that civic organizations do attend council meetings more regularly in Bushenyi and are likely to attend at times without waiting for a formal invitation, as seems more likely to be the case in Lira. NGOs in Mpigi, however, seem much more likely to invite local council officials to functions they have organized rather than attend council meetings. Yet, informing the district council or councils at other levels what has been accomplished after the fact is unlikely to have positive effects on council performance. One important point, however, is that NGOs are represented at council meetings in Mpigi, and likely Lira and Bushenyi as well, informally. Many district councilors in Mpigi were also members of NGOs or even founders of a particular organization.

Table 5 about here.

Additional survey questions asked respondents more about the nature of these linkages (see Table 5). District responses to these questions only varied significantly for two of the seven questions.³⁰ More respondents in Bushenyi district said that their organizations *receive funding* from local councils as well as *seek advice* from the council to help the organization carry out its activity. I created an index of organizational activism by summing up the “yes” responses to the battery of questions about linkages between civic organizations and local councils. A higher value on the index of organizational activism indicates tighter linkages between civil society and the local government. The average scores for the three districts on this measure differ as

³⁰ Differences across districts are significant at the .05 level based on the value of the Chi-square for statements B and G. The Phi and Cramer’s V are also significant .05 level.

theoretically expected (see Table 1).³¹ Bushenyi, the better performer, also has the highest score at 1.48. Mpigi score is somewhat lower at 1.37, while Lira is substantially lower with a score of .95.

Interviews with district officials and NGO representatives in each district indicate that all three districts provide at least some funding and facilitation to area NGOs, especially within the health sector, as will be discussed below. All three districts provide some money to fund NGO activities and allow NGOs to use district staff and facilities, although to varying degrees. For example, the use of district technical staff to conduct training programs organized and financed by NGOs is quite common in the production sectors of all three districts, however, often NGOs must bear some of the cost of using agricultural workers. A veterinary officer in Mpigi described the linkages this way:

Unfortunately, there are very few NGOs and CBOs that we interact with, but the ones we do interact with mostly our interaction is at the level of technical input. They are social mobilizing organizations. We might be called in for training and demonstration purposes and sometimes we might be called in to guide their planning because some of these groups do planning.

A veterinary officer in Bushenyi also explained

The only relationship is that they use our staff to train farmers. That's the only place where we have overlap. They facilitate them when they use them. We don't plan together. We do little in common with them.

Beyond the use of staff, the linkages between the production department in all three districts and NGOs providing agricultural or veterinary services are not well developed, with little cooperation in planning. Although a veterinary officer in Lira suggests that the department is trying to changing this, "Yes, the NGOs collaborate with us. Those that

³¹ ANOVA *F* statistic = 3.48; sig .05. Note: if the LC officials are included in the sample, the differences in average scores on the index of organizational activism are not statistically significant (ANOVA *F* statistic = 1.53, sig .218).

don't collaborate with us, we've forced ourselves to talk to them and they're coming now."

In addition to allowing agricultural and veterinary staff to assist NGOs with their programs when requested, all three districts provide a great deal of funding to NGOs working in the health sector. In fact, in all three districts, the linkages between the health department and NGOs working on health are more developed than for any other sector. This is due primarily to an explicit national policy to tighten linkages between district and sub-county governments and NGOs working in health. Certain funds come from the center earmarked for NGOs, such as money for NGO hospitals. NGOs that receive such funds are required to submit their workplans to the district for inclusion in the district budget. A health administrator in Bushenyi explained:

Funding from the center to NGOs comes through this office. They must submit workplans and these are incorporated into the health sub-district workplans....at times they [the NGOs] are rigid and don't want to disclose information. Things are improving as government pushes in more money.

The DDHS in Mpigi also described the process:

In relation to health, we have NGO hospitals and health units. They are allocated money from the MoH. They are serving the same community. They get money quarterly and must submit reports and account for the funds through this office.

This process is common to all districts, including Bushenyi, Mpigi, and Lira. Thus, all three districts have extremely well developed linkages between their health department and NGOs that provide health services. NGOs in this sector coordinate their activities with those of the district health officials and the two groups plan together.

As will be discussed below, an extremely small number of NGOs working in other sectors operate in this manner, regardless of the district. Most NGOs do not receive

funding from the district or the central government that is channeled through the district, and thus, have little incentive or reason to disclose their budgets and workplans with the local councils. This is a source of concern for the local councils and also the national government, evident in the NGO Registration Bill under consideration by Parliament. Scholars, such as Dicklitch (1998) or Tripp (2000), who had done in-depth research on NGOs in Uganda argue, however, that the Registration Bill is simply an attempt by the Movement to limit the political activities of NGOs and facilitate government control or co-optation of existing NGOs. While such political motivations are certainly important, there is concern among some LCs, based on previous experiences, that many NGOs do not have the best interests of the community in mind and need to be monitored.

For example, in response to a question about whether Bushenyi district is aware of the activities and finances of NGOs operating in the area, one executive committee member in Bushenyi explained, “Not so sure. We’ve complained about these NGOs. Some NGOs are not transparent. In other districts, when NGOs get money, they reveal it to the district and the district can see what they can top up. Those here are not quite as transparent.”

Survey responses, however, suggest that NGOs in Bushenyi are more likely to seek advice from the LCs. Such interaction is important because LCs can identify areas in need of NGO services, but most importantly, they provide valuable information to LCs about what NGOs are doing and where their activities are concentrated. This helps avoid the serious problem of duplication. A NGO representative in Bushenyi described the relationship this way:

The NGOs, we have to work hand in hand with the district because you would fail if you are not cooperative or introduced to the LCs....An NGO

can't be independent. For example, CARE wanted to distance themselves, but needed to use district government agricultural extension workers, so they had to cooperate.

The extent to which NGOs and LCs plan together in Lira seems somewhat limited, except in those cases where the two groups are explicitly working together. For example, one NGO representative described a process in which the LCs do not seek out NGO participation or advice, "We are not invited to participate in council deliberations. We write to the CAO to discuss if we want to do something. We have to introduce our agenda to them. If it is okay, they let us present it."

Comments from a representative from another organization, on the other hand, suggest the local councils in Lira are more aggressive in involving area NGOs in the planning process. He reported that "When making sub-county workplans, they invite us [the NGOs] to bring our programs and we go and present them so that they can include our program in their workplan." The respondent continued:

I've spent 2 or 3 years here in the district working with an NGO. For any NGO or CBO project, you must work with the local authorities. Few NGOs that don't work with local authorities, they just fail. On average the relationship is okay. The only thing lacking was on the local authority side. They didn't take an interest in the NGO/CBO activity.

Again, there seem to be fewer such interactions between NGOs and LCs to plan together or coordinate their activities in Mpigi. For example, in response to a question about how the NGO plans its activities, one NGO representative explained, "We don't consult the LCs. We sit as an organization....We call the LC leaders and they're involved through mobilizing and are also involved in the workshops." The response again suggests that LCs in Mpigi are involved in NGO activities, with the exception of the health sector, only after the initial planning and preparations have taken place.

The district administrator responsible for coordinating NGO activities described the relationship:

In health there is a policy of involving them in service delivery. They've been active in planning. In agriculture, the NGOs there have been active. The main problem is that they are not involved in the LC3 planning process....An NGO comes with a plan and they give them funding, but the sub-county is not aware of the activities, does not supervise, and does not contribute resources. It is kind of aloof. There is not a partnership at the sub-county and the district. A partnership is not forged unless we have money to give.

The impression of a lack of coordination persists outside the district council as well. The representative from an NGO stated, "In this region, we [NGOs] haven't worked so well. We haven't been able to give our views in the council. We have not had a chance to air our views."

One important factor that may facilitate the linkages between Bushenyi district council and area civic organizations is an active and knowledgeable NGO coordinator. The district has an administrator who is responsible for coordinating the activities of NGOs and CBOs in the district. As this is his primary responsibility, the coordinator seemed knowledgeable about various NGOs operating in the district and the relationship between the LCs and these organizations, and it certainly seemed as if he has the necessary time to perform this role.

In sharp contrast, the administrator responsible for coordinating NGO activities in Mpigi district was also an Assistant CAO at the time. The demands of an ACAO position certainly ensure that she had extremely little time to devote to carrying out the duties of NGO coordinator, which might explain why linkages between the district and NGOs are weaker than in the other districts as indicated by her quote above.

The level of funding and facilitation provided to NGOs and the nature of the relationships between the local government and NGOs varies much more across these three districts outside of the health and agricultural sectors. For example, Bushenyi district seems to provide more, especially in the way of facilitation to area NGOs. One NGO in particular, COBS, uses office space within the district administration building. The COBS representative explained, “At all levels we are using the existing government structure. I’m the only COBS staff. We use the existing structure, staff, office accommodation. For meetings and organizations, invitations are done by the CAO.” Yet, the exchange of resources goes both ways. The COBS representative continued:

Other projects come and have separate facilities. They work like a cocoon. Because we are a support project we wanted to work in their space. We share facilities. The district environmental officers use my computer. The chairman and CAO use my copier.

Interviews in Lira reveal that NGOs outside of health get little money from the district to fund their activities. One respondent explained, “The relationship is mostly advisory and not material. There is very little money for NGOs in LC budgets.” Despite limited funds to finance the activities of individual organizations, the district did cover the cost of meetings for the NGO Forum on several occasions. In fact, the chairman of the NGO Forum indicated that the district’s commitment to the forum goes beyond financing meetings. He reported that “Our [the NGO Forum’s] activity is being funded by the administration....The administration promised to give us an office in the local government building. But right now there’s a shortage. I’m using my office now.”

The district council in Mpigi seems to have been less organized and perhaps more informal in providing funds to NGOs in the district. For example, a member of a large women’s organization in Mpigi district explained:

First of all, we don't get much from them. Only when we want agricultural officers or facilitators for gender or nutrition programs, we get them from the district....The district gives us no funds, only facilitators, but we pay for them.

Another NGO member, and also former Mpigi district councilor who now is a member of the newly formed Wakiso district council, described the process through which the district's NGO Coordinator alerted NGOs that funds were available. She explained that the NGO coordinator at the time:

...could really see which organizations would be good for a particular program. The district has funds to be used by NGOs. The funds are through [her] efforts...At times we wouldn't know if the funds were there. [The coordinator] was open and would call us to apply. This is not the case in other districts. [In other districts] when funds are available, there is a lack of transparency, they just pass it along to an organization without having NGOs apply for it.

The respondent suggests that the method of making funds available to NGOs in Mpigi was working well, and in fact, more transparent than the process in other districts. However, the comments also imply that the process of awarding funds was informal and even somewhat personalized, as the coordinator would invite particular NGOs to apply. It is even more telling that the funds were being dispersed to the NGO of which a district councilor was a key member.

Many of the quotes listed above suggest that there is some degree of interaction between NGOs and LCs when it comes to planning. Yet, LC officials in all three districts complained about the complications that arise when NGOs plan their activities independently of the LCs and with little consideration for local government priorities. An administrator in Lira explained:

Some [NGOs] are large and can overshadow the LC3. They have their own plan of what to do. What is not a priority of the LC3 is their priority. They pump a lot of resources into that priority even undermining the LC3

plan....A problem arises when those with external donor support and they want to implement their own programs in the sub-county. It can distort the sub-county plan of action.

The exception is again found in the health sector where there is an explicit national policy. Local government officials also expressed concern repeatedly about a lack of transparency and the unwillingness of NGOs to reveal the sources and levels of their funding to local government officials. There also seems to be suspicion among local council officials about the true intentions of NGOs operating in their areas. Numerous elected and nonelected officials complained about the problem of “briefcase NGOs”—groups that do not exist on the ground, but exist in name only as a way of getting resources from unsuspecting donors.

The extensiveness of the problem of briefcase NGOs is not clear, but there is certainly reason for LCs, especially officials who might operate outside the law, to be wary of NGOs in their areas. NGOs around the country have recently organized into the NGO Forum, which seeks to monitor, control, and organize NGO activity in the country generally, but also in each district. The NGO Forum and the participating NGOs have also linked up with the Uganda Debt Network to serve as watchdog groups for how local governments are spending the PAF resources they receive that are made available through debt relief programs. The purpose of this program is clearly to limit corruption at the local level. Volunteers from NGOs are now required to track local government activities and report back to the headquarters in Kampala any suspicious or illegal activities. Given this role, it is not surprising that there is a positive and significant

correlation between the number of NGOs and the total number of corruption charges brought against elected and nonelected LC officials.³²

Related to the problem of briefcase NGOs is the issue of sustainability. Officials in all three districts expressed concern that NGOs begin projects and when the NGO leaves, the project fails. An administrator from Bushenyi saw plenty of benefits from decisions by NGOs to leave an area:

The LCs want many NGOs and CBOs in the area. When it comes to mobilization, the NGOs and CBOs make it easy. When it comes to service delivery, NGOs and CBOs may be more committed and also more facilitated than the LC. They bring resources and when they are winding up they leave those resources with the sub-county. For example, Integrated Lake Management [a large NGO operating in Bushenyi] has built offices in Kichwamba sub-county. These offices will remain when ILM has gone. It's installed solar power and computers and won't take all the computers away. Not to mention when sharing experience, you're learning. NGOs have reporting/management styles and mechanisms which we pick from them. When NGOs are operating in the area, chances for training are greater. They give scholarships to local officers, so you see capacity building.

Yet, differences in levels of funding between cash-strapped LCs and NGOs that are well funded, often receiving resources from large international donors, can be problematic. NGOs often employ more advanced and expensive equipment and techniques, a fact that prompts resentment from many LC officials who are constantly facing a lack of resources. Moreover, salary differentials between the public and private sector were also a source of concern for many local officials. One administrator in Bushenyi explained that NGOs "facilitate their staff so well," which "creates imbalances in service delivery and the community thinks that the government works don't want to work." A NGO representative in Bushenyi also described the problem,

³² Pearson's correlation coefficient = .4027; $p > .01$ level. Correlation is still significant at the .05 level ($r = .361$) if Kampala and Mpigi, the districts with the highest number of NGOs, are excluded.

You have a parallel structure, staff working in the same area alongside local government staff. The CARE staff earns \$200 per month, while the local government staff earns \$30. You can see why they'd [the local government staff] have a negative view of the project staff.

The evidence presented above does not support the hypothesis that district councils perform better where there is a greater density of civic organizations. Bushenyi has fewer NGOs, using on the aggregate measure, than would be expected given the higher level of performance. On the other hand, the index of organizational membership also does not vary as hypothesized. While the average number of organizational memberships was quite close across the three districts, the rate of membership was higher in Mpigi than in either Bushenyi or Lira.

As noted above, there is some evidence to suggest that the linkages between LCs and civic organizations are more developed in Bushenyi than elsewhere. For example, respondents in Bushenyi were more likely to say that representatives from their organization attend council meetings. Similarly, the variation in district scores on the index of organizational activism also varies as hypothesized, with Bushenyi earning a higher score on this measure than Lira or Mpigi. Yet, it is not clear whether these differences are substantial enough to explain the differences in performance laid out in Chapter Six. Qualitative evidence reviewed above cautions one against being too optimistic in interpreting the size and the impact of apparent differences in linkages between LCs and civic organizations in these three districts. For example, local leaders in Bushenyi still feel that linkages between the two groups are weak.

8.4 Local Political Context

In the previous sections, I noted the limits of explanations based on citizen participation, social capital, measured by trust, and civil society to explain Bushenyi's better performance. In this section, I discuss the local political context in the three case study districts, focusing attention on the effectiveness of elections as a mechanism of holding local leaders accountable, local political competition, sources of political cleavage within each district, and the political strategies of local leaders. The discussion below highlights the important indirect or mediating effect of central-local relations on the power of society to direct the actions of local leaders, which has clear implications for the performance of local political institutions.

In Chapter Two, I asked several important questions: how do voters view local elections?; how competitive are local elections?; what are the sources of cleavage?; and do elections serve to sanction poorly performing leaders and reward those who perform well? This section will answer these questions with respect to the three case study districts and highlight the ways in which local political dynamics influence local government performance directly and indirectly as it may undermine efforts by society to hold leaders accountable.

8.4.1 Patterns of Local Political Competition

Elections are one of the principal ways in which Ugandans can influence the behavior of their elected representatives. Ideally, democratic elections empower citizens to oust poorly performing politicians. Yet, the low level of participation in local council elections means that there is often little check on the power and behavior of local leaders. The influence of the Movement and the no-party system also interferes with this process,

making it even more difficult for citizens to employ elections as a way of enforcing accountability. The defeat of an incumbent is not based *solely* on the evaluation of a candidate's performance by his or her constituents. As discussed at length in section 8.2, citizen participation is quite similar in these three case study districts. Nevertheless, Bushenyi district does exhibit higher rates of participation on the index of voting and higher voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections (see Table 1). While I concluded that differences in participation across the three districts was not substantial enough to explain differences in council performance, if local elections are more competitive in Bushenyi, then higher rates of participation may have a greater influence on LC performance.

In order for elections to serve as a means of sanctioning poorly performing leaders, voters must be able to evaluate the performance of incumbents. This requires not only that voters are aware of the responsibilities of different leaders and levels of government generally, but also that they are knowledgeable about what leaders are capable of doing to fulfill these responsibilities. There are reasons to be somewhat skeptical about the ability of citizens in developed and developing countries alike to make informed evaluations of their local government leaders. Not only are many citizens uninformed about the responsibilities of different levels of government, as detailed below, but citizens do not always have access or time to gather and evaluate information about how local leaders sought to fulfill their responsibilities.

Survey respondents were asked which level of government was responsible for a variety of important tasks. Generally, Ugandans are not clear about which level of government is responsible for different activities, although there are clear differences across districts. For example, respondents were asked which level of government was

responsible the “defense of the country’s borders.” Over 75 percent of respondents in Bushenyi district correctly answered that the central government is responsible for defense. Almost 70 percent of respondents in Mpigi and only 49.7 percent of Lira respondents answer the question correctly. More respondents in Mpigi and Lira district were unsure and responded “don’t know.”³³ In fact, for five of seven questions respondents from Bushenyi district answered correctly more often than did respondents from either Mpigi or Lira. Moreover, Bushenyi respondents were also much less likely to respond “don’t know.”

For example, another question asked respondents which level of government was responsible for “staffing and equipping district hospitals.” While the majority of respondents in the three districts answered the question incorrectly, almost 29 percent of respondents in Bushenyi correctly answered that the district council is responsible for maintaining district hospitals. Less than 24 percent of Lira respondents and 20 percent of Mpigi respondents provided the correct answer. Moreover, only 3 percent of Bushenyi respondents responded “don’t know” compared to 9.7 percent of respondents in Mpigi and an overwhelming 32.1 percent of respondents in Lira.³⁴

The Second Schedule of the LG Act states that districts are responsible for primary health care, a vitally important and well-funded service in rural Uganda. Unfortunately, most respondents were not aware of this. Less than 25 percent of respondents in each district correctly answered a question about the level of government responsible for primary health care. The fact that the majority of respondents in all three

³³ 34.2 percent of Lira respondents and 22.2 percent of Mpigi respondents said “don’t know” compared to only 6.1 percent of Bushenyi respondents. Differences across districts in responses to this questions are significant at the .01 level based on the value of Chi-square; $\Phi = .300$, Cramer’s $V = .212$, sig .00.

³⁴ Differences across districts in responses to this questions are significant at the .01 level based on the

districts were not knowledgeable about many of the activities the district council is responsible for providing raises serious questions about their ability to hold local leaders accountable. The ability of voters to correctly reward or punish LC officials based on the council's performance is quite limited if voters are not aware of what their different representatives actually do for them.

One cannot evaluate the competitiveness of LC elections in Uganda without reference to the center and central-local relations, in particular. There are a variety of constraints built into the Ugandan political system that affect the competitiveness of elections and undermine the effectiveness of elections as a mechanism of accountability. These include the no-party system of government, the institutional linkages between the local councils and the Movement, and most importantly, the conscious political strategies of Movement leaders. These problems were mentioned briefly in Chapter Three, but will be discussed below and with particular reference to how they affect political competition in Bushenyi, Mpigi and Lira districts.

The no-party system and consequent restrictions on political party activity mean that competition for local elections is based, at least theoretically, on individual merit, not party affiliation. Technically, all candidates are a member of the Movement, although the Movement endorses some candidates and not others. Likewise, some candidates are identified as being multipartyists or reformists, and likely voters in these areas are well aware of these differences, which certainly influences the outcome of an election. The extent to which campaigns and competition between competing candidates for local offices are based on policy differences is not always clear. Nonetheless, there are

value of Chi-square; Phi = .361, Cramer's V = .255, sig .00.

differences across these three districts in the extent to which candidates exhibit meaningful differences that voters can use as a basis for their decisions about voting.

As noted in Chapter Three, often a candidate's defeat has less to do with voter preferences than the preferences of elites within the Movement or groups supporting a return to multiparty politics. The problem with interference by Movement officials or others is that it weakens the power of elections to sanction poorly performing leaders and reward those who have performed well. If a person can be elected or even pushed out of a race by forces outside the local society, the power of citizens is certainly curtailed. Although Movement officials work hard to ensure candidates supportive of the Movement win in all LC elections, their ability to influence elections certainly varies from district to district. As the discussion below indicates, interference in LC elections has been more of a problem in Mpigi and Lira. While Movement officials, have certainly tried to influence election results in Bushenyi, their efforts have been less successful.

As already discussed, voter turnout in the 1998 LC elections was higher in Bushenyi district than in either Mpigi or Lira district. I calculated an average measure of local political competition by averaging the share of the vote won by the successful candidate for district chairperson in the 1998 and 2002 elections in each district. The averages for these districts are: 46.1 in Lira; 46.8 in Bushenyi; and 71.1 in Mpigi. The average percents won by the winners of LC5 chairperson elections are considerably lower in Lira and Bushenyi, indicating that local elections are more competitive in these two districts.

Similarly, Table 6 reports the margin of victory for the winner in the 2002 LC elections in each district. The margin of victory in Mpigi is considerably greater than that

for Lira and especially Bushenyi where the winner had an advantage of only 4 percent of the total vote. Looking at whether the seat was safe provides additional evidence that elections are more competitive in Bushenyi, but also in Lira, than is the case in Mpigi. Determinations about whether a seat is “safe” is based upon the definition used by Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993) in which a seat is considered safe if the winner receives 55 percent or more of the vote.³⁵ In neither election in Bushenyi or Lira was the LC5 chair position considered a safe seat, instead incumbents faced formidable challengers. This was not the case in Mpigi. In all three districts, as described below, the races were contested, although in Bushenyi and Mpigi in 2002 the incumbent did not stand.

Table 6 about here.

Based on the data presented in Table 6, one could conclude that Bushenyi and Lira are both more competitive than Mpigi. If that is indeed the case, then my theoretical expectations are not supported. I hypothesized that local governments would perform better where there is greater political competition. Yet, I would argue that the summary statistics do not provide a complete picture of local political competition in these three districts. The discussion below indicates that the nature of social cleavages in Bushenyi differs from what exists in the other districts, in particular, the political salience of religious divisions. In all three districts, a key difference between candidates is the extent to which they are viewed as Movementist. A stark Movement/multiparty dichotomy is no longer appropriate. The behavior of Movement officials has made these political differences much more continuous, ranging from Movementist with the backing of the

³⁵ Holbrook and Van Dunk follow the guideline established by Tidmarch, Lonergan, and Sciortino (1986).

central government to dilute Movementist, often without support or central endorsement, to reformist to multipartist. Yet, the importance of religion in Bushenyi politics adds another consideration for voters when selecting candidates. It seems that this may affect the competitiveness of elections as well.

Secondly, the fact that electoral contests in Bushenyi may be insulated to a limited extent from outside interference also suggests greater competition. Finally, voters in Bushenyi seem more aware of government responsibilities, and thus, I would argue that they are better prepared to evaluate the performance of the local officials. The extent to which they then base their votes upon these evaluations is unknown.

I would add a note of caution. The current state of political affairs in Uganda—with restrictions on parties still in place—means that political competition in all districts is curtailed. Yet, the fact that Bushenyi seems to exhibit greater cleavages around which voters can organization seems to help competition. There is an effort, however, to manage the religious divisions, as officials at both the local and national level indicated in their interviews. District politicians work hard to ensure some degree of balance between the two dominant groups—Catholics and Protestants—both in elections, nominees for important district positions, and the allocation of goods and services. For example, one MP from Bushenyi explained:

Also when the elections of the local government councilors or during the elections of the councilors, there seems to be the element of sectarianism. It's still a pronounced problem on the local government elections in Bushenyi. That one is true. Always between the Catholics and the Protestants. For a long time, since the inception of the RCs, the district has always been headed by Protestants. They've not practiced sectarianism. You find in the council both religions are represented, but the people always want to look at the chairman—the political head. Now the Catholics are saying it's their turn to lead, their turn to have a chairman. This is still a big problem. The religious leaders are not

involved. It's the lay people. But campaigning on religious grounds, it's still there. Though it doesn't affect the distribution of resources. Right now the chairman is a protestant and the vice is a catholic and you find that out of the 7 members of the executive, there are 2 Protestants, 1 Muslim, and 4 Catholics. The Protestants don't dominate the executive but then everybody is looking at the head.

This problems and efforts by district politicians to manage these problems are evident in the discussion of the Bushenyi LC elections of 1998 and 2002 below.

In 2002, nine incumbents were defeated in the elections for district chairpersons, including Otoa, the LC5, in Lira district. Another 17 incumbents, including Zimbe in Mpigi and Makaanu in Bushenyi, chose, or were forced, not to run for reelection. Thirteen incumbents won their reelection bids, while six went through unopposed.

For example, in the 1998 LC elections Levi Zimbe defeated incumbent, Herbert Miiro, winning 61.2 percent of the vote. Zimbe was considered a Movement supporter and served as the head of the district's Movement Referendum Committee while he was district chairman. Prior to the 2002 LC elections, Zimbe pulled out of the race for district chairperson. Zimbe's decision not to run was likely influenced by several factors. There may have been pressure from district MPs who had pushed for the division of the district, which Zimbe had strongly opposed. Most likely, however, Movement officials pressured or encouraged Zimbe not to run because he was viewed as a political liability given the scandals that plagued him during his term in office as Mpigi district chairman. The *New Vision* reports, "Movement spokes-man [sic] Ofwono Opondo says Zzimbe was asked not to stand in Mpigi and new district Wakiso, with the promise of getting something nice" (February 20, 2002). Mpigi, thus, offers a great example of central government interference in local political affairs, in this case deciding who should and should not run for reelection. I argue that the Movement's manipulation of the electoral process

undermines the competitiveness of local elections and the ability of elections to reflect the will of the people. While Zimbe was district chairman, he faced numerous corruption allegations from within the council. At the time of the survey in Mpigi (April 2001), 48.4 percent of respondents felt he was performing well or very well. It remains unknown whether he would have lost a reelection bid had he tried.

The former Secretary for Production under Zimbe, Badru Kabega Mukalazi, won the 2002 LC5 election with 81 percent of the vote.³⁶ Kabega, who was formerly a special investigator with military intelligence and a member of the Movement Referendum Taskforce, most likely had Movement backing in the election.

In Bushenyi district, Makaaru was elected to his third term as district chairman in 1998, winning 41.6 percent of the vote. Elections in Bushenyi seem more competitive than those in Mpigi and perhaps even in Lira for a couple of reasons. There is some evidence that outside actors, whether Movement leaders or MPs, have less influence on the outcomes of local council elections in Bushenyi, especially for the 1998 LC elections, than in either Mpigi or Lira. In the 1998 elections, Makaaru, who was described as a “dilute Movementist”, easily defeated his challenger, Ndyanabo Longino “who was fronted by cabinet ministers Amanywa Mushega and Kahinda Otafiire” (*New Vision* April 22, 1998). Makaaru Yowasi polled 72,010 votes compared to the 63,811 votes of his main challenger. The fact that Makaaru “who was opposed by the NRM top brass” won provides evidence of the limited influence of Movement officials and even district MPs in affecting election results in Bushenyi district.

³⁶ Election results include only Maddu sub-county, which constitutes only 7 percent of the district population based on 1991 census.

An important component of local political competition in Bushenyi also stems from the district's past as a "former hotbed of UPC politics" during the 1980s (*New Vision* May 28, 2003). Recent events, such as the declining support for the Movement between the 1996 and 2001 presidential elections, described in Chapter Seven, and the success of multipartyists in the elections for LC3 chairpersons in Bushenyi in 2002, heightened the government's attention to district activities. In the LC3 elections, "twenty out of 30 LC3 chairpersons in Bushenyi district lost their seats to reformist and multipartists" (*New Vision* January 18, 2002). Similarly, Odo Tayebwa, the district campaign coordinator for Besigye for the 2001 presidential election, was elected district speaker after the 2002 LC elections.

An important part of Bushenyi's relationship with the Movement government relates to its history as a UPC stronghold in 1980s. Since the Movement came to power, Bushenyi has been a strong Movement supporter in national elections. Yet, the district's multiparty past, despite high levels of support for the Movement described in Chapter Seven, and the recent resurgence of support for multiparty candidates at the local level have likely intensified the struggle between Movement and multiparty supporters in the district. I argue that this, combined with the existing religious cleavage, results in more competitive elections.

The ways in which the center relates to Bushenyi reflect the Movement's efforts to hold onto previously existing support in the face of such challenges, especially at the local level. For example, one political analyst discussing Museveni's cabinet reshuffle in May 2003 speculates that Professor Tarsis Kabwegyere, who was recently elected MP for Igara West in Bushenyi, was included in the cabinet "to calm down crucial constituencies

and forestall any lingering opposition to his rule from areas *previously presumed to be Movement safe-havens*” [emphasis added] (*New Vision* May 28, 2003). Likewise, speaking of the promotion of Colonel Otafiire (MP for Ruhinda County, Bushenyi) and Kabwegyere’s inclusion in the cabinet, the analyst writes, “...both from Bushenyi, the former hotbed of UPC politics, the President seems to be plugging any loopholes the partyists would hope to exploit” (*New Vision* May 28, 2003).

The recent challenges to the Movement’s political control of Bushenyi are very real. Dr. Adonia Tiberondwa, the Chairman for Political Affairs for the UPC, while mobilizing for support in Bushenyi, vowed that “they would use Museveni’s own LCs to fight him” (*The Monitor* March 11, 2002). Although central government support to Bushenyi was less than that of Mpigi, based on my analysis of data collected in 2000/01, certainly I would expect that, with declining levels of support for the Movement in the district, levels of central government support will increase. Such increases may reflect efforts by the government to maintain support in the district, and likely Bushenyi’s relationship with the center may begin to resemble over time Mpigi’s situation of central dominance. Quite possibly there will be costs to the performance of Bushenyi district council should this occur.

In 2002, Makaaru chose not to stand for reelection. Ndyanabo Longino ran for the LC5 chair position again, and once again he was supported by the MPs of the district. His challenger was Nyine Bitahwa, a former MP who lost his seat to Kabwegyere in 2001. The decision by district MPs to support Ndyanabo reflects efforts to balance religious concerns. The *New Vision* reports, “The district MPs reportedly held a meeting in Kampala in which they agreed to support Ndyanabo, a [C]atholic, to balance religions

in the district leadership because the outgoing chairman is a Protestant” (*New Vision* January 22, 2002). A MP from Bushenyi described the process:

The antagonisms between religions were so rife, but now they’ve harmonized. The harmony is based on power sharing. There’s an internal respect for political differences. We can avoid polarization and can be the beginning of a more tolerant political community. The councils are operating within that. We couldn’t have a government in Bushenyi that excludes Protestants or Catholics or doesn’t represent people from all parts of Bushenyi.

The most recent action to ensure political harmony among Catholics and Protestants prompted sharp criticism from Museveni who called the district leaders to a meeting at his Rwakitura home and “cautioned Bushenyi district leaders against mixing religion with politics” (*New Vision* January 22, 2002). Nevertheless, Ndyanabo won with 52 percent of the vote. His success illustrates the limits to the Movement’s, and in this particular instance, Museveni’s ability to interfere and orchestrate elections in Bushenyi. MP involvement in the election—by supporting one candidate over another—does, however, raise concerns about the extent to which the 2002 elections reflect the will of the people. Yet, as discussed above, the race was extremely close, and in fact, Bitahwa brought two separate electoral petitions to the courts, although he lost in both instances.

In 1998, Otoa, a multiparty candidate, was elected to his first term as Lira district chairperson with only 32.1 percent of the vote, defeating his challenger, Ongwen-Ogwal, who was supported by the Movement. The high rate of turnover in LC elections and the fact that Movement candidates have challenged multipartyists in most LC elections in Lira suggest fairly high levels of political competition for local elections. However, the influence of political powerhouses, such as Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, raises questions about the true level of competition in these contests. For example, the 2002 race for LC5

chairperson turned out to be a struggle between incumbent Otoa and Lira district MPs, such as Ogwal and Omara Atubo. Problems developed between Chairman Otoa and the MPs during the presidential election in 2001.

Many in Lira, including LC officials and especially powerful MPs, supported Colonel Besigye in his bid to oust President Museveni. District Chairman Otoa and a few close political allies within the council, on the other hand, supported the candidacy of Aggrey Awori. The ensuing political struggle between the two camps pitted Chairman Otoa and a few Awori supporters on one side and the powerful MPs and other local council officials on the other. One result of this struggle was a reshuffling of the executive committee as Chairman Otoa attempted to redistribute executive committee portfolios to councilors who had supported Awori for president and by default supported the chairman in the political struggle.³⁷ A second and especially important result was Otoa's defeat in the 2002 LC5 elections. Lira's MPs put all of their support and resources behind Otoa's challenger and former vice-chairperson, Dr. Charles Odwe Arago, who easily won the election with their backing. Rumors abounded that Otoa had switched political allegiance and was running as the Movement candidate in the election, an allegation he denied (see *The Monitor* November 27, 2001). For example, a *New Vision* article discussing the outcome of the LC5 elections described Otoa as the "Movement-backed incumbent" (February 20, 2002).

Although the quantitative measures of political competition suggest that local electoral contests are equally competitive in Lira and Bushenyi, I have argued that

³⁷ One *New Vision* article reports that Otoa "threatened to reshuffle his cabinet if they do not stop supporting Col. Kizza Besigye and President Yoweri Museveni" (February 26, 2001). The article continues that the vice-chairman accused Otoa of illegally using PAF conditional grant funds to campaign for Aggrey Awori (*New Vision* February 26, 2001). Odwe was quoted as saying, "He (Obua) should not

Bushenyi is more competitive because of the fact that outsiders have had less influence on the election results, and there seem to be more salient political issues around which voters can organize. In particular, the Movement/multiparty divide and religious cleavages likely result in heightened competition in Bushenyi. If the case can be made that Bushenyi is more competitive, even slightly, then there is evidence to support my hypothesis that district councils perform better where there is greater local political competition.

8.4.2 Political Strategies of Local Leaders

In Chapter Two, I hypothesize that district councils perform better where politics is less personalized. Evidence to test this hypothesis proved difficult to gather. Moreover, measuring the extent of personalism and the tendency among local leaders to resort to patronage is difficult. I attempted to gather such data through survey questions which ask respondents to evaluate levels of corruption in their district. I also asked LC officials and administrators about the criteria and process used to make decisions about the allocation of goods and services in the district. In addition, the Afrobarometer survey from 2000 includes several questions that also can be used as measures of personalism. The description of performance in the three districts in Chapter Six also includes references to recent corruption scandals, investigations, and allegations in each district. I argue, in Chapter Six, that corruption seems to be more routinized and prevalent in Mpigi and Lira.

It is somewhat surprising then that there is no significant difference across the three districts in whether respondents said they had heard about corruption by sub-county

use his interest against those of the people. The PAF money he is using was not meant for canvassing votes" (*New Vision* February 26, 2001).

or district officials. Between 55 and 65 percent of respondents in each district reported hearing of incidents of corruption involving local council officials.

Nevertheless, there are significant differences in respondents' perceptions about the prevalence of corruption in the different districts. While the majority of respondents in all three districts said that corruption has increased since 1998, slightly more respondents in Lira (61.7 percent) said that corruption has increased, while only 55.6 and 53.3 percent in Mpigi and Bushenyi districts, respectively, felt that corruption has been on the rise.³⁸ President Museveni expressed similar sentiments, stating that "there are a lot of corrupt people down there [in the local councils.]"³⁹ On the other hand, approximately 40 percent of respondents in Bushenyi felt that corruption has decreased, while only 30.2 percent in Mpigi and 28.9 percent in Lira also felt that corruption has been declining. Citizen perceptions of corruption vary as theoretically expected. Corruption is perceived to be less of a problem in better performing Bushenyi district.

Table 7 about here.

On the other hand, Table 7 reports the percent of respondents in each district that said corruption was "common" or "very common" in different local councils. The data presented in Table 7 does not support my hypothesis that personalism would be higher in Mpigi and Lira. While the percent of respondents that felt corruption was a common problem in sub-county and district councils and among district administrators varies across the three districts, these differences are not statistically significant at the .05

³⁸ Differences in responses across districts are significant at the .05 level based on the value of Chi-square; Phi=.139 and Cramer's V=.098, sig .04.

level.⁴⁰ The consistency in responses across these three districts is quite interesting, as well as the fact that a sizeable majority in each district felt that corruption is common within these three local government institutions. Over 70 percent of survey respondents in each district felt that corruption was a common problem among district administrators. Likewise, an equally large percent felt that corruption was common within the district local council.

One Afrobarometer survey question asked respondents about the importance of contacts in getting ahead in life. Contrary to my theoretical expectations, more respondents in Bushenyi agreed with the statement, “The best way to get ahead in this life is to have contacts with important people in high places.” In fact, 77.7 percent of respondents in 2000 from Bushenyi agreed with this statement compared to 72.2 percent in Mpigi and 68.8 percent in Lira. Bushenyi and Mpigi both lie within one standard deviation below the mean for all districts included in the Afrobarometer survey (mean=80.2), while Lira lies just beyond one standard deviation below the mean.

The qualitative data offers a somewhat different picture. For example, when asked about the process and criteria the district uses to make important decisions about the allocation of goods and services across the district, an overwhelming majority of respondents in Bushenyi stated that the decision making process is based on technical criteria and the needs of different communities. Only one person interviewed from the district administration said that politics is sometimes involved in decisions about the allocation of goods and services. More interview respondents in Mpigi and Lira acknowledged that politics does play a role in such decisions. Although in both Lira and

³⁹ Personal communication during a brief and informal meeting with the President in July 2001.

⁴⁰ Differences in the percent that felt corruption was common in district council is significant at the .10

Mpigi there were respondents who assured me that the distribution of goods and services in their district is based solely upon technical criteria and need, there were an equal number or more respondents in both districts who explained that *politics is important* in such decisions.

For example, a veterinary officer in Mpigi described the process of deciding which areas and which individuals, in particular, would benefit from the restocking program. He explains:

There are two levels of decision making. The district restocking committee headed by the LC5 chairman, that one decided which sub-counties benefited. There were six sub-counties. At the sub-county level, we contacted the LC3 council and they chose the parishes to benefit. When they chose, the LC3 chief was required to mobilize people to choose a restocking committee in that parish. That restocking committee handles the allocation in that parish.

I followed up by asking the respondent, "If you were to choose, would you choose those sub-counties?" He continued, "According to the criteria that were supposed to be used for inclusion. Yes, all of them should have been included. The problem is that we were limited to only six, I would have gone for a larger number."

An official in Mpigi's education department explained that the allocation of new classrooms and desks for schools "depends on need based on various indicators." With respect to bursaries, on the other hand, he explained that politics is considerably more important:

With bursaries, they fill forms and after that the education committee sits and looks at the forms. But a lot of politics is introduced in. It is our [the administrators] job to advise. I suggested we help a few and pay fees in full. We should help those poor kids, but those who can actually perform. But when they [the politicians] come here, they look at 'how many in my constituency?'...At the end of the day, there is no criteria [sic] at all.

While a few officials described an allocation process based on need, others noted that politics is extremely important in deciding who gets what in Mpigi. The description of the strategies he uses to ensure that his constituents benefit from district goods and services provided by one official in Mpigi is a great example of personalism within the district. The official explained:

For my sub-county, I'll be frank. I'm grateful to the district. I have been here three terms. It has helped me to know where I go, to the head of the department, try to do me a favor. I can ask for the water head to give me some wells. He asks where and I tell him. If the three year development has put in for wells, then they get done....Schools, they have put five primary schools in my sub-county, fully constructed. It's been done because I am here and I know to go to the DEO....As an LC you must know how to make a follow up. The head of department must be your friend. It is not automatic.

Yet, few other respondents in Mpigi or Lira offered such vivid descriptions of strategies to pull resources toward their constituents.

As in Mpigi, the responses were mixed in Lira. For example, many respondents noted that politics does matter. In response to a question about the extent to which decisions on distribution are political, one administrator answered, "90 percent." Other respondents were less pessimistic and noted that technical criteria and need are important, although politics remains an important part of the story as well. For example, an administrator in the works department described the process of making decisions about which area receives district support or a project this way:

Originally we used economic rate of return of the road. There are a number of points considered—the population by the road; the proximity to health centers and education institutions; productivity of adjoining land; and political considerations.

I followed up by asking the respondent what are the principal political considerations. He explained, “It is in the interests of politicians to see that a certain road is worked on-- 20 percent political considerations; 80 percent economic rate of return.”

Another respondent from the production department characterized the process quite similarly when asked about the criteria used in making decisions about the allocation of goods and services, “Political considerations and implications, technical considerations—e.g. certain crops grow in certain conditions better than others, and farmers’ demands and practices, and cultural practices.” I followed up by asking which of these considerations were most important. The respondent continued, “Technical considerations take a bigger percent really, followed by political considerations. Those are also quite important. The third is the demand by farmers although farmers’ demands should come first and foremost, but in terms of weighting.” Finally, another respondent noted that the district considers a variety of factors and that, at times, the distribution is not equal:

It’s not equal. We try to follow parameters used at the national level, like population...Sometimes there is a natural disadvantage, like Kyoga [county] got flooded because of El Nino. Roads were cut off and people displaced. So when it comes to such a thing, the allocation can be more.

The respondent continued in response to a follow-up question about the extent to which politics is considered in these decisions:

To some reasonable extent. SFG [School Facilities Grant] and road construction, the sub-county of the Secretary of Education has two blocks while Kyoga has none. We can try to make a balance. That’s why technical people can try to balance the politicians, but it is there.

On the other hand, as noted above, several respondents in Lira insisted politics was not a consideration in such decisions. One executive committee member, as if

responding to the comments of the respondent listed directly above, insisted that the services his area had received were in no way connected to the fact that he was the executive committee member working in that sector. Another executive committee member explained that, “Politics affects our decisions very little. We agree services must be delivered to the population. Whether an area voted for you or not, services must be delivered.”

While few respondents in Bushenyi admitted that political criteria are important in the distribution of resources by the district council, one respondent from the education department did, however, mention that the department considers religion in making decisions about the distribution of educational services and tries to ensure the Catholic and Protestant schools benefit equally. While this is not directly comparable to leaders trying to pull resources to their areas in order to be seen as having delivered on campaign promises, it does highlight one way in which politics enters into equations about allocation in Bushenyi. Similarly, council members recently rejected several of the chairperson’s nominees for the District Service Commission because they were religious leaders, and councilors feared that they would favor members of their faith (*New Vision* November 9, 2002). These examples illustrate that politics is an important consideration, even among better performing districts, such as Bushenyi.

The quantitative evidence does not at all support the hypothesis that local governments perform better where politics is less personalized. The qualitative evidence based on the interviews with district officials does suggest, however, that there is greater weight given to political criteria in Lira and Mpigi. Yet, the data presented does not seem to accurately measure personalism. Certainly politicians in all three districts work hard to

ensure that their constituents benefit. It is not clear that such examples of pork barrel politics among LC officials in Uganda constitute personalism or patronage. Thus, I would conclude that, with the evidence available, I cannot test this hypothesis sufficiently and am unable to determine if officials in better performing districts are less apt to resort to strategies of patronage or personalism.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the explanatory power of society-centric explanations for government performance in three case study districts, including participation, civil society, and social capital. In addition, I have also explored the impact of features of the local political context on local government performance in these districts, focusing on patterns and levels of political competition and political strategies of local leaders in particular. There is little evidence to support most of these explanations for local government performance. As the discussion above indicates, Bushenyi, the better performing district, does not exhibit significantly higher levels of generalized trust or appear more participatory than Lira or Mpigi as I hypothesized. While the sheer number of civic organizations does not provide an adequate explanation for the district's performance, the linkages that have been developed between LCs and area civic organizations in Bushenyi explain part of the district's better performance. Equally important, I argue, are the patterns of political competition that exist in the district. LC elections appear to be not only more important in Bushenyi, as discussed in Chapter Seven, but also more competitive. Existing political cleavages in the district, both between Movement and multiparty supporters and representatives from different

religious groups, contribute to increasing the level of competitiveness in local elections. Moreover, while participation alone does not explain the differences in performance observed across the three districts, the impact of heightened political competition in Bushenyi on local government performance is certainly influenced, and likely increased, by the higher voter turnout in local elections.

Bushenyi's relationship with the central government, described in Chapter Seven, is an example of cooperative relations. I argue that the characteristics of this relationship—the fact that the district has a degree of political leverage in its relations with the center—increase the influence of society on local governments in the district. But then the features of the local political context described above, in particular, local leaders' need to respond to salient cleavages in the district, weaken central government efforts to control local leaders, thereby influencing how the district relates to the center. In all three districts, the relationship between the district and the center *is influenced by* and *influences* the relevance of societal factors and features of the local political context. In the case of Bushenyi, cooperative relations with the central government and heightened political competition at the local level contribute to better performance in Bushenyi district.

Table 1: Selected Measures of Societal Factors

		Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Participation	Voter turnout in 1998 LC elections	57.1	30.1	49.1
	Percent said contacted LC official	53.6	41.6	29.8
	District average total number of contacts with LC officials	1.52	.87	.76
	Percent saying they always or often attend LC meetings	23.3	33.3	37.5
	Average number of council meetings in past two months	.81	.76	.33
Civil Society and Social Capital	Percent express feelings of generalized trust	13.9	8.1	34.4
	Number of registered NGOs	34	147	67
	District average number of organizational memberships	1.17	1.32	.94
	District average on Index of Organization Activism	1.48	1.37	.95

Table 2: "The last time you attended a local council meeting, what was your main reason for doing so?"

Bushenyi N=124	Mpigi N=157	Lira N=123
1. Bring services to community (31.5%)	1. Do citizen duty (25.5%)	1. Unify community (35.7%)
2. Do citizen duty (16.5%)	2. Bring services to community (17.0)	2. Do citizen duty (27.4%)
3 Discuss how to spend tax revenue (13.0%)	3. Unify community (13.5)	3. Bring services to community (20.2%)
4. Work with others (10.9%)	4. Work with others (9.9)	4. Fill LC positions (6.0%)
5. Unify community (6.5%)	5. Learn what's happening in area (8.5)	5. Get help with personal problem (3.6%)

(Percent of respondents in each district giving each response provided in parentheses.)

Table 3: Attendance at Local Council Meetings

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
A. When I attend local council meetings, I only attend because it is expected.	82.0	80.1	18.3
B. I attend LC meetings because I feel it is my responsibility as a citizen.	97.7	98.1	93.1
C. I attend LC meetings because I feel my attendance makes a difference.	83.9	80.3	86.6
D. Sometimes people in my area pressure others to attend LC meetings.	25.5	32.7	18.4
E. People are free not to attend meetings without feeling pressured.	88.1	80.7	85.2
F. It doesn't matter if I attend local council meetings, because my opinion is not considered.	24.1	29.8	29.0

(Percent of respondents in each district agreeing with each statement.)

Table 4: Organizational Membership

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Not a member of any organization	43.3	39.2	49.1
Member of 1 organization	30.1	32.3	31.1
Member of 2-4 organizations	21.0	21.4	16.2
Member of 5 or more organizations	5.5	5.7	3.7

(Percent of respondents in each district.)

Table 5: Linkages between Civic Organizations and LCs

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
A. Organization work for LCs?	42.0	34.5	33.8
B. Org. receive funding from LCs?	17.0	16.0	3.8
C. Org. receive facilitation from LCs?	16.9	10.9	10.0
D. Org. share information about people's needs with LCs?	49.4	52.0	42.6
E. Org. share information on its activities with LCs?	59.3	51.9	54.2
F. Org. participate in LC decision making?	45.1	41.9	31.9
G. Org. seek advice from LCs?	60.7	47.4	38.6

(Percent of respondents in each district said "yes.")

Table 6: Measures of Political Competition

	Bushenyi 1998	Bushenyi 2002	Mpigi 1998	Mpigi 2002*	Lira 1998	Lira 2002
Percent of popular vote won by winning candidate	.416	.519	.612	.807	.321	.552
Average percent of vote received by winner in 2 LC elections	.468		.711		.461	
Winning candidates margin of victory		.038		.615		.178
Safe seat?	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Race contested?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*Results for Mpigi's 2002 election based on Maddu sub-county only. Results from other sub-counties were not available at time data was collected.

Table 7: Corruption among Local Government Leaders

	Bushenyi	Mpigi	Lira
Village council	39.6	41.0	30.1
Sub-county council	67.2	70.5	61.7
District council	74.3	67.6	83.2
District administrators	76.1	67.9	77.4

(Percent of respondents in each district said corruption was "common" or "very common".)

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

As noted in the Introduction, local governments are rapidly becoming more and more important as governments throughout Africa and the developing world adopt comprehensive decentralization policies. Such policies shift decision-making responsibility and financial authority to local governments in the hope of promoting democracy and spurring economic development at the grassroots level. The question remains, however, whether local governments in Africa that have historically been poorly funded and politically marginalized under authoritarian rule can actually perform this new role. This research project sheds light on this important question by identifying the factors that contribute to good performance among local governments in Uganda.

This project increases our understanding of how local governments actually operate in Uganda, which has important practical applications. More importantly, however, the findings discussed in previous chapters reveal that the political legacy of centralization in African politics persists, despite very real efforts to decentralize. Uganda's central government influences local government performance through the design of local government institutions, features of the decentralization policy itself, and also through the political context, which under the present no-party system limits political competition at all levels of government.

Yet, the true weight of the central government is felt in the various ways in which it relates to district councils across the country. I argue and present evidence in Chapters Five and Seven to show that the political linkages between the center and Uganda's districts are an important influence on the performance of district councils, although with

mixed support for my hypotheses 2a and 2b (see Chapter 2). I hypothesized that district support for the central government would have no impact on local government performance. In fact, this research indicates that district support for the Movement positively affects council performance, as local councils in areas with high levels of popular support for the government do not face nearly the obstacles to good government, such as insecurity, that their counterparts in opposition areas endure. Moreover, the case of Lira suggests that opposition to the central government may come to dominate local politics, pushing local concerns to the margins. Yet, this research also reveals that opposition to the central government provides politicians in opposition districts some room to maneuver politically that their counterparts in other areas do not have. For example, local politicians in Lira used the district's opposition to the Movement strategically and often criticized the center or voiced long-standing complaints of discrimination by the center instead of addressing present issues.

The discussion in Chapters Five and Seven indicates that the impact of central government support to Uganda's district is certainly less straightforward and more complex than I expected. I hypothesized that higher levels of central government support would be associated with lower council performance. While there is some evidence and considerable reason to believe that increased levels of support from the center undermine local council performance, the impact of such support seems to be dependent upon levels of district support for the central government. Different combinations of district support for the center and central government support to districts affect the motivations of local leaders differently and thus, have different effects on council performance. Local leaders in districts that receive high levels of support from the central government, but fail to

deliver equal or higher levels of electoral support face a dangerous political imbalance that serves to increase the power and influence of central government officials and undermines council performance. This was the situation in Mpigi, an example of central dominance. On the other hand, political leaders in districts, such as Bushenyi, maintain some degree of autonomy from the center, despite high levels of central government support, in part because such support is balanced by high levels of electoral support for the Movement. Bushenyi closely, although not perfectly, approximates the cooperative relations discussed in Chapter Two. Finally, the performance of local governments in districts, such as Lira, with low levels of support for the center and equally low levels of central government support is determined from within, although as discussed already the lack of support for the center tends to dominate the local political scene.

Contrary to existing literature (e.g. Putnam 1993; Crook and Manor 1995, 1998) societal factors, such as community participation and the density of civil society, are not found to be important influences on council performance in Uganda. The evidence presented in Chapter Eight provides little evidence to support hypotheses that local governments perform better where communities are more active participants and where there is a greater density of civic associations. This is an extremely important result. Yet, evidence from the three case studies supports the idea that the linkages between civic organizations and local governments are what really matter rather than simply the sheer number or the existence of such organizations. For example, tighter linkages between Bushenyi's district council and area NGOs contributes to the district council's better performance.

Equally important, evidence presented in Chapter Eight supports my hypothesis that local governments perform better where local elections are more competitive. As argued, levels of political competition are certainly not independent of central-local relations as interference in local elections is a principal mechanism through which the Movement government exerts its influence over local councils in many areas. Yet, competition is driven by local factors, such as the existence of important political cleavages. I argue that in areas with salient political cleavages, such as the role of religion in local politics in Bushenyi, not only are elections more competitive, but local leaders work harder while in office because of the very real threat of losing in the next election.

Finally, neither multivariate analysis nor the case studies support my expectations about the possibility that ministries could mentor local governments to better performance. There is little support for my hypothesis that tighter administrative linkages between district councils and the center are associated with better council performance. Instead there is evidence, although limited in the case studies, that ministries simply react to crises in districts instead of working proactively to better district council performance.

The findings presented in this dissertation provide considerable information about when and why some local governments perform better than others. Yet, there are still areas for further research. As noted above, the impact of generalized trust on local council performance is unclear based on the results of multivariate analysis and the case studies. This important relationship needs further exploration. Similarly, the impact of central government support also needs to be explored more deeply. The relationship

between the two components of political linkages—central government support to districts and district support to the center—should be examined more closely. As noted in Chapter Seven, efforts to do this are limited given the difficulties in collecting all of the necessary data on central government allocations.

Likewise, if Uganda continues moving closer to opening up the political space to political parties, the impact of central government interference in local elections may be reduced or at least altered, which would affect local council performance. Levels of local political competition certainly will be influenced by political liberalization and, as a consequence, have an impact on local government performance, which I hope to track.

Similarly, the relationship between the use and reliance on patronage at the national level and the reliance on such strategies at the local level demand greater attention. I posited in several chapters that personalized politics at the national level is likely to be replicated at the local level, but this is an empirical question as to whether and to what extent this occurs. Finally, I intend to pursue more research into the differing impacts of electoral turnover and competition on local government performance.

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

DILEMMA OF DECENTRALIZATION: A STUDY OF LOCAL POLITICS IN UGANDA March-November 2001

Respondent Number:

--	--	--	--

 [Office use only] Field Number:

--	--	--	--

Interviewer ID:

--	--

[Supervisor use only]

Back-checked:		Back-checked by:		Coding checked by:		Parish: [Circle one]	
Yes	1					Urban	Rural
No	2						

[Interviewer: Fill in boxes.]

District	
County	
Sub-county	
Parish	
Town/Village	

Household Selection Procedure

*Find the household you are to contact from the list given to you by your supervisor.
Introduce yourself.*

Introduction
Good day. My name is _____. I am from **Makerere Institute for Social Research on the Makerere University campus.** I do not represent the government or any political party. We are studying the views of citizens in Uganda about the performance of local and national government. We would like to discuss these issues with yourself, or a member of your household. Would somebody from this household be willing to answer a few questions?

[If yes]
Every person in Uganda has an equal chance of being included in this study. Your household has been chosen by chance. We would now like to randomly choose an adult from within your household. Would you help us pick one?

If the interview is refused, walk away from the household and substitute that household with the first household from the list of alternate households given to you by your supervisor that has not been selected already.

Respondent Selection Procedure

[Interviewer: Circle the correct numbers.]

	Male	Female	Not applicable (if 1 st interview of day)
Previous interview was with a:	1	2	97
This interview must be with a:	1	2	

Please tell me the first names of all Ugandan citizens who presently live in this household and who are over eighteen years old. Include yourself.

Determine whether they are male or female. If this interview must be with a female, list only women's names. If this interview must be with a male, list only men's names. List the first names only of all eligible household members 18 years or older, even those not presently at home but who will return to the house that evening

Women's Names	Men's Names
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

Please choose a card. The person who corresponds to the number chosen will be the person interviewed.

REMEMBER: Circle the number of the person selected.

Interview the person whose name appears next to the selected number.

The person I need to speak to is [read in name] _____. Is this person presently at home?

If yes: May I please interview this person now?

If no: Will this person return here at any time today?

If no: Thank you very much. I will select another household. Substitute the first household from the list of alternate households that has not been selected already.

(NOTE: YOU MUST SUBSTITUTE HOUSEHOLDS, NOT INDIVIDUALS.)

If yes: Please tell this person that I will return for an interview at [insert convenient time]. Make one return visit. If the randomly selected respondent is not present on your second visit, first household from the list of alternate households that has not been selected already.

If the selected respondent is not the same person that you first met, repeat Introduction:

Good day. My name is _____. I am from Makerere Institute for Social Research on the Makerere University campus. I do not represent the government or any political party. We are studying the views of citizens in Uganda about the performance of local and national government.

Read confidentiality statement.

Your answers will be confidential. They will be put together with over 800 other people we are talking to to get an overall picture. It will be impossible to pick you out from what you say so please feel free to tell us what you think. Are you willing to participate?

How many calls were made to the household where the interview actually took place?	1	2
--	---	---

Date of interview [Interviewer: Enter day and month]				0	1
Time interview started [Interviewer: Enter hour and minute]					
[Interviewer: Circle AM or PM]	AM		PM		

BEGIN INTERVIEW

Let's start with a few questions about you.

1.	Male	Female
[Interviewer: What is the respondent's gender? Do not read out]	1	2

2.	No	Yes
Are you the head of the household?	0	1

[If yes, go to Q. 4]

3. What is your relationship to the head of household?	
Wife	1
Husband	2
Mother	3
Father	4
Sister	5
Brother	6
Uncle	7
Aunt	8
Grandmother/Grandfather	9
Friend	10
Other [Interviewer: Specify on this line]	

4. How old are you? [Write in respondent's age in years]	
---	--

5. What is your main occupation?	
Unemployed	0
Farmer/fisherman	1
Informal Marketeer	2
Businessperson	3
Clerical Worker	4
Artisan	5
Domestic Worker	6
Miner	7
Technical Worker	8
Teacher	9
Government Worker	10
NGO Worker	11
Professional	12
Retired	13
Housewife	14
Student	15
Transporter	16
Medical Worker	17
Soldier	18
Shop Keeper	19
Other [Interviewer: Specify on this line]	

6. What is your highest level of education? [Circle only the highest level obtained]	
None	0
Primary school incomplete	1
Primary school complete	2
Secondary school incomplete (O-level)	3
Secondary school complete (O-level)	4
Secondary school incomplete (A-level)	5
Secondary school complete (A-level)	6
Vocational college/tertiary/diploma	7
University incomplete	8
University complete	9
Post-graduate university incomplete (Masters or Ph.D.)	10
Post-graduate university complete (Masters or Ph.D.)	11
Other [Specify]	

7. What is your mother tongue?	
Ateso	1
Luganda	2
Lugwere	3
Luo	4
Runyankole	5
Other [Specify]	

8. What is your religion?	
None	0
Church of Uganda	1
Catholic	2
Islam	3
Seventh Day Adventist	4
Other [Specify]	

9. What is your ethnic group?	
Baganda	1
Bagwere	2
Banyankole	3
Iteso	4
Langi	5
Other [Specify]	

Now I'd like to hear your opinion on some important political issues.

10.	No	Yes	Don't know
Have you heard about the Local Government Act?	0	1	9

11.	No	Yes	Don't know
Have you heard about decentralization?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 15]

12. In your opinion, what is decentralization about?	
[Write down the respondent's exact words]	

13. In which year was the policy of decentralization enacted?	
[Write in year given by respondent]	

14. How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the policy of decentralization?	
Very unsatisfied	0
Unsatisfied	1
Neutral	2
Satisfied	3
Very satisfied	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

15. Which of these five statements is closest to your own opinion?	
A. Things have gotten worse for me in the past few years and I believe it is because of decentralization.	0
B. Things have gotten worse for me in the past few years, but I'm not sure if it is because of decentralization.	1
C. My life has not changed in the past few years.	2
D. Things have gotten better for me in the past few years and I believe it is because of decentralization.	3
E. Things have gotten better for me in the past few years, but I'm not sure if it is because of decentralization.	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

16. Which level of government is responsible for the following activities?						
	Village	Sub-county	District	Central Govt.	NGO/ Private	Don't know
A. Defense of the country's borders	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. Construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of feeder roads	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. Staffing and equipping district hospitals	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. Foreign relations and external trade	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. Maintenance of community roads (bulungi bwansi)	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. Primary health care	1	2	3	4	5	9
G. Staffing and equipping referral hospitals	1	2	3	4	5	9
H. Formulating national policy and standards	1	2	3	4	5	9

17. In your opinion, what does the district council (LC5) do? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

18. In your opinion, what does the sub-county council (LC3) do? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

19. How would you rate the performance of the following:							
	Very Bad	Bad	Neither Good nor Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good	Don't know
A. Village council	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. Village chairperson	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. Sub-county council	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. Sub-county chairperson	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. District council	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. District chairperson	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
G. RDC	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
H. Your Member of Parliament [Interviewer: Refer to MP before June elections]	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
I. President Museveni	0	1	2	3	4	5	9

Now I am now going to read for you several pairs of statements. Please listen to both, then tell me which one you agree with most. Choose Statement A or Statement B. [Interviewer: Probe: "Do you agree strongly or just somewhat?"]		
20.	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat
A: Our local leaders are accountable to the community for the decisions that they make.	1	2
B: Our local leaders make decisions without any consideration for what the community wants.	4	3
Do not agree with either [Do not read]	5	
Don't know [Do not read]	9	

21.	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat
A. Decentralization has changed my life.	1	2
B. My life has not been affected by decentralization.	4	3
Do not agree with either [Do not read]	5	
Don't know [Do not read]	9	

[If respondent selects statement B, go to Q. 23]

22. How has your life been affected by decentralization? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

23.	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat
A. Local leaders consider my opinions and views when making important decisions.	1	2
B. It does not matter what I think, local leaders do not consider my opinions when making important decisions.	4	3
Do not agree with either [Do not read]	5	
Don't know [Do not read]	9	

24.	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat
A. Decentralization has led to a situation in which everyone has power to influence important decisions made by the local council.	1	2
B. Despite decentralization, there are only a few individuals who have the power to influence important decisions made by the local council.	4	3
Do not agree with either [Do not read]	5	
Don't know [Do not read]	9	

25.	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat
A. The local councils do not spend money on things to meet our needs.	1	2
B. The local councils spend money on things that the people here need.	4	3
Do not agree with either [Do not read]	5	
Don't know [Do not read]	9	

26. What is the most serious problem in this area that you feel the district council should address? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

27. What is the most serious problem in this area that you feel the sub-county council should address? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

28. What are the main health problems in this community? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

29. How would you rate the work of the district council (LC5) in:							
	Very Bad	Bad	Neither Good nor Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good	Don't know
A. providing health care in this district generally	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. constructing new health units	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. ensuring adequate supply of drugs are available in government health units and hospitals when needed	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. providing health education	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. mobilizing people for immunization	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. increasing access to proper sanitation	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
G. rehabilitating existing health units	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
H. staffing health units with trained and qualified staff	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
I. increasing access to clean water	0	1	2	3	4	5	9

30. Since 1997, the quality of health care provision by the district has gotten	
Much worse	0
Worse	1
Stayed about the same	2
Better	3
Much better	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

31. What are the main education problems in this community? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

32. How would you rate the work of the district council (LC5) in:							
	Very Bad	Bad	Neither Good nor Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good	Don't know
A. providing education in this district generally	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. staffing existing schools with trained and qualified teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. inspecting schools in the district	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. providing desks for students in existing schools	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. providing textbooks in existing schools	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. constructing classrooms	0	1	2	3	4	5	9

33. Since 1997, the quality of education provision by the district has gotten	
Much worse	0
Worse	1
Stayed about the same	2
Better	3
Much better	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

34. What are the main transport problems in this community? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

35. How would you rate the work of the district council (LC5) in:							
	Very Bad	Bad	Neither Good nor Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good	Don't know
A. rehabilitating existing feeder roads	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. constructing new feeder roads	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. maintaining existing feeder roads	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. ensuring that all parts of the district have equal access to well maintained roads	0	1	2	3	4	5	9

36. Since 1997, the quality of road construction and maintenance by the district has gotten	
Much worse	0
Worse	1
Stayed about the same	2
Better	3
Much better	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

37. What are the main agricultural production and marketing problems in this community? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

38. How would you rate the work of the district council (LC5) in:							
	Very Bad	Bad	Neither Good nor Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good	Don't know
A. assisting farmers in the production and marketing of their agricultural products generally	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. providing training in modern farming techniques	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. providing new varieties of seeds/plantings to farmers (e.g. clonal coffee)	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. vaccinating livestock	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. providing treatment of sick animals	0	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. assisting farmers in dealing with major diseases that threaten production (e.g. Coffee Wilt, Cassava Mosaic, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	9

39. Since 1997, the quality of agricultural production and marketing services by the district has gotten	
Much worse	0
Worse	1
Stayed about the same	2
Better	3
Much better	4
Don't know [Do not read]	9

40. Please rank the following problems in order of urgency, 1 being the most urgent problem facing this area and 5 being the least urgent.

Lack of school buildings/classrooms	
Too few teachers	
Lack of health units	
Lack of drugs in health units	
Lack of capital for income-generating projects	
Poor roads	
Lack of roads	
Lack of water	
Poor quality of water	
Cassava mosaic	
Coffee wilt	
Lack of markets for agricultural products	
Corruption	

41. If the sub-county council received 10 million Ush, on which activity would you want most of the money to be spent?

On primary education	1
On secondary education	2
On immunization	3
On malaria control	4
On HIV/AIDS	5
On some other health service	6
On roads	7
On water	8
On agriculture	9
On salaries of public officials	10
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

42. Which level of government uses the money collected from graduated tax?
[Write down the respondent's exact words]

43. How is this money used?
[Write down the respondent's exact words]

	No	Yes	Don't know
44. Did your village receive its 25% of taxes from the sub-county last year?	0	1	9

[If yes, go to Q. 46] [If don't know, go to Q. 50]

45. Why not? [Write down the respondent's exact words] [Go to Q. 50]

[If no to Q. 44, go to Q. 50]

46. How was the money used? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

	No	Yes	Don't know
47. Did your village council hold a meeting to discuss how to use the 25%?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 50]

	No	Yes	Don't know
48. Did you attend this meeting?	0	1	9

49. How did the village council decide how to use the money? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

	No	Yes	Don't know
50. Have you personally ever contacted an LC official to try to get help with a particular problem?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 55]

51. Have you contacted an LC official at:	No	Yes	Don't know
A. LC1?	0	1	9
B. LC2?	0	1	9
C. LC3?	0	1	9
D. LC4?	0	1	9
E. LC5?	0	1	9

52. [Ask for each level the respondent said yes to in Q. 51]

[If yes to LC1] How many times in the past year did you contact an LC1 official?	
[If yes to LC2] How many times in the past year did you contact an LC2 official?	
[If yes to LC3] How many times in the past year did you contact an LC3 official?	
[If yes to LC4] How many times in the past year did you contact an LC4 official?	
[If yes to LC5] How many times in the past year did you contact an LC5 official?	

53. Thinking about the most recent time that you went to a LC official with a problem, what was the problem you were seeking assistance for?
[Write down the respondent's exact words]

54.	No	Yes	Don't know
Did you receive help from the LC to solve this problem?	0	1	9

	No	Yes	Don't know
55. In the past year, have people in your village met to request that officials address a specific issue?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 57]

56. Were these actions successful?	
No, none were successful	0
Some were successful, others were not	1
Yes, all were successful	2
Don't know	9

57. What is the name of the LC5 councilor who represents this sub-county on the district council?

[Write down the respondent's exact words]

	Incorrect	Correct
[Interviewer: Verify that the answer given is correct and circle appropriate answer]	0	1

58. How frequently does the LC5 councilor for this sub-county visit the area?

[Write down the respondent's exact words]

59. In the past two months, how many times has the village council in your village met?

[Write down the respondent's exact words]

60. How often do you attend the local council meetings in your village?	
Never	0
Sometimes	1
Often	2
Always	3
Don't know	9

[If never to Q. 60, go to Q. 62]

61. The last time you attended a local council meeting, what was your main reason for doing so?	
To get a job or advance my career	1
To get help for a personal or family matter	2
To have a chance to work with others	3
To help unify our community	4
To do my duty as a citizen	5
To help bring services or opportunities to our community	6
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

62.	No	Yes
Are you currently an LC official?	0	1

[If no, go to Q. 64]

63. What is your current position in the local council system?	
[Write down the respondent's exact words]	

	No	Yes
64. Since the local councils were created, have you ever been an LC official?	0	1

[If no, go to Q. 66]

65. What positions have you held in the LC system?	No	Yes
A. LC1 executive member	0	1
B. LC2 executive member	0	1
C. LC3 councilor	0	1
D. LC3 executive member	0	1
E. LC5 councilor	0	1
F. LC5 Executive Member (Secretary)	0	1
G. LC5 Vice Chairperson	0	1
H. LC5 Chairperson	0	1

[Interviewer: Part D of Q66 and 67 refer to MP before June elections]

66. How interested are you in the decisions made by each of the following institutions:					
	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	Don't know
A. Village council	0	1	2	3	9
B. Sub-county council	0	1	2	3	9
C. District council	0	1	2	3	9
D. Parliament	0	1	2	3	9
E. President	0	1	2	3	9

67. Please tell me how involved you are in the decisions made by each of the following institutions:					
	Not involved at all	Not very involved	Somewhat involved	Very involved	Don't know
A. Village council	0	1	2	3	9
B. Sub-county council	0	1	2	3	9
C. District council	0	1	2	3	9
D. Parliament	0	1	2	3	9
E. President	0	1	2	3	9

68.	No	Yes	Don't know
Do you remember any meetings specifically organized to write a development plan for this sub-county held in your area?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 70]

69.	No	Yes	Don't know
Did you attend any of these meetings?	0	1	9

70. How would you rate your involvement in the process of writing a development plan for this sub-county?		
Not involved at all		0
Not very involved		1
Somewhat involved		2
Very involved		3
Don't know		9

71.	No	Yes	Don't know
Did the district hold a budget conference to write the budget for the district council?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 73]

72.	No	Yes	Don't know
Did you attend the budget conference?	0	1	9

73. How would you rate your involvement in the process of writing a budget for this district?		
Not involved at all		0
Not very involved		1
Somewhat involved		2
Very involved		3
Don't know		9

74. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:						
[Interviewer: Probe for strength of opinion]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know	N/A
A. When I attend local council meetings, I only attend because it is expected.	1	2	3	4	9	97
B. I attend LC meetings because I feel it is my responsibility as a citizen.	1	2	3	4	9	97
C. I attend LC meetings because I feel my attendance makes a difference.	1	2	3	4	9	97
D. Sometimes people in my area pressure others to attend LC meetings.	1	2	3	4	9	
E. People are free not to attend meetings without feeling pressured.	1	2	3	4	9	
F. It doesn't matter if I attend local council meetings because my opinion is not considered.	1	2	3	4	9	

75. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: <i>[Interviewer: Probe for strength of opinion]</i>					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
A. The local councils are the same thing as the Movement.	1	2	3	4	9
B. The local councils will cease to exist when the Movement leaves power.	1	2	3	4	9
C. The local councils simply exist to promote the interests of the Movement.	1	2	3	4	9
D. The local councils are independent of the Movement.	1	2	3	4	9
E. The local councils will remain after the Movement leaves power.	1	2	3	4	9
F. The local councils were created to promote development and democracy at the grass roots.	1	2	3	4	9
G. The local councils exist to teach about Movement ideas.	1	2	3	4	9
H. The local councils have been successful at promoting development and democracy at the grass roots.	1	2	3	4	9

76. Who is the most important politician in this district? <i>[Write down the respondent's exact words]</i>

77.	No	Yes	Don't know
Since January 2000, has President Museveni visited this district?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 82]

78. What was the purpose of his visit(s)? <i>[Check all that apply]</i>	
Campaigning for referendum	1
Campaigning for presidency	2
Campaigning for parliament	3
Meet with local council officials	4
Check on the development of the area	5
Other <i>[Specify]</i>	
Don't know	99

	No	Yes	Don't know
79. During his visit(s), did President Museveni promise to provide assistance or any particular services to the district?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 82]

80. What did he promise? <i>[Write down the respondent's exact words]</i>

81.	No	Partly	Yes	Don't know
Has this promise been fulfilled?	0	1	2	9

82. Who was the Member of Parliament for your area before the June 29, 2001 elections? <i>[Interviewer: Refer to MP before June elections for Q82-88] [Write down the respondent's exact words]</i>	
	Incorrect Correct
<i>[Interviewer: Verify that the answer given is correct and circle appropriate answer]</i>	0 1

83.	No	Yes	Don't know
Has s/he visited this area in the last year?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 89]

84. What was the purpose of his/her visit(s)? [Check all that apply]	
Campaigning for referendum	1
Campaigning for presidency	2
Campaigning for parliament	3
Meet with local council officials	4
Check on the development of the area	5
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

85. How frequently does s/he visit this area?	
Never	0
Rarely	1
Once a year	2
Once every six months	3
Once every few months	4
Once a month	5
Once a week	6
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

86.	No	Yes	Don't know
During his/her visit(s), did your Member of Parliament promise to provide assistance or any particular services to this area?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 89]

87. What did s/he promise? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

88.	No	Partly	Yes	Don't know
Has this promise been fulfilled?	0	1	2	9

89.	No	Yes
Are you a registered voter?	0	1

[If yes, go to Q. 91]

90. Why not? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

91.	No	Yes	Don't know
Did you vote in the parliamentary elections of June 2001?	0	1	9

[If yes, go to Q. 93]

92. Why not? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

93. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
<i>[Interviewer: Probe for strength of opinion]</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
A. At least two political parties are needed to provide people with real choices of leaders	1	2	3	4	9
B. Even without political parties, we already have enough choice among candidates for office	1	2	3	4	9
C. Many political parties are needed to make sure that all points of view are represented in government	1	2	3	4	9
D. Political parties will not necessarily include me in political discussions and decisions.	1	2	3	4	9
E. Political parties help to ensure that people in government don't abuse their power.	1	2	3	4	9
F. In order to get elected, political parties simply make promises that they can never fulfill.	1	2	3	4	9
G. Through political parties, young leaders will arise to replace older leaders who used to run this country.	1	2	3	4	9
H. By causing conflict and confusion, political parties will undermine national unity.	1	2	3	4	9

94. Now I am going to read out a list of voluntary organizations. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?				
	Official Leader	Active Member	Inactive Member	Not a Member
A. A religious organization like a church or a mosque	3	2	1	0
B. Sport or recreation organization	3	2	1	0
C. Art, music or educational organization	3	2	1	0
D. Trade union/farmers organization	3	2	1	0
E. Professional or business association	3	2	1	0
F. Development association	3	2	1	0
G. Women's organization	3	2	1	0
H. Pro-democracy or human rights organization	3	2	1	0
I. Environmental association	3	2	1	0
J. Charitable organization	3	2	1	0
K. Other [Specify]	3	2	1	0

[If respondent is NOT a member or leader of any organization listed in Q. 94, go to Q. 98]

95.	No	Yes	Don't know
[If yes to ANY part of Q. 94] Do representatives from any of the organizations that you are a member of attend local council meetings?	0	1	9

[If no, go to Q. 97]

96. Which level(s)? [Circle all that apply]	
Village council	1
Parish council	2
Sub-county council	3
County council	4
District council	5

97. Do any of these organizations that you are a member of:	No	Yes	Don't know
A. do work for the local council?	0	1	9
B. receive funding from the local council?	0	1	9
C. receive facilitation (e.g. transport) from the local council?	0	1	9
D. share information about the needs of the people with the local councils?	0	1	9
E. share information on the activities of the organization?	0	1	9
F. participate in the decision making of the local council?	0	1	9
G. seek advice from the local councils to help the organization carry out its activities?	0	1	9

98. I am now going to read you a list of people and organizations. How much do you trust each of them to do what is right. [Interviewer: Probe to see whether or not views are held strongly.]					
	I do not trust them at all	I distrust them somewhat	I trust them somewhat	I trust them a lot	Don't know
A. Someone from your own ethnic group	1	2	3	4	9
B. Ugandans from other ethnic groups	1	2	3	4	9
C. The police	1	2	3	4	9
D. The Movement	1	2	3	4	9
E. Political parties	1	2	3	4	9
F. Village council	1	2	3	4	9
G. Sub-county council	1	2	3	4	9
H. District council	1	2	3	4	9
I. District administrators	1	2	3	4	9

99.	No	Yes	Don't know
Have you seen or heard reports of sub-county or district government officials involved in corruption?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 101]

100. Where have you seen or heard reports? [Check all that apply]	
I have witnessed it myself	1
In local newspapers	2
In national newspapers	3
On television	4
On the radio	5
From my friends or relatives	6
From community leaders	7
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

101. How common do you think corruption is within each of the following groups or organizations?					
	Very common	Common	Rare	Very rare	Don't know
A. Village council	1	2	3	4	9
B. Sub-county council	1	2	3	4	9
C. District council	1	2	3	4	9
D. District level administrators	1	2	3	4	9
E. Political parties	1	2	3	4	9
F. Central government line ministries	1	2	3	4	9
G. Schools	1	2	3	4	9
H. Parliament	1	2	3	4	9

102. Since the last local council election in 1998, corruption in the local government has:	
Increased considerably	0
Increased somewhat	1
Stayed the same	2
Decreased somewhat	3
Decreased considerably	4
Don't know <i>[Do not read]</i>	9

103.	No	Yes	Don't know
Do you feel close to any political organization?	0	1	9

[If no or don't know, go to Q. 105]

104. Which one?	
Conservative Party (CP)	0
Democratic Party (DP)	1
Movement	2
National Democratic Forum	3
Uganda People's Congress (UPC)	4
Uganda Young Democrats (UYD)	5
Other <i>[Specify]</i>	
Don't know	99

105.	No	Yes	Don't know
Do you own or co-own land?	0	1	9

[If no, go to Q. 107]

106. How much land do you own?	
<i>[Write in number of acres given by respondent]</i>	

107. Does your family own any of the following?			
	No	Yes	Don't know
A. a bicycle	0	1	9
B. a motorcycle	0	1	9
C. a car	0	1	9
D. a phone	0	1	9
E. a watch/clock	0	1	9
F. a refrigerator	0	1	9
G. a radio	0	1	9
H. a television	0	1	9
I. animals <i>[Specify]</i>	0	1	9
J. other <i>[Specify]</i>	0	1	9

108.	Borrow	Rent	Own
Do you own this place or rent or borrow from someone?	0	1	2

109. How many rooms are in this place?	
<i>[Write in number of rooms given by respondent]</i>	

110. How many people stay in this place at night?	
<i>[Write in number of persons who sleep in the residence]</i>	

	No	Yes	Don't know
111. Understanding that some Ugandans choose not to vote, let me ask you: Did you vote in the local council elections of 1998?	0	1	9

	No	Yes	Don't know
112. Did you vote in the referendum of June 29, 2000?	0	1	9

[If yes, go to Q. 114] [If don't know, go to Q. 115]

113. Why not? [Write down the respondent's exact words]

[If no or don't know to Q. 112, go to Q. 115]

114. Would you share with me the side that you voted for in the referendum?

Movement (Bus)	1
Multiparty (Dove)	2

	No	Yes	Don't know
115. Now let me ask you: Did you vote in the presidential elections of March 12, 2001?	0	1	9

[If no, end interview and thank respondent for his/her time]

116. Would you share with me who was your choice for president?

Aggrey Awori	1
Col. Kizza Besigye	2
Francis Bwenye	3
Karuhanza Chapaa	4
Kirbirige Mayanja	5
Yoweri Museveni	6

117. What factors influenced who you voted for?

The agenda of the candidate	1
The political affiliation of the candidate	2
The candidate's prior experience in national politics	3
The candidate paid me to vote for him/her	4
The religion of the candidate	5
The ethnic group of the candidate	6
The gender of the candidate	7
The native language of the candidate	8
Other [Specify]	
Don't know	99

118. In your opinion, was this presidential election conducted honestly or dishonestly?

Very dishonestly	0
Somewhat dishonestly	1
Quite honestly	2
Very honestly	3
Don't know	9

Thank you for your time. We really appreciate your participation in this research.

Time interview ended [Interviewer: Enter hour and minute]			
[Interviewer: Circle AM or PM]	AM	PM	

Contextual Data

[Interviewer: The following items should be completed after the interview is ended.]

119. Generally speaking, how would you describe the settlement pattern? <i>[If in doubt, ask Supervisor]</i>	
Urban	1
Rural	2

120. What type of material was the roof of the shelter constructed of?	
Grass thatch	1
Wood	2
Tiles	3
Iron sheets	4
Other	9

121. What type of material were the walls of the shelter constructed of?	
Mud/wattle	1
Grass	2
Wood	3
Bricks (not covered with cement)	4
Bricks (covered with cement)	5
Other	9

122. Does this area have electricity?	
No	0
Yes	1
Don't know	9

123.	No, no-one	Spouse	Children only	A few others	Small crowd
Were there any other people immediately present who might be listening during the interview?	0	1	2	3	4

124. Did the respondent check with others for information to answer any question?	
No	0
Yes	1

125. Do you think anyone influenced the respondent's answers during the interview?	
No	0
Yes	1

126. What proportion of the questions do you feel the respondent had difficulty answering?	
None	0
Few	1
Some	2
Most	3
All	4

127. Interviewer: Do you come from a rural or urban area?	
Urban	1
Rural	2

128. Interviewer: What is your gender?	
Male	1
Female	2

129. Interviewer: Do you have any other comments on the interview?

<p>Interviewer: I hereby certify that this interview was conducted in accordance with instructions received during training. All responses recorded here are those of the respondent who was chosen by the appropriate selection method.</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>

Appendix B

Development Planning

1) A district's capacity in staffing is the first item considered and districts are evaluated on the extent to which heads of departments positions are filled. For example, districts in which the position of the Chief Administrative Officer, who serves as the administrative head of the district and supervisor of all administrative staff, is not filled receive a lower score on this item.

2) Districts are evaluated on the existence and operations of the legally required District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC). The DTPC is expected to oversee and coordinate planning within and across sectors. The assessment looks not only at whether this committee exists in a district, but whether and how frequently it meets and what topics are discussed in meetings. Districts which lack a planning committee, or in which the DTPC fails to convene meetings or discuss relevant topics receive a lower score on this item. The DTPC expected to meet twice a year and a quorum is two-thirds of committee members.

3) The assessment teams evaluated districts' legally required Three-Year Development Plans. This sub-section includes eight items. First, districts were evaluated on whether a development plan exists and whether the district council has approved the plan. Second, development plans were assessed on the extent to which they included a cross-sectoral integrated analysis of the particular problems facing the local government, "not just a list

of sectoral issues”. Third, plans were also evaluated on the extent to which they presented strategies to attempt to address the problems facing the local government. Fourth, plans were scored on whether they included investment profiles, workplans and budgets for projects included in the plan. Fifth, development plans were evaluated on whether they included “a formal statement of the over-riding objectives of the LG [local government] to provide a means for comparing investment proposals across sectors, prioritizing and appraising” (Uganda 1999). Sixth, plans were evaluated according to whether they integrated investment plans from lower level local councils in which the district has a budgetary responsibility. Seventh, district development plans were assessed on whether the plan captures aggregate budgets for lower local governments. Finally, plans were evaluated on the extent to which they present a “crosscutting, strategic policy commitment by [the] council to devolution and mentoring lower level local governments” (Uganda 1999).

4) The assessment evaluated the annual district budgets. First looking at whether the Executive Committee had endorsed the district budget and second, whether there was any linkage between the budget and local government planning, such as the plans contained within the district development plan.

Internal Audit and Financial Management

1) A district’s capacity in staffing key positions in the Finance Department is the first item considered. Districts are evaluated on the extent to which positions in this department are filled with competent staff. For example, districts in which the position of

the Chief Internal Auditor is not filled or filled by someone who is not qualified for such a position receive a lower score on this item.

2) Districts are expected to have a specific committee responsible for financial issues and this committee should meet at least quarterly. Districts are evaluated on whether this committee is functional and meets as specified.

3) Districts are also assessed according to whether they prepared and submitted the final accounts of the district for the previous financial year to the central government's Office of the Auditor General.

4) Districts are assessed on whether a limited purchase order is functional for all of the different departments of the local government that would be using funds from the development budget.

5) Districts are expected to have a stores register in place and functional. They are scored according to whether this is the case.

6) District performance in internal auditing is also included. Districts are evaluated on whether they have prepared at least two quarterly internal audits of the district council activities and whether these audits have been submitted to the chairperson of the district council.

7) Districts are assessed on whether they maintain books of accounts as required under the Financial and Accounting Regulations of 1998.

Appendix C

Mpigi District

Parish	Sub-county	Parish status	No. of respondents
Bweyogerere	Kira	Urban	12
Mutundwe	Makindye	Urban	24
Ndejje	Makindye	Rural	24
Sazi	Kasanje	Rural	24
Kituntu	Kituntu	Rural	24
Kisoga	Kyegonza	Rural	24
Butoolo	Kamengo	Rural	24
Jaggala	Gombe	Rural	24
Kyabagamba	Maddu	Rural	24

Bushenyi District

Parish	Sub-county	Parish status	No. of respondents
Bitooma	Mitooma	Rural	24
Nyakasha	Kagango	Rural	24
Rwajere	Burere	Rural	24
Butoha	Ryeru	Rural	24
Kyempisi	Shuuku	Rural	24
Karimbiri	Bitereko	Rural	12
Kajumbura	Bihanga	Rural	24
Ward 1	Bushenyi T.C.	Rural	24
Kasharara	Karungu	Rural	24

Lira District

Parish	Sub-county	Parish status	No. of respondents
Te-Obia	Lira Central	Urban	12
Alolololo	Omoror	Rural	24
Anepkide	Olilim	Rural	24
Alwitmac	Dokolo	Rural	24
Ajonyi	Amugo	Rural	24
Alenga	Dokolo	Rural	24
Arwotcek	Awelo	Rural	24
Awelo	Kangai	Rural	24
Atinkok	Apala	Rural	24

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