Under the lens of embeddedness: a socio-cultural perspective on home-grown school feeding in Ghana

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List of Abbreviations

ACDEP: Association of Church-based Development NGOs

ADRA: Adventist Development and Relief Agency

AID: Agency for International Development

CAADP: Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme

CFMC: Community Food Management Committee

CRS: Catholic Relief Services

CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

CSB: Corn-Coya Blend

DA: District Assembly

DIC: District Implementation Committee

EC: European Commission

ECASARD: Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

ED: Executive Director

ESAs: External Support Agencies

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

FBOs: Farmer Based Organisations

FIFO: First-In, First-Out

GES: Ghana Education Service

GNSPS: Ghana National Social Protection Strategy

GSFP: Ghana School Feeding Programme

HGSF: Home-Grown School Feeding

IFDC: International Fertilizer Development Center

IFPRI: International Food Policy Research Institute

IMC: Inter-Ministerial Committee

MDAs: Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

MLGRDE: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Environment

MoFA: Ministry of Food and Agriculture

NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NS: National Secretariat

ORCC: Office of the Regional Coordinating Council

P4P: Purchase for progress

PCD: Partnership for Child Development

PSC: Programmes Steering Committee

PTA: Parent-Teacher Association

RC: Regional Coordinator

RCC: Regional Coordinating Council

RCO: Regional Coordination Office

SDA: Seventh Day Adventist

SEND: Social Enterprise Development

SFSPs: School Food Service Professionals

SIC: School Implementation Committee

SMC: School Management Committee

SNV: Netherlands Development Organisation

SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa

UN: United Nations

URBANET: Urban Agriculture Network

US: United States

USA: United States of America

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

WFP: World Food Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

How behavior and institutions are affected by social relations is one of the classic questions of social theory....Much of the utilitarian tradition, including classical and neoclassical economics, assumes rational, self-interested behavior affected minimally by social relations, thus invoking an idealized state... At the other extreme lies what I call the argument of "embeddedness": the argument that the behavior and institutions to be analyzed are so constrained by ongoing social relations that to construe them as independent is a grievous misunderstanding (Granovetter 1985, 481-482).

1.1 Background

Home-grown school feeding programmes are part of broader efforts at harnessing the power of public food procurement to impact positively on local economies (Morgan and Sonnino 2008). They aim at linking school feeding to local agricultural development (Morgan and Sonnino 2008; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011) and have opened up a new era in the history of school feeding which hitherto has been confined to education and nutrition outcomes (Fisher 2007). Home-grown school feeding attempts to deploy the power of purchase in a way that nurtures smallholders to help them make a transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture (Morgan and Sonnino 2008, xx). In the opinion of the World Food Programme (WFP), home-grown school feeding programmes aim to increase children's well-being and also to promote local agricultural production and development by providing an ongoing market for smallholders (Espejo et al. 2009).

Conventionally, school feeding programmes have been important social protection interventions employed to pursue nutrition and education objectives. As social protection interventions school meals alleviate short-term hunger and when the meals are nutritionally balanced, they improve the nutritional status of children and lead to healthy growth and the development of beneficiary school children. School food also attracts children from poor families to school and thereby improves school enrolment and attendance. The effect of good

nutrition on both physical and mental health enhances school performance and hence educational achievement (Alderman and Bundy 2012; Jomaa et al. 2011).

Evidence from high- and middle-income countries show that linking school feeding to agricultural development yields important benefits through synergies (Espejo et al. 2009). The majority of school feeding programmes in developing countries, however, are externally driven and funded, and usually come in as food aid (Bundy et al. 2009) which has the potential of depressing domestic food prices (Abdulai et al. 2004). While low food prices may be good for the poor, it is said to have the potential to create disincentives for producers to invest in improved technologies or for marketing intermediaries to invest in storage and transport capacity in order to increase domestic output which is detrimental to economic growth in the long run (Abdulai et al. 2004). It is argued, however, that proper targeting of food aid distribution has the potential to alleviate these negative effects of food aid since poorer households are also grain buyers (Barret and Maxwell 2005). Besides, well-targeted food aid may also increase market participation through increases in productivity resulting from improvements in seasonal liquidity and nutritional constraints among beneficiary farmers (Abdulai et al. 2005). In order to reduce the negative effects of food aid on economies of recipient countries, some donor agencies, like the European Commission (EC), endorse local and regional procurement of food aid, a practice that is believed to assist in the development of local agriculture and livelihoods in the supplying countries (Walker et al. 2005). In this regard, more than half of all non-US food aid is now procured in the developing world (Barrett 2008). The World Food Programme also now procures more than 75% of all its local and regional purchases in Africa (Barrett 2008). The Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative of the World Food Programme (WFP) is an important demonstration of its commitment to local and regional procurement of food aid (WFP 2012). This apparent shift within the donor community from imports to local and regional procurement of food aid has come across as an opportunity for governments of sub-Saharan Africa to exploit.

African Governments, in 2003, endorsed the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) which recognized the importance of school feeding and included locally procured school feeding programmes as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the same year, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) also recognized the importance of home-grown school feeding (HGSF) in dealing with food insecurity in Africa, with the potential to contribute to long-term

development goals. The United Nations World Summit in 2005 recommended the expansion of HGSF as one of the "quick-impact initiatives" to achieve the MDGs (Espejo et al. 2009) and, in the same year, the Millennium Project's report "Investing in Development", also recommended the same for all children in hunger hot spots by 2006 (UN Millennium Project 2005). A year later, the December 2006 African Union Special Food Summit also called for an expansion of HGSF to reach at least 20 per cent of member states by 2008 (Espejo et al. 2009). Sanchez et al. (2005) identified HGSF programmes as one of three entry points in the battle against hunger.

All these commitments at both the regional and global level led to renewed commitment from African governments and their development partners to the implementation of HGSF programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, NEPAD, WFP and the Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger, launched a pilot Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme designed to link school feeding to agricultural development through the purchase and use of locally produced food. Twelve pilot countries (Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia) were invited to implement the novel programme, but up until 2011 only Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Nigeria had started implementing the programmes (Gelli et al. 2010; PCD 2011).

These home-grown school feeding programmes that are being implemented by Governments of sub-Saharan Africa emphasize national ownership and local procurement of food (Gelli et al. 2010) (see Appendix for a brief description of models of implementation that have been employed by these programmes). Even though school feeding programmes have long been employed as social protection interventions, the explicit objective to integrate locally grown produce into school food programmes is novel (Espejo et al. 2009; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). Home-grown school feeding is based on the notion that social protection and smallholder agricultural development objectives can be pursued in a single intervention and has been identified as one of the win-win interventions towards achieving the MDGs (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). Even though Conventional school feeding programmes have mostly been employed to achieve nutritional and educational objectives (Ahmed and Sharma 2004; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011), proponents of home-grown school feeding argue that if smallholders are linked directly to schools, they can gain access to a stable and reliable market that will return a fair price for their farm produce (Vallianatos et al.

2004; Azuma and Fisher 2001). Arguments for synergies between social protection and smallholder agricultural interventions are strengthened by the fact that both interventions often cover the same geographical area and target the same poor rural households (Tirivayi et al. 2013).

Studies on school feeding have mainly focused on the nutrition and education aspects (Adelman et al. 2008; Ahmed 2004; Ahmed and Arends-Kuenning 2003; Ahmed and del Ninno 2002; Meng and Ryan 2010; Pollitt 1990, 1995; Pollitt et al. 1978; Ravallion et al. 1998) making home-grown school feeding an under-studied field. Literature on public food procurement has focused mainly on the potential of locally grown foods as a market opportunity for farmers and for enhancing sustainability (Sonnino 2009, 2010; Morgan 2008; Morgan and Morley 2002; Morgan and Sonnino 2008, 2010). There is also extensive literature on alternative food networks (Alkon 2008; Bowen 2011; Chiffoleau 2009; Feagan et al. 2004; Hinrichs 2000; Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010b, 2010a; Milestad et al. 2010; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino 2012; Murdoch et al. 2000; Pallares-Barbera et al. 2004; Sonnino 2007; Winter 2003) but much of the literature is focused on the global north where such networks create a sense of quality and value that competes with the overly globalized food chains (Sonnino 2007)

Evaluations of the home-grown school feeding programmes that have been started by some governments of sub-Saharan Africa have shown appreciable success in the areas of improving child nutrition, increasing school attendance and retention, as well as improving school performance. The same success, however, has not been recorded in linking such programmes to local agricultural development. A study by the US Department of Agriculture of four African countries revealed that very little has been achieved in the area of linking school feeding to local agricultural production (USDA 2009b). Similar studies focused on the Ghana school feeding programme have also revealed a low level of success in linking the programme to local agriculture (ECASARD and SNV 2009; SEND Ghana 2008; USDA 2009a; Lopatka et al. 2008; SNV 2007, 2008). Thus, in spite of the explicit objective of home-grown school feeding programmes to boost local food production, farmers are yet to be connected to the school feeding markets (De Carvalho et al. 2011). In the words of Eenhoorn (2007, 53) "the farmers are not yet playing ball": a suggestion that farmers are not patronizing the school feeding market. Eenhoorn and Becx (2009) identified the lack of entrepreneurial skills and

risk aversion as part of the problem that needs to be addressed in order for farmers to patronize the school feeding market. A reading of the literature on home-grown school feeding (Ahmed and Sharma 2004; Espejo et al. 2009; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011) suggests that more needs to be done on the link between school feeding and local agricultural development. Thus, the mechanism for getting food from smallholders to schools has emerged as one of the key challenges of the implementation of home-grown school feeding (Allen and Guthman 2006; Berkenkamp 2006), since buying food directly from smallholders differs greatly from dominant school food procurement practices (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010a).

In spite of these apparent failures observed in the implementation of home-grown school feeding, the assumptions that underpin such programmes are hardly tested. This thesis sets out to empirically investigate an ongoing school feeding programme in order to test the assumptions that underpin the notion of home-grown school feeding. I do this from an embeddedness perspective which takes into account the socio-cultural aspects of school food actors which have been ignored by assumptions of the value chain approach that underpins the notion of home-grown school feeding.

1.2 Research scope and themes

The focus of this thesis is the novel aspect of the Ghana school feeding programme as a home-grown school feeding initiative which seeks to link school feeding to local agricultural development. Creating such a link involves the activities of different actors acting at different scales. As a result, a holistic understanding of the issues involved in such an initiative requires a multi-actor approach in order to capture the experiences of the different actors. For this reason, this thesis focuses on the actors involved in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme as an entry point to analyse the issues involved in the linkage between school feeding and local agriculture in developing countries. In this regard, local food procurement under home-grown school feeding is the thematic focus of the thesis. A schematic representation of the relevant actors in the link between school feeding and local agriculture is presented in figure 1.1. This thesis focuses on school level governance structures, school food caterers, smallholders, and local food traders. The focus on these actor groups is because they are intimately involved in the procurement of school food under the Ghana school feeding programme which is the mechanism linking school food to local agricultural development. School food caterers are responsible for procuring, cooking and

serving food for their respective schools. Local food traders play an important role in food distribution by ensuring that food moves from points of production to points of consumption and they mostly supply school food caterers. Farmers produce the food and, in this thesis, the focus is on smallholders in the communities in which the beneficiary schools are located. Actors in civil society and government play a regulatory and facilitating role in the daily implementation of the programme. Because of the direct role of school level governance structures, school food caterers, farmers and local food traders in the procurement activities of school food, a chapter each is dedicated to an empirical analysis of their activities, experiences and perspectives. Actors in the school level governance structures have a responsibility per the project document to oversee the implementation of the programme at the school and community level. The experiences and perspectives of the actors in civil society and government provide background information to contextualize and support the theoretical and empirical discussions of the activities of the other actors discussed in the thesis.

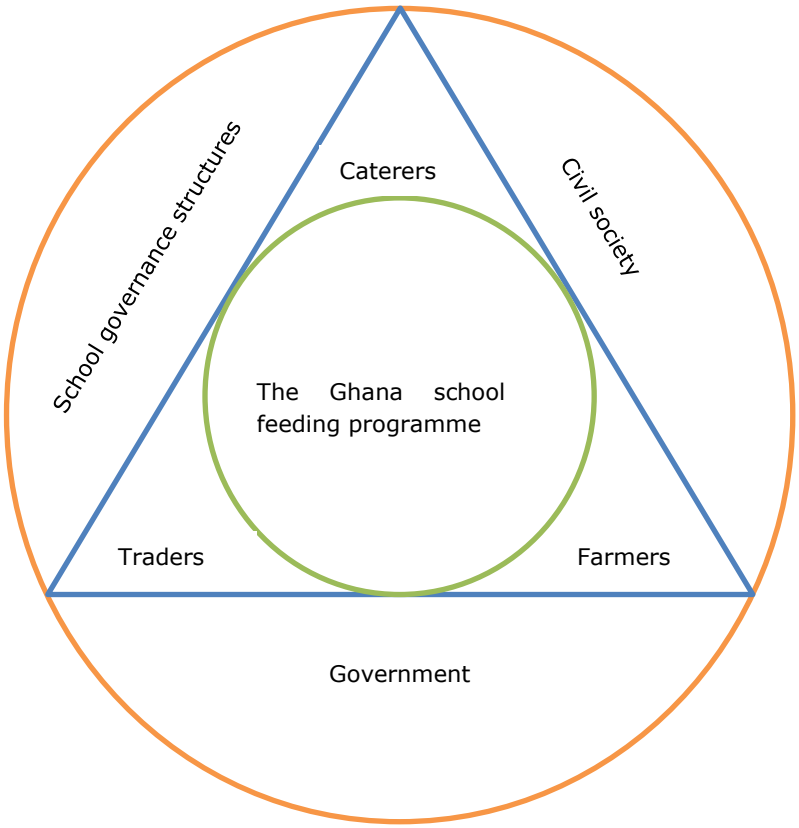

Figure 1.1 Actors in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme
Source: Author's representation

1.3 Theoretical framework

This section explains the conceptual issues that underpin the analysis of data in the empirical chapters of the thesis. While the overarching theoretical underpinning of the thesis is embeddedness, each empirical chapter can be understood as exploring a different dimension of the concept. Thus, the different dimensions of embeddedness become the theoretical lenses through which I make sense of the empirical data in the various chapters. This section, therefore, provides a framework that explains how the different dimensions of embeddedness are related. In order to provide the necessary context to discuss the concept of embeddedness, I explain, first, the change mechanism of home-grown school feeding and the theoretical assumptions that underpin such a theory of change. Second, I explain and critique the value chain approach and the neoclassical economic assumptions that underpin it. I then explore the concept of embeddedness and its use in the agro-food sector, explaining how it will be used in the present study.

1.3.1 Change mechanisms of home-grown school feeding programmes

School feeding programs supported by the Agency for International Development (AID) through its Food for Peace operation appear to be the embodiment of such win-win gamesmanship. They, along with other Food for Peace programs, further the aspirations of an important constituency in America's heartland, the farmer. New markets for surplus products are generated, and domestic price levels for targeted commodities are maintained. Indeed, with the possible exception of aid to Israel, there is probably no U.S. foreign assistance endeavor that generates more sustained or vocal constituent support than Food for Peace. It serves as a cornerstone of both domestic and international U.S. policies, a unique position enjoyed by no other U.S. foreign aid program (Levinger 1986, 11).

It is clear from the above quote that the implementers of the school feeding programmes had in mind to support the American farmer through price stabilization by procuring surplus farm produce. Thus, the purchases for school feeding programmes provided a new market opportunity for the American farmers to absorb surplus food produce to keep prices of agricultural produce stable. The author described the programme as the embodiment of a win-win gamesmanship because it benefits both farmers and school children: farmers enjoy stable prices and a new market for their farm produce and school children enjoy food in school. Currently, middle-income developing countries like Brazil and Thailand are developing linkages between school feeding and local agricultural development in order to enjoy this win-win gamesmanship, even though actual policies often fall short of fully linking the two (Otsuki 2011). However, in low-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, there is

little empirical evidence regarding linking school feeding to local agricultural development. As a result, economic models have been employed to show how synergies may be developed through the linking of school feeding to local agricultural development.

One of such models is that of Ahmed and Sharma (2004) which was commissioned by the Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger. The authors employed econometric procedures to evaluate the welfare implications of using locally produced food in school feeding programmes on farmers and consumers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their results indicate that a rightward shift in the aggregate demand curve for maize, due to additional demand generated by food for education programmes, raises the equilibrium price for maize. Farmers then respond to this higher price by investing in improved technology to produce more maize, which shifts the supply curve outwards to create a new equilibrium, the price of which is lower than the original equilibrium price. According to the authors, farmers still benefit from this lower equilibrium price because of the increase in productivity which culminates in more sales and also lower cost of production resulting from improved technology. Consumers also benefit by buying cheap from this new and lower equilibrium price resulting from the outward shift of the supply curve. Results of the second economic model which was conducted in 2007 by the WFP, IFPRI and the Gates Foundation on the potential impact of HGSF on smallholder maize farmers indicated that the impact of HGSF programmes would be greater on smallholders if they were able to achieve increased productivity (Espejo et al. 2009).

Thus, inferring from the two modeling exercises, unless school food purchases lead to increases in the productivity of smallholders, there would be no significant benefits to them (see box 1.1 for some principles underlying home-grown school feeding). The assumption behind these modeling exercises is that farmers act purely on price and, therefore, all they need is higher prices in order to increase productivity. Another assumption is that there are productivity enhancing technologies out there and farmers are not using them because of low prices for agricultural produce. The solution, therefore, lies in using the additional demand from school feeding purchases to increase the prices of food produce to the level that will motivate farmers to invest in these productivity enhancing technologies in order to benefit from the higher prices and, thus, increase their income. In the US case described by Levinger (1986), the win-win association between school feeding and local agriculture comes from absorption of surplus produce from farmers to maintain domestic food prices, while in the case of the developing world, the idea is to increase demand to push prices up in order to

induce a supply response from farmers.

Box 1.1 Organising principles of home-grown school feeding

Organising principles of home-grown school feeding

1. Reliance on domestic food production
2. Diversification of diets based on locally available foods, with micronutrient supplementation and fortification
3. Stimulation of farm productivity and market systems
4. Crop diversification and cottage industry development
5. Infrastructure development
6. Resource mobilization and community ownership
7. Control over the flows of products and funds by local communities through good governance
8. Quantification of solutions and benefits
9. Targeting of small holder farmers and school children in food insecure areas of the country
10. Targeting most vulnerable food insecure children including street children and HIV/AIDS orphans

Source: Ahmed and Sharma (2004)

The task of home-grown school feeding in the developing world has been framed as creating an enabling environment for smallholders to access markets and to participate in tendering while arranging distribution channels for their products (Otsuki 2011). Proponents of home-grown school feeding have argued that food procurement from smallholders creates for them a stable market which boosts their confidence and also gives them the necessary resources to make investments in improved technologies, as well as build their capacity to access new markets and, hence, trigger what they describe as multiplier effects (Mitchell 2009). Thus, local purchase of food for school feeding is seen as a force multiplier, benefiting children and the local economy at the same time (Bundy et al. 2009). Even though there seems to be less agreement regarding the scale at which school feeding will be linked to local agriculture (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011), the Ghana school feeding programme particularly prioritizes procurement from the local community and broadening the focus to the district and national levels when food items are not available (PCD 2011, 14).

The World Food Programme (WFP) has also outlined a framework to link school feeding to agricultural development consisting of three focus areas in which interventions are needed. These are strategic procurement, agricultural development, and institutional development (Espejo et al. 2009). By strategic procurement, programme implementers make conscious

efforts to remove barriers they think smallholders face in accessing the school feeding market. These barriers may include lack of information, insufficient capacity to meet traditional tendering requirements, lack of capacity to supply, store, and transport commodities, as well as vulnerability to post-harvest losses. The focus area of agricultural development aims to assist smallholders to increase productivity, produce better quality crops, manage natural resources and mitigate risks sustainably. These may involve assistance packages such as improved seeds, fertilizer and other inputs at subsidized prices to smallholders, so that they are able to produce enough to supply school feeding programmes (Espejo et al. 2009). The third focus area is institutional development which may include the formulation of policies, rules and strategies to govern school feeding, procurement and agricultural development. Of the three focus areas identified by Espejo et al. (2009), strategic procurement is the one that falls directly in line with the objective of this study since it is the only focus area so far employed by the Ghana school feeding programme to link with smallholders. In spite of the fact that HGSF programmes have widely been framed as a market opportunity for smallholders, they have not led to significant increases in income of participating farmers (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010b). Otsuki (2011) notes that food procurement for school feeding should lead to:

1. The creation of a market for small-scale farmers;
2. The contribution to changing market structures so that a larger proportion of the market price goes to local farmers;
3. The creation of a stronger role for local farmers in the supply chain through reducing the relevance of intermediaries in the purchasing process; and
4. Ensuring that small-scale farmers produce a sufficient supply of good-quality products to enable them to respond to market demand (215)

Thus, the starting point of linking school feeding to agricultural development is making the school feeding market accessible to smallholders through food procurement. The procurement model used and the scale of HGSF purchases will determine the magnitude of benefits and how the benefits will be distributed between producers and other supply chain actors (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2011) have identified eight logical steps by which home-grown school feeding impacts on agricultural development based on the ideas of agricultural development of sub-Saharan Africa and the use of economic localization for demand assisted growth (see box 1.2). These steps essentially

give us ideas about the basic assumptions underlying home-grown school feeding programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, which may be summarized as below:

1. Smallholders have the capacity to invest in agricultural technology to improve their yields;
2. The lack of markets and low food prices are disincentives for smallholders to invest in in these productivity enhancing technologies;
3. Smallholders will respond to and invest in improved technology to increase agricultural productivity when there is a market and the prices are right;
4. This increased productivity will lead to increased income for smallholders.

It is assumed that the school feeding market will offer a structured demand for the farm produce of smallholders. Structured demand requires predictability in terms of quality standards, quantities to be purchased, and frequency of purchases (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). The use of public procurement to support local economies as envisaged under HGSF would effectively structure demand as indicated in figure 1.2. This structuring of demand then stimulates local economic activity through a response system that will eventually increase demand for local goods and services, which then creates both direct and indirect benefits to targeted groups and other people (see figure 1.2).

Box 1.2 Steps by which home-grown school feeding impacts on local agricultural development

Steps by which HGSF impacts on agricultural development

1. Agricultural growth is essential for broad-based poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Agricultural growth will come about through increased engagement with input and output markets, which will stimulate technical change and result in productivity enhancement.
3. The greatest poverty reduction impact of this ''market engagement − agricultural growth − poverty reduction'' linkage will come via a focus on small or family farms.
4. A major block to greater market engagement by family farmers is the fact that in much of rural SSA input and output markets are thin, seasonal and poorly governed, infrastructure is poor, etc.
5. These market constraints can be addressed by using the public sector demand for food associated with social protection programmes (like school feeding) to drive a demand-assisted agricultural growth strategy. The demand for this food can be ''structured'' so that it is easier, less costly and less risky for specific target groups within the population of family farmers to engage with input and output markets.
6. Social protection programmes involving food are prime candidates for a structured demand approach for two reasons: there is growing recognition among both funders and recipient countries of the benefits of substituting domestically produced commodities for food aid and imported commodities; demand is highly predictable and thus amenable to a structuring process that will reduce the uncertainty and risk associated with family farmers' engagement with food markets.
7. The provision of complimentary services (training, credit, access to inputs and technology) can be linked to the process of structuring demand.
8. Thus, the use of structured demand to supply school feeding programmes is an attractive avenue through which to kick start a process of agricultural and livelihood transformation (p. 342)

Source: Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2011, 342)

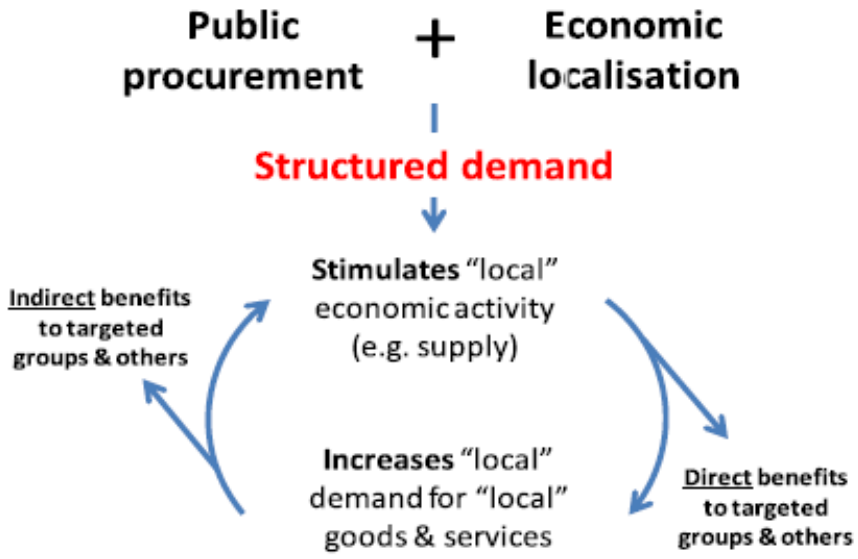

Figure 1.2 Structured demand as change mechanism under HGSF

Source: Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2011, 344)

1.3.2 Value chain analysis and the working of the economy

The value of a product in the market is determined by the amount of money buyers are willing to pay for it and value addition is reflected in retail price appreciation (Porter 1985). The core methodology of value chain analysis is to break companies down into single activities, called value activities, which allows companies to understand which parts of their operations create value and which do not, which parts give competitive advantage and which do not (Porter 1985). Projects that adopt the value chain approach aim at maximizing value creation while minimizing costs by linking all activities together efficiently (Lynch 2003). The idea behind the value chain approach to smallholder agriculture is to ensure smallholders capture the largest share of the retail price through their involvement in the transformation, processing, transportation and marketing of their produce (IFAD 2015). The value chain approach to smallholder agriculture is thought to be particularly useful because it is a descriptive device for outlining what the potential flow of produce might be from the smallholder to the consumer, and all the steps in between where value is added in response to market demands (Wonder 2014). Under the lens of value chain analysis, home-grown school feeding is conceptualized as a chain of activities that follow rational actor theories of efficiency and profit maximization (Ahmed and Sharma 2004). School feeding is divided into separate subsystems, the linkages of which can and should be optimised for the benefit of smallholders, school pupils and local economies as a whole (Espejo et al. 2009). This way of conceptualizing home-grown school feeding is flawed by the fact that it ignores history, culture, social relationships, and context, leading to outcomes that are different from the ones anticipated by project planners. In order to understand how home-grown school feeding works, it is important to take into account the effects of history, culture, social relationships and context. To do this requires a different conceptualization of home-grown school feeding: conceptualizing home-grown school feeding as a set of negotiated outcomes (Long 1989, 1997, 2001; Rondinelli 1993) among school food actors, mediated by both economic and non-economic factors (Granovetter 1985, 2005; Granovetter and Swedberg 1992; Block 1990).

Gudeman (2001) argues that the economy which revolves about making, holding, using, sharing, exchanging, and accumulating valued objects and services includes more than standard market theory suggests, maintaining that economic practices and relationships are constituted within the realms of the market and the community. The market aspect of the economy designates anonymous short-term exchanges of goods and services and can be

described as far-distant because transactions are usually impersonal, even global, and abstracted from social context. The value chain approach to home-grown school feeding is located in the market aspect of Gudeman's (2002) economy.

The community aspect of the economy refers to real, on-the-ground associations and to imagined solidarities that people experience (Gudeman 2001). It can be described as up-close because it is local and specific, constituted through social relationships and contextually defined values. In this aspect of the economy, material actions may be constructed through religious, social, or other "non-economic" practices from which they cannot be separated, giving rise to multiple, meaningful formulations of the economy within particular cultures. Conceptualizing home-grown school feeding as a set of negotiated outcomes among school food actors is located in this community aspect of Gudeman's (2001) economy.

In spite of the fact that the market and community aspects of the economy operate together, neoclassical economics focuses on the market aspect and models it as a separate sphere to make up the whole of the economy in which all goods are priced and available for exchange (Gudeman 2001). Value chain thinking is modeled on this neoclassical economics view of the economy which consists of households and businesses (see figure 1.3). Households own labour and raw materials which they sell in markets; firms purchase these resources and transform them into products and services for sale to households. This circulation of materials, goods and services through markets is thought to be self-contained and efficient. Government holds a regulatory role but is not an immediate player. If communal transactions[1] exist, they are treated as irrationalities, frictions, hindrances, or externalities to a system that is otherwise efficient (Gudeman 2001). In the discourse of neoclassical economics, the notion of individual preferences influences demand, which, in combination with supply, determines a good's value or a good's price. However, Gudeman (2001) argues that we live in a world of inconsistent and incommensurate domains of value that are locally specified which makes it inappropriate to reduce the economy to only one value, but one made up of different value domains (see figure 1.4) which complement the two realms of the economy. The value domains identified by Gudeman (2001) include the base, social relationships, trade and accumulation. He argues that economic practices and relationships are constituted within the two realms of the economy and these four value domains. The base consists of a community's

[1] What others like Granovetter (1985), Polanyi (1944) and Block (1990) describe as embedded transactions

shared interests, which include common and lasting resources, produced things, and intangible aspects of their culture such as knowledge, technology, laws, practices, skills and customs. Cultural agreements and beliefs that constitute the base define values that are embodied in goods, services and ideologies which together express identity in community and provide structure for all the domains. Gudeman (2001) notes that these culturally defined values are unpriced, heterogeneous, and often sorted into incommensurate spheres.

Social relationships and associations consist of valued communal connections maintained for their own sake and include house economies, lineages, and nations. These relationships enable the creation of the base, as well as its allotment and apportionment to people in the community. The base and social relationships, which partially constitute one another, fall within the community realm of Gudeman's (2001) economy. Social relationships mediate the transfer of materials and services and the material transfers express relationships, while between communities, reciprocity forges and disconnects relationships through the extension of the base (Gudeman 2001).

In the trade domain, individuals and groups of people impersonally trade goods and services which are considered separated. The traded goods and services are consumed, saved or used in production and their values are expressed in varying exchange rates. Participants in this trade domain are communally constituted as corporations, individuals, partnerships, households, families, lineages, kin groups, and others and their exchanges are often aided by use of a currency or part-currency, even though exchange may also take the form of barter (Gudeman 2001).

The accumulation domain consists of collecting value in the form of resources, relationships, goods and money capital which may be held, invested, consumed, and displayed. Value accumulation may occur through tribute or tithes, monopolies, and arbitrage, which secure value from the other domains (Gudeman 2001). Practices in this domain of value revolve about appropriating newly formed values, and allocating and reallocating established ones (Gudeman 2001).

The community aspect of Gudeman's (2001) economy is what other writers (Block 1990; Granovetter 1985, 2005) in the economic sociology literature have described as the non-economic aspects of market exchange, also referred to as embeddedness.

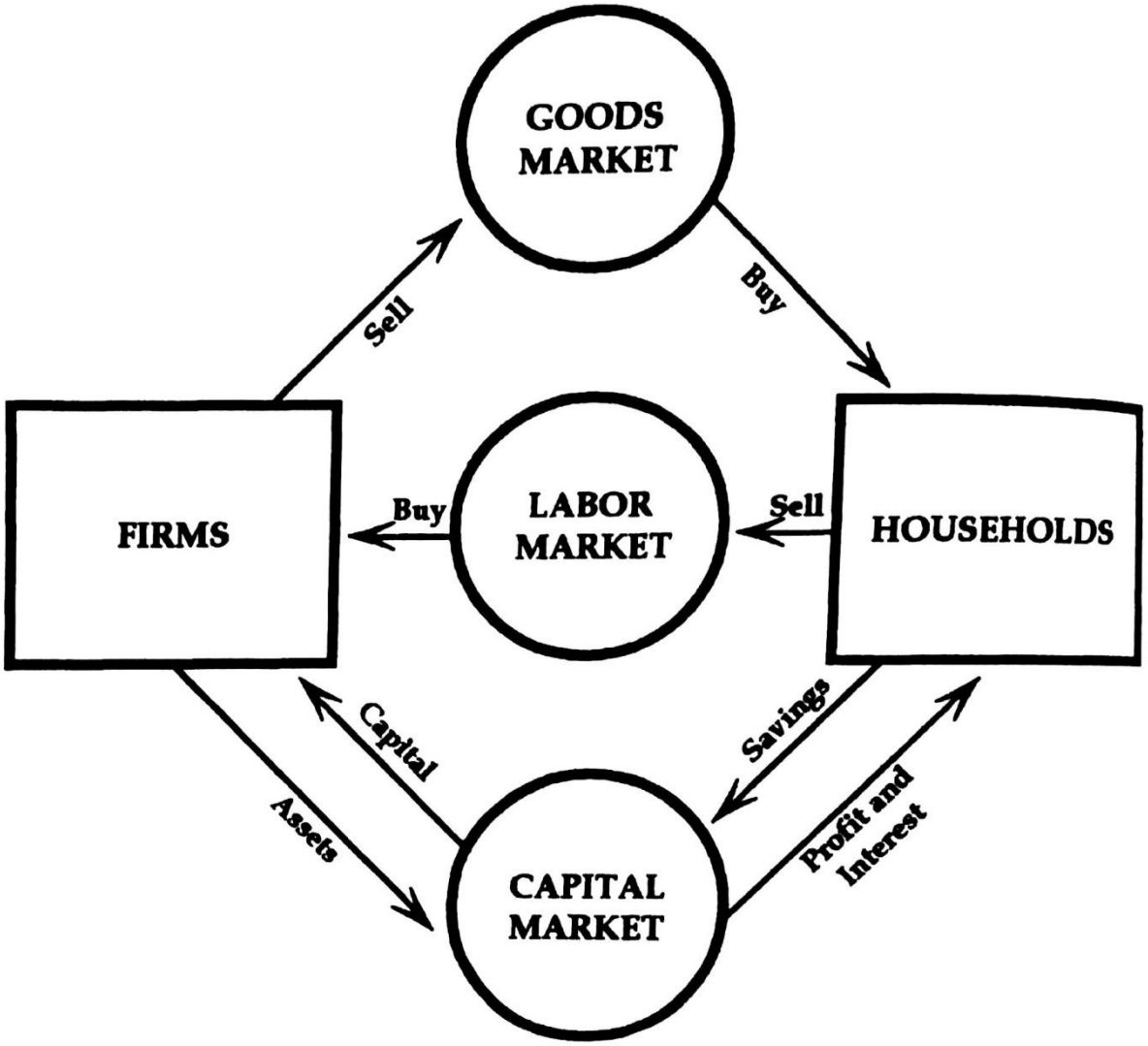

Figure 1.3 The neoclassical economy

Source: Gudeman (2001, 6)

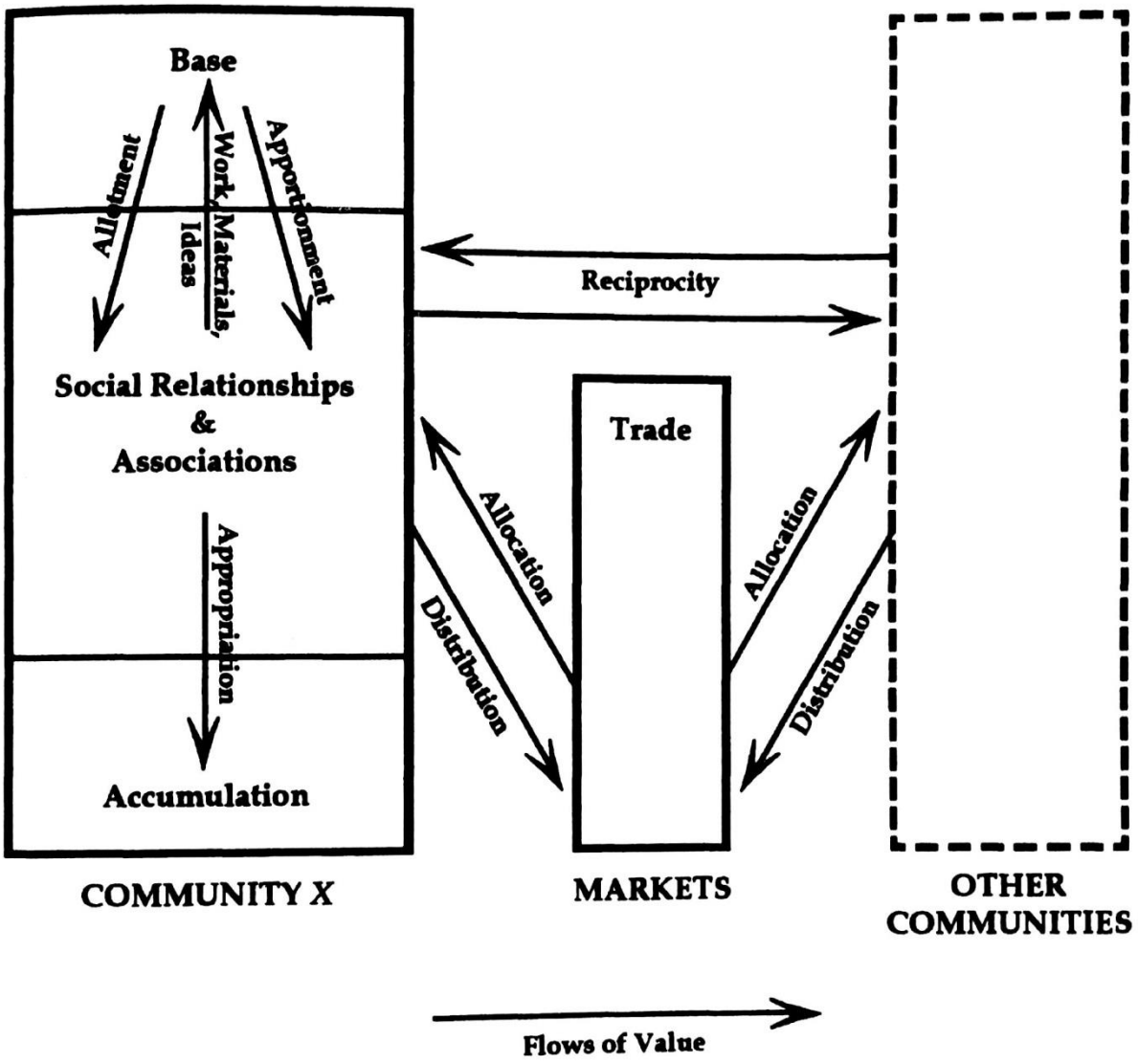

Figure 1.4 Economy as domains of value

Source: Gudeman (2001, 7)

1.3.3 Embeddedness: a theoretical exposition

Embeddedness has been used by economic sociologists to describe the intermixing of economic and non-economic activities, the latter influencing the process, cost, outcomes and the available techniques of the former (Granovetter 2005; Hinrichs 2000). Thus, the extent to which economic action is influenced by actions that are non-economic in content, goals or processes is the defining feature of embeddedness as a concept (Granovetter 2005). The notion of embeddedness has its roots in the work of Polanyi (1957) who argues that all economies are embedded and enmeshed in social relations and institutions. Granovetter

(1985) used the concept of economic embeddedness to extend Polanyi's argument and provided insight into the problem of social embeddedness. Granovetter argues that "economic systems … operate within a network of relationships, institutional arrangements, and cultural meanings that limit the extent to which economic actors can be regarded as purely instrumental and rational in their market orientation" (cited in: Roep and Wiskerke 2010, 4,5). Granovetter (1985) stresses the role of concrete interpersonal relations and networks that arise from these relations in generating trust and discouraging malfeasance in economic transactions.

Winter (2003) notes that embeddedness is not merely a question of trust but also that of meaning. "If embeddedness is to do with local social relations of consumption based on trust relations between producers and consumers, it is also surely to do with the meanings these relations hold" (ibid: 24). This is in line with the claim by Lie (1997) and Swedberg (1991) that markets are socially structured institutions, infused with cultural norms and meaning. Block (1990), for his part, argues that all economic transactions take place along a continuum of marketness. He writes that "high marketness means that there is nothing to interfere with the dominance of price considerations, but as one moves down the continuum to lower levels of marketness, non-price considerations take on greater importance" (Block 1990: 51). Block (1990) goes on to argue that as "the marketness of transactions diminishes, economic behavior tends to become more embedded in a more complex web of social relations" (ibid: 53). He supplements the marketness continuum of evaluating economic transactions with the continuum of economic instrumentalism to evaluate the motives of economic actors. When economic actors are motivated purely by economic self-interest and price considerations, their actions are considered instrumental and when price considerations diminish, economic actions become more embedded. The fundamental assumption of the concept of embeddedness is that social relations shape economic behaviour and activities and this has afforded economic sociologists an opportunity to question the *Homo economicus* models of neoclassical economics regarding economic behaviour and also to elaborate an alternative approach to the study of the economy (Sonnino 2007). Economists often treat non-economic aspects of human life as exogenous factors to be ignored in economic models (Callon 1998), emphasizing the autonomous and self-regulating nature of the market where agents enter and leave as strangers (Peck 2005). Economic sociologists, however, have called for the recognition of non-economic factors that have been treated by neoclassical economics as exogenous to the exchange process since non-economic factors have an impact on economic outcomes by

providing a context that may facilitate, as well as constrain, economic action (Morris and Kirwan 2011). Thus, social relations, though non-economic in nature, influence market actions by providing the trust and mutual understanding needed to make markets work (Peck 2005).

In spite of the usefulness of the concept of embeddedness in understanding the shortcomings of neoclassical economics, it has been criticized for not explaining concretely how contextual factors influence economic outcomes (Uzzi 1996). In other words, it is not enough to state that context matters in shaping economic outcomes, but it is also important to explain how it matters by specifying what contextual factors lead to the realization of specific economic outcomes (Peck 2005). Thus, the lack of consensus among economic sociologists on how context matters in economic action has been cited as a key weakness of the concept of embeddedness, even though it may also be argued that the way that context matters is contextual in itself (Peck 2005). A major critique of embeddedness comes from Krippner (2001), who argues that in spite of Granovetter's reworking of Polanyi, he fails to adequately conceptualize economic activity. Block's (1990) continuum of marketness is also under attack. For Krippner (2001), the focus on embeddedness and the notion of a continuum effectively blinds economic sociology to the hard core of instantaneous transactions. Krippner (2001) also argues that network theorists working on embeddedness of the market have distilled social content away from the market construct to a level of abstraction that tends to produce tension between marketless conceptions of the social and conceptions of the economy in which every social trace is suppressed.

Another critique of embeddedness comes from Zelizer (cited in Steiner 2008) who argues that the Polanyian distinction between embedded economy and disembedded economy is not a useful one. This distinction between embedded and disembedded economies is also the point of attack by Gemici (2008) who argues that whilst Polanyi offers a vision of all economies 'embedded and enmeshed in institutions', he tends to see market exchange and market economy as self-regulating and disembedded. Gemici (2008) claims that Polanyi employs embeddedness in a dual manner: one, as a methodological principle akin to methodological holism, and two, as a theoretical proposition on the changing place of economy in society. Gemici (2008) goes on to argue that embeddedness as a methodological principle is the only acceptable usage of the term, which, to him, falls short of economic sociology's goal of providing a theoretical alternative to neoclassical economics.

Jessop (2001) notes that social embeddedness is a common concept with social scientists and yet has so many meanings. He, therefore, suggests three levels of social embeddedness in order to deal with the complexity of the concept. The first level of social embeddedness Jessop (2001) distinguishes is in line with Granovetter's (1985) social embeddedness of interpersonal economic relations. According to Jessop (2001), this level of analysis focuses on the multiple networks in which economic actors are embedded and on the differential and changing impact on such actors' identities, interests, capacities and practices. He insists that even if economic agents in a market economy appear to confront each other as bare individuals, they still remain always-already social actors. Thus, the decisions that economic actors take will always be influenced somehow by their relationships with other economic actors. As such, analysing economic actions without recourse to such social relations will lead only to partial explanations of economic actions and predictions arising from such incomplete explanations cannot be accurate (Granovetter 2005). The second level of social embeddedness distinguished by Jessop (2001) is what he described as the institutional embeddedness of inter-organizational relations. At this level of embeddedness, the focus is on the internal cohesion and adaptability of individual organizations and how they may be rendered compatible with their respective operational unities and independence with their *de facto* material and social interdependence on other organizations (Jessop, 2001). The third level of social embeddedness is that of the 'societal' embeddedness which Jessop (2001) ties to the work of Polanyi in the sense of embedding of market relations in traditional societies; their disembedding to form a market economy; and the latter's re-articulation with other forms of social relations to create a modern market society.

Rooks et al. (2000) for their part, distinguished three types of social embeddedness namely temporal, network and institutional embeddedness. According to the authors, temporal embeddedness refers to repeated exchange between trade partners, while network embeddedness refers to relations with third parties such as other firms. Institutional embeddedness describes social institutions that allow for credible agreements and commitments. Rooks et al. (2000) note that these dimensions of social embeddedness combine with transaction characteristics to shape trust problems in economic transactions and argue that social embeddedness provides alternatives for costly contractual planning such as reciprocity and conditional co-operation. For Lindberg et al. (1991, 8), it is only the first

analytic step required to identify embeddedness in networks as a means of conceptualizing economic activity. In their own words:

> …it is not enough to assert that all economic action is embedded in networks of informal social relations (e.g., Granovetter 1985) and that, such networks, rather than the largely fictitious pure market, account for whatever observable order exists in an industry. To do so neglects the important tasks of identifying different degrees and qualities of embeddedness, specifying different kinds of networks, explaining how they developed, and determining how effectively they moderate different types of exchanges (Lindberg et al 1991: 8)

Sociologists have since explored different dimensions of embeddedness, which include territorial, cultural, and social (Granovetter 2005; Sonnino 2007).

The territorial dimension of embeddedness is often emphasized when embeddedness is applied in the context of food (Goodman 2004). Territorial embeddedness refers to the enmeshing of economic and cultural relationships within broad territorially placed social and institutional structures that facilitate social relations (Pallares-Barbera et al. 2004). For Bowen (2011) territory is a space that is socially constructed, culturally marked and institutionally regulated. Similarly, Sonnino (2007) invites us to see place beyond a fixed and neatly bound geographical entity and to recognize it as a socio-cultural construction that participants re-define and re-negotiate to provide their product with an historic and territorial identity. The importance of territory in analyzing economic actions stems from the fact that it acts as the space for the accumulation of economic actions and common values (Pallares-Barbera et al. 2004). Malecki and Tootle (1997) note that placed formal institutions may improve reciprocity, collaboration, co-operation and trust relationships between the public and private sectors, promoting territorial characteristics in order to increase regional unity and provide firms with networking. Thus, spatial relations may inform economic activity by creating unique opportunities and access to those opportunities (Uzzi 1996).

In spite of the role territory plays in embedding networks and economic actions, some writers question the usefulness of exploring the territorial dimension of embeddedness. For example, Winter (2003) argues that it is not possible to equate localness with embeddedness because all market relations are socially embedded. Spatial relations reinforce social relations between actors and between actors within the network and consumers (Milestad et al. 2010). Exactly because spatial relations act through social relations, Hess (2004) questions the usefulness of exploring the spatial dimension of embeddedness. Territorial embeddedness of alternative

food systems has often been assumed rather than critically and empirically analysed, leaving power relations and culture largely untheorised and, hence, embeddedness theory has remained vague (Sonnino 2007). Sonnino (2007) encourages us to explore questions about the degrees and forms of embeddedness and goes on to explore the process through which food economies become embedded by focusing on the emergence of saffron as a local food network in southern Tuscany. According to her, embeddedness assumes social, spatial and temporal dimensions. Izumi, Wright, et al. (2010a, 338) for their part caution us against "conflating spatial relations with social relations".

Writers in the alternative food literature have focused their analysis on how territory is used to create a sense of quality for agricultural produce by producers who want to distinguish their products from the more conventional and globalized agro-food chains (Sonnino 2007) and, thereby, produce and access a niche market for such products. For the most part, the territorial embeddedness of food has been seen as a distinguishing feature of different food systems where some food systems have been described as embedded and others as disembedded. Parrott et al. (2002) distinguish between the food cultures of the global north which they consider disembedded because of the focus on economic efficiency and those of the global south, which they consider to be embedded in place, culture and society. Barham (2003) in a similar fashion explains that the quality label of embeddedness is created by emphasizing the link between production and territory. In her own words, such links between production and territory "re-embed a product in the natural processes and social context of its territory" (Barham 2003, 130). In this sense, embeddedness in the food sector has been associated with the notion of food quality where it competes with price. Holloway and Kneafsey (2004, 264), thus, hit the nail on the head when they describe the quality turn in the food sector as a form of resistance to the disembedding forces of globalization through the development of niche products that are "embedded within producer-consumer relationships in which notions of trust, regard, authenticity and connectedness are given prominence".

The social, territorial, spatial and ecological dimensions of embeddedness have been the focus of much of the literature on agro-food networks (Hinrichs 2000; Hinrichs 2003; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino 2012; Pallares-Barbera et al. 2004; Parrott et al. 2002; Penker 2006; Sonnino 2007, 2009, 2010; Winter 2003). Other writers (Granovetter 1985; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993) have emphasized the role of social capital and trust in shaping economic

outcomes. The works of Uzzi have focused on the importance of specifying the dimensions of embedded relationships and the mechanisms by which they influence economic action (See Uzzi 1996, 1997, 1999). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) have demonstrated how social structure affects economic action by focusing on the effect of social capital on individual goal-seeking behaviour as part of efforts at specifying mechanisms by which social structures affect economic actions. Thus, it is important to recognize that non-economic issues are more or less important in certain economic relations (Milestad et al. 2010) and that both price and self-interest may still matter even in the presence of meaningful social ties (Hinrichs 2000).

Granovetter (2005) identified embeddedness as one of four core principles of the effect of social networks on economic action, noting that:

> Much social life revolves around a non-economic focus. Therefore, when economic and noneconomic activity is intermixed, non-economic activity affects the costs and the available techniques for economic activity. This mixing of activities is what I have called "social embeddedness" of the economy (Granovetter, 1985) — the extent to which economic action is linked to or depends on action or institutions that are non-economic in content, goals or processes (35).

Granovetter (2005) outlines three reasons social networks affect economic outcomes. First, actors believe information from people they know, more than information from people they do not know because of the difficulty in verifying subtle and nuanced information independently. Second, social rewards and punishments make the greatest impact among people who personally know each other rather than among people who only know each other casually. And third, trust which may facilitate economic transactions is more likely to develop among people who know each other personally and interact at different levels and scales. Fafchamps (2004) has also identified possible roles of social relationship in trade transactions to include information sharing, access to trade credit, prevention and handling of breaches of contract and conflict, regularity of trade flows as well as risk mitigation.

Following Granovetter's (2005) concept of social embeddedness and supplementing it with Block's (1990) continuum of marketness and economic instrumentality, I analyzed the activities of actors involved in the Ghana school feeding programme. Embeddedness in the form of social relationship is particularly useful for analysing the activities of these actors because of the social context in which they operate. Social relationships bring to light embedding forces such as trust and reciprocity, as well as disembedding forces such as price

and self-interest. These embedding and disembedding forces together shape the activities of these actors and determine the extent to which school food procurement is connected to local agricultural development.

An embeddedness approach is essentially actor-oriented as it takes actor defined perspectives as the point of departure. For this reason, studying home-grown school feeding from an embeddedness perspective entails identifying the actors involved, as well as the relationships and the negotiations that arise from their interactions. The focus on actors under an embeddedness approach allows for a holistic understanding of the practical issues involved in the implementation of home-grown school feeding by focusing on activities and experiences of school food actors. Starting from an interest in explaining differential adaptations or responses to the same or similar circumstances, an actor-oriented approach attributes agency to actors which enables them "to process their and others' experiences and to act upon them" (Long 2001, 49), such that outcomes of home-grown school feeding are the result of processes of negotiation, involving dialogue and bargaining among the school food actors (Long 1997) and are not determined by programme planners.

Agency refers to the capacity of the individual social actor to "process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life even under the most extreme forms of coercion" (Long 1989, 223). School food actors possessing agency means that they are knowledgeable and capable of processing information in their environment and taking action. An embeddedness approach that assumes agency for school food actors would allow for the understanding of contextual issues like culture and social relationships and how they influence economic behaviour due to the constraining and enabling effect they have on the activities of school food actors (Giddens 1987). Because of the negotiation processes among actors that produce outcomes of development interventions like home-grown school feeding, Rondinelli (1993, 18) suggests that such programmes be considered as 'social experiments' to reflect the unpredictable nature of their outcomes.

1.4 Problem statement

Home-grown school feeding is based on the assumption that smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa lack markets and that school feeding provides the needed market to motivate farmers to invest in improved technology to increase their productivity and, hence, income. This

assumption has largely ignored socio-cultural relationships among smallholders and other actors involved in school feeding. Conceptualizing home-grown school feeding as a problem of embeddedness will provide insight into how socio-cultural relationships constrain, as well as enable, activities of school food actors.

1.5 Research objective and research questions

Research objective

The objective of the research was to explore how the activities and experiences of actors in the Ghana school feeding programme were embedded in socio-cultural relationships and how such embedded relationships enabled, as well as constrained, linking school feeding to local agricultural development.

General research question

What is the nature of the relationships between the actors involved in school feeding activities in Ghana, and to what extent is school feeding embedded in the local economic and socio-cultural relationships?

Specific research questions

1. What are the perspectives of school level governance actors about the Ghana school feeding programme and how are such perspectives embedded in historical and contemporary developments of school feeding in Ghana?

2. How do school food caterers procure food for the school feeding programme in Ghana and what local economic and socio-cultural relationships enable as well as constrain their procurement practices?

3. What are the experiences of local food traders with school feeding programmes in Ghana and how are these experiences embedded in local economic and socio-cultural relationships?

4. What is the nature of the contribution of the school feeding programme in Ghana to the local agricultural economy?

1.6 Thesis outline

The next chapter presents and discusses the methodology that I followed to collect, analyse and interpret data. It describes the research area and context, the research design, how cases were selected and the sampling procedures I used. The chapter also details the data collection procedures, as well as how data were handled, analysed and interpreted.

In Chapter Three I discuss the perspectives of school level governance structures on the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme and how such perspectives are embedded in historical and contemporary developments of school feeding in Ghana. I argue that the perspectives of school level governance structures on the Ghana school feeding programme are influenced by both historical and contemporary developments of school feeding in Ghana. I make the point that the perspectives of the school governance structures on the Ghana school feeding programme largely concern nutrition and education outcomes and hardly regard the objective of boosting agricultural development because of the influence of historical and contemporary experiences of the actors with earlier and current implementation of school feeding in Ghana. The implications of these perspectives of the school level governance actors on the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme, especially the aspects of local food procurement, are also discussed.

I deal with procurement practices of school food caterers under the Ghana school feeding programme in Chapter Four. Here, I discuss both the embedding and disembedding effects of the challenges of programme implementation and argue that social relationships play an important role in the procurement practices of school food caterers. I also explain how school food caterers use social relationships to deal with the twin challenges of tight school feeding budgets and delays in the release of funds and how such social relationships enable, as well as constrain, local food procurement by the school food caterers.

In Chapter Five, I focus on how the activities of local food traders are embedded in social relationships and the implications of such embedded activities on the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme as a home-grown initiative. I present and discuss the activities of four categories of food traders operating in the study area, using case studies. I also discuss the role of social relationships in the activities of these traders and the implications of such social relationship in the activities of the local food traders for the implementation of the local food procurement objectives of the Ghana school feeding programme.

The focus of Chapter Six is on how the market relations of smallholders are embedded in socio-cultural relationships and the implications for efforts at linking the Ghana school feeding programme to local agricultural development. I explain how smallholders relate with both input and output markets for the production and marketing of their farm produce and the role socio-cultural relationships play in the way they mobilize inputs and, also, market surplus farm produce. I also discuss the role of off-farm income in the market relationship of smallholders and how it reinforces the autonomy of smallholders. The cultural dimension of subsistence and its role on smallholder relationships with markets are also explored, bringing out the cultural issues that determine which commodities are marketed and which ones are not.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with conclusions as answers to the specific research questions and a general discussion that speaks to the general objective of the thesis. The general discussion brings to light how socio-cultural relationships enabled as well as constrained the activities of school food actors. I also explain the dissonance between the activities of school food actors and the food procurement model of the Ghana school feeding programme to shed light on why the Ghana school feeding programme did not work as planned. I then conclude the chapter, and for that matter the thesis, with some reflections on the theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis to the debate on home-grown school feeding.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology I followed to conduct the study. Section 2.2 describes the research area and context in order to provide background information within which to interpret the methodological procedures. I describe in section 2.3 the research design which spells out the theoretical underpinnings of the methodological procedures. I dedicate section 2.4 to how cases were selected and how respondents were selected for the study. In section 2.5 I describe how data were collected, analyzed and interpreted. Section 2.6 concludes the chapter with a summary of the main issues discussed.

2.2 Research area and context

The study was conducted in the northern region of Ghana and included the Tamale metropolis and the Tolon/Kumbungu district (see figure 2.1). The northern region shares boundaries with the Upper East and Upper West Regions to the north, the Volta and Brong-Ahafo Regions to the south, The Republic of Togo to the east and Ivory Coast to the west. The region occupies a land area of about 70,383 square kilometers and is the largest among the 10 administrative regions in Ghana in terms of total land area, accounting for about 29.5 percent of the total land area of the country. In spite of this vast land area, the region's population of 2,479,461 people only accounts for about 10.1 percent of the country's total population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012) making it sparsely populated. The region's population is dispersed with no significant concentration in specific districts. The climate of the region is relatively dry, with a single rainy season that begins in May and ends in October. The amount of rainfall recorded annually varies between 750 mm and 1050 mm. The dry season starts in November and ends in March/April with maximum temperatures occurring towards the end of the dry season. Because of the Savannah agro-ecological zone, the region supports food crop production rather than tree crops, as is the case in the forest regions of the country. The

unimodal rainfall pattern also means that there is only one cropping season as opposed to two in the south of the country. These conditions position the northern region as one of the major food baskets of the country due to its focus on food crop production. The bulk (71.2%) of the economically active population in the region is employed in Agriculture. Only 5.7 percent of the workforce is made up of professionals, administrative or clerical staff. The rest (23.1%) are in sales, services, and transport and production.

The Tamale metropolis is predominantly urban while the Tolon/Kumbungu district is predominantly rural. The 2010 population and housing census (Ghana Statistical Service 2012) has the population of the Tamale metropolis as 371,351 consisting of 185,995 males and 185,356 females. This population constitutes 15 percent of the total population of the region. A total of 274,022 people, representing about 73 percent of the population, are urban dwellers. In sharp contrast, only 8,459 people of the Tolon/Kumbungu's population of 112,331 are urban dwellers, representing about 7.5 percent of the population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). The people in both districts are predominantly Dagombas by tribe and Muslim by religion.

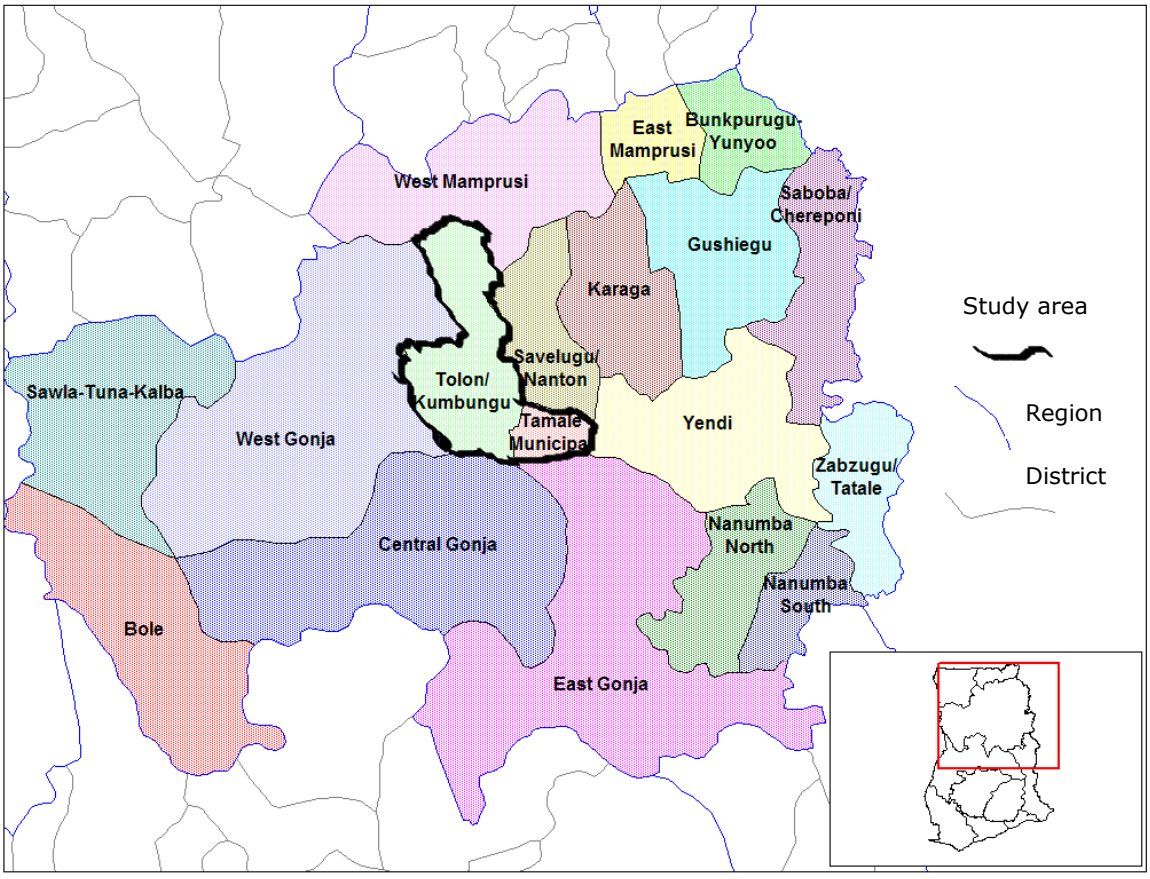

Figure 2.1 Map of Northern region of Ghana showing the Tamale metropolis and the Tolon/Kumbungu district

Source: Adapted from Ghana disctricts.com

2.3 Research design

The extended case method was adapted in order to capture the role of history and context in producing the outcomes observed in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme. The extended case method enables researchers to extract the general from the unique, to move from the micro to the macro, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future by building on pre-existing theory (Burawoy 1998). For this reason, what constitutes a case could be an individual, group of individuals or an institution (van Velsen 1967). Yin (1984, 23) sees the case study as an empirical "enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". As a result, the extended case methodology employs data collection techniques that capture accounts of what actors actually do in real life events and the associated struggles and

dramas over space and time. Analysis of such extended cases brings out discrepancies between normative prescriptions and everyday practices (Burawoy 1998). The fact that the Ghana school feeding programme is currently taking place and the actors under study were actively going about their duties made the extended case methodology the best to explore. The case study methodology is also the best when it comes to researching questions involving *how* since it allows for the retention of holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events (Yin 2003). It is, therefore, safe to see the extended case methodology as a detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principle (Mitchell 1983) and locating such findings in their appropriate historical, theoretical and contextual framework (Burawoy 1998). The concept of embeddedness was the theoretical principle believed to be exhibited in our case studies and so sampling was purposive and based on information richness rather than typicality (Patton 2002). The goal of studies that adopt the case study methodology is to generalize to theoretical principles rather than to populations as the case is in statistical representativeness (Yin 2009).

2.4 Case selection and sampling

Ghana was selected for the study because of its pioneering role in the implementation of home-grown school feeding in sub-Saharan Africa. The northern region of Ghana was selected because it is located in the Savannah agro-ecological zone which supports mostly food crop cultivation and, thus, contributes greatly to the food basket of the country. The region is also a major beneficiary of the Ghana school feeding programme because it is one of the poorest regions in the country. Preliminary interviews with government officials and civil society practitioners involved in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme in the region enabled me to select three communities in two districts to be part of the study. The sampling technique of maximum variation (Patton 2002) guided the sampling process. The idea was to make the cases as diverse as possible (maximum variation) so that themes that emerge from such diverse cases may truly be central to the actors involved.

The Ghana school feeding programme started in 2005 with ten pilot programmes, one in each administrative region. Other communities benefited from the scale-up from 2006 after the pilot phase. The guiding line was that the pilot school feeding programme in the region was included and any others should have been involved in school feeding for at least two years at

the start of data collection[2]. This was to ensure that communities selected for the study had enough experience with the school feeding programme and could, therefore, provide the necessary information needed for the research. On the agriculture side, the communities were selected to reflect rural, peri-urban and urban characteristics, the assumption being that urbanization affected agricultural practices. In this regard, I selected my study communities based on level of urbanization, as well experience with the Ghana school feeding programme. For the level of urbanization, I included Tibung in the Tolon-Kumbungu district which is rural, Gbanyamli which peri-urban and Tamale which is urban. For experience with the Ghana school feeding programme, Tibung was also the pilot community in the northern region in 2005 when the project started and, therefore, was the most experienced in school feeding in the region. Gbanyamli and Tamale both benefited from the upscale phase from 2006 and exibit peri-urban and urban characteristics respectively. Tamale was particularly important because of the Aboabu market which is the centre of food trade in the region**.**

People were approached based on observations made by the researcher and information from key informants and they became part of the study if they agreed. The fact that the researcher spoke the local language and, therefore, conducted all interviews directly further enhanced rapport and the quality of the interviews. In all, 71 people were interviewed in the study consisting of local food traders, school food caterers, school cooks, teachers, school level governance structures and government officials (see table 2.1). The focus group discussions with smallholders involved 18 farmers. Member checking involved 5 people: 2 farmers, a food trader, a school food caterer and a civil society practitioner. The sample size was arrived at when further interviews did not add new information to what was already collected, an indication that data saturation point was reached (Patton 2002).

[2] Data collection started in May 2011

Table 2.1 Study participants by stakeholder group

Stakeholder group	Number of respondents
Interviews	
Smallholders	23
Cooks	6
School caterers	3
School level governance actors	6
Civil society practitioners	7
Government officials	4
Local food traders	16
Teachers	6
Total	71
No. involved in focus group discussions	18
Membership checking	5

Source: Fieldwork 2011-2013

2.5 Data collection and analysis

In qualitative studies, it is recommended that data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand in order to build a coherent interpretation since data collection may be modified as the researcher collects and analyses data (Marshall and Rossman 2011). For this reason, data collection and analysis were done simultaneously in order to learn in the field and use the knowledge to improve data collection. New perspectives from the field shaped data collection instruments and gave direction as to further observations and interviews. The simultaneous data collection and analysis enabled me to use member checking (Lincoln and Guba 1985) to improve the validity of the research findings. This procedure also allowed me to cross-check emerging themes in my data with respondents while still in the field. In order to triangulate the primary data elicited from participants, relevant documents in the form of project

documents, school menus, newspaper articles, project monitoring reports, as well as scholarly publications, were examined.

Extensive notes were taken during interviews and where participants gave their consent the interviews were recorded to support the field notes. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to enhance open and honest discussions. Spending ample time in the communities at the start of the field work afforded the researcher the opportunity to build rapport with community members and make observations which eventually resulted in interviews and focus group discussions. The data collection and analysis were conducted in four phases. Observations and study of relevant documents run throughout the four phases.

2.5.1 Phase 1: Key informant interviews

The first phase of fieldwork was interviews with key informants in government, civil society, and school level governance structures. The first point of contact was the regional secretariat of the Ghana school feeding programme to get general information about the operation of the school feeding programme in the region and the actors involved and the roles they played. It was not possible to have a formal interview with the regional coordinator but the informal chat with her in the office and the subsequent interview with an officer she referred me to, did the trick. A list of contacts of beneficiary schools in the region, as well as civil society organizations that were working with the Ghana School feeding programme was obtained here. Contacts were then made with civil society organizations and interviews were scheduled with ACDEP, SNV, IFDC, SEND Foundation Ghana, Grameen Ghana and URBANET. The interviews with key informants from these organizations were focused on the roles and perspectives on the functioning of the Ghana school feeding programme and, particularly, the local procurement component. Key informant interviews were also conducted with desk officers of the GSFP in the two districts selected, as well as the head teachers of the three schools involved. PTA/SMC/SIC members of these schools were also interviewed as key informants. Extensive notes were taken during the key informant interviews and the tape recording of four of the interviewees who gave their consent was transcribed by the author for analysis. The transcribed interviews and the interview notes were analysed using Atlas.ti 5.2 to draw themes that guided the selection of case studies and subsequent interview themes. Relevant documents were also collected from these key informants and formed part of secondary data. The results from this phase enabled me to select three communities in two

districts for the second phase of the data collection.

2.5.2 Phase 2: In-depth interviews with core actors and participant observations

The focus of the research was on the activities and experiences of three groups of actors considered to be key in the local procurement component of the Ghana school feeding programme. For this reason, ample time was spent observing their activities, interviewing them and participating in their activities whenever the opportunity availed itself. These actors were school food caterers, local food traders, and smallholders in the school feeding communities. Other actors who worked closely with these actors were also interviewed in order to get information that could be used to triangulate the information collected from the core actors. These included the school cooks, the school teachers and members of PTAs/SMCs/SICs.

2.5.3 Phase 3: focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were held with smallholders and local food traders as a way of triangulating data from individual interviews. The group discussions were also an opportunity to clarify issues emerging from the individual interviews and identify themes for further interviews. The focus groups for the smallholders were often informal and took place as informal talks with groups of smallholders in their normal group activities. For example, smallholders often sat in groups to eat and talk in the afternoon hours between 12:00pm and 3:00pm. On days that they worked together on the farm of an individual as part of rotational labour arrangements, they also took lunch at the house of the host farmer. Three of the focus group discussions took place during these lunch sessions. On two occasions, I accompanied them to the farm. These groupings were usually by age so the young often sat together and the old did the same. Because these informal groups were usually self-selecting, they created a secure atmosphere that enhanced honest and open discussions. In all, three focus groups were held with smallholders and two focus groups for the village level food traders. For the school food caterers, it was only possible to meet with two of them at a time and once only because of busy schedules.

2.5.4 Phase 4: member checking and mop-up interviews

This was the last phase of the fieldwork. Themes emerging from the simultaneous data collection and analysis were cross-checked with a section of the respondents including key

informants for their comments which led to a few mop-up interviews. This phase served as an exit strategy from the field and also as a way of enhancing the validity of the research findings.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the methodological procedures that were followed to conduct the research. The study was conducted in the northern region of Ghana and focused on the Tamale metropolis and the Tolon/Kumbungu district. I adopted the extended case study design in order to capture the role of history and context in producing the outcomes observed in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme**.** Ghana was selected for the study because of its pioneering role in the implementation of home-grown school feeding in sub-Saharan Africa. The northern region of Ghana was selected because of its location in the Savannah agro-ecological zone which supports mostly food crop cultivation and, thus, contributes greatly to the food basket of the country. The region is also a major beneficiary of the Ghana school feeding programme because it is one of the poorest regions in the country. The sampling technique of maximum variation (Patton 2002) guided the sampling process. The idea was to make our cases as diverse as possible (maximum variation) so that themes that emerged from such diverse cases may truly be central to the actors involved. Key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions were the main data collection instruments. Data collection and analysis were done simultaneously in order to learn in the field and use the knowledge to improve data collection. New perspectives from the field shaped data collection instruments and gave direction as to further observations and interviews.

3. PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL LEVEL GOVERNANCE ACTORS UNDER THE GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

3.1 Introduction

There is currently a gap between the Ghana school feeding programme and the communities in which the programmes are implemented (PCD 2011). Efforts of programme implementers to link the Ghana School Feeding Programme with local agricultural development require that community members play an active role in the implementation of the programme. School level governance structures are particularly important in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme and programme designers recognised this by providing for the establishment of a School Implementation Committee (SIC) to be in charge of the programme at school and community level. Membership of the SIC includes members of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), which are the governance structures at the school level. The members of these governance structures are the link between the programme and the local communities in which the programme is being implemented. Community participation is important to enhance programme ownership within the community, as well as to enable the GSFP to achieve its food security objectives (PCD 2011). The level of participation of community members in the programme depends on the opportunities available to them for participation and their motivations to act. The motivations of community members to participate actively in the Ghana school feeding programme are very much dependent on their perspectives regarding the programme objectives and activities. It is, therefore, important to study these perspectives and to understand the issues that influence them in order to appreciate the current implementation issues regarding the Ghana school feeding programme.

I show in this chapter that the perspectives and activities of governance actors at the school level are embedded in historical and contemporary developments in school feeding, as well as in socio-cultural relationships, which, taken together, present opportunities as well as challenges for bridging the gap between the Ghana school feeding programme and local

agricultural development. Thus, the object of this chapter is to explore how school level governance actors perceive their role in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme and how these perspectives influence their governance activities. A positive perspective towards the objectives and activities of the programme is important for a meaningful participation of these governance structures in the implementation of the programme.

The chapter progresses as follows. Section 3.2 traces the history of school feeding in Ghana from pre-independence through independence to post independence, presenting evidence of school feeding in Ghana in those times and the nature of such programmes. I explore the activities of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Food Programme (WFP) in sections 3.3 and 3.4 respectively because of the special role they played in the implementation of school feeding in Ghana. I then zoom in on the Ghana school feeding programme in section 3.5, providing an overview, as well as discussing the objectives and some implementation issues. I use empirical data to discuss the perspectives of school level governance actors on the Ghana school feeding programme in section 3.6, highlighting the factors that influence such perspectives as well as their implications for the Ghana school feeding programme. Section 3.7 concludes the chapter with a reflection on the future of school feeding in Ghana.

3.2 History of school feeding in Ghana

School feeding in Ghana has a long history and has been implemented by different development agencies, particularly in the north of the country. Literature on the history of school feeding in Ghana has often been limited to the activities of the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in the 1950s and the World Food Programme (WFP) in the 1960s (Fisher 2007). For this reason, 1958, which marked the beginning of the activities of CRS in northern Ghana, has often been quoted to mark the beginning of school feeding in Ghana. Nonetheless, a 1953 publication by the FAO claimed that school feeding in the then Gold Coast was "still in an experimental stage" and that a few schools were then "providing breakfasts or mid-day meals" (Scott 1953, 119). Unfortunately, no further details about these experimental school feeding initiatives were provided in the report. However, a closer look at the literature on the history of education in Ghana suggests that feeding school children dates as far back as the 18th century when children in the castle schools were fed and the missionaries operated boarding schools.

The earliest attempt at educating African children in the then Gold Coast is evidenced in an instruction of King John (Joao) III of Portugal to the Governor of the Gold Coast in 1529 "to provide reading, writing and religious teaching to African children" (Graham 1971, 1). This school was opened and existed until 1572 even though "the general extent of Portuguese educational efforts is unknown, and they were terminated with the abandonment of their possessions in 1647" (Foster 1965, 43). The early schools in Ghana were within the confines of the Castles where the Europeans instructed mulattoes (children European men had with African women) and children of local chiefs and wealthy businessmen (Graham 1971). Schooling in the castle schools included feeding as suggested in the following quote:

> Such were the distractions that by the 1780s, in fact, Quaco's school was on its last legs, having been reduced to a "pitiable condition". Its survival is attributable to the timely aid given by a group of officials who had formed themselves into Dinning Club, with the name Torridzonian. They enabled the school to get funds for teaching, clothing and feeding the twelve mulatto children in 1788 (Graham 1971, 17).

Thus, feeding school children in Ghana can be traced back to the castle schools and as early as 1788. From this time onwards, the missionaries who played a significant role in Ghana's education in the colonial period had a preference for boarding schools which meant that feeding was an integral part of the mission schools. As noted by Graham (1971):

> In their belief in the usefulness of Boarding schools, the Basel mission opened such schools at Akropong and Christianborg between 1845 and 1850; the one for girls which was already established at Akropong was transferred to Aburi in 1854. ... At this time also two of the boarding schools had two advanced grades added to the curriculum, giving them a six-year course in all (55).

During these early attempts of education in Ghana, schooling was not popular as many had not yet seen its importance. So the boarding schools and the associated feeding were in part to motivate pupils to attend the schools. It was also a source of motivation for parents to allow their children to attend the schools, since schooling also meant that the children were not available to the parents to help out in both house and farm work. This was especially so for girls since they were more useful at home and valuable when they got married. This is evident in the writing of Graham (1971):

> But there were disturbing factors which, however, continued to check the expansion of the girls' education. Many parents still needed the services of their daughters at home, and they also seemed to value highly bride-money, and the prestige which their daughters could bring to them on their marrying. It was against such

drawbacks that the educationist had to struggle. As further attraction to the girls and their parents, therefore, the educationists tried to board and feed them. The journals of the Wesleyan missionaries are full of reports of the care and meticulous attention bestowed on the girls (p.74).

The missionaries continued to open more schools with boarding facilities. For example, Kemp opened a Technical Boarding School in Cape Coast in 1892 and enrolled twenty young boys to train them in handicrafts. About the same time, the Wesleyan mission also expressed the need for boarding schools which would allow parents from the adjacent towns to send their daughters and "where the girls would be entirely under the control of the Governors"(Graham 1971, 131). The Educationists Committee set up by Governor Guggisberg in 1920, recommended, among others, that since boarding facilities were crucial in education, more government middle schools should be opened and that a secondary boarding school for boys and one for girls should be opened. This resulted in the opening of the Achimota school. Also, Government Boarding Middle schools were established at Kibi, Asuantsi and Mampong in Ashanti by 1932 (Graham 1971).

The use of boarding facilities to encourage enrolment and attendance at schools worked very well. It is reported that there was a much lower dropout rate from school by pupils in the Northern Territories because "almost all the pupils were boarders and, therefore, better fed and maintained in school. Added to this was, of course, the free education which the white Fathers' mission was giving" (Graham 1971, 174).

Parents also paid for some of the boarding and feeding of their children in these boarding schools. Graham (1971), for example, reports that boarding fees in 1935 (including laundry and medical attention) were £6 per term at Mfantsipim and £7 flat at St Nicholas grammar school. At Achimota, the fees for the secondary department were £50 per year which covered boarding, tuition and supply of sports materials.

In spite of the usefulness of the boarding and feeding facilities of the colonial schools, they were accused of alienating the boarding students from their culture. Graham (1971, 122) notes that the emphasis of the Basel missionaries "on residential institutions tended to isolate the African Christians from their traditional way of life". Indeed the "Basel industrial and agricultural training, combined with residential institutions and the practices of pupils 'boarding in' with the missionaries was aimed at isolating the African Christians from traditional culture and establishing self-supporting Christian communities" (Foster 1965, 88). Yet still, there are some who argue that the alienation produced by the boarding schools was a deliberate policy to subjugate the African culture which the Europeans considered to be pagan

and sinful, and also to replace it with features of European culture. To support their claim, Aissat and Djafri (n.d.), quoted a recommendation from Rev. A. L. Kitchen that "... if they are to be woven into character, isolation from degrading influences, so far as is possible, is essential during the early hours. For this purpose the boarding schools are the most efficient instruments" (p.10).

In post-independent Ghana, the government offered free education to students of northern origin which included feeding grants for boarding secondary schools in order to bridge the gap in education and development between the north and the south. Not so long after independence, cost became a limiting factor in the pursuits of government to expand educational access, with housing and feeding becoming major challenges for the continuous expansion of education in post independent Ghana. Antwi (1992) envisaged that if the rate of growth were allowed to continue, education would be costing between 40 to 50 percent of the total government expenditure in the year 2000. The author attributed the increasing cost of education to the fact that more funds were at the time being spent in housing and feeding students throughout the educational system than educating them.

School feeding outside the secondary school boarding system in post-independent Ghana has been dominated by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) who started their activities in northern Ghana in 1958 and the World Food Programme (WFP) which joined them in the late 1960s (Fisher 2007). Other actors in school feeding in Ghana include World Vision, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and SEND-Ghana. World Vision, for example, provides lunch during the lean season to children in primary schools in the Gushegu and Bongo Districts where it also operates Area Development Programmes. The focus of these school feeding programmes has widely been geared towards satisfying the nutritional needs of school children in food insecure areas and also to help keep such children in school and improve their performance. This is in line with research findings that well-nourished children have a better potential for learning than those who suffer from malnutrition, hunger, or who lack certain micronutrients (Pridmore 2007). Fentiman et al. (2001) have also suggested that health inputs should be targeted towards infants and the first years of primary schooling because if feeding interventions are targeted at this stage, school enrolment levels increase and the majority of children are reached. However, there are some who question the wisdom of investing heavily in school feeding programmes as a way of improving educational access without attending to other factors,

especially health related ones, citing studies that have found no improvement in enrolment levels in schools before and after food aid interventions (Akyeampong et al. 2007).

CRS and WFP have dominated school feeding activities in terms of coverage and length of programmes since they started operating in Ghana after independence (Fisher 2007). Because of the major role played by these two organisations in school feeding in Ghana, I would like to explore their activities in some more detail.

3.3 School feeding activities of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Ghana

School feeding by CRS in the 1950s was more general in nature and did not target specifically poor or vulnerable people. Food support was provided to schools, hospitals and teachers' training colleges, and most of the focus was on Catholic institutions (CRS 2014). CRS started targeting their assistance in the late 1960s and therefore, shifted their support from teachers' training centres to primary schools and instead of providing food to all hospital patients, CRS focused on mothers and children as a vulnerable group. From this time onwards CRS also experimented with other vulnerable groups which resulted in their food for work programmes in the mid-1980s where food was provided to adults who participated in community development projects, such as digging wells and building community infrastructures. CRS continued school feeding through the 1990s but with a focus more on rural areas where they thought food assistance was most needed, especially in the three northern regions (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) (CRS 2014).

In 1997, CRS, with funding from USAID, implemented school feeding that targeted the three northern regions to increase enrolment and attendance especially for girls (USAID/Ghana and Catholic Relief Services 1998). As part of the project, CRS sensitized rural community members and built their capacities to support their schools and also assisted communities to raise structures to house children in schools that were without shelter. This school-feeding programme benefited children in the primary schools (average ages 6-12), as well as those at the preschool level. Each child in a programme school was entitled to a hot lunch a day and girls who were able to make a minimum monthly school attendance of 85 took home a ration. The success of this programme hinged very much on the collaboration between CRS and Ghana Education Service (GES). CRS had one GES Partner Supervisor per district and one for each of the three regions to assist in monitoring the programme schools. As part of the

collaboration and to enhance performance, CRS provided motorcycles to the Partner Supervisors on a hire purchase basis and monthly deductions were made from their salaries by GES towards payment for the bikes. Reimbursement for fuel, oil and maintenance was made per mile traveled to monitor the programme. The Partner Supervisors, on their part, submitted monthly reports to both the GES Regional and District Offices and CRS in which they provided information on their monthly activities and their reimbursement requests (USAID/Ghana and Catholic Relief Services 1998).

The USAID funded school feeding programme covered approximately 200,000 primary school children in 296 pre-schools and 967 primary schools (Fisher 2007). CRS integrated the food assistance with other interventions such as water, education and school health. The beneficiary communities provided some of the ingredients in the preparation of food, fuel (wood) and water, either through canteen fees or contributions in kind. Equally, infrastructure and other accessories were the responsibility of the communities but the district assembly also supported them. Part of the responsibilities of the beneficiary communities were the provision of safe, secure and leak-proof storage facilities for all commodities, as well as safe and neat kitchens. Communities were also responsible for cooking and the provision of cooking utensils. Communities were also encouraged to contribute foodstuffs to supplement what CRS provided, especially when CRS food resources ran out and the next supply had not arrived yet (USAID/Ghana and Catholic Relief Services 1998).

In the take-home rations for girls, the mothers of the girls who qualified were expected to ensure regular and punctual attendance of their daughters and to go to the school to collect the ration when their daughters qualified. A Community Food Management Committee (CFMC) in each beneficiary school was put in place to oversee the use of all resources and also assist the teachers in the effective running of the programme. Two members of the CFMC attended an initial training before a school joined the programme and continued to attend refresher-training workshops in turns throughout the programme in order to build their capacities for enhanced performance (USAID/Ghana and Catholic Relief Services 1998).

Food for the CRS school feeding programme and take home rations were mainly imports donated by the USAID. The food aid arrived in Tema from the USA where it was loaded into a 15,000 metric tonne warehouse supervised by CRS staff (Anderson et al. 2005). The food usually arrived in the warehouse by November or December and two or three distributions could be made during the year. The food system was managed using First-In, First-Out

(FIFO) inventory management, waybill distribution tracking, and fumigation of CRS warehouses every 3 months which ensured that total food losses were less than 1% (Anderson et al. 2005).

3.4 School feeding activities of World Food Programme (WFP) in Ghana

In 1995, the WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Health to implement a Supplementary Feeding, Health and Nutrition Project which gave food aid as a nutritional supplement to children under five which comprised two cooked meals a day for 260 days a year (Anderson et al. 2005). The WFP also implemented take-home rations in 25 districts in the 3 northern regions of Ghana in which they gave food every month to girls to get them enrolled in school and also to ensure their continued attendance in primary and junior secondary schools (WFP 2006). Girls had to attend school for at least 90% of the school days in a given month to qualify for a food ration. This food ration programme covered 17 districts of the three northern regions and the food basket consisted of rice, maize, sugar, and vegetable oil (Anderson et al. 2005). The food aid targeted girls from poor families and especially where female enrolment was lowest in order to attract them to school. The WFP food ration programme was in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service (GES) which handled the actual implementation of the programme. Under this programme girls who qualified received 10 kg of rice and 2 kg of vegetable oil every month. The implementation of the programme was arranged such that the GES distributed food to the district level and teachers collected the food from the district store 3 times a year: roughly every three months during the school year. To ensure that communities were involved in the programme, there was a five-year written agreement outlining the respective duties of the WFP and the community, and establishing a quarterly or semi-annual feedback schedule, as well as a phase-out strategy when appropriate (Anderson et al. 2005).

The WFP collaborated with the government of Ghana in the northern region in the implementation of the GSFP. The idea was to increase the number of beneficiary children in the programme in the region. In the collaboration, WFP provided food resources to feed children in each beneficiary school for three out of the five school days of the week. This meant that resources from the GSFP would feed the children for the remaining two days of the week. The MOU signed between WFP and the GSFP made room for the use of the established model of implementation under the GSFP in all the schools where WFP

collaborated with GSFP. The assistance of WFP came in the form of fortified food baskets consisting of corn-soya blend (CSB), iodized salt and palm oil. The food items were stored in a central warehouse in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region and each district was given a distribution sheet that allowed it to collect its allocation from the warehouse. Districts received allocation for a full school term from the central warehouse based on 150 grams of CSB, 3 grams of iodized salt and 10 grams of palm oil per child per day (WFP 2007). The districts then distributed the food items each month to their beneficiary schools. Local schools and authorities decided how and when to use the WFP-delivered food items. The GSFP, through the District Assembly, made funds available for the schools to purchase condiments to complement the WFP food basket. As a result, caterers serving in the WFP assisted schools received only a part of the allocated feeding cost per child per day. The proportion caterers received to help buy condiments for the supplies from WFP was left for local authorities to decide. This arrangement, therefore, meant that more schools in the region were able to benefit from the school feeding programme, given the same amount of money from the government.

Figure 3.1 WFP activities in Ghana

Source: Photographs by the author

3.5 The Ghana School Feeding Programme in perspective

The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) began in September 2005 with 10 pilot schools, one in each of the ten administrative regions of the country. The basic concept of the GSFP was to provide each kindergarten and primary school child with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. The explicit objective to use locally-grown foodstuff in the programme was an integral part of the home-grown school feeding initiative by the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of NEPAD which sought to enhance food supply and reduce hunger in African countries. National school feeding is part of Ghana's efforts at attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on extreme hunger and poverty, as well as achieving universal access to primary education and reducing under-five mortality by 2015. The school feeding

programme, based on locally-grown food, is consistent with various development strategies of the Ghanaian government which include the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003-5), the Education Sector Plan (2003-2015), Imagine Ghana Free from Malnutrition (a concept paper produced by the Ministry of Health), Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (Ministry of Food and Agriculture), Ghana National Social Protection Strategy - GNSPS - (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment), and decentralization policies (Government of Ghana 2006).

The overall long-term development objective of the GSFP was to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Ghana (see figure 3.2) which should create the foundation for community based development. The three main components of the programme which relate to the MDGs are agriculture, education, hunger and malnutrition (Government of Ghana 2006). As indicated in figure 3.2, one of the immediate objectives of the GSFP was to boost domestic food production by assisting farmers to increase productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and improve national food security. It was also expected that greater demand for food crops, efficient procurement and marketing practices and improved storage of food crops, that were considered basic to the programme, would go a long way to benefit smallholders. Indeed, it was targeted that 80% of feeding costs for the programme would go into the local economy (Government of Ghana 2006).

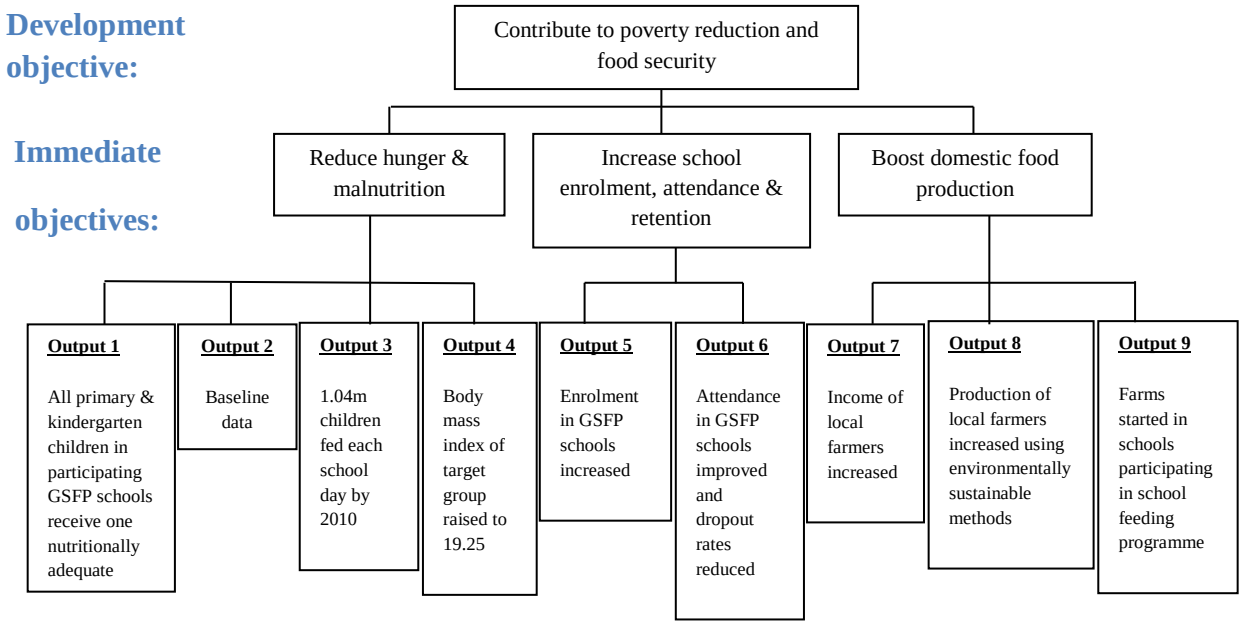

Figure 3.2 Objectives and outputs of the Ghana school feeding programme

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 4)

It was also envisaged that the Ghana school feeding programme would create opportunities for greater availability, access, utilization, and stability of food crops at the community level as well as increase incomes of farmers supplying to the GSFP. The increased demand for food would lead to development of other economic activities, such as processing and cottage or small and medium enterprises, using the surplus agricultural produce as inputs. Women were expected to benefit more because they were those mostly involved in food crop production. Improved food security through increased rural household wealth would greatly impact on human capital formation which has been noted to start from early childhood. The programme would benefit poor rural households by helping them to achieve improved food security through purchasing of food from the local community and only purchasing at the district level when there were no required food products at the community level. National level procurement would be done only when required food items could not be found at the district and community levels (Government of Ghana 2006). Food purchases would be recorded by the SIC and the DIC to allow for follow-up tracking, monitoring and evaluation. Imported food items such as rice, if any were purchased, would also be recorded. It was also expected that schools would develop viable gardens to raise extra food and reduce the cost and quantity of purchased food items. The gardens would also contain economic trees (fruits, etc.), as well as nutritious options like moringa which could complement the diet. The GSFP targets children in primary schools and attached kindergartens in government schools in Ghana. The programme also defined its secondary and tertiary beneficiaries as reflected in its objectives (see box 3.1)

Box 3.1 Secondary and tertiary beneficiaries of the Ghana school feeding programme

- Agricultural enterprises/food crop farmers, especially women who would supply food to the programme.
- Other private sector firms who would supply agri-inputs, vehicles including motor bicycles, and capital equipment.
- Caterers/Outsourcing firms who may gain opportunities to provide private sector support to the feeding programme.
- School teachers who are routinely fed with the children.
- Parents/Guardians of pupils in participating schools.
- The community (through employment and infrastructure).

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 19)

The feature of multiple beneficiaries, especially farmers, as captured in the third objective of boosting domestic food production is what differentiates the Ghana school feeding programme from similar programmes which had earlier on been implemented in the country.

It was anticipated that purchase of food from local farmers would increase their income. Women farmers supplying the programme would specifically be targeted for provision of credit and other services. To ensure that the GSFP benefited smallholders the programme would purchase food from local farmers and facilitate credit from rural banks and other financial institutions for farmers involved in the programme. To do this the project document outlined a series of activities that would be carried out under the programme (see box 3.2).

Box 3.2 Ghana school feeding programme activities to ensure programme benefits smallholders

- Purchase food for school feeding from local producers.
- Facilitate credit from rural banks and other financial institutions for farmers involved in the programme.
- Specially target women farmers supplying the programme for provision of credit and other
- services.
- Liaise with MoFA and interested NGOs (e.g. Technoserve) to provide extension services to participating farmers.
- Facilitate the provision of inputs – water, seedlings, agro-chemicals, implements, organic manure etc.
- Facilitate access to credit to rural banks, micro finance institutions or other financial institutions.
- Fast track above activities in model schools to serve as demonstration centres.
- Facilitate the formation of Farmer Based Organisations (FBOs) with particular emphasis on smallholders.

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 23 & 24)

The Ghana school feeding programme is national in character and so programme actors are at the national, regional, district and school levels. Figure 3.3 is a schematic representation of the key actors and their relationships in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme as set out in the programme document (Government of Ghana 2006, 28). The figure reflects the national character of the programme and recognizes the responsibility of the government in overseeing the successful implementation of the programme. Thus the office of the president is expected to have an indirect oversight responsibility for the programme through the various ministries. The dotted line in figure 3.3 denotes this indirect relationship between the programme and the office of the president. To make concrete the relationship between the programme and the government, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development would exercise direct oversight over the programme and coordinate all inputs, activities, and outputs of collaborating ministries. This ministry would work with the national secretariat of the GSFP and other collaborating agencies at the national level to implement the programme. At the regional level, the regional secretariat would collaborate with the office of the regional coordinating council for the implementation of the programme at that level. At

the district level, the district assemblies would be responsible for the implementation of the programme. In order to do this, they would establish district implementation committees and school implementation committees at the beneficiary schools. These school implementation committees serve as the implementation unit of the GSFP at the school level (see box 3.3) and are, hence, important in efforts at linking the GSFP to local agriculture. This is especially so because the GSFP aims at linking to local agriculture at the community level in order to enhance the local economy and improve household and community incomes, as well as generate resources that will directly improve the status of poor families (Government of Ghana 2006). Sustainability measures of the Ghana school feeding programme are rooted in the ownership and participation of community and school level actors in the implementation of the programme. To this end, programme actors at the school and community levels become pivotal in the implementation of the programme. Box 3.4 outlines the measures envisaged by the programme designers to ensure its sustainability. A closer reading of box 3.4, however, reveals some tension in the programme design in terms of its implementation at the school level, since outsourcing food procurement and catering services to private actors actually has the potential to limit the participation of school level actors in the implementation of the programme. This is especially the case in the current implementation of the programme where the private caterers contracted to procure, prepare and serve food to the school children mostly come from outside the school feeding communities.

Box 3.3 Role of school implementation committee in the Ghana school feeding programme

School Implementation Committee (SIC).

The school level implementing unit that plans and executes the actual feeding. It receives funds from the DIC, procures needed inputs, supervises the food preparation and feeding activities, and accounts back to the DIC. The SIC directly manifests ownership of the programme by local communities who are its ultimate beneficiaries. The SIC will also lead community mobilization to support and sustain the feeding programme. It will also provide the frontline for the programme objective to build food security at the community level through linkage between the school feeding initiative and community level wealth creation activities including value added farming. The SIC will also be at the fore-front of sustainability initiatives, starting with innovation in arrangements to conduct the feeding in the least costly manner, including piloting community-or-parent-assisted strategies to do the actual cooking. Sensitization for the SIC will also include exposure to other strategies employed by ongoing school feeding programmes by the WFP and CRS to reduce cost and improve reach.

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 27)

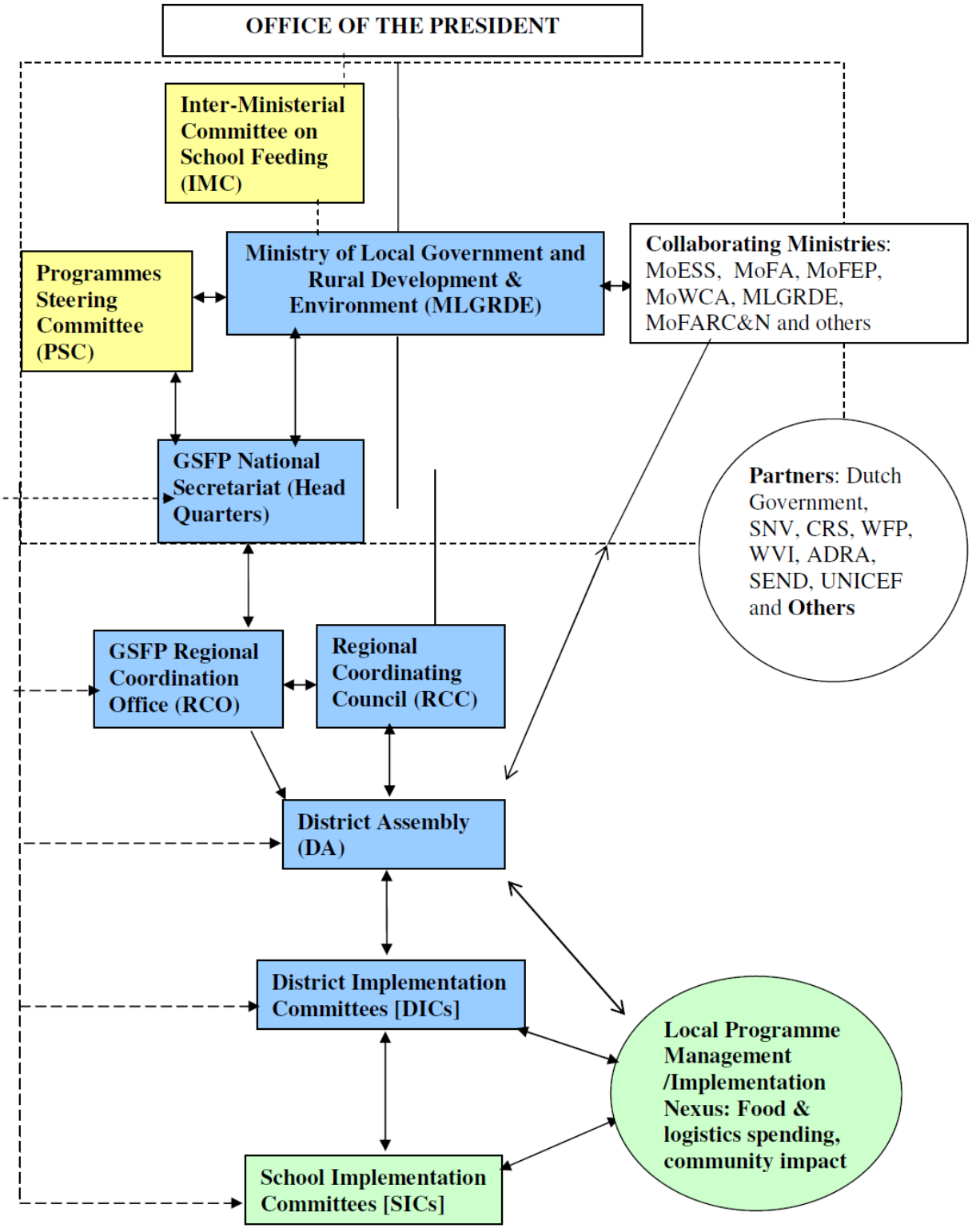

Figure 3.3 Schematic representation of GSFP actors and their relationship

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 28)

Box 3.4 Measures to ensure programme sustainability of the GSFP

1. Community ownership/involvement/contribution in design and implementation
2. Use of existing structures at national, regional and district levels.
3. Inclusion of the GSFP in district and regional plans.
4. Dedicated/designated focal point for GFSP in district assemblies.
5. Involvement of collaborating MDAs on Programme Steering Committee.
6. Decentralizing implementation to include procurement at the district/community level.
7. Ensuring purchases of food crops from farmers especially women (target – 80%) using environmentally sustainable methods.
8. Facilitating support for local farmers e.g., input, equipment, finance.
9. Outsourcing preparation and serving of meals to private sector and community.
10. Environment: encourage use of community wood lots and biogas for fuel.
11. Infrastructure: Put in structures (kitchen, store, dining hall) before programme ends and maintain such structures.
12. Providing health and nutrition education (including malaria and HIV/AIDS) to children and their parents/guardians in participating schools.
13. Capacity building of members of SIC, DIC and other stakeholders in the community to implement and monitor programme.
14. Restructuring GSFP Secretariat to attract well-qualified people including in-house technical experts in core programme components e.g. nutrition, agriculture.
15. Active collaboration with MDAs, development partners, NGOs and civil society groups to implement activities and deliver outputs.
16. Securing contribution of the communities including parents and guardians in cash and in kind.
17. Ensuring programme is included as a permanent line item in budgets at national and district level.
18. Assuring injection of 80% of feeding budget into the local economy to begin to strengthen household and community incomes and generate resources that will directly improve the status of poor families.

Source: Government of Ghana (2006, 43)

3.6 Perspectives of school level governance actors on the Ghana school feeding programme

This section is based on data from interviews with six teachers and six members of School Implementation Committees (SICs), which together represent the school level governance structures of relevance to the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme. Membership of these structures consists of parents, community leaders and teachers. The school level governance actors were interviewed about their views on the Ghana school feeding programme and its implementation and their answers are the focus of this section. Box 3.5 presents an account of a rural school teacher on the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme. The perspectives of these school level governance actors can be broadly captured under child welfare and local agricultural development to reflect the objectives of the Ghana school feeding programme.

3.6.1 Child welfare

Child welfare was the most prominent issue among respondents regarding the Ghana school feeding programme and included nutrition and education outcomes. All the school level governance actors who were interviewed underscored how the programme was good for the school children and their education. They noted that the programme had increased school enrolment and attendance. Those of them who had their children attending school at the time explained that they no longer had difficulty in getting their children to go to school. As one parent put it:

> My daughter now goes to school without anyone asking her to do so and even her younger brother that we are yet to send to school officially also follows his sister to school...it is a very good programme for the children. Because they eat in school, they no longer come home to eat during break which means that they have more time to study at school. And their mother too doesn't have to worry about getting food down for them to come and eat during break hours. So it is a very good programme for us (field interview, 2012).

The teachers also observed that younger siblings followed their elder ones to school even though they were not officially enrolled yet in the school. In the rural and peri-urban schools where this phenomenon was more prominent, the teachers contemplated opening a day nursery next to the primary schools to take care of these pre-school children. It is a normal practice in the rural communities for children to baby-sit their younger siblings while their mothers are busy with household chores. This, I believe, is what has found its way into the schools. Food meant for the school children eventually also took care of their younger ones. The three head teachers who participated in the study confirmed that school enrolment and attendance had increased since the start of the programme and said it was a very good programme that benefitted the children. For those parents who gave money to their children to buy food during break, this was no longer the case because the children would eat at school. School teachers noted that school attendance had improved and that children remained alert throughout school hours, especially during the afternoon sessions when previously most of them would have been hungry and no longer concentrating on classwork. To this end, some of the teachers observed improvement in the academic performance of the school children which they attributed to the programme.

However, there were also challenges regarding child welfare attributed to the programme. Increasing enrolment numbers did not immediately match increasing facilities which resulted

in overcrowding in classrooms as well as deterioration in the quality and quantity of the food served. The teachers explained that the caterer was paid on a per child per day basis and the number of children was adjusted only once a year. So the increasing enrolment was a strain on the school feeding budget that the caterer had to deal with which negatively affects the quantity and the quality of the food served. Interviews with the school food caterers confirmed this issue even though the caterers would not admit compromising the quality and quantity of the food.

An interview with the Tamale metro desk officer for the Ghana school feeding programme corroborated this shift in focus in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme. Responding to a question about whether there were criteria for food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme, she explained that:

No, this one is not like first, the previous one they were using caterer, matron system. The assembly, the MIC[3] they will provide the raw materials to the caterers and they will cook and they will pay the caterers at the end of the month but this time, it is not like that. The money is given to the caterers and they will do their own thing, they will feed even in advance then before they are paid, … so they will decide wherever they are supposed to buy their food items… from food supplier or what? Because they buy on credit, so obviously they decide where they want to go to….

This shift in focus was also reflected in her monitoring activities of the programme. During monitoring, she was concerned more about menu, food quality and the sanitation of the environment. She described her activities in the schools when she goes for monitoring:

If I go, first I will look at the cooking because we have given them a menu they should use, all the caterers. I will look at that one, whether the caterer is following the menu. The quality of the food, also because sometimes you go there and some schools and the gari, sometimes if it is gari and beans you look at the gari, you wouldn't like to eat it. And also the beans so we look at all that. And also we look at the environment they are cooking. We also look at, we asked them to sow uniforms for the cooks that are helping them and apron. We check all those things if there are not. We also ask the relationship between the caterer and the head teacher because sometimes some of the schools they are just… there is no this thing… so all that we look at all the … if also they have some grievances or concern they will say and I will take it back and give to the MIC. But if it is something I can just solve there, I will do it but if it is something I cannot then I will give it to the MIC (field interview, 2011).

Thus, not matching the funding for feeding with the increasing enrolment is a major challenge to child welfare as it compromises the quality and quantity of the food served to the school children.

[3] Metropolitan Implementation committee, same as District Implementation Committee (DIC)

3.6.2 Local agricultural development

Respondents were of the opinion that the programme did not provide a market for the surplus farm produce of farmers in their communities because the caterers bought most of their foodstuff outside the school feeding communities. The school implementation committee members said they could neither enforce nor monitor the local procurement directive since they did not know when money was released to the caterer and how much. They also underscored the delay and irregularity of the release of the feeding money to the caterers. One of the SIC members explained that:

> "Di cheliya ka ti gmariya tab' ziri" (don't let us lie to each other) you are not paying the caterer and she is doing her best to feed the children. How can you insist on where she buys the food? We don't know how much money you give the caterer and when you give her money. How can we monitor? If she says there is no money, how can we know she is telling the truth? (field interview, 2012)

Other respondents were happy that the caterer managed to continue feeding the children in spite of the delay in paying her. One of them noted that:

> For us it is ok that she manages to feed the children in spite of all the troubles about budget and delayed payments. As for where she buys her food, I don't think that is an issue for us. If she is buying from us and tomorrow we don't have food does it mean the children will not eat? The corn-soy blend that WFP brings as part of the food, do we know where it comes from? And do the children not eat it? How about the CRS school feeding and the WFP school feeding programme? So, school feeding, yes, but where the food comes from is another matter (field interview, 2012).

It can be seen in the above quote that the respondent also makes mention of the corn-soy blend provided by the WFP in support of the GSFP (see section 3.4) and the CRS school feeding as the basis for not siding with the directive for caterers to buy from local farmers. He was also concerned about sustainable supply of foodstuff for the caterer to be able to feed the children on a regular basis in the face of delayed payments.

SIC members in the pilot school noted the difference between the current implementation model and the model that was piloted and were of the opinion that the caterer needing to benefit from the school feeding budget was a disincentive for local food procurement. One of them explained that:

> The pilot programme was different, we were all involved. There was a food budget. But this time it is on the basis of per child per day and the caterer does not have a salary. So you see that? She has to get something out of it (field interview, 2012).

Civil society actors working to link the programme with local agricultural development were also of the opinion that the programme was not linked with local agriculture because the governance structures at the school level did not work. One civil society actor working with the school level governance structures, who served as a key informant, explained that:

...we should allow the structures to work. And if I say structures to work, the DICs and the SICs, I hope you understand DICs… District Implementation Committee and School Implementation Committee. If we allow these structures to work, then they can source the food from the communities, they can work with the farmers and get the food to the schools (field interview, 2011).

But until the school food caterers who are in charge of procurement are motivated to buy from local farmers, it will be difficult for these school level governance structures to work with the local farmers to get local food into the school kitchens.

Box 3.5 An account of a rural teacher on the school feeding programme

Mr. Abu has been teaching in a rural school in the Kumbungu district. He is married to a native of the community and has been teaching in the community for 7 years. He was already teaching in the school and living in the community when the school feeding programme started. He narrated his experience of the school feeding programme in the community when it started:

"In 2005 during the pilot phase of the programme, the district assembly caterer was in charge of the programme. Two people from the community were selected to serve as cooks under the caterer. The district assembly caterer was in charge of the budget and the cooking of the food. She would come to the community on Sunday evening and sleep over. On her arrival on Sunday evening, she, together with the two cooks, would season the meat she brought with her from Tamale in readiness for cooking on Monday. During this time, a supplier brought weekly supplies of food to the school and the teacher receiving the food signed for it. The head teacher received money from the assembly and bought food items that were not supplied. Later, a caterer was posted to the school and she bought food from the community. Food items that were bought from the community included maize, rice, and yam. During the pilot phase, the menu included banku and TZ but school children did not like it because they complained they did not want to eat TZ in the house and come to school and eat TZ again; they wanted something different. Therefore the menu was revised and TZ and banku were removed. The menu at the time included banana, orange, meat and egg. There was meat on the menu four days a week and egg for one day. Fruits were served from Monday to Friday. Later, meat was withdrawn and fish introduced for some days of the week. The fish also stopped later and eggs were re-introduced but this time as egg stew. The frequency of the fruits diminished with time and also stopped. Now the menu is without fruits, meat, eggs, or fish. The menu is as follows:
Monday – Jollof
Tuesday – Gari and beans/Yam (when yam is in season)
Wednesday - Wakye
Thursday – Jollof
Friday – Gari and beans

In the pilot phase, payment was done according to food expenditure. So the caterer with the head teacher would make an itemised budget and present to the district assembly. But now, there is a fixed budget of 40p[1] per child per day."

Source: Field interviews, 2012

3.7 Conclusion

I have shown in this chapter that the perspectives of school level governance actors on the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme are embedded in their experiences of both historical and contemporary developments in school feeding. The implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme as a home-grown model deviates from the way school feeding programmes were implemented in the past. This deviation does not resonate with the experiences of school level governance actors who have to oversee the implementation of the programme at the grassroots. School feeding in the education system in Ghana, from the castle and mission schools in pre-independence to the boarding school system in post-independent Ghana, did not make an effort to connect schools with local agriculture. School feeding, organised outside the boarding school system, was mainly implemented by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in post-independent Ghana and their supplies were mostly from food aid. Thus, in all instances of school feeding in the history of Ghana that I encountered in my research, the origin of food for feeding school children was never an issue. What was important was that children were fed to alleviate their hunger and also motivate them to attend and stay in school. Thus, child welfare issues dominated the perceptions of the school level governance actors to the detriment of the home-grown elements of the programme which advocate local food procurement.

The perceptions of the school governance actors were also embedded in socio-cultural relationships. This was reflected in how the governance actors empathized with the school food caterers and how they perceived the directive of local food procurement as unreasonable given the circumstances in which the school food caterers operated.

4. PROCUREMENT PRACTICES OF SCHOOL FOOD CATERERS UNDER THE GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

In the original design of the programme, it was thought that SIC, composed of local people, would collaborate with local farmers to ensure that local supply also meant local foodstuffs. In the event, two other procurement systems have emerged, sometimes called the 'supplier model' and the 'caterer model', both of which could compromise the goal of creating local markets for local farmers (Morgan and Sonnino 2008, 159).

4.1 Introduction

Home-grown school feeding took inspiration from its 'cousins' in the alternative food networks that have received growing interest in the global north because of their objective to re-localize the food chain (Morgan and Morley 2002) to counter the negative effects of the more globalized food chains. Food procurement in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme is important because of the explicit objective to link with local agricultural development. In the alternative food ature, the farmer is at the centre of food procurement with procurement practices geared at supporting less privileged farmers. Examples of alternative food networks include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), organic farm movements, and farmer markets. Consumers who patronize these alternative food products have varied motivations ranging from health, environment, social interaction, to support for local farmers. Alternative food consumers often pay a premium on these products for their quality[4]. For example, organic food products in the supermarkets are often more expensive than non-organic products because they are considered healthy due to limited or no use of agrochemicals. Under CSA, members often pay extra on food boxes in order to support the farmer. In farmer markets, clients consider the direct and informal interaction with

[4] Often defined in terms of freshness, localness, health etc.

farmers, as well as the freshness of the products, very important and so would usually pay extra. Quite recently, some governments have recognized the power of the public plate in promoting sustainable development and have made efforts to harness this power for the benefit of the economy, society and environment. Since school food represents a substantial part of the public plate, there have been some reforms in school feeding policies to make procurement of school food more creative in order to promote wellbeing of children, green the environment, as well as provide markets for local farmers (Morgan 2008; Morgan and Sonnino 2008, 2010).

Alternativeness, however, mostly does not coincide with least cost as the practice is in public procurement law, making creative public food procurement a challenging task for procurement officials. In order to deal with this challenge, some food procurement agencies in the public sector have defined quality as part of the procurement criteria which allows them to add localness and freshness as part of the criteria in what has been described as 'value for money' as opposed to traditional tendering procedures which rely heavily on least cost to get value for money (Morgan and Sonnino 2007; Morgan and Sonnino 2008). This means that for procurement to be employed to benefit local farmers, as in home-grown school feeding programmes, it is important for the procurement agency to be committed to the objectives of local procurement and be prepared to pay a premium, if need be, since local procurement could come with extra cost[5]. For this reason, the actors in charge of procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme become decisive in the success of the local procurement components of the programme. This chapter, therefore, explores the opportunities and challenges of local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme from the perspective of school food caterers. I use three case studies of school food caterers in the northern region of Ghana to examine how their procurement practices are embedded in social relationships and how such embedded relationships affect the local procurement objective of the Ghana school feeding programme. I supplement the case studies with key informant interviews from actors in government, civil society and school level governance structures.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I discuss procurement models of home-grown school feeding used in sub-Saharan Africa. Section 4.3 deals with food procurement arrangements under the Ghana school feeding programme to provide context for the case studies. I present the case studies in section 4.4 as the empirical material for the chapter.

[5] Extra cost could be direct as in high cost of quality produce or indirect in terms of the time and energy to procure from individual farmers.

Section 4.5 discusses the effect of the twin challenges of tight school feeding budget and delay in release of funds on procurement activities of school food caterers. In section 4.6, I discuss the procurement practices of the school food caterers in the light of embeddedness and section 4.7 concludes the chapter with highlight of the main arguments in the chapter.

4.2 Home-grown school feeding procurement models in sub-Saharan Africa

The impact of home-grown school feeding on any particular group of actors depends to a large extent on the procurement model that underpins the implementation of the programme. Different food procurement models have been identified in the home-grown school feeding literature based on the levels and scale of procurement and whether procurement is outsourced or insourced. Based on these criteria, Gelli et al. (2012) have drawn up five typologies of procurement models as presented in table 4.1 (see Appendix for a brief description of each model). As the authors note, it is possible for a single home-grown school feeding programme to exhibit elements of the different models. Thus, in practice, programmes may exhibit more or less of a particular typology and not necessarily coincide neatly with one of the typologies.

Programmes that utilize the decentralized models by definition enjoy shorter transportation legs, but are also more complex to manage in terms of quality control. Espejo et al. (2009, 44) suggest that the simpler approaches to procurement under home-grown school feeding "have lower risks of corruption, bureaucratic hurdles and delivery negligence than the more complex approaches". The authors reason that greater ownership and accountability at the grassroots level play an important role in reducing mistakes that have a potential to impact negatively on feeding school children. However, the simpler approaches may also encounter difficulty in controlling food quality, predicting food quantities, guaranteeing that food is coming directly from small-scale farmers, having a food storage place at the school or in the community and having staff fully dedicated to food procurement (Espejo et al. 2009). If food is procured from farmers located in the same village as the school, transportation costs are lowest and local farmers stand a higher chance of benefiting from the purchase than if procurement is done outside the community, especially at the national level where big suppliers come in. With the exception of the integrated farm-to-school model which places priority on smallholders and actually goes the extra mile to have direct interventions to assist them, all the other models tend to see school feeding as an opportunity for smallholder agriculture market development but have no explicit programme component to address this aspiration. While this may

disadvantage the smallholder, it is good for the education and nutrition aspects of the programme because the focus on smallholders may affect deliveries and food quality if the smallholders do not perform to expectation. It is assumed that the more decentralized the level of procurement, the smaller the market and the more inherently vulnerable the model will be in terms of market effects (Devereux et al. 2010). The procurement models also rely on different degrees of community involvement, covering both cash and in-kind contributions. In general, the more centralized the procurement model, the less involved are the community members in the programme. The third party model depicted in the caterer model of the Ghana school feeding programme has the potential of least community involvement because the third party organizes every aspect of the programme. This provides few opportunities for local smallholders but effectively frees school authorities to concentrate on their school work. The models offer opportunities for community and school authorities to monitor the programme to ensure quality delivery. A major advantage of the third party model is that it offers a possibility of pre-financing arrangements which may address issues of delayed release of funds from the government.

Table 4.1 Food procurement models under home-grown school feeding

Model	Example	Centralization	Third party
Decentralized model	Kenya	Decentralized	Insourced
Semi-decentralized model	Mali	Semi-decentralized	Insourced
Centralized model	Botswana	Centralized	Insourced
Integrated farm-to-school model	Cote d'Ivoire	Insourced	Insourced
Decentralized third party model	Ghana	Decentralized	Out-sourced

Source: Gelli et al. (2012, 18)

4.3 Food procurement arrangements under the Ghana school feeding programme (GSFP)

In the programme document of the Ghana school feeding programme, School Implementation Committees (SICs) were to be in charge of procurement and cooking of food at the school level. The idea was that the membership of the SIC, who are part of the local community,

would work with local farmers to ensure that local procurement also meant local food from the local farmers in order to provide for them the intended market (Morgan and Sonnino 2008). At the district level, District implementation Committees (DICs) were to disburse funds from the district to the SICs for their operations and also oversee programme implementation and directly supervise activities of SICs (Government of Ghana 2006). In the pilot phase of the GSFP, the procurement arrangement at the school level, which is described as the school based model, was used but after the pilot phase, two other models emerged: supplier model and caterer model (WFP 2007). First, I examine the school based model.

4.3.1 School based model.

The school based model was used during the pilot phase of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP). The model engaged the grassroots in the decision-making process. In this model, food procurement and storage was carried out at the school and community level: the community decided what to buy, when to buy and the cost. The community, through the SIC, oversaw the cooking and the feeding of school children. The model of procurement was in line with the objective of the GSFP of buying home-grown food for the programme and creating a market for local smallholders since no middlemen were used. The model provided a direct link with local farmers, the community and school authorities. The WFP (2007) reports that the national pilot review of the GSFP indicated signs of response from smallholders, aside from improvements achieved in school enrolment, attendance and retention. This was reflected through aligning of production to the needs of the local schools in the programme (WFP 2007). However, challenges in release of funds to the district assemblies and other considerations that had to do with time teachers spent on procurement led to the emergence of the supplier model of procurement after the pilot phase of the programme.

4.3.2 The supplier model

As the name suggests, this model contracted suppliers to supply food items to the beneficiary schools. These suppliers were either registered companies or unregistered businesses run by individuals. The supplier bought food, delivered it to the beneficiary schools each week and submitted invoices to the DIC for payment. Each week supply requests were sent to the DIC and were based on requests made by the head teachers based on the menu which was usually built around locally produced food items. In the northern region, for example, local food items included yams, maize, rice and beans. Most of the suppliers bought these food items from outside the beneficiary communities, usually from commercial traders during market days in

the regional and district capitals (WFP 2007). Some suppliers also released money to head teachers or cooks to buy vegetables and other condiments locally because of their perishable nature.

There are suggestions that the supplier model was apparently developed to resolve problems caused by delays in budget releases, since suppliers were capable of pre-financing the programme, (WFP 2007). The supplier model also freed head teachers, who are chairpersons of SICs, from spending time procuring food and allowed them to concentrate on their academic work. Moreover, if beneficiary communities did not produce enough surplus food to supply the programme, then the supplier model would ensure continuous availability of food for the programme.

In spite of these advantages, the supplier model seems to defeat the objective of the GSFP to increase local and community food production through market opportunities provided by the programme. This is because suppliers that were contracted under the programme were not obliged by the programme to buy food within the beneficiary communities and they often bought food outside these communities (WFP 2007). By so doing, the suppliers provided no direct market opportunities for farmers in the beneficiary communities. Also, participation of school authorities and communities in this model was limited to taking delivery of food items, storing them, releasing them to their kitchen staff, supervising cooking and feeding of the children. Decisions regarding what was procured, how it was procured and at what cost were made by those outside the beneficiary schools and communities. Further, the supplier model had no mechanism to monitor procurement by the suppliers including quantity and quality of delivered food items: the supplier only presented an invoice to the Assembly and received payment (WFP 2007). In order to further deal with the challenges that led to the emergence of the supplier model, the caterer model emerged and is currently the model of food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme.

4.3.3 The caterer model

The caterer model outsources food procurement, cooking and serving to private caterers through awarding of contracts to these caterers as shown in figure 4.1 (PCD 2011). Under this model, cash transfers are made from the District Assemblies, under the supervision of the DICs, to caterers every two weeks on a per child per day basis. Storage is the responsibility of the caterers and no rigid tendering procedures are enforced. School food caterers are not

restricted or guided in their procurement and are able to procure on a competitive basis without commitment to purchasing from small-scale farmers. Though caterers may serve more than one school, they are "not permitted to serve more than three schools each, and profit is derived from savings made after food has been procured, prepared and distributed" (PCD 2011, 25). Depending on the convenience of the caterers and availability of facilities, food may be cooked on the school premises or in kitchens outside the school premises and then transported to the school.

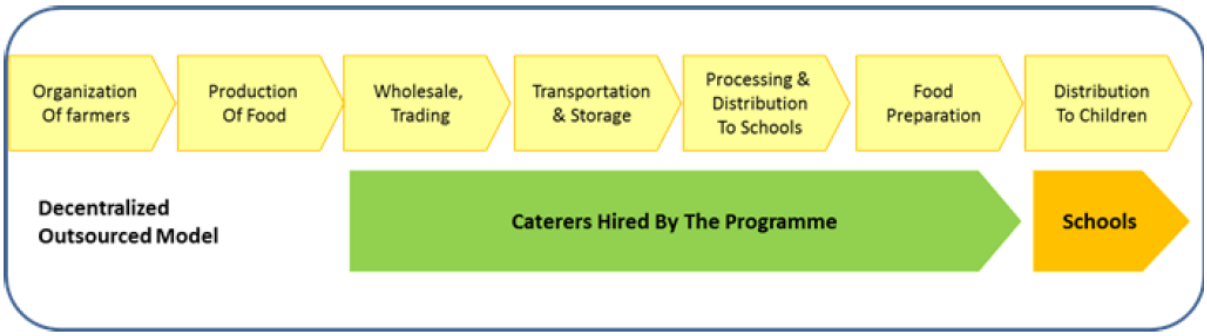

Figure 4.1 Stylised GSFP supply chain of the GSFP under the caterer model

Source: PCD (2011, 8)

The caterer model is said to be more convenient in urban and sub-urban communities, where community people are relatively apathetic and more difficult to organize into SICs. The caterers are also said to be better organized with bigger operations than the suppliers (WFP 2007). Like the supplier model, the caterer model also frees school authorities for them to concentrate on their academic work. The caterers also have the capacity to pre-finance the programme to ensure children still have food to eat even when funds from the assembly are not forthcoming. One disadvantage associated with this model is that because food for the programme is mostly bought from outside the communities, local farmers benefit very little from the programme under the caterer model. Also decision-making regarding the programme leaves out both community members and school authorities which may impact negatively on the sustainability of the programme. Besides, some caterers have been accused of buying more imported food items such as rice, canned tomatoes and canned fish for the feeding programme which further defeats the home-grown objectives of the programme.

4.4 Procurement activities of school food caterers: case studies

In this section, I examine the procurement activities of school food caterers and their motivations and challenges regarding local food procurement. I present and discuss three case studies of school food caterers: one each from an urban, peri-urban and a rural school community benefitting from the Ghana school feeding programme. The idea is that procurement practices vary depending on the degree of urbanization which also presents opportunities, as well as challenges, for local food procurement. The case studies are supplemented with information gathered from in-depth interviews with officials of government, civil society and school governance structures who served as key informants. Such information is useful because of the experiences of these people with the Ghana school feeding programme, especially regarding efforts at linking the programme with local agriculture. Pseudonyms are used to identify the school food caterers and all distinguishing characteristics are veiled to protect their identity. Each case study describes the caterer and her procurement activities and then goes on to describe her motivations and challenges regarding local food procurement. Figure 4.2 shows food stuffs in the store room of a school food caterer which includes local foodstuff from smallholders.

Figure 4.2 Foodstuff in the store room of a school food caterer showing local foodstuff

Source: Photographs by the author

4.4.1 Case 1: Caterer in a peri-urban school

Hajia Salmata, 42, enrolled as a school food caterer in a peri-urban primary school, located about 5km away in the outskirts of Tamale. Aside from her job as a school food caterer, she

has a shop in the Tamale market where she sells women's clothing. When she took over as the school caterer in 2009, the enrolment was 290, and increased to 330 in 2011, and to 400 in 2013. Her school was WFP assisted which meant that she received feeding money only for two days of the week because WFP provided food inputs for the remaining three days of the school week. Hajia Salmata, however, was responsible for feeding the children for all the five days of the school week. As a result, she used the corn-soya blend (CSB) from WFP as part of her food supplies. Because the school benefited from food supplies donated by WFP, Hajia received 29GHp[6] per child per day out of the standard 40GHp per child per day at the time. She worked with three women cooks from the community whose salaries she also paid.

Hajia Salmata says that the 40Ghp per child per day is too tight a budget. In her opinion, 1GHS per child per day would be more appropriate to feed the children adequately. She, however, thinks that, "it is better for everyone to get a small piece than only a few to have enough". When I spoke with her on the phone in February 2014, money for the school feeding programme was in arrears for two school terms which is about 6months, but Hajia kept her part of the bargain and fed the children every school day. The feeding cost per child per day had also been reviewed to GHp50 per child per day and she then received 39GHp per child per day instead of the 29GHp she received before. She explained that, "payment for third term of last year (2013) is still in arrears and the second term of this year is almost ended". This delay in payment meant that she had to mobilize resources from other sources to feed the children while she waited for the programme to reimburse her. She said she could not take a bank loan because the interest rates from the bank would be an extra stretch on the school feeding budget which she said was already tight enough. Besides, the payment was not regular and it was difficult to anticipate when she would be paid. A bank loan would require her to agree on a payment schedule which would be difficult since her own payment is not regular. Fortunately for Hajia, her brother's wife is a food trader and travels to rural communities to buy foodstuffs and brings them to Tamale to sell. Since Hajia got the contract in 2009, the sister in-law has been her main supplier. The sister in-law supplied her on credit and waited until she got paid no matter how long it took. Hajia explained that sometimes she relied on the trade network of the sister-in-law to get food on credit. With this arrangement with her sister-in-law, Hajia never ran out of food supplies before she received payment. Hajia also moved money between her shop and the feeding programme. She would use money

[6] Ghana pesewas.

from her shop to feed the children and when she was paid by the district assembly, she would pay back the money to keep her shop running.

The main foodstuffs used by Hajia were rice, beans, gari, groundnut oil and palm oil. Table 4.2 presents Hajia's weekly food requirements when I met with her in August 2011. Hajia had storage at home and she also used the store of the brother's wife in the Aboabu market when necessary. She did not buy food from the community and explained that "the farmers say they will not sell on credit". She also noted that:

...there is no assurance when you will be paid for your services, so if you don't have money you will not enjoy the programme. Sometimes you buy expensive because of credit. If you have money, you can buy and store when the prices are low. So for you to benefit from the programme, you need to be able to organise money on your own and wait to be paid (Field interviews 2011).

She thought that under the circumstance, the brother's wife was God-sent since it would have been difficult for, as she put it, "an outsider to understand such difficult situations". Another reason she did not buy from the community was that when she had money, she would buy in bulk and store and she did not have adequate storage at the school or in the community. Also, she would not buy from the brother's wife only on credit; she would also buy from her if she had cash.

Table 4.2 : Foodstuffs procured by caterer in a peri-urban primary school near Tamale

Food item	**Quantity/week**
Rice	1 bag
Beans	1 bag
Cassava flour	10 bowls
Gari	7 bowls
Groundnut oil	20 litres
Palm oil	10 litres

Source: Field interviews (August 2011)

Motivations and challenges for local food procurement

The priority of Hajia was to feed the children within the budget because there was no avenue to reclaim over-expenditure on the budget. She also needed to make savings on the budget to compensate for her time and energy on her work as a caterer. So for her to buy from farmers in the community, such purchases should help to meet this target. She noted that:

..what I am contracted to do is to feed the children, so my priority is to manage the budget such that I can provide adequate and nutritious food for the children within the budget. Yes, the assembly said we should buy from the farmers in the community, but that one is secondary because we are paid to feed the children. And that is what I am doing (field interviews 2012).

At their training before she commenced work, they were encouraged to, as much as possible, buy from the community, but buying from the community would only come to the table if it helped her to carry out her mandate of feeding the children in the most cost effective way. She also thought that the market and the food traders were markets for the famers and explained that:

The products of these farmers end up in the market, so if I buy from the market, it is still the same. The farmers sell to food traders like my sister-in-law, so buying from the food traders also means buying from the farmers. Farmers sell in bits and a single farmer can sell only small at a time. But if these traders buy from them, it means I can buy all the food I need from one person which is good for me. It is also good to establish relationship with someone who can always supply you because whether farmers have food or not the children have to eat and that is my responsibility. I am open, if farmers bring me good offers, I will take because it is business. But I know they have food traders who buy their surplus produce. You know these traders are everywhere (field interviews 2012).

Thus, market for smallholders does not necessarily mean buying directly from them. If food traders buy and aggregate the surplus produce from individual smallholders and supply the smallholders, it is still market for the farmers. This view is, however, contrary to that expressed by Devereaux et al (2010) who argue that traders represent an additional step in the procurement process between the producer and the buyer and, therefore, can be assumed to be a drain on the income farmers get from the sales of their farm produce.

Enrolment figures on which money for feeding is paid get adjusted only at the beginning of the academic year but new students come throughout the year and they have to be fed, which causes an extra strain on the feeding budget. Hajia explained that the school children come

with their younger siblings who are not officially enrolled in the school and such children also have to be fed. The extra strain on the budget, coupled with the delay in the release of funds was a challenge for Hajia in terms of cost management. It increased the need for her to procure as cheaply as possible which usually did not coincide with procurement from local farmers. She explained that, "the credit transactions make procurement more expensive because if you have money you can organise your purchases to take advantage of seasonal fluctuations in prices and buy and store when prices are low". She also noted that local procurement would have been easier and more beneficial if the school had adequate storage because she would not have to transport the food after purchase.

4.4.2 Case 2: Caterer in an urban school

Lela, 45, is a caterer for a public primary school in the Tamale metropolis. She is married to a 51 year old civil servant with two daughters and three sons. Prior to her joining the GSFP as a caterer, she traded in food stuff. She has a store in the Aboabu market where she does her food trade but she has also dedicated a room in their house to storage of food for the school feeding. Before she became a caterer the room was used to store extra grains when her store in the market was full. Her school has a kitchen and a store room which is able to keep stock enough for a month's feeding. At harvest, she buys food and stores it in the house and moves stock to the school store every month. She buys water and charcoal for her cooking, as well as paying the three cooks that she hired to help her in preparing the meals. Lela brought the cooks with her when she took over as the cook in 2009. She knew them before she joined the programme and thought they were the ones she could work with. Food is cooked and served at the premises of the school every school day. There is very little involvement of the school authorities and parents in the procurement of food and cooking. At the time of the interview, the feeding costs for the children were in arrears for more than a month. When Lela took over as caterer in 2009, the school enrolment was 409 and in 2011 it was 437. She buys her foodstuffs from traders who bring food from the rural areas to sell in Tamale market and she has good relations and reputation at the market. She keeps the school feeding and her food trading business separate but when money from the school feeding is not yet paid, she takes food on credit from her stores and when she is paid, she uses the money to buy more foodstuff for her business. The food commodities she uses for the school feeding include rice, beans, bambara beans, cassava flour, gari, palm oil, and groundnut oil (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Weekly foodstuff by a caterer of a primary school in Tamale.

Food item	Quantity
Rice	35 bowls*
Beans	15 bowls
Bambara beans	14 bowls
Cassava flour	6 bowls
Gari	5 bowls
Groundnut oil	24 bottles**
Palm oil	8 bottles
Groundnut paste	2 bowls
Tomatoes	2 buckets
Salt	2 bowls
Pepper	1 cedi worth
Spices	3 cedis worth
Magi	36 pieces
Tin tomatoes	3 x 2.2kg
Water	120GHS per term
Fuel wood	450 x 3 per term
Groundnut flour	4bowls

**A bowl is about 2kg ** a bottle is about a litre*

Sources: field interviews, 2011

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Most of the urban community dwellers were not farmers and they bought their food in the same market that she bought her foodstuffs from. Lela was, therefore, of the opinion that she was buying local since all the food items in the market were from the local farmers from the surrounding farming communities. She explained that budget constraints made it impossible not to buy imported rice and tinned tomatoes. As presented in Table 4.2, she bought both tinned tomatoes and fresh tomatoes so that she could still give the children fresh stew without overspending the budget. She thought that the community members were more interested in the quality and quantity of food she provided for the children and not the origin of the food. As she puts it:

> These people do not farm and they buy their food from the market so there really are no farmers to buy from. The people who do vegetable gardening in town here already have their buyers who buy wholesale and also help in the harvesting. I know some of these women and sometimes I buy my fresh tomatoes from them (field interviews 2012).

Lela also noted that the irregular adjustment of the feeding cost to take care of increasing numbers of school children was a strain on the school food budget. Figures for the school feeding are adjusted once a year but teachers do not turn away children who come to enroll in the middle of the school year. So the continuous enrolment throughout the school year and the delay in the release of funds, coupled with the already tight budget, were challenges for Lela in executing her contract as a school food caterer.

4.4.3 Case 3: Caterer in a rural school

Amaama is 40 years old and is married with three children. She became caterer for the school in 2009 after her predecessor was transferred to another school in the same district. She maintained the three cooks that worked with her predecessor and continued to pay their salaries. She lives in Tamale at the regional capital. When she started as a caterer, she got her first loan from her husband as seed money because the contract was such that she had to feed the school children before she was reimbursed. Later, she established contacts with food traders in Tamale who were able to give her foodstuffs on credit for her to pay when she received money from the district assembly. When she needed to transport foodstuff from Tamale to the school she made use of the truck that travelled from Tamale to the community every market day. Sometimes she also managed to get her husband to use his pickup truck to transport the food items for her. She uses a motorbike to travel from Tamale to the school

which is about 20 km away. One of the cooks, Mma Fati, assisted her to link up with a local food trader, Mma Ayi, who now supplies her local rice (see box 4.1). Amaama got yam supplies from Karimu who buys yam in the community and aggregates it into bigger lots before transporting it to Tamale to sell. Apart from Karimu who agreed to supply her with yam on credit, all her purchases in the community were based on cash. She explained that the farmers were not able to sell on credit because they only sold part of their farm produce because they needed money. But Karimu was different: he sold yam to her and waited till she got money to pay him without harassing her for his money unnecessarily. According to the caterer, traders in Tamale understood her situation and, therefore, did not have problems advancing credit to her. Table 4.4 presents the monthly foodstuffs requirements of Amaama. But yam is seasonal and when it was not in season[7] it was substituted with one of the rice meals on the menu. Amaama did not buy water or firewood for fuel because the children brought water from home and they also contributed firewood. This, she said, was the community's contribution towards the feeding of the school children.

Box 4.1 Mma Fati, the cook and the link with local agriculture

Mma Fati is in her late-fifties and is one of the cooks for the school feeding programme in her community. Before the start of the government's school feeding programme in 2005, she cooked rice to sell to the school children of the local primary school during break hours. Her passion was to have the school children fed even though it was a business for her. She tells me that sometimes some school children did not have money to buy the rice and because she is a mother herself, she was often moved by pity and she served them with the rice for free. To her it was more about taking care of the children than a business, but she also made money out of it. When the school feeding programme started and she was contacted to be one of the cooks, she agreed and joined two other women to cook for the school children. This meant that she had to give up her business of selling cooked rice that brought her extra income. But it could also well be that her business had come to an end since not many children would buy her rice after eating from the school feeding programme. During the time she cooked rice to sell to the school children, Mma Ayi, a sub-collector in the community, supplied her local rice. Because of her relationship with Mma Ayi for the years she cooked rice to sell at the local primary school, she became the link between the school caterer and the local food trader who now supplies the local primary school with local rice.

Source: field interviews, 2012

[7] The season for yam is between August and November. You can find yam to buy all year round but it is more expensive in the off season

Table 4.4 Food items procured by caterer of a rural primary

Food item	Quantity/month
Beans	2 bags
Rice	2 bags
Yam	200 tubers**
Gari	1 bag
Cooking oil	4 jeri cans*
Palm oil	2 jeri cans*

Source: field interviews (2011)

**holds about 20 litres of oil.*

***only when yam is in season (between August and November)*

Motivations and challenges for local food procurement

As much as possible, Amaama tried to buy her food from the school community because it was good for her budget. Responding to a question regarding her opinion on the local food procurement objective of the Ghana school feeding programme, Amaama had this to say:

> It is better for me as a caterer if I can buy all the food I need from the community because it is cheaper compared to buying from Tamale and then transporting it here. That way I will be able to still make some savings even if I feed more children than the ones that are officially paid for. You know we are paid on a per child per day basis and I always have more children than there are on paper and I cannot turn any child away once they are in school. But the thing is that most of the time I buy food on credit and not many of the farmers are willing to sell to me on credit. Those who sell on credit want to know when they can get their money, which is normal. But most times, I am not sure when I can pay them because my payment is also not regular. Some farmers come here once in a while to find out if I will be able to buy their food items but the cash is always the issue (field interviews 2012).

Thus the location of the school in a rural farming community is a great opportunity for the caterer to buy from local farmers because of the proximity to the school and the absence of transport costs. Because farmers also do not have to pay transport costs and they are selling at

the farm gate, they also profit even though they may sell cheaper than compared to selling in the nearby market. Her work in the community and the fact that she buys some food items from the community has made her develop personal relationships with the community members which are an additional opportunity for her to buy local. Examples are Karimu, the farmer and yam aggregator who supplies her with yam, and Mma Fati, the cook who linked her to Mma Ayi for the supply of local rice.

However, Amaama's local procurement efforts were not without challenges. As indicated in the quote above, lack of cash was a major challenge regarding local food procurement efforts since most of the farmers could not extend credit and, therefore, demanded cash when they sold their farm produce. For this reason she only bought from the local farmers when she was able to pay cash. Besides, there was no storage in the school premises but her relationship with the cooks and other members of the community enabled her to store some of the food items with them when the need arose.

4.5 Tight school food budgets and delay in release of funds as challenges to local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme

The twin challenges of tight budgets and delay in the release of funds were commonly expressed by all three caterers. Funds were supposed to be released every two weeks for the activities of the caterers but it was clear from the case studies that the release of the funds delayed anywhere from a month to about six months. Caterers were not also certain when they would receive payment for their services. The amount allocated for the feeding of the children was also mentioned as a challenge for the caterers. The caterers found the budget allocation of GHS0.40 per child per day inadequate to properly feed the children. All three caterers complained about the inadequacy of the forty pesewas per child per day to provide a nutritionally balanced meal for the school children. These challenges were also acknowledged by the GSFP focal person at the Tamale metro assembly:

And also another challenge especially with the caterers is how they are paid. Sometimes they will feed for thirty days or forty days before they are paid. Sometimes the whole term[8], they will not pay them. If they pay them it will be like sometimes two times in a term. So that one too is a challenge because if they are not paid sometimes they complain to you. If they are not able to also provide quality food in the school you can't complain because

[8] A term is about 3 months

they will say they don't have money because they are not paid… So it is also a big challenge. And they also complain about the forty pesewas per child per day[9].

As is evident in our case studies, caterers had to feed the children in advance before they were paid. These delayed payments of school food caterers were also issues in the national newspapers. The newspapers captured the plight of the school food caterers, with some threatening court action to get their money while others were threatening to stop feeding the children until they were paid (Jafaru 2014; Obour 2013; Akwa 2014). One of the papers reported that:

The Northern Regional Co-ordinator of the GSFP, Madam Olivia Yahaya, said the caterers had been entreated to find ways of continuing with their services, although they had not been paid what was due them since the beginning of the year, as a result of which many of them were in financial distress. "We let them understand that this programme is not like paying salaries at the end of every month and so they would have to find ways of providing the services until the government pays them," she said (Obour 2013).

In October 2013, an online news item reported that:

The inconsistent flow of money from the Ministry of Finance to the GSFP secretariat for onward distribution to the caterers contracted to prepare the food for the children is one of the main problems bedeviling the programme. Although Siiba Alfa, Public Relation Officer of the secretariat, noted that a caterer's ability to pre-finance the project was a major consideration for the selection, most caterers run out of money and are forced to prepare foods that do not meet the specification of the programme. The government budgets a paltry 40 pesewas per pupil per day. This amount has drawn sneers from critics, because 40 pesewas can hardly satisfy the nutritional needs of a growing child. Indeed, 40 pesewas can hardly buy a coin-sized piece of meat[10] .

Similar sentiments were also expressed by members of civil society organizations who worked with the Ghana school feeding programme. One of them explained:

... many of the caterers ... look at how can we benefit instead of how can the community benefit. And then the other thing is the time taken for payment of these things under the school feeding programme. I must say that in Ghana that is one of the things that is killing many of the innovations, ya. And government this thing to pay promptly is one of the frustrations that many people will tell you. Because you know that funds are supposed to be provided at this quarter, it doesn't come until… from the first quarter, you wait, second quarter, it is in the third quarter and therefore it makes even the caterer position a difficult one. And then also key persons who...would have benefited from the school feeding programme are not (field interviews, 2011).

[9] As of the time of interview (August 2011)

[10] http://www.spyghana.com/ghanas-school-feeding-programme-on-a-collision-course/ (accessed on 26th January 2014)

The fact that caterers were not sure when they would get paid by the district assembly made them prefer working with suppliers who were able to give them credit and wait until they got paid. The relationships caterers had with these suppliers were family, friends or long term trade partners whom caterers could trust. This limited opportunities for caterers to buy from local farmers. Caterers also complained that farmers at the community level had limited capacity to sell on credit since they often sold their farm produce because they needed cash to settle pressing issues which could not wait until the caterer got money from the district assembly. The situation was even worse because caterers often did not know when they would be paid which made it difficult to plan their procurement activities.

Tight school feeding budgets meant that caterers had to look for options to cut cost which meant procuring as cheap as possible. Under the circumstances, caterers only procured food from local farmers if it was the cheapest option. For example, the caterer in the rural school bought food from local farmers because she found it cheaper and convenient. She also enjoyed the support of the cooks who were members of the community and introduced her to farmers and food traders who gave her good price and also good measurement when she bought food items. But this only happened when she had cash to buy food items. When she needed to buy on credit, then she had to turn to the urban food traders because the farmers did not have the capacity to extend credit. The caterers in the urban and peri-urban schools did not buy from local farmers because they had cheaper and more convenient options in the food traders they dealt with at the regional market in Tamale. It can, therefore, be asserted that tight school feeding budgets, coupled with delayed payments, limited the procurement options of caterers which most times did not favour smallholders in the school feeding communities. The combination of budget constraints and delayed payments, therefore, was a critical disembedding force of the procurement activities of school food caterers because it forced caterers to procure based on price. At the same time, it served as an embedding force because it increased the role social relationships played in the procurement activities of the caterers. For there to be a shift from procurement that is largely based on price to one that is based on the origin of food, there is a need for adequate funding of the Ghana school feeding programme and also timely release of funds in order to ease the twin challenges of tight budgets and delayed release of funds. It is, therefore, safe to argue that food procurement decisions of school food caterers would continue to be made under conditions of high marketness until adequate and regularly released funding is available for the Ghana school feeding programme, making the objective of linking with local agriculture that underpins

home-grown school feeding initiatives continue to be subordinated to the market (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010a).

4.6 Procurement practices of school food caterers under the lens of embeddedness

This section analyses the procurement practices of the school food caterers in terms of their experiences and motivations in executing their contracts and how those practices are embedded in socio-cultural relationships in which the caterers are involved. The twin challenges of tight school feeding budgets and delayed payments to school food caterers had both disembedding and embedding effects on the procurement practices of school food caterers which can be captured as "first things first" and social relationships.

4.6.1 Disembedding effects – "first things first"

All three caterers in the case studies indicated that their first priority was to feed the school children in the most cost effective way possible: first things first. As a result, procuring food from local farmers was only one of the options available to the caterers and they used it depending on the benefits it brought to them in terms of cost and convenience. This priority placement is not surprising since the most important objective of any school feeding programme, conventional or home-grown, is to feed school children. Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2011, 345) note that:

> It is not realistic or appropriate to assume that stimulating agricultural development can or should be the primary objective of a HGSF procurement system: rather, the primary objectives must be the provision of a reliable supply of safe, appropriate food at a reasonable cost.

To this end, the procurement practices of the caterers represented in the case studies were embedded in conventional school feeding objectives which are focused on nutritional and educational objectives. My case studies, however, had an additional twist: remuneration of caterers for their work came from the savings they were able to make on the school food budget after feeding the children. Under the circumstance, the higher the savings, the better their remuneration. This situation motivated caterers to base their purchases more on price considerations than any other, including origin of food. The caterers, thus, bought local food only if the price of the local food was lower compared to other alternatives. The words of the caterer for the rural community captured it all:

If I have money and buy my foodstuffs here (in the local community where the school is located), I make a lot of savings. I get good price from both farmers and traders because they don't have to pay the cost of sending the food items to the market. Even when I buy at the same price as in town, the measurement is always better and I don't have to transport the food because it is already here. The problem is when I need to buy on credit since farmers most often need cash when they sell their foodstuff.

Thus, the caterer in the rural community found procuring local food cheaper which is contrary to commonly expressed views that local food is expensive, especially in much of the alternative food literature. The explanation for this is that the foodstuffs from the local smallholders were not territorially branded or certified organic products which usually increased the price of such farm produce. Similarly, Izumi, Alaimo, et al. (2010) have observed among School Food Service Professionals (SFSPs) in the United Sates that the price of locally grown food sourced through a farmer or wholesaler was competitive with and often cheaper than food carried by broadline distributors due to shortened supply chains and good relationships with farmers.

In Block's (1990) marketness-embeddedness continuum of characterizing economic transactions, the purchasing behaviours of the caterers in the case studies can be described more as marketness than embeddedness since price considerations were higher than any other. The same is true for the complementary continuum of economic instrumentality-embeddedness which captures the motivation of actors in entering into market transactions; the motivations of the caterers were more instrumental than embedded since they were based on options that maximized their profits. Under such arrangements, it was less likely that caterers would procure from local farmers if such purchases came with extra cost to them. Extra cost in this case could come from higher prices, increases in transaction cost due to multiple transactions and inability to purchase on credit from smallholders. Programme implementers at the district level who have oversight responsibility for the programme also found it difficult to insist that school food caterers bought food from local smallholders because of the focus on feeding the school children. The shift from the school based model in the pilot programmes to the current caterer based model has shifted power regarding procurement decisions from school governing authorities to the school food caterers who are private actors. The GSFP focal person at the Tamale metro assembly explained that:

This one [referring to the caterer model] is not like first ...the MIC they will provide the raw materials to the caterers and they will cook and they will pay the caterers at the end of the month but this time, it is not like that[11]. The money is given to the caterers and

[11] Referring to the pilot phase of the Ghana school feeding programme in 2005

they will do their own thing, they will feed even in advance then before they are paid ... so they will decide wherever they are supposed to buy their food items... from food supplier or what... (field interviews 2011).

The district assemblies encouraged the school food caterers to buy from smallholders in the local communities whenever it was possible for them to do so, but they were not able to enforce it because the resulting cost needed to fit within the budget, such that the school food caterers could still provide for the school children an adequate quantity of food of good quality. So it was not only school food caterers who had the first things first notion: the assembly was also concerned about the quality and quantity of food being served the children and not necessarily about the origin of the food. Similar sentiments were expressed by the teachers and head teachers of the schools. For the school teachers, it was more important for the children to be fed on regular basis since, for them, that was the purpose of school feeding. Parents who were members of PTA/SMCs, however, had a different opinion: they wanted to be involved in the food procurement process. If they were involved in the school food procurement, a lot of cost could be saved on the school food budget. They pointed out that buying from the local farmers was cheaper than buying from the district or regional market because there would not be any transportation cost. They would be happy to be involved in the procurement since it would allow them to participate in deciding what their children ate in school. They were of the opinion that the current arrangement where the caterer was in charge of procuring and cooking food left the community with very limited opportunities to participate in the programme. For this reason, activities of the governance structures at the school level, including the SIC instituted at the school level to be responsible for the school feeding programme, was almost negligible.

These observations regarding high economic considerations in the procurement practices of school food caterers are in line with observations of the activities of food distributers who supplied food to farm-to-school programmes in the US (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010a). Since the school food caterers offered their services as part of their livelihood, it was important that they operated within the budget such that they could still benefit from their labour. Case studies have shown that, even though many of the benefits of home-grown school feeding to local agriculture have been developed around local food procurement, such procurement strategies do not resonate with the food procurement priorities and practices of the school food caterers who are at the centre of food procurement in the Ghana school feeding programme.

4.6.2 Embedding effects – role of social relationships

In spite of the fact that procurement decisions of school food caterers were largely based on economic considerations, social relations played a significant role in affecting those decisions. These relationships were expressed in terms of cooperation, reliability, and trust. Caterers worked with suppliers who could cooperate with them such that when they were not yet paid, they could take food on credit and could wait until they were paid before they settled their own debts. Reliability in social relationships meant that caterers could get food from their suppliers irrespective of the time of the year and whether the caterers had cash or not. Trust meant that caterers could discuss both personal and business issues with suppliers and both parties knew that issues they discussed with each other were safe. These relationships were seen in family, friendship as well as business ties between caterers and their suppliers. As one of the caterers remarked:

My husband cooperates with me very much in my work as a caterer. He gave me my first loan to start and since then he has always been there to help me with money when I need it. The delayed payments require this kind of support and you can only get it from someone who understands your situation and is willing to support you.

A caterer whose sister-in-law traded in foodstuff found her very cooperative in terms of giving her supplies on credit and waiting for her to make payments later. An example of a business tie was seen in the case of the rural caterer (see section 4.3.3) who got cooperation from a yam sub-collector in the community who cooperated with her by supplying her with yam on credit.

These social relationships ensured that caterers had reliable food supplies to feed the school children in spite of the twin challenges of tight feeding budgets and delayed payments. As is evident in the case studies, caterers entered into supply relations with people they were familiar with and could trust. As a result, it took more than a business relationship between school food caterers and their suppliers to get the trust, cooperation and reliability that were observed in the procurement practices of the caterers. In the case of the peri-urban caterer, business relationship was mixed with family: the sister in-law was the source of supply the caterer could rely on. As she explained: "even if my sister in-law run out of food items, she always got some within her network of traders for me". This is an expression of confidence that she would always be able to get food to feed the children whether she received payment from the district assembly or not. In the case of the caterer of the rural school, she related well with the cooks who were natives of the community and she established relationships with

other community members who sometimes supplied her foodstuff. She also had relationships with food traders in Tamale who supplied her food on credit which made it possible for her to be able to feed the school children even when the district assembly delayed in releasing money to her.

The social relationships embedded the procurement activities of the school food caterers in two ways: one, in the sense of Granovetter (1985), by providing the trust necessary for credit transactions to take place and by discouraging malfeasance that gives the trading parties confidence that the other will keep their part of the bargain; two, in the sense of Granovetter (1985, 2005) and Block (1990), by ensuring that procurement activities are not based purely on price but mediated by the on-going social relationships. As a result, it is not possible to understand and let alone predict procurement behaviour of the school food caterers based on price considerations alone as suggested by neo-classical economic theories.

4.7 Conclusion

The case studies presented in this chapter revealed that school food caterers were committed to feeding school children at a cost that would fit in the tight school food budget and still allow them to make some profit to compensate for their labour. This meant that the lower the amount of money spent on actual feeding of school children, the higher the profit margins of the caterers. It was, therefore, not surprising that economic considerations were observed to be central in the procurement practices of the school food caterers. This led caterers to use the cheapest available options of procurement, which did not resonate with the objective of providing market for local farmers since procuring from local farmers was not necessarily the cheapest and the most convenient option. Thus, there was a disconnect between the caterer model and the directive of government that caterers procure as much as 80% of food from local farmers. It was, therefore, not surprising that caterers did not heed the directive to buy from local farmers unless it was the most economically profitable and the most convenient option. A similar observation was made among school food service professionals in the United States who were of the opinion that buying locally grown food, especially directly from farmers required extra effort such that only those who had some level of concern for farmers or the food system would make such extra effort; in other words, buying locally grown food was "more than a business decision" (Izumi, Alaimo, et al. 2010, 89). The three school food caterers profiled in this chapter regarded local food procurement as a business decision and, therefore, bought from local farmers if such actions contributed to their profit

margins. This business consideration of local food procurement by the school food caterers represents a major challenge of linking the Ghana school feeding programme and local agricultural development. The 2013 Annual Operation Plan of the Ghana school feeding programme acknowledges the challenge of linking the programme to local agricultural development and proposes the recruitment of an agricultural consultant to help address the challenge (Government of Ghana, 2013).

5. MARKET AT THE DOORSTEP: THE ROLE OF LOCAL FOOD TRADERS IN PROVIDING MARKETS FOR SMALLHOLDERS IN NORTHERN GHANA

5.1 Introduction

Local food traders occupy an important position in food provisioning in sub-Saharan Africa by moving surplus farm produce from points of production to points of consumption, since the bulk of food is often produced in the rural areas and transported to urban areas where it is consumed. Food traders usually buy farm produce in local markets where farmers bring their surplus produce or at the farm gate where traders travel to meet farmers (Cark 1994). But, "of all the private sector actors involved in African cereal markets, none has been more maligned or misunderstood than the private traders who assemble grain at the village-level" (Sitko and Jayne 2014, 56). Because of this misunderstanding, the traders, who are mostly women (Clark, 1994), have often been accused of over-exploiting both farmers and consumers by buying cheap from farmers and selling expensive to consumers and, thus, have become a source of price increases (PCD 2011). However, a study conducted in four markets in Ghana by Compton et al. (1998) concluded that traders' valuations and pricing of grain were remarkably consistent, even though there were wide differences in geographical location, type of customers and traders, and the amount of produce normally handled by the traders. Empirical evidence of the activities of food traders suggests that the needs of small farmers in rural areas are better met by small traders (Minten and Kyle 1999).

In the value chain approach adopted by home-grown school feeding, local food traders have been considered an additional step in the value chain and are; therefore, appropriating part of the retail price that otherwise would have gone to the farmer. For this reason, procurement models under home-grown school feeding often sought to exclude local food traders by encouraging direct links with farmers as a way of increasing their incomes (PCD, 2011). In spite of the important role these traders play in local food distribution, and could play in

linking school feeding to local agricultural development (Morgan et al. 2007), their activities are seen by some as detrimental in linking smallholders to local agricultural development. For example, Devereaux et al (2010, 14) argue that:

> ...traders represent an additional step in the procurement process between the producer and the buyer, and therefore it can be assumed that the share of income that reverts to the farmer will be lower. As indicated by a WFP report (see Morgan et al. 2007: 298), traders can play a positive role for local farmers in terms of capacity development, helping to integrate them in the food supply chain. However, there is little evidence in the literature of traders playing this kind of 'support agent' role for farmers.

This critique appears to be solely based on assumptions of the value chain literature where price is considered as the only value. The authors have also failed to take into account the risks involved in trade and the significant impact these traders make in the marketing and distribution of food (Clark 1994; Lyon 2003). Sitko and Jayne (2014, 58) contend that "while there appears to be a reasonable theoretical explanation for the persistent claim that farmers are getting a raw deal at the expense of private grain traders, there is virtually no empirical evidence to support this assertion". The authors in their study of assembly traders in eastern and southern Africa concluded that:

> ...far from exploiting farmers, assembly trading appears to offer competitive market intermediation services, even in geographically isolated regions. These data suggest that assembly traders offer farmers access to markets at their doorstep, which in the vast majority of cases appear to be far better than what farmers would receive if they were to arrange their own transport to the nearest wholesale or retail market. Moreover, even in remote villages farmers are able to access markets at prices that are competitively discounted relative to those in more accessible villages (Sitko and Jayne 2014, 62).

But why is there so much misunderstanding and disagreement about the activities of local food traders that are so important in local food distribution? Why do the activities of these traders continue to persist? What are the stories of the local food traders themselves? This chapter addresses these questions by exploring the activities of local food traders in Ghana school feeding beneficiary communities from the perspective of the traders themselves. I use data from in-depth interviews and participant observation from 16 local food traders in three school feeding communities to understand how the activities of the food traders are embedded in social relationships that create "values" for both farmers and final consumers of agricultural produce, which are unpriced and, therefore, evade the tools of neoclassical economics.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. In the next section I discuss how local food traders organize their activities based on data from the 16 local food traders that were studied. The traders are sub-divided based on the type and scale of their trade activities. In section 5.3 I discuss the role of social relationships in the activities of the local food traders and in section 5.4. I turn my attention to the implications of the activities of the food traders for linking school feeding to local agricultural development. I then summarize the key issues discussed in the chapter in section 5.5 as conclusion.

5.2 From farms to kitchens: the organizing practices of local food traders in northern Ghana

This section presents and discusses how local food traders organise their activities, using empirical data from 16 local food traders in the northern region of Ghana. Table 5.1 presents the characteristics of the traders who were involved in the study. All 16 food traders were females except for 2 who were males. All the food traders financed their trade activities through informal sources with only one of them having access to a bank loan. The food traders have been categorised based on the type and scale of trading activities in which they were involved. These categories include sub-collectors, wholesale collectors, wholesale retailers and retailers which include food venders and petty traders (Overå 2006). Figure 5.1 is a schematic representation of the flow of food and credit among various categories of traders.

5.2.1 Food trading at the farm gate: engagement of sub-collectors with smallholders

Sub-collectors were the first to buy surplus farm produce from smallholders at the village level and aggregate it into larger volumes for onward resale to wholesale collectors. The study included 6 of these sub-collectors, 4 of whom resided in a rural community, and the other two in a peri-urban community (see table 5.1). The sub-collectors resided and did their trading activities in the farming communities where surplus food items were sold by the local farmers. The 4 sub-collectors in the rural community operated only within the community they lived in, while the 2 in the peri-urban extended their activities to neighbouring farming communities. All 6 sub-collectors practised farming as an additional source of income because food trading activities were limited in the farming season. The sub-collectors bought different foodstuff from the farmers and aggregated it for onward sale to wholesale collectors. Foodstuff sub-collectors traded included yam, cassava, rice, maize, beans, soybean,

groundnuts, sorghum and millet. The male sub-collector specialized in yam trade and bought yams from his community and nearby communities and transported them to the regional market in Tamale. When yam was out of season, he also retailed part of the yam he collected to his community members and took the rest to the regional market in Tamale. The fact that the sub-collectors lived in the same communities with the smallholders offered an ongoing ready market for their surplus farm produce. Wholesale collectors who came to the farming communities on market days, often paid for, and took delivery of the food items purchased by the sub-collectors

Table 5.1 Summary of characteristics of local food traders included in the study

Category	Trader	Age	Sex	Locality	Access to formal credit?	Alternative sources of livelihood
Sub-collectors	1	47	F	Rural	NO	Farming
	2	30	F	Rural	NO	Farming
	3	51	F	Peri-urban	NO	Farming
	4	38	M	Peri-urban	NO	Farming
	5	32	F	Rural	NO	Farming
	6	30	F	Rural	NO	Farming
Wholesale collectors	7	42	F	Urban	NO	None
	8	35	F	Urban	NO	None
	9	55	F	Urban	NO	None
Wholesale retailers	10	43	M	Urban	YES	Farming
	11	56	F	Urban	NO	None
	12	41	F	Urban	NO	None
Retailers	13	56	F	Peri-urban	NO	None
	14	44	F	Urban	NO	None
	15	51	F	Urban	NO	None
	16	39	F	Urban	NO	None

Source: Fieldwork 2011-2013

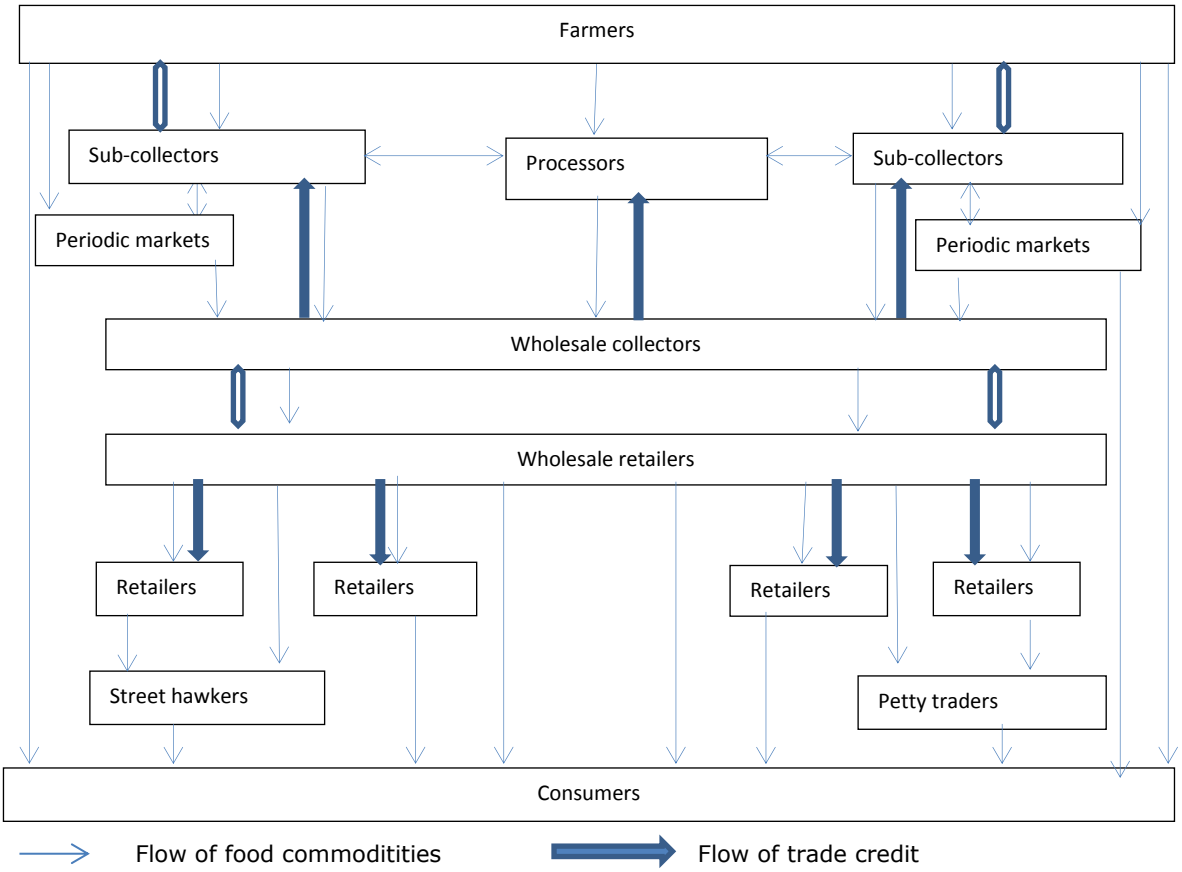

Figure 5.1 Flow of food and credit among farmers and the various categories of traders

Source: Author's representation based on field interviews, 2011-2013

However, there were instances where the sub-collectors transported the produce to district or regional markets where the wholesale collectors operated. The thin arrows in figure 5.1 indicate movement of farm produce while the thick arrows indicate the flow of credit. Sub-collectors sometimes advanced credit to farmers who had farm produce to sell but were yet to get the produce ready. Such advance payments were needed to satisfy family and social needs like hospital bills and children's school fees. The loans were usually against farm produce to be settled within varying lengths of time, ranging from a day to about 3 months in instances where loans were taken to invest in farms and were to be paid after harvest. For example, some sub-collectors advanced loans to farmers to engage tractor services for ploughing or to secure seed for planting. The double tick arrow between farmers and sub-collectors in figure 5.1 is an indication of a two-way credit relationship between farmers and sub-collectors. In some instances farmers allowed the traders to take their surplus farm produce and pay them after selling. This usually took from about a day up to a week. While sub-collectors advanced

short-term credit to farmers against crop produce, they in turn received credit from wholesale collectors who bought their aggregated food items. All 6 sub-collectors did not have access to formal credit and relied on their own resources and financing from wholesale collectors. Two of the sub-collectors received money from wholesale collectors on a weekly basis to buy food produce. Every time they delivered the produce for which they took advance payment, they got new advance payment to purchase surplus farm produce for another market week. The other 4 sub-collectors mostly relied on their own financing and occasional short-term loans from farmers and wholesale collectors.

Figure 5.2 Yam depot and retail shop of a sub-collector

Source: Photograph by the author

Case study of activities of a sub-collector – Mma Ayi in Tibung

Mma Ayi is a 45 year old woman married to a 50 year old man with 3 boys and 2 girls. She has her own farm of 2 acres where she plants groundnuts and okro. She also intercrops her husband's yam farm with tomatoes and peppers which she uses at home. Mma Ayi started her trade activities 15 years ago. She got motivation from selling her husband's farm produce in

the local market. From there she started helping other farmers with their surplus produce each time they wanted to sell and soon she started bulking farm produce from farmers for onward resale to wholesale collectors who came round or in the local market. She trades in rice, beans, soybeans, sorghum and groundnuts. When food items were in season (the period immediately after harvest usually October to February) she was able to bulk up to 10 bags of maize per market week (a bag is approximately 100kg) from farmers. In the lean season (usually March to September) she hardly got 3 bags of maize per week. Because some households did buy maize in the lean season, she also sold some of the food items in the community during the lean season.

Farmers who had surplus produce to sell sometimes collected money from Mma Ayi before they delivered the farm produce. Mma Ayi explained that anytime farmers had something to sell, they would send a child to collect the money for the amount of produce they wanted to sell. She then gave out the requested amount and the farmers delivered the produce when they were ready with it. It was also normal for farmers to bring the produce to her house or call her to come and buy foodstuff. Smallholders often called her if they had a bag or more of grain to sell, but if they had less than a bag, they brought it to her house. She did not worry about defaults because she knew everyone in the community. Mma Ayi was connected to a wholesale collector called Mata who resided in Tamale. A large part of her capital was financed by Mata who visited the community weekly.

5.2.2 Linking produce of smallholders to urban consumers: role of wholesale collectors

Wholesale collectors are also referred to as “travellers” (Clark, 1994: 9) because they usually reside in urban centres and travel to the rural areas where there is surplus food produce. They usually spend a few days within the market week moving from one farming community to the other gathering farm produce from sub-collectors, farmers and village markets. The study included 3 wholesale collectors, all of whom were female and resided in the urban centre (see table 4.1). Below is a case study of one of the wholesale collectors.

Case study of a wholesale collector – Mma Awabu in Tamale

Mma Awabu belonged to a network of 7 sub-collectors in five farming communities, as well as 2 wholesale retailers in the Aboabu market in Tamale. The sub-collectors assembled surplus farm produce for her in their communities and she in turn sold to the wholesale retailers. In each of the farming communities where she traded, the sub-collectors in her

network were her contacts and she advanced money to them on a weekly basis. Before she arrived in each community, the sub-collectors had already collected surplus farm produce from farmers to wait for her arrival. The sub-collectors were traders in their own right but had limited capital and, therefore, could only buy little produce by themselves. They, therefore, used money from Mma Awabu to leverage their own trade. The sub-collectors did not have access to formal credit and relied on their own capital, as well as support from family and friends. The leverage the sub-collectors got from the advance payments of Mma Awabu was very important for their relationship with the farmers they traded with. Not only did farmers want cash when they sold their farm produce, they sometimes also needed money before they were able to hand in their farm produce in order to deal with emergency social expenses. Because Mma Awabu wanted to have more farm produce when she visited, she advanced money to her contact sub-collectors so they could buy more. The sub-collectors accounted for whatever money she advanced to them when she visited to collect the produce. They sold to her and accounted for the money advanced to them. Mma Awabu would leave Tamale three days before the Tamale market day[12] to arrive with her goods early in the morning on market day. On her arrival, the two wholesale retailers in her network, who also pre-financed her, bought first and then she sold the rest of her goods to other wholesale retailers.

5.2.3 Food business in the market: understanding the operations of wholesale retailers

Wholesale retailers bought food items in bulk from wholesale collectors and resold in smaller quantities to retailers. Credit flow between wholesale collectors and wholesale retailers went both ways. Wholesale collectors allowed wholesale retailors to take a portion of crop produce on credit and to pay after selling. This kind of credit often lasted from a few days to two weeks. Alternatively, wholesale retailers sometimes gave money to wholesale collectors in advance and redeemed the loan as farm produce when the wholesale collectors came back with farm produce from the farming communities. The thick up-down arrow in figure 5.1 depicts this two-way movement of credit between wholesale collectors and wholesale retailers. Figure 5.3 shows pictures of wholesale retail scenes in the Aboabu market in Tamale.

[12] The market days follow a six day cycle

Figure 5.3 Wholesale retail scenes in the Aboabu market inTamale

Source: Photographs by the author

Case study of a wholesale retailer – Mbe Dokurugu in Tamale

Mbe Dokurugu is in his mid-forties and is a wholesale retailer in the Tamale Aboabu market. He is married with three children and his wife, Mma Meeli, is a retailer in the same market. Mbe Dokurugu started as a farmer and worked as a labourer with a local contractor as a source of off-farm income. The off-farm income supplemented his 2-acre maize and 5-acre rice farms. The maize farm provided food for his household whilst the rice farm served as a source of income. Then it happened that the contractor delayed payment for his labour for a period of one year and later gave him a lump sum which he decided to invest in his rice farm. He made 15 more acres of rice bringing the total acreage of rice to 20. Because of the irregularity of the income from the work with the contractor, and the fact that the extra investment in the farm needed more labour and attention, he stopped working with the contractor and concentrated on his farms. Six years down the line, rainfall patterns became erratic and rice yields dwindled. For three consecutive years, he had poor harvest from his rice fields and, therefore, less income. He looked for opportunities to increase his income and found one in food trade. Mbe Dokurugu sold his rice and acquired a store in the Tamale Aboabu market to start food trading. This investment in food trade reduced his rice farm size from 20 to 10 acres. His maize farm has since remained 2 acres.

The store served as his trading base in the market. Other traders also brought their produce to his store and often paid him commission after selling which served as an extra income. It was also a source of networking which he utilized to find supplies and customers for his own food produce. He traded in rice, maize, guinea corn, millet, groundnuts, beans, cowpea, soybean and sheanuts. As a wholesale retailer, his focus was on supplying customers who bought in bulk. He purchased different crop produce from different locations depending on the relative

advantages of the produce, based on availability and price. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 present the locations Mbe Dokurugu gets his food supplies from and the customers he supplies respectively.

Table 5.2 locations of agro-commodities traded by Mbe Dokurugu

Community	Commodities traded
Gushegu and Kariga	Millet
Kpatinga	Beans, groundnuts
Walewale, Kpasinkpe	Sheanuts
Tamale, Gushegu, Walewale, Kariga and Kpatinga	Maize, rice.

Source: field interviews, 2012

Table 5.3 Customers of Mbe Dokurugu and the produce supplied

Customer	Produce
Private hospital in Tamale	Maize
Kumasi market	Maize, millet
Accra market	Maize, groundnuts

Source: field interviews 2012

Mbe Dokurugu used to mobilize farm produce from the Tamale market and transport it to Accra and Kumasi to sell. He explained that:

> Food prices generally are lower in the north compared to the south. In the Kumasi and Accra markets, the market queens are in charge. They take delivery of your produce, sell it and give you your money after they have taken their commission (field interviews 2012).

This arrangement had challenges. Sometimes he came home without his money and had to go back later to collect it. Then he established relationships with some customers in the markets who would place orders for him to deliver. Now he does very little traveling. He transacts business with his suppliers and customers on the phone. The contacts in the supply areas are

wholesale collectors whom he has worked with for many years and, therefore, he trusts them. His distant customers in Kumasi and Accra, however, are still under study and he transacts only small volumes with them so far. But he was happy with the business. They would usually discuss on the phone the food produce they needed and agree on price, quantity and quality descriptions. He would organize the farm produce and put it in a truck and give the details of the truck and the driver to the customers. They pay the money to his bank account after taking delivery of the produce.

5.2.4 Satisfying the food needs of final consumers: the role of food retailers

The four retailers involved in the study were all from Tamale and traded in local rice, beans and maize. They bought a bag or two of food items from wholesale retailers and sold to consumers in the open market (see figures 5.4). The retailers had credit relationships with the wholesale retailers who supplied them and they could take foodstuff and pay after selling, which usually took about a week. The thick arrow from wholesale retailers to retailers in figure 5.1 indicates this credit relationship.

Figure 5.4 Retail scenes at the Tamale market

Source: Photographs by the author

Case study of a retailer – Mma Memuna in the Tamale market

Mma Memuna is 39 years old and retails in beans in the Tamale market. She has been in the business since her childhood when she assisted her mother who also did the retail business in the same market. She is married with two daughters. Her mother is no longer in the retail business because of ill-health and she has taken over. She buys beans and stalks in her store and resells to consumers. She operates every day of the week with the exception of Sundays.

When the market is good, she is able to sell up to 10 bags a week but on average she sells 6 bags a week. When the market is bad, she could sell as few as 2 bags a week. Her main supplier is Mma Abiba who travels to Kumbungu to bring the beans to sell. But sometimes she also gets good deals from other wholesalers in the market. She often sold in bowls to consumers. Sometimes she took beans from Mma Abiba and paid after she sold the beans, which often took a week. She hardly sold on credit since the majority of her customers bought and paid in cash. Only people she knew and related with personally were able to get credit from her.

5.3 Role of social relationships in the activities of local food traders

This section focuses on the role of social relationship in the activities of local food traders. I adopted a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis because of the subjective nature of relationships and the need for rich and contextual information. The adoption of an actor-oriented approach also meant that I took actor defined perspectives as points of departure and, therefore, did not apply a strict theoretical framework to my data. Social relationship in the activities of local food traders was demonstrated in the multiple networks they were involved in, as well as repeated exchanges that took place among the traders and their clients. Two types of multiple network situations were observed in the activities of the food traders. One was the fact that traders knew and also dealt with clients of other traders. This was especially so in the activities of sub-collectors who resided and traded in farming communities. This kind of network relationship among the food traders ensured transparency, which led to the building of trust and discouraged opportunistic behaviour among traders and their clients (Granovetter 1985). One of the sub-collectors put it like this:

> I live here in this village. This is my home and everyone knows that I am not going anywhere. Will I run away because of small money? What about my husband and children? And extended family? And my own farm? That is too much to run and leave behind. So they trust me and I can get credit from them. When they also need advance money for their farm produce, I don't think twice before giving them. It is not all the time that I have money, but when I have it I give them because they will surely hand in their produce. Because we are together, I know them. If someone says he has ten bags of rice, it is easy to know if he really has it or not (field interviews 2012).

In the study communities, sub-collectors talked among themselves and it was a common practice for them to refer clients to each other in instances where a client needed money and the trader did not have it immediately. This made trade transactions transparent and enabled

trade partners to build confidence in each other.

The other type of multiple network situation could be described as multiple relations. Multiple relations were observed in situations where trade partners had relationships beyond trade. For example, one of the sub-collectors was also the chairperson of a women's group in the community and also had in-laws because her eldest daughter was married in the community. As a result, trade relationships between her and her in-laws, as well as members of the women's group she chaired, went beyond business relationship. These multiple relationships facilitated trade transactions by building trust among traders and discouraging opportunistic behaviour even where trade parties could get away with such malfeasance. While some of these multiple relations developed naturally, others were deliberately cultivated for the purpose of trade. A wholesale collector in Tamale explained that:

I don't stay in the farming communities. But because I have representatives, they always go to them when they have something to sell. Sometimes they hand in the produce, other times they just take the money and tell her that they will bring it on market day[13] . They don't default. If they have problem, they tell you ahead of time because you have become a friend. They invite me to their outdooring, festivals, marriage and funeral ceremonies. Sometimes I am able to go and other times I am not able to go. When I am not able to go, it is usually enough for my trade partners to make a presentation on my behalf (field interviews, 2012).

Another wholesale collector put it like this:

Every place I go, I have someone who lives there as my contact and she is in charge of my business. I may deal with people directly in the community but everyone knows this is my woman; she does my business. Because of her I get to be treated as an insider since whatever she knows about someone, I get to know as well. So because I know people in the places I do my business, I also have my eyes and my ears there (field interviews 2012).

Social relationships enabled urban traders to be able to trade in rural communities as if they were part of those communities. As seen in the above quotes, the traders had ears and eyes by means of social relationships which enabled them to know what was happening through their contacts. This illustrates what Sonnino (2007) described as exhibiting both embedding and disembedding tendencies. Relationships with people in the community reinforced the embedding tendencies through building of trust. The trust relationship which discouraged malfeasance and made distant transactions possible, disembedded trade transactions in

[13] Periodic market which comes every six days and is two days before the Tamale market which follows the same six day period

locality through expansion of transactions beyond familiar territories.

Social relationship in economic transactions made social sanctions the most effective and, therefore, discouraged opportunistic behaviour from traders and their customers. Answering a question about what happened to defaulting customers, a sub-collector had this to say:

> Well, I don't worry so much about that because I have to trust someone to do business. So if I am doing business with you, it means I have some trust for you. The level of trust will decide the kind of business I will do with you. But answering your question, our elders say that vi yi bi kuri nira, di lee kabri nyingoli (translated literally as "if shame does not kill a person, it breaks the neck").

This means that if one cannot raise their head to look at another straight in the face or raise their head or voice in public, certainly, they have a broken neck. In effect, shame kills, but does so figuratively by way of tarnishing the reputation of those who do not keep their part of a contract. Also, defaulting customers lose the chance of future transactions with the same trader and others who get to know about it. Expectations of future transactions then become another mechanism that embeds activities of local food traders in social relationships. For this reason traders tested new clients with smaller transactions and only when they found them trustworthy did they increase the transaction volumes. What also contributed to building trust relationships was referral by trusted trade partners. New traders who did not yet have a trade track record needed referral from older ones in order to be trusted by other traders.

In spite of the trust relationships between farmers and traders, sometimes farmers sold surplus farm produce to traders outside of their regular trade network. When farmers had reason to sell to other traders aside from their regular customers, they did not do so openly but in ways that the other traders may not notice. The food traders were aware of this and one of them explained that:

> When your regular customer goes behind you, it is usually because someone has offered them a better price or they need money and you don't have money yet. Even though you cannot claim absolute buying right over a farmer's produce, you don't like it when you get to know that your farmer is selling to another trader. When the farmers do that, they don't even want you to know because it will decrease the trust relations they have with you. But because we live together in this community, such things are difficult to hide and so farmers don't do it that often (field interviews 2012).

Repeated exchanges helped to build trust and the expectation of future exchanges reduced

opportunistic behaviour on the part of trading parties. Expectation of future exchanges was reflected in the popular saying in Dagbanli that "Ban da mbi yo ku lan da" (translated as "defaulters will not buy again"). Thus, traders delivered on their contracts so they could get the chance to trade in the future, thus reducing the chance that traders would behave opportunistically even if the opportunity availed itself (Granovetter 1985). Rooks et al (2000) refer to this as the shadow of the future. The fact that the traders had quite a stable customer base suggests that repeated exchanges among traders and their clients increased trust and thus the likelihood of future exchanges. Rooks et al (2000) refer to this as the shadow of the past and suggest that the longer and more successful the past exchanges, the less efforts exchange parties will invest to manage transactions, thus, relying more on social control to enforce contracts.

5.4 Implication for linking school feeding to local agricultural development

A major challenge of home-grown school feeding in developing countries is how such programmes may be linked properly to local agricultural production (Otsuki and Arce 2007; WFP 2007; Morgan and Sonnino 2008; Espejo et al. 2009; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). A publication by the World Food Programme (Espejo et al. 2009) outlined a framework to link home-grown school feeding programmes in developing countries to local agricultural production. The framework identified three distinct but interlinked activities through which home-grown school feeding may be linked to local agriculture: strategic procurement, agricultural development, and institutional development.

Strategic procurement involves removing barriers that smallholders face in accessing the school feeding market, which includes lack of information, insufficient capacity to meet traditional tendering requirements, lack of capacity to supply, store and transport commodities and vulnerability to post-harvest losses. Agricultural development involves activities intended to help smallholders increase productivity, produce better-quality crops, manage natural resources and mitigate risks in a sustainable way. It entails the provision of assistance packages (e.g. improved seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs at subsidized prices) to the least advantaged small-scale farmers so they can produce food in greater quantities and be able to supply the school feeding programme. Institutional development involves support in terms of policies, standards, rules and strategies related to school feeding, procurement and increased agricultural production and to national capacity building to fund, manage and

implement a cost-efficient programme and document results. The focus in this section is on strategic procurement which is expected to enable farmers to access the school feeding market. Here, I discuss how an understanding of the activities of local food traders can enhance the procurement of food from smallholders under home-grown school feeding. The constraints of linking home-grown school feeding to local agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa border on the lack of capacity of smallholders to produce enough and also to supply. This makes the procurement costs from smallholders and their associations expensive (Espejo et al. 2009). Yet school feeding programmes as social protection interventions need to deliver quality food to school children at a reasonable cost. In the case of the Ghana school feeding programme, caterers who operate on the basis of profit maximization need to spend as little as possible for them to be able to make some profit. Besides, money for feeding school children was often received late requiring caterers to pre-finance feeding or buy food items on credit.

These challenges require innovative ways to keep the balance of providing cost-effective food for school children, as well as linking the school feeding market to smallholders. The activities of local food traders put them in a unique position to address these challenges in spite of popular notions about their exploitative tendencies. The findings in this chapter suggest that local food traders can perform an intermediary role to bulk farm produce from scattered smallholders into bigger lots that can supply the school feeding market. Field interviews indicated that this bulking function was needed to link smallholders to school food procurement as suggested in the following quote from a civil society practitioner who works to connect smallholders with the school feeding market:

> ...they should purchase the food items and then sell them at the market price to the caterers...they can get maybe a supplier who will buy the items from the farmers and keep in a store then the caterers can go there and buy because most of the caterers they don't have money to buy in cash (field interviews, 2012).

Thus, the bulking function that food traders perform in the marketing and distribution of food seems to be what is needed to connect the school feeding market to smallholders. This is especially the case for sub-collectors in the school feeding communities who perform this function for wholesale collectors. In their efforts to link local farm-to-school projects with local farmers, some school districts in the US engaged the services of "foragers" who acted as a liaison between the school districts and the local farmers (Feenstra and Ohmart 2012).

The forager found farmers who wanted to sell to the school district, and then met with the kitchen manager, provided information about the availability and volume of the produce, and helped the manager to think about how to integrate seasonally available local produce into the menu cycle (Feenstra and Ohmart 2012).

Because of seasonal gluts and scarcities, prices of foodstuffs are lowest during harvesting and the period after harvesting and start increasing with time. In order to benefit from the higher food prices later, farmers keep their farm produce and sell as and when they need money to solve social problems like a child's school fees, or a funeral or hospital bills. When farmers do sell, they do so only to get enough money to solve the particular issue and keep the rest. Thus, apart from the fact that smallholders are scattered, they also sell only in small bits at a time, making the bulking function of sub-collectors in school feeding communities necessary. One key informant explained that:

… the caterers do not have money to go and buy from the farmers directly and farmers too cannot sell on credit and wait for caterers to get money. And also it is not very easy to, like, locate the farmers and see that this is what I want and the farmer has it, but if there is a common this thing, a supplier or someone who can just buy from the farmer, if the farmers know that they will bring it to the place, if there is market for it, they will sell it to the person and then the caterers can go there and buy (field interviews, 2011).

A civil society practitioner working to connect the school feeding programme with local farmers also suggested that:

...with a volunteer, somebody within the community taking up the role of trying to aggregate, work directly with the farmers and also with the caterer, to aggregate produce towards the school feeding programme, it will be a more sustainable method. Where the matron is just left alone and she has to just… once he/she doesn't have a good working relationship with farmers, it will be difficult, but the volunteer is going to be within the community and would be a pivot on which all these facilitations would be hinged (field interviews, 2011).

The quotes above also suggest a need for a good working relationship with farmers which sub-collectors have cultivated over years of dealing with smallholders. School food caterers lack this relationship with farmers because they do not come from the school feeding communities. Espejo et al. (2009) acknowledge the importance of this intermediary role of food traders in connecting home-grown school feeding to local agriculture. In their opinion, food traders "aggregate small quantities of a commodity into efficient trading volumes, incur

the cost of visiting farmers and farmer groups to collect products and assume the risk of purchasing poor-quality commodities" (ibid, 43).

Inter-channel credit, which is an important characteristic of local food trade in Ghana, can be exploited to benefit the implementation of home-grown school feeding. Its significance in local food trading activities is well illustrated in the activities of various categories of local food traders presented in this chapter. Each of the traders studied, in one form or another, extended or benefited from some form of credit. This is understandable since almost all the traders did not have access to formal credit. Since school food caterers under the Ghana school feeding programme complained of receiving funds late from the district assembly, this could be an opportunity for them to benefit from the inter-channel credit if they become part of the local food trade chain. Caterers in school feeding communities can link up with sub-collectors who may be able to give them short term loans of food items from the credit they get from wholesale collectors who normally have the financial muscle to extend credit. It is also possible for school food caterers to link with wholesale collectors who operate in their communities. The school food caterers worked with wholesale retailers which meant that food had to travel to the urban before coming back to the community. This is where there is the opportunity for substitution with imported food items which sometimes were cheaper in the market. This was especially the case for imported rice.

5.5 Conclusion

The Ghana school feeding programme as a home-grown initiative aims to connect with local agricultural development through local food procurement. The case studies I explored in this chapter suggest social relationships play an important role in the activities of local food traders who ensure that food surpluses from smallholders in farming communities eventually reach final consumers, including school kitchens. The empirical data presented and discussed in this chapter reveal that social relationships play a role in the activities of local food traders through trust relationships, as well as the effect of social rewards and sanctions (Granovetter 1985, 2005).

Local food traders belonged to multiple networks (Jessop 2001) and also engaged in repeated exchanges (Rooks et al. 2000) among themselves and smallholders. The food traders knew and also dealt with clients of other traders which ensured transparency, leading to trust relationships that enhanced trade relations (Granovetter 1985). In the study communities, sub-

collectors talked among themselves and it was a common practice for them to refer clients to each other. This was especially so in instances where smallholders needed money and the trader did not have it immediately. Urban food traders had ears and eyes by means of social relationships which enabled them to know what was happening through their contacts in the farming communities, illustrating what Sonnino (2007) described as exhibiting both embedding and disembedding tendencies. Trust relationships which discouraged malfeasance and made distant transactions possible, disembedded trade transactions in locality through expansion of transactions beyond familiar territories (Sonnino 2007).

The fact that traders knew each other and related to each other and smallholders beyond trade, as well as the expectation of future exchanges, made social sanctions the most effective. Local food traders delivered on their contracts so they could get the chance to trade in the future, thus reducing the chance that traders would behave opportunistically even if the opportunity availed itself (Granovetter 1985). Rooks et al (2000) describe this as the shadow of the future. Local food traders also had quite a stable customer base, suggesting that repeated exchanges among traders and their clients increased trust and, thus, the likelihood of future exchanges. Rooks et al (2000) describe this as the shadow of the past and suggest that the longer and more successful past exchanges are, the less efforts exchange parties will invest to manage transactions, thus, relying more on social control to enforce contracts.

6. SMALLHOLDERS' MARKET RELATIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

The use of the supplier and caterer models of procurement helps to explain why the GSFP has failed to make any impression on the agricultural production in the beneficiary communities. Much more needs to be done, therefore, to ensure that the local demand from the schools is benefiting local farmers. But pro-poor farming policies will need to better understand the nature of agriculture in Ghana (Morgan and Sonnino 2008, 61).

6.1 Introduction

One objective that distinguishes home-grown school feeding from its conventional counterparts is the local procurement of food that aims at providing market for local farmers in order to boost local food production. The home-grown school feeding initiative is based on widespread agreement among policy makers that smallholders require improved access to agricultural markets in order to raise their farm productivity and, hence, improve their incomes (Chamberlin and Jayne 2012). As such, the lack of markets has been identified as an important challenge to agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2007) in spite of the fact that sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by the abundance of markets, and not the lack of it (Fafchamps 2004). Assumptions about the lack of markets for farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are as a result of how market access is conceptualized and measured, the exclusive focus on improved infrastructure and the idea of value chains. Neoclassical economics view markets as ideal constructions which are efficient and self-contained. This conceptualization of the market, in which price is the only value that determines the worth of goods and services, is what is adopted by the value chain approach used in home-grown school feeding. However, it has been demonstrated that improvements in market access often have more to do with the behaviours of marketing agents than with improvements in physical infrastructure (Chamberlin and Jayne 2012). Not that physical infrastructure and price do not matter in market access for smallholders, but that there is more to it than assumed in the neoclassical economics discourse on which the value chain approach is based.

In this chapter, I use empirical data from 23 smallholders to show that there is more than price in market transactions of farm produce by smallholders and that farmers are neither operating in marketless situations nor are they waiting for new markets for their surplus farm produce. Indeed, farmers are exposed to all kinds of opportunities to sell their surplus farm produce and they select the ones that make the most "meaning" to them. This "meaning" aspect of the market is what Gudeman (2001) describes as the community realm of the economy which is characterised by different domains of value and not just price. Others like Granovetter (1985), Polanyi (1944), and Block (1990) have termed it as embeddedness of the economy. I show how the activities of smallholders in their interaction with both input and output markets are embedded in social relationships which reinforce their autonomy. It is also demonstrated that the market activities of smallholders are embedded in off-farm activities and cultural factors.

The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. The next section presents an overview of smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa and how they relate with markets, in order to provide a theoretical context for the analysis of the empirical data. In section 6.3, I present and discuss empirical data on how smallholders relate with markets at both the input and output sides. I then turn my attention to the role of off-farm activities in the market relations of smallholders in section 6.4. The focus of section 6.5 is the cultural elements that embed market relations of smallholders. Some lessons from the market relations of smallholders are drawn in section 6.6 to inform implementation of the local procurement aspect of the Ghana school feeding programme. Section 6.7 concludes the chapter with a summary of the main findings presented in the chapter.

6.2 Smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa and how they relate with markets

Smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa are considered to be cultivating farm sizes of 2 hectares or less (World Bank, 2007). It is estimated worldwide that smallholders number about 450-500 million and their farms represent 85% of the world's farms (Harvey et al. 2014). In Ghana, farms of smallholders constitute 90% to 95% of all farms (Asuming-Brempong et al. 2004). Ironically, smallholders are also estimated to represent about half of the world's hungry with about three-quarters of the hungry in Africa (Harvey et al. 2014). Smallholder farms are usually rain-fed and, therefore, subject to weather conditions which make smallholder agriculture a risky venture. This risk is not only limited to the weather, but also to socio-economic conditions in which they operate, including market shocks. These difficult

conditions have made smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa often the target of most social protection and agricultural development interventions. There is a general agreement among policy makers that smallholders require improved access to agricultural markets to raise their farm productivity and living standards (Sitko and Jayne 2014). But smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa have often been considered to be operating under poor market access conditions with generally high levels of remoteness and the associated high marketing costs and risks, coupled with poor access to supporting services (Commission for Africa 2005). Poor market access has also been identified as an important explanatory factor for persistent underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa, from explicitly theorized microeconomic studies and macroeconomic perspectives to more generalized perspectives on the costs and consequences of remoteness (Chamberlin and Jayne 2012).

Smallholders' participation in markets has mostly been treated under transaction cost and price incentives, as well as access to productive resources including technology (Alene et al. 2008). Barrett (2008), however, cautions us that just getting prices right does not induce broad-based, welfare-enhancing market participation and that one also needs to get institutions and endowments right. Inefficient food markets have been identified as a major challenge of smallholder agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2007) and it has been argued that improving the function of the food markets will improve agricultural productivity through investments in inputs and technologies which will enhance yields (Onumah et al. 2007). Thus, interventions to improve agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa have been geared towards integrating smallholders into agricultural commodity markets. Unfortunately, most of the market-oriented liberalization policies for smallholders that overtook most of sub-Saharan Africa have not fully delivered on the promises, leading some farmers to revert to subsistence (Barrett 2008). Household endowments like landholdings, livestock ownership, or credit access affect food grain sales by smallholders and have been explained using the semi-subsistence poverty trap hypothesis in which poor farmers lack the assets to produce marketable surpluses and, hence, are not able to reap the gains from market-based exchange, limiting their ability to accumulate assets which reinforces the initial condition of lack of endowments (Barrett 2008).

Grain markets in most of sub-Saharan Africa are characterised by regular, sharp seasonal price fluctuations (Stephens and Barrett, 2011). As a result, farmers who are able to afford it, hold their grain in order to be able to enjoy future price increases or to smooth consumption

(Alderman and Shively 1996). Stephens and Barrett (2011), however, have observed that many smallholders do not appear to take advantage of the opportunities created by the predictable seasonal price variation in storable commodities but instead often sell their farm produce at low prices after harvest and buy back the same produce at higher prices months later. The authors describe this as the "sell low, buy high" puzzle which they argue is at odds with "unconstrained, inter-temporal profit-maximising behaviour" (2). It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the heterogeneity of smallholders since different categories of smallholders respond differently to new market opportunities (Amanor 2009). Above all, it is important to understand what smallholders do and why.

The logic of peasant agriculture is that of a constant struggle for autonomy through the construction of a self-governed resource base that allows for co-production, which interacts with markets and allows for survival of peasant households and reproduction of the resource base (van der Ploeg 2014). But peasant autonomy cannot be constructed and maintained unless there exists a wide range of possibilities and potentialities (Schneider and Niederle 2010). Given the difficult conditions under which smallholders operate, livelihood diversification strategies are important for them to achieve some level of stability in order to face the contingencies of farming, as well as reduce the risks caused by possible failures in access to markets and income. A diversified resource base is, therefore, an important ingredient for smallholders in the construction of autonomy as it "increases their capacity to decide and to develop the (re)production process and interaction with markets" (Schneider and Niederle 2010). Thus, non-farm income sources are important in the peasant struggle for autonomy since it diversifies and expands the resource base of smallholders. Smallholder maize farmers in Mexico were found to also depend on non-farm income, irrespective of whether they sold maize or not, as opposed to commercial maize specialists who relied solely on farm income (Eakin et al. 2014). The essence of non-farm income is to diversify income sources and may not necessarily be substantial or reliable (Eakin et al. 2014). Another means by which smallholders construct autonomy is by ensuring self-sufficiency in food. As much as possible, smallholders continue to grow food for subsistence irrespective of the economic rationality of such decisions. As Eakin et al. (2014) write:

> Reflecting what we have observed among non-sellers in Chiapas and Mexico State, households will expend resources in fertilizer and hired labour for their maize fields, even though a more economically rational choice might be to use the same resources to purchase tortillas in the market. We have also observed similar behaviour among smallholder irrigated vegetable producers in the states of Puebla and Morelos: while vegetables were

arguably their primary source of income, they continued to plant maize, often at high opportunity cost in terms of irrigated land and input use, in order to guarantee subsistence needs and preferences (150).

Thus, irrespective of the source of income of smallholders and the cost of producing their own food, smallholders would often opt to produce their own food even though such a decision may not necessarily be the most economically efficient or beneficial one. These measures of eating what they grow and growing what they eat effectively free smallholders from the uncertainties of the socio-technical and economic circumstances that surround them and, hence, reinforce their autonomy.

As part of developing and maintaining autonomy, smallholders as much as possible organize factors of production outside the domain of markets, so that these factors remain in their control. Where it is possible, smallholders mobilize all inputs outside markets; otherwise minimum use of the market is employed. van der Ploeg (2008) argues that when capital is mobilized outside markets, then they are not expected to yield market-comparable profits. This is because other processes of conversion are important and other benefits apart from market profits matter to peasants but are not captured by neo-classical profit calculations. Institutional arrangements like land tenure and landholding, family capital and labour arrangements govern conversion processes that ensure that the peasant remains in control of the factors of production and, thus, reinforces his autonomy. van der Ploeg (2014) illustrates this using Dutch peasant farms and notes that because farm buildings, animals, and machines do not have to function as capital, and labour is not remunerated as wage labour, and no rent or lease is paid on the land, peasants do not go broke where their capitalist and entrepreneurial farm counterparts, who pay for all productive resources mobilized from the capital markets, go broke. At the output side peasants pattern and re-pattern relations with market agencies which could allow for greater flexibility in their market relations and thereby reinforce their autonomy (van der Ploeg 2008). Conceptually, these kinds of relations with markets that enhance autonomy of smallholders, but are not necessarily the most profitable actions in terms of neo-classical economic considerations, are described as embedded relationships (Granovetter 1985, 2005).

6.3 How smallholders relate with markets − empirical analysis

Table 6.1 summarizes the characteristics of the smallholders who were involved in the study. The respondents included 17 males and 6 females, with ages ranging between 27 and 63 years. The respondents also represented different statuses in the household including household heads, housewives and eldest sons. Farm sizes of smallholders ranged between 0.3ha and 7ha confirming an earlier observation which recorded farm sizes of between 0.1ha and 10ha among Ghanaian smallholders (Chamberlin 2008). Landholdings were smaller in the urban and peri-urban areas compared to the rural areas, except for famers who sought land outside the urban area to expand their farms. The smallholders cultivated cereals, legumes, roots, tubers and vegetables. They also engaged in other sources of income generation including rearing of livestock. Smallholders sold their surplus farm produce through local food traders, periodic markets, processors and consumers. In general, smallholders adopted a minimal and flexible relationship with both input and output markets which contributed to building and strengthening their autonomy. The relationships of the smallholders with both input and output markets are discussed in turns in the next two sub-sections.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of smallholders included in the study by locality

Farmer	Farm size (ha)	Sex	Age	Status in household	Crops grown
Rural					
1	2	M	35	Eldest son	Maize, yam, cassava, beans, groundnuts
2	0.5	F	45	Housewife	Maize, groundnuts, okro
3	4	M	32	Eldest son	Rice, yam, maize, groundnuts, soybean
4	2	M	51	Household head	Maize, yam, cassava, sorghum, soybean
5	1.5	F	40	Household head	Maize, Groundnuts, okro, *bra,* sorghum
6	5	M	61	Household head	Maize, yam, rice, soybean, cassava, millet
7	0.8	M	27	Eldest son	Maize, soybean, rice
8	1	F	32	Housewife	Maize, okro, groundnuts
9	2	M	45	Household head	Yam, maize, cassava, groundnuts, soybean
Peri-urban					
10	1	F	30	Housewife	Groundnuts, okro, soybean
11	1.4	M	63	Household head	Maize, soybean, yam, cassava
12	0.7	M	27	Eldest son	Maize, soybean
13	5*	M	50	Household head	Rice, maize, yam
14	2.5	M	60	Household head	Rice, soybean, maize
15	1.2	M	36	Household head	Rice, soybean, maize
16	2	M	60	Household head	Maize, yam, millet, cassava
17	0.5	F	44	Household head	Groundnuts, okro
Urban					
18	0.6	M	45	Household head	Maize, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, *bra*
19	5*	M	36	Household head	Rice, maize, soybean
20	7*	M	61	Household head	Rice, yam, maize, soybean
21	1	M	51	Household head	Maize, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage

22	0.4	M	26	Eldest son	Maize, Lettuce, *ayoyo, alefu, bra*
23	0.3	F	33	Housewife	Maize, Tomatoes, pepper, okro, *ayoyo, bra*

*Farms in rural communities because of scarcity of land

Source: Field interviews (2012 and 2013)

6.3.1 Input markets

In this sub-section I examine how the smallholders that were studied engaged with input markets to produce food crops both for subsistence and the market. I identified four categories of inputs that smallholders employed to produce their crops: land, labour, capital and seed (see table 6.2). Credit and other inputs like fertilizer and agro-chemicals are considered under capital due to their involvement with money. I will organise the discussion of this sub-section under these input categories.

Land

The sources of land for cultivation among the smallholders are presented as part of table 6.2. Some farmers got the right to cultivate on a piece of land by being the first to cultivate it. This was when there was still virgin land that no one had cultivated before. Farmers also got land from their fathers either as gifts or through inheritance. Farmers also gave land to their wives who wanted to make their own farms. Under such arrangements, the women did not own the land but they could produce whatever food crops they pleased on it. Farmers also borrowed old farms (*kagsogu*) that were once cultivated by neighbours but which were no longer being cultivated by the first owners.

Lands that the smallholders cultivated were generally outside the domain of the market: they neither bought nor had titles to the lands on which they cultivated their crops. Even in special cases where urban smallholders had titles to land they cultivated, they did not treat such land as part of their production cost. A typical example was Alhassan (farmer 18 in table 6.1) who cultivated a piece of land he bought in 1998 with the hope that one day he would build apartments on it, stay in one and rent out the rest to generate additional income. His plans for the land had not materialized yet but in the meantime he produced crops on the land and stayed in a rented two bedroom house with his wife and three children. He cultivated maize for their food needs and vegetables in the dry season and sold for extra income. He also kept

sheep and goats in Taha, a rural community about 8 kilometers to the east of Tamale. When he was asked about the cost elements of his production, Alhassan did not mention land as one of the cost items of his farm. When he was asked directly about land, he explained that the land was not bought for farming. He considered only the things he paid for in the particular farming season as his costs. For example, he counted seeds of cabbage, but not those of maize because he used seed he had selected and stored the previous year. Thus, as long as the land was not directly paid for in a particular year to be used for farming, its cost did not enter into the calculation. So only fertilizer, weedicides, pesticides, seeds for leafy vegetables and occasional hired labour were the main cost items he identified. Thus, though purchased, the land still remained outside the market domain and did not have to yield rents at market rates (van der Ploeg, 2014).

The majority of the smallholders farmed on land they inherited from their fathers (see table 6.2). The importance of inherited land was more pronounced in the rural community compared to the urban and peri-urban communities, which could be attributed to higher population densities (Chamberlin 2008) and the associated increased commoditization of land. Some farmers in the rural community also acquired land through the cultivation of virgin lands even though at the time of data collection[14] no more virgin lands remained in the study communities. Smallholders in the peri-urban and urban communities sought additional land in rural communities to expand their farms because of shortage of agricultural land due to urbanization and the associated infrastructural development resulting from high population densities. For example, Dasana (farmer 13 in table 6.1) had been cultivating maize and yam on his one hectare farm he inherited from his father. In 2007 when he decided to go into rice cultivation, he went to Manguli, located about 15km from Gbayamli where he lived, to seek extra land. Dasana was introduced to the chief by a friend who was already farming rice in the community under a similar arrangement. Through this, Dasana obtained 4 hectares of land for his rice farm. At the end of each harvest, he presented to the chief two bags of paddy rice in appreciation. Dasana explained that the appreciation was not payment in any way for the land because it was not mandatory. He explained further that if he had bad harvest in one season and was not able to give something to the chief, there would be no debt on him to be made up for in subsequent seasons. In effect, there were no payments of land rents among the smallholders studied and, thus, land remained outside the domain of the market.

[14] Data was collected between 2011 and 2013

Labour

The smallholders studied depended mainly on their own labour and that of their families. Other sources of labour were used only to supplement own labour and family labour. Household heads were privileged over family labour because they also had the responsibility to provide for the subsistence needs of all household members. Housewives and other members of the household who made their own farms did not have the benefit of mandatory family labour, except during planting and harvesting where it was normal practice to work on each other's farms in turns in order to ensure uniform planting and harvesting. Nonetheless, other household members still supported the household head with maize if the maize from the family farm ran out before the next harvest. As Abu (farmer 3 in table 6.1) explained, *zugu zim verindi nyingoli* (blood of the head soils the neck eventually) which means that the shame of the household head eventually is the shame of the other members of the household. This was the reason Abu cultivated maize, even though he spent the morning hours of his labour each day working on his father's farm.

Not many (17%) of the smallholders used hired labour on their farms. This could be attributed to the fact that smallholders produced mostly food crops and also on subsistence bases. This is in line with the observation by Amanor (2005) that cocoa farmers in the south of Ghana, who used to depend on hired labour, reverted to use of own labour when they shifted to production of food crops, because cocoa production was no longer lucrative due to low producer prices paid by the government as a result of decreased cocoa prices in the world market. Smallholders preferred own labour to hired labour also because of the quality of work. As one farmer explained:

> ...hired labour cannot be compared to own labour when you consider the quality of work. Hired labour helps you when you are constrained with work on your farm, but if you want quality work, you have to do it yourself. When you raise yam mounds for example, you want sizeable and evenly spaced mounds which make a beautiful farm and yield good tubers. But when you hire people to work on your farm, they do not consider these things (field interviews, 2012).

Smallholders also organized themselves into labour groups to leverage their labour force. This practice was limited to the rural (67%) and peri-urban (38%) areas (see table 6.2) reflecting a sense of community among the rural and peri-urban smallholders as opposed to their urban counterparts. Labour groups were used by smallholders to help each other on their farms in

turns. Fridays, Mondays and also market days were the days on which these groups undertook their activities. When the group worked on someone's farm, the person provided lunch for them. This meant that the host farmer's wife had to cook for a large group, usually between 5-15 people. Because of the work load involved in the cooking, the women often worked together in preparing the meals as shown in the left bottom picture of figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Smallholders working together in various farm activities including cooking

Source: Photographs by author

Smallholders who belonged to these labour groups could sell their turn if they did not have much work on their farm or if they needed money to solve pressing social issues. Some also loaned out their turns to colleagues who would give them their own when they needed it. This practice was also a source of cheap but quality labour for the farmers since they worked together in turns and often worked like they did on their own farms. Thus, own labour, family labour and labour groups were the most important sources of labour among the smallholders. Similar labour arrangements have also been observed in another community in the study region (Sulemana 2009). These labour arrangements offered smallholders flexibility and

control over their labour use and, thus, reinforced their autonomy. The labour arrangements employed by the farmers also kept the labour process, as much as possible, outside of the market domain.

Table 6.2 How smallholders organized factors of production

Production factors	Sources	Percent*			
		Rural (n=9)	Peri-urban (n=8)	Urban (n=6)	Total (n=23)
Land	First to cultivate	22	0	0	9
	Old farm of neighbour	33	0	0	13
	Inherited from father	44	25	17	30
	Husband's land	33	25	17	26
	Father's land	33	25	17	26
	Own land	0	13	33	13
	Permission from chief	0	13	33	13
Labour	Own labour	100	100	100	100
	Family labour	89	88	67	83
	Hired labour	11	13	33	17
	Labour groups	67	38	0	39
Capital~	Sale of farm produce	100	100	100	100
	Family and friends	22	13	0	13
	Trader	33	25	17	26
	Sale of livestock	22	25	0	17
	Projects	22	25	0	17
	Bank loan	0	0	17	4
	Other sources	33	25	67	39
Seed^	Own seed	100	100	100	100
	Borrow from neighbour	22	0	0	9
	Buy from other farmers	44	25	33	35
	Buy from food trader	22	13	17	17
	Seed dealers	0	0	33	9
	Buy from open market	0	13	17	9

*Rounded to the nearest whole number. May not add up to 100 due to multiple selections

^Includes all planting material ~Any investment in farms

Source: Field interviews (2012 and 2013)

Capital

Capital for investment by smallholders came from sales of food crops, livestock, or from off-farm sources. All the smallholders I studied, at some point or another, used money from the sale of crops to invest in their farms (see table 6.2). Only one (farmer 20) had access to a bank loan which was facilitated by his in-law who worked in a bank (see box 6.1). Some smallholders (26%) got financing from food traders who bought their farm produce. More rural smallholders (33%) used financing from food traders than their urban counterparts (17%) which could be attributed to the fact that local food traders played a more important role in the marketing activities of rural smallholders than they did for urban smallholders (see table 6.3). Besides, urban smallholders had access to more sources of financing compared to their rural counterparts by virtue of their location. Some smallholders (17%) also sold livestock to invest in their farms.

Box 6.1 Social relation facilitates a bank loan

Adam is 61 years old and his in-law, Iddi, worked with a Rural Bank in Tamale. In 2008, Iddi introduced his father-in-law to the bank manager and offered to guarantee for a loan for the father-in-law to invest in his maize farm. The bank manager agreed and Adam got his first loan from the bank which was GHC1500. The loan was to be paid within a year which meant that Adam could also store his maize and sell it when the prices were good. The completion of each payment qualified Adam for another cycle of loan. At the time of the interview, he had finished paying for the third cycle but indicated he did not want to take any more loans because he would reduce his farm size due to ill health.

Source: field interviews 2012

Seed

The smallholders studied produced seed as part of the production process and used their own seed (see table 6.2) at least for one of the crops they cultivated. Seed production and storage varied for the different crops. For groundnuts, soybean and beans, all plants in the field were harvested together and, after drying, part was stored as seed. For maize, smallholders selected the healthiest cops during harvesting, dried and then stored them for use the following year (see figure 6.2). In the case of yam, harvesting was staggered such that the vines of yam plants harvested in the rainy season were put back in the soil to regenerate the setts for the following season. For cassava, smallholders would leave cassava plants on the farm until the following year to provide stems for planting. Being able to select, store and use their own

seed was a source of empowerment for the smallholders. One of the farmers explained that:

When you start clearing land in expectation of the rains, you have to also make sure you have seed. But how can you be sure you have seed when you did not keep any? The performance of crops depends on the quality of the seeds used in planting. So if you want to have healthy crops in the field, you need to plant healthy seeds and the way to do that is to select and store the seeds yourself. You know, your farm is your stomach, and your seeds are your farm. So you see, you want to be in charge of your stomach (field interviews 2012).

Thus, by selecting and keeping their own seed, smallholders empower themselves and increase their pride as farmers. Knowing they had seed for the next farming season also assured smallholders that they would be able to make farms and, hence, their *stomachs* were secured. When the farmers did not have seed from their own farms, they preferred to buy seed from other farmers rather than from the open market. One of the farmers put it like this:

You always want to select and store your own seed for the next season. But if you have to buy seed then it is better to buy from another farmer. If you buy seed from a fellow farmer, you are sure of the quality. We all live here so he will not sell bad seed to you. But when you buy in the market, you don't know whether they will geminate or not. And if they don't geminate who will you ask? You know, groundnut seeds don't geminate very well if it rained on the pods when it was being dried and so such seeds are not good for planting. But how will you know this if you buy from someone you don't know? (field interviews, 2012).

Because of the importance smallholders attached to the source of their seed, they needed to be really constrained to use seed from unknown sources. As such, when farmers could not use their own seed or buy from fellow farmers, then they preferred to buy seed from local food traders rather than in the open market (see table 6.2). Local food traders bought farm produce from farmers whom they knew personally and interacted with at different scales, so they were able to get good seeds to sell to other farmers who needed them. The local food traders knew good seed because they also had farms. Acquiring seed from local food traders worked better for rice, soybean, and groundnuts because seeds for those crops did not need to be selected on the field during harvesting.

Figure 6.2 Selected maize seed suspended from the roof as form of storage in wait for the next cropping season

Source: Photographs by the author

Taken together, smallholders organized production inputs outside the domain of markets. This was illustrated by the fact that no rents were paid on land, there was limited use of hired labour, own resources were used to invest in farms, as well as own seeds. This way of organizing factors of production ensured smallholders were totally in control of the production and reproduction processes of their farms and, thus, reinforced their autonomy. Organizing factors of production outside of markets enabled farmers to have free farms and they could, therefore, use their farm produce as they wished. Free farms were necessary for the autonomy of smallholders because such farms still looked profitable even under adverse environmental and market conditions that resulted in poor yields and low prices for farm produce (van der Ploeg 2008). This flexibility of use of farm produce made smallholders their own bosses (Mooney 1988) and gave them a feeling of independence. Value for free farms is in line with the culture of the Dagombas that frowns on indebtedness, as reflected in the saying that *san diri ka yaa* (the debtor has no strength). Because smallholders considered it a

sign of weakness to owe, they preferred to organize factors of production outside the domain of markets, which reinforced their autonomy.

6.3.2 Output markets

Figure 6.3 presents the cumulative percent of total output of various crops that smallholders marketed over six months after harvest. The figure shows that smallholders marketed their surplus farm produce bit by bit after harvest. The proportion of produce sold by smallholders and the time of sale after harvest varied with the type of crop. Maize, millet, sorghum and cassava were the least (less than 40%) smallholders sold by proportion of total output 6 months after harvest of 2011[15]. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed that these were the main staple foods and, hence, a greater proportion of output was used for subsistence. Yams and beans were used for both subsistence and for income and, hence, a little more (about 60%) of the total output was sold. Almost all the output for rice, soybean and groundnuts were sold because they were not staple foods in the study communities.

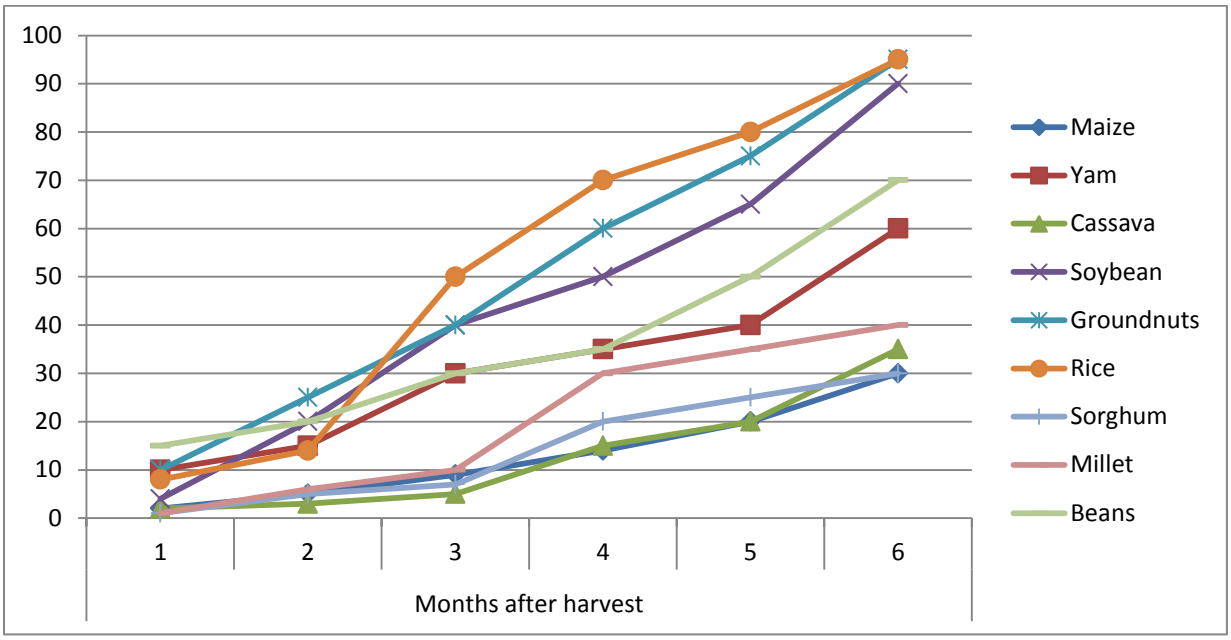

Figure 6.3 Cummulative percent of total output sold by crop up to 6 months after harvest

Source: author's representation based on field interviews (2012)

Smallholders sold farm produce only when they needed money because they anticipated prices to increase with time after the harvest season. This was especially so in the study region where there was only one farming season because of the unimodal rainfall pattern. One of the

[15] Interviews were conducted in August 2012

smallholders explained that:

> I only sell when I need money. So I always make sure there is a place to keep my farm produce. When you sell later, you get a better price. Every market day, there is a different price for the food items. Sometimes they reduce, sometimes they increase, and sometimes they stay the same. But when no one is harvesting anymore, the prices keep rising. Why will I sell now if I am not pressed for money? And when I need money and the food items are there, I know what to do. When a trader knows you have something to sell she gives you the money when you ask for it (field interviews 2012).

The quote above demonstrates the attitude of smallholders towards the output market: piecemeal. They engaged with the market only when it was necessary and a bit at a time, just to satisfy the particular need, until they thought food prices were at their peak which was usually in the lean season when the majority did not have farm produce in their barns any longer. The quote also suggests some confidence about the conversion of food commodities to cash when needed and deliberate effort to profit from inter-temporal price arbitrage (Stephens and Barrett 2011). The piecemeal approach to the market allowed smallholders to engage with the output market in flexible ways that enabled them to get maximum benefits from their surplus food produce. It was a common practice that smallholders would crack groundnuts each time they needed money and they helped each other out in this whilst they rested and talked after work on their farms (see figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4 Smallholders helping each other out in cracking groundnuts for the market day

Source: Photographs by the author

This flexible relationship with the market reinforced the autonomy of smallholders. The findings here deviate from what was observed among maize farmers in Kenya where the majority sold their maize in the harvest season at low prices and bought maize back in the lean season for higher prices (Stephens and Barrett 2011). A possible explanation for this deviation is that the smallholders in our study had access to off-farm sources of income which they could rely on and, thus, keep their farm produce for better prices later. Smallholders also had storage facilities for their various farm produce. Besides, smallholders had confidence they could sell their surplus farm produce whenever they decided because of the numerous market channels that were available to them. The variety of crops smallholders cultivated enabled them to sell only those that were not for subsistence (eg. groundnuts) and keep the others like maize to serve subsistence needs.

Market channels used by smallholders for their surplus farm produce

Smallholders marketed their surplus farm produce through local food traders, consumers (individual and institutional), periodic markets and processors. The flow of farm produce from smallholders until it reached final consumers is presented schematically in figure 6.5. The one-directional arrows indicate one way movement of food items while the two-directional arrows indicate movement of food items in both directions. Figure 6.5 indicates that smallholders sold surplus food produce (eg. paddy rice) to both food traders and processors, but some smallholders also took their farm produce to periodic markets in Kumbungu and Tamale. Smallholders took their surplus farm produce to the market themselves if they needed to use the money to buy something from the market on the particular market day[16]. If farmers needed money for other things then they relied on local food traders who lived in the same community with them. The two-directional arrows between processors and periodic markets means that food processors (usually rice processors) bought paddy from the periodic markets but also sold the milled rice grain in the periodic market. The same two-directional relationship existed between local food traders and the processors: processors bought paddy from local food traders and sold milled rice grain back to the food traders. Some of the food traders would buy paddy from farmers, parboil it, dry and mill it before selling. Figure 6.6 shows parboiling and drying of paddy rice before milling.

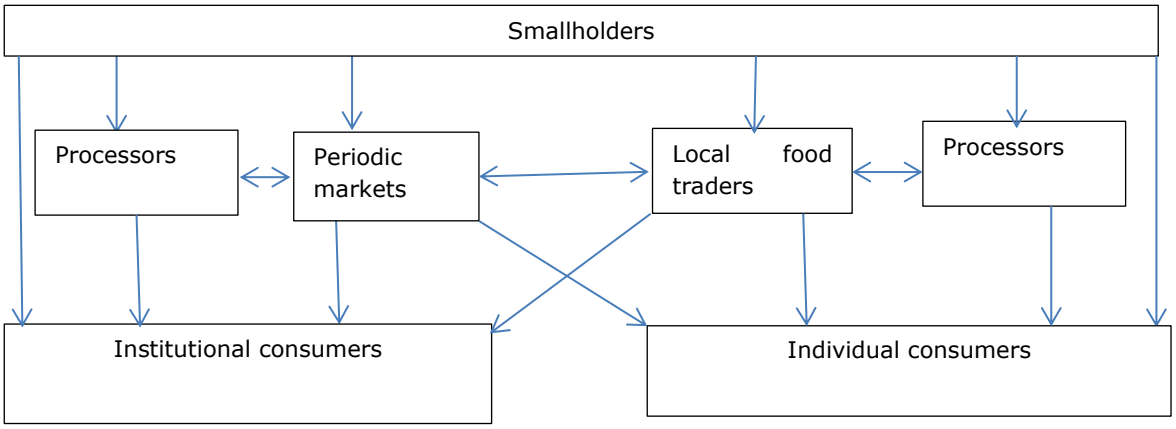

Figure 6.5 Schematic representation of flow of surplus farm produce from through the market channels

Source: author´s representation

[16] Market days come every six days

Figure 6.6 Parboiling and drying of paddy before milling

Source: Photographs by the author

Local food traders were the most important market channel for the surplus produce of smallholders compared to the other market channels (see table 6.3). All respondents in the study said they often sold their surplus farm produce to local food traders. This was true for both rural and urban smallholders. All the respondents in the rural and peri-urban communities said they often sold their farm produce to local food traders. As much as 67% of urban smallholders often sold their surplus farm produce to food traders. There were instances where smallholders carried food items to the market and to specific food traders in the market. These findings are in line with the findings of a study among smallholders of four southern African countries which revealed that irrespective of their relative market access, food traders remained the most important market channel smallholders used (Sitko and Jayne 2014). A specific case study of Zambian farmers also revealed that assembly traders were the most frequently utilized market channel for farmers in more remote villages and the second most important channel for those in more accessible villages (Sitko and Jayne 2014).

Table 6.3 Smallholders' surplus food sales by market channel and locality

Market channel	Percent*			
	Total (n=23)	Rural (n=9)	Peri-urban (n=8)	Urban(n=6)
Market	57	56	63	50
Trader	91	100	100	67
Processor	13	33	0	0
Individual consumer	13	11	0	0
Institutional consumer	17	0	13	50

* Do not add up to 100 due to multiple responses

Source: field interviews, 2012

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the smallholders revealed that they sold their surplus farm produce to local food traders as a deliberate marketing strategy, which contradicts the popular rhetoric that food traders, often referred to as middlemen, exploit farmers due to lack of market access. Farmers advanced several reasons in support of their preference for food traders. One, food traders, especially those who buy food at the village level (sub-collectors), were always available to purchase surplus farm produce from farmers and, thus, saved them from the need to look for buyers. This was especially so because farmers sold in smaller quantities and so the cost of transporting and time of travel often did not commensurate the additional gains that could be made from carrying the produce to the market. Besides, the food traders were better able to organize transportation from the rural areas to the urban market due to returns to economies of scale.

Two, most sub-collectors lived in the same community with the farmers and, therefore, had inter-personal relationships with farmers which went a long way to develop trust between the trading parties. This inter-personal relationship and the associated trust enabled farmers to access advance payments for their farm produce and later hand in the produce. It was a normal practice for smallholders to send children to a food trader to collect money for a quantity of farm produce to be delivered the following day or the next market day, thus helping resolve liquidity problems of smallholders. Food traders were also important in the marketing activities of urban and peri-urban smallholders as indicated in table 6.3. One of the urban smallholders who sold vegetables to a woman trader explained that:

The market is the place for women. That is their work. They have the links and they know how to sell. If I take

the vegetables to the market and I don't sell what will I do with it? Besides, she comes here to harvest the vegetables herself after we have agreed on the price. So I don't have to worry about the harvesting and the selling. I just concentrate on my work (field interviews, 2013).

The relationship smallholders had with local food traders offered them flexibility and also took away the risk associated with market insecurity. This coupled with the fact that they were able to get money from these traders on a need basis gave farmers a level of flexibility which reinforced their autonomy.

Three, the trust relationships also enabled smallholders to get support from food traders to invest in their farms during the farming season when some farmers had sold all their farm produce but still needed money to farm. This support was usually in the form of seed, support to pay for tractor services or hire a few more hands to help in weeding. Terms for such support depended on the specific relationship between the farmer and the trader but also the type of support. If a farmer collected seed directly from a trader, he replaced it in two fold after harvest. So for a bag of groundnuts, the farmer paid two bags after harvest. If the farmer collected money, they agreed on the terms of payment which could be that the trader redeemed the money as crop produce after harvest.

6.4 Role of off-farm income sources

Smallholders engaged in various off-farm activities as additional sources of income (see figure 6.7). Table 6.4 presents the percentage of smallholders engaged in the various off-farm income sources by locality. Livestock was the most important source of off-farm income by smallholders. Almost 60% of all the farmers kept livestock and close to 80% of rural smallholders were involved with livestock rearing. Livestock rearing was, however, less pronounced among urban farmers (less than 20%). Livestock expanded the resource base of smallholders since they relied on them to invest in their farms when necessary. When smallholders had excess income, they bought and kept livestock as an investment for the future. These ranged from fowls, guinea fowls, sheep, goats or cattle depending on how much money was available for investment. Livestock was considered an important investment as it had the potential to multiply and make a farmer rich. Assets in livestock ensured farmers were able to cope with difficult periods resulting from poor yields due to poor rainfall patterns. Services were the second most important source of off-farm income among the smallholders.

Its importance was more pronounced in urban compared to rural communities. These services included bullocks for ploughing and transporting farm produce, de-husking and shelling of maize, barbering, as well as salary work like serving as night watchmen in urban and peri-urban areas. Smallholders also engaged in small-scale agro-processing like rice processing, shea butter processing and groundnut oil extraction (see table 6.4). Some smallholders also produced handicrafts like robes and baskets to sell as additional income sources. Income from the off-farm activities allowed farmers to keep their farm produce until they could get good prices for them, giving them the flexibility needed in their relations with the output market (Bellwood-Howard 2014) that enhanced their autonomy. Figure 6.7 shows scenes of various off-farm income generating activities that smallholders engaged in.

Figure 6.7 Scenes of some off-farm income generating activities that smallholders engaged in

Source: Photographs by the author

Table 6.4 Off-farm income sources of smallholders by locality

Income source	Per cent* (n=23)			
	Total(n=23)	Rural (n=9)	peri-urban (n=8)	urban (n=6)
Livestock	57	78	63	17
Food trading	17	33	13	0
Services	22	11	25	33
Agro-processing	9	22	0	0
Charcoal burning	4	11	0	0
Making jute robes	17	33	13	0

*Do not add up to 100 due to multiple responses

Source: field interviews 2012

6.5 Cultural issues in the relationship of smallholders with markets

Maize purchases were culturally abhorred by smallholders. Maize is the staple food among the Dagombas[17] and it was the responsibility of the household head to provide maize for subsistence needs of the household. Sorghum, millet and cassava were also used for subsistence but only supplemented maize. Millet and sorghum were typically used for *koko* (porridge) as breakfast and only used for TZ[18] (*Tuo Zaafi*) when no maize was available. Cassava supplemented maize in the preparation of TZ to improve the consistency of the TZ. Cassava was used alone to prepare TZ only when maize was not available, which farmers said was a sign of lack in the household. Smallholders in a focus group described how the pride of a man was damaged if he could not feed his household with maize from his own farm. One of the smallholders presented it as follows:

Dan di ku bahi gmani kambong lana (The man who buys to eat cannot be compared to the one who eats from his own barns). A lot of misfortunes may befall a man, but the worst is that he cannot feed his household. The first sign of poverty is when you cannot feed your family with maize from your own farm. Because you have to buy maize, and where is the money going to come from? If you can feed your household from your own harvest, it

[17] The dominant ethnic group in the northern region of Ghana

[18] Maize meal which is the main staple dish among the Dagombas

means you save your assets and you know that you are a successful farmer (field interviews, 2012).

Thus, whenever possible, smallholders preferred to feed from their own barns. As a result, staple foodstuff like maize, sorghum and cassava were often kept in storage until the next harvest was in sight. Only emergency expenses like hospital bills and funerals warranted the sale of maize from the farm of the household head. This reflects a cultural dimension of subsistence among the Dagombas which Bellwood-Howard (2014) also observed:

It is the traditional responsibility of the Dagomba household head to feed his family, and several respondents described the pride they felt if able to use their own maize do so for much of the year. This could be seen as expressing the cultural meaning of subsistence, but risk avoidance is another contributing factor (21).

The risk dimension suggested by Bellwood-Howard (2014) in the above quote is understandable since smallholders practised farming first and foremost as a source of livelihood. Farming maize is increasingly becoming expensive because of decreasing soil fertility and the fact that maize is more nutrient hungry and water responsive compared to other crops like soybean, groundnuts and beans (Bellwood-Howard 2014). Maize is more expensive to cultivate because of the need to apply fertilizer and the fact that poor rainfall may affect maize yields greatly. One would, therefore, expect farmers to shift from maize cultivation to the cultivation of other crops like groundnuts and soybean so they could buy maize from the sale of those crops. This, however, was not the case: smallholders kept their maize farms to provide their subsistence needs, confirming their resolve to eat from their own barns. Similar behaviour was also observed among smallholders in Mexico (Eakin et al. 2014). Most respondents interviewed by Bellwood-Howard (2014) also said they would sell maize only if some remained at the end of the year. Smallholders likened selling maize to selling a pregnant goat which could only be due to *pregnant* issues. Pregnant issues were those that demanded immediate attention like hospital bills, funerals, outdooring, and children's school fees. A popular saying in Dagbanli said it all: *A yi ti nya bubagli daani, yel'bagli mbe yigna* (any time you see a pregnant goat in the market, it means there is a pregnant issue waiting at home).

This cultural dimension of subsistence leads to selectivity among smallholders regarding which crop produce goes to the market and which ones do not, based on the importance of satisfying household subsistence needs.

6.6 Lessons for the Ghana school feeding programme

The public funding and private administration of procurement activities under the Ghana school feeding programme make it a special case in terms of its implementation. In the Ghana school feeding programme, private caterers are engaged to procure, cook and serve food to school children. As observed by De Carvalho et al. (2011):

> The GSFP's procurement is highly decentralized and engages with the private sector to a large degree; it gives contracts to caterers to procure, prepare, and serve food to students in beneficiary schools. While the model instructs caterers to procure from the schools' communities, and source from the district and national levels only when food items are not available, in practice caterers are sourcing the large majority of food from the market regardless of local availability. Caterers are advised to procure 80% of foodstuffs from local farmers, but this rule has not been enforced (12).

Asked what he thought about the linkage between the GSFP and smallholder agriculture, a civil society practitioner involved with the GSFP explained:

> A major concern also has to do with the fact that 80%, per the document, of the food items per community were supposed to be procured within the local community. Unfortunately, there have never been, I will say, we have done the research. Send-Ghana conducted research into the complementary services. SNV and ACDEP collaborated, these are all our partners. They also conducted and the agricultural aspect, to tell you the truth, the linkage is not there, the linkage is not there (field interviews 2011).

Local food traders are considered to be competing with private caterers hired by the GSFP for the farm produce of smallholders. This was noted by an official of the GSFP:

> ...the market queens, the middlemen, they compete with our caterers… and they have been able to... the middlemen and the market queens have excellent traditional relations with the community members. We have realized that most of the farm produce in the communities is sold to these people and these people will again resell it to our caterers at higher prices (field interviews, 2011).

An analysis of the market relations of smallholders revealed that smallholders relate with markets in ways that reinforce their autonomy. This was true for both input and output markets. At the output side, relationship with local food traders who were accessible to farmers almost at all times enabled smallholders to dispose of their surplus produce anytime they needed money. The extent to which the school feeding market becomes available to smallholders depends entirely on the school food caterers involved. Thus, even though the

school feeding market may sound like an institutional market, in practice, it operated more as an individual buyer in the market. While this fulfilled the principle of strategic procurement (Espejo et al. 2009) through elimination of bureaucratic tendering procedures, it gave power to private caterers who did not necessarily have interest in buying from smallholders. School food caterers need to be able to make their purchases of food flexible to match the piecemeal sales habits of smallholders, which makes local food traders living in communities with the smallholders all the more important in the efforts to link school feeding to smallholder agriculture. Also, the fact that some of these farmers were also food traders could be the starting point of organizing farmers to access the school feeding market. This suggestion is not in isolation since it took such innovative and risk-taking farmers in California to push for connection with school food markets by acting as both suppliers and local brokers to consolidate products from other farmers and deliver them to school districts (Feenstra and Ohmart 2012).

At the input side, smallholders generally organized factors of production outside of markets to ensure free farms. Nonetheless, smallholders took advantage of new opportunities to improve their incomes, as well as to diversify their income sources if they found the conditions good. An example was the involvement of smallholders in out-grower schemes that provided input credit for them to produce crops and also bought the farm produce from them. These arrangements were noted to have the potential of inducing investment response from smallholders. As explained by an official of a civil society organization working with farmers to access the school feeding market:

> Because if you go to them they tell you that inputs is something they don't have to expand or cultivate the high yields. They tell you that they don't have credit facilities, do you see? So we have started making groups. IFDC[19] is one organisation amongst us that has started mobilizing them into farmer associations. And we have told them that the school feeding serves as a market to whatever you are producing, so don't think that if you produce you won't get market; you have a ready market for your crops when you come into association and you produce. You also take advantage of this mechanized farming system or is it block farming other partners have started (field interviews, 2011).

Thus, farmer groups were seen as one way of strengthening the front of smallholders to be able to access the school feeding market. The fact that some smallholders also traded in foodstuff as additional sources of income presents an opportunity to link farmers with the

[19] International Fertilizer Development Centre, working with farmer groups to link them to the Ghana school feeding programme.

school feeding market. Linking the private school food caterers to these "farmer-traders" will not only ensure supply of food to schools but also serve as an opportunity to organize and build the capacity of farmers to access other markets, as seen in the efforts made by NGOs in the quote above.

6.7 Conclusion

Home-grown school feeding is based on the notion that synergies can be created between school feeding and local agricultural development through the procurement of food from smallholders (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). For this reason, creating an enabling environment for smallholders to access the school feeding market and to participate in tendering while arranging distribution channels for their products has, therefore, been framed as an important task of such programmes (Otsuki 2011). The mechanism by which procurement of food from smallholders impacts on local agricultural development has been explained in terms of price movements (Ahmed and Sharma 2004), strategic procurement (Espejo et al. 2009), and structured demand (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011). However, empirical evidence in this chapter suggests that these mechanisms do not resonate with the organising practices of smallholders, who related with both input and output markets in flexible ways that allowed them to control their engagements with the market to their benefit. At the input side, smallholders, as much as possible, mobilized factors of production outside the domain of markets to ensure free farms, a condition necessary for smallholder autonomy (van der Ploeg 2008), which effectively embeds smallholder input mobilization in culture. Thus input mobilization is, therefore, not amenable to demand and supply forces and prices of such inputs and potential prices of outputs to be produced by the inputs cannot dictate production levels, as suggested by planners of home-grown school feeding programmes guided by value chain principles.

At the output side, smallholders adopted a piecemeal approach to marketing of surplus farm produce which ensured they profited from inter-temporal price arbitrage (Stephens and Barrett 2011) whenever they could. Relationships smallholders had with local food traders also offered flexibility in the marketing of their farm produce, allowing them to convert farm produce to cash anytime they needed money. This flexibility, coupled with good relationships with local food traders, reinforced the autonomy of smallholders and embedded their market relationships in socio-cultural relationships (Block 1990; Granovetter 1985, 2005). As part of

expanding and diversifying their sources of income, smallholders invested in livestock, as well as engaged in other off-farm sources of income which made it possible for them to keep their farm produce until they could get good prices for it. This also enabled farmers to keep staple foodstuffs like maize long enough to fulfill their subsistence needs. These findings corroborate earlier observations that smallholder endowments, including livestock, impact positively on their market participation through enhanced ability to produce and take advantage of new market opportunities, enabling them to escape the semi-subsistence poverty trap (Barrett 2008). The results presented in this chapter also demonstrated that smallholders used markets as part of their efforts to construct and reinforce their autonomy, indicating that markets were more useful to smallholders only if they had some level of control to enable them to use the markets to their advantage (Bellwood-Howard 2014; Mooney 1988). Local food traders provided for smallholders the kind of flexibility needed because of their presence in the same communities with smallholders and the long standing relationships they had with smallholders, which both enabled and constrained their market engagements (Granovetter 1985, 2005).

7. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the thesis presented in the empirical chapters and speaks to the central objective of explaining how the activities of actors in the Ghana school feeding programme are embedded in socio-cultural relationships and how the embedded relationships enable, as well as constrain, efforts to link smallholders and the Ghana school feeding market. While the primary objective of any school feeding programme is first and foremost to provide adequate and nutritious food to school children, efforts at employing the power of procurement under home-grown school feeding to benefit local agricultural development have been considered as 'win-win' in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The value chain approach adopted to achieve this win-win objective is based on neoclassical economic theories which assume smallholders are rational actors and make decisions based on self-interest and prices alone. This assumption ignores the socio-cultural relationships that anchor the everyday activities and experiences of the actors involved in the implementation of the programme. These socio-cultural relationships have mediated negotiations among the school food actors to produce a disconnect between the programme and smallholders that were envisaged by programme planners to benefit from the school feeding market. This disconnect has resulted in outcomes that are entirely different from those envisaged by programme planners, who are of the view that 'the farmers are not yet playing ball' (Eenhoorn 2007, 53), a suggestion that farmers have not yet responded to the supposed market opportunity provided by the programme.

This thesis has sought to explain how the school feeding system in Ghana works by focusing on the actors at the school and community level. I have used the concept of embeddedness to capture the socio-cultural aspects of the activities and experiences of school food actors that enabled and also constrained their actions. I argue that farmers (as well as the other school food actors) are indeed playing ball; only it is a different ball game that needs to be understood from an embeddedness perspective. This concluding chapter does three things.

First, it presents the conclusions of the study by answering the specific research questions that guided the study. Secondly, it discusses the socio-cultural aspects of the activities and experiences of school food actors and how they enabled as well as constrained their actions, and also explains why the Ghana school feeding programme did not work out as planned. Thirdly, it reflects on the theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis to the debate on home-grown school feeding as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

7.2 Conclusions – answering the specific research questions

The general research question that underpinned the study was how the activities and experiences of actors in the Ghana school feeding programme were embedded in socio-cultural relationships and how the embedded relationships enabled as well as constrained efforts to link smallholders and the Ghana school feeding market. Four specific research questions were formulated to help answer the main research question, each focusing on one of the actor groups of interest (see section 1.2). These specific research questions were the focus of the four empirical chapters of the thesis (chapters 3 to 6). While each of the empirical chapters addressed the general research question in part through the respective specific research questions, this section seeks to state the major conclusions from the study by answering the specific research questions that guided the study.

1. *What are the perspectives of school level governance actors about the Ghana school feeding programme and how are such perspectives embedded in historical and contemporary developments of school feeding in Ghana?*

Chapter Three of this thesis captured the perspectives of school level governance actors on the Ghana school feeding programme under child welfare and local agricultural development. Under child welfare, the school level governance actors underscored the importance of the programme in alleviating hunger among school children and improving school enrolment and attendance, which coincides with the nutrition and education outcomes of conventional school feeding programmes (Ahmed and Sharma 2004; Morgan and Sonnino 2008). The school level governance actors also noted that not matching educational facilities and funds for feeding with increasing enrolment figures was a major challenge which needed to be addressed. Under local agricultural development, the school level governance actors were of the opinion that the programme did not provide a market for the surplus farm produce of farmers in their

communities because caterers did not buy their foodstuff within the school feeding communities. School Implementation Committee members did not see the need to enforce or even monitor the local procurement directive, since they were not involved in the food procurement. The respondents were, however, happy that school food caterers managed to keep feeding the school children in the face of delayed payments.

While these perspectives resonated with historical practices in school feeding and the financial challenges confronting the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme, the same could not be said about efforts to link the Ghana school feeding programme to local agricultural development. The dominant practice of school feeding in the history of Ghana was focused on feeding children from food aid and was implemented by external agencies like the World Food Programme and the Catholic Relief Services. There were no conscious efforts in the past to link school feeding to local agricultural development through procurement. The dissonance between the perspectives of the school level governance actors and the local food procurement objective of the Ghana school feeding programme impacted negatively on the motivations of the governance actors at the school level to enforce local food procurement. It is important to link the programme to local agricultural development.

2 *How do school food caterers procure food for the school feeding programme in Ghana and what local economic and socio-cultural relationships enable as well as constrain their procurement practices?*

The case studies in Chapter Four revealed that the twin challenges of tight school feeding budgets and delayed payments to school food caterers had both disembedding and embedding effects on the procurement practices of the caterers under the Ghana school feeding programme. The disembedding effects were captured as "first things first", indicating the focus of the caterers on feeding school children as a priority. Under the circumstances, local food procurement was not considered unless such procurement was the cheapest and most convenient option available to the caterers. In the marketness-embeddedness continuum of Block (1990), the "first things first" procurement practice coincided with the marketness end of the continuum because price consideration was higher than any other. The case studies also revealed that remuneration of caterers for their work came from the savings they made on the school food budget after feeding the school children: the higher the savings, the better their remuneration. On the complementary continuum of economic instrumentalism-embeddedness, which describes the motivations of economic actors for entering into

economic transactions, the fact that school food caterers benefited personally from savings made on the school feeding budget made their motivations for procurement more economically instrumental than embedded.

The embedding effects were captured under the role social relationships played in the procurement activities of the school food caterers in dealing with the challenges of tight food budgets and delayed payments. These relationships were expressed in terms of cooperation, reliability, and trust. Caterers worked with suppliers who could cooperate with them such that when they were not yet paid, they could take food on credit and wait until they were paid before they settled their own debts. Reliability in these social relationships enabled the caterers to get a regular supply of food from their suppliers. Trust meant that caterers dealt with people they were familiar with in their procurement activities. These social relationships ensured that caterers had reliable food supplies to feed the school children in spite of the twin challenges of tight feeding budgets and delayed payments. The procurement activities of the school food caterers were embedded in social relationships in two ways: one, by providing the trust necessary for trade transactions to take place and by discouraging malfeasance that give the trading parties confidence that the other will keep their part of the bargain (Granovetter 1985); and two, by ensuring that procurement activities were not based purely on price but mediated by the on-going social relationships which reflected the different value domains that the actors operated with (Block 1990; Granovetter 1985, 2005; Gudeman 2001). This suggests that the current outcome of the programme in which caterers procure food from local food traders instead of smallholders is a negotiation mediated by both social relationships and economic instrumentalism which cannot be easily planned.

3. *What are the experiences of local food traders with school feeding programmes in Ghana and how are these experiences embedded in local economic and socio-cultural relationships?*

The case studies in Chapter Five of this thesis revealed that the activities of local food traders in Ghana were embedded in social relationships and demonstrated through trust relationships and the effect of social rewards and sanctions (Granovetter 1985, 2005). This meant that relationships of trust were important in the operations of these traders since there were no formal contracts which could be enforced by law (Fafchamps 2004). As a result, social

sanctions and rewards kept the activities of the food traders working by discouraging malfeasance and reinforcing the trust relationships which made trade relationships fluid. The embedded activities of the local food traders perform two important functions that ensure effective local food provisioning. First, sub-collectors bulked small and scattered food surpluses from smallholders into bigger lots for onward transportation to urban market centres. It is, therefore, suggested that school food caterers could link up with these sub-collectors or wholesale collectors who operate in the school feeding communities to be able to exploit this bulking function, in order to bring local food into the school kitchens. Secondly, local food traders made use of inter-channel credit to facilitate their trading activities. Because of long standing relationships with each other and farmers, traders were able to extend and also benefit from credit within the food distribution channel. Given the twin challenges of tight school food budgets and delayed payments, discussed in Chapter Four, the inter-channel credit could support the school food caterers to solve their liquidity problems and get local food into the school kitchens.

4. *What is the nature of the contribution of the school feeding programme in Ghana to the local agricultural economy?*

Chapter Six of this thesis revealed that smallholders in Ghana related with both input and output markets in flexible ways that allowed them to control their engagements with the market and, thus, reinforced their autonomy. At the input side, smallholders, as much as possible, mobilized factors of production outside the domain of markets to ensure free farms, a condition necessary for smallholder autonomy (van der Ploeg 2008). At the output side, smallholders adopted a piecemeal approach to marketing of surplus farm produce which ensured they profited from inter-temporal price arbitrage (Stephens and Barrett 2011). Relationships smallholders had with local food traders also offered flexibility in the marketing of their farm produce, allowing them to convert farm produce to cash anytime they needed money. As part of expanding and diversifying their sources of income, smallholders invested in livestock and also engaged in off-farm income generation activities which made it possible for them to keep their farm produce for much longer periods, enabling them to become their own bosses (Mooney 1988). This thesis also revealed that the cultural meaning of subsistence among smallholders influenced which foodstuffs were marketed and at what time of the year, with the least marketed and kept for longer periods being the staple foods like maize and sorghum which were kept to meet subsistence needs. It is, therefore, argued that smallholders

related with markets as part of their efforts to construct and reinforce autonomy - an indication that markets were more or less useful to smallholders, depending on the level of control they had over such market relationships.

This kind of smallholder relationship with the market does not resonate with the structured demand mechanism (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011) envisaged by the programme designers to link the school feeding market to local smallholders, since it meant less control of the market by smallholders and, thus, jeopardized their autonomy. It is, therefore, suggested that efforts at linking the market of the Ghana school feeding programme to smallholders should take measures that will enhance the autonomy of smallholders by giving them more control over the market relationship. The activities of farmer-traders can also be exploited to get local food into the school kitchens because of their relationship with their colleague farmers and their experience in getting food surplus from smallholders. This suggestion is not in isolation because it took the work of innovative and risk-taking farmers in California to push for connection with school food markets by acting as both suppliers and local brokers to consolidate products from other farmers and deliver them to school districts (Feenstra and Ohmart 2012).

7.3 Putting it all together – a general discussion

This section discusses the findings of the thesis in relation to the general research question that guided the study and will be organised under two sub-sections. The first sub-section discusses the role of socio-cultural relationships in producing the observed outcomes of the Ghana school feeding programme. Specifically, the sub-section describes the nature of the socio-cultural relationships that exist among the school food actors and how such relationships enabled, as well as constrained, local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme. The second sub-section focuses on the dissonance between the assumptions of home-grown school feeding and what really happens in the lives of school food actors. Specifically, the sub-section explains why the Ghana school feeding programme did not work as planned.

7.3.1 Role of socio-cultural relationships in producing school feeding outcomes

In this section I discuss how socio-cultural relationships in the activities of school food actors enabled as well as constrained local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme. I consider school food actors as knowledgeable and capable of processing

information in their environment and taking action in order to cope with life, even under the most extreme form of coercion (Giddens 1987; Long 1989). I showed in Chapter Four how school food caterers as knowledgeable and capable actors dealt with problematic situations of tight school feeding budgets and delays in the release of funds by making use of their socio-cultural networks to get cheaper and more reliable sources of supplies, instead of procuring from smallholders as the programme required. A similar point was made in Chapter Six about how smallholders used their socio-cultural networks to pattern relationships with markets in flexible arrangements that reinforced their autonomy (Mooney 1988; van der Ploeg 2008; van der Ploeg 2014). Chapter Five also showed how social relationships of local food traders enabled them to provide an on-going market for the surplus farm produce of smallholders.

The point I make in this section is that the activities, experiences and motivations of the school food actors in the Ghana school feeding programme discussed in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six are embedded in socio-cultural relationships which enable as well as constrain their activities. These enabling and constraining effects of the socio-cultural relationships are reflected in the organising practices of the school food actors, as they deal with problematic situations in their work.

Tight school feeding budgets and delays in the release of funds to school food caterers made caterers adopt a least cost approach to procurement as well as engage in credit transactions to deal with the problematic situation. School food caterers used their social networks which enabled them to procure on credit, get a regular supply of food and, also, procure in relatively large quantities to enjoy economies of scale. The use of the social networks of caterers meant that they dealt with people they could trust to deliver, so that they would have a regular supply of food and also not be harassed for unpaid debts while they waited to be paid by the government. These social networks were largely based on family and friendship relationships, as we saw in Chapter Four. Trusted family and friendship relationships meant that caterers could rely on them to supply even under unfavourable[20] business conditions. It also meant that caterers continued to do business with their trusted trade partners when conditions were favourable and they could get better business deals somewhere else. Nonetheless, caterers still had room for manoeuvre and used their relationships with school cooks, who were members of the school feeding communities, to get cheaper sources of food supply when they had ready cash. The use of these social networks enabled caterers to procure cheaper food sources

[20] Delayed and uncertain payment schedules

but also constrained efforts at procuring school food from smallholders since their social networks mostly fell outside of the school feeding communities.

The piecemeal approach to the market discussed in Chapter Six gave smallholders flexibility with the market, which reinforced their autonomy but also constrained the practical execution of the notion of structured demand (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011) proposed as one of the mechanisms of change under home-grown school feeding. The notion of structured demand required that smallholders produced and sold their produce according to the demand of the programme but farmers produced and sold their produce according to their own needs. The selling on a need basis meant that only a small quantity of produce was sold by a farmer at a time, which did not favour the procurement arrangements by the school food caterers. The long standing and trusted relationships that existed between smallholders and local food traders enabled the working of this piecemeal approach to the market. The farmers trusted the food traders, who were handy in terms of market for their farm produce because of social relationships and their continuous presence in the farming communities (see Chapter Six). These relationships gave smallholders the confidence that they could get money for their surplus farm produce anytime they needed it. The social relationships between food traders and smallholders also made it possible for traders to advance money to smallholders when they needed it. Because the school food caterers did not come from the school feeding communities, they did not have good relationships with the smallholders, which would facilitate the trust relationships that existed between the local food traders and the smallholders (Granovetter 1985).

While the organising practices of both farmers and school food caterers constrained local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme, those of local food traders played a more enabling role to connect both school food caterers and smallholders. It was, therefore, not surprising that both school food caterers and smallholders dealt with local food traders as part of their manoeuvres to deal with their problematic situations (Long 1997, 2001). This thesis, therefore, suggests that the organising practices of local food traders resonate with the local food procurement objectives of the Ghana school feeding programme, since they already connected smallholders with markets. This was especially the case for sub-collectors (see Chapter Five) who bought small quantities of food from smallholders for bulk resale to wholesale collectors and represented a major opportunity to get surplus farm produce of smallholders to the school kitchens. An example is found in the case study of the rural caterer

in Chapter Four, who bought local rice from the school feeding community through a local food trader (see box 4.1). Reference has also been made in this thesis to suggestions by people from both civil society and government about the need for intermediaries between smallholders and caterers in order to get the produce of smallholders into school kitchens. Quaye et al. (2010), for example, found in a survey of the Ghana school feeding programme in four districts that the only time the school feeding market was accessible to smallholders and made an impact on their lives was through an intermediary, ICOUR[21].

I showed in Chapter Two that historical developments of school feeding had the potential to influence perspectives regarding what the objectives of school feeding should be. The focus on nutrition and education objectives of school feeding historically affected actors' perspectives on school food procurement: it does not matter where the food comes from, as long as the school children are well-fed. In sub-section 4.4.1 of Chapter Four, I made the point that school food caterers were of the opinion that their mandate was to feed school children, in spite of the fact that they were required to procure from smallholders and hence the title of the sub-section, "first things first". Of course, we cannot assume that stimulating local agriculture through local procurement should take precedence over providing adequate, safe and nutritious food to school children. However, a positive perspective regarding local food procurement will motivate actors to act in favour of local food procurement if the opportunity avails itself. Thus, the "first things first" attitude prevented school food caterers from making any effort towards local food procurement as demonstrated in Chapter Four. Sulemana (2009) described this situation as an interface between programme priorities and individual profit motives. Similar points have been made in this respect by Punt (2009) and Quaye (2012, 108) who, for example, notes:

> ...it is apparent that the way the caterers view their roles in the GSFP contributes to the limited involvement of local farmers. Although most caterers are aware of the poverty reduction objective of the programme, they see themselves solely as food providers for the school children rather than partners responsible for achieving GSFP-smallholder farmers' linkages. Consequently, caterers look for the most economic and efficient way to provide the meals, with the practical benefits of buying food from the market and suppliers largely explaining the way food is purchased.

[21] Irrigation Company Upper Region Limited provides rice farmers who are members of nucleus out-growers farming scheme with credit and assistance in the form of production inputs from the Agricultural Development Bank. The project provided a guaranteed market for rice farmers' produce. Rice purchased by ICOUR was then sold to GSFP food contractors/suppliers, thus linking local rice supply to the demand created by the GSFP (Quaye et al. 2010, 436)

The “first things first” perspective was shared by other actors in the programme as well. Teachers and parents who were members of PTAs/SMCs/SIC were more concerned about whether children were fed or not and, also, about the quality and quantity of the food provided. For this reason these actor groups who were supposed to play a monitoring role on the school feeding at the school level were more concerned about actual feeding than about food procurement. I refer to an earlier point that I made in Chapter Four that school teachers were more concerned about the feeding of children on a regular basis with adequate and nutritious food than the origin of the food. Because of this perspective, their monitoring role was limited to ensuring adequate and quality food for the school children.

Also, SIC members who were parents showed interest in being involved in food procurement since it would allow them to participate in deciding what their children ate in school, but that was how far it went. No further effort was made to contact school food caterers to explore the possibility of selling food to them. An explanation for this can be seen in Chapters Five and Six where local food traders provided the needed market for the surplus produce of smallholders and were even able to give them money in advance to solve urgent issues when it was necessary. Thus, the smallholders did not see the school feeding programme as an alternative market for their farm produce, which corroborates the findings of Izumi, Wright, et al. (2010b) that farm-to-school programmes constitute a very small per cent of total sales of participating farmers. The authors concluded that social benefits and market diversification were the main reasons the farmers participated in the farm-to-school programmes. This buttresses the fact that local procurement under home-grown school feeding requires more than economic considerations on the part of the actors involved: actors need to be committed to the ideals that underlie the concept of local food procurement to benefit local agriculture and the economy as a whole, including social benefits (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010b).

In summary, the organising practices of actors in the Ghana school feeding programme were embedded in socio-cultural relationships which enabled, as well as constrained, their activities which, in turn, affected the realization of the local food procurement objective of the Ghana school feeding programme. This thesis has shown that smallholders made use of their socio-cultural networks and related with markets in flexible patterns that reinforced their autonomy, while school food caterers also employed their social networks to ensure cheap, regular and convenient supplies of food for their school kitchens. Local food procurement only happened

where the social networks of smallholders intersected with that of the school food caterers. In spite of the enabling role the activities of local food traders played and could play in bringing local food into school kitchens in the communities studied, they often came into the picture only because of their social relationships with school food caterers. Thus, local food traders brought local food into school kitchens. However, they are not recognized by the programme designers because their activities are seen in a negative light in terms of the objectives of the programme, when, in fact, they are doing exactly what the programme sets out to do. Thus, the outcome of the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme in which food is largely procured outside the school feeding communities, instead of within the school feeding communities, is the result of the negotiation between conflicting interests and socio-cultural relationships of the school food actors involved. The outcomes of such negotiations are uncertain and cannot easily be planned ahead of time, which is the reason Rondinelli (1993) wants us to see such interventions as social experiments.

7.3.2 Dissonance between food procurement model of Ghana school feeding programme and activities of school food actors

Food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme is decentralized and outsourced making it a publicly funded but privately administered programme (Izumi, Wright, et al. 2010a). Local food traders, who are private actors, play an important role in local food provisioning by moving food from points of production to points of consumption. Food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme did not follow strict tendering procedures and school food caterers procured food from individual farmers, traders or from the open market. In the home-grown school feeding literature, decentralization of food procurement has been considered strategic since it removes tendering requirements that smallholders usually would otherwise find difficult to meet and so could boost local food production through procurement in the community (Espejo et al. 2009). Food procurement at the school level under the Ghana school feeding programme meant that supplies were relatively small and, therefore, could be handled by smallholders or groups of smallholders. The idea was that procurement for a single school would be significantly smaller compared to that for a number of schools handled at the district level or the national level. The decentralized procurement was also to put power in the hands of school level actors who would act to bring local food into school kitchens (Morgan and Sonnino 2008).

However, the fact that school food caterers were private actors and worked on a contract basis brought on board different dynamics regarding local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme. Outsourcing of food procurement to private caterers required school food caterers to pre-finance the programme when government funding was not forthcoming, as noted in Chapter Four, where most of the time caterers fed children with their own money in expectation of re-imbursement from the district assembly which was often delayed in coming. While this arrangement enabled the smooth running of the programme in the face of irregular release of funds from government, it did not resonate with the local food procurement objectives of the programme. The pre-financing and irregular flow of funds from government made caterers often cash strapped and they entered into credit relationships with local food traders who had the financial muscle to supply them on credit and wait until they received money from the district assembly. In instances where caterers procured food from local farmers, they often did so with cash because the majority of farmers sold their food items on a cash basis (Chapter Six). Besides, school food caterers did not come from the school feeding communities and, thus, were not socially connected with the farmers to be able to get credit from them. Thus, the school food caterers preferred to work with local food traders in spite of the popular assumptions that they give both farmers and consumers a raw deal.

The irregular release of funds to the caterers, coupled with the autonomy caterers enjoyed also made the work of school level governance structures, established under the programme to oversee the activities of the caterers and the overall implementation of the programme at the school level, difficult. Governance actors at the school level who were to monitor the implementation of the programme tended to focus on feeding the children and not on local food procurement, making it difficult to enforce the government's directive that school food caterers should procure food from local farmers (De Carvalho et al. 2011).

Outsourcing of food procurement to private caterers and the operation of the caterers on a contract basis produced conflicting motivations regarding food procurement among the programme actors. Government and its local actors had an objective to employ the power of purchase of school food to stimulate smallholder agriculture and, hence, the objective to procure locally and thus locate procurement activities more towards the embeddedness dimension of Block's embeddedness-marketness continuum (Block 1990). Under the circumstance, motivations for school food purchases would be more concerned about support for smallholders rather than economic instrumentalism (Block 1990). However, the private

caterers wanted to be able to make a profit to compensate for their services after feeding the children, which disembedded their procurement activities from the notion of support for farmers. This conflict between public interest and private interest is not an easy one to solve. As noted in the concluding section of Chapter Four, local food procurement, especially directly from farmers, required extra effort such that only those who had some level of concern for farmers or the local food system would make such extra effort. In other words, buying locally grown food was "more than a business decision" (Izumi, Alaimo, et al. 2010, 89). This was demonstrated in Chapter Four where school food caterers only procured locally if the price was cheaper compared to procuring elsewhere. Thus, a major challenge to local food procurement under the Ghana school feeding programme is conflicting motivations between government, who is providing the funding, and the private school food caterers who are in charge of food procurement.

Programme planners also envisaged community participation and ownership as part of ensuring the sustainability of the programme. However, findings presented in Chapter Four, indicate that community participation in the programme was almost non-existent. Unlike the example of Kenya, which typified the decentralized model (see Chapter One), where community members contributed community level resources to take care of cooking the food whilst they used resources provided by government to procure food items for the programme, outsourcing limited such community participation under the Ghana school feeding programme. In the three case studies presented in Chapter Four, school food caterers handled food procurement, cooking and serving of food. Where cooks were community members they were employees of the caterer who received monthly salaries, as opposed to community volunteers. In two of the cases, caterers bought water, as well as fuel wood and charcoal, to prepare the food. The situation was different in the other case, where students contributed fuel wood and brought water from home for food preparation probably because of experience from the pilot programme that the school enjoyed, which included such community participation measures.

In summary, this thesis argues that the procurement model employed by the Ghana school feeding programme did not resonate with the activities and experiences of actors in the implementation of the programme. The decentralized procurement model gave power to school food caterers who procured locally when there was adequate motivation for them do so. It also removed standard tendering procedures that would otherwise make it difficult or impossible for smallholders to participate. However, outsourcing procurement to school food

caterers had a conflicting effect on local food procurement, despite facilitating smooth running of the programme in the face of the irregular flow of funding from the central government. Private caterers had a profit motive and, therefore, did not make any extra effort to procure locally if such extra effort meant extra cost to the school feeding budget. Therefore, there was a dissonance between the local procurement objective and the decentralized outsourced model of the Ghana school feeding programme which ensured procurement decisions were motivated more by price and self-interest rather than food origin.

7.4 Conclusion − some theoretical and methodological reflections

This concluding section reflects on the theoretical and methodological issues that underpinned the study and their implications for the interpretation of the findings presented. Porter's (1985) analysis of companies' competitive advantage through value chains has been hailed in the industrial sector because the breaking up of companies enables managers to see how the various components perform and how such performance may be optimized. This value chain thinking, coupled with the notion of structured demand (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2011), is the basis for the home-grown school feeding model. Cconceptualising home-grown school feeding as a value chain breaks the school food system down into smaller units, referred to as value activities, in an attempt to simplify a rather complicated system in order to understand which of the activities create value and which do not (Porter 1985). The division of the school food system into separate activities assumes the activities can be performed independently of each other and that the linkages of such value activities can and should be optimised.

An analysis of the Ghana school feeding programme based on this value chain approach means that the school food system is broken up and treated as value activities, which require people, companies or groups that have the competitive advantage in performing those activities to take them up in order to optimize performance and maximize benefits of the value chain as a whole. Thus, private caterers who are contracted by the Ghana school feeding programme are expected to perform wholesale trading, transportation and storage, processing and distribution to schools, and food preparation (see Chapter Four). This way of conceptualising home-grown school feeding is convenient for project planners and school feeding proponents because it allows them to be able to plan school feeding activities and to predict their anticipated outcomes. However, actual outcomes resulting from these value activities often deviate from the predicted outcomes. This deviation is the result of the fact

that the approach largely ignores the effect of context, culture, history and social relationships in producing the outcomes of such interventions.

In order to understand these deviations between actual outcomes and the ones predicted by planners, I have conceptualized home-grown school feeding in this thesis as a problem of embeddedness, which allowed me to take into account the effects of history, culture, context and social relationships. Under the lens of embeddedness, school food activities cannot be treated in isolation in terms of their performance in practice since home-grown school feeding is influenced by culture, context, history and social relationships and their outcomes are determined by negotiations among the school food actors and cannot, therefore, be predicted.

Methodologically, the value chain approach to school feeding focuses on school food activities and how their linkages can be optimized. A framework to link home-grown school feeding to local agricultural development, jointly developed by the World Food Programme and the World Bank, identifies three focus areas, each of which consist of separate activities which need to be performed in order to link home-grown school feeding to local agricultural development (Espejo et al. 2009) and reinforcing the value chain approach to home-grown school feeding. A methodology that focuses on individual activities misses the opportunity to capture the effect of the motivations and experiences of school food actors on the outcomes of school feeding programmes.

The embeddedness approach adopted in this thesis allows for a focus on school food actors, exploring their motivations, interests, and experiences that mediate negotiations among the actors who ultimately produce school food outcomes in practice. The focus on actors recognises that the world of school feeding produces multiple realities made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests, and constituted by ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the school food actors involved (Long and Ploeg 1989). It is this actor-oriented approach to school feeding that gives agency to school food actors and captures the role of history, culture, context and social relationships in producing school feeding outcomes, that enables us to understand the deviations observed between planned outcomes of school feeding and actual outcomes observed in practice.

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Appendix: Models of home-grown school feeding in sub-Saharan Africa

Decentralized model is also referred to as the school based model and schools receive money from the central government to procure food. Food is insourced; no third parties are involved. Intermediaries, who are typically traders, link the schools to food producers. Food may be purchased from both smallholders and large scale farmers; there is no special focus on smallholders. Schools initiate procurement procedures which are based on simple tendering system immediately they receive money from the government. Even though schools handle procurement, the government establishes requirements that suppliers must satisfy to qualify to supply the schools. Food commodities procured through the tendering system are delivered to the schools and food preparation and serving are handled by school authorities and community members. Community members make contributions in cash or in kind in order to ensure that the food delivered to the schools are prepared and served to the children at the school. A school management committee is put in place and tasked with managing the school feeding programme at the school level which includes keeping all records of food procurement transactions. The national school feeding programme in Kenya which is run by the Ministry of Education is a typical example of this model. The school based model devolves all power and responsibility of procuring, cooking and serving food to school authorities and community members which allows for full participation of community members in the programme and thus create a sense of ownership of the programme (Quaye et al. 2010).

The semi-decentralized model is typified by the national school feeding program in Mali. The difference between the decentralized model and the semi-decentralized model is that mayors at the district level are involved in the food procurement process. District mayors contract the suppliers and pay them directly, but food supplies are delivered directly to the schools. Because the district mayors are involved in the procurement process, transactions tend to happen less often than in the school based model and involve larger volumes of food at a time. Money for food procurement is released through the district mayors for food procurement and usually when prices of food items are lowest (Gelli et al. 2012). There is still the school management committee responsible for managing the programme at the school level where food is cooked and served to school children. Oversight at the district level is provided by the Ministry of Education through its decentralized offices. Communities contribute labour for cooking the meals and other ingredients including fresh vegetables that may be needed in cooking the meals.

Centralised model procures food on a national scale. The national school feeding programmes of Ecuador and Botswana are examples of the centralised model of procurement. Gelli et al. (2012) note that school feeding programmes that adopt the centralized model of procurement are often started by international organizations and followed by a transitioning process to national programmes. Food procurement is done by a unit at national level such as a department in a ministry. The government releases funds to its agency responsible for the procurement and the agency the contracts large suppliers who deliver food to districts depots before they are distributed to the schools. Cooking is done at the school level and may involve contracted workers or community members. Programme oversight is usually done through education officers at district level who visit schools and write quarterly monitoring reports.

Integrated farm-to-school model pays special attention to the organization of smallholders around communities in which schools reside. This model is what is adopted by the school feeding programme in Cote d'Ivoire (Gelli et al. 2012). There is an agricultural support component of the programme which provides support and training to smallholders in order for them to be able to increase productivity and progressively meet the school food requirements. The programme identifies alternative sourcing to make up for the deficit in supply of the smallholders until such a time that they are able to supply all the food requirements of the programme. These alternative sources of supply are usually traders with large capacities and they should be certified by law to qualify. At any point in the sourcing, smallholders are the preferred supply source and the deficit is then sourced at the national level through qualified traders. For greater impact on communities, local women groups are encouraged to supply the schools in their communities and such groups therefore benefit from the agricultural support component of the programme. The government provides funds for food procurement as well as to support the agricultural activities of the smallholders especially the women smallholders.

Decentralized Third-party model engages the services of third-parties to procure, cook and serve food to school children. This is also known as the caterer model and is adopted by the Ghana school feeding programme. In this model, food production is done mainly through farmers with no special focus on smallholders (Gelli et al. 2012). Government provides funding to selected service providers on the bases of fixed payment per meal served. Under this model, the contracted service providers may cook food on the school premises or in kitchens outside school premises and transport the food to the school depending on convenience and availability of kitchen facilities of school premises. The third party model offers very little opportunity for community participation in the programme. Caterers receive money from the government and they organize everything from procurement to serving the food. The caterers rely very much on food traders for their supplies. School management committees at the school level and education officers at the district level monitor the programme to ensure quality food for the children.

Summary

The thesis analysed how the activities and experiences of different actor groups involved in the implementation of the home-grown aspects of the Ghana school feeding programme enabled as well as constrained local food procurement that was expected to link the school feeding programme to local agricultural development. While the primary objective of any school feeding programme is first and foremost to provide adequate and nutritious food to school children, efforts at employing the power of procurement under home-grown school feeding to benefit local agricultural development have been considered as 'win-win' in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries like Ghana. The assumptions that underpin these 'win-win' notions of home-grown school feeding, however, ignore the socio-cultural relationships that anchor the everyday activities and experiences of the actors involved in the implementation of the programme. The thesis, therefore, conceptualized home-grown school feeding as a problem of embeddedness and showed how socio-cultural relationships in the activities and experiences of school level governance actors, school food caterers, local food traders and smallholders enabled as well as constrained local food procurement efforts.

The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) began in September 2005 with 10 pilot schools, one in each of the ten administrative regions of the country. The basic concept of the GSFP was to provide each kindergarten and primary school child with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. The explicit objective to use locally-grown foodstuff in the programme was an integral part of the home-grown school feeding initiative by the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of NEPAD which sought to enhance food supply and reduce hunger among African countries. A study by the US Department of Agriculture of four African countries revealed that very little has been achieved in the area of linking school feeding to local agricultural production. Similar studies focused on the Ghana school feeding programme have also revealed low level of success in linking the programme to local agriculture. Thus, in spite of the explicit objective of the Ghana school feeding programme to boost local food production, farmers are yet to be connected to the school feeding market, raising questions of both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, how do the school food actors organise their activities?

Practically, how do these ways of organising impact on the local food procurement efforts of the Ghana school feeding programme? Using an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis, and focussing on four actor groups in the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme, the thesis presents four main findings.

First, the objective of the Ghana school feeding programme to procure food locally in order to boost local agricultural production deviates from the dominant practice of school feeding in the history of Ghana and does not resonate with the experiences of school level governance actors who have a responsibility to oversee the implementation of the programme at the school and community levels. For this reason, the school level governance actors were more concerned about actual feeding of school children rather than the local procurement aspects of the programme.

Second, school food caterers compensated their labour on savings on the school feeding budget which motivated them to concentrate on least cost purchases rather than procuring from local smallholders. Tight school feeding budget and delay in the release of funds to school food caterers made the caterers to rely on their social networks in order to get food on credit as well as get good prizes thereby making economic considerations central in their procurement practices which did not resonate with the objective of providing market for local farmers since procuring from local farmers was not necessarily the cheapest and the most convenient option.

Third, social relationships influenced activities of local food traders through trust relationships and effect on social rewards and sanctions enabling the traders to bulk surplus food produce from smallholders into bigger lots for transport to the cities. The same social relationships enabled traders to extend as well as benefit from inter-channel credit to make for their inability to access formal credit. The activities of the local food traders make them an important channel to get local food into school kitchens since they provide market for the surplus produce of smallholders at the doorstep.

Fourth, the smallholders who were studied related with both input and output markets in flexible ways that allowed them to control their engagements with the market and thus reinforced their autonomy. At the input side, smallholders, as much as possible, mobilized factors of production outside the domain of markets to ensure free farms; a condition necessary for smallholder autonomy. At the output side, smallholders adopted a piecemeal approach to marketing of surplus farm produce which ensured they profited from inter-

temporal price arbitrage. This kind of smallholder relationship with the market does not resonate with the structured demand mechanism envisaged by the programme designers to link the school feeding market to local smallholders since it meant less control of the market by smallholders.

I argue, therefore, that the current outcome of the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme in which there is little connection between the programme and local agricultural production is the result of a negotiation process among the school food actors involved, which is mediated my socio-cultural relationships that anchor the everyday activities and experiences of the actors, making it difficult, if not impossible, to plan the outcome of such interventions.

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About the Author

Nashiru Sulemana was born on the 15th of September 1977 in Bagbani, near Yendi, in the northern region of Ghana. He was among the first batch of students of the Bagbani R/C Primary School which was established in 1983. He attended Abatey Junior Secondary School in Yendi from 1989 to 1992 and proceeded to the Tamale Secondary School for his secondary education from 1993 to 1995. Nashiru Sulemana enrolled in Bagabaga Teacher Training College in Tamale to train as a teacher and obtained a 3 year post-secondary teachers' Certificate 'A' in 1999. Later in the same year he enrolled in the University of Cape Coast to pursue a BSc (Agriculture) degree and graduated in 2003. He did his national service at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension of the same university from 2003 to 2004. He started work with Grameen Ghana, a non-governmental organisation, as a project officer in 2005, a position he held until 2007 when he got a NFP fellowship to pursue a MSc (Management of Agro-ecological Knowledge and Social Change (MAKS), now Development and Rural Innovation (MDR)), and graduated in 2009. He did his thesis with the Rural Development Sociology Group and graduated with minors in Development Economics and Management Studies. In 2010, he started a Sandwich PhD programme with the Rural Sociology Group of Wageningen University. A year into the programme, he got a teaching position in the Department of Agricultural Extension, Rural Development and Gender Studies of the University for Development Studies, a position he holds till date.

Overview of training activities

Nashiru Sulemana

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Advanced Social Theory, RSO 32806	WUR	2010	6
Innovation for sustainability: Bringing theory into practice	TransForum and PE&RC	2010	3
PhD research proposal	WASS	2010	6
Qualitative data analysis: procedures and strategies, YRM 60806	WUR	2010	6
"Linking home-grown school feeding programmes in developing countries to local agriculture: lessons from the activities of local food traders in northern Ghana"	WASS PhD day	2014	1
"Public Food Procurement and Home-Grown School Feeding in Developing Countries: a review"	International conference Agriculture in an urbanizing society, WUR, Wageningen	2012	1
Co-convenor, Working Group Public Food Procurement	International conference Agriculture in an urbanizing society, WUR, Wageningen	2012	1
B) General research related competences			
Scientific publishing	WGS	2011	0.3
Research methodology I: from topic to research proposal	WASS	2010	4
Information literacy PhD including Endnote introduction	WUR library	2011	0.6
Scientific writing	WGS	2010	1.8

Techniques for writing and presenting scientific papers	WGS	2014	1.2
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Competence Assessment	WGS	2010	0.3
Project and time management	WGS	2010	1.5
Total			**33.7**

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

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