EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN MALI

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Department of Public Policy and Administration

Abstract

of

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN MALI

by

Melissa Erin Mallory

Mali faces many economic and social hardships. Across the nation, Malian women organize to combat issues affecting family and community development, the most prominent being hunger and economic opportunity for women. Frustrated by an unstable food supply and lack of economic opportunity, Malian women form associations to explore options on how to generate income and improve conditions within their villages.

This thesis examines collaboration within women's organizations in rural Mali, and more specifically tries to identify factors associated with successful collaboration. The purpose of the research is twofold: 1) to determine whether or not the frameworks created for encouraging and supporting community collaboration in developed countries are applicable in a developing country context, and 2) to expand current knowledge on collaboration by studying collaborative efforts in the context of women's organizations in rural Mali.

In June 2011, I traveled to Mali to interview members from two women's associations in Markala, a rural commune in southern Mali. Twenty-four members from Muso Jigi and ABEF participated in the study through a structured interview process. Due to the fact that the results were so similar within each group and across both associations, I used descriptive statistics to explore the factors that were important to the collaborative process.

Descriptive statistics from the structured interviews indicate that the framework for collaboration in the United States is very similar to collaborative methods employed by both Muso Jigi and ABEF. Consensus-based decision-making, inclusiveness, fairness of process, facilitation, and stakeholder commitment are as imperative to collaboration in Markala as they are to collaborative practices in developed countries. Additionally, human and social capital increases as a result of joining a women's organization, as does the political power of women in Mali.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the many wonderful people in Mali who welcomed me into their homes and extended their love and support. To Yacouba and Haby Sangare, thank you for your hospitality, friendship, and teaching me how to make tea. The Sangare children, I can't wait to come back and draw you pictures. To Tamba Traore, his wives, and children, I am grateful for your knowledge, warmth, and inviting me into your home. The women of Muso Jigi and ABEF, thank you for sharing your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to community development. Additionally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my dear friend, Sekou Kante, who watched out for me and taught me a great deal while in Mali. I am indebted to Mali for showing me limitless happiness through community.

I also dedicate this thesis to my grandma. Maureen Costa was an amazing woman, grandmother, and friend.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women may be just the answer to some of the challenges facing Malian communities. Mali, a landlocked nation in West Africa, ranks among the poorest, most underdeveloped countries in the world (The World Bank, n.d.). Lacking basic infrastructure and a developed financial sector, the Malian government is a young democracy striving to improve key development sectors with very limited resources (African Economic Development, 2011). Government revenues rely heavily on foreign aid, as the average annual income is approximately 691 dollars (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Inadequate rainfall leaves subsistence farmers without the means to provide for their families. Due to the lack of economic opportunity and insufficient rainfall, many Malian families and communities face hunger and starvation. The Human Development Report 2011 by the United Nations Development Programme declared that 51.4 percent of Mali's population live below the income poverty line, with 68.4 percent of those living in poverty falling within the boundaries of severe poverty. Across the nation, Malian women organize to combat challenges affecting family and community development, the most prominent being hunger and few economic opportunities for women (See Figure 1 for a map of Mali).

Frustrated with food instability and lacking economic opportunities, Malian women formed associations to explore options for generating income and improve conditions in their villages. Income generating activities can include projects such as making soap and mosquito repellent cream, drying fruits and meats and producing millet to sell at the market (Masermann, et al., 1997). This thesis examines collaboration within women's organizations in rural Mali, and more specifically identifies factors associated with successful collaboration. The purpose of the research is twofold: 1) to determine whether or not the frameworks created for encouraging and

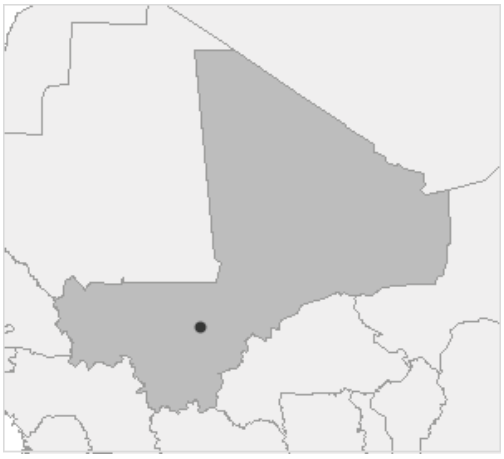
supporting community collaboration in developed countries are applicable in a developing country context, and 2) to expand current knowledge on organizational collaboration by studying collaboration in the context of women's organizations in rural Mali.

I traveled to Mali in June 2011. While there, I worked with African Sky, a non-profit, all volunteer organization that assists in empowering Malians to meet the needs within their communities and form relationships with communities in the United States. A Peace Corps volunteer, Dr. Scott Lacy, created African Sky after completing his service in Dissan, a rural community in Southern Mali. With the assistance of Dr. Lacy, I observed and spoke with two women's associations that took action to directly affect the lives of women and their village, Markala (Figure 2). I studied collaborative groups while acquiring my Master's in Public Policy and Administration at CSU Sacramento, and wanted to compare the factors making collaboration successful in a developing country such as Mali with the factors producing successful collaborations in the United States.

Figure 1. Mali, West Africa

Source: WolframAlpha

Figure 2. Markala, Mali



Source: World Visions Canada

This chapter presents some information about the current challenges facing Mali. Subsequently, I discuss the social roles of women. Additionally, I describe the research site, Markala, as well as provide background information on Muso Jigi and ABEF, the two women's associations at the focus of this case study. I conclude this chapter with my research agenda.

NEED FOR COLLABORATION: CHALLENGES FACING MALI

The Republic of Mali extends over 474,000 square miles, and as of 2010, houses a population just over 15.3 million people (U.S. Department of State, 2012; The World Bank, n.d.). Once a great empire, Mali went through a devastating period of French colonialism, followed by restructuring, independence, and political instability (U.S. Department of State, 2012). In 2011, the Human Development Index ranked Mali as the 13th poorest country in the world with 77 percent of the population living on less than two dollars per day (Oxfam, 2009).

Economy

Mali's economy is supported primarily by subsistence farming. The U.S. Department of State (2012) notes that approximately 70 percent of the labor force works in agriculture and/or fishing. Unfortunately, agriculture is susceptible to environmental circumstances. Labidi, et al. (2012) note that grain prices rose fifty to sixty percent over the five year average starting in 2008. Drought or minimal rainfall, disease, birds and locust attacks make the nation's primary industry a volatile one (World Food Programme, n.d.). Cotton and gold are the country's two main exports and are vulnerable to price fluctuations that occur due to internal and external causes such as political crisis in neighboring countries (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Although the government increased spending on public services, Mali relies heavily on aid from numerous donors such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, Arab Funds, and a number of

developed countries; Mali also received $461 million from the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact to develop agricultural land and the international airport (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Given the large geographic region and insufficient economic opportunities, key development sectors like infrastructure, public health and education remain underdeveloped and under-funded. With a relatively new democratic government, Mali is making slow, but much needed progress in key developing sectors.

Education

Although education in Mali has made substantial gains since 1990, the national education system lacks sufficient resources to serve all children within the primary and secondary age ranges (Pearce, C., Fourmy, S., & Kovach, H., 2009). Primary school enrollment of students, 7-12 years, increased from 21 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in 2008. Pearce, C., Fourmy, S., & Kovach, H. (2009) state that of the primary school net enrollment only 68 percent of boys and 53.9 percent of girls are enrolled. Close to 40 percent of school-aged children do not have access to primary education, and 60 percent of these children are girls. Primary school enrollment is low due to the fact that families are unable to purchase uniforms, books, supplies, and pay other fees required to attend public school. In 2008, the net enrollment for secondary students dwindled down to seven percent, which limits Mali's adult literacy rate, which lingers at about 23 percent (Pearce, C., Fourmy, S., & Kovach, H., 2009). The education system in Mali is in a dismal, albeit improving, state with many schoolrooms filled with teachers possessing limited education. Without sufficient funding, school sites, and qualified staff, Malian children lack access to a quality education that could be the key to a better future.

Health

Mali faces numerous health challenges related to poverty, malnutrition, and inadequate hygiene and sanitation. Mali's health and development indicators rank among the worst in the world. With more than half of the population living in poverty, health and sanitation issues plague the region. Forty-seven percent of children suffer from malnutrition and 2010 data indicated that Mali possesses a 19.4 percent mortality rate for children under the age of five (UNICEF, n.d.). Additionally UNICEF data indicates that in 2008, only 56 percent of the population was estimated to have access to improved drinking water sources. Thirty-six percent of the population in 2008 used improved sanitation facilities of some kind (UNICEF, n.d.). Additionally, there are thousands of villages and schools that lack access to clean water. Water-based diseases, including diarrhea and cholera plague the country. Unfortunately, medical facilities in Mali are very limited and medicine is in short supply. Poverty related challenges fetter the population's ability to combat health and nutrition issues.

WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Women's Organizations in Mali

Improving opportunities and access to resources for women is a primary objective of women's associations in Mali. During a thirty-year period when Mali had a single party system, two national women's organizations, Commission Sociale des Femmes and the Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali, began to spread throughout Mali. This enabled women to possess a greater role in local decision-making (De Jorio, 2000). De Jorio (2000) notes that over 1,000 women's associations and nongovernmental organizations were developed since 1991 with the aim of promoting women's development and women's groups (p. 325). De Jorio (2000) continues by stating that the primary reason women participated in politics was the improvement of the

domestic sphere, or the welfare of the women and their households. Women join these associations for various social and economic reasons, and many female leaders often organize small development projects to meet a need within their communities.

Muso Jigi and ABEF: Two Women's Associations in Markala, Mali

After a short time of being in Mali you get a strong sense of the people's commitment to family and community. Communities work together seamlessly, but only as a result of the collaborative family structure which Malian women are central in developing. In the village of Markala, two formal women's groups are doing what they can to improve the welfare of both families and the village of approximately 54,000 residents. Muso Jigi and ABEF's income generating projects provide revenue for the groups' operations and assist in reducing hunger for families in Markala during the toughest times of the year.

Muso Jigi is both an admirable and effective organization. Their mission is to facilitate the political capacities of women as they participate in the development of the community. The group takes women and teaches them how to sew, cultivate millet, make cereal, and many other food items known as value-added goods. Muso Jigi's main room is filled with candied peanuts, dried fruits, meats and vegetables, syrups, jams, and cereals filled the cabinet next to the group's handmade bags and embroidery. A sewing room was adjacent to the main room. It was here that the women worked on different projects commissioned by private citizens who have heard of the fine tailoring work of Muso Jigi.

The second women's organization I worked with in Markala is the Association pour le Bien Etre de la Famille (ABEF), or the Association for Family Welfare. Initially the women worked with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the area, but when the NGO departed they were left without the structure an organization can provide a group of people. It was then

that the women formed ABEF. The work of ABEF contributes to the development of the community and family. Women come together using their collective skills to teach the group how to make different products that can be sold in the market, or used at home. The groups' many projects include producing soap, peanut butter, and a community cereal bank to generate income and mosquito repellent cream to help protect individuals from malaria. Through hard work and determination, the women of ABEF are now completely self-sufficient. Prior to taking adult education classes, the women needed the assistance to keep the group's finances in order. Independent, the women are successfully managing their own books. As difficult as it is to run a successful business, the talented women of ABEF are doing quite well. After purchasing supplies, women make a little money to take home to their families.

The purpose of both organizations goes beyond the interests of the individual members or the groups themselves, empowering women throughout the community to improve the quality of life for many families in Markala. The women's organizations provide the women a place to socialize, to develop skills, to generate income and to grow as individuals. ABEF and Muso Jigi encourage women to actively participate in collective decision-making processes regarding the structure and objectives of the organization as well as projects and their implementation. In January 2010, ABEF and Muso Jigi hosted African Sky's First Annual Mothers and Daughters Summit. Both groups have worked with African Sky, focusing on community development by bridging communities between the U.S. and Mali. African Sky and Malian women's associations planned and implemented a summit where eight women's associations met for three days of workshops, discussions and lectures. Each of the organizations possessed knowledge in specific areas: health, water and sanitation, organizational development and income generating activities. With the support of Muso Jigi and ABEF, African Sky was able to facilitate the Women's Summit empowering women from seven rural communities in Mali to develop new skills that

would benefit their families and communities. The Women's Summit was a success, encouraging the development of women's associations in other communities and illustrating what women can accomplish when they work together.

Income Generating Activities

Muso Jigi works tirelessly with the goal of assisting women and their families, ensuring food stability during the hungry season. This is accomplished through their cereal bank project. The millet grown for the cereal bank provides a food reserve for members and their families experiencing need. Depending upon need, millet loans may be absorbed by the group budget to assist members. From June through August, market price for millet is high making it difficult for families to purchase an adequate supply. Muso Jigi supplies women in the village access to cheaper millet from the cereal bank to help combat hunger and assist in family development. In addition to buying millet throughout the year to store in their cereal bank, the women buy the seed, plant, and harvest their own millet and store it until they go to market. Although the women sell their millet at a lower price than the market prices, which are elevated by the demand during the hungry season, Muso Jigi is still able to make a profit from selling millet and cereal. Profits from this income generating activity go into a savings account providing monetary assistance to families in need, paying for group supplies and for seeds for the next planting cycle.

Much like Muso Jigi, ABEF is committed to helping women and their families in Markala. A smaller nonprofit organization, ABEF's main income generating activity is peanut butter production. The group is fortunate to have the expertise of members from Kita, which is regarded as the best region for peanuts and peanut butter in Mali. The women agree that the peanut butter they make is a better quality than the peanut butter sold at the local market. ABEF wanted to provide women with the option of purchasing a higher quality peanut butter at a cost

below the current market price. The women sell the peanut butter at regular market prices rather than increase the cost when high demand ensures the sellers can get a higher price for the product. In addition to their community cereal bank, the peanut butter allows many women in the group and in the village to supplement their families' income and diet, helping reduce the difficulties during the hungry season.

The women's organizations are cohesive organizations whose manner of working together is both efficient and effective. Understanding the factors of collaboration within these women's groups provides information on the ways in which women work together within rural Malian villages. While women in the community continue to join ABEF and Muso Jigi to better their lives and the lives of their families, many more women in the region desire membership to women's organizations for the same reasons. However, without the knowledge or proper guidance, the women are left with limited opportunities to organize a sustainable association. Dissemination of the research findings may help other women's groups by providing models of successful collaboration within an organization.

Research Agenda

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on women and development in Mali as well as best practices for collaboration by identifying factors of effective collaboration within organizations in the United States. Chapter 3 describes the structured interviews I conducted in June 2011 with members of two women's organizations that implemented income-generating projects using collaborative methods. Research methodology and data collection are also described in detail. Chapter 4 analyzes the interview data and reports findings on factors of effective collaboration in rural Mali. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by offering a comparison of collaboration in the

United States and in rural Mali. Finally, I explore international policy implications resulting in the study of successful collaborations in the developing world.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Women in development" is a development approach utilized by international aid communities that focuses on the needs of women. USAID's policy on gender equality and women empowerment illustrates how sustainable development increases when reducing the gender gaps in various fields such as education, the economy, health, and other areas (Grown, 2012). Women's voluntary associations (WVA's) are one mechanism by which women are slowly closing these gaps. In this section, I discuss women's voluntary associations as a collaborative mechanism for individual and community development in Africa. The literature review is organized into two parts: (1) a brief overview of women's voluntary associations, and (2) factors for effective collaboration. In order to gain an understanding of WVA's and membership, I briefly review the research on the organizational structure and barriers of admission. Furthermore, I discuss the purposes for these associations as it pertains to building human and social capital. Discussions of political advantages and access to public goods conclude part one of the literature review. In the second part of this literature review, factors for effective collaboration as identified by different researchers. This research provides essential background knowledge on collaborative women's groups in Africa and how group membership assists women in their daily lives.

PART I: WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Women in Development

Soetan (1999) and other authors state that African women are among the poorest populations in Africa. They are burdened with a disproportionate share of responsibilities that,

for the majority, are unattainable due to inadequate resources. In 1989, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa suggested that instead of structural adjustment programs, which focused on top-down development, a bottom-up strategy of empowering community organizations would increase access to resources and local decision-making processes (Soetan, 1999). Women's organizations give women the power to access these resources and the skills to participate in a formal decision-making process.

Women are charged with the welfare of their households. They provide food and clothing for the family, money for their children's educations and health care needs (Thomas, 1988; Tripp, 2001). The literature shows that women's income, in contrast with men's income, directly contributes to the welfare of the family as it goes to the household and their children's educations while men purchase items that benefit themselves (Kevane, 2004; Mehra, 1997; Trip, 2001). With a disproportionate share of the responsibilities, women work long hours to provide for their household. In sub-Saharan Africa, women produce approximately 70 percent of subsistence food (Thomas, 1988). Therefore, women contribute food and monetary income to the household from selling their harvest provided the crops get enough water. As part of a women's group, members gain access to additional resources for the household.

Women's Voluntary Associations in Africa

WVA's are widespread throughout Africa and provide women with opportunities to meet the challenges they face on a daily basis. As members, women discuss different ideas and projects, participate in consensus decision-making processes, and hold leadership positions not readily available to them in their society due to cultural norms (Modic, 1994). Greenberg and Okani (2001), from the Women in Development Technical Assistance Project (WID Tech), state that women's groups are critical assets in development due to their ability to work

collaboratively. Culturally, women work and socialize together from a young age, so they are already accustomed to group communication and finding collective solutions to problems. Although women may not work within a formal organizational structure in their daily lives, there is a hierarchy within the family and community that women follow.

Although the structures of WVA's vary from one organization to the next, the literature shows much consistency within these structures. Women's groups employ horizontal structures and are democratic in nature (Gugerty and Kremer, 2008). Most groups possess an administrative core consisting of a chair or president, secretary, and treasurer. Many WVA's meet bi-weekly or monthly to discuss objectives and income-generating activities, work on projects, resolve problems, and/or celebrate an event (Modic, 1994; Masermann, et al., 1997). In order to acquire capital, many of the organizations collect monthly dues, which are used to pursue investment opportunities and provide revolving credit to members (Thomas, 1988). In a study of eight income-generating groups in Uganda, Pickering, et al. (1996) surveyed members and found that each group had a formal structure and contained between nine and twenty members. These groups paid membership fees to fund income-generating projects. Structures of WVA's somewhat reflect the cultural structure women adhere to in their daily lives while working together in their households and within the community.

Barriers to Participation

Numerous factors play a role in whether women are able to participate in WVA's. The literature identifies time constraints, cultural expectations, lack of educational or professional training, and lack of resources (Pickering, et al., 1996; Masermann, et al., 1997; Greenberg and Okani, 2001). Time constraints are a large concern for many women due to their many responsibilities. Women work long days providing income for the family, tending to their daily

domestic duties and agricultural workload. Traditional culture limits women's abilities, but these constraints vary within regions in each country (Masermann, et al., 1997). Different groups within a region may not consider it appropriate for women to participate in decision-making processes (Greenberg and Okani, 2001). Husbands sometimes resist their wives participation in women's associations. Pickering, et al. (1996) and Masermann, et al. (1997) remark upon the fact that some women hesitate to join women's associations due to low literacy rates and lack of professional or technical training. Without education, many women feel they may not be able to participate in organizational activities. Furthermore, economic constraints play a factor in women abstaining from group activity. Lacking material resources, such as equipment and cash, women felt they could not contribute to the group's activities (Masermann, et al., 1997; Mequanent, 1998). These barriers to group membership prevent many women form joining women's associations.

Purposes of Women's Voluntary Associations

To meet the needs of specific groups, women organize for many purposes. Many women join WVA's to deal with the responsibilities they hold, as previously described. These associations are extremely beneficial to rural or low-income households in that they offer women opportunities to make additional income. Groups participate in collective labor, income-generating opportunities, and permit women to gain entry to credit, savings, and occasional investments. Additionally, WVA's provide social advantages such as support and guidance to members and their communities. Women's social and human capital increases as well as their access to information, and civic involvement by supplying communities with access to public goods. Women join WVA's for various reasons according to the needs they must meet in their daily lives or to improve their status in the community.

Women and the Informal Sector

For African women, access to formal economic markets is limited due to a lack of education and required skills needed in the formal sector. Women require flexibility to combine reproductive and productive responsibilities (Masermann, et al., 1997). As opposed to the formal sector of employment and economic markets, the informal sector is characterized by unregistered small businesses or operations that do not comply with government regulations (Masermann, et al., 1997). Relying on family labor and local resources, operations in these informal markets have low amounts of capital, limited barriers to entry, are extremely competitive, and possess an unskilled workforce (Masermann, et al., 1997). Tripp (2001) explains that the informal sector provides employment opportunities for a large sector of society that would otherwise be unemployed. Tripp (2001) continues by stating that women in Africa constitute the majority of employment within this informal market. The retail trade sector lies within the boundaries of the informal market. In the Congo, 94 percent of women are in retail trade while Gambia and Zambia have close to 90 percent of women are employed in this sector (Tripp, 2001). Acquiring skills through women's organizations allows women entry into the informal sector to develop small-scale micro-enterprises.

Economic Advantages of WVA'S

Human capital theory indicates that investments in people result in individual and societal economic benefits. Education is often cited as the primary human capital investment in research as it contributes to other types of investments such as nutrition and health (Sweetland, 1996). Research discusses several types of education, but in this thesis focuses on informal education, which is acquired through domestic duties or work. In the case of women's education, many women learn new skills from the associations they join. These skills allow them to not only

improve their economic capabilities, but also provide more resources to the household. For example, women who learn how to make soap, dried meats, or how to read can then use these skills to supplement household needs. Education and skills gained from WVA's add to the individual's skill set, and contribute to her personal growth and provide greater access to income-generating activities.

WVA's supply women with mechanisms to gain access to income-generating activities (Thomas, 1988; Abwunza, 1995; Robertson, 1996; Masermann, et al., 1997; Gugerty and Kremer, 2008). The literature reveals a variety of income-generating activities women produce through working in theses associations. Through WVA's, women learn how to make, sell, and in a few cases export, items such as dried fruits and vegetables, honey, cooking oil, cloth, soap, and syrups (Masermann, et al., 1997). Another study noted that women engage in cutting and selling firewood, raising small farm animals, and making pottery (Thomas, 1988). Although craft production was listed as an income-generating activity in several articles, Pickering, et al. (1996), Abwunza (1995), and Masermann, et al. (1997) found that craft production was common among many households, and therefore demand for these products were low in the informal market.

Collective labor is another manner in which women to earn subsistence income and cash. "By organizing themselves into groups working together as an agricultural labour force women…have assured for themselves the benefits of more regular income-earning opportunities and have made themselves less vulnerable to the whims of the individual employers" (Thomas, 1988, p.416). Women organize to generate income both individually and collectively. On an individual level, the women work collectively on each other's farms to ensure stable income. During peak agricultural seasons, the group may also accept paid jobs by community members to work on coffee farms, constructing homes, and collecting firewood (Thomas, 1988). Income from these association jobs was distributed among the members for additional income.

Opportunities like these assisted in meeting the basic household needs for the women, and provided them additional revenue to save for educational expenses or larger future purchases.

Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) is another popular type of women's organization in Africa. O'Reilly (1996) explains the process quite simply: women make regular monetary contributions to the group, then money from that account is distributed to an individual member during her rotation. The purpose of revolving-loans is to generate capital for individual members in the organization (Geertz, 1962; Kurtz, 1973; Little, 1973; Thomas, 1985). Different ROSCAs have varying restrictions on loans; some groups may need to approve a member's purchase, while others ROSCAs allow the recipient to choose whether she uses the loan for domestic or business items. Loan defaults are rare because the women understand the importance of repayment both for the individuals and to the group (O'Reilly, 1996). ROSCAs are an important strategy to help women with few resources gain credit to assist with larger purchases for agricultural production or household responsibilities.

Women's organizations contribute to economic and community development providing public goods that the government is either unable or unwilling to provide. Many associations have successfully implemented a wide array of services within their communities. Barkan, McNulty, and Ayeni (2001) state that the most successful "hometown" voluntary associations in Nigeria constructed primary and secondary schools, health clinics and hospitals and basic infrastructure needs such as power lines, roads and access to clean water. Educational and health needs are at the forefront of women's concerns, so when a WVA can provide these goods, they do so. Collectively, the Kirogo Women's Group in Weithaga, Kenya have built nursery schools and constructed a social hall where adult literacy and sewing classes were offered (Thomas, 1988). With a willingness to support community needs and infrastructure, women's groups foster widespread community support.

Social Advantages of WVA'S

In addition to economic advantages, women's associations provide access to different social aspects of life. Increased social capital not only permits women's networks to grow, but it provides a place for women to share their struggles and accomplishments. Additionally, information about the community and the world is shared between women in these informal organizations. As women come together, accumulate knowledge and are exposed to new information their social and political power builds (especially if they provide public goods to their communities). These are a few of the social advantages that women gain from participating in women's associations.

Social capital increases for women when they join women's organizations. Social capital focuses on the development of social relations or networks that produce increase benefits to members of the networks (Portes, 1998). Gugerty and Kremer (2008) note that WVA's provide a type of social insurance to members who are sick or unable to contribute the same level of labor inputs as other members of the group. These "less capable" members still receive an equal distribution of agricultural production, illustrating that the group values assisting members in need because they realize that one day they too many require help from the group. Due to the fact that many African nations possess a social structure that revolves around the clan, or the tribe to which you belong, women who marry and move away from their homes lack social networks after marriage. WVA's are particularly important to elderly women who have lost many members of their family or women recently married to husbands who are from different villages far from their homes. In an interview conducted by Tripp (2001), a woman explicated the idea of why accumulating social capital was so important to women's associations. The Ugandan woman stated that, "you cannot survive if you only rely on yourself, we all need one another"

(Tripp, 2001, p.5). There is a substantial belief in mutual assistance among African women. Wallman et al. (1996) state that forgiveness, neighborliness, and respectability are the ways of life for both rural and urban communities. Women's networks build trust and reciprocity as investment, so if a need occurs in the future, their needs will be met.

Solidarity is a significant theme within women's organizations. WVA's bring women with similar access to resources and needs (O'Reilly, 1996). The group setting provides a place for women to unite around common struggles, concerns, and issues. As Abwunza (1995) discovered, women's groups that were not economically profitable still received tremendous social support from the solidarity of the group. Tripp (2001) describes many African nations as ones with a "moral economy" (p. 5). Survival is the driving force behind the solidarity of most WVA's, and the women believe that their success and well being are dependent on that of other members. Due to this "moral economy", African women lower market prices for poorer people, sharing products and ideas, in order to provide for families in crisis because they value mutual assistance and community development over increased profits.

With limited access to all types of news media, women's organizations provide channels of communication by which women receive information, both informally and formally. Traditional channels of communicating information for women include word-of-mouth, celebrations, visits from nongovernmental organizations, and other groups (Greenberg and Okani, 2001). Thomas (1988), Barkan, et al. (1991), and Greenberg and Okani (2001) all contend that women's organizations are mechanisms for receiving information. Local government officials and NGO's will sometimes plan visits to WVA's to discuss different matters, whether it be related to health, family planning, nutrition or economic issues. Women then improve their lives, households and communities by applying this new information and sharing it with others. This

new knowledge disseminated through women's groups equips women to make more informed decisions and better participate in their community.

Political Advantages of WVA'S

Political capacities also develop as a result of joining a women's organization. Social power accrues with membership to WVA's. By participating in collective decision-making through the organization, the women gain a greater influence in household decision-making (Thomas, 1988; Gugerty and Kremer, 2008). House-Midamba (1996) states the WVA's "articulate visions and goals that promise to link the state more effectively with civil society" and through these goals they are able to effect society's transformation (p. 290). Although men possess a greater political power than women, it is important to note that women participate both informally and formally in political processes. In their field assessment of women's political participation in the decentralization of Mali, Greenberg and Okani (2001) report that women, who are extremely familiar with the concerns of the community, are consulted by their husbands on village issues. The women advise their husbands in one of two ways. Either, the women discuss the issue with their husbands, or the next day the women hold a meeting to discuss the issue collectively, thus advising their husbands with a unified voice. Additionally, and more formally, the WVA's may reunite to discuss the issue and then send a representative to the men's meeting to express a unified view from the women's association. Whether privately or publicly, women influence political decisions. As the economic interests and social capital of women's associations are expanded, women become increasingly aware of the needs to address community issues such as infrastructure for transportation, communication and economic advancement. By working together, the women possess a greater influence over local policies and priorities in their villages.

Conclusion

The ubiquity of women's groups in Africa illustrates a necessity to fulfill several needs or address the various concerns of women. The functions of WVA's vary and many times overlap. Although there are barriers to joining these groups, the advantages are huge. Women's voluntary associations afford women economic and social advantages that they would otherwise not obtain on their own. The collaborative way in which these women work foster an environment that promotes consensus-based decision-making and an aggregation of human and social capital that assist women in their daily lives and with their households.

PART II: FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

The purpose of the second part of this chapter is to explore the literature on collaborative policy in the United States, specifically factors or variables that contribute to effective collaborative processes. Although this study proposes a framework for collaboration in a developing world context, it is necessary to review existing literature for two reasons: (1) it provides information on the variables that are necessary for effective collaboration, and (2) it provides a foundation for comparative studies on collaboration in an industrial and developing world context. This study intends to further this body of literature by identifying elements necessary to construct a framework for collaboration in the developing world.

I identify three themes that are important in creating a collaborative process: inclusiveness, fairness of process, and consensus-based decision-making. Each category consists of subtopics found to be important to the collaborative process. Many of the categories themselves overlap, so it is difficult to completely separate the intertwined elements of collaboration. After introducing each factor that contributes to successful collaboration, I provide a definition of each theme for clarification purposes.

Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness refers to both the involvement of stakeholders with diverse interests and procedural fairness (reconciliation of power and resource imbalances). Stakeholders affected by the policy issue, especially those who have the power to impede or block implementation of the collaborative group's recommendations, should be included in the discussions exploring innovative solutions that could lead to win-win solutions for agencies and the collective. Power and resource imbalances are a reality among stakeholder groups, but identifying these imbalances and taking measures to safeguard against the potential negative effects of such differences within collaboration facilitates a sense of equity.

It is imperative to the success of collaboration to involve all affected interest groups. Stakeholders with power to block the implementation of a project must be included in order for the collaborative to reach a valid agreement. Involving relevant stakeholders is a necessary element for effective collaboration (Straus, 2002; Keough & Blahna, 2006; Daley, 2008; Firehock, 2010; Leach, 2011). Keoguh and Blahan (2006) identify eight important factors in collaborative ecosystem management. After involving relevant stakeholders, the authors highlight the significance of stakeholder influence as the third influential factor. Stakeholder influence refers to whether input from the group is validated and impacts final decisions, constituting meaningful participation. When stakeholders feel that their contributions are valuable to the process, they are more committed to active participation.

Fairness of Process

Inclusiveness is also affiliated with feelings of equality, access to participation and decision-making within the collaborative process. Hierarchical structures are not a part of collaborative design; therefore power imbalances must be addressed and minimized within the

group environment. Firehock (2011) states that prior research indicates that Community Based-Collaboratives (CBCs) use their local influence to change processes and overcome traditional power imbalances. CBCs influence the decision-making process; however, in most cases, they do not have the authority to confirm, reject or implement policy. Even though CBCs lack absolute authority, they provide new ways to engage the public in resource management. Leach (2011) expands this understanding by developing a framework to help structure our knowledge of CBCs and factors that lead to their success. Leach summarizes empirical research describing the "essential building blocks of successful CBCs", or theoroids. Theoroids four through six describe the necessity for all stakeholders to view the process as fair. Without fairness, it is difficult for a collaborative process to be completely inclusive. During the design process, participants developed ground rules to ensure that individuals or workgroups receive equal time to speak, while a facilitator fosters an environment of equity through his/her neutrality. Additionally, Leach (2011) states that transparency is needed to achieve equal treatment of participants and professional facilitators are helpful for the enforcement of procedural rules, which contribute towards a perception of equality. Through a fair and inclusive process, members of the collaborative can focus on consensus building.

Consensus Building

Consensus building occurs at each phase of collaboration and is necessary for reaching agreement. A primary reason for using the collaborative process in politics is in cases of stalemate where stakeholders are legislatively mandated to identify a solution. In many cases, stakeholders have been entrenched in their positions for years, even decades, fighting the "other side," further deteriorating relationships between stakeholders. Adversarial environments usually create alternatives satisfy the needs of one group of stakeholders, but not others. Collaboration

uses interest-based negotiation requiring consensus-based approaches to define a problem, generate alternatives and make decisions on a number of issues including process design (how the group will move through the phases of collaboration). Consensus building fosters trust and builds relationships within the group (Strauss, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2003; Leach and Sabatier, 2005; Ansell and Gash, 2007; Leach, 2011). Under the umbrella of consensus building, studies found elements of trust building to include authentic dialogue, development of common knowledge, incentivizing participation and the decision-making process.

Trust is an important factor in effective collaboration; it involves faith in another's proclivity to negotiate fairly and honestly with respect for other viewpoints. Ansell and Gash (2007) conclude, for collaboration to be successful, stakeholders should participate in face-to-face discussions, trust building, and the development of commitment and shared understanding. Collaboration and negotiations can last weeks, months, even years. Through understanding the interdependence of stakeholder interests, stakeholders are more likely to commit to working together on future policy regarding their issue. During this time, personal relationships are likely to develop over the course of face-to-face negotiations (Straus, 2002; Innes & Booher, 2003; Leach & Sabatier, 2005). Investing in and building personal relationships assists the process of reaching an agreement among stakeholders. Due to the fact that trust is such a substantive aspect of collaboration, structures must be in place to facilitate trust building.

Innes and Booher (2003) recognize that consensus building can only happen through authentic dialogue. The authors indicate that for a dialogue to be authentic it must meet certain requirements: each spokesperson must legitimately represent their interest, and they must speak sincerely, with clarity and accuracy. These types of dialogue, along with the ownership of designing their own process by which the stakeholders participate, are necessities when working on consensus phase by phase. David Straus (2002) proceeds to demonstrate that consensus is

built through a six-phase process: perception, definition, analysis, generation of alternatives, evaluation and decision-making. Straus states that consensus is necessary during every step of the problem solving process, and that by getting consensus at each phase you are improving relationships and ensuring easy implementation of an alternative.

In collaborative ecosystem management, Keough and Blahna (2006) list the "consensus group approach" as the fourth variable affecting the success of the collective. This approach convenes stakeholders to work on issues relating to a specific ecosystem using a consensus-based process. "Consensus approaches seek a balance among a broad range of values and are thus a key element of collaborative processes" (Keough & Blahna, 2006, p.1375). The function of collaboration is for a group of diverse stakeholders to assemble, explore an issue, generate alternatives and make a decision collectively that will provide recommendations and/or policy options for stakeholders and decision-makers to implement.

Conclusion

African women work collaboratively within their households, communities and women's organizations. Due to the fact that many women know members in the women's association in which they join they're joining, and African women tend to unify over issues of survival, celebration, and economic opportunity, there already exists a trust amongst members. They discuss problems and solutions using consensus-based decision-making strategies which include all members in the process. WVA's are an integral part of the lives of their members and the collaborative mechanisms by which they solve their problems are consistent with those of the literature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this exploratory study is to describe female stakeholder perceptions of important elements of collaboration in rural Mali. In order to accomplish this, I needed to work with someone who is fluent in French and Bamanakan, who possesses preexisting relationships with the participants and who is knowledgeable about Malian culture. Working with Dr. Scott Lacy, a professor of Anthropology at Fairfield University, Connecticut and Executive Director of African Sky, allowed me to access two women's groups in Markala, Mali. Assisted by Dr. Lacy and a Malian translator, I visited one village in Mali and asked 24 women from two income-generating women's organizations about the collaborative processes of their organizations. Through face-to-face structured interviews, Malian women shared their perceptions on stakeholder inclusiveness, decision-making, fairness of the process, and several other aspects of collaboration.

The second objective of the study is to make preliminary comparisons between collaborative structures in the United States and local collaborations in Mali. To address this objective, I use the framework for collaboration in the United States as identified in Chapter 2, the literature review. Interview data collected from participants in Mali supply this research with preliminary information on the perceptions of Malian women on local collaboration in their country.

PRINCIPLE VARIABLES

While research focuses on stakeholder perceptions of different aspects of effective collaboration, it is necessary to define "effective collaboration". For this study, effective

collaboration, this study's first primary variable, signifies that the group reached a collective agreement on a project and fulfilled project implementation. The literature review provides two intended outcomes for collaboration: meeting project goals and developing human and social capital. The primary test of effective collaboration is whether or not the group successfully addresses the need(s) for which they are created. In order to measure the *effectiveness* of each of the partnerships in Mali, participants responded to two interview questions: (1) whether agreement was reached on a project, and (2) whether the project was fully implemented. A secondary outcome of collaboration, my second and third principal variables, is the building of human and social capital. Section IV of the interview protocol includes questions on the development of human and social capital. Questions regarding human capital include what skills women learned from the group and if they received benefits from their participation in income-generating activities. Social capital questions focus on whether long-term friendships or professional relationships developed as a result of the partnership, and if the partnership would continue to work together on future projects. Data collected by the structured interviews, indicate whether the collaborations were successful.

SECONDARY VARIABLES

I began preliminary selection of explanatory variables during my review of empirical research on collaboration. Explanatory variables guided development of the questions asked during the interview, and are explained in greater detail in the interview protocol section. Explanatory variables include: stakeholder interests, inclusiveness, consensus and decision making process, group knowledge, fairness of process, facilitation, stakeholder commitment, project implementation, gender perspective and demographic information. Variable operationalization is illustrated within each section of the interview protocol in the following

sections. Demographic information consists of place of residence and whether participants are married, have children and grandchildren. Limitations on demographic data are covered in the Unexpected Complications section later in the paper.

CASE SELECTION

This study focuses on rural women's collaboratives working on key development issues in their villages, including income generating activities. Markala was a good village to study because it is boasts two successful women's organizations, Muso Jigi and ABEF. Within Markala, the two collaborative groups are similar in demographic characteristics that fit the requirements for selection. I deliberately chose these partnerships for two reasons. First, due to funding limitations, a village that possessed two women's organizations was ideal. Secondly, due to cultural and language barriers, I needed partnerships with the NGO, African Sky, to provide some kind of connection between the women and myself. This last component was important because social relationships are extremely significant in Mali, and in order to acquire quality data, a previously established relationship increased the validity of the responses.

DATA COLLECTION

Upon review of the literature, I determined that a survey, given through a structured interview process to mitigate literacy issues, would be an appropriate tool for data collection when trying to identify and determine effective factors of collaboration. Due to the fact that participants engage in an interview process, I define the survey as the interview protocol. Surveys increase reliability in the study as participants undergo a standard approach, reducing unpredictability in both small and large samples. As this is exploratory research, the sample size is relatively small. Collecting qualitative data in Mali is extremely time intensive with many

cultural, gender and language barriers to overcome. First and foremost, socializing must take place before data collection can occur. Structured interview questions were revised multiple times in the U.S., and then repeatedly after arriving in Mali and consulting with Dr. Scott Lacy, a cultural anthropologist who has worked in Mali for over 17 years. I vetted the interview protocol with a young Malian woman and met with Kaly Traore (my Malian translator) to finalize and translate the interview protocol prior to the interviews.

During a two-week period in June and July 2011, I conducted structured in-person interviews that included Kaly Traore, the interviewee and me. Due to literacy restrictions, the interviews were highly structured using an interview protocol with relatively few open-ended questions. Responses were then translated and transcribed onto a spreadsheet. An advantage of face-to-face interviews is that the respondent can ask for clarification increasing the reliability of the responses.

Unexpected Complications and Cultural Considerations

Field research in Mali was complex due to cultural differences. In the United States, I am accustomed to making schedules and getting straight to work. Malians work along a different timeframe. It is considered rude to begin work related activities without first taking time (sometimes several days) to visit with your host family and new friends. During the first four days, I immersed myself in Malian culture, focusing on learning important phrases and vocabulary in Bamanankan. Upon learning of the birth of a new relative to my host father, we postponed our trip to Markala a couple of days to attend the naming ceremony. This unexpected event left even less time for data collection.

Once in Markala, the interview protocol needed to be finalized. I met up with a young Malian woman, fluent in Bamanankan and possessing advanced English skills. Due to the fact that Malians live in two separate social worlds: one for men and one for women I initially wanted

a female translator to make the participants feel as comfortable as possible. Although I wanted this young lady to translate for me, it was clear by the third question that I needed someone who understood the purpose of my research. Even though she could translate the language, she missed the meaning behind numerous questions within the interview protocol. Kaly Traore, an English teacher at a secondary school in Bamako, realized that the young woman did not fully understand the purpose of the questions and intervened to assist me in finalizing the interview protocol. Many participants may be unfamiliar with academic terms such as authentic dialogue or stakeholders. For this reason, Mr. Traore and I worked together for an extended amount of time to discuss the specific word choices in the interview protocol. His expertise permitted me to adjust the interview protocol to fit the participants' communication style and culture. Understanding that the young Malian woman could provide her perspective on the cultural issues that some of the questions presented, the three of us worked together to ensure that the women would fully understand the interview questions. Kaly wrote a version of the interview protocol in Bamanankan, and then translated it into English to verify that the questions in Bamanankan matched the English version of the interview protocol.

Many questions were difficult to quantify for various reasons. Respondents' ages were unknown as birthdays are not recorded, remembered or celebrated each year as they are in the United States. Numerous women did not know their age; in order to describe age, I asked if the women were married, if they had children and if they had grandchildren. Respondents consist of recently married Malian women and women with children and women with grandchildren and were coded as such. Additionally, inquiring into the educational achievements of the participants may make the women feel uncomfortable or insecure. As I am consciously building a relationship with these women with the hopes of collaborating with them for future research, I did not want to risk damaging these nascent relationships. Demographic variables such as education

and age, which apply to collaborative groups and stakeholders in the United States, are irrelevant in Mali. Although the education level of each participant is important, I decided not to include this question in my interview protocol after discussing it with Dr. Lacy. First, educational data is difficult to collect due to the fact that many Malians do not have access to primary and secondary education. Those who did attend school for a short period of time may not have enough of a skill set to be deemed as literate. Per the literature review, one barrier to joining women's organizations was the perception by women that an education was necessary for membership. Furthermore, due to the fact that this was my first visit with the women's group, I did not want to embarrass any women by asking if they attended school.

Due to the fact that interviews required translating, time was a huge factor in the success of the interviews. For this reason, the interview questions were repeatedly modified and focused, and included numerous closed-ended questions. Close-ended questions using the Likert Scale (1-5) were modified to "Never, Sometimes, or Always" responses because of the participants' lack of familiarity with the measurement tool. Narrowing response choices intended to reduce interview times and provide short responses where appropriate. Although Kaly reminded the women of their response choices, it was seldom that the women adhered to the response structure because they wanted to share their experiences.

SAMPLE

The sample only includes women who participated in the collaborative effort from the beginning of the project, whether it was making peanut butter or raising millet for the cereal bank. All the women in each association partook in their respective income-generating activity; therefore all members met the criteria to participate in the survey. Of the sixty-six women who were eligible to participate in the study, the sample consists of twenty-four individuals from two

different collaborative organizations or partnerships. All sixty-six members of the two women's associations were invited to participate, but due to family and economic responsibilities, many women were unavailable to participate. Twelve of the twenty-four women in ABEF elected to participate in the interviews yielding a response rate of fifty percent. Twelve of the forty-two women in Muso Jigi chose to participate in the interviews for a twenty-nine percent response rate. All of the women live in the area where the collaborative implemented an income-generating activity to assist in meeting economic and nutritional needs.

Due to the fact that this is an extremely small convenience sample, and not a large random sampling of the population, the validity of the data may not necessarily lead to conclusions that can be extrapolated to other women's associations in Mali or Africa. Using the twelve responses from ABEF, and the twelve responses from Muso Jigi, I will analyze responses to construct generalizations of each respective group as a whole. Cautiously, I use all responses to construct modest generalizations of women's associations participating in income-generating activities in Mali. Small samples possibly contain other limitations including an increased standard error, reduced internal and external validity as well as decreased reliability. Measurement error and sampling error increase as does coverage error with such a small sample of responses.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL, VARIABLE OPERATIONALIZATION, AND CODING

The interview protocol consists of four parts: about the collaborative and stakeholder, project implementation, human and social capital and demographic information. I crafted the questions to explore whether a collaborative framework utilized in the United States is applicable in rural collaborations in Mali. I discuss specific questions within each section to illustrate how each interview question is linked to specific variables, and then the coding for participant

responses. Tables contain coding for each question, and rather than discuss coding for every question, I only discuss the coding for open-ended questions. Many of the questions were limited to yes and no responses, or responses consisting of never, sometimes, or always options. Open-ended questions within the interview protocol allow the respondent to further detail the elements of collaboration. This permits me to collect any data that is dissimilar to the framework for collaboration laid out in the literature review. Each section helps construct a holistic picture of the two collaborative efforts in rural Mali.

Section I: Collaborative Factors

The first group of questions deals with characteristics of the association and its stakeholders. The first two questions explore the interests of both the women and the group by asking why the organization was formed and why each participant joined the group. Questions 1c. through 5 cover perceptions of inclusiveness and the fairness of the collaborative processes. Fairness and equality are essential elements of effective collaboration. Per my review of the literature, stakeholders will not fully participate in an unfair process; thus greatly reducing the effectiveness of the collaboration. Question six considers decision-making processes. Consensus-based approaches to decision making, is another strategy in creating a fair and just process where stakeholders participate on a level playing ground within the group. Group knowledge and facilitation are considered in the questions seven and eight. The ninth question addresses the structure of the group, while the next one discusses stakeholder commitment. Stakeholder commitment is touched on again in the subsequent section as participants respond to whether parties fulfilled their obligations towards project implementation and if the partnership will continue to work towards their goals. These questions address the organization and

commitment of the collaborative partnership. *Table 1-1 Section I: Collaborative Factors* illustrates variable operationalization through the interview questions, shown below.

Table 1-1
Section I: Collaborative Factors

VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Purpose	PURPOSE	1a. Why did the women form a group?	1=To help with the development of the community and family 2=To work with other women, share ideas, and make money
Interests	INTRST	1b. Why did you join the women's group?	1= I wanted to work with other women 2= I wanted to learn to make products 3= It's more profitable working in a group 4=I wanted to work with other women and make products
Inclusiveness: Membership	INCLUMEM	1c. Can anyone join the women's group?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Common Knowledge	CKN	2. The women's group helps me understand the problems in Markala.	1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always
Inclusiveness: Sharing Ideas	INCLUSPK	3a. Everyone can speak and share their ideas.	1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always
Fairness of Process	FAIR	3b. When you talk to the group, do you feel okay saying something the other women might not agree with?	1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always
Fairness of Process: Group Listens	FOPGPLSTN	4a. Sometimes people don't agree. When you don't agree with the group, do you feel they listen to your ideas?	1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always
Fairness of Process: Individual Listens	FOPULSTN	4b. When you don't agree with someone, do you listen and try to understand his or her ideas?	1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always

Table 1-1 (Continued) Section I: Collaborative Factors			
VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Fairness of Process: Sharing Ideas	FOPSHR	5. How do women share their ideas and talk? Who speaks first?	1=The President introduces the meeting. Then the person with the idea shares their idea or project. Comments are heard after the speaker is finished. 2= The President introduces the meeting. The Treasure speaks, and then anyone else can speak. Comments are then heard. 3= The President introduces the meeting. The Vice President speaks, and then anyone else can speak. Comments are heard after the speaker is finished. 4= The President introduces the meeting. The Vice President speaks, then the Trainer, and finally anyone else can speak. Comments are heard after the speaker is finished. 5= The President introduces the meeting. The Treasure speaks, then the Secretary, and finally anyone else can speak. Comments are heard after the speaker is finished. 6= The President introduces the meeting. Tamba sometimes speaks. Then the person with the idea shares their idea or project. Comments are heard after the speaker is finished. 7=The President speaks, then the VP, then the Treasure, Advisor speak. Then whoever wants to speak, speaks. 8= (7) with the Secretary speaking after the Advisor
Decision-making: Projects	DM2PRJCT	6a. If you have two or more projects, how does the group pick what project to do?	1=We arrive at consensus 2=The project with the most benefit/profitable 3=We divide the group for different projects 4= (1) We arrive at consensus & (3) We divide the group for different projects

Table 1-1 (Continued) Section I: Collaborative Factors			
VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Consensus	CONSEN	6b. The group tries to pick projects that everyone agrees on.	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Decision-making: Disagreement	DMAGRE	6c. When the group can't agree, what does the group do?	1=Talk until consensus is reached 2=Ask Tamba for advice if consensus is not reached
Group Memory	GM	7. How does the group remember what happens at the meetings and what is agreed upon?	1=Take Notes 2=Other method
Facilitation	FACDRV	8a. Does someone drive the meeting?	0=No, 1=Yes, the President, 4=N/A
Facilitation: Neutrality	FACNUTRL	8b. Do they share ideas or listen and help the group?	1=The President shares her ideas 2=The President is neutral and only helps guide the group 4=N/A
Structure: Roles	ROLES	9. What is the structure of the group? Is there a pres., vp, etc?	1=There is a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary 2=President, vice president, treasurer, secretary and trainers 3= (2) President, vice president, treasurer, secretary and trainers PLUS members 4= There is a president, a vice president, a secretary and a trainer 5= There is a president, vice president, treasurer, trainers and an advisor 6=President, VP, Treasurer, Supervisor and 2 young interns 7= president, treasurer and secretary of information, secretary of organization, administrative secretary 8=(5) and Admin. Secretary 9=President, Treasurer, Secretary
Stakeholder Commitment: Attendance	SCATTEND	21a. Do you attend every meeting?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Stakeholder Commitment: Attendance1	SCMISS	21b. If not, why do you miss a meeting?	1=I miss because I need to do work for the group 2=I need to work at home 4=n/a

Coding for this section varies between yes and no responses, the 1-3 Likert scale, and open-ended questions. I discuss the coding for open-ended questions, only. For the open-ended questions, I categorized the responses. Responses to question one were divided into two categories: (1) to help with the development of the community and family, (2) to work with other women, share ideas, and make money. When asked why members joined the group, responses are divided into three categories: (1) I wanted to work with other women, (2) I wanted to learn to make products, and (3) it's more profitable working in a group. Question five discusses how the group shares ideas. These responses are categorized into 8 different responses due to slight variation in responses. Also slightly varying, responses for group structure consist of nine categories. The last question in this section discusses reasons for missing association meetings and is categorized into three parts: (1) I need to work for the group, (2) I need to work at home, and (4) not applicable.

Section II: Project Agreement and Implementation

Questions in this section deal with project agreement, stakeholder commitment and project implementation. I asked participants whether the group reached agreement on a project idea, and if so, was the project fully implemented? The response indicates whether participants employed a consensus-based approach when deciding on a project to complete. Full implementation consists of all parties fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined by the collective group, so participants responded on stakeholder commitment to the project. Data from this question exhibit stakeholder commitment by whether or not individual/group responsibilities were fulfilled. The essential measure of collaboration effectiveness is whether or not it addressed the policy issue. A watershed partnership's main goal is to improve the numerous watershed conditions in a complex system. Similarly, income-generating activities should provide increased

access to food and other basic necessities. Participants described how the project successfully met its objective(s) and the need(s) of the village. Information on decision-making approaches, stakeholder commitment, project implementation and stakeholder perception of the success of the project provide important data on effective factors of collaboration, as illustrated below in *Table 1-2 Section II: Project Agreement and Implementation.*

Table 1-2
Section II: Project Agreement and Implementation

VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVIATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Project Consensus	PRJCTCNS	10a. Did everyone want to make PB or cereal?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Project Interests	PRJCTINT	10b. Why did you want to do the PB/cereal bank project?	1=Growing it will help women feed their families at a reduced cost. 2=Raising millet produces seeds 3=Women can receive a small loan from profits 4=I wanted to learn to make the product at home. 5=It is profitable 6=Our product is better quality than the product at the market. 7=(4) I wanted to learn to make the product at home & (5) It is profitable. 8=(1) Growing/Making it will help women feed their families at a reduced cost & (6) Our product is better quality than the product at the market
Project Success	PRJCTSUC	11a. Did the group complete the first batch of PB/cereal?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Project Longevity	PRJCTSUCA	11b. Does the group still make PB/cereal today?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Stakeholder Commitment: Fulfillment	PRJCTRLS	11c. Did all the women do their part in making the PB/cereal?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Outcome	PRJCTOUT	12a. You come together as a group to make PB/grow millet for the cereal bank. After you make the product, what happens?	1=We sell it to women in the group and the village. 2=We sell it 4=n/a

Table 1-2 (Continued) Section II: Project Agreement and Implementation			
VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Project Success	PRJCTSUC	11a. Did the group complete the first batch of PB/cereal?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Project Longevity	PRJCTSUCA	11b. Does the group still make PB/cereal today?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Stakeholder Commitment: Fulfillment	PRJCTRLS	11c. Did all the women do their part in making the PB/cereal?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Outcome	PRJCTOUT	12a. You come together as a group to make PB/grow millet for the cereal bank. After you make the product, what happens?	1=We sell it to women in the group and the village. 2=We sell it 4=n/a
Profits/Goals	PROFT	12b. What do you do with the profits from the project?	1=We use the profits to buy seed and pay for things in the group. 2=Profits are split in two. One half goes to the bank, where it is used to help women in need, and the other half is used to pay for things for the group.
Beneficial Unintended Consequences	UCGOOD	13a. Did the project create any good surprises?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Beneficial Unintended Consequences1	UCGOODA	13b. What were they?	1=There was a lot of food and seed produced. 2= We could loan women money and/or food at a reduced cost; it's profitable.
Negative Unintended Consequences	UCBAD	13c. Did the project create any problems?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Negative Unintended Consequences1	UCBADA	13d. What were they?	1=Storing the millet was problematic at first 2=Millet was too expensive at first; there was no benefit the first year. 3=The product was difficult to transport. 4=It was difficult to make. 5=N/A

Section II of the interview protocol contains five open-ended questions that needing coding specific to responses. Question 10b. discusses why women wanted to participate in their respective income-generating activities (peanut butter or cereal bank). Responses were categorized according to the following: (1) growing it will help women feed their families at a reduced cost, (2) raising millet produces seeds, (3) women can receive a small loan from profits, (4) I wanted to learn to make the product at home, (5) it is profitable, (6) Our product is better quality than the product at the market, (7) includes (4) I wanted to learn to make the product at home and (5) it is profitable, (8) includes (1) growing/making it will help women feed their families at a reduced cost and (6) our product is better quality than the product at the market. Responses on what the group does with the profits are categorized into two groups: (1) we harvest and sell the millet to women in the group and the community, and (2) we sell it. When discussing how profits from the income-generating projects, women responded within two categories: (1) we use the profits to buy seed and pay for things in the group, and (2) profits are split in two with one half going to the bank, where it is used to help women in need, and the other half is used to pay for things for the group. Positive unintended consequences are categorized into two responses including: (1) there was a lot of food and seed produced, (2) we could loan women money and/or food at a reduced cost; it's profitable. Finally, in regards to negative unintended consequences, responses were categorized into four groups: (1) storing the millet was problematic at first, (2) millet was too expensive at first; there was no benefit the first year, (3) the product was difficult to transport, (4) it was difficult to make, and (5) not applicable (no problems with production).

Section III: Gender Roles and Perspectives

In a society where roles and social activities are divided by gender, I thought it was important to explore the women's perceptions of male attitudes towards the women's associations as perceived by their wives. Women are asked if their husbands (or male relatives of widows) support the women's organization's work and if so, what benefits do the husbands think their wives attain from working in the partnership. Perhaps this information will give insight into other questions such as stakeholder participation (whether individual women attend all meetings, etc.). Since the family is such a central focus of Malian culture, understanding women's perceptions of how the men feel about their wives community involvement is imperative, as shown in *Table 1-3 Section III: Gender Roles and Perspectives*.

Table 1-3
Section III: Gender Roles and Perspectives

VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Gender Roles	GENPRJCT	15a. Do men ever help with projects like making PB/cereal bank?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Gender Perspective	GENLIKE	16a. Does your husband like your work with the women's group and the PB/cereal bank project?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Gender Perspective1	GENWHY	16b. Why or why not?	1=It is profitable for the family 2=He likes the way the group works together 3=I learn to make products for the family/home 4=(1)It is profitable for the family & he likes that I work with women 5=N/A

Coding for Section III includes two open-ended questions. First, women were asked how men assisted with association projects. Responses lay within four categories: (1) the president's son transports the millet, (2) women taught men to sew, (3) Tamba (African Sky Community

Director and husband of two members of ABEF) advises the association, and (4) not applicable. When the women were asked about whether or not they perceive that their husbands, their responses could be divided into five categories: (1) it is profitable for the family, (2) he likes the way the group works together, (3) I learn to make products for the family/home, and (4) it is profitable and he likes that I work with women, and (5) not applicable.

Section IV: Human and Social Capital

Five questions frame this section. As education is a central facet of human capital, participants were asked about other projects they implemented with the women's association. Asking participants whether or not they built new relationships from the organization operationalizes social capital, or the building of networks to gain some kind of benefit. Additionally, whether partnerships intend to collaborate in the future indicates either a positive or negative response to the building of their networks. These are essential building blocks of human and social capital, which has the potential to increase the group's effectiveness, as shown in *Table 1-4 Section IV: Human and Social Capital* below.

Table 1-4
Section IV: Human and Social Capital

VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVIATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Human Capital	HCEDU	14. What other projects (or skills) have you done (or learned from) the group?	1=Making clothes and bags, embroidery, dried mangos, dried onions, dried tomatoes, candied peanuts, syrup, jam, and cereal bank 2=Soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank, literacy program 3= Soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank
Social Capital: Friends	SCFRNDS	17a. Have you made new friends in the group?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A

Table 1-4 (Continued) Section IV: Human and Social Capital			
VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVIATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Social Capital: Business	SCBUS	17b. Have you made new business relationships within the group?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Social Capital: Future	SCFUTR	18. Will the group work together in the future?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Benefits	BENS	22. What benefits have you received from the group?	1=Friendship and a way to better the community and ourselves. 2=Taught me how to make products for my family/work 3= (2) Taught me how to make products and (3) gave me a way to make money/food 4= Learn to make products and learn to read and write 5= Learn to make products, learn to read and write and gave me a way to make money

Section IV only contains two open-ended questions that needed coding for the categorical data. Responding to what the group has taught members, the women's responses fell into three categories: (1) making clothes and bags, embroidery, dried mangos, dried onions, dried tomatoes, candied peanuts, syrup, jam, and cereal bank, (2) soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank, literacy program, and (3) soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank. As illustrated by Table 1-4, the last question contains five categories for responses, with answers containing one or a combination of responses for individual members.

Section V: Demographic Information

Section V provides demographic characteristics of the respondents. Questions consider a participant's social position, which serves as a rough proxy for age (according to whether they are

married without children, married with children and married with grandchildren), and whether they live in the area, Markala, where the association's income-generating activity was implemented. If respondents lived in the area where the project was implemented they included whether or not they were native residents of Markala. The information in this section provides a description of the stakeholder, as shown in *Table 1-5 Section V: Demographics*.

Table 1-5
Section V: Demographic Information

VARIABLE	VARIABLE ABBREVATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CODING
Residence: Native	RESNAT	19a. Are you a native of Markala?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Residence: Moved to Markala	RESMOVE	19b. If not, when did you move to Markala?	1=I moved to Markala as a child 2=I moved to Markala when I got married 4=N/A Native
Age/Status: Married	MARRD	20a. Are you married?	0=No, 1=Yes, 2=Widowed
Age/Status: Children	CHILD	20b. Do you have children?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A
Age/Status: Grandchildren	GRANKID	20c. Do you have grandchildren?	0=No, 1=Yes, 4=N/A

Demographic questions consisted on predominately “yes or no” answers; therefore coding this section was not difficult. Question nineteen asks respondents when they moved to Markala (if they are not native to the village). Categorized into 3 groups, responses include (1) I moved to Markala as a child, (2) I moved to Markala when I got married, and (3) not applicable.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis options are limited with such a small sample. Using data from the structured interviews, I report on participant perceptions on collaboration in Mali using two units of analysis. First, data is analyzed to evaluate all 24 individual participants. Subsequently, I treat the associations as the unit of analysis and combine the responses from participants within each

of the two women's associations. Analysis of the research begins with descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics for each of the survey questions illustrate the mode and percentages of individual responses. Utilizing descriptive statistics allows me to view participant agreement on questions regarding factors of collaboration and organization characteristics for the complete sample and between both Muso Jigi and ABEF.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 illustrates data describing the way the women's associations function as a collaborative unit according to the members of Muso Jigi and ABEF. In order to analyze factors of collaboration within Muso Jigi and ABEF I collected data from twenty-four participants from both women's associations. Chapter 4 contains two parts: the first part describes data for the overall sample and the second part is a comparison section focusing on data from Muso Jigi and ABEF. Due to the fact that there is so much agreement within the sample, each part of this chapter first discusses areas where there is common agreement and then areas of disagreement. With descriptive statistics, participants' perspectives on the group's success, and the ways in which they collaborate are analyzed. By looking at the mode of each variable, I find areas of agreement and disagreement regarding factors for collaboration and organizational characteristics. Additionally, I speculate about the levels of social and human capital from descriptive statistics. As noted in Chapter 1, human and social capital is expected to increase when groups work collaboratively.

PART I: OVERALL SAMPLE

Descriptive Statistics

This first part of the chapter describes different characteristics of the total sample by collective areas of agreement and where participants' responses differ. Within this section, data analysis is discussed according to each factor for collaboration as outlined in Chapter 2. Each section contains multiple data on each of the factors that contribute to effective collaboration as well as a table with the standard deviation, and the range of responses are noted with a description

of the mean and/or mode for each variable. Subsequently, data on organizational characteristics are illustrated. This section begins with a description of demographic information of the overall sample.

Demographics

Demographic data includes the residence of participants and whether they are married, have children, and/or grandchildren. While roughly 54 percent of participants are native to Markala, data shows that approximately 17 percent of respondents moved to Markala as a child, and close to 38 percent moved to the village when they got married. Nearly 92 percent of participants answered that they are married (two respondents are widows). Many of the women do not know their actual age, so in addition to marital status, participants were asked about children and grandchildren. Twenty-three participants, or 95.8 percent of the sample, responded that they have children while only about 54 percent of participants stated that they have grandchildren. Additionally, 87.5 percent of participants attend every meeting with participants missing meetings due to work or family obligations. See *Table 2-1 Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Information* below. To differentiate between questions and their respective responses, questions are highlighted in green). Demographics specific to each group are covered in Part II of this chapter.

Table 2-1 Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Information

	Total Sample
Are you a native of Markala?	
No	45.8%
Yes	54.2%
When did you move to Markala?	
When I was a child	16.7%
When I got married	37.5%
N/A I'm a native of Markala	45.8%

Table 2-1 Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Information (Continued)	
	Total Sample
Are you married?	
No	0%
Yes	91.7%
Widow	8.8%
Do you have children?	
No	4.2%
Yes	95.8%
Do you have grandchildren?	
No	45.8%
Yes	54.2%
Stakeholder Commitment	
If you miss an association meeting, what is the reason?	
I need to finish work for the group	4.2%%
I have family responsibilities	8.3%
I attend every meeting	87.5%

Collective Agreement within the Overall Sample

While discussing collective agreement within the overall sample, I focus on areas of complete agreement. Variables examined in this section include consensus-based decision-making, inclusiveness, fairness of process, facilitation, stakeholder commitment, gender perspective, and human and social capital. Data on these variables illustrates a level of commitment to the collaborative process.

Consensus-based Decision-making

While interviewing the participants, I was overwhelmed by their ability to seamlessly work together. Consensus-based decision-making processes are vital to collaboration, and the women agree that consensus is fundamental to the associations' functions. *Table 2-2 Descriptive Statistics for Consensus* shows that the overall sample unanimously reports that decisions are made by consensus. Additionally, when women's associations find themselves in disagreement

on a project or direction to take the group, 95.8 percent of the women state that they continue their discussions until consensus is reached. This data illustrates the women's commitment to working together through consensus-based decision-making.

Table 2-2 Descriptive Statistics for Consensus			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
The group tries to pick projects with which everyone agrees?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
When the group does not agree on an issue, what does the group do?			
Speak to each other until consensus is reached	95.8%	100% (n-12)	91.7% (n-11)
Ask Tamba for advice	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)
Did everyone want to make the millet/cereal bank or peanut butter?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)

Inclusiveness and Fairness of Process

Based on the data, participants unanimously agree that the organizations are inclusive and boast a fair, collaborative process. Inclusiveness and fairness of process are imperative factors to effective collaboration. Regarding inclusiveness, I look at the ability for members to join the association and to share their ideas within discussions. *Table 2-3 Descriptive Statistics for Inclusiveness and Fairness of Process* illustrates unanimous agreement that the group is inclusive and any woman can share her ideas. "Fairness of process" infers that all participants are encouraged to share their ideas with the groups and that other members listen with an open mind. When individuals do not agree with a conflicting opinion or position, 100 percent of respondents indicate that they keep an open mind and listen to the opposing viewpoints. Conflicting data on fairness of process is discussed later in this chapter.

Table 2-3 Descriptive Statistics for Inclusiveness and Fairness of Process			
Inclusiveness			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
Can anyone join the WVA's?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
Everyone can speak and share their ideas.			
Never	0%	0%	0%
Sometimes	0%	0%	0%
Always	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
Fairness of Process			
When you don't agree with the group, do you feel they listen to your ideas?			
Never	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
Sometimes	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	16.7% (n-2)
Always	87.5%	75% (n-9)	83.3% (n-10)

Facilitation

Facilitation is a mechanism that assists in keeping the collaborative process fair. A facilitator ensures that everyone has an opportunity to speak during the meetings, and tries to steer the discourse so that objectives are met in a timely fashion. From the 24 participants in this study, 100 percent of them stated that there was a facilitator, or that someone "drove" the meeting. Furthermore, 100 percent of the overall sample stated that their president served as a facilitator and simultaneously participated in meeting discussions and the decision-making process. Although it is ideal to have a neutral facilitator, many collaborations employ a member of the group to act as facilitator.

Stakeholder Commitment

Stakeholder commitment is necessary at each phase of collaboration. Stakeholders must be willing to attend every meeting to guarantee that all interests are represented; that they learn

about new information presented, that they make collective agreements, and are committed to implementing their agreements. In order to discover the success of project implementation, I asked women if the millet or peanut butter projects were completed. One hundred percent of the participants responded that the first production of millet or peanut butter had been completed. Moreover, all participants concur that the associations continue to produce their respective income-generating product. Talking with the women you perceive a real sense of community, so it was not surprising to observe data suggesting that stakeholders upheld their commitment to the group and the project by fulfilling their part in project implementation.

Gender Perspective

Data in this section illustrates women's perspectives on men's views about the groups' work and how men interact with Muso Jigi and ABEF. When asked if men work with the women's associations on income-generating activities, all 24 of the participants answered that men do not work with the women on projects. While 100 percent of participants believe their husbands or male relatives approve of the women working with the associations, there are various reasons for their support. Approximately 46 percent of participants believe the men back the association's work because it is profitable for the family. Close to 30 percent of participants state that the men enjoy the products the women learned to make from the association. Whereas 12.5 percent of the sample perceive the men like the way the group works together, only 8 percent believe that the men think it is both profitable for the family and they like their wives working with other women in the village (See *Table 2-4 Descriptive Statistics for Gender Perspective* on the following page).

Table 2-4 Descriptive Statistics for Gender Perspective			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
Do men ever help with projects like making PB/cereal bank?			
No	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
Yes	0%	0%	0%
Does your husband like your work with the women's group and the PB/cereal bank project?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
Why do you think your husband/male relative supports your work with WVA's?			
It is profitable	45.8%	25% (n-3)	66.7% (n-8)
He likes the way the group works together	12.5%	16.7% (n-2)	8.3% (n-1)
I learn to make products for family/work	29.2%	33.3% (n-4)	25% (n-3)
It is profitable and he likes that I work with other women	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
Not applicable	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%

Human and Social Capital

Human and social capital, among stakeholders, increase as a result of the collaborative process. As noted in Chapter 2, education is a primary human capital investment. All participants indicate that they acquire specific skills related to income-generating activities from the women's associations. Half of the participants learned to produce clothing and bags, embroidery, dried mangos, dried onions, dried tomatoes, candied peanuts, syrup, jam, and millet for the cereal bank. Whereas roughly 46 percent of the overall sample indicates they learned to make soap, mosquito cream, and produce cereal for the cereal bank, only one participant (4%) stated that in addition to the aforementioned products, she learned how to read and write. With these skills, the women are able to supplement their households with value-added goods and increase their household income.

Social capital leads to increased connections within the women's associations and among other networks. *Table 2-5 Descriptive Statistics for Human and Social Capital* show a vast majority of the participants affirm they made new friendships and business partners since joining the association, and will continue to work together in the future. One hundred percent of the women agree that the group provides many benefits to its members. In addition, approximately 42 percent of the sample notes that the association taught them how to make products for family and income. Twenty-five percent of members in this sample believe their greatest benefit to joining their group is the fact that the groups not only taught the women to produce value-added goods, the associations also provided a mechanism by which the women were able to sell their products. Close to 21 percent of participants lists learning to make products and taking group literacy classes as benefits from association membership. While 8 percent of participants cite friendship and ways to better themselves and the community as benefits from their respective associations, 4 percent of the sample lists learning to make products, becoming literate, and obtaining a way to make additional income as membership benefits. Muso Jigi and ABEF provide women a place to discuss the challenges facing their village, learn new skills to support their household, and socialize with other women.

Table 2-5 Descriptive Statistics for Human and Social Capital

	Total Sample	Muso Jigi	ABEF
What other projects (or skills) have you done (or learned from) the group?			
Making clothes and bags, embroidery, dried mangos, dried onions, dried tomatoes, candied peanuts, syrup, jam, and cereal bank	50%	100% (n-12)	0%
Soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank, literacy program	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)
Soap, mosquito cream, cereal bank	45.8%	0%	91.7% (n-11)

Table 2-5 Descriptive Statistics for Human and Social Capital (Continued)			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
Have you made new friends from group membership?			
No	8.3%	8.3% (n-1)	8.3% (n-1)
Yes	91.7%	91.7% (n-11)	91.7% (n-11)
Have you made new business relationships within the group?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
Will the group work together in the future?			
No	0%	0%	0%
Yes	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)
What benefits have you received from group membership?			
Friendship and a way to better the community and ourselves.	8.3%	8.3% (n-1)	8.3% (n-1)
Taught me how to make products for my family/work	41.7%	75% (n-9)	8.3% (n-1)
Taught me how to make products and gave me a way to make	25%	16.7% (n-2)	33.3% (n-4)
Learn to make products and learn to read and write	20.8%	0%	41.7% (n-5)
Learn to make products, learn to read and write and gave me a way to make money	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)

Disagreement within the Overall Sample

Discussion within this section focuses on areas of disagreement within the overall sample. Data in this section examines differences in fairness of process, stakeholder commitment, and organizational characteristics. Unintended consequences for project implementation are discussed at the end of this section.

Fairness of Process

To measure fairness of process, I review responses of whether women openly receive and share ideas that may not be agreeable to everyone in the group, and the structure of discussion

within the associations. The first two questions use a Likert scale of 1-3 with the responses signifying the following: (1) never, (2) sometimes, and (3) always. Seventy-five percent of women responded that they always felt comfortable discussing ideas that other women might not agree with, while 25 percent of women indicate that they sometimes feel comfortable sharing differing viewpoints. When members share opposing ideas approximately 79 percent of participants believe that their group always listens; roughly 17 percent of participants sometimes feel the group listens to disparate viewpoints, and 4 percent of the sample states that the group never listens to contrasting opinions. When engaging in a collaborative process, it is imperative that everyone has an opportunity to share his or her interests and suggestions. Both WVA's design their discussions according to organizational structure. *Table 2-6 Descriptive Statistics for Fairness of Process* illustrates a wide range of responses from the overall sample describing the order with which the associations' officers and members share their ideas and suggestions. Although there is variance with the structure of discussion, all respondents report that everyone has an opportunity to speak.

Table 2-6 Descriptive Statistics for Fairness of Process

	Total Sample	Muso Jigi	ABEF
When you talk to the group, do you feel comfortable voicing an opposing viewpoint?			
Never	0%	0%	0%
Sometimes	25%	33.3% (n-4)	16.7% (n-2)
Always	75%	66.7% (n-8)	83.3% (n-10)
When you don't agree with the group, do you feel they listen to your ideas?			
Never	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
Sometimes	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	16.7% (n-2)
Always	87.5%	75% (n-9)	83.3% (n-10)
When you don't agree with a member, do you listen and try to understand their opinions?			
Never	0%	0%	0%
Sometimes	0%	0%	0%
Always	100%	100% (n-12)	100% (n-12)

Table 2-6 Descriptive Statistics for Fairness of Process (Continued)			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
How do the women share ideas at meetings? Who speaks first?			
The President introduces the meeting. Then the person with the idea shares their idea or project.	16.7%	25% (n-3)	8.3% (n-1)
The President introduces the meeting. The Treasure speaks, and then anyone else can speak.	37.5%	16.7% (n-2)	58.3% (n-7)
The President introduces the meeting. The Vice President speaks, and then anyone else can speak.	16.7%	33.3% (n-4)	0%
The President introduces the meeting. The Vice President speaks, then the Trainer, then anyone else can speak.	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
The President introduces the meeting. The Treasure speaks, then the Secretary, then anyone else can speak.	12.5%	0%	25% (n-3)
The President introduces the meeting. Tamba sometimes speaks. Then members share their ideas.	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)
The President speaks, then the VP, then the Treasure, Advisor speak. Then whoever wants to speak, speaks.	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
The President speaks, the VP, then the Treasure, Advisor , and the Secretary speak. Then anyone can speak.	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%

Organizational Characteristics

This section explores characteristics of both organizations from their purposes to their organizational structure. Within the structure of collaboration in the United States, it is very important first and foremost, that groups share a common purpose. When asked about the purpose of forming the women's organizations roughly 67 percent of responses corresponded to an old Malian proverb, "One finger can not lift a stone", meaning that working with others provides more benefits than working alone. The remaining 33 percent of responses declared that the association formed to assist with community development and the family unit. As far as individual interests for joining the WVA's, approximately 42 percent stated that the primary

reason they became members was that they wanted to work with other women. Thirty-seven and a half percent indicate that learning to make products that the groups produced was an important factor in wanting to join the associations. About 17 percent of the sample states that it is more profitable to work in a group than alone. Lastly, one participant (4%) wanted to both work with other women and learn to make products from the group. Answers to this question of why women joined the organization vary slightly, but revolve around the Malian proverb, which indicates that working with others provides the individual with more resources. Additionally, the collaborative process assists members with understanding interconnected interests of stakeholders and issues affecting the collaboration. Twenty-one responses (87.5%) of the women believe that the association always helps them to gain a common knowledge about the challenges facing Markala and Malian women. The remaining 12.5 percent believe that group membership sometimes assists in understanding the problems facing the women of Markala. *Table 2-7 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics* shows conflicting responses regarding organizational structure among the majority of the overall sample.

Table 2-7 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics

	Total Sample	Muso Jigi	ABEF
What is the purpose of the association?			
To help with the development of the community and family	33.3%	33.3% (n-4)	33.3% (n-4)
To work with other women, share ideas, and make money	66.7%	66.7% (n-8)	66.7% (n-8)
Why did you join the women's group?			
I wanted to work with other women	41.7%	33.3% (n-4)	50% (n-6)
I wanted to learn to make products	37.5%	58.3% (n-7)	16.7% (n-2)
It's more profitable working with a group	16.7%	8.3% (n-1)	25% (n-3)
I wanted to work with women and learn to make products	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)

Table 2-7 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics (Continued)			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
The group helps me understand the problems in Markala.			
Never	0%	0%	0%
Sometimes	12.5%	25% (n-3)	0%
Always	87.5%	75% (n-9)	100% (n-12)
What is the structure of the group?			
There is a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary	12.5%	25% (n-3)	0%
President, vice president, treasurer, secretary and trainers	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
President, vice president, treasurer, secretary and trainers PLUS members	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
There is a president, a vice president, a secretary and a trainer	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
There is a president, vice president, treasurer, trainers and an advisor	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
President, VP, Treasurer, Supervisor and 2 young interns	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
President, treasurer and secretary of information, secretary of organization, administrative secretary	45.8%	0%	91.7% (n-11)
There is a president, vice president, treasurer, administrative secretary, trainers and an advisor	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
President, Treasurer, Secretary	4.2%	0%	8.3% (n-1)
After you make the millet and peanut butter, what do you do with the product?			
We sell it to women in the group and then the village	33.3%	25% (n-3)	41.7% (n-5)
We sell it	66.7%	75% (n-9)	58.3% (n-7)
What do you do with the profits from the project?			
We use the profits to buy supplies for the association	16.7%	33.3% (n-4)	0%
Profits are split in two, half goes to the bank to help women in need. The other half is used to buy supplies for the association	79.2%	58.3% (n-7)	100% (n-12)
I don't know	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%

Unintended Consequences from Project Implementation

Data in this section describes unintended consequences for implementing the millet and peanut butter income-generating activities during the first year. While one hundred percent of the participants agree that there were unintended benefits, close to 92 percent of the sample concur that the groups could loan women money, supply food at a reduced cost as compared to high market prices, and that their respective products are profitable. Only 8 percent of the sample states that unintended benefits included that a lot of food and seed were produced from growing millet. Although these seem like expected results from forming the WVA's, the women truly did not anticipate such opportune results. This is further discussed in the comparison section on unintended consequences.

Roughly 42 percent of the respondents indicate that negative consequences arose from their first production. About 17 percent of the sample responses fall into the second category: millet was too expensive at first. Twelve and a half percent of the overall sample said the product was difficult to make. Furthermore, close to 8 percent of participant data responded that storing millet was problematic at first. Finally, 4 percent of respondents' answers fell into the third category: the product was difficult to transport. The fifth response illustrates that 58 percent of the sample believe there were no unintended consequences (See *Table 2-8 Descriptive Statistics for Unintended Consequences* below).

Table 2-8 Descriptive Statistics for Unintended Consequences

	Total Sample	Muso Jigi	ABEF
Were there any beneficial unintended consequences for the first batch of millet/cereal bank or peanut butter?			
There was a lot of food and seed produced	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
We could loan money to women and/or provide them with food at a reduced cost	91.7%	83.3% (n-10)	100% (n-12)

Table 2-8 Descriptive Statistics for Unintended Consequences (Continued)			
	Total Sample	**Muso Jigi**	**ABEF**
Were there any negative unintended consequences for the first batch of millet/cereal bank or peanut butter?			
Storing the millet was problematic at first	8.3%	16.7% (n-2)	0%
Millet was too expensive at first	16.7%	33.3% (n-4)	0%
The product was difficult to transport	4.2%	8.3% (n-1)	0%
It was difficult to make	12.5%	16.7% (n-2)	8.3% (n-1)
There were no negative unintended consequences	58.3%	25% (n-3)	91.7% (n-11)

PART II: COMPARISON STUDY

Descriptive Statistics: Muso Jigi and ABEF

Descriptive statistics in this section describes data as it pertains to each of the organizations. Again, each section contains data on factors that contribute to effective collaboration, but here I describe the similarities and differences between Muso Jigi and ABEF.

Demographics

Demographic information for both groups is also very similar. Roughly, 58 percent of the members of Muso Jigi are native to Markala while approximately 67 percent of members of ABEF are non-native, and moved to Markala either as a child or when the women married. Eighty-three percent of the women of Muso Jigi, and 100 percent of the women of ABEF are married. Approximately 92 percent of the participants from Muso Jigi have children, and all the participants from ABEF have children. Only half of the Muso Jigi members have grandchildren, while 58 percent of the participants from ABEF have grandchildren. Data from *Table 2-9 Descriptive Statistics* for Muso Jigi and ABEF illustrates many similarities between the two groups on stakeholder commitment.

Table 2-9 Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Information		
	Muso Jigi	**ABEF**
Are you a native of Markala?		
No	41.7% (n-5)	66.7% (n-8)
Yes	58.3% (n-7)	33.3% (n-4)
When did you move to Markala?		
When I was a child	33.3% (n-4)	0%
When I got married	8.3% (n-1)	66.7% (n-8)
N/A I'm a native of Markala	58.3% (n-7)	33.3% (n-4)
Are you married?		
No	0%	0%
Yes	83.3% (n-10)	100% (n-12)
Widow	16.7% (n-2)	0%
Do you have children?		
No	8.3% (n-1)	0%
Yes	91.7% (n-11)	100% (n-12)
Do you have grandchildren?		
No	50% (n-6)	41.7% (n-5)
Yes	50% (n-6)	58.3% (n-7)
If you miss an association meeting, what is the reason?		
I need to finish work for the group	8.3% (n-1)	0%
I have family responsibilities	8.3% (n-1)	8.3% (n-1)
I attend every meeting	83.3% (n-10)	91.7% (n-11)

Collective Agreement within Muso Jigi and ABEF

This section considers agreement among the participants of Muso Jigi and ABEF. Agreement is found in all factors for effective collaboration. Variables in this section include consensus-based decision-making, inclusiveness, fairness of process, and facilitation. Additional variables discussed in this section include gender perspective, human and social capital, and unintended consequences from project implementation.

Consensus-based Decision-making

When describing the collaborative process and ways the women's associations make decisions within the groups, there was a lot of agreement among all participants (Refer to Table 2-2 Descriptive Statistics for Consensus above). All participants from both Muso Jigi and ABEF indicate that their associations make decisions using consensus-based decision-making. Additionally, when both groups encounter disagreement when making decisions, 100 percent of participants state that each WVA continues to discuss the issue or project until consensus is reached. Similarly, 100 percent of participants from Muso Jigi agree that their group chose their respective project by consensus-based decision-making. Data indicates that Muso Jigi and ABEF are committed to finding solutions and projects that meet expectations of all members.

Inclusiveness and Fairness of Process

Data illustrates that inclusiveness is a significant aspect of both women's associations. Again, both groups completely agree that any women can join the association. Regarding sharing ideas, 100 percent of respondents for both associations responded that members are *always* permitted to speak and share their ideas. One hundred percent of participants from Muso Jigi and ABEF state that when a member verbalizes a conflicting opinion or suggestion, all members try to listen and understand this differing viewpoint. Observing the women together, it is apparent that the groups value their members' contributions to the associations (See Table 2-3 Descriptive Statistics for Inclusiveness and Fairness of Process in Part I).

Facilitation

Facilitation is key in guiding group discussions and meeting group objectives. One hundred percent of participants in both WVA's agree that the president of their association

"drives" the meetings. Although each group uses a facilitator during their collaboration, none of the members say that the president is a neutral facilitator, but rather they say that she shares her ideas and participates in the decision-making process. A facilitator makes it easier to achieve objects set during association meetings.

Gender Perspective

This section contains data on how members of each group perceive how their husbands or male relatives feel about the work of the women's associations (Refer to *Table 2-4 Descriptive Statistics for Gender Perspective).* All participants in both associations declare that men are not involved in income-generating projects. Additionally, one hundred percent of participants from both groups respond that their husbands or male relatives like their work with the women's groups. Women perceive that their spouses or male relatives like their work with Muso Jigi and ABEF because it is profitable for the family, the men like the way the group works together, the women learn to make product for the family, and lastly, that it is both profitable and the men like that their wives or female relatives work with other women. Approximately 33 percent of the women from Muso Jigi believe their husbands or male relatives appreciate the group's work due to the fact that it is profitable for the family and that they like that the women work with other women. Whereas 25 percent of Muso Jigi participants perceive the men support the association's work because it is profitable for the family. While close to 17 percent of the women reply that they think the men like they way the group works together, another 17 percent remark that their spouses appreciate that the women work with other women and that working with ABEF is profitable for the family. However, approximately 67 percent of the women from ABEF believe their spouses appreciate their work with the organization due to the fact that it is profitable for the family. Twenty-five percent of ABEF participants reply that their spouses like

that the women learned to make products for the home. Lastly, one participant (8%) believes that her spouse enjoys the way ABEF works together. Though men do not directly contribute to the organizations' workings, all participants believe their husbands and male relatives support their work.

Human and Social Capital

With regards to increasing human and social capital, there is much agreement within the two associations. One hundred percent of members from both groups indicate that they learned new skills by joining the associations. Twelve members (100%) from Muso Jigi, state that they learned how to make clothes and bags, embroidery, dried mangos, dried onions, dried tomatoes, candied peanuts, syrup, jam, and cereal bank, while 11 participants, or approximately 92 percent of the respondents from ABEF, participated in producing soap, mosquito cream, and millet for their cereal bank in addition to making peanut butter. One participant added literacy to the list of things learned from joining ABEF. These skills serve the members not only as mechanisms to create additional income, but these products are utilized in their homes as well. *Table 2-5 Descriptive Statistics for Human and Social Capital* demonstrates the vast majority of each group made new friends, business partners, and will continue to work together. As far as benefits to individual women from joining Muso Jigi, seventy-five percent of women indicate that the most beneficial aspect of joining the group was learning how to make products for their families and for additional income. Roughly 17 percent of Muso Jigi participants answer that the benefits they receive include both learning to make products and joining the association provided a mechanism by which they could make additional income or get food when they needed assistance. Only 8 percent of Muso Jigi participants reply that friendship and a way to better themselves and their community correspond to the benefits of joining the women's organization. Approximately 42

percent of ABEF participants learn to make products and read and write. One third of the women from ABEF list learning how to make products and a way to make additional income and food for their households. One participant (8%) cites friendship and a way to better the community and herself, while another participant from ABEF notes learning to make products for her family and home as a benefit of group membership. Lastly, one participant (8%) mentions learning to make products, to read and write, and to make additional income as a benefit of joining ABEF. Increased human and social capital gives many benefits to the women of Muso Jigi and ABEF.

Unintended Consequences from Project Implementation

Unintended consequences from project implementation provide some interesting data. While listening to the women speak about their project implementation, I was surprised at their responses. One hundred percent of participants respond that there were beneficial unintended consequences from producing their respective income-generating projects. As *Table 2-8 Descriptive Statistics for Unintended Consequences* illustrates, a majority of the women from both groups state that they were surprised that they could loan women money, supply them with food at a reduced cost from high market prices, and that the project was profitable. Believing that I had not communicated my question correctly, I consulted with my Kaly, my translator, and we asked the women the question again. Kaly explained to me that even though these outcomes were the objectives of the project, the women were surprised that it was successful because there is little opportunity in Markala, and they were skeptical about their projects' success. As far as negative unintended consequences from project implementation, 75 percent of the respondents from Muso Jigi and only 8 percent of the participants from ABEF noted difficulties stemming from the first production of millet or peanut butter. In Muso Jigi, roughly 33 percent of participants observed that millet was too expensive that first year. About 17 percent state that

storing millet was problematic, while 17 percent indicate that it was difficult to make the millet. Lastly, 8 percent reveal the millet was difficult to transport. Furthermore 92 percent of the women in ABEF indicated that there were no negative unintended consequences as illustrated by (5) not applicable.

Disagreement within Muso Jigi and ABEF

This section examines variance in responses between the two women's associations. Due to extensive agreement between the two organizations, only two areas are discussed here: fairness of process and organizational characteristics.

Fairness of Process

In order to facilitate a fair process for collaboration, participants need to feel that their ideas are heard and that everyone has the opportunity to speak. Approximately 67 percent of the members from Muso Jigi and 83 percent of the members from ABEF state that they always feel at ease expressing an opinion or idea that contradict other members' opinions. Only 33 percent of Muso Jigi participants and 17 percent of ABEF participants reply that they sometimes feel comfortable presenting differing opinions. Furthermore, 75 percent of the women from Muso Jigi believe that group members always listen to their opposing ideas, while roughly 17 percent feel that the other women only sometimes listen. There is one participant, or 8 percent of the sample, that thinks the group never listens to conflicting viewpoints. Whereas approximately 83 percent of participants from ABEF perceive that members always listen to differing opinions, close to 17 percent believe that the group only listens sometimes to contrasting viewpoints. Additionally, all responses indicate that officers speak first and then members make their comments, however members of both groups disagree about their administrative structure. *Table*

2-6 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics illustrates a range of responses from both groups describing the order with which the associations' officers and members present their opinions. Although there is variance with the structure of discussion, all respondents report that everyone has an opportunity to speak.

Organizational Characteristics

In this section I describe the data for the organizational characteristics for Muso Jigi and ABEF. First and foremost, a common purpose or mission is necessary to unify each association and their work. When asked about their respective group's purpose, the participants responses fell into two categories: (1) to help with the development of the community and family, and (2) to work with other women, share ideas, and make money. Of the two responses given by the women, 67 percent of the members of Muso Jigi and ABEF indicate that the group's purpose is to work with other women by sharing ideas and making money. The other 33 percent of both groups explain the purpose of the group is to assist with the development of the community and family. As for individual interests for association membership, close to 59 percent Muso Jigi participants state that they joined to learn how to make value-added goods as described by the Benefits variable, while one third reply that they wanted to work with other women. Only 1 participant (8%) from Muso Jigi affirm that working in a group is more profitable than working alone. While 50 percent of the ABEF participants reveal that their interests lay in working with other women, 25 percent share that they were interested in joining ABEF because it is more profitable working in a group. Whereas roughly 17 percent of ABEF participants indicate that learning to make products interested them, only 8 percent reveal that they wanted to both work with other women and gain knowledge on making products. Developing an understanding of difficulties facing the community provides citizens with a better understanding of how to improve

their circumstances. Seventy-five percent of the members of Muso Jigi and 100 percent of the women from ABEF reply that the associations always provide them with a common understanding of the challenges facing Markala. Only a forth of the women believe that belonging to Muso Jigi sometimes facilitates a common understanding of the circumstances in Markala. As far as the structure of the organization, *Table 2-7 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics* demonstrates vast disagreement among Muso Jigi participants when asked about administrative roles. On the other hand, the data from the table shows significant agreement on the topic of the administrative structure within ABEF.

Project outcomes and goals illustrate commitment to project implementation and group objectives. *Table 2-7 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Characteristics* confirms that both groups unanimously agree that they sell their products to women. Roughly 58 percent of respondents indicate that profits are split in two with half going to the bank to help women in need and the other half of the profits pay for organizational supplies. Forty-two percent say Muso Jigi uses all the profits to buy seed and pay for group supplies. One hundred percent of ABEF's participants use half of the profits to help members in need and the other half is used to purchase organizational supplies. Though there is variability in responses, there are a lot of similarities between the two groups regarding their organizational characteristics.

Conclusion

Results indicate significant agreement among the overall sample and the two groups regarding factors for effective collaboration. However, variance in responses to certain questions regarding the knowledge of organizational structure and project outcomes demonstrates differences not only between Muso Jigi and ABEF, but also within each of the groups. The

subsequent chapter contains a detailed discussion on key findings concerning factors for collaboration as well as organizational characteristics of the collaborative groups.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

While chapter 4 reviews the data by looking at areas of agreement and disagreement, this chapter discusses whether frameworks created for supporting collaboration in developed countries apply to community collaboration in a developing country context. Additionally, I review key findings from the data within each organization. Human and social capital are further examined in this chapter as secondary outcomes of collaboration. To conclude this chapter, I discuss ways in which I will disseminate information from this study to the women's organizations in Mali, and expand current knowledge on collaboration in developing countries.

COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

Data from this study indicates that collaboration is an important aspect of women's organizations in Mali. Furthermore, results illustrate extensive agreement regarding elements of effective collaboration: inclusiveness, the use consensus-based decision-making, a fair collaborative process, the utilization of a facilitator, and a commitment to collaboration within and among both women's organizations. From informal observations of these associations, and of women in Mali more generally, collaboration is an important aspect of daily life within Malian culture. Data also implies that collaborative methods and frameworks supporting organizational collaboration in the United States are very similar to those employed by both women's associations from this study.

KEY FINDINGS

This section discusses key findings from the data analysis. Although the women within each association appear to work seamlessly together, results regarding knowledge of

organizational structure, project outcomes, and gender perspective differ among participants. Additionally, I discuss the key findings of human and social capital within Muso Jigi and ABEF. Whereas this is exploratory research, I cannot reach any concrete conclusions; I can only look at possible trends.

Results from the organizational structure data show some discrepancies surrounding knowledge of the administrative structure of the associations. While there was a wide range of responses from the Muso Jigi participants, the women of ABEF demonstrated a consistent understanding of their group's administrative structure. Data from Muso Jigi suggests that participants do not collectively understand the structure of the group, as indicated by variance in responses to questions about the group's administrative structure. At the time of data collection, Muso Jigi's membership was approximately twice as large as ABEF, as noted in Chapter 3. It may be possible that as new members join the association, the administrative structure of the group is not explicitly stated. ABEF may have a more structured meeting process where each administrator is introduced before she speaks. Educating members about the structure and roles of the groups' adminstration will provide the women with a basic knowledge of organizational structure and its purposes. This information is useful, provided the group members wish to hold office in their group, participate in local politics, or start a sister organization.

While there was disagreement among Muso Jigi members about what the group does with their profits, ABEF showed unanimous agreement about the use of profits from the production of peanut butter. If you look at data describing the different skills members acquired from both associations, members of Muso Jigi indicate that they assist with eleven income-generating activities as illustrated in *Table 2-5 Descriptive Statistics for Human and Social Capital*. Due to the fact that my data is limited, I am uncertain how the group tracks profits from different projects. It is plausible the only the treasurer knows details of the group's profits and

that members play a minimal role in group finances. Whereas ABEF is a smaller organization focusing primarily on one income-generating activity, making it easier to disseminate information and gain knowledge about each part of the organization. Regardless, through Muso Jigi and ABEF, women have access to mechanisms providing additional income, which is consistent with the literature that recognizes the improvement of women's economic capabilities with membership to women's voluntary associations.

Chapter 2 discusses the increased political power women gain from joining a women's association. As the literature states, these additional resources along with new skills in collective decision-making give women greater influence in household decision-making. While reviewing data on gender perspective, I note that the women unanimously agree that they perceive their husbands and male relatives support the women's associations. The majority of the women cite two primary reasons for male support: (1) membership is economically profitable, and (2) members learn to make products for their households.

From the data, it is evident that human capital exists and is increased by joining women's associations in Markala. As noted in the literature, human capital indicates that investments in people result in individual and societal economic benefits. Though skills learned from joining the women's associations differ, 100 percent of the sample gained an education in making value-added goods and other commodities which increased their ability to provide for their families by gaining access to inexpensive food and additional income. These skills not only give the women individual economic benefits, but benefit the community as well due to the availability of lower than market prices for food items during the hungry season.

The literature defines social capital as the development of social relationships or networks that increase benefits to members of these networks. Data from the overall sample states that not only have women made additional social connections, 100 percent of the women

from Muso Jigi and ABEF affirm that they have made new business relationships as a result of joining these women's associations. Data from this study supports the argument that WVA's provide a type of social insurance to members in need. Profits from income-generating activities are used partially to assist members in need. This type of solidarity and commitment provides members access to help during difficult times, especially during the hungry season.

Conclusion

As the data illustrates, the framework for collaboration in the United States, as laid out in the literature review, is very similar to collaborative methods employed by Muso Jigi and ABEF in Markala. Consensus-based decision-making, inclusiveness, fairness of process, facilitation, and stakeholder commitment are as critical to collaboration in Mali as they are to collaborative practices in developed countries. Both associations provide women with opportunities to grow as individuals while participating in the development of their community. In addition to offering women an opportunity to learn new skills and earn additional income, Muso Jigi and ABEF also provide women a place to socialize and share their opinions about the challenges facing women and Markala. In conclusion, Muso Jigi and ABEF present opportunities to the women of Markala that they may not otherwise access.

Dissemination of Findings and Future Research

In order to expand our understanding of the collaborative process as it pertains to developing nations, I will disseminate the findings within this study through different mechanisms. First and foremost, this thesis will post to Google Scholar and will be available to academics and the general public. Secondly, the Managing Director of African Sky will share these findings with both organizations included in this study and other women's organizations

during African Sky's Mothers and Daughters Women's Summit. Finally, I will summarize my findings for African Sky members in an article for the African Sky newsletter.

Future research of collaborative women's associations in Mali is necessary to examine the relationship between these associations, members, and their communities. Research should explore the possibilities of WVA's as appropriate mechanisms for community development and empowering women. As previous literature illustrates, WVA's have the potential to not only increase individual and societal economic benefits, but to provide women with the option to hold administrative positions and participate in the political arena, thus empowering women and helping to close gender equity gaps .

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