

Matooke in Kabarole district, Uganda: a social material analysis.



Msc Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This research analyses the Matooke market in Kabarole district, Uganda through an analysis of actors, networks and materialities. Evidence from the field showed that four different circuits compose the market: 1)the traditional market for local consumption, 2)the traditional local fragment of the regional consumption circuit, 3)the high scale circuit for regional consumption, and 4)the NGO sponsored circuits. As a way to show how these circuits are shaped and differentiated by the interaction of the actors with the materialities and social elements of the context. I base research on constructivist theories that counter both, the notions of markets being homogeneous structures driven by market forces and the perceptions of unorganised and chaotic derived from the label of 'informality' commonly used for local markets. By the use of theories about nested markets as a way to analyse each circuit, it was evident that the two traditional circuits are aligned with the characteristics of nested markets. While on the contrary, the high scale circuit for regional consumption, and the NGO sponsored circuit aim to intentionally avoid these social and material structures as well as the actors of the local setting in search for the accumulation of wealth by the relatively few actors that compose them.

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1. Introduction

This thesis is set against the background of debates about markets and particularly how ‘local’ markets are understood in policy papers as an input in developing policies to restructure and reform these. In many of these policy documents, often with reference to academic papers, markets are discussed and positioned as homogenous and seen as predominantly shaped by market forces and supply and demand. These markets are far more complex than only to be understood from a demand and supply point of view. They involve different material infrastructures, different supply networks, revolve around complex social relationships involving alliances based on friendship and kinship. This is one of the reasons that the notion ‘informal’ which carries the meaning of being ‘unorganised’ and ‘chaotic’. Such views do not only ignore that markets are underpinned by a variety of organisational and alternative economic models or that heterogeneity of markets structures is key to recognise. But also that the views and experiences of those that are involved and give hands and feet to such market are not taken into account in the plans to socially and physically restructure markets. The middlemen, their reputation and role in the organisation of the mark economy are positioned as the bad guys. The result of interferences with markets and the way they are to be reorganised departing from these views do not correspond with specific dynamics of the area (IIED, 2012; Zijlstra, n.d.).

The thesis aims to develop a more nuanced view about local markets. It will do so via a review of the literature, notably those that explore markets from a constructivist point of view. This allows me to make a distinction between markets. I particularly focused my literature review on the relationship between markets and (rural) development. This to explore the various roles markets perform in such processes but the more so to understand how markets are constructed in interaction between social actors (producers, traders, middlemen, consumers, transporters, etc.) and the material environment around them. The latter includes not just geography (distance, climate, etc.) but also policies, laws, means of transport, investment strategies and so on. I specifically developed an interest in the literature that identified nested market as playing a key role in not just the commercialisation of agricultural produce but also in broader processes of rural development and livelihood enhancement. To explore the various markets, I conducted

a field study in the Karbarole district, Uganda of a local market. I decided to focus on the market for matoke as the matoke is culturally and ecologically well embedded in the Ugandan context. It is widely and rather easily grown and consumed and fetches good prices in the market. Matoke marketing is well pictured by an approach that is capable of making a distinction between various markets and in the end compare them on certain key questions and issues. The matoke allows discussing the relevance of a nested market perspective. The thesis is based on fieldwork conducted in the Kabarole district in Uganda.

The thesis is constructed as follows. I first provide a short and concise account of the Matoke banana and what is so special about it. The chapter that follows reviews the relevant literature that has assisted me in problematising markets as heterogeneous and con-existing. Based on this review I formulated a few key research questions that oriented my fieldwork in Uganda. The chapters that follow specify the various markets I have identified based on my field research and through a comparative analysis I discuss the relevance of these markets for rural livelihoods and the role of policy interventions in markets.

2. The matoke (Highland cooking banana)

Despite the worldwide importance and consumption of bananas, the highland cooking banana is a product specific to this region as well as the importance that this crop has for the economy and food security in the Kabarole district and the whole the East African region. The theoretical importance of Matoke is that it fits the heading what Eleanor Ostrom and others refer to as 'common property resource'. The quality of Matoke is widely shared and the use is well distributed. Matoke is ecologically well adapted to the highland conditions and is widely grown by a variety of producers, in terms of scale and specialization.

According to the research done by the cultural museum of Mbarara, Bananas were brought to East Africa by traders from Asia through the routes used by the Arab slave traders. They reached the Buganda Kingdom first and then gradually reached the western territories. Once the banana production started in the west of Uganda, they became the core for social and Economic development. As matoke is a perennial crop, people face social transformation mainly living together for more extended periods of time, acquire leadership skills, and as this plant is a constant source of food people had the opportunity to focus on other issues including the diversification of the farm production. Due to the continuous production and the importance in the diet, matoke became a symbol of wealth, implied in the common saying "No banana, no cows, no wife".

This particular type of cooking banana known as "highland cooking banana", "Matoke" or (Musa spp., AAA-EA genome) is the most important staple crop in the East Africa Great Lakes Region (KRC, n. d.). Matoke production is tightly concentrated in a zone no more than 150 miles wide, centred in Uganda, 70% of matoke production is in southwestern and central provinces of Uganda BMGF (2014).

Uganda has the highest per capita consumption of cooking bananas in the world being ½ kg/day at a national level, and it reaches ~1 kg/day in the main southwestern matoke growing region BMGF. (2014). This cooking banana has specific characteristics appreciated for the consumers of the East African region, the appearance of the fruit bunch is spikier and more compact than for plantain, with smaller fruit this type of banana is a starchy banana fruit, harvested green, the peeled fruit is white and firm when raw, turning yellow and mushy with cooking. It is typically

cooked with firewood by lengthy steaming and then served whole or in mashed form BMGF (2014).

The Western region is the main matoke production area in Uganda with 696,000 agricultural households that grow matoke (UBOS 2014), although, About 70% of harvested bananas are consumed at home by the producers themselves, and Only 20% sold fresh to traders who then supply local, national (urban), and export markets BMGF, (2014) as according to KRC, (n. d.) Banana producers are mostly small/ subsistence farmers with a plantation area averaging 0,5 to 4 acres (KRC, n. d.), in 41,4% of this farms bananas are produced a mono-crop, and 58,6% in association with other crops (UBOS, 2014).



Figure 1: Matoke ordered by quality, Harugongo Cooperative market

The quality of bananas is defined by the actors based on three main aspects. The first one is the size as due to the difference of the means of transport at a local level (mainly bicycle and boda-boda). A mid-size bunch is ideal, while for the non-local while a bigger bunch can be sold at a better price and will be split in fingers and packed in sacks or directly loaded for its transport in lorries. A bigger bunch also becomes more profitable as most of the fees are charged per bunch

(market fee, transportation, labour in the markets) regardless of its size or weight. Since the regional market has a growing demand and the price according to the size, many farmers are oriented to increase the size of their bunches as much as possible through more intensive farming techniques.

The second aspect that defines quality is the ripening state which is when exactly when the bananas reach their physiological maturity and its maximum size. Although in time of high demand people tempt to harvest premature bananas this means that the fingers haven't reached its maximum size and buyers will offer a lower price. On the other side if the matoke is too ripe the buyer will avoid buying it, as being a highly perishable product the window of opportunity for reselling it shortens fast.

The last aspect mentioned by many interviewed actor is the consistency of the cooked banana, and the time it takes to cook. The interviewed actors suggest that the highland cooking bananas are softer than other types this becomes important due to the fact that most of the household use firewood and charcoal for cooking and these fuels are very expensive.

3. Theoretical framework

Conceptually I start from the perspective that the market is not a homogenous institution. In the literature one regularly finds references to 'main stream markets', 'alternative markets', 'nested markets', 'informal markets', 'wet markets', 'open air' or 'street markets' and so on. These labels or categorizations are all expressions of the existence of a multitude of markets. While conducting my fieldwork in Uganda I immediately recognized that the market for Matoke is not uniform. Based on a variety of characteristics and based on a constructivist understanding of markets made by human and non-human actors I was able to categorize them (see chapter 4 where I discuss my findings).

My theoretical framework hinges on four partly overlapping building blocks: 1) markets are constructed by social actors; 2) markets in essence are social-material 3) markets are embedded in and shaped by specific economic repertoires; 4) markets are sites of social struggles between the actors involved. This building block I argues allows me to distinguish between and compare markets.

3.1. Markets as social-materially constructed

The interest in 'local' markets in Africa is not new. Anthropologists like Hill (1963, 1969) and Bohannan and Dalton (1962) followed by Guyer (1987) started to explore markets and how these are constituted in rather descriptive ways. There was a strong focus on social actors involved in the market place as well as the institutional and material environment. Hill's (1962) account of markets is rich in detail which we recognize till today. The current and more recent focus on markets (Abrahams 2009; Van der Ploeg et al. 2012; Hebinck et al. 2015; Manyelo et al. 2015; Wegerif 2017; Wegerif and Hebinck 2016; Skinner 2008; Battersby et al. 2016) aim to theorize markets by taking a constructivist stand. One of the reason being is that it is useful to see markets as constructed and made by social actors. Social actors like traders, porters, consumers, brokers, and all other actors that appear on markets (see Hill, 1962) give hands and feet to markets; they shape markets, they negotiate prices, bargain and so on. Markets are locally specific configurations of the social actors involved. Markets are also, as Ostrom (1990) and Van der Ploeg et al. (2012) point out, are governed by rules and regulations that are negotiated and shared by common property resource users. These rules provide them with the

means and space to defend the ordering of their market economy and marketplace. Building on Lie's (1997) overview of the sociology of market literature and the work by Michel Callon and others (Callon et al. 2002) I hypothesized markets as socially constructed. Markets, Callon (1998) argues, are also performed or enacted by multiple social actors while making use of the physical infrastructure that historically has evolved. Markets can thus be specified according to their social-material infrastructure. This is a term developed and used by Van Der Ploeg et al. (2012). When at the marketplace, one literally observes as I did, the coming and going of people and fresh vegetables, negotiating, repackaging vegetables at market stalls. While observing on a regular basis, the market comes to life as an assemblage of people and mobile goods, market stalls, the gate that separates the wholesale from the retail section, the police officer guarding the gate, discourses, attitudes, behaviors, interests, practices, rules, and regulations underpinned by personal experiences of buying and selling.

There is a need as most contemporary studies on markets argue (Wegerif 2016; Hebinck et al. 2015; Crush and Frayne 2011) to go beyond the market place *per se* and include the relationships with the so-called 'hinterland', the production sites of the produce that is marketed at the market place. This is nowadays referred to as value chains or supply networks. Widening the scope of observation, inquiry and analysis to include the hinterland allows exploring the various ways by which the market place is connected to the hinterland. The notion network or circuit is employed in the rural development literature to investigate the markets as circuits (Van der Ploeg et al. 2012; Hebinck et al. 2015). There is a need to recognize and empirically identify the variety of market circuits one encounters while in the field. With reference to the common property management perspective of Ostrom (1990; Van der Ploeg et al., 2012) one could distinguish between markets that are polycentric and monocentric. Some of these markets are managed and controlled by a single agency (a supermarket chain, or agro-food processing company, or a single trader) others are managed and organized by a plurality of social actors that in turn are highly differentiated. Some are brokers, others are fulltime or professional traders and again others come selling with other livelihood activities. My observations and investigations of the Matoke market circuits clearly underpins the relevance of such an argument.

Moreover, as the nested market literature argues, some markets are constructed as a reaction to the hegemony exerted by one powerful and strategic actors (such as big traders, or big companies). Some markets are constructed around the local specific common pool character of commodities; whereas other markets have always been there but despite the encroachment of big retail companies and big traders trying to control regional and local trade circuits, the localized market circuits remain operational and dynamic.

The nested market literature specifically sets out to argue to perceive the construction of markets – or the maintaining the market as it performs now - as part of the social struggle of people for a decent living and a fair share of the benefits of their production activities. Fligstein & Dauter, (2006) argue that social structuring of markets is generally in response to the problems of competition and exchange implying that stable markets emerge, such structures will appear as actors figure out how to resolve their problems. Defending the common pool nature of many of the agricultural produce grown and markets across the globe offer opportunities to protect markets. The definition of nested markets hint clearly at that aspect. Schneider et al. (2015) define nested markets as “a common pool resource that is grounded in a . commonly shared set of rules. This set of rules links specific producers and consumers (through shared expectations, quality definitions, specific infrastructure, reputation, trust, etc.). It specifies resource use (also beyond the nested market) and thus, allows for the transaction of specific products.” It is the shared and negotiated nature that assist local producers and traders to defend their market from taking over.

3.2. Informality and culture

A central aspect of a constructivist conceptualization of markets is culture. Economic culture or performing economic transactions such as trading is an important building block for a further conceptualization of markets. Together with the recognition of a plural or heterogeneously co-existing of market circuits is recognizing that markets are governed and structured by a variety of economic repertoires. This has been subject to an intense debate which is well summarized by Grannovetter (1985). The debate is known under the heading of the ‘formalist – substantivist’ debate. The core of the debate is whether economic performance such as price setting and so on can be understood as a generalized or universal economic discourse which

evolves independent from context, history, culture and the nature of social relationships (the formalist position defended by neo-classical economics); or do we see and problematize economic performances as embedded in local cultural repertoires, social relationships, culture and so. The first position is recognizable in the distinction that is made between 'formal' and 'informal' markets. Mainstream markets are usually seen as formal; local or street or wet markets are designated as informal' Formal standing for rules and regulations that are in line with economic theory and thought; informal stands for localized, locally specific set rules and regulations that shapes economic behavior and thought. The formal is rational and stands for organized and the informal is the opposite: unorganized, unstructured, chaotic, etc. Informality is the common ways of addressing these markets (NPA, 2010; IIED, 2012), nevertheless informality is a term used arbitrarily by public institutions and the development sector as a way to categorize these markets and its component as 'unstructured' and 'chaotic' (Guha-Khasnobis et al., 2006).

With 'Informal, I mean arrangements outside of what is regarded as mainstream and 'formal', fully regulated and under the jurisdiction of the state, governed by market forces and neo-liberal discourses. The notion 'formal' aligns with the modernization commitment to 'rational management' (Arce and Long, 2000: 21) and the transfer of organizational forms from the more "developed" world or sector of a country' (Long, 2001: 10). Economic activities that do not fit within these organizational forms are rejected as 'informal', with formal being the state that they should reach in the linear process of 'development'. For Scott (2009) activities that we capture here as 'informal' represent resistance towards state-led attempts to modernisation (i.e. formalisation) and to control social life and the economy (see also Skinner, 2008). In similar ways, informal represents for Hart (1973), who was among the first to coin the notion 'informal sector', that what is not visible to and therefore not within reach of the state (see also Hart 1992, 2010). This is in turn reminiscent of Scott's 'Seeing like a State' (Scott, 1998). Modernisation or rather the formalisation of social and economic relations that often manifests in the physical and spatial reorganization of the marketplace generally plays out such that the state and municipalities are able to increase the extracting of revenue from already economically hard-pressed 'informal' entrepreneurs (Rogerson 2016). The reorganization of

‘informal’ markets and the regular sweeping of the streets are legitimized because these markets and street vending supposedly are a threat to public health and public safety. Generally, informality equals illegality (Kamete 2013) and thus approached with repression (Raleigh 2015; Potts 2006).

The characterisation of these local markets as “informal” plays an important role in the political and regulatory context as it has led to policy disasters as the state sought to provide ‘structures’ where none was presumed to exist before (Guha-Khasnobis et al., 2006). For the case of Uganda Salami et al. (2010), argues that smallholder farming in East Africa accounts for about 75 per cent of agricultural production and over 75 per cent of employment, embedded in local and most of the time so-called “informal” markets, while according to KRC,(2016), despite the existence of regional free trade agreements, most of that trade in Ugandan borders is informal, bypassing official channels.

This characterization restricts the possibilities of a more in-depth analysis of the reasons and elements under which local markets are structured, creating a gap between the reality and perception of food safety in local, informal markets resulting in the developing of inadequate policies and regulations that tend to penalize the informal sector (IIED, 2016;) Cities Alliance, 2017).

3.3. Comparing Market circuits

Based on the above building blocks I engaged a two-staged comparison. One is following van der Ploeg et al. (2012), while referring to Bernstein’s (2010) four basic questions of political economy proposes. They propose a relatively simple scheme to make an effective and structural comparison between markets one is able to recognise. The four questions pertain to 1) Who owns what? 2) Who does what? 3) Who gets what? and what is done with the surpluses?

In addition, and on top of that, I include as second layer the social-material aspects of market circuits; these are not well covered by Bernstein’s four questions. This implies taking on board issues and factors such as distance between production sites and the market place, the regulations that structure to a degree the markets; the mode of transport.

Such a comparison allows debating the broader relevance of these markets to rural development, of urban food supply systems, rural livelihoods enhancement opportunities and so on.

Based on the above consideration and orientations, I formulated the following research question which has guided my fieldwork and the writing of the thesis.

3.4. General research question:

Which market circuits in the Matoke trade can be distinguished in the Kabarole district of Uganda?

To answer this general questions, a few sub-research questions were formulated

3.5. sub research questions

Which actors play a role in the Matoke market ?

What is the role of the middlemen in the Matoke market

What is the material infrastructure of the Matoke market

Which collaborative dimensions exist between middleman and other actors part of the Matoke market of the Kabarole district (Uganda)?

3.6. Methodology

During the fieldwork and in the further analysis I focused on observing the material, and social elements with which the actors interact to compose the matoke market and in this process creating a structure that responds to the characteristics of specificity, rootedness and connectedness proper of nested markets (van der Ploeg, et al., 2012), (Schneider et al., 2015; Wegerif & Hebinck, 2016; Hebinck et al., 2015). For a better understanding, the field work started by compiling as much information about the region concerning agro-ecological characteristics, demography, culture, ethnicity, agriculture, governance and access to services. This information was the starting point to plan the fieldwork identifying the main production areas (Kasenda & Harugongo) as well as the main marketplaces for the cooking bananas

(Kitomba, Kabundaire, Kasenda, Mugusu Karago and Harugongo). The fieldwork was conducted using an actor-oriented approach focusing on the actor perspective on social change that attributed 'agency' to people and institutions (Hebinck and Verschoor, 2001). I identified key informants that represented or were connected with the type of actors that compose this market, within this approach, the research was conducted through detailed ethnographic accounts of specific situations that spanned extended periods of time (Hebinck and Verschoor, 2001). For this reason, I intended to spend as much time as possible with my key informants, accompanying them as a participant observer, while gathering information through informal discussions and conversations as well as unstructured interviews with the actors that were connected to these key informants. All this information was compiled by audio recordings, a field diary and photographs, for interacting with the actors that didn't speak English I was accompanied by a translator which most of the time was an additional function of my key informants.

The people that contributed to this research were divided into groups of actors according to their role in the market, many of them fit in more than one group which is characteristic of this market. The group of local middlemen combined with the brokers and retailers were identified two key informants, besides 13 other people were interviewed, in the case of the farmers were identified four key informants and 18 people interviewed both associated and non-associated farmers. Any NGO workers were interviewed. Nevertheless, I conducted my research with the support and participation of the KRC (Kabarole Research Center). The collaboration with KRC gave me also the opportunity to understand this local NGO as an actor of the matoke market that through various fronts is connected with many other actors. I interviewed seven people from the government in different positions related with the matoke market, tax collectors of two markets a representative of the ministry of agriculture, two Chairperson of the villages, and a representative from the municipality of Fort Portal. I had the chance to interview just five workers due to the language barrier and the fact that the key informants and translators didn't want to participate in the interviews with this group of actors. Any non-local middlemen "Baganda" were interviewed since in every occasion I tried to interview them they did not want to be interviewed. Although this actor does not belong to the local but is more an external actor

that links the local market with the rest of the country as well as with surrounding countries (KRC, n. d.). Therefore all the information gathered about this actor is based on the opinions and experiences of the interviewed people.

Chapter 4. The Kabarole district and Matoke

In this chapter, I depict as detailed as possible the multiple dimensions of the context that play a role when defining what represents the “local” for this particular market as well as the specific factors that will contextualize the analysis of the matoke local market. For this reason, I will describe the study area concerning: governance, agroecological conditions, geographical location, demography and the historical background of the different ethnic groups that live in this territory. This information will be essential to contextualise my findings in further chapters.

Kabarole District Administrative Structure is composed of the political and technical units. The council is the highest organ of the district which is administratively represented by the District Executive Committee headed by the District Chairperson, and the Chief Administrative Officer leads the technical leadership. (NPA, 2011). The agroecological and geographical conditions are favourable for the banana production; the district generally has a good climate with fairly well-distributed rainfall throughout the year. The district has bimodal annual rainfall ranging from 1,200mm – 1,500mm. The Temperatures range from 20°C to 25°C in all parts of the district, and in some parts, the temperatures fall below 19°C (NPA, 2011). These climatic conditions derive from the proximity of the Rwenzori mountains, many surrounding forests like Kibaale and Semuliki Game Park and the many flowing rivers and streams. However the in the last year the district is suffering from extreme climatic events that threaten the agricultural production as according to the interviewed people in Fort Portal during the year 2017 (one year before I conducted my fieldwork) they suffer an intense drought that affected the production considerably.

The Kabarole district is a productive valley in western Uganda, close to the Rwenzori Mountains, in the north, it borders the lake Albert and the Semuliky wildlife reserve, and in the south, it borders the district of Kasese. The Kabarole district is located in the west of Uganda, in which the 74% of the population is living in rural areas and the 26% in urban areas (UBOS, 2017).

Uganda's agricultural sector is dominated by smallholder farmers who produce on small plots mainly for home consumption and small surpluses for the market (KRC, n.d.) and subsistence farming is the primary source of livelihood for the rural areas of Kabarole. In the urban area, backyard farming is practised to supplement incomes (NPA, 2011). Land pressure is an issue increasing rapidly through land fragmentation as a traditional practice, due to increasing population pressures this is affecting food security at the household level (KRC, n.d.).

The principal means of transportation are bicycle (63,6% of the agricultural households) and Boda-boda (40% of agricultural households hire Boda-bodas in a regular basis), although to travel outside the district matatu (van for public transportation) are the chosen option (UBOS, 2014).

The city of Fort Portal (the district capital) was chosen as the base for my fieldwork as is surrounded by the main marketplaces in the district. Also is the place where the Food lab was established by the KRC (Kabarole research centre) in partnership with HIVOS and IIED, with a research mission and a long-term commitment to understanding the measures and drivers of poverty and its solutions (KRC, 2017). As my research was conducted in collaboration with KRC, I started the research by discussing with intellectuals of the KRC the proposal as a way to align it with the current epistemic pathway and the objective of this (local) research centre.

The study area is characterised by a diversity of ethnic group where the majority belong to the Tooro ethnic group, as well as a big community of Basigas and Runankoles in the southern part of the district. The ethnic groups considered as a minority are the Bakonjo, Bamba and Babwisi (KRC & RFPJ, 2012). Thus the major languages spoken in the district are Rutooro, Rukiga and Runyankore, although English and Swahili are the official languages at a national scale (UBOS, 2014)

The relation between the main ethnic groups and the minorities has a long history of conflicts since the formation of the Tooro kingdom in 1882, these conflicts have always been triggered by the lack of representation, discrimination and not alleged in consideration of the interest of the minorities such as massive displacements of people from their homes and land KRC, & RFPJ. (2012).

As a result nowadays the social cohesion between communities is broken, and the moral fiber in the public sector is so distorted that access to jobs, business opportunities and social services is more determined by one's ethnic identity rather than competence in skills, which is also visible in the private sector and population in general KRC, & RFPJ. (2012). Sadly this is not an isolated case but part of a log hierarchical chain as at a national level the Tooro Ethnicity becomes a minority that faces that discrimination of the Baganda (KRC, & RFPJ, 2012).

All these aspects constitute and clearly delimitate the Kabarole district and the "Local", although Language & ethnicity and hierarchy are factors that define the position of the local in relation with the rest of the regional or non-local, as well as the creation of a sub local composed by the minorities mainly relocated in the western part of the district close to the Rwenzori mountains. The non-local includes all the actors that come from other cities and countries, despite the fact that it mainly goes to Kampala, it also goes even to neighboring countries like DRC and Rwanda, nevertheless local actors refer to all the non-local middlemen as "Bagandas".

Actors operating at the matoke market:

Here I present a short explanation of the actors that compose and play key roles on the matoke market:

Small Farmers: Farmers who own plantations averaging 0.5 to 4 acres, usually for subsistence agriculture and the use of traditional extensive farming techniques and combined this with other crops.

Big farmers: Farmers who own a plantation of more than 4 acres of land, usually are able to invest in labour and advice for the intensification of their plantation, which is mostly a mono-crop produced for business purposes.

Associated Farmers: Group of farmers that belong to a cooperative usually supported by an NGO concerning resources, and technical assistance.

Local traders: They form the function of initial collecting agents that later on transport the matoke usually by boda-boda or bicycle to resell it in marketplaces to other local traders, non-local traders and retailers, or directly to the final consumer.

Non-local traders: Individuals that are based in cities outside the Kabarole district. They usually come with big trucks to buy big amounts of matoke from the big farmers, specialised marketplaces or public marketplaces in the main production areas. As most of them come from Kampala local actors, refer to them as “Baganda.”

Brokers: Commissioning agents whose function is to link the non-local trader with the local production of matoke through multiple circuits and strategies.

Concessionary: Person that is in charge of organizing the tax collection and administration of a commercial sector in the municipality in this case the matoke sector in the municipality.

Tenders: Member of the concessionary team that surveils a specific selling point to collect the fees from the traders, as well as administrates the marketplace to which they are assigned.

Retailers: Market vendors that buy multiple products including matoke from the local traders to later sell in smaller amounts, usually in the same marketplace where they bought the bunches.

Workers: People who work in temporary jobs performing different activities such as packing and loading matoke and other products in the market, working in farms or construction, usually they are hired for a short term activity, they get paid in a time basis (around 5000 to 10000 UGX/day) or in a task basis for example: by splitting matoke bunches in fingers and packing the fingers in a sac (usually one sac can contain fingers twelve bunches) a worker will receive 2000 UGX,

Lastly there are consumers. I left these out of my research and therefore not present any detailed information on this group of actors.

1.1. Matoke market circuits in Kabarole district: an overview

This chapter the various markets circuits are depicted. After ordering my data with reference to my theoretical starting point, I have identified four structurally different Matoke market circuits. Which are: a) the traditional market for local consumption, b) the traditional local fragment of the regional consumption circuit, c) the high scale circuit for regional consumption, and d) the NGO sponsored circuits. I will provide information of each of these circuits ordered such that Bernstein’ four questions are answered and that details are given about the material components of the circuits.

1.1.1. Traditional market for local consumption

This circuit is based on the production of small farmers which produce matoke in their food gardens or plantations most of the time intercropped and smaller than 4 acres using traditional farming techniques. The matoke is usually purchased by local traders that continuously explore the district in search of matoke. Local traders are usually based in marketplaces within the urban setting where they resell the matoke to the final consumer or retailers usually settled in the same marketplace. Despite the small scale in the whole length of this circuit the large quantity of actors enables the regular mobilisation of significant amounts of matoke, local governments receive taxes through fees collected via a concessionary in the various selling points occupied by the traders.

1.1.2. Who owns what?

The producers of this circuit are mainly small farmers (0,5 to 4 acres), even people who own a food garden come to the market to sell one or two or more bunches of matoke. In these farms or food gardens, the matoke is usually intercropped with other local products such as cassava, fruit trees, and vegetables that are usually meant for self-consumption; the farming technics are usually traditional and not highly capital and labour intensive. Despite the high concentration of matoke producers in the sub-counties of Kichwamba, Kasenda and Harugongo, the matoke growers that supply this circuit are present all over the district. The size of the farms and the lack of intensification cause small volumes of matoke produced per farm. Due to the high amount of matoke growers, there is a significant volume of matoke trade through his circuit.

The actor that takes care of the purchasing transportation and commercialisation of the matoke in this circuit is the local trader. According to the interviewed key informants of Kitomba and Kabundaire marketplaces just in Fort Portal, there are around 500 to 700 of these actors; in the surrounding villages, none of the interviewed people had an estimate, as especially in the villages some of the people that bring the bananas to the market are small farmers. Nevertheless, this number involves local traders from all the circuits. The fact that some of these actors trade in different circuits at the same time makes challenging to have an estimate per circuit.

Local traders who participate in this circuit usually own boda-bodas or bicycles, depending on their vehicle they will travel the maximum possible distance in search of bananas at low prices and that meet the required quality. For this purpose, they have the knowledge of the location of the producers as well as referential selling prices in the marketplace they are settled and referential buying prices of the production areas.

These local traders are usually settled permanently in a selling point within the public markets of the main consumption centres that correspond to the urban setting in the district such as Kabundaire market in Fort Portal Municipality; in some cases, they might also have agreements of delivering matoke to restaurants or hotels. As an exception to the rule, some farmers participate as traders in this circuit, nevertheless due to the time demand of being a trader in this circuit farming has become their secondary activity.

Retailers have a spot in the marketplace and split the bunches that were previously bought generally in the same market from the local middlemen, but also directly from their own food gardens when they live close by the consumption areas. Consumption is done by local restaurants, hotels or families that according to the size of their household and purchasing capacity they will buy an entire bunch or a few fingers from the retailers. Because of these the size of the bunches required by the consumers are of a medium size as once they buy it, they will carry it to their home or restaurant by foot boda-boda or public transport. Thus a big size bunch is too heavy to handle. Local governments own the marketplaces and also have a surveillance network through concessions for tax collection.

1.1.3. Who does what?

Many interviewed farmers argued that they prefer to sell their matoke in their farms to local traders, by doing this they do not need to worry about all the time money and effort that represent the logistics of transporting and selling the matoke in the consumption areas.

This is the case of Steven, a farmer from the surroundings of Mugusu village, owns a highly intensified and well-managed banana farm (0,5 acre) intercropped with all the local produce. In his case bananas are the only product that he commercializes, the rest of the products are for self-consumption, in the way he farms this acre of land is enough to feed and sustain his

household, through the commercialization of the matoke but also by the creation of a constant food source from the rest of the products. Whenever he wants to sell matoke, he finds a local trader.

Steven (Small farmer, Mugusu area): “I know him (referring to Emma, key informant, local trader Kabundaire market) so first I call him if I have matoke. If he is not available I just walk on the street of the village for a few minutes, you will find the boda-boda guys or bicycle guys that buy the matoke they are very many buyers”.

Once he finds a trader, he shows the matoke bunches that he wants to sell still hanging from the plant. After scrutinizing the bunches, they bargain if they don't agree on the price then the trader will leave, but if they do then Steven will harvest the bunches and help the trader to load the vehicle, this process takes place for each transaction independently if he has done business with that particular trader in repeated occasions or not. Through this process, Steven argues that extends the time that he can keep the bunch for longer as if the harvest before being sure that will sell it at the price he wants, and the transaction is not completed his risk of losing the bunch increases.

Steven (Small farmer, Mugusu area): “I am a farmer I just farm, when I want to sell matoke I just call a buyer and sell if we agree on the price, I do not like to waste time going myself to the market to sell.”

Being a local trader is a full-time job, as it requires a lot of time exploring the area and transporting the bananas to the marketplace where the bananas are going to be sold, for the case of this circuit local consumers just buy one or two bunches, consequently, the time invested in selling the bunches is also high. These actors frequently are based on the marketplaces, but the strategies of buying and selling will depend on each person.

Vincent (Middlemen, from Harugongo): “Here (Harugongo) there are lots of matoke, even me, I do not have so much, so I always buy from my neighbours. Every day I go to Fort Portal (10,6 km from Harugongo), I normally carry eight bunches, is hard I have to hire someone to help me push the bike up the hills, it takes me all day to go there sell the Matoke and come back. Most

of the time I am in Kabundaire, but I also got to restaurants and hotels to sell matoke when they ask me. ”

Emma (Key informant, local trader based in Kabundaire): “I go every two days to buy matoke from farmers I go very far my boda-boda, to Mugusu (20 km from Kabundaire market), Harugongo and other places to find good prices. Here close to Fort Portal the prices are high, I buy four or five depending on the size, but if I am not looking for matoke I am always in Kabundaire market”.



Figure 2 Emma (Key informant) buying matoke from Steven, Mugusu village

Retailers are actors that buy one or two bunches in the markets to the local trader, in order to split it in fingers and sell to consumers that need smaller quantities than a whole bunch, these actors are not specialised in matoke as they usually do this with multiple products.

The municipality collects taxes in the marketplaces and unofficial selling points from any actor that arrives to sell the matoke (Farmers, middlemen, retailers).

In order to understand better the tax collection system, I interviewed Omongy George, a representative of the municipality of Fort Portal. He is in charge of the administration of the tax collection in the municipality of Fort Portal and explained that the tax collection is done through concessions. The concessionary of each sector should pay to the municipality a monthly fee, in the case of the banana sector the fee was 3,2 million UGX. The person who has the concession is in charge of hiring a team of people called tenders, which are strategically distributed town so they can collect the fee from all the vendor that arrive in town.

According to Omongy George, the concessionary and his/her team have other responsibilities besides collecting the fees. They are in charge of administrating the marketplace and take care of keeping it clean although this differs from market to market, depending on the tender or administrator but also on the organisation of the vendors.

Anonymous (Tender for the banana sector in Kabundaire): “I collect the money for the boss; he comes at any time to pick up the money. I stay here the whole day giving the receives and registering the matoke. I know all the people that sell here, we have a good relationship as I stay here the whole day” (he did not want to talk about the amount of money or the number of bunches).

According to the Omongy George, the vendors that occupy the area of the marketplace do not have the right to do any kind of change or improvement to the infrastructure or build any infrastructure. For the case of some marketplaces that are just empty fields such, arguing that this is municipal land and the authorities of the municipality should approve any change.

Besides, some of this marketplaces have a status of temporary for this reason there is always that possibility of relocation in the case these areas are required for other porpoises. Although he states being aware of the needs of the occupants and states that the way these actors can participate of the decisions they need to be associated, as an example he argues that there was a reduction in the fee that is paid per loaded bicycle from 2500 UGX to 2000UGX.

Emma (Key informant, local trader based in Kabundaire): “we belong to an association, and we are officially registered, I think we are around a hundred members, but we don’t have help from anyone, now our association is only to know the people and organize a SACCO to save money,

but that was also done by ourselves. The only thing is that now if someone outside the association wants to sell here, he also has to pay a fee to us, besides the fee of the municipality because we keep the place clean and at night we pay a watchman to take care of the matoke.”

1.1.4. Who gets what?

The prices within this circuit are continuously changing, commonly determined by all the actors from the producer to the consumer, although each actor has a different perspective and different aspects to consider when thinking about the price. In the case of farmers they decide on the cost based on the necessary income to sustain his/her household, rather than thinking about the costs of production that are very low, thus, if they don't sell the bunch they will use it for self-consumption or feed farm animals, this doesn't represent an entire loss.

On the other hand, to sustain their household local traders and retailers entirely rely for their income from the money generated through investment in buying and transporting the matoke. Compared to farmers these actors are very keen on calculating their operational costs, including fuel food, labour in case they need a person to help them pushing the bicycle if the route is steep, as well as developing the capacity to determine the quality of the matoke and be constantly aware of the changes in production, consumption and external events that will affect the matoke market such as the harvest season of other staple foods like Irish potato.

After paying for everything including the bananas, if local traders manage to sell everything they bought at the price that they expected to, these actors would earn in average around 10000 to 20000 UGX per day depending on the season, the number of trips they can do per day and their bargaining capacity. There is always the risk of not selling the matoke or that the prices drop after buying the bunches.

Emma (Key informant, local trader based in Kabundaire): *“ The prices are always changing so I first check the prices in the market, I normally sell the bunches 3k more expensive, I need to think that I spend 12k in fuel food and market fees, but I still earn something, 15 to 25k depending on the season”*

Vincent (local trader, from Harugongo): *“the prices always change, a bunch here (Harugongo) can be between 15k and 30 k, and where I sell (Kabundaire) can be 5k more, but I pay many*

things, I hire someone that helps me, y pay the fees in the market and the food. At the end I get 2K per bunch, which is around 15k per day that I earn."

Gertrud (Local trader , Kabundaire): *"I bought these bunches that you see at 20k, that's very expensive, I normally try to earn 2k per bunch, but now the prices are dropping perhaps I will sell cheaper because if I don't sell fast the matoke will be yellow, and then no one will buy"*

Local traders are fully aware on the kind of bananas that the consumer requires and will explore the area looking for the desired quality in terms of size especially. Thus the consumers will get a product that fits their conditions of transport, still they will also bargain to get the lowest price possible.

The local governments according to Omongy George (tax office, Fort Portal), the Municipality of Fort Portal receives an amount of 3,2 million UGX from the whole matoke sectors involving all the circuits that occupy the public markets or selling points within the municipality. After paying this fixed amount to the municipality, the rest belong to the concessionary.

1.1.5. What's done with the surpluses?

The money remains in the district and is distributed through a numerous group of actors. Farmers will still get most of the money from the selling price of the matoke bunch. Most of the money gained from the difference between the buying and selling price around 60% will be used to pay the logistical costs. The maintenance of a low scale in the whole circuit make the distribution of the wealth more balanced than in other circuits. Although the individual income is relatively low, being 10000 to 20000 UGX/day for local traders, 5000 UGX/day for workers, farmers will get 10000 to 25000 UGX/ bunch.

Farmers use the money to sustain their households, and sometimes there is a small surplus to invest in the intensification of their farm, buy a bicycle or boda-boda for transportation and business purposes. In the case of local traders, the surplus is almost inexistent as they calculate what they will earn based on what they need to sustain their household, although when there is a surplus many traders save it through SACCOs for an emergency or eventually investing in something for their family.

The fees go to the municipality and the tenders to pay salaries and build infrastructure, due to the number of fees collected this represents a significant amount of money. Nevertheless, traders complain that there is no investment from the government in building infrastructure in the marketplace of giving any kind of support.

Gertrude (local trader, based in Kabundaire): “We don’t receive support from anyone nor the municipality or NGOs. Here you see is full of garbage, we have to pile up everything. Also, you can see here is just an empty field, the small hut that we have for our meetings we build it ourselves, but the government did not want us to do it because is not our land.”

1.2. Traditional local fragment of the regional consumption circuit

The production that is traded within this circuit will come from small farmers as well as some food gardens with similar characteristics of technology and size that in the local consumption traditional circuit. However, the producers that supply this circuits are usually settled in the main production areas, within a short distance of one of the marketplaces occupied by the actors of this circuit, or farmers in remote areas that difficulty of reaching their farms they are obliged to sell matoke at considerably low prices. Numerous local traders buy, transport and sell matoke from small farmers in small quantities, less than ten bunches at the time, a considerable amount of farmers living close by the marketplaces will also transport and sell their matoke themselves. This two actors will sell the matoke to a non-local trader through a bargaining process with the broker. These transactions take place in specialised marketplaces (markets whose single is this particular circuit) and big public markets in the main production areas, thus the local governments receive taxes through fees collected by a delicate system.

1.2.1. Who owns what?

Similar to the previous circuit, the production of matoke relies on small farmers spread all over the district. Local traders are also abundant using means of transportation like bicycle and boda-boda as well as the knowledge of the area and the locations where they could find the lower prices for acceptable quality.

Within the small farmers that live close by the marketplaces, there are many farmers that will bring their matoke to the market, if they have the transportation means and trust in their capacity to bargain.

The transactions also take place in public markets controlled by the local governments, for the case of this circuit the markets occupied by the actors have different characteristics. These are big markets like Harugongo, Karago and Mugusu that are located in the main production areas reducing the distance from the farms to the selling points. Also, there are specialised markets, such as Kitomba in Fort Portal and the Kasenda matoke market, which are marketplaces are only used to commercialise big amounts of matoke.

The brokers have social skills and knowledge of the production areas and farmers, the experience to quickly grade the quality of the bunch and a good bargaining capacity that is needed to perform their job.

The non-local traders, “Baganda” has money to buy significant amounts of bananas and finance the logistical costs of the operation that include: paying fees in the marketplace, labour to pack and load the trucks and the commission of the broker.

1.2.2. Who does what?

Contrary to the first circuit, distribution and local mobilisation of the matoke is much more complex as in this circuit. Many farmers choose to take their matoke to the marketplaces. This is common for farmers that live close to a marketplace or a populated area.

Francis (Farmer, Kasenda): “When the matoke is ready I harvest them, and I go to the village to sell in the bicycle, normally I sell 4 or five. From here to the village (Kasenda) is very close and there are always people buying for the Baganda, then I can also buy the things I need or do whatever I need to do in town.”

Besides farmers, local traders are the main group of people that buy transport and sell the matoke to the non-local traders.

Compared with the local consumption traditional circuit, the activities that the local trader performs are the same, except that here, as the non-local traders buy everything that the local

trader has, the time for selling is really short. As it just needs some minutes for the broker to observe the quality and bargain. For this reason, most of the local traders that participate in this circuit perform many trips per day, with the exception of some that prefer to go up to the mountains where the prices are much lower, but the distance implies that just one trip can be made each day. This selling timeframe is one of the reasons that make attractive for farmers to bring their matoke and sell it to the broker.

Mosses (middlemen Kasenda Sub-county): “For every Market day I buy matoke from farmers around here, I carry 7 to 10 bunches in each trip, I need to make two or three trips every day to earn something.”

Christof (local trader, Kasenda sub-county): “I know where to find bunches very cheap, but is up going up in the mountains, so it takes me the whole day so I make just one trip, I carry eight to ten bunches depending on the size.”

The municipality offers this spaces in exchange of fees, which, are paid based on the space in the marketplace that each actor occupies, thus most of the time these fees are only paid by the non-local trader as due to the fast transactions the people that bring the matoke will be gone before the Tender appears.

Kamisi (Broker, Kitomba market): “as today you see the Baganda does not come yet so the people are waiting and that is not good because they also have to pay a fee to park the bike in the market.”

Brokers ensure the production, bargain in the market and organise the logistics, non-local traders bring the lorries for loading the matoke and delegates to the broker all the logistical planning and the buying of matoke in big marketplaces and specialised marketplaces. Although there are multiple ways in which the brokers fulfil the task that will depend on the seasonal supply and demand levels of the market and his/her skills.

When there is a scarcity of matoke in the region is the task of the broker to ensure that the required volumes reach the market for the time the non-local trader arrives.

Kamisi (Key informant, Kitomba market): “I am a Broker, I live close to the market, so what I do is coming to the market, and if the Baganda needs matoke I just call the people in the village,

and they will harvest their matoke and bring what is needed. I know everyone in my village, and for that, I get a commission, but that depends on the week, sometimes there is no Baganda coming because there is potato or other things to buy, this week there is grasshopper season, that is why there is no Baganda in the market.”

Inaudible name in the recording (Broker, Harugongo market): “In this season I have to be in the market bargaining and checking that the workers pack the matoke correctly. Because you can see, many people arrive with matoke. When the boss (non-local trader) needs matoke, and the production is low, then I go the previous week and give some money to the farmers, so I ensure that they will deliver their matoke to me.”

The Municipality or local government of the sub-county is in charge of the administration of the marketplace and collecting the fees, as well as in the local consumption circuit. This is done through the Concessionary. Some markets are better administrated than others, as compared with the complains of actors of the previous circuit about the Kabundaire market. Kamisi, a key informant from the Kitomba market argues that the tender that administrates the market does a good job in keeping the market clean, organising the people and keeping things in order. Who gets what?

Farmers and local middlemen usually get lower prices than in the circuits of local consumption. At the same time in this circuits these actors have the chance to sell their matoke faster and many times don't require to assume the cost of the fees, thus, their income is similar to the previous circuit. Also the time invested in selling is much lower in this circuit it can be even minutes.

As I could notice in the Harugongo market that when a local trader arrived at the market with matoke, the first thing he will do is asking to the people that were chatting outside whether they knew the prices. After getting this information going directly to one of the brokers and after a couple of minutes of bargaining and agreeing at the price, they will unload their bicycle and leave the matoke in the floor so the people hired by the broker can start packing it for loading the lorry, after that the trader or farmers returned to his group of acquaintances to tell about the price and talk about the things.

This dynamic makes the logistical costs for local traders, much lower than in the local consumption circuit, although the referential prices are also lower. Thus the local traders earn between 10 and 20 k on a daily basis. Farmers on the other side don't invest money in buying bunches nor include the production cost in their calculation thus they see the full selling price as their income.

John (Small farmer, Harugongo): *"I live very close, I bring 4 bunches in my bicycle and sell directly to the Baganda, my bunches have good quality I want to sell them at 25k (25000 UGX), if I sell to the middlemen (local middlemen) he pays less, for this bunch he will pay 20 or 15 K (15000 UGX)"*

After this short interview, John went to talk with one of the brokers that worked for one of the Baganda that were sitting next to half loaded lorries. The bargaining was challenging, and John sold their bunches at 20 k (20000 UGX) each. Still, he was satisfied with the money he received and added that he likes to come to the market to talk to the people, buy food that he doesn't produce.

The presence of this actor makes the competition harder for local traders that need to be very careful of not losing their investment and try to earn enough to sustain their household.

Brokers get a commission per bunch they manage to buy at the price that previously been set with the non-local trader based on the referential prices in the market and the calculation of this actors. The non-local trader will get high-quality matoke at a low price packed and loaded in the lorry ready to transport to the places where this actor will resell it. The local government receives taxes through the tender system as in the previous circuit.

Local governments benefit from the fees that are paid in the markets. These fees are always paid by the non-local traders, although as the fee is paid base on the space that the actor occupies in the marketplace, sometimes local traders that arrive to sell are also charged a fee if they remain too much time in the marketplace before selling.



Figure 3 Worker packaging matoke for regional consumption, Kitomba matoke market

1.2.3. What is done with the surpluses?

The interesting feature of this circuits is that the money comes from outside through the non-local traders. Moreover, all remains within the district, most of it is spread in a balanced way, in small quantities among though numerous farmers and local traders, Farmers still receive most of the selling price.

Christof (local trader, Kasenda sub-county): “With some other people we have a SACCO, now we are 32, so I give 5k every day. All of us do so every day one of us gets 160k that big money, for me, is good it helps me to save and don’t spend the money here (the interview took place in one of the numerous bars within the marketplaces)”

Brokers usually receive an income much higher than other local actors, based on the commission system. This creates an unbalance in the way the wealth is distributed locally, as this group of actors is relatively small compared with farmers and local traders.

Kamisi (Broker, Kitomba market): “Normally I get a commission of 50 to 100 UGX, it depends, that is good money because the Baganda buys many bunches. It depends if the bunches are packed in sacks, imagine you can fit until 12 bunches per sack) he can buy more than 800 bunches per lorry, if he just loads the entire bunches then in less 2500 to 400., sometimes they do half half (Half of the truck loaded with sacks and half of the truck loaded with bunches)”.

Despite the exceptions of some well-organised markets actors of this circuit agree that the amount of money collected by the municipality through concessionaries, doesn't reflect in any kind of support or improvement of the infrastructure of the markets.

1.3. High scale circuits for regional consumption

This circuit is characterised by a small number of actors that accumulate relatively high amounts of money. The matoke that circulates through this circuit usually comes from big plantations that usually present high levels of intensification. These farmers sell their matoke directly to non-local traders usually with the help of a broker. Thus the non-local traders bypass the urban settings and public markets, avoiding in this way tax collectors at a local level.

1.3.1. Who owns what?

Big farmers have plantations of more than 4 acres and usually well maintained through intensive farming techniques that increase the productivity and the size of the bunches, the investment required for this kind of farming is also possible by the relatively high income of this farmers. The obtained yields are attractive enough for non-local traders.

Brokers as in the previous circuit must have social skills, knowledge of the production areas and a “good eye” grade quality, for the case of this circuit the bargaining becomes harder as the yields and quality that these farmers can produce give them the possibility to choose to whom they want to sell.

Sometimes when a local trader finds a farm with these characteristics, he becomes a temporary actor of this circuit performing as a temporary broker looking for a non-local trader in one of the markets and offer to make de deal with the farmer in exchange of a commission.

Salongo (Middlemen Kasenda sub-county): “Sometimes I found a good plantation, good quality and many bunches. There are two options I can tell other colleagues, we gather money to hire a lorry, and we go and harvest to sell here in the village to the Baganda, but with the Baganda, you never know if they will come, and you can lose the money. The other option is to find a Baganda and bargain a good price for the matoke. Normally he will pay a commission of 100 shillings (100 UGX) per bunch, that’s better because I don’t risk my money.”

The non-local traders provide as well as in the previous circuit have the transportation means for significant amounts and money to invest in the logistical costs and in buying the matoke.

An especial feature of this circuit is that local governments are not involved as they do not have the means to intervene in this circuit due to the spread distribution of this farms, and lack of control and surveillance strategies.

1.3.2. Who does what?

Farmers have the advantage of not harvesting as a crew hired by the non-local trader will do so. Due to the risk of cross-contamination mainly of the banana wild disease, the farmers provide the tools to the crew and controls that the harvesting is done correctly to guarantee the good health of the plantation, reflected in high yields in the future.

Name inaudible in the recording (big farmer Harugongo): “I like selling to the middlemen because he takes care of harvesting and loading the truck, I just have to control, also I give them the pangas (machetes for harvesting) because now you have this wild disease that is a big problem in the area”

Brokers explore looking for farms that have good production, negotiates with farmers, hires people to harvest the matoke pack it and loafed to the lorry. Non-local trader surveils the whole operation and then transports the matoke to resell it in other cities.

1.3.3. Who gets what?

Farmers get a lower price than in the marketplace, at the same time he invests no effort or money to harvest or transporting the matoke and the amount of money he receives is high due to the number of bunches that he/she can offer.

Samuel (Big farmer from Harugongo): “I have a plantation of four acres, I do not need to worry, I sell my matoke to a buyer of Kampala. He gives me a million (1 million UGX) every month and is good because I do not have to worry about counting or measuring the bunches because depending on the season it can be between 60 and 100 bunches. Every month he comes with people that harvest all that is ready they load the lorry, and I do not have to do anything, and is good money to sustain my family.”

The broker receives a commission usually paid by the non-local middlemen that sometimes depending on the bargaining skills of the farmers he can offer a commission to the broker is he manages to get him a higher selling price.

Name inaudible in the recording (big farmer Harugongo): “To have a good price the important thing is the broker, and there are many brokers. What I do is negotiate with one of them and tell him that if he can talk to the Baganda to give me the price I want, I will give him a good commission. I do not trust in contracts. Sometimes the Baganda comes one time takes bananas with contract and don’t come again.”

Although in the case the non-local trader and the farmer manage to have a fixed agreement there is the possibility that the expertise of the broker is no longer required, or required less often, as an effect his commission has the risk of disappearing or be reduced.

Workers all over the district are paid relatively low amounts on a daily basis or also paid to fulfil a specific task. Usually, they will be paid 5 to 10 k per day for harvesting, while activities such as packing and loading, are paid by sac or bunch. Nevertheless, some workers argue that after working with the brokers will allege that the work was not done correctly and will pay them less than it was agreed at the beginning.

Due to the lack of strategies to surveil these actors the local governments are not capable of collecting taxes in this circuit.



Figure 4 Non-local trader exiting a big farm, Kesenda subcounty

1.3.4. What is done with the surpluses?

As in the previous circuit, the money comes from outside the district brought by the non-local traders, although all of it remains in the district, the majority of it is highly concentrated in few big farmers who will invest in intensifying their plantations and create other business.

I had the opportunity to visit the plantation of two big farmers, and there was an enormous difference in the technology used for farming as he could afford to hire various workers to perform activities usually not done by small farmers such as constant weeding, organic fertilization, pruning and chopping (cutting the matoke stems in small pieces). Also, It was evident that they had a high-income livelihood as in the houses of both of them it was possible to observe that they had access to services and goods impossible to buy by the actors of previous circuits such as new cars a solar panels for the entire roof of a huge house, satellite television etc.

This level of income allows farmers to have high surpluses that are generally used to improve or expand their plantations as well as invest in other business.

This is the case of Juliet, a lady who owns a plantation of 7 acres in Kasenda. She argues that the income that she receives is high enough to sustain her household but also to invest in new

business now she owns a drugstore in the Kasenda village as well as a banana wine artisanal factory.

Brokers receive a commission of around 100 UGX per bunch depending on the arrangement similar to the previous circuit. Nevertheless, his job is much easier as he only has to bargain once for the whole plantation, compare with his job in the markets that includes bargaining with every trader that arrives.

Through this circuit, non-local traders will reduce their costs significantly by buying the matoke at a lower price but also not paying fees within the district. Thus their surplus will be much higher than the non-local that buy the matoke through the other circuit, assuming that they will sell it at the same price.

For this reason, the local governments do not receive any money from this circuit, and less money per bunch in coming to the district. Although, inhabitants of the sub-counties from the production areas argue that the lorries of non-local traders usually damage the dirt roads when they go to the farms, and then this road should be fixed by local governments.

1.4. NGO sponsored circuits

This circuit is characterised by a reduced number of big and small farmers that are associated in a cooperative through which they commercialise their matoke aiming to avoid local traders, expecting to trade directly with non-local traders as a way to receive a higher price. NGOs support these cooperatives through technical assistance and resources. The wealth in this circuit is mostly accumulated by the cooperative members, through the selling of their matoke but also through the collection of fees that increase the patrimony of the cooperative.

1.4.1. Who owns what?

The cooperative owns the land for their marketplace, as well as infrastructure for meetings as well as a microfinance institution through which the payments are made. The farmers are big and small. These farms usually have a level of intensification higher than the average small farmer even similar to the highly intensive farm of big farmers.

Farmers must belong to the cooperative and the MFI as both are connected, the NGO has the means to support this cooperative through technical advice as well as capital for building infrastructure, financing meetings and providing plants and tools for the farmers.

The non-local trader who are the ideal customer of this circuit Non-local traders have the money to buy significant amounts and the means of transporting the bananas to other cities, although the complex functioning of this model and the lower prices in public markets and big farms counter the attractiveness of this circuit.

Non local governments don't participate directly in this circuit, although they usually work with NGOs for other activities

1.4.2. Who does what?

Farmers farm and participate of the decision making processes, also, they participate of multiple events, courses or other activities organised by the NGO of the cooperative, for the market day they should bring their matoke to the land of the cooperative.

The cooperative, through the board members, takes care of the classification, bargaining and matoke commercialisation of the matoke as well as the further payments to the farmers and collecting fees.

A real case of this is the Harugongo-Kichwanba banana growers marketing cooperative. One day per week farmers arrive with their matoke at the private commercialisation area of the cooperative where the board members started to classify the bunches. However, This process lasted a long time as during the whole morning farmers kept arriving with their production, as it happened in the municipal market. The difference is that here the buyers have to wait until all the production was being gathered. This makes some buyers uncomfortable and many left before being allowed to buy. The ones that stayed, while waiting had the opportunity to think and discuss between them if it was profitable to buy or not.

The interesting thing came with the bargaining, the board members of the cooperative were in charge of the negotiation. The hierarchical behaviour and the group support played an important role in the negotiations instead of farmers bargaining by themselves people with experience in facilitation and politics managed to get better prices. Most of the Bananas were

sold to Gertrud, a local trader that sells her matoke in the Kabundaire market, (local traders of this scale are not so common). Although she explained to me that the price was too high and it was going to be difficult to earn good money from this investment as she bought 85 bunches, each at 20000 UGX expecting to earn 2000 per bunch. Although as she explained to me, when you risk buying a big amount is also possible that the bunches will become ripe before selling and then the money will be lost. After agreeing at the price the payment is made immediately either in cash or mobile money, nevertheless in this commercialisation model farmers have to wait to get their money as first is needed to calculate the number of bunches and the quality of the bunch of each farmer and deduct the fees for the cooperative.

The NGO provides technical support and finances some activities, infrastructure, materials or tools for the members and the cooperative. Big traders, buy the matoke and transport it to be resold in other market-places.

1.4.3. Who gets what?

For NGOs, these cooperatives will become good evidence to prove the achieving of their results, thus, improving its reputation and possibilities to access to funding in the future.

The cooperative grows its patrimony through the collection of fees from its members, farmers (members) get higher prices, and reduce their effort to sell as the selling point is close and the negotiations are done by a team of people keen on this tasks.

Members also receive constant help and support from NGOs, as I could evidence during my fieldwork KRC organised two events in which various cooperative had the opportunity to commercialise and present their products.

Wilbur (Key informant, Kasenda Sub County): “Farmers from my association received technical support, tools and plants. Even I was chosen to go and learn how to make banana wine to teach the others and create a new business.”

Farmers who do not belong to that cooperative will be able to receive some technical information as a spillover effect by observing or talking with the members.

Deo Muguisa (Key informant, Farmer/ food processor, Bamugisa farmers demonstration centre, Kibito village): “People have come to teach us many things to farm better, to make wine ... Here I teach to the people what I learned, but not everyone wants to learn, I also give plants does not matter if they are from my association, I like when people want to learn.”

Non-local traders get another source of higher quantities of matoke that, nevertheless, they still complain about the high prices and organisational aspects that make this model not so attractive for them.

Tem Evo (Middlemen, Kasese): “Is always risky due to price fluctuation, and competition. You see I am here 80km from Kasese, but in Kasese, the prices are higher in the farms. I came to see if prices where ok but are very high. I prefer to buy in the market that is close to here (Harugongo, municipal market)”

Djhon (Middleman that supplies the markets of Kabundaire and Kitomba): “I came to see if the prices were good but they are too high, with this prices I will not be able to earn money when I resell the matoke. I need 30 k (30000 UGX) per day, Imagine I earn 3 to 5 k (3000 to 5000 UGX) per bunch and imagine I will take me the whole afternoon to take the bunches to town in the bicycle.”

Workers receive the same salaries as in other circuits for loading the bananas in the lorries. This activity is paid by the buyers separately from the matoke.

1.4.4. What is done with the surpluses?

The cooperative invests in other entrepreneurship such as infrastructure for added value products, usually co-financed by NGOs. For the case of the Harugongo-Kichwanba banana growers marketing cooperative, this has contributed to increasing the patrimony of the cooperative, although this implies that the entrance fee for new members will increase proportionally to the patrimony making almost impossible that small farmers can become part of this associations.

Farmers invest in their farms and other businesses. In some cases, once they have achieved a certain level of income and knowledge members might choose to leave the cooperative to keep

working individually as many complain about the bureaucracy and social effort that implies belonging to these cooperatives.

Juliet (big farmers and businesswoman Kasenda sub-county): *“I was part of the cooperative for a time, but it was always meeting and fees. I learned many things, but I prefer to work for myself”. Since the visited cooperatives were in an initial stage, they argue not having enough volume to be entirely formal and pay taxes from sales. Nevertheless the municipality receives taxes from the MFIs that are part of these cooperatives”.*

5. Discussion and conclusion

The matoke market of the Kabarole district in Uganda is a highly heterogeneous structure composed of multiple actors that operate in multiple scales and through various strategies, making difficult to find suitable ways to fully understand the dynamics that take place in these spaces. Based on this characteristic, development policies and intervention in the area have proven not fully address the reality of it, thus instead of pursuing collaboration with the existing structures, institutional actors have chosen to promote models that contradict or bypasses the social and material elements of the context. Prove of this, is the characterisation of informal (Guha-Khasnobis; et al., 2006; NPA, 2010; IIED, 2012) given to a numerous group of actors especially the local traders identified as "the middlemen" and material infrastructure such as the marketplaces through which these actors operate. Creating in this way narratives that define these elements as the reason for farmers' low income. From this point of view, these institutional actors have created new channels in which a reduced group of farmers will commercialise their matoke, making the reality much more complex and heterogenic (Grannovetter,1985).

Despite the heterogeneity of this structure, there is a high level of order where multiple circuits are created based on the needs and objectives of the actors and the way they interact with the material and social elements in the context.

These circuits present constant overlapping in terms of actors, material and social elements nevertheless each of them can be easily identified. The matoke market of the Kabarole district is composed of four well-defined circuits which are: a) the traditional market for local consumption, b) the traditional local fragment of the regional consumption circuit, c) the high scale circuit for regional consumption, and d) the NGO sponsored circuits.

Following the analysis of the circuits based on Bernstein' four questions (van der Ploeg et al., 2012), I will discuss my findings separately for each circuit.

The case of the traditional circuit for local consumption the actors of this circuit are highly collaborative as the clear definition of roles evidence how each of the actors has successfully satisfied the needs of the rest. This system has the property of presenting closer social relations

among actors since the actors of this circuit are highly connected to fixed spaces. This doesn't mean the creation of fixed agreements, due to the unpredictable conditions of the setting. The equitable wealth distribution among actors makes this a remarkable case. Besides, the local traders being the main actors of this circuit as well as farmers agree that they can sustain their livelihoods and sometimes, there will be minor surpluses used in the case of farmers to invest in their farm or household, local traders will use it for similar purposes. The evidence shows a double discourse from the local government as in one hand is embracing the narrative of informality and not giving support to the actors of the circuit, on the other is highly aware of the dynamics as is showed by the well-adapted technology of the concessionary and tender system.

The traditional local fragment of the regional consumption circuit presents many similarities with the first one as the same type of traders and farmers. Thus, it can be considered as the same circuit responding to the external influence of the non-local traders. Nevertheless, the high influence of this external actor has created an entirely different structure in response to the high amount of matoke that this actor can buy. By turning the productive areas in actively commercial settings, the clearly defined roles characteristic of the previous circuit has turned into an overlapping of roles according to the relation of each with the material conditions of this structure such as distances and mobilisation. The cultural differences between the non-local traders and local actors (KRC & RFPJ, 2012) required the participation of the brokers which are hired based on their social skills and the knowledge of the area as a way to bypass these challenges. This local actor is highly compensated for these skills as through the commission system he earns considerably more than the rest of local actors, while on the other hand the wholesale model offers lower selling prices for local actors, especially local traders, must work harder for the same reward.

The participation of the local governments remains the same as in the first circuit, although contrary to the local traders being the main taxpayers this role is transferred to the non-local as the fast selling characteristic of this circuit makes that most of the time local actors can avoid the tenders.

The high scale circuit for regional consumption, presents itself as a completely different circuit, that contrary to the traditional ones, the actors of this circuit make use of the material

infrastructure such as the road networks and the incapacity of local governments to control the non-local traders of this circuit when they access the district. The high scale of all the actors and the reduce number on them, makes possible a relatively immense wealth accumulation of wealth. Thus the livelihood of the local actors that belong to the circuits is considerable that the majority of people involved in the matoke market. The high surpluses allow a constant improvement of the productivity and quality of big farmers is making this circuit progressively bigger in terms of scale but not in terms of actors. Rather than collaborating, this circuit is threatening other circuits by their capacity to offer lower prices and de convenience for the non-local traders that in some cases can even skip the brokers.

The NGO sponsored circuit shows how the institutional actors, in this case, a local NGO, rather than embracing and supporting the structures based on social and material elements of the context observable in the traditional circuits. Has taken a divergent approach that resembles a lot to the high scale circuit for regional consumption. The narratives of informality (Guha-Khasnobis; et al., 2006; NPA, 2010; IIED, 2012) and exploitative "middlemen" are the main argument that shapes this circuit (KRC n.d.) (IIED, 2012) (Trijp and Ingenbleek, 2010) (FAO 1999). This strong narrative has become a symbolic element that encourages the actors of this circuit to restrict the participation of other actors intentionally. The support of the NGO is destinate to farmer cooperatives, which doesn't represent the majority of the farmers of the district. Long-term support has increased the patrimony of these cooperative considerably, making it resemble a prominent farmer in terms of scale power and wealth. The fact that the inscription fees are proportional to the patrimony of the cooperative only farmers that already have a relatively high income can afford it and become new members. Consequently, the number of actors doesn't grow parallel to the accumulation of the wealth that is accumulated from the commercialization of their matoke but also through the resources constantly provided by the NGO.

I would like to conclude by pointing out how my theoretical entry point has shown successful on unravelling markets as structures shaped by the interaction of the actors that compose them with the social and material elements of context. As well as the more specific nested market theory has being helpful for a more in-depth characterization and analysis of these circuits

showing that the traditional circuit for local consumption has proven to be a fully nested market in which the distribution of power and wealth is equitable, presenting a high level of collaboration among actors. External players such as the non-local traders have proven to alter these balanced structures. While in the traditional fragment of the regional consumption circuit local actors manage to resist this unbalance by fast adaptation of the existing structures. Actors from the high scale regional circuit and the NGO sponsored circuit are rather shaped as mainstream markets that due to their perceived progressive growth, threaten the livelihoods of the majority of local actors in the matoke food system. Based on the evidence of this research my recommendation centres on the importance of seeing markets through theories more holistic rather than conventional economic approaches as a way to reduce the gap between rural development processes (van der Ploeg et al., 2012) and the intervention of institutional actors.

The analysis of these circuits has shown that they are all shaped by the interaction of the actors that compose them with the social and material elements of context. In concordance with the arguments of (Abrahams 2009; Van der Ploeg et al. 2012; Hebinck et al. 2015; Manyelo et al. 2015; Wegerif 2017; Wegerif and Hebinck 2016; Skinner 2008; Battersby et al. 2016) who theorize markets as locally specific configurations of the social actors involved. Governed by rules and regulations that are negotiated and shared by common property resource users (Ostrom 1990) & (van der Ploeg et al. 2012).

According to my findings, despite of the importance of the material and social elements, actors interact in multiple ways with these elements creating in this way the circuits that operate under entirely different paradigms, in concordance with (Callon, 1998)& (Callon et al., 2002) who argues that markets can be specified according to their social-material infrastructure.

Ostrom (1990) & van der Ploeg et al., (2012) state that when referring to the common property management markets can be distinguished between polycentric and monocentric. Based in this concept is possible to see that the two traditional circuits correspond to a monocentric type of market as is being managed and organised by a plurality of social actors, while the other two pursue the reduced participation of actors thus the control of the circuit is in the hands of few big players.

Traditional circuits present fundamental differences from the NGO sponsored circuit and the high scale circuit for regional consumption. This differences can be explained by the argument of Van der Ploeg et al. (2012) who makes a distinction between nested markets and mainstream markets, where nested markets are grounded on the explicit recognition of their embedding, while mainstream markets that tempt to obfuscate the reality of the context in which they are embedded. For the case of the analysed traditional circuits, they make use of the material and social elements through adaptation and collaboration, while the other circuits are based in the development of strategies that making use of many of the material and social elements intentionally bypass or exclude actors and institutions.

The traditional circuits have proven to be highly organised structures which even allow active participation of the local governments that despite benefiting from them through tax collection the label of informality provokes a lack of support to this circuit. On the other side, this characterisation of informality as ‘unstructured’ and ‘chaotic’ (Guha-Khasnobis; et al., 2006), (NPA, 2010) & (IIED, 2012) through which NGOs and local governments address these circuits hinder the possibilities of collaborative support. This can be clearly observed in the NGO sponsored circuit where its structure is based on premises that characterise the traditional circuits as informal, and actors local trader labeled as “the middlemen” as the responsible for the low income of farmers (KRC n.d.) (IIED, 2012) (Trijp and Ingenbleek, 2010) (FAO 1999). Contrary to these premises under which the NGO sponsored circuit is constructed, my research has shown that the local traders so called the middlemen provide essential services in these markets through technological and social material adaptations in response to the needs of other actors.

despite the evidence of the importance that social and material elements have for markets, for the case of this research it has being clear the divergence between rural development policies and rural development practices (van der Ploeg et al., 2012) thus my recommendation is that more research should be done to generate evidence that counter generalized premises (KRC n.d.) (IIED, 2012) (Trijp and Ingenbleek, 2010) (FAO 1999) that influence the decision-making and planning processes of development interventions.

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