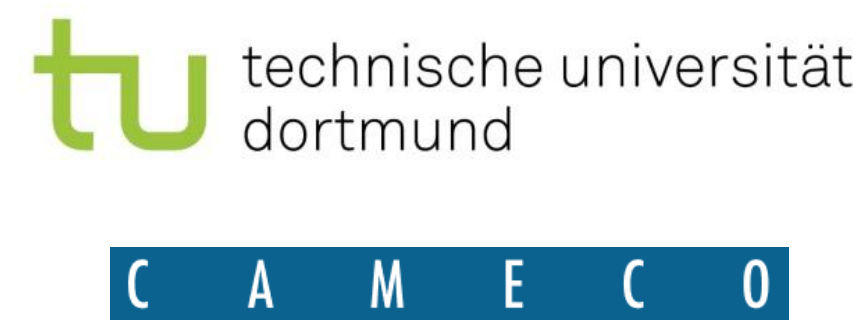


Tracing the Process of Sustaining Proximity Radios in a Developing Context

Michel LEROY



Through two case studies in Uganda, the research aims to unpack the causal mechanisms that lead from corruption to unsustainability to see when and how these processes can be broken and radio sustained.



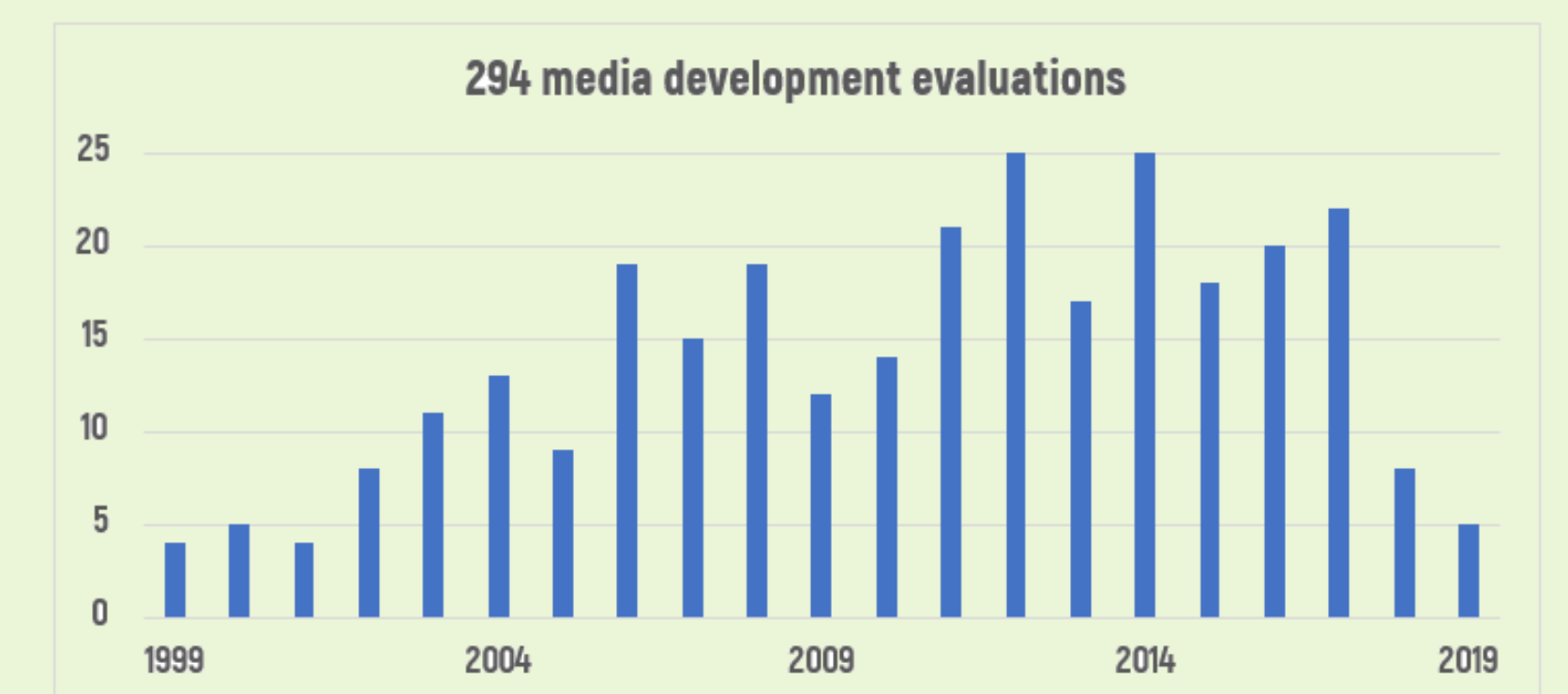
BACKGROUND

From its very premises in the 17th century, sustainability came out of its purely environmental sphere to become a very flexible and also **polysemic motto**. It is like a bet, a promise of reliance or a probability of future achievement—depending on how the concept of future is understood. To get rid of the trap of a **normative development-oriented vision**, the research will focus on the path more than the outcome: how it is constructed by donors and media development implementers and to what extent this contributes to the **consolidation of social architectures** among local radio-makers.



METHODS

My theoretical approach is based on post-modern thinking, as looking for an overall development goal has become challenging.



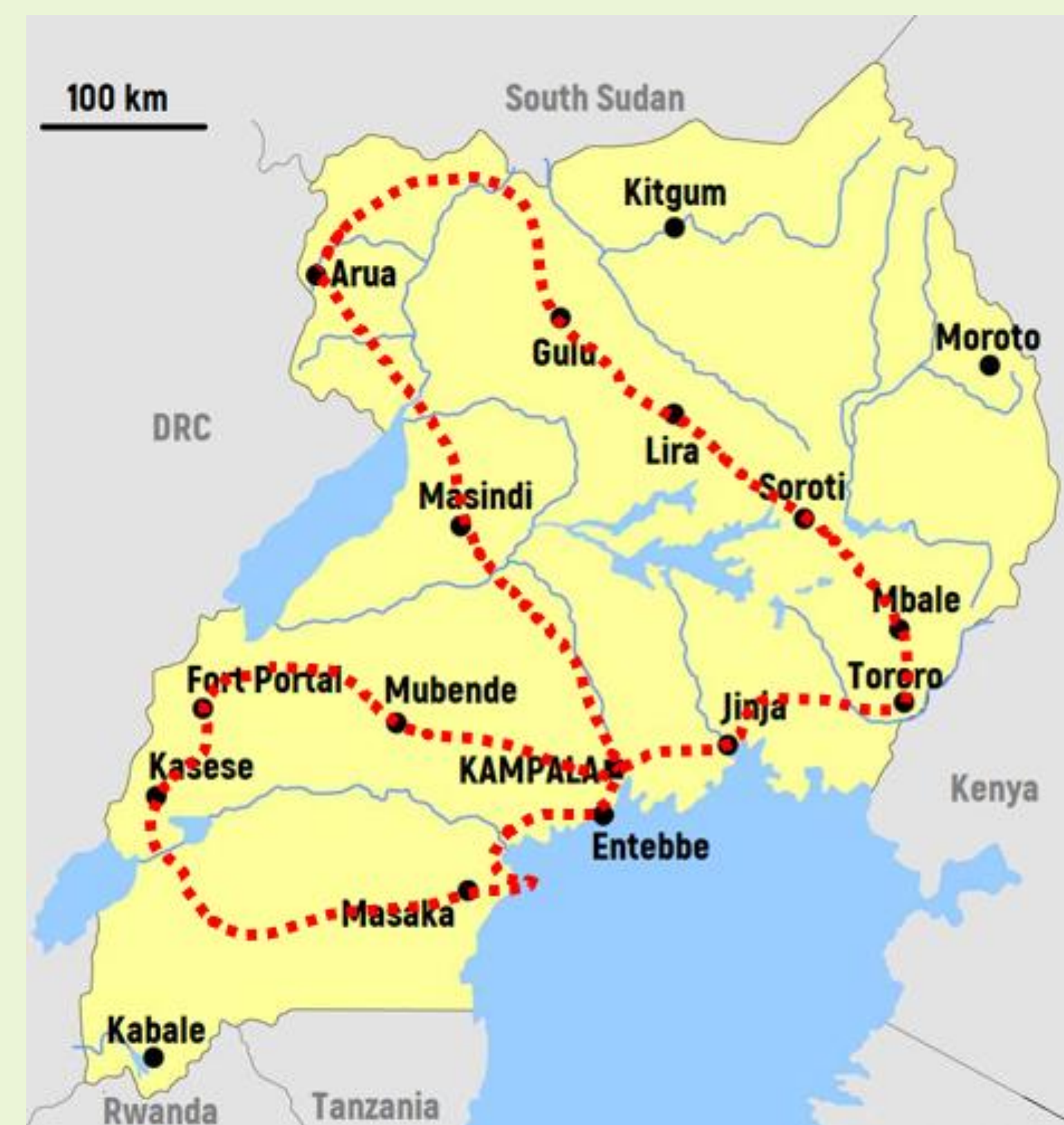
The first step was a **meta-evaluation** of nearly 300 assessments of media development projects from the last 20 years through a transversal qualitative content analysis.

The second step is a **field mission** in Uganda, mostly upcountry. Within two specific cases, processes that lead from corruption (i.e. hidden agreements when selling frequencies, go between who take commissions when selling commercials, State-dependent advertisers who buy commercials on State-related media...) to unsustainability are explored, using the process-tracing method and various tools. The third step is an **analysis** with experts interviews to discuss the heuristic potential at work in these dynamics, for the media development sector as a field.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What has been the **discursive construction** of the concept of sustainability in the sector of media development over the last 20 years?
- Within two specific cases in Uganda, what are the conditions necessary to **better sustain** radio projects?
- How can the concept of sustainability in the sector of media development be **refined**?

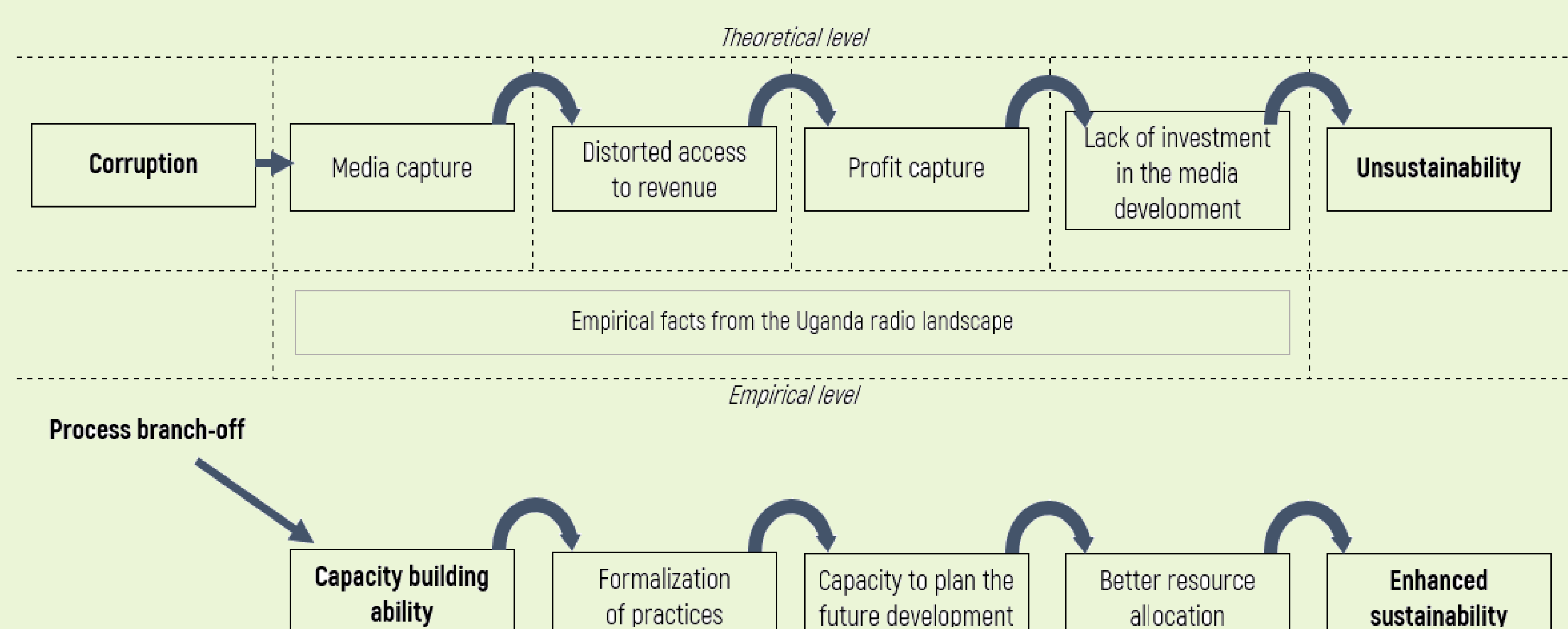


“We’ve already had dozens of training sessions and that doesn’t change the state of the landscape, which is less and less professional, with a huge turnover. **Corruption prevents the market from being regulated**” Ugandan official, 2020

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CHART 1. – PROCESS THEORY FRAMEWORK LINKING CORRUPTION AND MEDIA UNSUSTAINABILITY.



Adapted from Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2013).