The Gospel of Being Independent

Development and religion as processes of individual change in a faith based organisation in Iganga, Uganda

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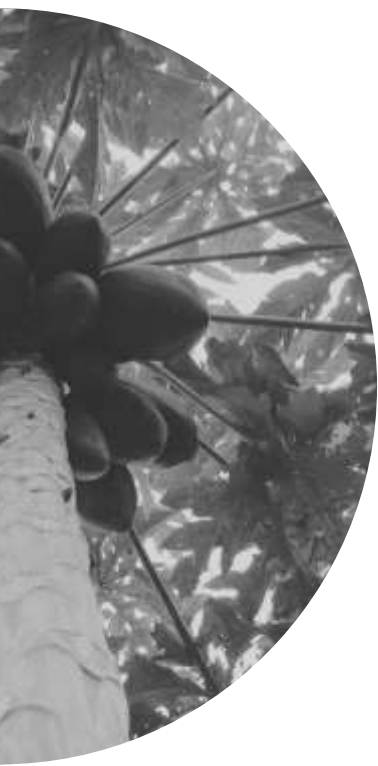Development and Change*

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The poet contemplates the chaos
of experience, the confusion of accident,
and the incomprehensible realms of possibility -
which is to say the world in which we all so
intimately live that few of us take the trouble to
examine it.

The fruits of that contemplation are the discovery,
or the invention, of some small principle of
harmony and order that may be isolated from that
disorder which obscures it, and the subjection of
that discovery to those poetic laws which
at last make it possible.

John Williams (2003)

Preface

"The Netherlands will probably never feel the same", replied my professor after my return. I had just explained to him that my fieldwork period in Uganda was the first time I visited Africa. Nearly a year ago, I stepped out on the sidewalk of Entebbe International airport.

The result of my journey to Uganda is this thesis. The MSc thesis in the Sociology of Development and Change department is my final course for the master of Development and Rural Innovation at Wageningen University. Basically, the research is an investigation of the relation between religion and development. All my life I have attended church services, as such I got acquainted with many faith based organisations. These organisations are often – and sometimes justly – looked upon with suspicion. Due to the normative nature of development, I experienced the sharp distinction that is often made between religious and secular development organisations as ambiguous. Therefore, I was motivated to write a thesis about faith based organisations.

Prior to this research, I had little knowledge of the existence of Musana. My parents had once visited a church in Denver, Colorado. This church apparently sponsored some development projects and my father suggested to inquire whether they had an opportunity for a research or internship. After some exploration, I discovered the church sponsored a project in Uganda, the Musana community development organisation. The organisation seemed to provide an interesting case for my research, due to their original approach towards development and faith as an important motive in their activities. I decided to contact Musana and, fortunately, they were more than happy to welcome me. A few months later, I stepped out of the airplane onto Ugandan soil.

I did not get to know Uganda as a country where people are worse off as compared to the west, where people are poor or need saving. As some of my respondents were inclined to say, Uganda is a rich country. "The pearl of Africa" is a name not only applicable to her natural wonders, but to her citizens as well. I had the pleasure of meeting and knowing some remarkable people in Iganga.

In Musana, I spend more than two months listening and observing. I became friends with so many of the Musana employees and I learned much about the Ugandan culture. Despite the critical reflections in this thesis on the organisation, I do believe that Musana makes a vital contribution to Iganga. Musana truly is a large family seeking to provide love and care to each individual. It was a delight to experience such love and care.

Most of all, the time I spend at Musana was a time of deconstruction. I disconnected myself from the Netherlands and learned about a foreign country and culture. This resulted in a process in which I had to reconfigure what I believed in myself. By observing how others believe in faith and development, I constantly had to reconsider my own beliefs. I did not want my own preconceptions and beliefs to obstruct any observations in the field. Putting aside my own preconceptions provided me with the opportunity to learn much more than I ever did since I began studying.

I enrolled in the master of Development and Rural Innovation in the hope of learning to provide "good" development. In the first semesters, I quickly learned about the hegemony of the west, unequal power relations between poor and rich countries, and development as a means to continue the immanent process of modernisation.

In Uganda, I learned that too often we are focused on the world and on large processes which we do not comprehend. Perhaps, when all of us attend to the tiny area in which we live and dare to make lasting and loving relationships, perhaps that is what constitutes good development. It might be a utopian future, but, as you will read further on in this thesis, the hope for a better future might just be all there is to development.

Acknowledgements

I wish everyone much pleasure in reading,

Sincerely,

Marthijn Keijzer

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Abstract

The Musana community development organisation is a faith based organisation located in Iganga in south-eastern Uganda. Musana means sunlight; the name is exemplary for the positive change the organisation wishes to bring to Uganda. Empowering change is how the website of Musana summarizes their vision. The organisation emphasizes local ownership and aims to provide development as an independent and sustainable organisation. However, these norms focused on facilitating independent development contradict to a certain extend norms of inter-dependency, which emerge from particular interpretation of interactions in religion. I spend two months performing ethnographic fieldwork in the Musana community development organisation. Participant observations and interviews were the methods I used to gain better insight into the relation of religion and development and actions of individuals relate to these processes focused on creating change.

I argue in this master's thesis that development and religion convey in similar fashion a message of proper behaviour. The thesis contributes to critical reflections on the role of faith based organisations in development (Clarke & Ware 2015; Jones & Petersen 2013). It concludes that specific interpretations of norms give shape to power structures in this particular development organisation. Moreover, the connection with moral conduct prescribed through religion and the particular interpretation of God as example for inter-dependency has transformative power in the development of individuals. Whereas relations within the organisation are interpreted as inter-dependent, the organisation's mission is to provide independent development through local ownership, empowerment and sustainable practices.

In order to cope with this apparent contradiction of norms, Ugandans in the organisation appropriate different norms to two levels of development; love and compassion is important for development of the individual, whereas local ownership, empowerment and sustainability are important for the projects executed by the development organisation. The organisation provides a powerful message of how the individual should behave. Being a part of the organisation means adopting the good message; adopting a gospel of proper behaviour. Meanwhile, the organisation itself aims at independent development. By making such a distinction, the Musana community development organisation provides a solution to conflicting norms, which necessarily exist in reforms brought by development (Wiegratz 2010).

1 Introduction

In this thesis, I respond to literature criticizing research on faith based organisations. In this introduction, I discuss, first of all, some of the literature that focuses on development performed by faith based organisations (FBOs). Consequently, I describe some of the criticism towards research on FBOs.

This thesis makes an argument for why FBOs are still relevant to observe in research and it provides insight into development as a process of individual change. The relevance of taking FBOs as a research subject is related to three arguments I make in this thesis. First of all, religion and development are similar processes of change, focusing on conveying a proper model for the future. Such a model is both in religion and in development inherently normative. Secondly, these processes of change emphasize change of the individual. The interpretation of norms influence the actions of the individual in development and religion. Finally, norms of development and religion conflict in the case of Musana with each other. However, any type of reform will lead to a situation of conflicting norms (Wiegratz 2010). By focusing on how individuals interpret these norms and to whom they appropriate them, this research provides insight into how such conflicting norms can coexist.

The first paragraph of this section discusses the definition of FBOs and research focusing on these organisations. Moreover, it covers some of the criticism towards FBOs and towards literature focusing on development and religion in FBOs. The second paragraph elaborates on how religion and development are similar processes of change, they function through a set of symbols communicating a model of and a model for the individual. The model for the individual is normative, it prescribes a set of norms. Each individual should behave according to these norms.

What constitutes proper behaviour is influenced by the power relations in the organisation and systematic interpretations of specific objects. Essentially, a systematic interpretation of God constitutes a hierarchal order in the organisation. Therefore, the third paragraph describes how authoritative power structures influence interpretation. The particular interpretation of God in Christian religions in Africa is discussed in the fourth paragraph.

Although norms of development and religion appear to be conflicting, participants in Musana have found a solution towards these conflicting norms by making a distinction between the project level of development, which has to be independent from donor funding, and the individual level of development, which is all about inter-dependency. In the fifth paragraph, I further introduce this tension between norms. Finally, the sixth paragraph provides a short summary of the remaining sections in this thesis.

1.1 The role of faith based organisations in development

The role of faith in development has been largely neglected in the last century (Ver Beek 2000). The first decade of this century, however, has seen a revival of research into so called faith based organisations (FBOs) (e.g.: Clarke 2006; James 2011; Clarke 2013; Clarke & Ware 2015). These organisations are described as: "any organization which derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith" (Clarke and Jennings in Wrigley 2011, p.3). Although every sector has FBOs, most often the term is used specifically for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the development sector engaging in faith activities.

FBOs were often looked upon with suspicion, which is most evident in the title of James' investigation of FBOs: "*Handle with care: engaging with faith-based organisations in development*" (James 2011). Therefore, researchers mainly focused on the advantages and disadvantages of FBOs. Among the

positive achievements of FBOs are the ability to reach the poor at the grassroots-level, a sustainable, long-term presence and the provision of an alternative to regular secular development (James 2011). On the other hand, FBOs are criticized for sometimes maintaining or strengthening inequalities (e.g. gender inequalities), an intention on converting subjects to an alien faith (James 2011), or that, through their religion, they can form a basis for conflict (James 2011; Balchin 2011). Although donors still look upon FBOs with suspicion, the last fifteen years have shown an increase in willingness to donate to FBOs (Clarke 2013).

Jones and Petersen (2011) criticize research in religion and development on three aspects. First of all, research has been too instrumental, it mainly focuses on the added benefits of religion to development. From this perspective FBOs have additional benefits that secular development organisations do not have. Their second criticism is that research has focused too much on formal actors, while having too little attention for traditions, rituals and beliefs. Finally, research takes according to the authors a normative assumption that religious development organisations provide an alternative to development by focusing not just on material development, but on spiritual development as well. These assumptions are problematic as they only take into account those values of religion that coincide with development, creating a "developmentalised religion" and at the same time observing development as merely progress and freedom; development being what NGOs do. Thereby, the literature on development and religion takes only a narrow definition of these concepts into account.

In this particular study of the Musana community development organisation, I respond to points of critique by Jones and Petersen. I present an image of development and religion that is entwined in the organisation. They show striking similarity in the presentation of models for the future. Moreover, I go beyond showing advantages or disadvantages of FBOs. Instead, I show that these models of religion and development use moral norms to communicate and develop a proper model for the future. Finally, although I do focus on one organisation, I approach the field through a focus on individual interpretations of development and religion and how these individuals are changed through interactions within the organisation. I argue as well that the particular interpretation of God as caregiver gives legitimacy to a structure. In this structure power might be unevenly distributed, but the structure has power to expand. Through its expansion more people change their behaviour according to Musana's norms. The combination of religion and development has potential for developing and changing individuals.

Reviewing this potential necessitates that one refrains from moral judgement. For instance, de Kadt (2009) gives a plea against the use of faith as a vehicle for change, meanwhile supporting the claim that faith contributes to processes of change. Indeed, some FBOs have strengthened gender inequalities, but even gender equality is a moral norm which can or cannot be subscribed by individuals. Moral norms are critical in any processes of change, whether it is about faith or religion. Wiegratz (2010) shows how neo-liberal reform in Uganda went hand-in-hand with a process of moral restructuring in which pre-existing norms and values were replaced by new ones.

Most sources into the practices of FBOs asses the relationship between donors and FBOs. There remains a blind spot on what faith actually does with the practices of FBOs at the local level. Moreover, literature largely focuses on how FBOs function as a vehicle for development and assesses the advantages and disadvantages of the development. The assumption beneath these types of research is that FBOs are somehow distinct from NGOs. Clarke and Ware (2015) describe how FBOs are contrasted with NGOs in literature. While they do mention that some literature perceives FBOs and NGOs as substitutable terms,

the provided in literature for the similarities between FBOs and NGOs are related to the goals of these organisation, for instance to alleviate poverty. These sources refrain from arguments that FBOs and NGOs are substitutable terms due to the similarities in how they function. All processes of change are normative (Wiegratz 2010). Whether FBOs or NGOs seek to change society through religion or development is less relevant, as religion and development are equally normative processes of change. Examining moral conduct in FBOs can provide a new perspective on how religion and development relate to each other.

In this thesis, I build upon the argument that religion and development are similar processes (Giri et al. 2004). Religion and development function as a process of individual change. The focus of change is on instilling proper behaviour by prescribing which norms should be followed. No process of interaction, however, is power free. Therefore, the course and direction of self-development are under influence of power structures in Musana. The Musana community development organisation has a strict hierarchy between staff members. Through prescribed moral norms the organisation builds a structure of dependency. In this structure, power is unevenly distributed in a hierarchical structure of taking care and being taken care off.

During my fieldwork, I focused on the different levels of development and religion and how, within these levels, interpretations of development and religion were created through interactions. This perspective allowed me to observe the influence of norms and values within the interactions of people in the organisation. In the second paragraph of this chapter, I elaborate on the similarities between religion and development as two processes of change. Subsequently, the third paragraph describes how interpretations of objects, specifically the interpretation of God, influence ideas on behaviour. In the fourth paragraph, I elaborate on the authoritative structures which influence the interpretations of individuals and finally, in the fifth paragraph, I introduce various ideas on the goals of development and prerequisites to fulfil the goal of development.

1.2 Religion and development

In chapter three, the first of three empirical chapters, I explain the similarities between the processes of religion and development. Geertz (1973) has described the relation between development and religion as a cultural system. Religion impacts the processes of change through motivations. This is illustrated in the definition of religion by Geertz:

> *"(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."* (Geertz 1973, p.90)

These moods and motivations are respectively made meaningful through the ends which they should induce or the conditions from which they emerge. Motives are not actions, instead they describe the probability of performing certain acts (Geertz 1973). In comparison, moods are not directed at anything, they are merely a scale of a certain state of being. Through these two dispositions, religion creates models *for* reality and models *of* reality.

I argue that the concept motivation is closely related to the norms that Musana emphasises. Motivations describe the probability of performing a certain act, motivations are related to the ends it should achieve. Norms define the necessary actions to achieve a certain end. For instance, being compassionate and acting out of love should lead to an end in which everyone is loved and a family like

organisation remains. However, in contrast to motivations, norms often are not emerging voluntarily in the individual. Individuals often adopt norms, consciously or unconsciously from prescriptions by the organisation. Norms are shared motivations.

Erath (2004) makes important remarks about the blurred distinction between norms and values. According to him values are universal, prescribe collective images of good and bad, but are not related to proper and improper. Norms prescribe the actions we should take to achieve these values. In the case of Musana, norms are constantly communicated and function as motivation to adopt proper behaviour. Not only religious actions convey norms in Musana, actions in development convey similar moral norms. Consequently, these norms prescribe the necessary course of action to be able to fulfil one of the universal values Erath (2004) describes; preserving human life.

Similar to religion, development is a process which intends to create change. It aims to change society, individuals, places, institutions and even the world, in order to bring prosperity, modernity or wealth. In her article Hart (2001) makes a distinction between development with a big 'D' and development with a small 'd'. On the one hand, [d]evelopment is defined as "an imminent and unintentional process" as for example in capitalist development and modernisation. [D]evelopment, on the other hand, is defined as "project of intervention in the ''third world'' that emerged in a context of decolonization and the cold war" (Hart 2001, p.650).

I regard the actions of Musana as part of the project-level of development ([D]evelopment). While Hart (Hart 2001) mainly argues the bilateral relationship between the project and the macro-process level of development, I argue that in Musana the project level mainly targets a third level of development; the individual level. Giri (2004) discusses self-development, and argues for a power-free environment in which individuals are able to determine how they develop. Including the other and accepting the otherness of the other is a necessary requirement to facilitate such a power-free environment. Otherwise the possibilities of self-development become heavily restricted. In the Musana case, the possibilities for self-development are heavily restricted, after all, the organisation prescribes, through religion and development, a proper model for the individual.

Hence, the Musana case is an example of development of the individual in an environment where individuals are structured in a hierarchy. Self-development is restricted to a predefined model of proper behaviour. It shows that the direction of development of the individual is prescribed by the models for the individual provided by religion and development. This is especially related to the idea of how norms are essential in the development process. Although moods might define the current of reality, the motivations of individuals and the norms in the organisation define how the individual is ought to and going to behave.

1.3 Interpreting God

An important aspect in the legitimacy of self-development emerges from a particular interpretation of God. Several authors emphasize the insurgence of American Evangelism and Pentecostalism in Africa (Bornstein 2003; Jones 2009). Both religions take an individual approach to religion and especially American Evangelism emphasizes spiritual transformation. This transformation is often called to be born again and is marked by moral conduct and a personal devotion to God. Moreover, God is perceived as a father-like figure that is always close, always present and with whom individuals experience a personal relationship (Luhrmann 2012; Bornstein 2003).

According to symbolic interactionism, actions of individuals are fitted together to joint action by indicating to one another what the other should do and interpreting these indications. The social world of these individuals consists of objects that are given certain meaning. This meaning is defined by interactions between individuals. Humans will act to certain objects by identifying the meaning these objects have to them. The interlinking of ongoing action is what creates institutions and organisations (Blumer 1986). Hence, meaningful objects define the actions of individuals.

The Musana case is an example of how within interactions God becomes a meaningful object. God is defined as ultimate caregiver through interactions at the Musana church and other churches in the vicinity. Simultaneously, God is defined as love and therefore love is interpreted as taking care. In the fourth section of this thesis I described how God becomes a meaningful object on which actions in the organisation are based.

1.4 Authority

The Musana case is not a power-free field. Symbolic interactionism has been criticized, due to its focus on micro-scale interactions between individuals, that it disregards the macro-level systems of society as influencing interaction. However, Dennis and Martin (2005) in particular give arguments on how symbolic interaction actually aims to overcome this divide. In their work on the concept of power, Dennis and Martin (2005) argue that meaning within interaction is defined by the person, but the process of meaning making is undeniably subject to power relations. Individuals might adjust their meaning about certain objects, to the meaning of authoritative individuals. Dennis and Martin (2005) do not look at power as an abstract structure of inequality, instead they look at how power of authoritative institutions and cultural patterns influences individuals and how it manifests itself in interactions between individuals.

Stryker (2008) argues that social structures are patterned social interactions. These social interactions are shaped by individuals that shape their identities according the structures and networks in which they reside. These macro structures influence social networks through intermediate structures, such as schools, neighbourhoods, associations etc. Moral norms are "standards of interaction concerning others" (Keller 2004). Religious structures prescribe a number of moral norms, they can function as authoritative structures as these norms create the standards for interaction. While interactions define meaning, they are also subject to these authoritative structures. In Musana, an intermediate level structure exists through a strict hierarchy in which moral norms are prescribed to the individuals.

Much in the same way, religion is embedded within structures at different levels in society. The cultural patterns of religion, whether it is a theological or economic kind of religion, are both interpreted by individuals, but they also dictate the behaviour of individuals. The meaning of religion is constituted within the interactions with other individuals. The interpretation of the interaction is, however, dependent on the power relations that are in play. The authoritative power of development has been explained by Ver Beek (2000). Ver Beek argues that development has often led to a change of spirituality of people, without explicit consent and without them reflecting on the change that occurred. Similar transformative power is attributed to a connection of religion and development by Bornstein (2003). She argues that faith provides motivation to perform as a collective towards development. The discourse of development is similar to the discourse of conversion; conversing to Christianity promises a future of development.

The case I studied during my fieldwork period shows how power is also distributed among non-human actors. This essentially takes place within the process of meaning making, where individuals shape their interpretations according to a systematic interpretation of God and a systematic interpretation of what constitutes proper behaviour. These interpretations gain authority through repetitive communications, shaping certain norms of proper behaviour as undisputable truths. These truths in turn influence the symbols individuals use. Consequently, individuals systematically convey similar interpretations of God and Musana's norms in their interactions.

1.5 The goal of development

The hierarchical structures in Musana are conflicting with their vision of becoming independent. They wish to develop into a locally owned, empowered sustainable organisation (Musana 2016b). At the same time, taking care of others is a major issue in the functioning of the organisation. The paradox between dependency and independency creates a tension in the collaboration of foreigners with Ugandans in Musana.

In order to understand this tension, it is important to understand that development in itself is a solution for a paradox in modern society. Buijs (2004) describes how development is a way out of the paradox that exists between the two religions of modern society; capitalism and Christianity. On the one hand, Christian religious beliefs dictate a moral duty to do good and love without conditions, on the other hand, capitalism has self-affirmation and individualism on the front line of its goals. A way to deal with this paradox is development. Through development both the capitalist desire of freedom of the market and economic growth and the Christian moral duty to do good are put into practice.

Hence, through development foreigners provide a service and through development the Ugandan economy will be able to grow. Both parties benefit according to this idea from development. Musana, however, aims to empower Ugandans to create the change themselves. The organisation believes that only through empowering Ugandans poverty in Uganda can be alleviated.

Many participants in the organisation seem to believe, however, that it is God and proper behaviour which bring development. If a person behaves well, God blesses this person. It is the hope for development to take place which gives legitimacy to their actions, not necessarily empowerment, local ownership and sustainability. Moreover, whether "God's blessing" comes true or not is irrelevant. The message spread in the organisation is that God blesses those who follow his norms and, therefore, God provides motivation to perform actions in development.

In this context, religion and development offer what De Vries (2007) defines as a desire for a utopian future. This desire is the value that people strive for and therefore shapes the actions of individuals. They steer their actions so that they come in line with the actions that belong to the structures of development and religion. Because the promise is that change will lead to a better future, what this actual future looks like, is vague. Still, if there is no change, there is no 'better' future. From, this desired end without clear formulation, individuals gain motivation to change themselves.

1.6 Reading guide

In the following section, section two, I introduce the ethnographic field; the Musana community development organisation. The section describes how I gained access to the field, the methodological considerations and gives a description of the organisation and its location.

In the third chapter, I introduce the connection between norms on the one hand and development and religion on the other. I show how the individual is given a task of changing from his current self to a new self. Changing yourself is initiated by the interventions of Musana, which are all about instilling good behaviour through norms. Central in this chapter is the notion of propriety, argued for by Jones (2009), and how this is embedded in religion.

The fourth chapter explains the interpretation of two norms of particular importance; love and compassion. The Musana employees, while becoming these new individuals, perceive specifically two love and compassion as the most important norms. I will show that these norms are conveyed through religious and development interventions and that they lead to a hierarchy of dependency and taking care. An important reason for the factuality of the interpretation of these symbols as taking care, is the specific interpretation of God. According to their belief, God is love, moreover he is the ultimate caregiver, who blesses his follower and rewards proper behaviour. Due to interpretation of God, who is love, as caregiver, to love in the organisation is interpreted as to take care of others and in return for care given every person is expected to show proper behaviour.

The fifth chapter has as title the Muzungu struggle. Basically Muzungus are foreigners, especially white foreigners. The paradox between helping someone gaining his/her autonomy is central to an experienced struggle by foreigners. Whereas the contradiction between dependency and independency is perceived as tension by Muzungus, the Ugandans structure their conflicting norms in models for the organisation and models for the individual. Moreover, Ugandans believe that Musana and God bring development and not specific norms of independent behaviour (as for example local ownership, sustainability and empowerment).

In the sixth and last chapter, I summarize the conclusions of the other chapters. Consequently, I discuss the role and potential of FBOs. FBOs and NGOs are both normative organisations engaging in processes of change. The difference between these organisations can be in the set of norms they adhere, but specific interpretations of these norms will differ within the different FBOs and NGOs. The connection of development to spiritual change, central in Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity (Bornstein 2003; Jones 2009), can make the organisations interventions meaningful in order to truly change actions of individuals.

In general, I provide some important lessons. I show how even power might erupt through specific interpretations of God. Such power, which has a transformative potential for change, is grounded in the interpretations of symbols. These symbols should all be looked upon equally. For instance, symbols of love and God are similarly interpreted and, therefore, equally influence actions of individuals in the organisations. Finally, the scales of development, especially in an era of neo-liberalism where the individual is of such importance, are important to take into account. Neo-liberalism, capitalism, modernism all are inherently moral and may conflict with the norms present in these countries. However, given opportunity, these organisations and individuals may find new paradoxical realities in which contrasting norms may coexist.

2. **Introducing Musana**
The field and methodological considerations

In this section, I introduce the ethnographic field of this study; the Musana community development organisation. I provide a short description of the lay-out of the site and I elaborate on the group of Musana participants, who were the main subject of my study. Consequently, I describe how I gained access to the field and, finally, I explain the methods I used within this ethnography.

2.1 The field

The collection of empirical data took place during two months of fieldwork at Musana community development organisation (hence forth: Musana) in Iganga, Uganda. Musana is engaged in empowering (vulnerable) women and children, education, farming (subsistence, cattle and cash-crop), crafts education and production of goods. The organisation claims to create ownership of the development practices amongst the community members, by employing them in the organisation. Hence, Musana wishes to avoid dependency by creating such ownership (Musana n.d.).

The organisation is explicit in that it is aiming at educating children about God's love (Musana n.d.). Moreover, three out of the six main partners are churches from Colorado, USA. The organisation does not limit its employment to Christian employees, it does not discriminate in race or religion. However, it does not allow for any Muzungus, white people, to be employed. One of the major goals of the organisation is to create employment. Consequently, employees in the organisation work towards growth of the organisation in order to expand the number of people who can be employed by Musana.

The main focus of this research is on how faith functions as an interpretive mechanism for development in this specific FBO. I specifically focused on participants in Musana. In an organisation where development and morality are entwined, self-development targets both subjects and objects of development (Giri & Quarles van Ufford 2004). The main approach of Musana to development is by employing more people in the organisation, who are consequently change in the organisation. Due to this approach, the distinction between subjects and objects becomes blurred. Technically someone might be a recipient of development upon entering the organisation and a development worker after he or she entered the organisation. In reality, however, much of the development is actually received while being active in the organisation and the individual change takes place over a longer period of time. Meanwhile, the person who is receiving development and changing towards the new individual, does provide development to others. Therefore, I often use term Musana participants. Whenever I use the term Musana employees, I specifically mean those who receive a monthly wage from the organisation. Musana employees, however, are still both recipients of development and developments workers.

The centre of action, and, hence, the centre of my ethnographic study, is the Musana compound. The compound is located at the outskirts of Iganga, on a slope in the village of Buseyi A. The owners bought the first piece of the plot seven years. Musana was founded seven years ago by three American women. They had encountered an orphanage in Iganga where the circumstances in which the orphans resided was close to inhumane. They decided to start the Musana development organisation (initially, it started as a children's home).[1] They transferred eighty children from the orphanage to Musana and gave them shelter in what is now the office building. Musana currently has 650 children in school and more than seventy employees.

During my fieldwork, I lived in one of the rooms in the guesthouse. The guest house is located in a walled compound, north of the school, together with several employee quarters.

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[1] Interviews with co-founders on 16-sept-15 & 22-09-2015

Walking down the slope, through a large iron gate, I reach a second fenced compound with more staff quarters, the bakery and the crafts department. I take a right, walk past the employees' houses, most of whom greet me while they are washing and preparing themselves, and I reach a second gate. I go through the gate, cross the street and reach the fenced school compound, which is the largest compound. Here, all the classrooms, the offices of administrators, the dormitories, the canteen and the church are located. It is difficult to imagine Musana once consisted of one of the smallest buildings on the compound.

There is only one department of Musana that is located further away from the compound, which is the farm. It is approximately a fifteen minute drive on the motorcycle. The proximity of all other departments to the guesthouse proved to be a major benefit for my research. Nearly every day I would visit the offices at least once. As the offices are located on the far south-west side of the campus and the guesthouse on the far north-east side, I would pass by nearly all buildings of Musana twice a day. A walk on campus would often result in meeting new people, new appointments and interesting conversations.

2.2 Access

Initial access to the field was gained through the stateside (USA) office of Musana. I discussed the complete content of my research proposal with the stateside coordinator of Musana, and she granted me permission to perform this research in Iganga. Consequently, I had a formal appointment with one of the founders of Musana in the first week of fieldwork to discuss my research. I discussed with her the topic and methodology of my research, and she indicated that she would be guiding me research-wise if need be. Subsequently, I had an appointment with the director and operations manager to discuss my schedule of how I wished to conduct my research.

Every time I was introduced to or met a new person in the first week, I explained that I was doing my thesis research at Musana. I quickly noticed that the objectives of my research were difficult for them to grasp. They saw me writing and observing, but usually only realised that I was doing a research in faith and development when I conducted an interview with them.

Before starting observations or conducting interviews in any department, permission to carry out these activities was always asked for through the head of department. Whenever I entered a classroom, I would ask the class teacher for permission to observe his lesson.

Although employees easily granted access to observations and interviews, it took more effort to get access to participation in activities. I can pinpoint several reasons for this challenge. The language barrier in the lunch room was an obstacle to participate in discussions, employees seemed to be hesitant to give work to me, the organisation has more than enough skilled employees to perform the work – there's no leftover work -, and I often lacked the skills to achieve the same quality of results at any assignment as compared to an employee doing the assignment.

2.3 Methods

The empirical methods consisted mainly of observations and interviews. I conducted most interviews with Musana employees and a few with residents in the villages. In this paragraph I explain how I used these methods during my fieldwork period.

Observations

The first week I was offered a tour of the organisation and I was introduced to most people in the organisation. I spent time observing behaviour in the staff-room and helped teachers prepare for classes that would start the following week. I composed a schedule for how I would spent the following weeks and with the operations manager and the director, we decided that I would spent a week in every department. The different departments I spent time with, in chronological order are: the farm, the social work department, the school, the crafts-department and women's projects, and the bakery. In some departments I could participate while observing - for instance, by feeding the animals at the farm and organising files at the social work department -, other departments, such as the school, had no opportunity for me to participate in active work. In the final weeks, I focused on conducting interviews, the remaining time I spent on observations in one of the departments.

During the observations, I tried to learn as much as possible about the people I spent time with. During all conversation, I specifically focused on the topics of development, religion, change, hope, moral values and information about the organisation itself. Moreover, out of the conversations and the interactions between employees I tried to discern power structures within the organisation.

Quick notes of observations were written down in notebooks. These notes were elaborated in the field notes document of that specific week as soon as possible. At the end of each week, I made sure that all my field notes were up to date.

In-depth interviews

I took semi-structured interviews with sixteen employees of the organisation. I tried to get stories of employees throughout the organisation, but most of the interviewees were heads of departments or administrators. Three reasons caused this bias towards higher ranking employees; 1. I had a better relationship with them, 2. They have a better command of English, 3. They were more willing to conduct interviews.

Before each interview commenced, I gave a brief introduction to my research and explained to them I would like to ask some questions about Musana, the community and their personal faith. I also inquired whether they would object to an audio recording being made. Guiding questions used during the interviews are written down in box [1]. These questions were seldom asked literally or in the depicted order. As much as possible questions based upon -, or related to the story of the interviewee were asked.

Interviews ended with the question whether the interviewee had any questions for me. This usually resulted in a short conversation. Often these conversation were related to my study, my research or my family. However, whenever the conversation seemed to have any relevance to my research, I transcribed it and incorporated it within my field data.

Short interviews

Next to these interviews, I conducted five short interviews with women from the villages in which Musana is working. I did five interviews in the villages. The women in these villages speak only Lusoga. I therefore went along with a translator. I explained my goals to him (I wanted the women to tell the stories of their life) and he asked me many questions about what I wanted to know from these women. This way, he got to know which questions I would like to ask during the interviews. The topics discussed during these interviews are written in box [2].

Eventually, these short interviews with women from the villages had a poor quality due the language barrier, time pressure and biases of the translator in his translations. Therefore, I made little use of these interviews. The interactions and conversations with the translator during and after these interviews did provide valuable data and these events are incorporated in the field notes.

The total amount of data gathered during my fieldwork consisted of more than 140 pages of field notes and a similar amount of interview transcripts. Besides the field notes and transcripts, the website and official documents of the organisation, such as the volunteer manual and the Musana constitution, provided data for the analysis as well. Although a longer fieldwork period would have provided more data, I am confident that the gathered data provides a fairly complete account of the Musana community development organisation.

Introducing Musana

3 A model for the proper individual

Moral conduct and individual change in Musana

In the introduction I explained how I consider different levels of development. On two levels of development, the individual and the organisation, Musana provides images of how the individual should behave, in other words what norms he/she should follow. In this chapter I will give examples of what symbols are provided through the organisations' actions in religion and development. It shows that the actions of the organisation are focused on creating moods and motivations. These moods and motivations instil a model of who an individual is and a model for how an individual should act (Geertz 1973).

In this first paragraph, I'll show the three places in which symbols are used to communicate proper models for the individual. These places are the church, the offices and the school. Symbols are, for instance, verbal communications (e.g. sermons, conversations, lessons or in exclamation), directions of employees, posters or particular actions (e.g. praying). In church, actions performed by employees of Musana are specifically focused on the models of and for the individual.

However, outside the church Musana employees make a connection between material and moral development. They communicate a message of changing the material circumstances of your life by changing your morals. This connection supports the similar efficacy of religion and development; namely, through symbols that communicate a new model for life. In the offices and in school, communicating symbols about a proper individual are not at the forefront of their activities. Instead, the symbols consist in these places as short exclamations or stories during lessons or in the form of posters in the offices.

3.1 Becoming a new individual

This church building is the hotspot of Musana's activities in faith. In church the emphasis is on the moral improvement of the individuals. The symbols that are used during church services, morning devotions and prayers are all focused on changing the individual behaviour according to proper norms. These symbols consist of the words and phrases used within sermons and prayers.

Every Sunday morning there is a church service at Musana, I attended these services nearly every Sunday. The church building is located down the slope of the compound, between the offices and the dormitories.

> The church building is a large rectangle building with decorated steel windows without glass. The building is probably ten meters wide and thirty meters long. In three rows from front to back, church benches are placed on which most of the children take place. I took a seat somewhere in the rear, to make sure everybody would be able to see the people on stage (I am quite tall). The stage is three steps high and filled with children. A keyboard and the sound system are located on the right, and when entering the church, music blasts out of the sound system. The kids behind the keyboard play four chord tunes accompanied by an enthusiastic, keyboard-generated drum rhythm. The centre of the stage is filled with a group of children who lead the worship. Usually one of the older kids stands in the front with the mic singing the song, with the rest of the group functioning as a background choir. The kids have studied for certain songs fully choreographed dances.[2]

The organisation claims to refrain from proselytization. Islamic students study and Islamic teachers educate in the school. Although the organisations does not identify itself as a religious organisation,

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[2] Field notes 13-sept-2015

many activities during the week are religious activities. Every Sunday during the school year there is church, every Tuesday there is morning devotion and every Thursday the staff gathers in church for devotion. Students in boarding stay over the weekends and, hence, go to church on Sunday's. The Tuesday morning devotions, between 7:30 and 8:00 AM, is mandatory for all students. The staff devotion is not mandatory. On Tuesday mornings the heads of department (HoD, the management) also come together for what they call prayers, although any religious activity is often referred to as prayers.

In the past Musana had struggles with parents of these children[3] as well as struggles with the community[4] over accusations of proselytising behaviour. Many of the employees have explained to me how the relationship between Musana and the community over the years has improved because *"they have realised that Musana is aiming at helping them."*[5] The school now approaches Christian teaching almost as classes on morality. One of the school's administrators explained it most clearly: *"it is not only important to teach children how to read and write, it is also important that they learn how to become a good person with good morals. The school has Christianity as its foundation."*[6]

This foundation is written in the organisations constitution, a legal document that arranges the legal status of the organisation in Uganda. In article 5 "statement of faith" it says: *The founders and vision bearers of Musana Community Development Organization believe that all human beings are created in the image of God and are loved unconditionally by God and therefore deserve equal treatment and recognition in society. All of the individuals that will benefit from the programmes and activities of the Organization will be taught the love of God, but we acknowledge that God gave us the gift of free will and we will pass that gift along to the communities we serve in their own personal decision to accept and believe in God. They will be taught to live with love and compassion and those values should be studied and reflected in our own lives.* (Board of Directors 2015, p.3)

Many of the symbols used in church are focused on moral improvement. Emphasis in church is continuously put on changing the individual.

> *"The opposite of lying, stealing, cheating and pretending is being honest. God wants us to be honest in all things, to your teacher and to your parents. I want to challenge you all in that we are going to be honest children of God. Repeat after me: 'I will be honest, I will speak the truth, I will not cheat, steal or pretend'."* And all the children repeat the teacher. *"I will be honest, even though it is sometimes difficult to be honest."*[7]

> *"The bible says what comes out of the heart, flows out of the mouth. If you have the love of God in your heart you will look like God. If evil is in your heart, however, evil will come out of you. If the love of God is in your heart, the love of God will come out of you."*[8]

The activities in the church shape a model of how the recipients of the development interventions are to behave. In other words, which norms the individuals should adopt. This is most vivid in the church services, as the prominent idea that God provides change, but to create change the individual needs to

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[3] Interview co-founder 22-Sept-2015
[4] Interview teacher 23-Oct-2015
[5] Interview teacher 9-Sept-2015
[6] Field notes 1-Sept-2015, conversation with co-founder
[7] Field notes 27-Sept-2015, sermon by a manager
[8] Field notes 20-Sept-2015, sermon by social worker

accord his or her behaviour to Christian morality. Even when the church is spoken to as a group, there remains an emphasis on moral change.

> *"Lord, purify our hearts, remove the evil in us. Give us love, put passion in our soul, so that we love not only with our minds, but also with our hearts."*[9]

The models for the individual are frequently projected against a picture of what the individual is like today. Especially in church, the image of a wrong, sinful self is portrayed. The preacher or teacher communicates these images to the students and they form as an incentive to change to a new individual.

> *"You deserve to be punished, you deserve to be killed, you deserve to be separated and segregated. But Jesus says no, you belong with me in paradise. Paradise is a new world of love, forgiveness, peace, enjoyment and excitement. God is there and he leads us today. If you realise your sin, God will not forsake you."*[10]

The focus of individual change is likely to be embedded in American Evangelicalism, in which God is resembled as a personal God (Bornstein 2003; Luhrmann 2012). This God is almost father-like or friend-like and the stories in American Evangelical churches are focused on being born again; changing your life style according to the ways of Jesus. The closeness of God and the example of the life of Jesus, provide the motivation to change their life style.

The American Evangelical movement has been accompanied by a surge of NGO's which combined the ideas of moral improvement with material improvement according to the neoliberal model (Bornstein 2003). Employees of Musana take a similar approach of connecting material and moral improvement to provide a model for the individual. In the next paragraph, I discuss how Musana approaches the connection between material and moral change.

3.2 Connecting religion and development through material and moral change

In class models for individual behaviour are communicated to students. Likewise, in the offices the employees of the organisation itself are targeted to adopt proper norms. The symbols used in the offices and in the school again portray models of proper and improper behaviour. However, in the school and in the offices, teachers and employees make a connection between these proper norms on the one hand and material development on the other.

Naturally, in school the lessons are mostly following the curriculum. Geography, biology, math and literacy are some of the courses in their curriculum. During the lessons there is a lot of repetition, the teacher says one sentence and the kids will repeat, he says it again and they repeat it again. Sometimes this goes on for five or six times, regardless of the lesson. Even during mathematics, the children are asked to spell out some of the words the teacher has writing on the board. Every time a kid has answered a question correctly, the teacher will say: "appreciate". The children then exclaim a word I have not been able to decipher, followed by seven hand-claps in rhythm.

Sitting in the classroom was often a drag. I spent a week observing behaviour in the classrooms of Musana and specifically focused on the instructions by teachers towards the children to find out more on how faith and development are constructed in Musana. I quickly realised that observing in the

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[9] Field notes 20-Sept-2015, sermon by social worker
[10] Field notes 22-Sept-2015, morning devotion by teacher

classroom was often searching for a pearl among stones. Throughout the lessons, teachers make small remarks on development or religion which often communicate a model *for* or *of* the individual. Although sometimes the model is extended to society as a whole.

I captured several quotes, which felt as authentic exclamations of what teachers believe are important norms for the children to adhere to. Consider the following event during a class of teacher Jeroah.

> We arrive at a question about basic needs. They first answer the question what basic needs are and then Jeroah asks why they are important. *"Some people will only have 1000 USH and they can maybe buy food, but they will not have enough to get healthcare."* He tells them how some people are just lazy and that is what can lead to poverty. *"We know lunch is at 1, but some people will arrive quarter to 2 for lunch. Some people have no job and they will just go begging, but why don't you go do something and try to make some money."*[11]

During the next lesson a different teacher commented on laziness in similar fashion.

> *"You will not pass this subject if you do not have a serious mind; if you are lazy. There are people who, when they get the wrong number, they just relax. Some of you will hear the assignment and think: 'I am tired'; you will come here and have to work and say: 'I'm tired'. There are children in P5* [The class I am attending is P7, meaning primary school class 7] *who will look at this number and get it. I like those who try and by time, you will be perfect, but if you do not try, it will never be perfect. I want you to be a strong mind."*[12]

> *"Why are you not serious? A community that is not serious, do not think it will develop!"*[13]

One teacher often talked about society in more general terms. The reason for focusing on society as a whole might be due to the topic of the lesson; namely, science, which is mostly about biology. He remarks his ideas about the state of society and to what model of society he preferred it to change.

> *"People nowadays do wrong things and call it right, but because of democracy we can't do anything about it, because they are just with more."* ['They' are the wrongdoers in society, the people who do right and good things are outnumbered][14]

> *"So God made the body, so that it can treat itself. We* [people in society] *spoil the body by our lifestyles that are not healthy, but God has provided the bodies with these cells* [white blood cells] *so that it can save itself."*[15]

Besides these remarks, the structure of rules and regulations also attend to instilling the model for proper behaviour in each these children. Every school has of course rules and regulations, which might be taken for granted. Still, I believe these rules and regulations function as important symbols to communicate the model to students.

Every Monday, the school day of all students starts in front of the school. The children stand in lines according to the class they are in. The news is read and several announcements are made. These announcement also cover the rules of interaction in the school.

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[11] Field notes 24-Sept-2015, teacher
[12] Field notes 24-Sept-2015, teacher
[13] Field notes 25-Sept-2015, teacher
[14] Field notes 29-Sept-2015, teacher
[15] Field notes 25-Sept-2015, teacher

"How do we respect, by greeting other people. We say good morning Ssebo (Lusoga for sir), good morning Nyabo (Lusoga for madam). We help one another and we love one another."[16]

Most classes start with a standard greeting; the Monday morning gathering also concludes with this greeting. The teacher initiates and the children respond.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning, teacher."

"How are we?"

"We are humble and obedient."

These lessons take place in the same or similar buildings as the offices. Each building is similarly constructed. The walls are made out of concrete, the roof consists of wooden trusses, and corrugated steel plates are attached to the trusses. Another similarity in every room, are the bright coloured posters attached to the wall. In the classrooms, these posters serve an educational function, depicting small sections of the curriculum. Words and their meanings, grammar, types of soil, types of plants, geography or topography.

Similar to the school buildings, the office walls are decorated with posters. These posters still function as symbols to communicate the moral norms and behaviour. Most often, these posters depict core values, the organisation´s vision and its mission. Every single office I visited had these posters attached to the wall. The text on the poster was the following:

Vision
To see rural communities in Iganga (Uganda) develop through using sustainable solutions that give hope and dignity to the most vulnerable.

Mission
Committed to providing health, education and life skills to disadvantaged rural communities with emphasis to women, children and youth, enabling them to be socially and economically independent while maintaining their dignity and living long healthy and creative lives.

Core activities
- Education
- Health Skill development
- Agriculture
- Income generating projects
- Women empowerment
- Micro finance
- Community outreaches
- Spiritual development

Core values
- Love
- Compassion
- Accountability/ Honesty
- Sustainability
- Dignity
- Empowerment
- Hard-work

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[16] Field notes 21-Sept-2015, teacher

Often the posters were not exact copies. Different words were sometimes used for similar values and a mission and vision tailored to a specific department often complemented or substituted the organisation's mission and vision (as described above). In contrast to the church and the school, few interactions take place in the offices as most offices are occupied by one employee at a time. However, the effort put at customizing the values, vision and mission to each department exemplifies the major value attached to these norms.

Musana connects a change of behaviour to a change in circumstances. Adopting the norms Musana describes in school, church and on its posters should provide prosperity and development. The emphasis that changing your morals will lead to development, gives an aura of factuality to development to truly happen. The belief that through faith the individual will have access to development, motivates the individual to actually change and adopt proper behaviour. As such personal faith has a transformative power to motivate individuals to change (Bornstein 2003).

3.3 Being a follower of proper behaviour

The work of Musana shows the similarity between religion and development. According to Geertz (1973) religion provides models of change particularly through moods and motivations. These moods are expressed for instance in church in the image of the current state of the self. The motivations are related to the ends, these ends are expressed through Musana's norms of proper and improper behaviour.

Where the organisation speaks of its "core values", they actually communicate, according to the Erath's framework moral norms (Erath 2004). These norms are not universal and belong to a framework of what is proper and improper behaviour. Honesty is proper, dishonesty is improper. Love is proper, hate is improper. Selfless acts are proper, selfish acts are improper. Adopting proper behaviour should lead to the desired end. The organisation claims adopting these norms will lead to development, will lead to a better future. Instead of aiming to influence the macro-process level of society, Musana aims to facilitate individual change.

The desired end of the moral and material change remains quite unclear to the Musana participants. Answers of respondents by and large came either in terms of an expansion of the activities they are currently engaged in or was expressed as 'positive change'. Their answers were centred on: in the near future Musana wishes to open a hospital and a secondary school; the primary school will expand; the number of employees will expand because of these interventions; and, therefore the number of lives impacted will increase. Musana's director gave an overview of the desired end of Musana's development in the following excerpt from my interview with him.

> "So, I think Musana is contributing to the development of this community more. You may weigh that what really counts as development; enterprises, infrastructures or other things that really add value to people lives, like education. One of the most poor performing students, is now coming up to at least an average performance. I see Musana improving in the health sector by establishing a hospital. From having one hospital in the district, I think we are going to be the number one NGO to establish a hospital next to the government hospital in the district. I find that really incredible, because there is not any private hospital in Iganga, apart from the one government hospital. So establishing that, it's going to raise up the development and it's going to add value to people's lives. Because people have another place where they can go access health care service, another place where they can get jobs and if one person gets a

job here, you have transformed nine people. Because average a woman has eight children, plus the mother there are ten people in the family on average. So, you employ one person, you're easily transforming ten people's lives. Being that right now, Musana employing over eighty employees and seven years ago we employed five. So if you would multiply every single person by ten, how many people getting transformed, how many people benefitting from that [...] but if you add on those women that are in our projects, there are so many children and women and men transformed through Musana and that number is causing different development elsewhere."[17]

Numbers are vital in Musana, the number of people that they reach through their interventions. The amount of development that is being achieved is usually termed in providing basic needs. As many people as possible should have access to basic needs. At first, I found it odd to see a poster with the Maslow Pyramid on the wall of the social work office. Later on, I learned in one of the classes that basic needs are part of the curriculum. These basic needs are essential in the operations of Musana. It is the basic level of provision to which all people should have access according to Musana. Therefore, the greater the number of people that is reached through development, the greater the result of development is. Musana has been quite successful in reaching more and more people in recent years and many of the Musana employees testify of the organisation's growth.

"That number of children has now increased. Then there is also that changed, in fact they used not to provide us with shelter or accommodation, right now they are providing. It is also changed. Then another change that I can talk about is in terms of development, when you compare, just within the last three years, Musana was not like the way it is now. So it is developing at a high speed."[18]

"Yeah, definitely. You know, when you look at 2008, it was crawling. In nine it was moving, right now, I can simply say we're at maximum speed. If you compare it to a child, this was a child that began schooling early enough, you know. And when that happens in a community, when you come to the side of the community, the community would benefit more if Musana has developed more. Because it will have more capacity to touch other sectors in the community, right now it's going through the health, but before, before that we would only single out a few people who need medical care and, you know, take them. Right now, that hospital is under construction, we think we can reach a bigger number."[19]

Those who Musana reaches are often immediately part of the organisation, they enrol as a student, as an employee in school, in the bakery or in one of the offices, or they take part in one of the crafts projects. The boundary between recipients of development and participants in development, becomes blurred. Once you enter the organisation, you make part of the organisations expansion. Once you adopt the proper morals, you become an advocate for those morals within the organisation. Just as when someone becomes Christian, he or she is responsible for spreading the gospel.

The transformative power of religion to change individuals (Bornstein 2003) and the immediate assignment of spreading the 'gospel of development', is a mechanism which has proved to be effective in the Musana community development organisation.

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[17] Interview with director on 28-Sept-2015
[18] Interview with teacher on 9-Sept-2015
[19] Interview with school administrator on 12-Oct-2015

4 Taking care of those below

Order created through love and compassion

Love and compassion, those are the two first values that are written down on the posters with core values of Musana. When one is talking with the members of Musana, these values are mentioned time and time again. They are norms that dictate how one ought to behave. In this section, I conclude that love and compassion are interpreted as taking care.

Individual change is of vital importance to the structure of the organisation. Through proper behaviour - expressed as, among others, norms of love and compassion – the participants create an authoritative structure. This structure is a form of dependency in which taking care of the other is central. That person to whom care is given, is ranked lower than the care giver. These power relations are created through the particular interpretation of love and compassion by people of Musana. I call this interpretation "taking care of those below".

The meaning of symbols in general, and these moral norms in particular, depends on the interpretation of these symbols. In the introduction, I explained how Blumer (Blumer 1986) argues that through interaction we interpret actions and make them meaningful. Consequently, these two norms of love and compassion are made meaningful within the interactions taking place at Musana. These interactions are, however, not limited to the interactions between humans. Their perceived interaction with God is important as well for their interpretation of these norms.

In the first paragraph, I introduce one of the rare events off campus during my fieldwork. I went to visit a secondary school in the vicinity of Musana. The vignette portrays how order and discipline are often observed as oppressive and are contrasted with Musana's operations by its employees. In Musana, however, order and discipline are just as present, but love and compassion are what guide the actions of participants in the organisation.

Subsequently, in the second paragraph I explain how the hierarchical structure of Musana functions. Love and compassion are the most important norms of the organisation and they are interpreted as taking care of others. This results in a structure of taking care of the ones below you and performing good moral behaviour in return.

In the third paragraph of this section, I argue how a particular image of God justifies the interpretation of love and compassion. God is interpreted as love and is most often explained as the ultimate care giver. The relationship with God is, however, reciprocal. In return for God's care, followers of God are expected to serve him in return, which basically means doing the right things and not doing wrong things.

In the last paragraph, I elaborate on the care-giving hierarchy. The emphasis of the organisation is on taking up as many persons as possible in this hierarchy. Moreover, within this hierarchy interpretations of these norms of love and compassion are structural. These structural interpretation contribute in maintaining the hierarchy and expanding the number of people that are reached by Musana's development.

4.1 Discipline and hard-work

The Victoria High school is close to Musana. A number of students that graduated from Musana's primary education are enrolled in secondary education at Victoria High school. First, I describe in detail the events that took place during my visit at this school, to paint a picture of the sharp contrast of the atmosphere of this school as compared to Musana. Thereafter, I describe the conversation I had with Musana's director about the events at Victoria High. His reaction contributes to my argument that

Musana aims to set itself apart from schools where not love, but discipline appears to be the norm of greatest importance. The Victoria high school is a school where hard work and discipline are emphasized.

Victoria High school visit

James, one of the social workers invited me to go with him to Victoria High school. He said there was some business with a students in Victoria High who is sponsored by Musana. We got on the boda-boda motorbike and drove off. Two big gates marked the border of the school. The name was forged into the metalwork of the gates. We horned to the guard and he opened the gates. James parked the bike in the shadow of one of the trees and spoke to someone about whom we wanted to meet. He led us to a table underneath a big tree. The table was surrounded by plastic blue chairs, and on one of them sat a teacher with a narrow face. He welcomed us to Victoria High school and greeted me by saying "Salam Malikum". I responded him with a hello and explained that I did not know how to respond to this greeting. He taught me how to respond and, subsequently, James explained that this was an Arabic language.

The man explained to James the situation of the girl. "She has a negative attitude towards studying, but she just does not open up. She remains silent." "Thanks for taking the initiative" replies James. At first I expected a regular conversation, where James would have a short conversation with the student and parent or teacher about how things were going, but quickly I realised I was witnessing something else. Slowly more people arrived, a dark Ugandan with a broad face, almost like a pit-bull a smaller teacher and finally the broadest and tallest man. He took place behind the desk and I quickly figured out he was head-teacher. Our company consisted now of four teachers, James and I.

The teacher with the narrow face saw a girl walking by. She was unknown to me. He shouted to her to come to him. She knelt down by his side clamping her hands to the chair. The teacher grabbed her by her head with one hand and slapped her with the other hand. She tried to defend herself, but the teacher kept hitting her several times on the top and the back of her head. The girl left again.

Soon two girls came to our place under the tree and were seated on two of the remaining chairs, Esther and Naomi. I estimated they were approximately fifteen years old. Esther was the girl sponsored by Musana, Naomi was her friend. The girls were accused of having "lost the love to study". The girls had obtained bad grades and, as it seems, tried to help each other out. One of the teachers was apparently the father of Naomi.

Some of the teachers, especially the father of Naomi, told me how Esther was sponsored by Musana, how rich guys from the West came to Uganda to bring money for her. In which I was pointed at while talking about rich guys from the west. Instead the parent teacher had little, but paid for Naomi himself. He asked to Esther, whether her parents still lived. She answered yes, but to the question whether they were able to pay school fees, she answered no. He asked Esther, what she thought was the reason that she was sponsored. She answered that "it is God's love". Naomi's father responded again by saying that even in the bible it is said that God rewards the people "who take care of themselves."

The head teacher asked if they – the students – thought the whole situation was beyond hope, or that they thought they would be able to improve their performance. Esther answered that she wanted to improve her performance and that it was the problem that she was demoralized by the low grades she had obtained in the past. Naomi had a lot more trouble finding words and started to object to the whole situation. Her father commented how he pays for her school fees and wants to treat her like the other students. That it will not prevent him from sleeping if his daughter has bad grades. He turned to me, telling that Western cultures are different;

> *"You* [Western people] *just speak to your teachers. In Uganda culture is different, you have to respect your teachers, we even go a step further than this. If your teacher speaks one word, you don't talk a hundred words back to him. These girls they speak a hundred words."*

The head master decided that these girls should be separated and no longer sleep in the same dormitory. The girls then started their replies again. It came to the point that one of the teachers kept shouting "shut up" repeatedly to Naomi. Naomi, however, told the others how she grew up with her mother, how she always took care of her and how her father did not love her. Her father started repeating that he would not lie awake if she performed poorly. "This girl is wasted beyond all hope" was one of his responses to the plea of her child. "You go look for other parents if you want, but you will not find them." The head teacher tried to silence Naomi and told her that he knew the story, that he in fact had helped her father search for her.[20]

Immediately after the visit to Victoria High school, I feared that the event would be only detrimental to my field research. The teachers observed me as a representative of Musana, while being a white foreigner (Muzungu), leading the teachers to draw conclusions that the organisation was depended on donor money and that "Muzungus" like me dictated how the organisation worked. Such interpretation of development opposes the aims and ideas of Musana. Local ownership and sustainable operations is what they are after. For a moment, I thought my access to the field would be restricted.

Instead, the event gave me a whole new set of insights in the ideas of Musana. I wanted to apologize to the director for how I influenced, by my presence, the events at Victoria High school. During my conversation, however, the director felt sorry for me that I had to witness this, although he thought it was a kind of insight that was unique and valuable. Why was it unique and valuable? Because it showed how Musana was different.

Despite the importance of love and compassion, order and discipline are far from absent in the organisation. In the classrooms the teachers are taking care of the children, but during the lessons teachers have a strict rule over them. They aim to discipline the children by telling them to sit still in the small wooden benches, three in a row, tightly grouped in the centre of the room. The children are so close together, that they usually start hitting each other whenever the teacher turns her back. It should be said that some teacher are much better at handling their class than others, but those that do lose control have to interfere.

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[20] Fieldnotes 18-Sept-2015

One day I was sitting in a younger classroom, one boy was not paying attention and chatting with his neighbour. The teacher approached them, asked the class who was not a friend to this boy, someone raised his hand and the boy was positioned next to this person. The teacher told the class she never again wanted to see the two persons, which had been talking to each other, sitting on the same bench ever again. Another moment, while the children were performing their assignments, she picked out a book of one of the kids. She told the whole class that her handwriting was poorly, while raising their book in the air; "this handwriting looks like Nursery 3!" On the work of another kid she comments "this is a sign of a poorly organised woman".[21]

It is easy to judge the methods of teaching and the atmosphere in the classroom as one that is only about discipline and order, not one that is about love. Discipline and order are extremely important in the school. The greeting exemplifies this importance most clearly. Whenever a teacher, or any other employee, enters the classroom, the teachers asks: "Good morning children", which is responded by the children with "Good morning teacher". Subsequently the teachers asks, "How are you?" which is responded by the children with "we are humble and obedient".

That love guides their actions, only becomes visible when the education in Musana is juxtaposed with other schools. I had a conversation with Matthew, he referred to his caning experience during his school period as 'torture'. He admired Musana for the absence of corporal punishment.

> *"I am glad we are now starting to see that children can also learn without caning. In the beginning, parents would really take their children to different schools, because they thought their children got less disciplined in our school, because we did not cane them when they would not listen. But there are other ways to punish children and that will come across as well. At least we have these norms now at Musana. It would happen that I would step into a classroom and that a new teacher would have a cane in her hand, because she wanted to cane someone. I would then ask 'why do you have that cane in your hand'. They would say they didn't want to cane, but still I would ask them not even to have a cane in their hand. That hand is not for caning; it is only for love."[22]*

Love and compassion in the classroom means for them, they will not perform corporal punishment in the classroom. A few days after witnessing the events at Victoria High school, I had a conversation with the director. He compared Musana to this school and explained to me that Musana was so much different, because they have love and compassion.

> *"See, people learn here that the best way to educate them is by hitting people and acting hard on the students; they do not know anything different. Your focus in Musana and being here it is likely that you will never really get the idea of the full culture, the real hard issues that persist in so many places in Uganda, you won't really see it here. There are so many places that have not yet been educated and offered the knowledge of how love and compassion can work. How things are done fairly or equally."[23]*

The director explained to me how, even though I did not feel comfortable under the situation, it still might have been a really good experience for me to visit Victoria High school and to see how Musana

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[21] Field notes 21-Sept-2015, teacher
[22] Field notes 03-Oct-2015, school administrator
[23] Field notes 22-Sept-2015, director

has learned from some things and has decided to do things differently. He said that I shouldn't judge on their behaviour, because they just might not have education to know that things can be done differently. Later in the conversation he explained that this education is all about love and compassion, which is at the core of Musana.

4.2 Love and compassion

Love and compassion are essential to the organisation. Not without reason are these usually the first two core values depicted on the posters in the offices. Musana employees interpret these values as taking care of others and especially the ones that fall under their responsibility. The positions in Musana fall under a stringent hierarchy, the director is above all and the youngest students form the bottom.

The director is not the only one emphasising love and compassion as core values of Musana. I asked consistently during my interviews what according to the respondent the most important value of Musana is. Most of the employees answered love, compassion, or passion for the kids. David, one of the heads of department, explained love to me as follows:

> *"The most important value to me, I would think, is love. Because if you have love inside your heart, all of these others can come automatically, like integrity; if you have love, the integrity will come. It means you are going to treat other people like you would have loved to be treated. It means that you are not going to misuse organisational resources, because you know you are accountable. It means that you are going to value the service you are giving to other people; […] So that love will push you into doing realistic things, valuing every person equally and therefore trying your best to provide the best that you can. So to me I would look at love first, being the most important value."[24]*

David explains what the norm of love actually entails, what the meaning of love is. It means taking care of each other, "*valuing every person equally and therefore trying your best to provide the best you can*"[25]. This idea of taking care of each other, providing service to each other is visible through other interview questions as well. It is what is coined as "the family of Musana", the relations in the organisation are experienced as family relations. The family of Musana is a frequently returning answer to the question what respondents appreciated most about Musana. Rosa likes her job because she loves the children, she loves the other employees, and she loves how they have taken care of her and how she can provide care for them[26]. Kyoga explains that he appreciates most "*the way care is given to workers*". He refers to his friends, to whom situations compared he feels at Musana he is far better off[27]. Daniel answers to the questions with "*first of all, the way they handled me […] they had trust in me*"[28].

Kyoga, Rosa and Daniel explain the relations in Musana in terms of being taken care off. At the same time, others, such as David, explain the relations in terms of taking care of someone. Through these ideas of taking care and being taken care of, the hierarchy of Musana is discernible.

Numerous times during the interviews, respondents answered how they loved to take care of the children. These children are constantly, in line with the vision of Musana, referred to as vulnerable children. Due to their vulnerability, Musana has the responsibility to take care of them.

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[24] Interview with manager on 13-Oct-2015
[25] Interview with manager on 13-Oct-2015
[26] Interview with manager on 8-Oct-2015
[27] Interview with teacher on 9-Sept-2015
[28] Interview with handyman on 13-Oct-2015

"I think Musana is centred around children and women, vulnerable children and women. […]So, it's also what tickles me, to do something, you know, to know that when I'm doing something I, I'm contributing to the welfare, general welfare of these people."[29]

"I know of some children who were brought to Musana when they were really in bad health conditions and now they are living they are even in high school."[30]

"At the moment, the most important thing Musana is doing is giving hope to the vulnerable children."[31]

These quotes show the responsibility employees feel in taking care of the children in Musana. Similarly, when I asked respondents who did not hold a management position, which persons were important to them, most referred in some manner to the leadership, the vision bearers. They use different words to reason why they value the leadership so much. The leaders give direction, encouragement, they shape the organisation, and they are available for consultation. The leaders are valued most, because they take care of their employees.

Taking care and being taken care of, is what Musana does, all the time and in all places. It is not only exemplified through the interviews. Looking at Musana's activities, the same philosophy of taking care and being taken care of is vivid in all of these activities.

In the classrooms, there is, besides a focus on order and discipline, a feeling of responsibility to show love and take care of the children. The idea of taking care and showing love stretches beyond the classroom. Teachers are provided with dwellings. Around the different compounds, several building blocks are located with simple housing facilities. One child of each employee is exempted for tuition and health care services are provided to employees and their families. This 'care' for employees is of course also an advantage for the managers to compete for personnel with other schools, but I believe the responsibility to take care is born out of genuine good will.

Even I experienced some of the care that emerges from the love of the employees. During my stay at the Musana community development organisation, I stayed in a guesthouse located on a walled compound, adjacent to the Northern border of the school compound. The hostess of the guesthouse was one of my closest contacts and in our interactions I perceived how she took care of me and how the organisation took care of her.

The compound was a beautiful site; well-build buildings around a beautiful garden. I needed to take no effort to start feeling at home. Most precious to this guesthouse, is the woman who runs it, Elisabeth. Her responsibility was to take care of the guests and she went above and beyond what could be expected of her. The morning I left Musana, I had to wake up at six 'o clock to makes sure we would be in time for the airport. These days, I wore white shoes, or they used to be white; the red dirt had transformed them to a brown-reddish colour. Elisabeth woke up extra early this last morning so she could make sure my shoes were as bright white as they used to be.

During my stay, Elisabeth developed a medical condition for which she had to visit the doctor. She went to the main hospital, which has an ill reputation, but it is free of charge. After she returned, an American volunteer explained to me that she did not understand why Elisabeth went to the main hospital, because

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[29] Interview with manager on 8-Oct-2015
[30] Interview with handyman on 13-Oct-2015
[31] Interview with manager on 13-Oct-2015

surely Musana would have paid for a better doctor if she needed one. Elisabeth would have gotten much better care in a private hospital.

These interactions with Elisabeth show my position within the "family of Musana", the hierarchy of taking care of those below. It was Elisabeth's responsibility to take care of me and she went above and beyond what was expected of her by her superiors. She, on the other hand, did not immediately take advantage of the extra care the organisation wishes to provide her. They would have given her the care of a private hospital. Instead, she chose to take care of herself and, hence, contradicted the structure of taking care in Musana. Her actions, however, emphasised the existence of this structure and the value attached to it by the participants in Musana.

I believe that the interactions mentioned above exemplify the Musana policy of taking care and being taken care of. It is how they interpret norms of love and compassion. Malavisi (2014) argues as well that the ethics in development is social of nature and, therefore, it requires inter-dependency and mutual cooperation. In practices of developing each other, there will always be an uneven power-balance between one and the other (Giri 2004). This uneven power balance creates a hierarchy in the organisation, in which those who take more care as compared to others, have more power than those who are more care-receiving. Each person that joins the organisation takes a place somewhere in this hierarchy.

4.3 God sets the example for taking care

The reason for the interpretation of love as "taking care" is grounded in the interpretation of God by Musana participants. The specific interpretation of love erupts from the perceived interaction with God and the symbols used to communicate stories about God to others.

While visiting Musana, I attended two different churches. Most often I went to the church service on the compound of Musana, which take place every Sunday. These services are mainly for the children that are in boarding and a small selection of teachers attend these services. One of the teacher also takes upon himself the role of preacher. The other church I visited only twice, this is a church close to the centre of Musana, which many of the teachers attend. The church in the centre is most likely more Pentecostal, while the church on the Musana compound is American Evangelical. Both streams of Christianity have, however, in common that they believe God is someone who is a father-like figure, that is close by and has an active role in the lives of believers (van de Kamp 2012; Bornstein 2003; Jones 2009; Luhrmann 2012).

According to Blumer (1986), the meaning of an object is projected by how people act upon these objects. Therefore, I asked each respondent during the interviews about actions they perform based on their faith. I also asked them what faith meant to them. Looking at their responses, nearly all respondents interpreted the latter questions as what God meant to them, what God does and how he acts.

> "One, being a Christian it means loving God. Knowing him and believing in him. So, and that is it. And to me, it has helped me, because if you have Christian values, they help to shape your life and it will always put you back on the right track."[32]

In line with this excerpt, many respondents explained to me how God took care of them, how they would have never found Musana if it was not through Gods will. On my first day, just after leaving the

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[32] Interview with manager on 21-Oct-2015

airport, I got picked up by the Musana taxi (a minivan). The driver immediately started to tell his story of how he came to Musana, he trusted in God and God blessed him by providing a job at Musana.

> *"Before we thought, I thought I would do things just within my own reach, but there are things we can't stand by our own, the things we just need God [to do]. Almost everything on planet earth we need God to do."[33]*

> *"First of all, I'm a person who is living, I believe I'm still living because of God. As I told you, I am from a very poor family. My father had some money, but misused it, he was so polygamous. Got many wives who showed up and who ate his money very fast. And so he's now living a poor life. And my brother, my big brother had a chance, he went to school and he got some money. Got a side job and he was really supporting me, but, again, when he died I was like, oh I am done. But just because of sticking on to God, on the word, on his teachings, I'm still living."[34]*

> *"My faith, what my faith means to me is, is that it, it tames me down. It makes me recognize that I am what I am today, not by my might, but by the grace of God"[35]*

> *"Me, being a Christian has helped me a lot, because it has helped to increase my relationship with God. I learned how to pray. Like sometimes, I get challenges and I don't have whom to talk to, but I always know that God is there, so I just have to pray and I feel kind of relieved from my problems."[36]*

The caring God is one of the most important interpretations of God. There is, however, also a flipside to the coin, which is, as Evan it explained in one of the interviews, "*the call to serve God*". Others explained the call to serve as "*doing the right thing*" or "*following the right values*".

Doing the right thing and serving God, is first of all interpreted as not doing bad things. For instance, not lying, not stealing, not going to parties and not marrying spouse with a different religion. On the other hand, however, there is a call to do the good things, for instance being honest - putting the right amount of money that someone has paid on the ticket you give in return -, forgiving other people or taking care of the orphans. During an interview with him, David told me a story about the reason why he never bought a vehicle.

> *"So you have to change, to make decisions and what I have always told people is that you should learn to take decisions that benefit you and benefit all. [...] Like about, for around ten years I had one question which would keep coming to me from different people. Why don't you have a vehicle? Why do you keep footing and jumping on boda-bodas every day? I said well, because it is not a priority and I don't have the money to buy it". But they believed I had the money to buy a vehicle, but I would tell them: if I bought a vehicle this time I would be useless to very many people, but without a vehicle I'm very useful because I can get fees for a number of orphans, because my father and mother died and they left children behind. So, I educated them, they went through university, so far seven of them graduated and I was like: if I had a*

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[33] Field notes 31-Aug-2015, driver
[34] Interview with handyman on 13-Oct-2015
[35] Interview with chairman board of directors on 15-Oct-2015
[36] Interview with social worker on 9-sept-2015

vehicle and have to buy fuel every day, I wouldn't do all this, because I don't have a vehicle I can afford to save and pay for, for their schools."[37]

The story makes quite a turn in the end, someone (he did not tell who) offered him a vehicle for free. He explained to me how exceptional such a gift is. His reasoning behind the gift is that maybe because he offered himself to others, someone helped him. He concludes that therefore "*the standard is what God expects me to do, not what other people think I should do.*"

The reason for pointing out the phrase "*call to serve*" is not without reason. The relationship between God and the Musana's employees is reciprocal. In return for Gods care and blessing, there is an expectation of men to serve and obey God. This is how God is interpreted in Musana. Similar reciprocal relationships exist between the members of the organisation. If someone takes care of you, you take care of someone else, namely, those persons that are on a lower position in the hierarchy of the organisation.

Every Tuesday morning all the children and some teachers gather in church and they have, what is called, morning devotion. During morning devotion, the children sing a few songs and there is a short sermon by one of the teachers. Eli was one of the most enthusiastic preachers among the teachers. His sermon one Tuesday morning was about the five pieces of bread and two fish that miraculously was shared by thousands of people and fed every single one of them. It is written down in the gospel of John. Walking enthusiastically through the aisles he preached:

> *"So, you are not fed." "Jesus knew that five breads and two fish was not enough, but he believed that God could feed these people. Whatever we can do to our friends, God can do in us. So if we can plant a good seed in one of our friends, God can plant a good seed in us. And if you can share a small bread with friends, God can share a big loaf of bread with you. So if you share something with your friends, God can make something big out of it. Therefore, extend your boundaries and take this attitude of sharing. When we share with our friends, God can also share big things with us. So I pray that you will all be good children."[38]*

Eli exemplifies in this sermon the reciprocal relationship which should exist between followers of Christ. Moreover, he relates this relationship to the relationship we have with God. God shares with us, so we can share with our friends. The preacher gives the relationship between God and man as an example – in other words, a model – for the relationship participants in Musana have with others.

In general, these examples show how God is presented within sermons and conversations as someone who takes care. Moreover, the church expects Christians to follow good Christian moral conduct by being born again in Christ and adopting proper behaviour according to Gods norms (Bornstein 2003; Luhrmann 2012). In Musana, the presentation of God as the ultimate caregiver is interpreted as a model for your own life. Hence, you should be a caregiver as well. Simultaneously, in return for the care God provides, Christian should adopt good Christian conduct. I argue that the perceived reciprocal relationship between God and individuals in Musana is projected on the interactions between participants in Musana. Therefore, they take care of each other and in return behave properly.

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[37] Interview with manager on 13-Oct-2015
[38] Field notes 29-Sept-2015, teacher

4.4 Order and discipline through love and compassion

In contrast to popular belief, discipline and order are not contrasted to love. Instead love is a carrier of order and discipline in Musana. Every employee at Musana has a manager, a head of department, a boss, an administrator or someone else above him. Based on the interactions a certain employee has with his boss, he/she interprets this relationship (Blumer 1986). Based upon these interactions, the norms of love and compassion become meaningful and he/she decides to take action by showing love and compassion to the one who is below him/her in the hierarchy.

In the introduction I explained how religion and development both picture a model for the future, by prescribing what this future should look like. Furthermore, in chapter three I explained how Musana emphasizes a model for a proper individual. The norms of love and compassion are essential in this model. However, due to the particular interpretation of love and compassion as taking care of those who are ranked below yourself, the norms facilitate a hierarchical structure of relationships in the organisation.

This particular interpretation of a relationship gains factuality through the constant prescription of love – taking care – through sermons, posters and speeches. Especially the interpretation of God as taking care of others is important, as God is also interpreted as love. God is the ultimate caregiver. The relationship with God is, however, reciprocal. In return for God's love, obedience and good behaviour are expected. Similarly, in return for the love and compassion of those who take care of you, you are expected to adopt good moral behaviour and be "humble and obedient". It results in a hierarchical power structure basically created through the norms of love and compassion. In turn this hierarchy creates authoritative individuals – those who are on top of the chain and those who preach – and they influence the interpretative processes of employees of Musana (Dennis & Martin 2005).

Another reason for the existence of this structure, is that it provides a system in which human life is preserved; care is provided in the lives of the Musana's employees. Erath (Erath 2004) describes three universal values. The first and most important of these is the preservation of the human life. Preserving human life is facilitated through the hierarchy at Musana. All human life is taken care of, because everyone takes care of someone. The hierarchy which emerges from taking care of one another, make the norms of love and compassion so much more powerful. The hierarchy makes the relationships of taking care systematic.

The aim of the organisation seems to be, to get as many individuals into this caregiving hierarchy. To extend the reciprocal relationships of taking care and being taken care of. If there is someone taking care of you, you are on the ladder of development and you can start to take care of someone else. This is exemplified in how the organisation measures its impact. The director explained it to me like this:

> *"You know the secondary school, vocational training, I see that that is causing to change a lot of people's lives. In…, you said five years or ten years from now? Yes, I see Musana employing three hundred people. Why because you've got a secondary school, you're developing a big bakery, a skill development, vocational training or hospital. Because just the hospital you count like at least thirty people, fifty people there. If you count the secondary school, our primary school has twenty-five teaching staff and maybe other workers are maybe like twenty, so that's about forty. So the same thing is going to happen in the secondary school, we're going to have more than fifty [employees]. We've developed our restaurant into a big facility. Rather than employing about nine people, we'll sample about twenty people. And this education system*

that we've put in place, we can see so many people getting educated from here; the primary, the secondary. And they're going to come back and do many good things. Because they would have got the knowledge, they would have got the principles and values to stand on and [they would have got] leadership skills, being a hard working person, who is accountable. So, we feel all this will transform, not just Musana, not just peoples' life, but the whole community."[39]

The impact assessment – measuring how effective Musana is – is based upon the number of people the organisation reaches and not merely the level of development those people reach. The website portrays the emphasis on the number of people as well, it gives an overview of the lives that have been affected by Musana (Musana 2016a).

Back to the story I started with, the story about my experience at Victoria High school. Musana sets itself apart by comparing their school procedures with those of other schools. Musana is the school where love and compassion are emphasized, in contrast to other schools. Victoria High school's slogan is "Hard work and discipline." This goes without saying that discipline is a major issue at Musana as well and that actually love has an important functionality in creating order, discipline and most importantly change.

Love is functional, necessary to create an order of taking care. Musana is creating economic development, but its primary focus is on moral change. For instance, they aim to teach the children in Musana to be loving and compassionate, and the employees to love the children and take good care of them. In this sense, the works of Musana follow Jones' conclusion, that in Uganda all kinds of institutions – religious, political and societal – aim at developing the right behaviour (Jones 2009). The focus on individual change according to proper behaviour is effective and results in an expanding structure that is successful in regard to reaching as many people as possible.

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[39] Interview with director on 28-Sept-2015

5 The Muzungu struggle

Conflicting norms of independent development and inter-dependent individuals

The story at Victoria High school (section 4.1) shows more than simply the major issue of love. My presence at that moment indicated what I call the Muzungu struggle. Muzungu literally means someone who walks idly around, referring to the 18th century explorers in the great lakes district of Africa (Che-Mponda 2013). Nowadays it mainly means white person, or even rich white person. The word is deducted from the verb 'kizungu', which means to behave rich. Anywhere you walk on the dusty roads of Iganga, people on the side of the road will shout it to you, especially children. It is not derogatory, they are simply stating that the colour of your skin is different than theirs. Essentially the term Muzungu means you are different.

In the theoretical framework, I explained how development has been explained as a solution for the contradiction between capitalism and religion (Salemink 2004). In the last two chapters I have explained how the individual is developed in Musana according to proper behaviour and in a hierarchical structure. The local and religious interpretation of development in Musana creates a form of development in which foreigners find themselves within a new contradiction. The struggle is exemplary for the conflict between values existent in the Musana organisation. It illustrates the paradox between empowering through providing aid and funding; the paradox of helping someone to gain autonomy.

First of all, it is important to take a closer look upon the vision and mission of Musana. Earlier on I wrote about the vision of the director on what he fought where the most important aspects of Musana. Now, however, I wish to take a closer look upon the ideas of the American co-founders and their ideas on the most important aspects of the organisation. They mainly emphasize local ownership empowerment and sustainability.

Secondly, I describe the tension I and some other foreigners in the organisation experienced in navigating the tension between helping and empowering. As a foreigner, it is easy to get a position of stature. In such a position, Ugandans might ask you to provide aid, to decide on courses of action and to take charge. Taking charge in such situations, would mean opposing Musana's mission and vision.

In the third section, I explain why this tension is experienced first and foremost by Muzungus. The explanation is grounded in two reasons. First of all, Ugandans believe that it is not local ownership, sustainability and empowerment that bring change. Instead, they believe that God, Musana and the vision-bearers bring change. Secondly, the participants in the organisation often apply the norms of love and compassion to how they should behave, whereas the norms of local ownership, sustainability and empowerment are appropriated to the organisation. It results in a situation of interdependent individuals working an organisation that aims to achieve independent development.

5.1 Local ownership, sustainability and empowerment

The organisation puts much effort in conveying the mission and vision to its employees. Three words are vital to the mission and vision of Musana; local ownership, sustainability and empowerment. These are the three norms committed to creating an independent organisation. There is little discussion on the goal of the organisation to be independent. To be an independent individual, however, does conflict with the interpretation of love and compassion as taking care of those below. It is vital to understand the mission and vision of Musana to understand the struggle between these conflicting norms in the organisation. Therefore, in this paragraph I focus on explaining the mission and vision of Musana.

In the last chapter, the focus was on the norms of love and compassion, which Musana participants repeatedly coined as the most important values. The founders of Musana picked a different value as the

most important; local ownership. To these two women local ownership was without a doubt the most important value. One of them explained the value to me as follows:

> "Number one, local ownership. I mean, I think without local ownership, anything we do here is pointless. And I think the thing that the development world has missed out on is local ownership; how do people truly feel passion and ownership over things and of projects then. Because if they don't feel ownership, they're not gonna sustain it and that's when you have corruption, that's when all of those other things follow. But if someone truly feels it, has a vision for it, sees the future in it, they're gonna protect it, they're gonna love it, they're gonna care about it, they're gonna expand it. So I think local ownership is huge."[40]

The other explained the local ownership in similar fashion, emphasizing as well the relationship with the international development world.

> "I mean the dependency mind-set is what's really hurting Africa. [...] It comes from the mind-set of the global north and that whole white saviour mentality. The second you don't feel like you own something you are not responsible for it; you don't have incentives to see it succeed. [...] But when you feel like you own it and you are responsible for it, then you will do everything in your capacity to see it grow and succeed. [...] I feel like since the local people believed in it, that's when Musana started becoming successful. Local ownership and sustainability are such buzz-words in international development. And I think in a lot of organisations the problem is that they say that's the goal, but they are acting very different on it. You know you can say 'I'm going to give you this cup of coffee', but I'm like hovering over it, making sure that you're making it how I think you should be making it. Then I am not giving you ownership of this cup of coffee. Me giving you ownership, would be me giving it to you and saying: 'Okay, here you go! It's up to you, make it the best cup of coffee ever; use your own creativity!' It's that, you hand it off and then you step away and you encourage. So it was just like a shift of us stepping away and them stepping up."[41]

The value of local ownership is grounded in the origin of the organisation. The co-founders still active in the organisation are two of the three women that initially went to Uganda and founded Musana. They had encountered an orphanage in which children lived under extremely poor circumstances. Their first idea was to start a new orphanage for these children, in which better care would be provided. An orphanage was not possible according to Ugandan laws and, therefore, they started a "children's home".

During the course of their work, these two women came to the understanding that it was impossible to have a lasting effect in the area, if the recipients of development would remain dependent on development. The organisation was transformed into the Musana community development organisation, emphasis has since been put on local ownership, empowerment and sustainability.

One of the main goals was, and still is, to become independent from donor money. Nearly all donations nowadays given to Musana, therefore, flow directly towards capital projects. An organisation can only be sustainable, when it is able to continue its operations whenever donor funding stops. Many

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[40] Interview with co-founder on 22-Sept-2015
[41] Interview with co-founder on 16-Sept-2015

organisation in Uganda have failed to reach such a level of sustainability (Jones 2013). This commitment to sustainability and independence is captured in the mission statement of Musana as well;

> Committed to providing health, education and life skills to disadvantaged rural communities with emphasis to women, children and youth, enabling them to be socially and economically independent while maintaining their dignity and living long healthy and creative lives.

Empowerment is to be achieved by giving authority to Ugandans themselves. The argument is that to be able to make decisions yourself, you need to be socially and economically independent. Local ownership is best shown through the human resource policy. The organisation will only hire Ugandan employees. It is not possible to work as foreigner in Musana, the only possibility to stay in Musana for a longer period is as a volunteer or intern. In this situation, the volunteer is even asked to contribute financially to the organisation by making a donation.

An incredible amount of effort is put at explaining empowerment in Musana and breaching, what they call, the dependency cycle[42]. Consequently, this emphasis of independence is discernible in the protocol provided to foreigners who wish to visit Musana. These visitors are required to commence a training before they travel to Uganda. This training consists of two informative meetings, a training manual and some mandatory reading material. The training is focused on educating the volunteer on the mission, vision and values of Musana. Above all, it aims to provide a development perspective of empowerment and independence. They also advise visitors to read some literature, with titles such as "toxic aid" or "when helping hurts" (Musana n.d.). At one point the manual raises the question: what role can I, as a volunteer, take on at Musana to be of true help. The manual explains that we Muzungus should take up the role of facilitator, connector, ambassador or encourager (Musana n.d.).

Every year, some teams and several interns visit Musana. These teams and interns usually have specific tasks and goals for which they came. There have been teams focused on improving the standards of education, an intern performing her thesis in social care and during my stay at Musana, there was an intern from the US working with the education department to improve lessons and skills on critical thinking. Intern sounds like these people are students or recent graduates, but the contrary is usually true. The intern in the social work department was a PhD student and the intern, who stayed in Musana while I was there, had a lifelong career in education behind her and recently retired. However, the term intern in certain ways does justice to the position these people have. As an intern at Musana it is expected that you learn about Musana's development alternative. While the intern teaches about his or her area of expertise, he/she learns about development in a context of local ownership, empowerment and sustainability.

Hence, through all activities of Musana, the three norms of local ownership, empowerment and sustainability are key. These norms are what constitute independent development. These ideas on how to provide independent development are, however, mainly the ideas of white foreigners engaged in the organisation and the high ranking Ugandans. Together they comprise only a small portion of Musana. When this small portion interacts with other people in the organisation, a tension arises. For this small portion of the organisation is the group that is regarded as most important in the hierarchy. Musana employees easily place foreigners or management employees in a powerful position, in which they are

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[42] Interview with co-founders on 16-Sept-2015 and 22-Sept-2015

expected to take charge and make decisions for the other employees. They, however, have the task to refrain from taking over and guide Musana participants in taking charge themselves.

5.2 **Navigating the tension between aid and empowerment**

Ugandans as well as foreigners value local ownership, empowerment and sustainability in the organisation. The interpretation of these norms differs between locals and the co-founders or foreigners. Local Ugandans are more likely to apply these norms to the organisation. The care of and respect for superiors in the organisation goes above and beyond any other norms. I argued in chapter four that the interpretation of God as taking care influences the interpretation of love as taking care. It results in a system in which not local ownership or sustainable practices, but adopting proper behaviour and showing respect gives results. Naturally this results in a tension with foreigners. They argue that it is local ownership, taking responsibility and sustainable practices which facilitate sustainable practices. Several occasions exemplified this belief among Muzungus, that particular knowledge is essential to deliver independent development.

For instance, while I stayed in Musana there were two other Muzungu volunteers during my stay at Musana. One afternoon we were discussing the experiences one of them had in her work as a counsellor in Musana. The difficulties she experienced concerned a conversation with some heads of department. She indicated that she does not want to make decision for them, but it is so difficult during a meeting to keep them on track.

> *"They come up with all kinds of ideas and don't work out one subject at a time. Moreover, they want to spend so much many. [Name] has already spend millions, now they want to redecorate the café, buy an extra bike and buy all sorts of new equipment for the bakery. A bike is over 4 million; one of the pieces of equipment he wants to buy for the bakery costs 2.5 mille. I don't want to say no the whole time, so I try to respond like: 'Do you think you will be allowed to spend those amounts of money? Do you think you can buy this or that?' You know, they need to learn that you don't need to spend money to earn money. You can also just try to increase sales. Like one of them had an idea for creating a Facebook page [for marketing purposes]. That's something that doesn't cost money."* I ask if [Name] is going to take over one of the departments, but she responds that this is actually one of the most difficult issues. *"I was appointed to teach him some management and leadership skills in the past month, but I didn't do a really good job"* she says while smiling. *"I am just not sure if he is the right person to lead the department. You know, he is a really sweet guy, but sometimes he will just say things of which I think 'you can't say that'. And I know it is a different culture, but... I don't know."*[43]

A tension resides in this mutual process of learning. Most of the (physical) resources Musana uses are local. That is how the value of 'local ownership' is best discernible. The restaurant has only recipes that are made from local ingredients, the children are sponsored from the income generating projects and local contractors build their facilities. Knowledge, however, is generally not local. It is why these volunteers and interns are invited at Musana. The struggle they face, is not to just tell others what to do, but provide guidance and counselling to empower them to use this knowledge to improve the quality, quantity, efficiency or effectiveness of their operations.

The management and leadership skills this volunteer talked about require a set of norms, for example independent thinking and a general belief in market systems. Such norms are conflicting with the idea

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[43] Field notes 22-Sept-2015, foreign volunteer

that God blesses those and takes care of those people who believe in him. In other words, that it is God who brings development, not necessarily independent thinking or believing in market systems. Hence, the Muzungu struggle is a tension between norms of independency – local ownership, sustainability and empowerment – and norms of dependency – love and compassion *or* taking care.

The Muzungu struggle was even pointed out by a Ugandan; someone who apparently did believe in working independently from others. At Victoria High school the parent teacher explained how "*God rewards people who take care of themselves*". I believe his intention was to indicate the girl was spoiled by Western money. He complained how Esther was sponsored by Musana, how "*rich guys from the West*" – which as explained is the translation of Muzungu – came to Uganda to bring money for her. He pointed at me while talking about rich guys from the west. The teacher commented although he had little, he paid for Esther, his daughter, himself. It was the first time during my stay that I was confronted with the ideas of dependency and empowerment outside the organisation.

Besides the executive director and the chairman of the board of Musana, the event at Victoria High was one of few times I heard a Ugandan explain (although tacit) the importance of empowerment. Mostly foreigners are carrying the message of being independent. Meanwhile, these foreigners come to help the Ugandans to become independent. It is no wonder that the Muzungu struggle is first and foremost experienced by Muzungu, this struggle resides within the paradox of helping someone to become independent. Moreover, the struggle is not experienced by most Ugandans due to their belief that prosperity comes from adopting proper behaviour and respect to your superiors and God, rather than from independent thinking.

While participating at Musana I often felt this struggle as well. I worked at most of the departments for a week. Every Monday it was a major struggle to determine what amount of work I could do at the department, before I would interfere with their business or start determining what would be done. For instance, in school I did not want to teach, as I believed that I then would determine the content of what would be taught. However, at the farm, there were a number of activities in which I could partake without taking over some sort of leadership.

The notion Muzungu itself captures why there are these expectations of foreigners to lead and give advice; Muzungus are seen as rich white people. Becoming friends with Muzungus equals opportunities and provision of resources. It is exactly this idea that Musana wishes to breach. The dependency mind-set, they call it. Through my presence in the situation, these expectations can be clearly seen. I will give some examples.

> One week I was helping out in the Bakery. The bakery is located in the building which formerly had the service of chicken shed. They had built an oven in one of the corners of the large concrete room, which has windows on both sides, but proper ventilation is absent. The remaining appliances, such as a refrigerator, popcorn machine and a mixer, were placed along one wall. The opposite wall had a number of desks on which produce was prepared. At one point, I decided to sit outside for a while. The smoke in the bakery, coming from the oven, was so thick I could not understand how the others managed to stay in this room. Outside was not much better, because of the smoke coming from the fryer. A baker was making an enormous pile of Bagiya (a kind of snack) on the fryer, which is basically a large pan on a wood-stove.
>
> I watched him making these cookies, when Dina asked me to get some tea. She had rolled out a mat, similar to the ones on which all the old ladies sit, outside on the side of the building. I

poured some tea and she brought me a cake. Then she moved inside the bakery again. I felt uncomfortable sitting there drinking tea and eating a cake alone. Dina even asked if I wanted a second cup of tea, I told her that it was enough for me.[44]

The difference in status was regularly observable as well in the conversation I had in several villages. The week I went with the social worker to several villages, we went to visit the village elder one day.

> The village was closer to Iganga and most houses where made out of brick instead of lime. James parked the bike outside a building block and through an alleyway and a metal door, we entered a courtyard. The courtyard was small, about three meters wide and five long. It was surrounded by simple brick single story houses. At the opposite side of the entrance there was a house with a porch attached to it. On the porch a low bench was situated, the village chief was sitting on it. James chose to sit next to him and I took place at the other end of the bench. The village chief greeted me (the Ugandan way) in English and asked where I am from. Subsequently he asked me "*how is the hospital going to work out?*" "*Very good*" I responded. James took over the conversation and later explained to me what was going on. Apparently, the village elder wanted to know from me if there were opportunities for employment, so James explained that I was a volunteer and that I do not engage in employment. Moreover, James is not involved in employment. "*I do one thing, the human resource manager is doing another thing. So I gave him his contact, because he is the human resource manager. Then he also asked for money. I told him I have to think about it. If I give him money it needs to be for a good reason. We do not just give money away for no reason. He just has a different idea about what we do.*"[45]

A few weeks later, I visited with Lewis a village north of Iganga. We stopped at a square on which the building for the village projected was located. It consisted of an open area with some well build houses surrounding it. Several trees provided some shade to people sitting on the ground of this 'village square' as I would term it. Almost every village consists of several of these 'squares' that are surrounded by houses. Sometimes the houses are of what I would term as high quality, made of bricks and corrugated steel roofs, and sometimes they were made of lime, wooden poles and straw roofs.

> We walked across the square and an old man sat there on a chair. An old lady, most likely his wife, sat on a mat next to him. There was a wooden bench behind them, Lewis took it and we both sat down on it. I said hello to the man in Lusoga and then to the woman in Lusoga. They both gave me a hand. Lewis first spoke to them in Lusoga and then explained to me that this man was the landlord of a building hired by Musana. The man had many sons who died; the former renters of the building had also passed away. Therefore, Musana is renting the building now.

> The man was explaining, in English, that he was sick. He needed their money now, he needed it for medicine. The men spoke very well English, which, for as far as I had noticed, was irregular for Ugandans of that age. He said hello to me in English and asked me where I was from. I explained to him my origin and my reason for visit and he inquired to how the country was like and how the UK was like. Then he spoke about the village: "*So you know, I was telling*

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[44] Field notes 6-Oct-2015
[45] Field notes 14-Sept-2015

this man that there are very many orphans in this town. I want him to take two children in at Musana, as orphans. So maybe you can tell them as well."

I responded that I was sorry for the situation and that I hoped that Lewis could mean something for him. The old man pointed to a man that was approaching, explaining to me that it was his son. His son greeted me and asked similar questions; where I was from, when I came here, when I was leaving and what course I studied. *"You take me someday to the Netherlands."* He asked me. *"I don't know, perhaps. No, I don't know. I am sorry."*[46]

These experiences illustrate the pressure on Muzungus to just give money, provide resources and execute development in its traditional form of charity. Volunteers and interns at Musana refrain from such interpretations of development, for Musana is "more than a charity, it is a sustainable solutions" (Musana, our model). The focus must therefore be on local ownership, empowerment and sustainability. The organisation should become more profitable, as to become less dependent on certain core businesses or on donor money. It should only use local products so that businesses in Uganda and more people in Uganda will be employed. All effort is put at realizing these norms.

While these norms are important for locals as well, I have not experienced a similar scale of struggle among them. I believe the struggle of Muzungus is therefore embedded in believing in norms of sustainability, local ownership and empowerment, while contradicting these norms by explaining to others how they should work sustainable, gain power and take ownership.

5.3 In Musana inter-dependent individuals are working towards independent development

It is not the content of the lessons or advice given by Muzungus or foreigners that conflicts with Ugandan norms or Musana's norms. It is giving advice in itself – being a leader, a counsellor or a guide - that conflicts with the form of development that exists at Musana. The tension that is felt by every Muzungu is that actually this organisation is constituting a new interpretation of development. This development is focused on individuals and the mode of interaction that is generally perceived within faith. I explained this in chapter four, that individuals are in a system of power and discipline through norms of love and compassion. These norms are therefore perceived by the participants of the organisation as most important.

While these norms are important for the organisation, the organisation itself carries a message of independence. Through local ownership, sustainability and empowerment, Uganda can develop. This is exemplified at the organisational skill by the emphasis on local employment and the use of local produce.

By Muzungus in the organisation, this interpretation of the "core values" of the organisation is often perceived as a tension. A tension between dependency and independency. Therefore, solutions offered by foreigners are often focused on creating more independent individuals. For Ugandans, this tension is much less apparent. Although they believe that independent development is important, they actually seem to believe that it is not local ownership, sustainability and empowerment that bring change. Instead, they believe that God, Musana and the vision-bearers bring change.

As a result, the organisation takes a direction in becoming independent. The individuals in the organisation, however, are in system of dependency, a system of taking care of those below. Musana

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[46] Field notes 29-Sept-2015

seems to have found a new status quo between religious norms of dependency and foreign norms of independence. By forming a new hierarchical organisation that aims to recruit as many individuals, development becomes like a giant web of dependent individuals in an independent organisation.

Buijs (2004) argues that the content of religion and capitalism conflict, because capitalism aims at gaining wealth and developing your own capital, whereas Christianity aims at taking care of others and sharing wealth. This conflict is solved through development, in which there is a promise of increasing capital on the one hand and sharing and giving care on the other. In this organisation, however, this paradox is not solved, for Musana limits foreigners to share wealth and take a position of caring for others.

A similar paradox exists between the religious narrative, which asks to position God as all powerful entity, to dictate behaviour and as care-giver, while the development narrative is centred on empowerment, determining your own goals and creating opportunities to grow and own your life. The inherent contradiction of these narratives is solved by determining that the individual is subject of the norms prescribed by religion, whereas the organisation is the subject of the development goals and norms of independence.

6 Discussion

6.1 The Musana case

The story of Musana is like a gospel. It has a compelling message for all to hear; a new fashion of development which should empower local people to be the change in their community. The message requires its followers to adopt proper behaviour, which is explained in a short rule book of "core values". These core values are the norms which motivate Musana participants to change. The gospel is able to change people. Its interpretation is structural and those who carry the message are powerful. Therefore, interpretations of others in the organisation are easily structured according to the interpretations of the director, managers or heads of departments.

The case of Musana proves the value of Blumer's theory on symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1986). It is through the interactions in Musana that interpretations on certain objects are made. In the Musana case, one specific interpretation – the interpretation of God as ultimate caregiver – drives the actions of individuals.

Despite a focus on individual interactions, systematic patterns within these interactions do explain the power structures within organisations (Stryker 2008). Through the structural communication of God as caregiver, the participants in Musana form a hierarchical structure of taking care of those below. Moreover, the adoption of this interpretation by authoritative individuals in this organisation, such as the director, steers the interpretation of others in the organisation (Dennis & Martin 2005).

The symbols that participants of Musana use within interactions relate to development and religion. According to Geertz religion functions as a cultural system in which symbols are used "*to establish moods and motivations in men*" (Geertz 1973, p.90). These motivations take shape as norms in Musana and they work towards the desired end, which is proper behaviour. Such behaviour should in turn lead to development. Development in Musana functions as well through a set of symbols which instil motivations in men. In conclusion, religion and development are similar normative cultural systems and should be analysed similarly, without making a priori distinctions between institutions of religion and institutions of development.

The approach of Musana is eventually much more focused on instilling proper behaviour on as many individuals as possible. Development is not focused on economic development. Motivation for this self-development comes from a narrative of hope. Giri and Ufford (2004) already argued for the interpretation of development as images of hope and de Vries (2007) talks about the desire for development. The hope of development finds strength in the promise of God's blessings. The image of a God who blesses the works of his subjects has transformative power. Through these promises, the employees of Musana experience proof for development to take place. As proof is provided, employees also experience a possible end, which motivates them to change themselves according to the norms of love and compassion. Which in turn continues the authoritative structure existing in the Musana.

6.2 The potential of faith based organisations

I discuss three different potentials of faith based organisations in this paragraph. The first potential is that the case of Musana provides an example of how conflicting norms can coexist in a transforming situation. The second, and related, potential is a result of the acknowledgement by FBOs of the normative nature of development. Sensitivity of organisations towards this normative nature can result in a more sensitive approach to local norms. The third potential is a transformative potential for change which resides in the connection these organisation make between moral and material change. Although I focus on the potential of FBOs, I also argue that NGOs and FBOs adopt similar processes of change and,

therefore, similar potential is applicable to some NGOs as well. Before further discussing these subjects, I recall the objective of this thesis and shortly discuss the relation between religion and development.

The objective of this research was to discover how faith functions as an interpretative mechanism for development. It is, however, not the case that faith specifically functions as an interpretative mechanism. I argue that interpretations of religious symbols might influence interpretations of symbols acted out in development and vice-versa. Such as that the interpretation of God has an impact on how development is acted out; namely, by taking care of vulnerable people and placing them within Musana's custody.

In addition to Clarke and Ware's (2015) analysis of how FBOs and NGOs are contrasted, I would add a category in which the terms define organisations focusing on similar processes of change. The terms FBO and NGO describe organisations that seek to change a situation and such change requires a change in the norms of the individuals to which the change is applied (Wiegratz 2010). The difference between the two merely consist in the set of norms they try to communicate.

In this research, I show how religion and development should be interpreted as similar forces that bring across different norms. In this context, sometimes conflicting norms appear to coexist. Analysing development and religion on the different levels they impact – the individual, the organisation and macro/world processes – shows how these conflicting norms can coexist and, when allowed, create new forms of development organisations. Musana as an organisation, is a development organisation first and foremost adopting norms that are in line with western development. The individuals in the organisation, however, are religious and their behaviour is influenced by their interpretation of religious norms.

While norms of religion and norms of development might seem to oppose each other through the eyes of foreigners, locals in Musana have found a solution to conflicting norms. The tension between dependency and independency is solved through individuals depending on each other in an organisation that tries to be independent. Wiegratz (2010) explains that moral restructuring often occur in development through neo-liberal reforms. He argues, however, that conflicting norms are likely to coexist in a situation of moral restructuring. This research shows how Musana is able to create a system through which the tension between independent norms and norms of inter-dependency are able to coexist. Perhaps Musana's model of development is able to provide solutions to tensions between norms in other development situations.

Based on this research, a conclusion that faith based organisation are special in their ability to provide more effective or more efficient development cannot be drawn. The advantages of FBOs which some authors describe, such as reaching the grass-root level (James 2009), are related to specific decisions on project level interventions. I do argue, however, that the acknowledgement by this organisation of moral conduct as an inherent part of development provides opportunities. By not only accepting, but specifically focusing on the normative nature of development, Musana sets an example in acknowledging that any process of change requires a change in moral conduct. Musana acknowledges that development is quasi-religious conversion (Salemink 2004), that development actually is a gospel.

In Musana this focus has led to reconsider distribution of power within development. The organisation nowadays aims to empower Ugandans. To a certain extent, the empowerment of Ugandans creates opportunity for Ugandans to decide themselves which norms are part of the religious or developmental conversion. The macro-processes of development – e.g. capitalist or neo-liberal development – still have

their influence on which norms are considered as prerequisites for development. However, Musana's perception of the normative nature of development and their acknowledgement of unequal power distribution between foreigners and Ugandans does have potential for increased local decision making.

Perhaps proselytising behaviour of FBOs is not what needs to be handled with care, but organisations that do not acknowledge their involvement in some kind of proselytisation. All too often, organisations in development, regardless of being faith based or not, do not acknowledge their influence on individual change and the normative nature of that change. Such development is defined as "secular development", but I consider that secular development provides a carte blanche for appropriating our western norms in foreign countries, disregarding local norms and empowerment of local individuals.

Hence, development organisations in general can have extra potential when acknowledging the normative nature of development. A faith based organisations might be more focused on moral conduct, but criticism has led some FBOs to focus more on development as generally practiced by other NGOs (James 2009).

A second potential of faith based organisations is related to the transformative potential for change by connecting moral and material change. The combination of development and religion gives an aura of factuality to prosperity promised by Musana (Geertz 1973). Exactly this factuality might just make the organisation more sustainable, as Jones (2013) showed how through the ideas of being born again churches in Uganda often became more meaningful than development projects. Musana, however, provides a development alternative by providing one model to which each individual person should change in order for the community to develop. By relating this change to taking on a spiritual "new life" the organisation has been successful in expanding the number of people that adopt their development model.

The combination of continuing to instil proper behaviour, preserving traditional values of dependency and creating a self-sufficient, locally owned organisation might just be the major strength of the development model proposed by Musana. This model is changing people's lives in Uganda and, therefore, Musana is creating change. Whether this change actually results in national change, in terms of economic growth and prosperity is impossible to say. Consequently, ideas of the organisation about changing the whole of Uganda are close to a utopian future (de Vries 2007). Still, change is experienced as real and happening. Perhaps this experience is valuable enough for the employees in Musana to continue changing individuals in Iganga.

6.3 Further research and limitations

In this research, I argued that Musana provides a solution to conflicting norms, which necessarily exist in reforms brought by development (Wiegratz 2010). As Wiegratz has argued, these norms are introduced by neo-liberal reforms in Uganda. While analysing the data for this research, I often stumbled upon practices which closely relate to the ideas of developed governance and neo-liberal political conduct. The data I gathered during my fieldwork do not provide sufficient material for an analysis of the relation between neo-liberalism and religious practices. Therefore, an interpretative analysis of norms within neo-liberal development organisations can shed more light on how individuals approach conflicting norms within a non-religious context.

Moreover, this research provides insight in just one case in one country. Any conclusions are, therefore, bound to this particular context. Moreover, the results are under influence of specific cultural and historical events. For instance, Jones (Jones 2013) explains how in the Teso district in Uganda

Pentecostalism is much more focused on healing than in Iganga, where it is mainly focused on prosperity. A better insight into the relation between religion and development from a perspective focused on individuals would require more cases in similar and different contextual situations.

Finally, it would be interesting to observe how norms are interpreted in situations where secular NGO's execute projects in development. How do individuals in organisation interpret local and non-local norms and what are the authoritative structures that influence the interpretations of these norms? An analysis of whether these norms are appropriated to foreigners, locals, individuals or the organisation could provide insight in whether Musana's development model is applicable in secular development as well.

The Gospel of Being Independent

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questions asked during in-depth interviews

1. Can you explain what your daily activities/responsibilities at Musana are?
2. Could you tell something about how you came to join Musana and the reason for why you decided to join them?
3. Could you elaborate a bit about how the community and/or Musana has changed in the years since you have joined Musana?
4. How do you think the community and/or Musana will change in the coming years?
5. What do you think you should do to ensure that this place develops in the right direction? *---or---* How do you think you can contribute to these changes?
6. What do you regard as the most important value(s) of Musana?
7. Can you tell something about your religious life?
8. How did you become a Christian/Muslim and who were important in your life as Christian/Muslim?
9. What does your faith mean to you?
10. Being a Christian/Muslim, what choices in life do you make that are maybe different from people who are not a Christian or Muslim?
11. Can you tell something about how and where you grew up?
12. What is your age?
13. Do you maybe have some questions for me?

Appendix 2: Topics discussed during short interviews women's projects Musana

1. How they grew up
2. How their life looked like before interactions with Musana
3. How their life looked like after interaction with Musana
4. Their religion and the meaning of this religion to them
5. Their ideas for the future