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Barter, Old fashioned or a Modern alternative?

Defining barter contextual practice as a dynamic and contemporary socially constructed strategy of socio-economic organization and autonomy.

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Summary

Barter is a practice that occurs and that has been perceived in different places, in different times and in different contexts. Despite of its latest come-back in different societies, as a respond on capitalism, on financial crisis and as a sustainable alternative practice, there is not much known about the practice among the general public. It is an invisible practice that escapes the interest in the frame of classical economy theory, that considers barter an archaic and primitive practice of underdeveloped societies. And still, the practice is used in different modes in international trade.

In the study of barter, the contributions of empiric research and the work of Caroline Humphrey, has brought up insights and tools for defining barter exchange as a *contextual practice of its own*, that differentiates itself from commodity exchange and from gift by merging the short commercial character and gains of the first with the social relational aspects of the second.

In this report I analysed barter's social dynamic and contextual nature through participant observation in the empirical case of longstanding barter, with ancestral roots in the Andean context and culture, taking place in the Northern province of Imbabura, Ecuador, at the hand of the concepts of: ***reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, value and information*** offered by C. Humphrey, 1992.

The case of barter I describe takes place in an small town called: Pimampiro. "El Trueque del Sol", as mestizos have baptized the annual traditional barter market celebration; attracts until today people from the 4 cardinal points around the Pimampiro valley. Its *authenticity* and its *unique character* inspires the *curiosity*, the *pride* and the *admiration* of social actors that invest their efforts in studying, visibilizing and promoting the practice, that is obtained the recognition for custom of Immaterial Value and Cultural Heritage. Social actors see an opportunity for *development* inside the frame of Social and Solidarity Economic practices.

I describe the interactions that makes of barter **a highly adaptable, dynamic, contextual phenomenon**; that has more of a **complex and sophisticated socio-economic strategy** (which is constructed in contextual cultural, socio-political, economic and historic repertoires) than of a repetitive, primitive practice that can be easily prototyped.

I have argued the persistence of barter in the Andes by defining and analysing the cultural, social, economic, political and religious parameters that play a role enabling Pimampiro's barter market celebration until today.

In the discussion, I argue to complement the analysis of barter in Pimampiro with the integration of Andean culture based concepts; to define more specifically and to visibilize its religious and social nature, its purposes and its articulations, inside the Andean context of Pimampiro. I have also argued the limiting factors of barter and barter systems related to the introduction of neo-liberal economic models, forcing the integration of people to the monetary system and the assimilation of values of individualization and profits maximization.

Suggestions for future research involve the influence of modernity and external interventions in the unique character of the celebration and on the subjective valuation mechanisms of people and on the role of women.

To conclude, the implications of this research work for policy and intervention are related to the importance of the social factor in the construction of barter, and barter markets, aimed for their continuity and perdurance.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Barter's *come-back* among people everywhere in the world as a 'new-way' of accessing goods with no money, is a new trend I perceive, even in the Netherlands where I live. This trendy-fashion is used between mothers, young-people and a strategy that is been implemented by some institutions (Fabre-Platas & Santamaria, 2012). I found barter an interesting subject to study because it is almost *invisible*. It happens at different levels, all around the world, but there is not much known about the practice among the general public. Authors suggest that barter functions as a strategy for the lack of liquidity (Ange, 2016; Thomson & Arango, 2013; Gatti, 2010; Primavera, 2010) and as a political-economic strategy (Tocancipa, 2008) for standing against the discrimination of capitalism and money with an alternative for accessing goods without the use of money (Ange, 2016; Thomson & Arango, 2013; Gatti, 2010; Primavera, 2010). However, it does not seem to get a relevant place inside dominant economic theory, as a *modern* economic resource, even when it is used inside international-trade where different kinds of barter models have been categorized (Kaikati, 2006; Liesch et al., 1998; Huzsag & Barksdale, 1986).

Despite the undervaluation of barter in economic theory, barter is used at large scale, discerning different barter modes in international trade. According to Kaikati (2006), "*there are entire (international) trade-systems based on it as their major mode of exchange*". It demonstrates the *modernity* of barter and the versatility of barter, which contrast with the *invisibility* of the practice as a result of the (theoretical) underestimation of barter (and socio-economic benefits) in traditional economic theory and in the recent past of economic anthropology, according Humphrey (1992).

Considering this, the debate around the *nature* and the *place* of barter in society and history develops on the criticism against the description barter has received in traditional economic theory ascribing it an image of *archaism*, *primitiveness* and *underdevelopment* (Graeber, 2011 Humphrey, 1982). Scholars agree on categorizing the practice as a *universal phenomenon*, as it has been observed since the past repeating itself in different times and contexts (Humphrey, 1992; Polanyi, 1944). It has been demonstrated that barter and barter-systems *coexist* since the past with monetary systems and with price-market systems where it has been used *as an alternative form of payment* and not a predecessor of money (Stanish, 2013; Graeber, 2011). Its implementation is multiple and diverse around the world, as well as the rules whereby it is performed, making a highly *contextual* phenomenon (Stanish, 2013; Humphrey, 1992; Ange, 2015).

Some examples of barter where authors base their theories are found in the documented use of barter in the earliest Euro-Asian civilizations; such as, the Mesopotamian civilization, 6000 B.C., (Graeber, 2011). The most known cases of barter of the past described in the literature is the barter-system among Polynesian tribal communities, according to the narratives from the 17th century (Polanyi, 1944). More lately barter is described taking place in international trade among Eastern and Western nations in the 70's, a phenomenon called: '*Countertrade-Barter*' (Kaikati, 2006; Huzsag & Barksdale,

1986). Barter is also observed in non-capitalist societies such as Russia in the 90's (Humphrey, 2002; 1992). And, in different places in Africa and Western-Africa (Guyer, 1995). Also, in curious indigenous ritual practices in Australia (Graeber, 2011); and most recently, in rural and urban areas of Europe, England and Australia, where different kind of modern-barter with and without currency have been in place during recession periods (Liesch et al., 1997). Further observations have also been made in the post-industrial United States (Humphrey, 1992) as in other capitalist's societies, such as, in Argentina in 2002 (Angé, 2016; Gatti 2010). In Mexico, cases of indigenous barter and barter organized in indigenous communities by the Catholic Church (Fabre Platas & Santamaria, 2012) have been observed and compared. The last example, has been categorized as a result of barter's *come-back* in the form of a *socio-economic alternative* utilized inside the frame of *Social Solidarity Economies* (SSE), or *alternative economies*, overlapping the well documented examples of barter-systems of indigenous people of the Andes in the Pre-Hispanic time, that have inspired the 'vertical-archipelago' theory (Murra, 1973), and that still exist until our days (Argumedo & Pimbert, 2010; Corr, 2016; Hirth & Pillsbury, 2013; Orlove & others, 1986; Murra, 1984).

1.1. Antecedent: Social Solidarity Economy

The increasing interest in alternative ways of making economy and the popularity that *Social Solidarity Economy* alternatives have gained inside the International Development political agenda as a way to *humanize* or to oppose the global dominant exclusionary economic system (Ward, 2019) and capitalism, designed to subjugate people to centralized norms, values and practices (Neantam, 2002); has contributed to a new arena of action where the sense of *community* is central (Kawano, 2013). Social Solidarity Economy, according to the UN definition embrace two streams: *Social Economy* (third sector) with *Solidarity Economy* (against the neo-liberal capitalist economic system) and is an alternative to capitalism (as concrete practices, policies and institution, social movements as well as theory or framework), that allows ordinary people to play a role in shaping their economic lives. It is an ethical and values-based approach to create economy development, opposed to growth that prioritizes the welfare of people and planet over (blind) growth. Self-management¹, the empowerment of women and of marginalized groups, popular and informal economies, green economies and fair trade are important elements comprising the areas of action of SSE. (Kawano, 2013)

Inside the SSE ideological, theoretical and practical frame, barter-markets are defined as *popular or informal economy practices* (Kawano, 2013) that have become ways by which explore, experiment and stimulate what is defined as *reciprocal* and *community-based* economic strategies; articulating through these, socio-cultural and environmental ideals that seek to empower (Ange, 2016; Gatti, 2010) people towards Sustainable Development Practices which are practices inspired by concepts of (Neantam, 2002) *well-being* and of higher *quality-of-life*.

The practice perceived *recurrently* and *persistently* in different times and places, is also observed in Pimampiro Ecuador, where a barter takes place in the context of a religious celebration, attracting people from different places. The following case of *traditional* barter held for centuries, offers a living-

¹ Autonomous, self-regulating.

example of a longstanding barter type that has ancestral roots and that still be practiced until today. The barter celebration market takes place in its genuine geographical and cultural context, having survived societal changes and time.

1.2. Pimampiro's actual and traditional barter

In 17 January 2018 the barter market or '*el cambeo*'² of Pimampiro got introduced in the list of Cultural Expressions considered Immaterial National Patrimony of Ecuador. This recognition has been given due to the historical and symbolic value of the celebration, considered Ecuadorian Cultural Heritage. Social actors recognize the economic and sociological value it has for the rural communities that meet each other once each year in Pimampiro, as it is described by government bureaucrats, in interviews, in 2018: *"this kind of barter has been preserved in its natural state, ..These activities have a magnitude at a cultural level because these identify the 'innate' and the 'quotidian' of Andean rural livelihoods, which are promoted in a natural way"*, according to the words of the Mayor of Pimampiro, Oscar Narvaez. Today, Pimampiro's barter exchange market, or "*El Trueque del Sol*"³, is perceived as an ancestrally held *tradition* that serves to obtain the products for the recipe of a religiously linked typical dish in a context that as an indigenous woman expressed: *"it is good to exchange, because sometimes one has not the money to buy it, so one exchanges, so you can have to eat"*.

The *uniqueness* of "*el cambeo*" celebration, held once in the year in Ecuador; its persistence and genuine character inspires pride and admiration, as I was able to perceive, by different people. This admiration and appreciation for the ancient market are demonstrated in the interest of political actors, such as the mayor of Pimampiro, Oscar Narvaez, who actively sought to conserve and to promote the practice, enabling academic research and exposing the practice of barter taking place in the streets of Pimampiro town to the public, *"for actual and later generations to (en)joy"* (as he has expressed in pers. comm. in 2018).

The use of barter in the Andes is evidenced in the *unique* and *visible* case of longstanding precolonial barter in Pimampiro. This barter celebration market event provides a real and unique opportunity to analyse barter in a context of tradition, where an ancestral ritual celebration is maintained until today.

The occasion, next to having the chance, to study in real life an ancestrally held tradition, motivated to look for answers to raised questions on what involves economic systems socially constructed and what has then *invisibilized* these social practices, contributing to their underestimation, and later on, to their come-back? What is actually the practice of barter and what does the practice of barter involve? Can barter be spread by promotion and prototyping? These are the questions I aim to answer in this report. The first questions are answered, resorting to Caroline Humphrey (1992) empiric research observations and the theoretical/conceptual *tools* she provides to define the elements that constitute the kind of exchange practices among people considered as barter, in her book: *"Barter, Exchange and Value"*, inside economic anthropology. Her work in this report represents a major reference point to understand more about barter as a practice. Taking her work as the conceptual

² Meaning in Spanish "the exchange" as it is pronounced by afro Ecuadorians.

³ Meaning in Spanish "The exchange of the Sun". A name that refers to the meaning of the quichua word "Pimampiro" = "Sun".

basis for the analysis of barter in Pimampiro, I describe the case and I finally argue the limitations of using her concepts through the incorporation of Andean-culture-based concepts; I reflect on and discuss briefly the invisibilization of barter and I suggest the implications for policy in interventions related to the practice related to its socially-constructed nature.

1.3. Report's Structure

The structure of this report will have the following sequence;

In chapter 1, I introduce the reader to the phenomenon of barter, its observation around the world. The antecedent for the study of this case, introducing briefly the place it has inside the developmental agenda. I introduce then, Pimampiro barter interesting and unique opportunity to empirically study, a case of, barter.

In chapter 2, I introduce the reader to the concept of barter as a practice. I introduce Caroline Humphrey. Then, the definitions of barter suggested by Caroline Humphrey are briefly introduced. As last in this chapter, the conceptual framework based on the following conceptual tools: *reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, value and information* suggested by Caroline Humphrey (2002; 1992; 1985) in the field of Economic Anthropology will be introduced. These tools will be used in this report for the analysis of the observed barter market event in Pimampiro, Ecuador, in 2018. I will also introduce Caroline Humphrey and her work; the research objectives and the research questions.

In chapter 3, I describe the research methodology, geographic location and research methods.

In chapter 4, I present the results in the description of Pimampiro case study. Historical background, Pimampiro today, Pimampiro barter celebration market case description, and the analysis of the Pimampiro barter and market case with the conceptual tools.

In chapter 5, I discuss Humphrey's conceptual tools. I discuss the contextual understanding of barter by suggesting concepts based on the Andean culture and context, suggested by N. Tassi (2017). I reflect on Humphrey's limitations in my view and in other authors' view. I discuss and reflect on the invisibilization of barter, on its rather dynamic nature that makes it an actual phenomenon. I reflect on my own research process. I offer some recommendations for future research study. And finally, I present implications and recommendations insights for policy and intervention.

In chapter 6, I bring up a conclusion on this report to finalize.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Conceptualizing barter as a practice

Human-Agency or a Natural-tendency to exchange things with one another?

The importance of placing barter correctly in history, not as a predecessor of money, lies in understanding the influence, or power, of human-agency in the co-creation of economic strategies which are part of the social arena. This process is not determined by natural processes or *made-up* evolutionary theories on how an economy is developed, or in which grade a society is developed. (Graeber, 2011).

In exploring the nature of barter, the empirically based, cultural-substantivist argument held inside anthropology takes distance from traditional economic theory's view wherein barter is motivated by "*a natural tendency to exchange things for others*" (Smith's 1776). Anthropological research has shown that economy is submerged in social relationships, resulting that economy, and economic strategies such as barter, is a *social construct* (Polanyi, 1944) by which people seek to meet its personal or collective needs, (Humphrey, 1992) and not a step inside a singular development-path (Smith, 1776) in which all societies in the world would commit before ending-up with one single kind of economic system. Modes of exchange without money are economic practices widely *perceived* in history and in the development of human societies around the world, where, as observed in empiric research, it is suggested that *human-agency* (Polanyi, 1944) "*figures as one generative and shaping agent*" of economic strategies (Dietz & Burns, 1992).

According to Karl Polanyi (1944), in an absence of separated institutions governing the different social and economic spheres and in the existence of *symmetry* and *centricity* as norms for the organization of society, 'principals of behaviour' such as *reciprocity* and *redistribution* ensure the working of an economic system. Based on Polanyi's suggestions, Caroline Humphrey, integrates in her work in the study of barter concepts of reciprocity and social relations in her analysis of the different barter she has observed. In her observations she confirms Polanyi's suggestions on the agency that '*man*', or people, have as a social being in the creation of economic systems and of economic systems being objects of social relations.

Barter has been described "*as a pattern that repeats itself in different times and places*", according to Polanyi (1944) "*these natural endowments reappearing with a remarkable constancy in all times and places*". In the actual days barter and barter systems have been found in different places of the world, according to Humphrey (1992): "*Such systems criss-cross Australia, link the Andes with the forest, the Amazon and Orinoco, and are documented in native North America, pre-Columbian Mexico, in Central Asia, Siberia and many other places*". due to the universal use of barter among people and the creation of barter systems as methods to make economy around the world, barter has been described and it is recognized as a practice of a *ubiquitous character* with cultural characteristics which are specific of each case (Yala, 1997) and its social nature is beyond mere economic motivations (Polanyi, 1944).

In arguing barter as a contextual and contemporary practice, rather than a natural tendency to exchange of human beings; it is important to understand the academic discrepancy around the nature of barter.

Academic discrepancy centres itself around the *nature* of barter, motivated by the criticism on the *formalist thinking*, which is characterized by the *rational thinking* in *traditional* or liberal economic theory that described the practice as an almost *biological human tendency* that required of an evolution. Inside this debate, the *place* in history in which barter is located is *fundamental* to understand more about the *systematically ignored historical, social and cultural processes* (Humphrey, 1992) part of the creation of economic strategies and the role of human-agency in this creation (Hebinck, 2015; Stanish & Coben, 2013; Polanyi, 1944) and its evolution, as a constant and dynamic process (Stanish & Coben, 2013; Graeber, 2011; Van Buren, 1996). The study the phenomenon of barter involves in itself exploration and the recognition of diverse and complex socio-economic systems, according to academics who criticized the dominant *knowledge-paradigm* inside traditional economic theory (Tocancipa, 2008; Humphrey, 1992; Polanyi, 1944).

In the study of barter, formalist thinking becomes the overshadowing factor for the integral understanding of the practice which is better understood when arguing the formal thinking inside economic theory. Recent Economic Anthropology research argues formalist thinking by delivering empirical evidence to demonstrate that barter is not *the predecessor of money* (Graeber, 2011), neither is it *an ancient phenomenon that pertains of primitive societies* and either it is a primitive practice (Graeber, 2011; Kaikati, 2006; Humphrey, 1992). Instead, when seen in the light of the social and its agency, barter demonstrates to be rather a sophisticated, complex and actual phenomenon, practiced in different kinds of societies. Its existence evidences the resourcefulness of people in finding ways to access products, services and in building relationships that would provide them with benefits and evidences the autonomy that they have to do so.

2.2. Introduction to Caroline Humphrey and of barter as a practice.

British anthropologist, C. Humphrey, is a relevant scholar in the study of barter systems and practice from a perspective that places barter inside the socio-political conditions of its context that has developed her work upon her empirical studies in Mongolia, Siberia, Nepal, India, Inner Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Her books constitute an important review through the literature on diverse exchange-systems. Her discussions on the theoretical level are supported by empirical observations in the different places, contributing to the debate around nature of barter and giving support to the culturalist-substantivist narrative inside economic anthropology, where cultural and social processes are central for the organization of socio-economic strategies and mechanisms. Her view demonstrates, and sets central, the influence of human-agency in the co-creation of strategically developed socio-economic mechanisms. Her book on barter called: *"Barter Exchange and Value"*, 1992, is an analysis and a co-work on barter theories and observations together with other academics that have also done research in the area of barter. The discussions and conclusions, she brings up are based on the theoretical and empirical work of her own and others'. Her second book on barter-

strategies observed in Russia, after the cold war, called: *"The unmaking of the Soviet Life. Everyday Economies After Socialism"* is an empirical study of how the strategy is used at different levels in the lack of *liquidity* inside the post-soviet period in Russia. Her paper on the barter-system of the Lhomi in North-east Nepal, called: *"Barter and Economic Disintegration"*, is another empirical example of a barter-system where the diversity of environments, (or "vertical-archipelago", as suggested by Murra, 1984), economic disintegration and/or a lack of liquidity, makes of barter an important strategy to obtain products of daily consumption.

Humphrey suggest that barter is a *socio-economic strategy*, with characteristic specific from the context where it is used. It is socially designed by individuals or groups of people to obtain goods and services without the use of money, (or with the use of an alternative currencies) and without the involvement of any formal institutions. Humphrey finds that barter is designed by people and people are the ones that set the rules, or the ritual, by which the exchange takes form. Some researchers, such as Graeber (2017) agrees with Humphrey on that idea.

In the exchange 'cultural, psychological, social and religious elements' play a role, this is why it is difficult to make *a one-fits-all* description of barter, or to categorize all types of barter practiced around the world (Humphrey, 1992). The dynamics, the symbolism and the case-specific way in which this activity takes place, the kind of relationships it generates, or the purposes behind it, make it hard to singularize and to give a prescription for what should be and what should not be considered barter. A definition on barter represented as *barter pure and simple* (Chapmann 1980; Malinowsky, 1922) seems not to fit into the diverse kind of relationships and the multiple purposes, contexts and dynamics in which barter takes place around the world. (Humphrey, 1992).

Humphrey, in 1992, explains that barter is better understood *"when seen in the light of its social context"*, because *"it involves a constellation of features not all which are necessarily present in any particular instance"*, indicating that for this reason it is less useful to provide an all containing definition of barter, and that it is preferable to treat barter as a phenomenon of a *polythetic category*. Due to her extensive work and her well described, well based contested argumentation delivering free of abstract complexity analytical tools for defining and for understanding barter as a social practice, I selected Humphrey's concepts for the initial analysis of barter in Pimampiro, Ecuador.

2.3. Characteristics and definitions of barter as a practice according to C. Humphrey

Barter, is according to Humphrey's definition, a practice *in its own* that has characteristics that differentiates it from gift and commodity-exchange. This polythetic category might probably be the reason why barter has been confused with exchange-commodity and with gift by academia, as suggested by C. Humphrey (1992). The major difference between both practices, where barter lays in between, is that one sets the nuance in the object and the other on the relationships. In barter both elements, the objects and relationships are central.

According to Humphrey (1992) barter is *essentially* determined by the *interest* each side has in the *object* of the other, an interest that gets satisfied by the transaction. The goods exchanged have a direct consumption value for the transactors.

Still, in barter, the *relationships* created are not necessarily, or need to become, economic relationships. *“These relationships are not compulsory as in a gift-relationship, but freer in its kinds”*. According to Humphrey (1992) categorisation of barter, she suggests that barter takes place at the moment two individuals, or groups of people, meet and there is *no delay* involved, as in *gift*. She suggests by this that barter implies a direct exchange or also called *‘instant-barter’*, as the opposite found in gift’s *‘delayed-barter’*.

In the literature, some have suggested barter as involving relationships of ‘haggling’ seeking the maximization of own profits (Graeber, 2011). In a Humphreys’ perspective (1992), seeking merely a *maximization of profits and personal benefit*, would disrupt the social ties created by barter, and would rather affect barter. Humphrey finds the opposite in barter relations and suggest that *trust* is the element required, in a certain degree at all commercial practices, that guarantees the repetition of the barter transaction.

According to Humphrey (1992), the *products* are important, or more or less central, in many barter transactions, but there is certainly *the relational aspect* of barter that makes it possible and that ensures its repetition. If barter would involve taking advantage of the other, by maximizing profits as end-goal, the practice would mean a *disruption of the social ties* because, one part would find it “unprofitable”, or un-satisfactory; having as real end-result that barter would not repeat itself.

“that the products are central in the exchange might be the case in some types of exchange, but certainly in all types of exchange, the relationship, or the kind of relationship, and the trust, the transactor-part have on and with each other influence the transaction itself”, (Humphrey, 1992).

She has also observed (1992) there are different elements that contribute barter market networks and markets to exist; such as: specialization by craft or local production, geographical parameters, etc. *ritualization* of trading and trading partnerships is often used in regular seasonal markets and fairs. These trading-partnerships and their particular practices are often misinterpreted and confused with ideas/thoughts of *disutility* and *primitiveness*.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

Humphrey’s categorization of barter as a *contextual phenomenon*, is based on characteristics (in barter and barter-systems) she has observed and described. These characteristics of barter, such as: ***Reciprocity, Social relations, Disintegration, Information and Valuation*** explain some of most relevant elements and conditions for the occurrence of barter and barter-systems, according to C. Humphrey (1992). In this report, the characteristics mentioned above, will be used as the conceptual framework for the analysis of the traditional yearly barter celebration in Pimampiro, because they play a role in this traditional barter event. These characteristics, have been chosen by a norm of

adequateness, or because the *fit in*, according to the kind of barter I have observed, during field work, in Pimampiro, in 2018.

A brief introduction to the meaning of these *conceptual characteristics* can be summarized and enlisted, (which I do in this paragraph) just for a matter of comfort for the reader in searching for the meaning of each concept. In the next paragraph, I will either way, introduce the reader properly and in more extend to the meaning of each of the conceptual characteristics, suggested by Humphrey.

Reciprocity refers to the ‘moral obligation’ one has to reciprocate the other when involved in barter reciprocal-relations. It is the obligation to reciprocate the sacrifice of the other. It lends its origin to religious and cultural *morals* and mechanisms to reach those morals.

Social relations are embedded in barter and barter-system. As social relations form the particular *bonds of society* through barter and barter-systems. Besides relations of kin (a kind of relationships frequently discussed in papers about barter in the Andes) there are *interethnic-barter relations*. The benefits gotten out through, or in, interethnic-barter relations are different, in the different cases, some examples I have found in the literature are; peace keeping, cultural reproduction, and other strategical or political purposes or ends. People involved in specialized-barter find a commercialization channel through barter systems and barter-trade. It can also be a way of keeping ritual-friendships with trivial transactions in order to create safety nets or just simply friendship.

Disintegration is a condition in which barter and barter-systems are created. This condition that can be voluntarily enforced by barter-systems, as well as it contributes to perpetuate barter systems.

Information is what enables barter. It is gotten through barter, but is also spread through barter systems.

Valuation is done by subjective estimations on the other, among other social, political, or psychological conditions. Requires a transformation of value and reflects ‘supply and demand’ of products within a certain context, but not as a numeric given extracted from or guided by external institutions (such as the market) but as a political decision to organize an economy in a particular way, not having universal values for things.

2.5. The meaning of the concepts offered by C. Humphrey

2.5.1. Reciprocity

In the observations made by Polanyi (1944) of the Polynesian tribes and interethnic trade to show that distribution and trade need not be subordinated to monetary gain, Polanyi argued that trade is not necessarily organised in terms of monetary exchange: it can also be organised in *reciprocal relationships* as in *gift-relationships*, or it can be administered from above in *redistributive systems*. In a contrasting parallel with Smith’s thinking (1776), Polanyi suggests that “*not the propensity to barter, but ‘reciprocity’ in social behaviour dominates*”, Polanyi’s view of barter was that of an *ancient system*

which was *socially constructed* and was part of a market economy, in which distribution and trade are not tied to mere economic gain. He categorized societies in capitalist and non-capitalist relations. Jessop (2010); “Polanyi identified three such principles associated with economic activities embedded in non-economic institutions: (a) reciprocity among similarly arranged or organised groupings (e.g. segmentary kinship groups); (b) redistribution through an allocative centre linked to a political regime; and (c) householding based on production to satisfy the needs of a largely self-sufficient unit such as a family, settlement or manor.

In Humphrey’s suggested characteristics of barter (1992), *reciprocity* is explained in the light of *reciprocal relations* where individuals stand in a *relation of reciprocal-exchange*, reciprocated transactions or acts, guided by *moral obligation*. In Humphreys words: “*individuals stand in a relation of moral obligation based on mutual exchange of equivalent sacrifices (or goods)*”, which can be explained as ‘reciprocity’.

What is important to pay attention to and to understand, is the *morality of barter* residing religious life, in the context where barter takes place. *Barter is not governed by any formal or central institution* than *morality*, often linked to spiritual and religious motives, according to Humphrey (1992).

Then, the morality ruling elements in barter, or the moral that motivates barter, can be different in different contexts, according to the cultural groups and their situation. Humphrey (1985) in this argument, refers to *justice* as motivated by *karma*, what would guide the moral obligation of giving-back or rewarding the other *fairly* in the interethnic barter of the Buddhist Lhomi in Nepal. Another example that reflects the *morality* behind barter linked to *religious believes* is given by Humphrey in the same context, but in a different *social dynamic*, as she refers to the *sacrifices* involved in *rituals of protection* to the *lamas* among the Lhomi. This is a kind of barter that involves *offers*, or goods, for protection. A relevant remark is that the morality behind barter is not always a *conscious-given* for the people involved in barter, she adds; “*It does not suggest people are consciously motivated by the idea of karma*” and its abstract mechanism of justice, but it proposes that “*the notion of a fair deal is a moral one related above all intention and that should be seen in the context of religious ideas present in this culture*”, of which the most relevant according to Humphrey is *karma*. The central idea of the notion of *justice* and *karma* embedded in the religious culture of the Buddhist Lhomi, becomes integral to barter practices and to the entire range of economic activities, which imply un-conscious reciprocity. It is in the moral that barter is or becomes reciprocal.

2.5.2. Social Relations

According to Caroline Humphrey (1992), barter in the societal context, cannot be a *purely economic transaction*, because “*it always occurs in a social or psychological situation*”, where ‘social-relations’ are reached as barter is (or becomes) a constant feature in regional economy.

In the Andes, monetary transactions alongside with non-monetary ones have coexisted as part of the *hacienda*, or ‘*farm-system*’ in which *patrons*’ and *peons*’ relationships, were reciprocal relations which played a role in the socio-economic structure imposed in colonial times (Stanish & Coben, 2013). The so-called *patronage relationships* that Spanish landowners, and their descendants used with indigenous people, but in a way that indigenous people where accounted a debt they would never finish to pay, enslaving them, by means of these life-debts. In the ‘*patron and peons*’ relationships

described in the literature, power and status were asymmetrical and were a form of procuring a “legitimate” way to enslave peons to labour and to their patrons. These kind of barter relations might appear moral or amoral, according to different views. This kind of barter has the character of *mutual payment*, more than *equal exchange* and has politics playing a role. This example of *impure*⁴ barter, where barter is evidently a transaction happening between two human beings, or social groups, occurring under a social and psychological situation, demonstrates that *social relations* play a role in barter systems, and that what is called ‘*the bonds of society*’ are formed. It demonstrates that for the analysis of barter; barter and barter systems and its social-relations, “cannot be detached from its cultural and economic context”.

For Humphrey (1992), one of the characteristics of barter is that it is a *voluntary act*, that creates relations in its own mode. In her book she says to agree with Simmel (1978) who *forcefully argues that: “it is not that society, as an absolute entity that exists and creates exchange, but that exchange itself creates the bonds of society”*; adding that, “*barter, in this perspective, is one of the kinds of exchange which creates social-relations in its own mode*”. Offering space for doubt whether or not the ‘patrons-peons’ relationships can be considered relationships of barter, I will proceed to solve this conceptual dilemma resorting on the point, which can be argued against, suggested by Humphrey herself on barter’s *voluntary nature*.

At the hand of Humphrey’s theory, some could argue that these ‘*patrons and peons*’ relationships of the past can be considered the kind of barter relations in which political and strategical purposes are involved, enacted by the transactors creating bonds of society which are rather based on power-disbalances. I think personally these can be considered barter-relations, indeed, even when these were enforced by means of aggression and power. Although, this is not the kind of barter I will be analysing in my report, it is nevertheless necessary to introduce this example in order to explain how social-relations play a role in creating or maintaining barter and how the role of social-relations can influence the moral values, valuation estimations and other elements that form part of the *whole* involved in barter, framing barter’s contextual analysis.

Even when *debt* and *enslaving mechanisms* can be considered mechanisms that formed particular bonds in society, as was the case in the Andes in colonial times, Humphrey (1992) suggests that barter as a socio-economic mechanism, is the type of transaction in which people relates in a *voluntary way*. According to Humphrey on barter’s voluntary nature, *voluntary, ungoverned agreements* are made between individuals, implicating there is a ‘*choice*’ to agree in a situation, having variable consequences and becoming crucial arena for ethical-action because it engenders a *morality of its own*.

*Impure, referring to barter as the opposite of the *pure economic transaction model* suggested by Anne Chapman (1980) in *L’Homme*, in her attempt to create or to stablish a *universal model of barter*, where barter is de-contextualized from the real circumstances in which it occurs.

⁴ Referring to contaminated barter by social elements.

2.5.3. Interethnic barter

Humphrey (1992) suggests that barter is been mostly held by people who live close to each other; *“most barter takes place between people who live close to one another, who interact frequently, who belong to a dispersed community.., .. and who are linked by a network of kinship relations ..it is both the result and the mark of their sociability”*. This vicinity among groups of people of different ethnic backgrounds, or from a different community or social groups, involves a constellation of features in itself as well which are of influence or are influenced through barter and barter-systems and which are enacted in the search of a benefit.

Interethnic barter, at the same time, serves for the *reproduction of culture* and is a *mode of socialization* among ethnizes or groups of people, *“whereby the ideas on the own self as community and the identity of the social group is represented by, and embedded in, the products exchanged”* (Humphrey, 1992). Indicating in this way that there is something very interesting happening in interethnic barter; things that are traded are *culturally classified* with their original owners and producers, what also makes the goods attractive to exchange or even to be demanded. From this angle *culture*, has implications for barter *“not only persons but also their wants and the types of exchange they create, will always be culturally define in particular ways”*, involving the transaction of ‘characteristic goods’ or *“the products of specific labour, processes and environments, identified with their community of origin”*.

Humphrey (1992) indicates as well that inter-ethnic barter relations are one of the types of relations where barter is held between people *unknown* to each other, on a base of *trust*, in a context where information is available and passed over.

2.5.4. Disintegration

“Barter will occur when economies are atomised or when money ceases to function as a standard of value”, indicates Humphrey (2002), suggesting that these ancient socio-economic strategies have an important role serving as mode of struggle for survival and disconnection, or *independence*, from a wider or central monetary system. According to Humphrey; *“barter will have the effect of disintegration of the regional economy*. In some cases, the conscious rejection of monetisation, can be one of the explanations for the persistence of barter and the immediate satisfaction of needs, as a deliberate strategy to maintain autonomy, (Humphrey, 1985). This might as well explain that barter is part of a system of subsistence of people who have less money to spend and that belong to cultural or ethnical group that is excluded or discriminated (or that excludes itself consciously) and that relate according to their own cultural norms and traditions. Humphrey (2002) adds; *“for barter to become dominant in an area, such that it can incorporate even pure money, we must suppose not only economic, but also some particular social and cultural conditions which allow the 'construction' of barter as a system”*.

An example of particular social and cultural conditions that allow the construction of barter as described by Humphrey is based on her observations of the systematic use of barter among the Tibetan nomads and the Lhomi, in north-east Nepal; who have (chosen for) an autonomous organization and independence, partly due to a trajectory of internal political disintegration. Based on

her observations in Russia (2002) and Nepal (1985), Humphrey refers to barter practices as a *symptom* of a disintegrated economy, that also *perpetuates it*.

2.5.5. Valuation

According to Strathern (1992) the assumption of the “*worth of gifts, of exchanges, of things, or people is expressed as an exchange ratio arrived at by the simple process of counting things as discrete units which are the calculated against one another*” is misleading, because it would imply that there are no individuals involved who would not be motivated by any emotional, psychological, social or cultural reasons. In barter goods have no ratio of equivalence based of external market forces but by a process of calculating the worth of things contrasting the objects with one another, assuming the goods exchanged are substitutable. She adds that the things exchanged “*are unitary entities which are matched and paired together, and in which enumeration serves merely as the metaphor for their substitutability.*”

In contrast with the calculation of values used in a price system, or in certain extend in commodity exchange; in barter (as in other types of exchange such as the gift) there is a *subjective calculation of the value of the goods exchanged*. Goods exchanged cannot be given or measured by for example market mechanisms because specific values are given by the specific context and moment wherein these are exchanged. Value, for Simmel (1978) later cited by Appadurai (1986) “*is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgment made about them by subjects*”.

The value of the objects exchanged often times also express the *valuation of the relation one has* with the other or of each other's persons, evidencing the *social nature of barter* by which the value of the goods exchanged cannot be calculated only by simple numeric affairs. “*The objects exchanged in barter, like those of the gift, are entities which are compared with their sources of origin, what is exchanged are not things for things, or the relative values of people quantified in things, but mutual estimations and regards*” (Strathern, 1992). The total englobing of the valuation parameters of an object and a person in a certain moment and context is called “*the barter model of value*”.

The kind of valuation method or mechanism that also play a role in interethnic barter is that *goods stand for people* meaning that, the classification of products by ethnic-group or (craft) origin sets the value to the product(s). This mechanism is also a relational, social or subjective value in the end. (Appadurai, 1986; Humphrey, 1992; 1985)

In the most relevant example of interethnic barter, among Lohmi and Tibetan nomads, offered by C. Humphrey (1985), there are characteristics observed that help describe the methods for the valuation of the goods used by the two social and ethnical groups. The observations of the barter-systems in north-east Nepal, lead C. Humphrey to suggest that more widely produced items are likely to be exchanged at ratios most nearly approximating to notional ‘equilibrium rates’^{5*}, than those infrequently transacted which are exchanged at more arbitrary rates. She adds that exchange ratios are subject to different conditions; such as, *bargaining* and *equilibrium-rates* for frequently exchanged goods. Humphrey observes that in intervillage exchange exchange-ratios for *frequent* or common produce are consistent. In *less frequently* exchanged goods, she observed *any consistency* in

⁵ Equilibrium rate: not exceeding the highest or the lowest value or price. A constant average.

exchange-ratios. In a situation where barter is done without the use of a measurement and the absence of money as a measurement, there is nothing like a 'fair-price', where this *justice-abstract* gets replaced by whatever the parties consider convenient.

2.5.6. Information

Confirming the argument of Anderlini and Sauborian, Humphrey (1992) suggests that what is necessary to allow barter to take place is *information* and not a particular social context, which is essential. Information is an element that makes barter systems possible, according to Humphrey's (1992; 1985) theory. Without information been involved, people would not be able to know where to get what and from whom.

In *the real world* there are different cultural settings and all of them involve relationships where information is exchanged.

Consequently, information is one important element required for people to create barter systems and networks. There are many kinds of social relationships where sufficient information is available for barter to take place. In a context of social-relationships there is information on specialization by craft or local production, geographical parameters, etc., that contribute to barter market networks and markets to exist. People become aware of this through the flow of information available between people (Humphrey, 1992).

2.6. Objectives

Next to conceptualizing and understanding the practice in Pimampiro, I will argue a discussion in which I use the contribution of other academics and their empirical studies, to further understand barter persistence and presence in modern times, in which I suggest socially embedded and modern character.

Objective 1

To (define barter as a practice and to) verify the theoretical concepts suggested by Caroline Humphrey (1992; 1985) in the analysis of the empirical study case of barter in Pimampiro, in 2018.

Objective 2

To understand human-agency in shaping economic strategies, such as barter and barter markets, evidenced in Pimampiro's barter celebration inside the Andean context.

Objective 3

To demonstrate barter is a modern phenomenon, which is not based on primitiveness but on complex contextual conditions, such as; culture and religious beliefs, environmental conditions, socio-political relations and on (political) choice of cultural, social and economic significance and purpose.

2.7. Research Questions

Main Question:

Is barter, an economic mechanism that can be prototyped or is it socially constructed?

Sub-questions:

1. *What are characteristics or conditions for the reproduction of barter, according to Humphrey (1992)? And, how do these explain the persistence of barter (in Pimampiro) until today?*
2. *How does human agency play a role in the construction and practice of modern barter? &, What enables and limits the conservation of barter (and barter-systems) in the Andean context?*
3. *Why barter, and barter systems, have become invisible and covered with an image of underdevelopment and archaism? why are barter systems invisible and underestimated?*

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

The *positivist* narrative in traditional economic theory sets barter as a primitive practice (pertaining to primitive and un-developed cultures) that precedes money, and the *cultural-substantivist* argument that sets the accent and the focus on empirical data to explain the practice inside the different contexts and societies persisting until modern times. Inside the debate between the *positivist thinking* narrative and the *cultural substantivism* narrative, Caroline Humphrey is one of the researchers that has contributed decisively with concepts formed on empirical evidence. Her conceptualisation of the phenomena is based on empirical observation of the practice in a few places around the world.

The interest and years of study that Caroline Humphrey has devoted to the study of barter and the theoretical discrimination towards a *misunderstood practice* (Humphrey, 1992), constitute a relevant body of literature for the understanding and for further study of barter. For me at this phase in this study, her work constituted a relevant source of theoretic material by which I could concretely understand the practice of barter as a specific practice *in its own* and as well in concrete terms the debate among the two dominant narratives in anthropology around barter. According to C. Humphrey's empirical work, barter is a contextual and polythetic phenomenon, which has specific cultural, psychologic, social and religious elements that influence the practice and due to this it is better understood "*when seen in the light of its social context*", because "*it involves a constellation of features not all which are necessarily present in any particular instance*", indicating that for this reason it is not useful to provide an all containing definition of barter.

Due to the suggested contextuality of barter it is relevant to be able to observe the practice in its real context. The analysis based on the observation of the practice inside its socio-political context is the aim to define each case of barter. In empiric research, the field data gathered from the real situation and context contributes to understand the influence of the different factors exerting influence on the practice. The influence of culture and other contextual parameters are suggested by Humphrey in an academic (global) sense since her work is not based on the observation of barter inside the Andean context. In this case to understand the nature of barter in Pimampiro, it is necessary to argue these concepts and I will incorporate concepts which are interesting for the study of barter in the Andean context of Pimampiro.

Research in this report is focused on the conceptualisation and analysis of Pimampiro barter through the concepts and characteristics of *barter as a practice* offered by C. Humphrey (1992). At this phase, the specialized study on barter *as a practice* delivered by known anthropologist Caroline Humphrey contributes to understand barter in Pimampiro as a socio- economic practice and phenomenon, in terms of its specific characteristics. Consequently, I analyse the empirical data gathered in the barter in Pimampiro (or also known as '*el cambeo*') and in field work based on the five most fitting conceptual characteristics that condition barter suggested by C. Humphrey (1992) which are: *reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, information and value*.

However, I suggest in my discussion that to integrally analyse the barter in Pimampiro, incorporating concepts, such as the concepts suggested by Nico Tassi (2017) based on the Andean context of Bolivia, contribute to a more complete study. Reflecting on the conditions for barter suggested by C. Humphrey but taking into account the socio-cultural parameters in the Andes, is a strategy for the

integral and inclusive utilization of the conceptual tools available, contributing to connect different observations and knowledge for future study of the barter in Pimampiro.

For the empirical part of this report I first moved to Quito, the capital of the country, where I got introduced to the phenomenon of barter and to the barter celebration market in Pimampiro. I used this period in Quito to orientate about the meaning and the specificities of barter, through informal interviews with academics involved in rural issues. I held in this city my first official semi-structured interview where I got introduced to the Andean economic strategies. Then I moved to the city of Ibarra, 54 km from Pimampiro town (or 1 hour with the car). From there I could reach contacts in the *Universidad Tecnica del Norte* where the last research on Pimampiro barter event was made and where I interviewed one of the researchers involved in that project. In Ibarra I also assisted and partly participated of two exchange markets organized by community leaders from rural communities around the area of Ibarra. These exchange markets resembled the Pimampiro exchange market (participants came from the lowlands and the highlands of the province) and took place once a week on Saturdays in the centre in the Obelisco square of Ibarra. From Ibarra, I was able to travel the region. I visited Pimampiro town several times and held interviews in two food markets: the central food (conventional) market and the agricultural market. I held semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with buyers and food-sellers about their experiences and perception on the barter in Pimampiro. I travelled through the surrounding highland villages and lowland villages in the Chota valley, where I held interviews with people at their rural homes. For field-work, I spent 1 month in Quito and 2 months in Ibarra, Pimampiro town and surroundings gathering data in the form of interviews and informal conversations.

3.1. Geographical context

Pimampiro valley is the geographical, agricultural and ritual entrepot, connecting highlands and lowlands of the Imbabura province. Pimampiro town (or, "City of the Sun" in Quichua language) situated at 2.163 m.a.s.l., is the commercial centrum of agricultural production which lies inside the valley, in between the highlands and lowlands. Its relative low altitude in the Andes mountain chain makes Pimampiro valley a corridor between the Amazonian region and the coastal region and due to its northern latitude; it is close located to the border with Colombia (Naranjo et al., 2017).

This geographical location point could evidence the location of an ancient *tiangués*, or local market, situated in Pimampiro. This was a meeting point chosen by ancient habitants of the different regions in the search of exotic, as well as first necessity, products from before the Spanish colonization (Naranjo et.al, 2017). According to Echeverria (in pers. communication (2018) barter trade has found a place in this region since precolonial times; where among other products, the exchange of coca leaves for labour took place. This confirmation is linked up with Tassi's (2017) definition of *tiangueces* (or the plural form for *tiangués*, in Spanish); *"Like shrines and sanctuaries tiangueces, played a role in connecting different ecological zones. Such territorial connections and relations were associated with reproduction –both material and cosmological- to the point that exchange and transactions across these spaces acquire a generative power"*.

The exchange of goods produced at diverse altitudes in Pimampiro resembles, or probably is the epitome of the theory of the '*vertical archipelago economy*' suggested by Murra (1984), which conceptualizes the result of zonal complementarity and verticality of the agricultural production. A characteristic, but not exclusive, of the Andes (Stanish & Coben, 2013). The people in the past, participating of the exchange, came from the four cardinal points surrounding the area (Naranjo et al., 2017). That the exchange event takes place in Pimampiro is easy to understand due to what is known as the mentioned '*vertical archipelago model*' where the combination of different geographical niches, serves as a system in which people living in different places can exchange products that are not available in their own environmental context, could have been essential for the survival of different ethnic groups (Murra, 1984) having an economic and social significance for a larger geographical area (Ferraro, 2011).

In the Northern Andes, it is possible to find vertical ecological zones within a day walking distance (Corr, 2016), facilitating the access to edibles of a wide variety. Today, the communities living in Nueva America at 3.200 m.a.s.l., until the communities of Chaguayacu in the Chota Valley at 1600 m.a.s.l., constitute the vertical range of reach of the yearly barter celebration (Naranjo et al., 2017).

3.2. Research Methods

Secondary data collection: Literature research.

Field research and Primary data collection: I collected empirical data for the analysis of the practice and of the context of the barter market celebration event in Pimampiro in 2018 through means of participant observation methods and through interviews that took place in the form of individual and groups' interviews previous, during and after the event.

Participant observation took place through participation in the Pimampiro barter event, and in two other barter markets taking place in the city of Ibarra, and the semi-structured interviews I made to community leaders, bureaucrats and to random participants. Participating of the two other barter markets located in Ibarra had the purpose of obtaining material for (personal) comparison and for understanding more about different barter types and markets in the region after the barter in Pimampiro.

I also gathered empirical data through semi-structured interviews in the form of group-discussions and individual interviews outside the event to participants, ex-participants, observers and key figures in the socio-political arena in the rural and the political sector of the provinces of Imbabura and Pichincha.

The individual interviews took place mostly at the home of the interviewees (observers, participants, ex-participants), but also in their place of work; such as their office in the municipality or the university (political figures, bureaucrats and professors). The two groups-discussions, took place in the elderly centre of Pimampiro (elderly observers and ex-participants) and the other groups-discussion with 4 employees of the Agroecological Foundation ('Vibrant Village') based in Pimampiro, at their office.

3.2.1. Chronological description of the activities involving data collection

For the empirical part of this research, I gathered data through interviews and participant-observation **the day of the event**, and through interviews held **previously** and **after the day** of the event. The interviews were held in Spanish, the vehicular language in Ecuador. I used my old smartphone to record some of the interviews, but I also used notes.

In the days previous to the celebration I held several interviews. The first interview took place in Quito with Javier Carrera, who is a member and practitioner in the Agroecology Association. Carrera is also founder of the grassroots' organization called; *Guardianes de Semillas*, (Guardians of Seeds), that organizes people at national level around seed conservation and takes action against for example, the acceptance in the legislation of the introduction of GMO seeds in the country. With J. Carrera I had a long conversation where he explained me about the origins of barter and money based on recent anthropologic research and the meaning on Andean *ayni* (sacred reciprocity) and the economic methods embedded in the social life and traditions of people in the Andes. His view nuanced the relevance of recognizing Andean socio-economic strategic resources and potential as a method for political autonomy and for becoming less depended on the monetary system. His ideals aligned with how economy can be structured from the bottom-up and with the preservation of Andean cultural patrimony.

Previous to the actual barter-day, I also held a discussion group with mestizo elders (10) that spent their mid-days with recreational activities organized by the Catholic Church in one building of the *elderly centre* in Pimampiro town. They shared me their past experiences and view of the barter celebration.

At the day of the barter celebration in Pimampiro, I conducted interviews with government bureaucrats (2) who were present the day of the barter in the Governments' stall and I also held (17) short interviews with participants of *el cambeo* (as the barter is actually denominated in this specific event). Through contacts of the WUR and Ekorural I got the name of Jose Echeverria, who I got to meet the day of the barter event. The interview with Echeverria took weeks after the celebration day in Ibarra, at the *Universidad Tecnica del Norte*, or UTN. Echeverria is a teacher of Anthropology at the UTN and one of the researchers that conducted, together with others, the most recent study on the barter in Pimampiro, last year.

In the days after the barter celebration, I held (2) interviews; one with Hugo Andradre, Coordinador de Participacion Ciudadana y Comunicacion Social, (or, Coordinator of Civil Participation and Social Comunicacion) of the Department of Communication of the Municipality of Pimampiro and with the Major of Pimampiro, Oscar Narvaez, who is responsible for the initiative around Pimampiro's research and for the infrastructural support the last two years of barter celebrations (pers. Communication, 2018). According to Narvaez (2018) the research conducted by the UTN (Universidad Tecnica del Norte) located in Ibarra, in association with the Municipality of Pimampiro, contributed to the obtention the title of 'National Patrimony' given by the National Government of Ecuador in 2018.

After the event in Pimampiro, I also assisted two times to the barter markets held in the *Obelisco* Square situated in the city of Ibarra. These barter fairs where organized by the leaders of different communities in the area with the permission to occupy the public space sqaure and the financial

support of the Municipality of Ibarra (pers. communication, 2018). I observed and participated of these barter fairs and held interviews with (2) leaders. I also held informal conversations with participants in the fairs.

Through Hugo Andrade I got in contact with the Association of Agroecological farmers based in Pimampiro. Vibrant Foundation is an organization that organizes the production and selling in Pimampiro's recently inaugurated agroecological weekly market fair. I held one groups discussion with 4 employees of the foundation about their perception and their experiences of the barter. I also got their support for locating participants of the barter in the highland villages a located at different altitudes around the valley of Pimampiro and in the lowland valley of El Chota; where I travelled together with one agricultural technician who knew people and the area. In these trips I held (15) interviews with people that had ever taken part of the celebration. There were (5) other people who had never taken part of the barter.

3.3. Limitations for data collection

I conducted the interviews for data collection, by travelling in the in the Province of Imbabura, most specifically around the valley of Pimampiro. Due to a lack of financial means, I was not able to travel longer distances (for example, to the south region of Colombia; where participants of the barter in Pimampiro also came from). Exploring the region more extensively would require financial means, more time and also an introduction through personal contacts. I think that it might have required to live for a longer period of time, in different regions, to obtain the type of ethnographical data that could help understand more about the economic and social specificities, relations, effects and the ritual meaning of *el cambeo* celebration in Pimampiro. Also, due to a lack of proper equipment I was not able to record interviews properly. I used my own old smartphone to record the interviews. I would have preferred to use a recorder, or a better smartphone, for sound-quality reasons.

Chapter 4. Pimampiro case study

In this chapter I describe the celebration taking place in Pimampiro. Starting by its historical background until what is Pimampiro barter celebration today. Then, I after to have introduced in the general sense the event, I describe the activities I took part of to participate of the exchange event. I also describe some exchanges, I observed, from the start of the day, until the last late hours of the market; and the sphere I was able to perceive in the celebration of this exchange market.

4.1. Background and historical context of barter in Pimampiro

Discussion on the Andean economy has traditionally emphasized the role of redistribution and non-commercial interactions of the Inkan society. The variety of commercial strategies throughout the Andes; such as reciprocal commercial exchange and even markets are signalled to have exist in different places and in different points in time (Hirth & Pilsburry, 2013). In Pimampiro, the variation of economic structures is reflected in the barter celebration. According to Naranjo et al. (2017), there are three possible reasons why barter in Pimampiro originated: The trade in coca leaves; the harvest of maize and; its geographic location.

Barter systems and markets are part of indigenous socio-economic strategy. According to Naranjo Toro (2017) on Echeverria & Rodriguez (2002) barter might have taken place in the 4th period* (500 BC –1550 AC), when tribal societies had emerged and strengthen chieftain systems. One of the characteristics of this related to these societies was the diversification of the agricultural production that brought agricultural surplus and social differentiation. In this period barter got intensified to obtain exotic products of the coastal range and the lower lands such as *Spondylus princeps*, snails: *Stropus sp*; objects made from gold, silver and platinum. From the Oriental side of the mountain range products are found such as coca leaves, medicinal plants, feathers and dissected animals: especially monkeys and colourful birds.

The production of coca leaves, which are of ceremonial value that took place in the region of Pimampiro was in hands of a privileged group named *Caranquis*. The Caranquis, local indigenous, run the coca production inside the familiar context. Collecting-labour was exchanged for coca leaves by foreign indigenous that wanted to access coca-leaves and that probably did not live in areas where the coca plants survived (Naranjo et al., 2017). This made possible the access to coca leaves for the rest of people who did not live in the area.

In the past, barter exchange took place among households as one of the strategies next to the specialist class of long-distance traders, called: *mindalaes*. This last, were a kind of specialized traders at the service of the higher lords of the time in search of luxury products, such as pearls, emeralds, salt, chilli's, coca, etc. This might find its origin in the redistributive systems of the Incas, where products where centrally organized and allocated to the people in the imperium (Bernand, 1987). The trade of mindalaes and other less specialized groups of mobile traders created a surplus of goods coming from different ecological zones that got exchanged in local markets called: *tianguences*; “these ‘tianguences’ like shrines and sanctuaries played the role of connecting different ecological zones, plots

and families scattered around the territory and ensure the fecund relationship and articulation between these spaces and people” (Tassi, 2017).

Festivity as part of the rituals of cultivation is part of the Andean cultural system. Through festivities people is able to socialize ideas, messages, behaviour and interests; gathering geographically in zones with certain particularities (Naranjo et al., 2017). In the Andes, *maize* has a symbolic meaning according to the narratives formed around it by the native communities (Naranjo et al., 2017). Maize is cultivated in different places along the Andes and its cultivation phases frame inside two important astral moments that repeat itself in time: the start of the winter and the start of the summer. Just as the phases of cultivation repeat itself in time, the astronomic calendar marks the times for the solstice and the equinoxes involving the cycle of life, which gives the symbolic status to maize.

According to these theories, coca leave production would have attracted ethnises (such as the Kitus, Huancar, ‘Pastos’ and Caranquis) to the region of Pimampiro (Hugo Andrade in pers. Communication, 2018) conglomerating them in this particular location which serves as ‘*natural corridor*’ for the Amazon and coastal regions, the highlands and the lowlands (Naranjo et al., 2017). The surplus created by the extensive trade on luxurious goods from the different ecological niches from different cardinal points would had enabled motivated ritual celebrations; such as, the celebration around the harvest of maize which symbolizes an important moment in the agricultural and astronomical calendar. In the Andean culture; agriculture and religious rituals became one (Naranjo et al., 2017) and the result of the crop cultivation depended of the grade of success of the ritual (Naranjo et al., 2017 on Osorio, 1994).

4.1.2. Pimampiro barter today

Barter continues to exist in the post-colonial era persevering until actual modern times, nevertheless, the reasons for the persistence of barter among different groups and places are different. The different types of barter practiced by people (Ferraro, 2011) involve different kinds of exchanges between kin, neighbours, rural peasants among each other, etc., which between indigenous people is different to the trade indigenous people have with *mestizos*. The term ‘*mestizos*’ in this context refers to the people coming descending from the mix of Indigenous with Spanish blood along history and; to the indigenous people that exchanged their rural livelihoods for living in the urban areas and that have exchanged the typical clothing that identifies them with their Andean communities for Western clothes and also ways of life (Tassi, 2017; Corr, 2016; Ange 2015; Ferraro, 2011)

In Pimampiro, Ecuador (just 82,5 km from *Pesillo*, where E. Ferraro made her observations) this ceremonial exchange takes place and the town becomes the meeting-point for the yearly ‘*cambeo*’ (meaning: ‘*exchange*’ in Spanish, as spoken by Afroecuatorians) celebration, which attracts people of different ethnic (indigenous) backgrounds, coming from the four cardinal points (Naranjo et. al, 2017) around the Pimampiro valley. The participants of the event are dominantly indigenous people from the highland provinces of Imbabura and Carchi; Afro-Ecuadorians from the lowland provinces of Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos and the indigenous habitants from the Southern-highlands of Colombia, as I could confirm during field research and; as several social actors, such as, Oscar Narvaez and Jose Echeverria, described in personal communication, in 2018. These ethnic groups, cross the

geographical and political borders to take part of an exchange for agricultural produce, majorly without money, called *el cambeo*. This “tradition”, as it is referred to by the majority of the mestizo population; takes place around Eastern (or, *Semana Santa*) when the ‘*fanesca*’, a traditional dish introduced by the Catholic Church, gets prepared and consumed. Through a process of *syncretism*, the ancient Andean celebration held yearly in Pimampiro has been re-signified, and normalized by the mestizo population. Its popularity among the mestizo population and the participant ethnicities of the event is due to the ultimate purpose of collecting the ingredients required for the preparation of the *fanesca* dish, according to interviewees and to Echeverria, in personal communication (2018)

Syncretism has converted an indigenous (ritual) market celebration taking place since precolonial times in Pimampiro around the time of harvest of maize (a period that falls together with of western Easter), into a celebration typical of *Semana Santa*; which is the Catholic religion variant of this festivity (Naranjo et al., 2017). Through this amalgamation process, several indigenous celebrations were made legitimate (or acceptable) in the inquisitor view of Spanish colonists and the resulting mestizo population of the time and of today. This ‘transformation’ process called *syncretism* is perceived in the entire Latin America and in the rest of world. One strong indication that the Pimampiro’s *cambeo* celebration has passed through a process of *syncretism*, is indicated by the *period* in which *el cambeo* is held and which is not negotiable to change, according to interviews. In the group-interview activity held at the Vibrant Village Foundation office with four employees, one female employee told the Municipality had change the night schedule for a day schedule. One female member of the Agroecology association (Blanca, 44) indicated that the local Municipality intended to change the date of the barter celebration (which takes place in the days around *Semana Santa*) and that people did not accept it. “*They would not accept to change -the-date- of the barter celebration, but they accepted to borrow the place for the barter*” (in pers. Communication, 2018). Confirming Naranjo et al., (2017) hypothesis on the particular barter event having a ritual connotation and confirming as well the what seems to be intermingled; an ancient celebration “*coming from our ancestors*” as described by several persons (in pers. Communication, 2018) and something which is celebrated to obtain ingredients for a mestizo dish typically consumed and exclusive of Catholic *Semana Santa*, as expressed by many people as well in interviews, in informal conversations and lately in the media.

New tendencies in recognizing ancestral traditions, is one of the motivations of the major of Pimampiro, Oscar Narvaez; who from a view of ‘state policies’ (as expressed in personal communication, in 2018) finds it relevant to *conserve* and to promote *practices* that reveal the *identity* of the people for the public, as it is the case of Pimampiro’s barter-celebration. The one that is considered *unique* in his form in Ecuador. “*This event has embedded elements of social cohesion, solidarity, commitment and sharing of the communities*”, as it is expressed by Isabel Rohn, Sub-secretary of Culture and Patrimony of Ecuador, in a promotional video (2018). The intervention of the last years of the local government pursues as well to make of Pimampiro’s barter celebration, a national touristic attraction and is investing efforts in promoting the tradition among anyone how wants to take part of it.

4.2. Pimampiro Barter Celebration Market Case: Day 1

4.2.1. Preparation previous to the barter celebration

The day of the celebration I left early in the morning to meet Blanca Obando (44) in her house and finca in Guagalá. Blanca is a member of the local Agroecology Association, situated in Pimampiro. Her contact number was reached to me through student of the WUR who at that moment was working for the association. I took contact with her and met her in one “ferias agroecológicas”, or agroecological fairs, in Ibarra. It was not really clear to me if she always took part of the yearly barter celebration or that she took part of it stimulated by the Agroecology Association. The day of the yearly barter I arrived at 7 a.m. in the small village where she and her family lives and from the road, asking around, I got to her house. The adobe house was surrounded by land, most of it on a steep hill, where the family grew their crops. The household consisted on husband and wife (35), three adolescent children and the husband (19) of their older daughter (19) and their baby. Bianca worked the land together with her husband. Their children contributed in the agricultural activities. Bianca also took care of the house and cooking, together with her oldest daughter who had recently formed her own family but, stayed in the house of her parents to live and to collaborate with the household. Next to the house, there were two buildings where they kept the agricultural tools and also cavia's (Guinea pigs). The Ginny pigs they used for own consumption and for the sale. They had also some chicken. Their production was of small scale. There were trees around the house and the fields. The total area of 5 hectare, according to Bianca, was used for the production of crops that got sold in regular and the agroecological markets, as it was also used for the production of their own consumption.

The day I arrived, Bianca and her son (14) were picking up yellow carrots, rhubarb, lemons and cabbages to bring to the barter celebration. Together with two adolescent members of the association, who took the taxi ride with me to Bianca's place, helped them further in the harvesting as far as we could. The picking of products (zambo, white, yellow and pink carrots and carrot seeds, zucchini, mandarins and avocados) was particularly tough for us who were not skilled in walking through the steep hills, and above this, carrying the heavy load of the harvest on our shoulders. In the break we took we could chat about the added degree of difficulty by the toughness of walking up and down the hill, for us newcomers. This factor opened-up the conversation in which Bianca explained me about the work routine they had. The husband, who was not present at that moment, together with Bianca, worked the land and sold the products in the markets. Most of the times, after harvest, her husband was in charge of organizing the loading and transportation of the products to take them to the markets of Quito (5 hours distance) or Ibarra (2 hours), where they arrived at around 3 a.m. At 7 a.m. goods were ready to sell and sale took place until around 2 p.m. when they organized, clean-up and loaded the necessary to go back home. Sometimes they sold to intermediaries coming to the village in the search of goods. The family sustained itself mainly from the income of their production. The earnings from the sales were not higher than the minimum wage (around 300 US Dollars in Ecuador) a month, as Bianca expressed. (pers. communication, 2018) The Guinea pigs were an extra source of income that was receiving more attention since the animals were growing healthy. Bianca explained me that the barter celebration was a moment in which there was no pressure. She perceived it as a moment of relaxation more than a necessity.

After lunch, consisting of diverse vegetables, the harvest got washed off the soils and put in plastic crates. In total we had 6 crates of products for the exchange. We carried up the six crates to the road and sat there to wait until someone would give us a lift to the centre of Pimampiro. It was around 2 pm. After a 20 min wait and some cars passed by, someone, apparently known to Blanca, and seemed to be willing to take us to Pimampiro. The trip downhill took less than 20 min and we were in Pimampiro's *Polideportivo* square (or *public* sports centre square) where transit made it difficult to park, so the pick-up truck stop for a while so we could unload the crates on the road street. The pick-up truck left us behind and, somehow, we had to carry the crates along the passing cars and the hectic of the moment. Street-food vendors aligned themselves around the plaza, selling all kind of foods, where tables and chairs were also arranged for people to eat.

4.2.2. The Location of barter

The barter event took place “Polideportivo”. The plaza was equipped with sound-system and markets stalls, which were placed at one side of the sports’ square, in the town of Pimampiro. One of the market stalls was use of the Municipality, that used the sound-system to animate and to comment by microphone on the celebration. In this stall, the municipality also had a team of people registering (recording) and gathering data on the event. There was also popular music played through the sound system. This entire scenario was new infrastructure provided by the Municipality of Pimampiro, for the second time. According to Narvaez, the mayor of Pimampiro, they decided to offer the square for the barter and to place infrastructure so that people felt invited to practice the barter tradition in this place, where researchers working on data about the event, could easily (with the use of drones and pictures) count the participation and study more easily the phenomenon. This data was worked out in the investigation that was offered to the national government, in order to preserve and to stimulate celebration of this tradition. (in pers. Communication, 2018).

Bianca, her son, and two adolescents from the agroecological youth association of Esmeraldas (UOC) and me arrived with our collected products at the booth of the Agroecological Farmers’ Association, where Blanca had a place among other members of the Association taking part of the barter. The Association participants were visibly distinguishable (they did wear logo t-shirts and had posters around their stall) as they were called by the Association to take part of the event. I did not remain too long with the members of the association and mingled myself around with the rest of the participants.

In the past, elders shared that when there were almost no roads and less vehicles, people used to go on animals and load wooden wagons to participate of the celebration. It could take one day to arrive in Pimampiro for some; they used to arrive in the morning or the early afternoon to leave after one or two days of exchange. (pers. communication, 2018) Today, through mechanic transportations means, such as; trucks, pick-ups, cars, motorcycles and buses, people can reach Pimampiro in a shorter time, reducing the days of exchange that took in past. Due to the lack of fast transportation in the past, the constant flow of people arriving and leaving Pimampiro after the exchange celebration had taken place, could take several days. This is why in the (recent) past the celebration took place at the houses on the ground floor, as they passed by and where the porticos of the old architecture houses that used to be the place to welcome the “participants”, and where the people *socialize* or rest after the travel.

This kind of architecture is still evident in a few old houses in the periphery of Pimampiro town. Wooden benches are placed that welcome people offering a place to sit, pots with flowers are displayed and where you can almost imagine a mule standing in front of them. In the past, people often shared drinks and food; conversations took place after a long trip made often by foot along with loaded mules. (pers. communication, 2018) Today, all kind of transportation vehicles have reduced the days but also the physical load of the trips; the houses are built differently, as square blocks, omitting verandas and welcoming porticos. The changes in society influenced the barter in Pimampiro, translocating it to the streets around the main plaza of the town where the products were displayed while participants sat on the ground. (pers. communication, 2018), until the last three years that Pimampiro barter has moved itself to the Polideportivo square due to the intervention of the Municipality.

4.2.3. The Participants

The participants exchanging varied in all age categories, from children to elders. These, around the 4000 and 5000 people (according to Narvaez, in personal communication, 2018) are constituted by men and women, adolescents, children and elders; afroecuatorians and indigenous mainly. There also *mestizos* involved in the exchange, but they represented really a minority in the event. They were dominantly rural people that seem to have a close contact with the products offered, by owning a *chacra* (small plots) and by working in agriculture.

Participants gathered around with jute bags filled with products. Many of them were not alone, but in a group and they assisted each other in the exchange. They sat or stood under the booths the Municipality had placed. Men and women took part in the exchange. Children also run around with the washbasin that functions as a measure instrument for some products. Adolescents were also part of the exchange and participants did not necessarily exchange with people their own age.

Participants came from the different places; Esmeraldas province, Chota, Mariano Acosta, Chalguyacu, Gaugala, Ambuqui, El Inca, among some places I was indicated at the exchange. The ethnic groups from the lowlands (afroecuatorians), the ethnic groups of the highlands (Caranquis, Zuletas, Otavalos) and mestizos coming from Pimampiro town mainly, came in contact with each other. The participants revealed not to know each other personally and not to come for meeting anyone who they knew previously. (pers. Communication, 2018) But they knew what kind of people and what kind of products they could expect in the barter. There were also groups of people coming from Ipiales and Pasto, which is the southern highland of the neighbour country of Colombia.

Participants expressed it was a *pleasure* to come and to exchange. Many of them said to *enjoy* this moment of *relaxation* and *happiness*. Others agreed on that this event was for people an activity to get out of the daily routine. *"It is fine to exchange with others in an ambient of joy"*. (pers. Communication, 2018). Others found the barter *tradition of the people*, of something which is a *custom*, something *"that always happens"*, referring to the practice of barter that regularly takes place among the villagers. *"But today it is a feast"*, a participant referred to the barter in Pimampiro.

When I asked if participants come to see other participants in particular, someone they knew or had a previous relationship with, many told me they did not know anyone. That was not the reason to

come. They enjoyed the exchange with strangers, indicating to *feel cheerful* in the celebration. (pers. Communication, 2018). The brief contact they had with each other during the exchange, seemed to be enough to time for many to get the products they desired. For others, who did have a small chat in between, particularly older participants did this, the exchange moment took longer and, they seemed *also* to enjoy the moment of chatting. In these particular exchanges I saw, elders and older participants (some of them where probably in the age around 60's and 70's and others in the 80's but not much older) got to give and to receive more from each other; I suppose as a result of the empathy they could have developed for the other during the chat. I saw there was little shyness, if any at all, in their approximation to each other. There are cultural differences of course. In general, indigenous from the highlands behave more prudently and are *shyer* than afroecuadorians, who have a more open-character in general and that behave more *loudly*. But in general, the exchange was supposed to happen, so people had a reason to approximate the other with their products, without more formalities than asking friendly or kindly if the other want it to exchange this for the other.

4.2.4. The Exchange

There was minimal exchange of seeds taking place, mostly organized by the agroecology association members present. However, the most dominant kind of exchange I perceived during the barter celebration in Pimampiro, was the exchange of agricultural products coming from the highlands such as; grains, cabbages, carrots, melloco (*Ullucus tuberosus*), tomatoes, potatoes, barley and other types of cereals such as mashua, maize, wheat, broad beans, pepinos (*Solanum muricatum*), sambo (*Curcubita ficifolia*), camote (or sweet potato), vetch, cabbages, beet, all kinds of beans, onions, quinoa; for products grown in the lowlands, such as; guayaba (*Psidium guajava*), sugar cane, oranges, bananas, oritos (small bananas), bananas, tomatoes, mangos, avocados, granadilla or passion fruit, mango, different types of plantains, peaches, zapote (*Quararibea cordata*), papayas, chirimoya, lime, mandarin, cassava, pimienta (*Capsicum annum*) or bel pepper, red tuna, tomate de arbol (*Solanum betaceum*), etc.

The kind of products exchanged were mainly grains for fruits. But I also spotted a few people exchanging some articles considered in anthropological terms as “out of the sphere of exchange”. Goods, such as; t-shirts, shoes, milk, cheese and flour. According to someone who had exchanged 8 t-shirts for products and 1 pineapple and avocado for cheese and milk, these were new articles. (pers. Communication, 2018) These articles do not belong to the category of agricultural products. The person with clothing and shoes seems not to get much attention from the participants. She did exchange a few articles, but she could not get rid of all she had brought. She said: “*No hay muchos que cambien*”, that means; “*there are not many (people) who wants to exchange*”. (pers. communication, 2018). It seemed that her *experiment* did not work out well and that people seem not to accept or to be prepared to exchange with this kind of products.

According to the elders in the town (pers. communication, 2018) and according to the research of the UTN (2017), the kind of products exchanged has nevertheless changed over the centuries and in the last decennia. For example, fibbers, for making shoes and bags have disappeared of the exchange since shoes are easier bought than made, as well as with fibber bags which have been replaced by plastic ones. (pers. communication, 2018).

Each exchange transactions took place quickly; products were offered by showing them in the small washbasins (kind of plastic trays) that were used as a measure or by counting each piece and comparing it with the product requested or offered. There were people crossing and going around looking for exchanges and doing exchanges rapidly. When I asked how did people know how much to give, one woman told me: “*no hay como calcular eso!*”, meaning, “there is no way to calculate that”. (pers. Communication, 2018). Some others told me it was a calculation *based on quantities* and *based on markets prices*.

The food gathered, “*would be enough for one month*”, according to an afroecuadorian woman from el Chota Valley. (pers. Communication, 2018).

Examples of some exchanges I saw during the barter in Pimampiro (2018) I have listed here below:

In the Morning

4 avocado's = 1 washbasin or tray of broad beans, potatoes or vetch.

5 mango's = 1 washbasin or tray of broad beans, potatoes or vetch.

6 oranges = 1 washbasin or tray of broad beans, potatoes or vetch.

6 mandarins = 1 tray of broad beans

3 oranges = 5 carrots

4 mandarin = 1 washbasin or 1 tray of potatoes

1 zambo = 3 sugar cane sticks

In the Afternoon

10 limes = 5 small yuca's

6 small mango's = 1 tray of vetch

3 mangos = 5 maize cobs

3 sweet potatoes = 4 pepinos

1 tray of melloco = 4 pepinos

1 tray potatoes = 4 pepinos

11 maize cobs = 3 pepinos and 1 green bell pepper

2 buckets of potatoes = 7 tomatoes and 6 pepinos

6 potatoes = 3 big avocados or 4 small avocados

1 tray potatoes (2,5 pounds) = 6 tomatoes

0,5 pound or 1 tray of vetch = 0,5 pound or 5 sweet potatoes and 1 avocado

After 5 p.m. and a strong rain shower:

2 zapotes = 1 tray of vetch

2 small papayas = 1 tray of broad beans

6 tomatoes = 1 tray of potatoes

1 quintal camote = 1 quintal potato

1 quintal melloco = 1 quintal potato

4.2.5. The last hours of the day

In the start people were more flexible and gave away easier but as time passed, I found that the participants who were still engaged in the exchange were less flexible and more demanding. The first part of the day, the weather seemed to have a relatively small influence in the enthusiasm of the participants, who endured hours of cold rain. But, at a certain moment the people started to get busy with another activity.

At around 8:30 pm, trucks started to arrive to load the products. Many people continued exchange, even when the weather was colder than hours before and the rain had offered us a short break of a couple of hours. The lights of the Polideportivo square made it possible to see in the night. The people leaving had their load gathered in closed jute bags. The number of jute bags varied between, according to the size of the group, from 5 to 20 bags, all filled with the exchanged products. The people awaited in the square the trucks that continuously stopped around the square, some of these trucks were replacing the food vendors that had left, to load the bags and leave to their destination.

These hectic hours concentrated people who seemed tired but satisfied, organizing their departure. They were standing on the Polideportivo square. I decided to have a break and to look for a roof to stand protected from the slight but cold rain. I stood at one of the shops surrounding the square. I felt the cold of the humid clothes and shoes I had on and felt hungry as well. While standing outside the shop in front of the market, people on the street were also very busy. People were looking for food and drinks. As well the transit of the trucks arriving and looking for a place to park captured my attention. It seemed as chaos, but people were just quick. In observing carefully to what people did, it became clear that people were organizing an important part of the event and that they knew what they were doing. People were organizing and communicating the logistics and load of the transport.

Mostly male, were busy with loading the trucks which were driven by males as well. Women, elders, adolescents and some children awaited by the stalls next to the exchanged products. Some of them still engaged in bartering the few last products left. But most of them, and perhaps due to the strong rain that had taken place for hours, were busy packing and preparing to load, if not they were busy with the process of loading. This happened all very quickly and with the same energy as the barter

took place. People run from one direction to the other, trucks came, parked, and got loaded and left very briefly in a constant crossing of people, cars, bicycles, even baby carriages.

The most trucks were medium-size; some were modern trucks with closed containers and bigger load capacity and some other smaller ones, had the truck-bucket made from wood, what for me seemed to indicate besides them been old (fashion) trucks, that these were cheaper (hiring rate) trucks that served most probably for the local, or regional, transportation of food.

A woman from afro-descendance told me when I returned to the barter square, they arranged the payment of the truck together with the people that trusted them their part production for the exchange. (pers. Communication, 2018) They (meaning herself and one cousin that assisted her) had contributed as well with their produce part but were also entitled, voluntarily, to do the exchange at the barter-exchange.

4.3. Analysis of the Pimampiro barter market

In this part of the report I analyse the practice of barter held in the market celebration in Pimampiro. I use for this analysis the 5 conceptual tools offered by C. Humphrey.

4.3.1. Reciprocity

Moral obligation is an important factor behind barter, according to C. Humphrey, (1992). To understand the sense of *moral obligation* that is embedded in barter, as suggested by H, we need to take into account the Andean context in which barter in Pimampiro takes place and in which *reciprocity* plays a role. Fulfilling this *obligation* is a matter of *balance* in Andean culture. In Barter engenders its own obligations (Humphrey, 1992); in the Andean culture these can be understood in terms of ‘reciprocity’ that fuels or generates *reproductive cycles*, which individuals and social groups such as, communities, are morally obliged to enact.

In Pimampiro *cambeo*, the short-term, non-personal relations of reciprocal *food* exchange induce that both parties are *guided* by an ethos of *mutuality* at the moment of the exchange, wherein one side offers and the other part gives something of the relatively the same value in return. In Humphreys’ definition, the Pimampiro *cambeo* can be explained as rewarding the other through a *mechanism* to obtain the product and the amount desires, fundamentally guided by *subjective valuation* and by *moral obligation* (Humphrey, 1992). According to what I have been able to perceive during Pimampiro’s barter event in 2018, at one side the moment of immediate-exchange is the result of the reciprocal-relation the products create, when both partners are morally obliged to respond with a portion of products of relatively the same value. At the other side, this barter celebration market seems to have roots in the Andean religious and cultural view by which mechanisms of barter, do not only contribute to access to goods, but also represent a manner by which to reproduce and mimic

cyclic mutations and phenomena considered to be part of the natural system that influences and that makes possible live and livelihoods and which are relevant to maintain by maintaining and reproducing balance.

No other 'formal' central institution is involved in regulating this practice, or economic mechanism, that involve cultural and religious values than the influence of the (unconscious) sense of moral obligation, by individuals and communities.

4.3.2. Social Relations

In Pimampiro, participants take part of *el cambeo* celebration guided by philosophical-cultural motives that engender most probably *rituals*, according to the Echeverria's observations in the interview I held with him (2018). The event itself is *autonomously* organized and *voluntarily* repeated each year across the time. As far I was able to confirm in interviews with different actors. For people it is perceived as a *tradition* and for participants is a moment of satisfaction, joy and relaxation, a celebration also motivated by the interest in the products they will get home, as it was expressed by different people during the event. (pers. communication, 2018).

Pimampiro's ceremonial character discriminates it from other types of local barter where more regular barter relationships with neighbours, or barter systems of kinship. According to the participants in the interviews, they did not have personal relations with each other. (pers. communication, 2018) Holding or maintaining personal relations, *where people find an opportunity to see each other every year*, as suggested by Echeverria, Narvaez and social actors, which are key to get information on the event and which are interviewed during field research (2018), is not the factor that motivates the concentration around *el cambeo* in Pimampiro. Participants revealed during field research interviews 'not to know personally the people they bartered with'. There were no particular relationships they sought to encounter in the event, as expressed by different people during the barter market event in personal communication, (2018).

The exchange event held in Pimampiro, *also known as el cambeo*, does not involve kin or personal relations (per se), but it does involve and stimulate social relations among family members living close from each other and neighbours in a same region. These come together and gather the total amount of products transported and exchanged the day of the event, according to what is expressed by participants during the event. These groups of people take commonly in their account the gasoline's transportation costs and the hiring of the transportation vehicles. A few *representative* members of the groups, would go to the event and do the specific practice of exchange. They were responsible for getting back the collected-bartered products to the community or group. (in pers. communication, 2018). The celebrational character of the event, attracts people who live in the area that do not know each other, but that live in vicinity of each other.

The type of social-relations, I found in Pimampiro were not the personal type of relationships. In this barter people did not participate to maintain personal relations with neighbours at the exchange, as I was told in the narratives of the social actors interviewed during field work. According to the participants, they do not know each other and they did not look to see each other the next year, either. The kind of social relations at stake in Pimampiro's barter market, can be described, as the ones

described by Corr (2016) in her study: “*relations with the ‘ethnic-other’*”, “*who went in negotiation with strangers*”. In line with Angé (2015) in her article on barter in the Argentinian Andes; “*barter not only takes place within a frame of previous social relations, but it also contributes to construct other kind of specific social relationships as kinship in a complex multi ethnic group*”. In this context, the approximation with the neighbouring ‘ethnic-other’ might create particular types of bonds in this particular regional society.

4.3.3. Interethnic barter

Echeverria (2018) in an interview confirmed that there are two ethnic groups dominantly present in the barter celebration: the indigenous people from different highland communities and afrodescendant people of different small villages in the Chota valley. They come from the provinces of Esmeraldas, Pichincha, Carchi, Imbabura and from the south provinces of Colombia, as Narvaez and Echeverria indicated (in pers. Communication, 2018).

In Pimampiro’s *cambeo* kin-relations, as described in barter cases in Ecuador by Ferraro (2004) or in the Argentinian Andes by Ange (2015), where not specifically present. I could confirm this in the barter celebration through brief interviews with the participants. Personal relations did not either *constitute* a condition for the participation in the event, instead; other less personal, but still social relations played a major role in this market event; *interethnic relations*. These inter-ethnic relations are maintained for centuries by people that seek to socialize once a year through *el cambeo* in Pimampiro. One of the objectives of the socialization the groups seek for, has effects on different aspects of people’s lives and livelihoods, such as the diversification of their diets, the celebration of rituals and ritual practices and it might even ensure peace among the different groups as suggested by Echeverria in our interview, in 2018: “*the market of Pimampiro is the place where indigenous people get to interact with the often aggressive-perceived ‘black’ communities*”.

The groups of participants of Pimampiro’s exchange market celebration, is constituted by close neighbors, friends or closely-living family members which form groups that jointly gather their left-produce to exchange it the day of the event, as participants explained during the event, in pers. Comm. 2018) There are no personal relations, but inter-ethnic social relations, the kind of relations involved and maintained in the exchange called: *el cambeo*, participants of the barter market, formed groups among the same ethnic group to exchange with other ethnical groups. The visually evident homogeneous ethnic groups; constituted by neighbours, friends and family, living close to each other, organize themselves in the collection of the products for the exchange, with the purpose to (go) barter with *unknown people* pertaining to a different (or, a similar) but as well, homogenous ethnic-group living in other areas. This confirms partly Echeverria’s (in pers. communication, 2018) indication on the barter market of Pimampiro as it being *the moment* for the two (mayor different) cultural, ethnical groups “*to meet and to interact*”. In this sense, barter would enable the interaction of different ethnical groups (afroecuadorians and indigenous people) and the exchange of typical products from their local (and cultural) agriculture, as it was also suggested by Echeverria in the interview.

It is also expressed by the participants during the event, that this barter market is a moment of *relaxation and joy*, “*where people go to celebrate*”. During my participation in the event, I could easily

perceive the ambient of *festivity*. 'Getting food for no money' seemed to be the parallel objective of this moment of *happiness* and *disconnection of daily concerns*, according to interviewees.

In this case, barter in Pimampiro would serve not only as a *socialization tool* for different ethnic groups, until our modern times, but it would serve as a mode of *reproducing culture* through an interaction that involves the *identity of the ethnical groups* been exchanged or represented by the kind of *regional characteristic products* they exchange and by which these *groups identify themselves*. Confirming Humphrey (1992) in this sense, people in interethnic barter, do not only exchange products, but their own culture and the products of their own culture, as a form of confirmation and reproduction, creating by themselves in this way (the) particular bonds of their society.

According to interviews, barter in Pimampiro has an important nutritional contribution for people. In this sense, participants do not only affect the dynamics of the practice of barter, but also get affected by the practice. They get to vary their diets and to bring food they do not regularly eat. As someone expressed "*se come bien esos dias*", meaning; "*one eats food those days*"

The non-personal, short-term relations enacted in the festivity, as I was able to confirm during the festivity, seemed to be maintained by a basis of *trust* (and *information*) of participants who do not each other personally, but that have an expectation on what they will find and what they will receive in the celebration of the traditional barter-market. Confirming Humphrey's observations (1992; 1985) on barter among ethnical groups.

Ritualizing trade partnerships and relations, as suggested by Humphrey, seems to be in place in the barter market taking place in Pimampiro where through a religious celebration (whether indigenous, Catholic or both due to syncretism) trade-relationships get celebrated among ethnical groups on a non-monetary base. *Ritualization* of trading and trading partnerships is often used in regular seasonal markets and fairs, as Humphrey (1992) has observed in her work. Her observations on 'rituals of exchange' (in trade systems of barter, or as a trade with religious and spirituals ends) seems to be the case in the annual exchange celebrated around Easter in Pimampiro.

4.3.4. Disintegration

Structural discrimination of afrodescendents and Andean indigenous social groups has pushed these ethnical groups into marginality, although the capitalist formula held decennia's long by Latin American governments and the World Bank, assuming economic success by the integration of people to the market (Tassi, 2017), in the Andean highlands, rural peasants live under harsh conditions, exploiting often market opportunities *parallel* with subsistence economic strategies (Pimbert & Argumedo, 2010); such as barter and other kinds of exchange. The small portions of cropping and pastoral land are important for the subsistence of the rural families, as I was able to perceive during fieldwork. However, the agricultural importance of Pimampiro canton for the supply of food to the major cities, has not contributed to the *economic* development of the rural populations of the highland and the afrodescendants of the lowlands. This phenomenon is easy to perceive in the region, especially in the rural localities further away from the major towns.

Most of the participants of the barter market event, where involved in agriculture in a small scale. A part of them were able to sell a part of their production to middleman, according to the information gathered during the event. The most, as I could not verify this on each participant, used their production for their own sustenance, by feeding themselves from their own products and by selling a part of their production. This is an induction that might make sense if one considers that it is convenient to exchange what one already has, and not require to buy in order to exchange. This also confirmed by one of the statements made during the event by an afroecuadorian black woman that said that *“one gathered what was left and had available to exchange”*.

The participants I spoke, where not involved in export activities directly, due to this given, I could define them as being disintegrated from the monetary system. However, many of them involved in economic transactions thanks to their implication in agricultural activities, delivering or selling in conventional food markets; according to participants defined as selling part of their harvest to middlemen or directly in the food markets.

Living far away from urban areas, in areas with difficult access but having direct access to their own agricultural produce, form conditions of “isolation” that makes it possible to live, or to subsist, without the daily use of money for food, as I was able to perceive during field-research.

This situation of disintegration and exclusion makes barter possible through different exchange networks that persist in the Andes. In this environment, social relations are of great importance for accessing food and goods one cannot buy. Exchanging among other social groups, becomes the social strategy and the relations they built become the aggregated value for in their small economies. Barter celebration in Pimampiro is a practice that takes place between social, ethnically diverse groups that lack enough money so they have to find ways not to depend totally on it, without the intervention or the support of any central institution.

Inside the indigenous culture barter, and other kinds of exchange that vary from commodity exchange and gift (Ange, 2015), is a socio-economic strategy part of a system of practices and ideas that has prevailed inside the indigenous socio-political context, partly due to the systematic marginalization Andean people have suffered since colonial times.

In conversation with Echeverria (2018) he noted that *mestizos* used to define the barter celebration literally as; *“it is something of the people, of indigenous and the blacks”*, referring to the activity held by, or pertaining of the, indigenous people and afro-descendants. The acknowledgement made by Echeverria reveals two aspects that contribute this event as a typical example of barter according to Humphrey’s theory. Firstly, by the tone of the phrase expressed by Echeverria (in pers. communication, 2018) the underappreciation from the mestizo population towards two ethnic groups, which are the most affected by the prejudices of the Ecuadorian society and its central political and economic system; gets reflected in the words “black” and “indian”. These words do not need necessarily mean negative discrimination, but used in a certain way and tone, the underestimation and distance towards these ethnic groups become dominant and evident. Second, it reveals which are the most representative groups, *owning* the kind of barter in Pimampiro.

In the Andes region, where Pimampiro is located, geographical and cultural elements; such as the Andean philosophy reflected in the practices of the Andean indigenous communities, combined with the socio-economic rural conditions and systematic exclusion, the Andean indigenous and afro-descendant ethnises have endured since historical times by colonial powers and later by republican

powers (Tassi, 2017; Quijano, 2005), constitute two important parameters for the perpetuation of barter-networks and markets to persist in the region.

This might be the cause why most representative ethnical groups participating of the exchange, belong to the two ethnical groups that have been the most, or systematically, (historically) discriminated by the dominant mestizo and white population; who have pushed them into marginality. These groups subsist economically through the advantage of living in rural areas to be able to feed and earn money from agricultural activities, but nevertheless living in a permanent status of *normalized marginality*.

In my observations during fieldwork, became evident that the rural places of el Chota and the small highland villages where participants came from, had a serious lack of some of the most basic civil infrastructure. Pimampiro province has as main resource and activity the agricultural production and deliverance of foods to the main surrounding cities. Their agricultural contribution generates incomes in the region. But still many of the rural villages lack basic infrastructure and many can be considered financially living in or under poverty edges. Pimampiro's *cambeo* participants' socio-economic background evidently confirms the theories whereby different authors describe barter a practice that takes place in environments where there is a lack of money or, money is scarce (Ange, 2016) and where communities or groups are disintegrated from the formal, central system (Humphrey, 2002; 1992; 1985). Integrating different types of barter networks and systems (and other exchange modes) widen their spectrum of (socio)economic strategies.

4.3.5. Valuation

In Pimampiro's barter participants constantly negotiate each transaction with each other and the results of each transaction could be quantified by numbers of products exchanged. The process is open and informal in terms of types of foods and amounts, as Corr once described barter in Salacas, Ecuador, (2016). In Pimampiro barter, there were two trends perceived in valuing products; one was guided by market mechanisms (price) and the other by a personal valuation of the products, and probably 'the other'.

Price mechanism: In Pimampiro barter, after following a number of transactions, I found a pattern in the *quantities* in the products exchanged. I observed certain regularity in the amounts exchanged; evidencing a pattern in the exchange which does not correspond with the subjective, calculation of the other. It was not and standard, was there was a pattern in the exchange of mango's, bananas or avocado (which were highly desired by the people of the highlands). These fruits got mostly exchanged for fava beans, vetch and grains (these last two were appreciated by the people of the lowlands. I noticed the high demand on these fruits, among other fruits and products from the lowlands and the high demand on vetch and beans by the lowlands. As well, I noticed that there were a number of avocados exchanged by a tray of vetch. Mostly one vetch was offered, but when the avocados were bigger or more beautiful, or starting to get less, the number of trays of vetch had to be double. I did not find any pattern in the *type* of products that got exchanged. I found that products such as mango's and avocado were highly desired and appreciated.

The regularity in the transactions made me suspect the participants were using an external mode of calculation, that in this case could be the market-prices. I wonder why they usually gave a number of

small avocados (4-5) for 1 tray of vetch. I asked to a few participants who did they calculated how much to get, and the answers were different among the participants. Some said fairly and right away, *"it is the price of the mango's, these are expensive now"*. Others indicated; *"there was no way to calculate this"*. 'This' referring to the products she had in front of her. (pers. Communication, 2018). This subtle consistency could also indicate that there is an equilibrium-rate reached in the exchange-ratio in the case of the most frequently exchanged goods, as suggested by Humphrey (1985). But also, as many of the responses confirmed; the penetration and normalization of market prices also in the rural context of the Andes; together with the relative easier access to price-information, enabled by modern means of communication, have influenced the valuation-element in this particular barter.

But this regularity was not the standard, as I said before. There were also exchanges where the exchangers agreed easier than others. Some let themselves convince by the other. The convincement factor had to do with the quality and the number of products offered; but it had also to do with the sympathy degree for a person. This degree was altered by the way participants asked for the exchange or they offered the exchange. Elements such as, a soft tone of voice, or, assertiveness in expressing their wish to exchange, influenced the transaction's result. Some people seem more flexible or open to give and required less negotiation than others did. At the end of the day, most participants tried to get rid of all their products as fast as possible.

Valuation of the products had to do in general with numbers offered, quality of the product and with personality and the negotiating skills of the participants. In some cases, it had to do with condescendence, as it seemed for my, for participants of age and less resources, or for children. *Solidarity* (or *pity*) for people who were (visibly) in a disadvantaged position was also a factor of influence in the valuation of products in the exchange.

In the literature, Polanyi (1944) described the systems of valuation in barter systems which compared with the Western economic system *"The principles of symmetry, centrality and closure are contrasted with the anarchy of exchange as this is mediated through price-making markets in a disembedded and potentially self-regulating economy"* and later confirmed by Jessop (2010) is a somehow idealized definition of the valuation methods used to generalized the process in barter. During field work in Ecuador, I found a relatively similar discourse repeatedly been expressed among academia, politicians and local bureaucrats on the valuation methods used in the barter market in Pimampiro. This idea around barter, seems to fit inside the *view* people has in the United States that designates contemporary barter as being 'non-commercial', according to Humphrey (1992). Humphrey (1992, 1983) argues this designation in her book by saying that *not only commercial interest is involved in barter*, and by demonstrating several examples of (historic) barter and barter-systems that demonstrate also the political and strategic use of barter.

In Pimampiro, I was able to confirm that in the practice of the practice, there is a combined utilization of subjective as of market-based mechanisms, such as market-prices, for the valuation of the goods exchanged by the exchangers. These mechanisms are integrated by people themselves, at the moment of the exchange, through a personal estimation process of the value of the products they exchanged in Pimampiro's *cambeo*. This demonstrate that the utilization of prices as guideline can be included inside the whole of the mechanisms that are used by, and that can be considered pertaining of the subjective-valuation-process the different participants use, in different moments and to different people. Demonstrating that there is no rigid categorization in the mechanisms of valuation

for considering this process merely or ultimately subjective in the sense that there are no external-references used in barter, as suggested by Humphrey.

Considering the valuation process merely or ultimately subjective, in the sense that there are no external references used in barter, as suggested by Humphrey in her work, might have to do with the specific cases that are observed. Humphrey describes barter systems of nomad groups in Nepal which might be totally disintegrated from the commercial system. In Ecuador the reality is that even though rural people are still systematically discriminated and marginalized, that a portion of them survive and combine their livelihoods in a weak and intermittent relationship with the market.

In Pimampiro, valuation seems to be a process that people seem to adequate according to their own knowledge, comfort, economic benefit or perhaps even, pragmatism. I found no rigid categorization on the valuation mechanisms used to barter and no rigid standards were used in the measuring of the quantities of products exchanged, besides the use of a small plastic tray predefining quantities in a certain way that resulted in multiple subjective and variable exchange transactions. Despite of this all, a general tendency to exchange certain amounts for other amount, indicated a measure, or standard, for the transactions used in addition to use of the small plastic trays to measure those quantities. Also, if the products did not fit the trays, people would have a number of products in exchange for one or for two trays of another product. In many cases, when asking why a certain number of products was exchanged for a certain number of trays, the participants indicated they had used internal calculations: “*así mas o menos es*” or, that they were using *market-prices* to regulate those transactions.

There seemed to be that more *expensive* (in market-prices) and less-common products created a special demand and were valued higher by participants. Distance might have played a role in the value of products as well.

In relation to distance as a parameter for valuation, a slight similar mechanism to the market-price mechanism took the place as valuation method used in the example of the Lhomi’s when they traded salt (Humphrey, 1985). ‘Salt’ in this case would get more valuable the geographically farer away the salt got bartered. In Pimampiro *distance* could have played a role in the calculation at the exchange, but that is something I could not verify for a large number of transactions to draw figures and to makes schemes this time at the exchange. Most agricultural products were redundant at the barter and valuating products had to do as well with their *scarcity* or *rarity* and physical qualities, in the exchange. The saturation of a product in the *conventional commercial* market, has as well an influence in the presence/absence (and the valuation) of the product in the exchange. For example, potatoes, that year had a backdrop in prices (0,20 cts per pound in 2018). As I could perceive in the exchange, the low prices for potatoes made that potatoes were almost not desired that year in the exchange. as a participant expressed that day, there are not many people looking for exchanging potatoes this year.

The *unideal* mechanism for valuing products in the barter in Pimampiro, would disappoint many of the social (key) actors I interviewed during field-work in 2018. Their view on barter been isolated form any market force, did not correspond to the empiric evidence I gathered in the event and also during field-research. The combined-method for valuing goods in the exchange, I perceived in Pimampiro could be the result, or be related to, how Andean systems of barter and exchange (could) have developed in time (van Buren, 1996) and the exposure of people to the market and conventional market mechanisms. Another factor of influence for this intermingling, or development, can be allocated to the semi- and not-total disintegration of the formal system of many participants due to

commercial agricultural activities and the consequent information available about prices rural people are able to resource to. Valuation mechanisms, agents, locations, money and modalities in barter constitute the kind of factors that play a role in differentiating the varied types of barter found in Ecuador, as described by Ferraro (2011) This is confirmed by Ange (2015) that suggests that “*only the context would define the kind of barter exchange takes place and within this context human agency generates the elements that define the transaction, considering the name, the type of social relations, the valuation mode and measure and the use of money or not*”. This last optic on barter broadens the range of elements that enclose and that indicate what actually happens in barter transactions. Simultaneously puts into question definitions offered by C. Humphrey (1992; 1985) where she finds there is non-numeric operation done on the base of units, as described inside the barter model. I think the answer is that Humphrey means there are predominantly subjective motivations and estimations made in barter. But as it is a mechanism used and designed by people, evolution and exposure to external elements (such as the conventional market and prices) are (or can be) influencing the personal valuation methods used by the exchangers in modern barter transactions and in different types of barter-trade.

There were also commercial transactions that involved ‘buying & selling’ products instead of exchanging them at *el cambeo*, -as it was offered to me-. But these were really rare cases. According to a couple of interviewees, outside *el cambeo*, there are cases where participants commercialize indeed products *at el cambeo*, but there are also participants that offer their exchanged products *outside el cambeo*, to sale in other spaces. (as some interviewees expressed in pers. communication, 2018) Curiously, I could not confirm these rumours as those were denied *at el cambeo* by participants. These are examples or a small indication on how (Ange, 2015) “*Value systems is a way to unfold social dimensions which are the concrete fabric of social life*” in the practice.

Even though barter in Pimampiro is not based on relations of *haggling* and *maximizing profits*, according to Humphrey (1992), there were a few cases in which people affirmed to perceive profit after the exchange. It is possible that barter is not based on making profits, still according to some people interviewed they did perceive *profit* in the exchange they took part in Pimampiro. Two women affirmed that they got *more* (quantity) by the exchange, than by having to pay for it. Meaning that they would have to pay more money, than the relative (market) value of het products they were taking home. Two other persons expressed, in informal conversations, that there are people that commercializes the products gotten from the exchange after the event. I was not able to verify that. And it might perhaps have been difficult to verify as participants might not want to reveal they were commercializing the goods obtained. Even when the making of profits for some might be a perception, not based in calculations; it might be possible that there are (in a certain degree) numeric calculations behind the perception of making profits from the exchange. Others might perceive the *benefit*, or the value, of taking something home they could not have paid, by not having money to pay for, a form of making profit.

Based on my observations during fieldwork, barter is a mechanism used to generate *benefit* of different kinds, as well as it is possible to generate *profit* with the products obtained in these kinds of markets. according to some interviewees.

4.3.6. Information

In order for Pimampiro to happen there must be information available. This information is not been passed through written means or communication media, at least not before the local government's intervention of the last 3 years. Nowadays *el cambeo* in Pimampiro is been promoted through communication media such as the tv, newspapers and digital media due to the attention the Ecuadorian local and national government had given to the tradition in their interventions. The last years, information on the event takes place through social media (e.g. facebook), radio and on national tv where bureaucrats use images on the event and people's testimonials to invite tourism and public participation at national level. The mayor of Pimampiro expects in this way (pers. Communication, 2018) that more people gets to know about the celebration to maintain the practice alive.

Some of the marketing and communication efforts undertaken by the Government of Pimampiro, are the following flyers I found on internet and which represent an example of the new communication flow taking place around Pimampiro barter.



Flyer 1. Barter event no year



Flyer 2. Barter event 2018



Flyer 3. Barter event 2015

This kind of *information flow* is nevertheless different from the kind of information flow Humphrey initially meant to be involved in barter and barter-systems, in which she meant that people need to know where to find each other, what kind of products people is able to manufacture or are been offered and who is bartering in order for barter actually to happen.

In Pimampiro, information gets reproduced every year by the people participating in the event. The celebration of the tradition of *el cambeo* in Pimampiro makes possible for people to spread *oral information*, in the form of narratives from the past (cosmovision, religion, heritage) and the present (political narratives) and stories about the festivity, developing a sense of identification with the market or tradition/ritual; as well as they create expectations that maintain at the same time the tradition alive, according to what I have been able to perceive during field-research.

the barter market ‘tradition’ In Pimampiro, is fixed in the calendar happening every year and people know there is an exchange of agricultural products. This kind of information is passed through oral narratives by people taking part of it and people having seen it, or heard about it, as I was able to perceive during field-research. People are, in this sense, familiar with the event in the area. According to the literature around this barter markets, it is an historical given dating from before the Spanish colonization. After this, the knowledge on this barter market has continued to spread throughout the valley, reaching the capital of the country, where I first got to hear from it by people involved in agriculture in the area. In actual times, the barter is known as and due to its status of a *tradition* celebrated around Eastern, among the general public and its participants.

In Pimampiro and in the surroundings of it, people *know* of the existence of the barter market. They explained that agricultural products are exchanged traditionally to obtained the ingredients for the *fanescas*) and they know which ethnises participate in it. There is knowing available on the type of products they can find. This knowing is shared with Colombia’s southern provinces from where people also take part in the event, as an historical given described in the literature dating from pre-colonial times and as I could confirmed during the market.

Through field work, I confirmed that barter *requires a degree of information* to take place, but it *also generates information*. The information generated on harvest, prices, agricultural production and or specialization of production is exchanged next to the products. This information generated and passed through might be relevant in the organization of trade in the region. Through barter markets the information flow obtains continuation and a place for exchange.

The recent information flow created by the government in their attempt to promote values of “*reciprocity, solidarity and humanity*” (Narvaez in pers. communication, 2018), in an attempt to popularize the event outside the original geographical range and social frame of the event, might unexpectedly change parameters of the original celebration. The same event that Oscar Narvaez himself described in the interview as; ‘*genuine*’ and “*unique in the country*” (Narvaez in pers. communication, 2018). The ignoring there could be effects not considered by the different and new information flows, probably affecting the *genuineness*, the social purposes and certainly the *dynamics*, that create this a specific and particular kind of barter.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1. Barter as a practice: dynamic contextual phenomenon of today or, a static practice of the past

Humphrey's suggested characteristics of barter (1992), which at the same time constitute the condition for the creation and the perpetuation (or continuity) of the longstanding, socially, dynamic and contextual practice of barter, are evidenced in Pimampiro, where cultural and religious motivations, stimulate the traditional/ritual barter market and maintain good communitarian inter-ethnic relations. The disintegration of the monetary system, which in this case, unfolds in a lack of money, motivates people to create alternative strategies that would provide them direct access to goods and services and indirectly, with a tool for autonomy. The cultural motivations, together with the external influences conform the dynamic parameters for the perpetuation of barter. A dynamic is also evident in the adaptive capacity and convenient use of subjective valuation mechanisms in the exchange and to maintain a constant information flow through barter, together with government interventions and technological advances, demonstrate barter's 'adaptational and dynamic capacity, making of the practice a sophisticated, well-directed and complex strategy, rather than a primitive, archaic, repetitive and unprofitable method.

The influence participants have on barter today, is also evidenced in the '*names*' participants give to the specific kinds of barter; as it has been described by E. Ferraro (2011) in her observations in Ecuador. According to Ferraro (2011) different types of exchange and barter take place among indigenous ethnicities in the Andes; these involve their own particularities; for example, some involve even partially the use of money and have "*their own specific names*". Confirming Ferraro's observations on the existence of specific names for the several specific types of barter-exchange in Ecuador; I would suggest that the correct name for the kind of barter occurring in Pimampiro's celebration, would be: '*EL CAMBEO*', as the most of the participants called it (and more naturally responded to) and not '*trueque*', or '*trueke*', as most outsiders (social actors and people not practicing it) called it. In this specific kind of barter, called '*el cambeo*', *inter-ethnic barter* took place involving *short-term relations* that get re-produced and celebrated in a *festive mode once a year*. The interethnic relations, between afro Ecuadorian and indigenous ethnicities, get reinforced, maintained, and celebrated during this specific kind of barter held in Pimampiro, in a *specific moment* of the year.

Barter in the Pimampiro's annual traditional celebration is practiced in a *market context*, where similar arrangements are made around logistics and organization, as in conventional markets. Their position next to conventional markets makes this market, at first look, comparable or, even similar, to *new nested-markets* (Hebinck et al., 2015), which are suggested to be constructed (informally) by people themselves. *New nested-markets* are perceived in different places of the world functioning *parallelly* to the often-exclusory centralized neoliberal markets. These markets, as suggested by Hebinck (et al., 2015) "*have the modern particularity of deconstructing the idealization of a monolithic market system regulating itself, as suggested in the neoliberal economy*". The social nature reflected in the construction of informal barter markets is similar or, corresponds, to the social construction and nature of the informal new-nested *commercial* markets described by Hebinck et al. (2015), who define

markets as; “being places of social interaction which are institutionally regulated and embedded in historic repertoires, instead of just been neo-liberal systems of commercialization”. In the case of Andean barter markets, such as the yearly Pimampiro market, *the informal institutions* regulating these, are popular and ritual institutions governing inside the communal systems of Andean culture and society, as suggested to Tassi (2017). Having confirmed the social and informal nature of alternative markets during field work, in 2018, I suggest that these forms of economic systems and strategies are epitomes of peoples’ creativity and resourcefulness. Undoubtedly, and differently from new nested markets which use money, barter and barter markets are considered tools for autonomy and empowerment (Ange, 2016; Gatti, 2010; Primavera, 2010; Humphrey, 1992; Polanyi, 1944) because they surpass the need to gather and to collect money in order to obtain products and services. These markets relay in the capacity of people to organize themselves and to produce the products of exchange.

5.2. Modern-barter in the Andes: cosmovision and contextuality. Culture-related concepts.

Reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, valuation and information are the conditions and characteristics of barter used as analytical conceptual tools in this report offered by Caroline Humphrey in 1992, used to analyse the practice of barter in the annual barter market celebration in Pimampiro. In the analysis of a practice surrounded by narratives that make of it a phenomenon based on *myths* rather than on empiric observation, I have argue barter’s contextual complexity and socially dynamic nature that makes the practice a contemporary economic resource and to argue against those narratives, with assumptions that contribute to invisibilize and to ignore the social dynamics and adaptational nature of barter, by attributing generalities and prejudices that overshadow its complex constitution and (historic) contextual conditions. My argument has been motivated by the identification of social and contextual elements, that evidence the role and the choice that people have in constructing and designing the mechanisms that involve their own social, religious, cultural characteristics and (political) economic benefit.

The tools offered by Humphrey’s are useful to define barter as a contextual practice and to describe the role of human agency in maintaining the practice until today, in a more general sense. The limitations of her tools, is that these are not, and cannot not be specific enough to contain all kinds of barter. According to Humphrey, that is also not the idea behind the study of barter. She suggests that there is no sense in generating models or a “universal model of barter”. Consequently, to generate *specificities*; specific knowledge of the Andes is required in the analysis of barter in the Andes. This is why Andean cultural related concepts suggested by N. Tassi (2017) and other scholars, are integrated in the discussion of this report, to complement the initial analysis of barter as a contextual practice, in the celebration of barter market in Pimampiro. The most important parameter for the conservation of the practice and the market is the *Andean cosmovision*, next to other contextual conditions.

According to Andes-culture-based concepts, the celebration of the barter market in Pimampiro, is a *cosmo-economic* strategy based on a practice that has origin in an ancient (ritual) trade-custom, generated by the Andean *animistic rationale* rooted in Andean indigenous cosmovision, by which dispersed and later *marginalized* communities of diverse ethnic background, get in contact with each

other and socialize through the *commercial* and *ritual* exchange of a diversity of products; engendering relations of harmony and peace, cooperation and trade. The traditional celebration of *el cambeo* has cultural, social and religious *meaning* for the different communities and this represents the *aggregated value* to the material and next to nutritional benefits the practice brings to the participants. The social and commercial dynamics in barter markets, shape the reality of communal life in the Andes and reframes barter as a contemporary practice and dynamic phenomenon that enables social cohesion among communities, due to the social, cultural, political and the economic significance it has for the communities that practice it.

5.2.1. The Andean cosmovision

Andean socio-economic strategies are suggested to be the result of adaptation and integration of the different natural environments (Murra, 1984) and of the different perception of nature and the role of community (Tassi, 2017; Rist, 2000; Marti & Pimbert, 2007; Rasmussen, 2012; Naranjo et al., 2017). This is how in the context of the Andes; the Andean indigenous culture and its *philosophical vision*, or “*Cosmo-Vision*”, have influence on the design, or construction of socio-commercial mechanisms, such as barter and systems of barter; based on *cultural-values* that guide and define how people *relate* with all *living and non-living organisms*. ‘*Reciprocity*’ is often referred to be *the moral-embedded* in rituals and in socio-economic practices in the Andean culture.

In the Andes, historically, there are different forms of organizing the economic system and practices. According to the literature, these mechanisms and rituals are based on a different rational way of *viewing life, the natural environment and the social* (Marti & Pimbert, 2010). At understanding Andean socio-economic systems, it is important to take into account the Andean rationale and its derived economic methods, defined as “*Cosmo-Economics*”. (Tassi, 2017) The cosmoeconomics rationale is different from the Western economic rationale standardly used to frame economic affairs and economic mechanisms at a global level.

In this sense, the concept of cosmovision, often argued in the literature around cultural frames and economic systems of the Andes, refers to the ontological frame in which, and by which, relations with the earth and the *cosmos* are perceived. (Tassi, 2017) Inside this frame of thought; there are *circular-relations* among all beings in earth. These circular-relations connect people with the physical world, “*so material becomes relational*” (Feola, 2017) through an *animistic* view of materials and their (social) relationship with the living. In the Andean cosmovision, all kind of reciprocal-exchanges are embedded and reproduced, defining and mimicking the specific relationships humans and their communities have and maintain with all creatures in the cosmos. (Tassi, 2017)

Inside this frame of thought, reciprocal-relations among humans are maintained on a base of reciprocal-exchanges, that *mimic*, or *symbolize*, “*transmutation*” (Tassi, 2017) the reciprocal exchanges and relations that people have with other organisms and creatures on earth; including the earth, mountains, rivers and others physical phenomenon “*what we call ‘nature’*”, are considered *living-creatures*, or sentient entities (De la Cadena, 2010). *Animism* inside Andean culture involves the relationship people has with *places* and *things* through daily work and *rituals* (Sillar, 2009).

“Understanding animism emphasises how agency is located in the social relationship people have with the material world and how material objects can have identities”. (Feola, 2017)

The *animistic rationale* of the Andes is reproduced in the norms that form its *ritual-culture* and the *ritual-cultural practices* deriving from that culture. This system of beliefs, even after a process of *syncretism*, remains preserved, giving form to rituals based on *“norms that construct the social and religious system of economy of the Andes”* (Tassi, 2017). In this sense, *ritual-economic practices* have spiritual and social signification for Andean communities.

5.2.2. Indigenous Economy

Due to the social, political and economic disintegration of the central system wherein Andean indigenous communities live as a result of systematic marginalization and discrimination, Andean economies function inside what has been denominated by Tassi (2017) the *“Interstitial-institutionality* which means that indigenous people of the Andes operate systematically within the fissures (or, inside the informal spaces) of society’s official economic and administrative system. The central formal system that un-favours, neglects and discriminates indigenous people, creating spaces for informality, or the realms of the informal. *“of highland indigenous groups and their tendency to operate in the fissures of the official economic and administrative system dates back from colonial times, where in indigenous law separated the indigenous politics and jurisdiction from the sphere of colonial powers.* (Tassi 2017 on Fernandez, 2000)

According to Tassi (2017) in the Andes, the ritual and the religious fields are other critical domains that allow the sedimentation of the interstitial institutions on which popular trade is founded, because in Andean cosmoeconomics *“economy and cosmology are tied together by a ‘double bind’, where material and financial conditions constantly influence cosmological practices and meanings, while simultaneously being acted on by them”*. By ‘cosmological practices’ Tassi means rituals, offers, ritual-celebrations and agricultural practices.

Accordingly, in Andean societies, economic and religious spheres converge through *ritual practices of circulation* giving social meaning to trade and to markets. This means that *markets* and *trade* are spaces, or spheres, in itself of social importance because economic and religious elements intersect and connect, becoming *centre for the reproduction* of other types of cosmological and social phenomena; such as relations of kin, mobility (Tassi, 2017) or, interethnic relations as in the case of Pimampiro’s barter.

Barter traditional celebration in Pimampiro is a (form of) ritual where the exchange of products coming of the ‘Pachamama’ with humans, is *symbolically reproduced* in the period of the harvest of maize. This ritual celebration takes place around a *crucial period*, inside the cosmo-agricultural calendar. (Naranjo et al., 2017). The barter operates on principals of *mutual respect* and *kindness*. Argumedo & Pimbert (2010) also suggest ‘*affection*’ as one the principals used in barter markets, in Peru; *“these principals have been institutionalized in exchange and participation rules through ritualized customs that express reciprocity and solidarity”*.

The *ritualization of commercial practices* are mechanisms engendered by culture. In the absence of a formal or state institution governing the practices of barter, Tassi (2017) suggests, there exist other *institutions*; such as, '*popular*' and '*ritual*' *institutions*, which are created and maintained by people that govern ritual and commercial practices which in the Andes are often intertwined. In this sense, barter markets and barter practices are commercial places, practices, with symbolic and religious meaning. Barter markets are accordingly commercial places, or *spheres*, of social and religious signification for the people in the Andes. These meanings and ideas are at the same time maintained and reproduced by the practice of barter in barter markets.

5.2.3. Indigenous Economy and Exchange in the Andes

Andean systems are based on a *circulation* element (Tassi, 2017) and mutual nurturing element (Marti & Pimbert, 2007) giving motivation for exchange and which is described by Tassi (2017) as: "*not simply involving, but also unifying the natural, the social, the economic and the spiritual in a circuit of fluidity, where these elements require to feed each other cyclically, in order to continue*" The moral of exchanging is a representation of the natural cycles, which are viewed as *transmutation of the material*. This material transmutation is *enacted* and *reproduced* by exchange and exchanging mechanisms, in order to maintain *cosmological-relationships* and *fluidity*. (Tassi, 2017)

This is why inside the Andean culture; mechanisms of exchange are still maintained and persist until today. Indigenous Economy and exchange mechanisms are governed by the moral obligation to reciprocate, coming forth the relationships and bonds people have with each other and with living- and non-living creatures that enable their existence.

Until today, among Andean communities in the Northern of Ecuador barter takes place as part of the socio-economic organization based on the "*generalized system of reciprocity that includes a variety of 'traditional' and 'modern' exchanges, monetary and non-monetary transactions and ceremonial exchanges*", according to the observations of E. Ferraro (2004).

Meaning that *solidarity*, or *Sumaq Kawsay* or *causay*, in Andean relations is based on the *ayny* or '*sacred-reciprocity*' (Pimbert & Argumedo, 2010); an element in barter that has a deeper religious roots and a complex religious, social and economic meaning, than been (merely) guided by a "*sense of solidarity with others*", or "*been reciprocal among people*" differently that the sense of solidarity in the Christian sense of 'being-good-people'. Because it identifies relationships of "reciprocal-exchange" (based on a moral obligation, as Humphrey has suggested, in 1992) between all existing beings. Enacting 'reciprocity' by indigenous people in the Andes, has accordingly roots in the Andean beliefs and cosmovision.

5.3. Criticism on Humphrey's conceptualization

While arguing barter's contextual character, making it unfit to fixed categorizations and for establishing a "*universal model of barter*", C. Humphrey suggests a number of characteristics, or concepts for the conditions on which barter and barter systems are created. Some of these concepts are according other scholars "not flexible enough" to represent the diverse types of barter, as the ones found in Ecuador, according to Ange (2015). Humphrey's categorization of barter as a form of exchange *where money is not included and the values are exclusively determined by subjective estimations* fails to explain the diverse kinds of barter found in the Andes and in Ecuador (Ange, 2015 on Harris 1989 and Ferraro, 2011).

On this point, I can also argue Humphrey's definition on barter as being a practice that takes place exclusively without money, in the case of the different barter exchanges taking place in the Ecuadorian Andes (Ferraro, 2011) and according to what I perceived in interviews in Pimampiro in 2018. I can also put into question the suggested *subjective methods* by which participants give value to the products in the exchange, in the descriptions and interpretations of Humphrey (1992).

Still, I can argue that Humphrey's concepts are brought up by her based on the different contexts. The concepts have also weight if we verify the history of different socio-economic systems in the world wherein barter networks did function based on social or personal subjective estimations according to the cultural and economic context wherein it took place. So, it is a matter of contextualizing Humphrey's definitions. According to many participants' in interviews during the event, they expressed to be guided by prices in the market, at the moment of giving a value of exchange to their products and to the products of the other. In my observations the *external influences* such as *market prices* are a given that explains the complexity and dynamics of the valuation-element in barter of the modern times, in which *subjective estimations* might even involve or contain *market prices* as an *increasingly trending standard*. At answering the criticism raised by Ange (2015), I suggest, there is rather possible there is more going on in Pimampiro's barter as a result of late developments in the region, such as, the *penetration of communication means and technology* and a not complete disintegration from the central system of the participants; who also sell their products to middlemen or, in the regular, conventional markets.

My observations are based on a kind of barter taking place in a geographically close area to the places where Ferraro (2011) made her observations. This closeness makes me able to recognize Ange's observations and understand Ange's argument at criticizing the 'fixed categorization' made by Humphrey. Still, I suggest this criticism is debatable and that for this it is important to understand what is meant by Humphrey when she defines subjective estimations, even when Humphrey did not define explicitly market prices as such, she did give the example of the value of 'salt' defined by the distance in the Lhomi barter systems, inducing that in these subjective estimations, *distance* was a variable for quantifying products in exchange. My deductions are however still debatable as well, as I have not been able to confirm my observations in the years following the year, I did research, on an annual event.

Humphreys' definitions of barter as a practice where *only goods-of-direct-consumption* are involved; and where there is *no-delay* involved is debatable according to the observations made by Harris (2000) according to Ange (2015) and by Ferraro (2011). These observations are made of different types of

barter in Ecuador. In Pimampiro's *cambeo*, I was able to confirm there were goods of non-direct consumption been offered as well, such as clothing and shoes, but rather in a minimal proportion. Due to the same reason as the one mentioned above, I still I cannot confirm if there is always a minor part of the people offering goods-of-non-direct consumption in Pimampiro, or that what I saw was a case of some participants experimenting with other kind of products at the event that year. No-delay involved is an element I could not verify, neither identify, during the event or during field work.

However, Ange's criticism on using a fixed characterization of barter, based on the contextuality of barter and its polythetic of category, is an obvious argument because it contradicts Humphrey's starting point. This criticism also warns future scholars because it could impoverish or restraint the optic in the study of barter.

An interesting element I did not find in the literature of barter, neither offered by Humphrey; is the '*learning*' element suggested to be present by Narvaez (in pers. Communication, 2018) in *el cambeo* in Pimampiro. One of the particularities, I was able to perceive at *el cambeo* held in Pimampiro, involves children taking part of the barter and bartering with mature people. According to Narvaez, the practice *el cambeo* in Pimampiro contains a form to teach children, from an early stage, commercial skills and introducing them playfully to *trade*, nuancing by this, one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Andean indigenous communities.

5.4. Modern-barter: complexity and contextuality. Is barter an economic mechanism that can be prototyped, or is it socially constructed?

The notorious contemporary political value, recognized by different social actors that see in commercial mechanisms *owned* and *shaped* by the people such as, barter and barter-systems, the potential of strengthening the body of strategies that people have to overcome the lack of money. The influence that people has in that process, also denominated: *human-agency*, is key for envisioning alternatives to a globalized central system "*which is controlled by an economic elite who has not the capacity to understand and to serve for the purpose of well-being of the greatest part of the global population and the environment, in their different cultural and environmental contexts*" (Tassi, 2017). For Andean rural communities, barter and barter systems represent *as well* a tool and an opportunity to operate less dependently on the monetary system. Relevant to this tool for *empowerment* and *autonomy* is that it is reached *by the grade of autonomy and independence people has to organize themselves around their natural and economic resources*. The social significance of the practice or, its social value, lays in the hands of the people that use it and that can be translated in autonomy, religious meaning or social meaning, through the building of social networks of economic support been generated and maintained.

In Pimampiro, 2018, the information passed today by the local government, social actors; such as, NGO's and farmers' organizations; such as, the agroecological farmer's organization, make the event of barter accessible for 'new' and probably a different kind of participants from the ones that take originally participate in this specific exchange market. I argue in this sense, the effectiveness of, and the objective of broadening, *this space* to a different kind of participants and the influence that

different social actors have on *interfering* in a certain extend *with* the dynamics and purposes of this specific barter constructed by original groups. Construction of the practice by the social is relevant condition for the continuation of barter. Not necessarily 'numbers of people', as some social actors might interpret, according to what I have been able to perceive.

One literature example, on how co-construction and top-down intervention by prototyping barter, is given in the paper of Fabre-Platas & Santamaria (2012) describing the well-intended interventions by the catholic church in a region of Mexico did not lead to a dynamic, lively market. In this paper, two barter markets were compared; one originally constructed by the indigenous habitants of the region of the lake Patzcuaro, in Michoacan Mexico, named *Del Santuario* in the city of Patzcuaro and the other solidary market called *Los Mojtakuntani* (or Purepecha) a regional 'tianguis' (or barter-market) organized by the church taking place the recent years. The last one, recommended the authors, needed to better coordination, communication and marketing to motivate participation in their reflection for the *continuity* of the market. As they have seen a decrease in participation in a barter market organised by the patters of the church. From the optic of the authors of the paper and their focus on 'organisation'; promotion and coordination might help to recover participation to the event. But, according to the literature and the research done in this report, there is a relation between owning a practice and continuity. In this case, the problem of the decrease participation after years of organisation of a barter market, could lay in *the lack of owning of the practice* by the people, the lack of motives of (structural) social nature, of the people who does not *own* the practice in this the market. Barter exchange (its different types and systems) are a contextual and dynamic phenomenon that generates relationships, as well as it takes place *inside* a frame of relationships of various kinds (Ange, 2015), reinforcing social networks of collaboration and economic resilience. There were no social, historic or environmental motivations coming from the group of individuals or their communities to engage in barter practices, as part of other possible motives that were not given for the non-existence of barter systems in that place.

However, initially people respond enthusiastic, and curious, to engage in a barter market organized, as I was able to perceive in Ibarra, a town close to Pimampiro, where I participated of two barter markets organized by the community leaders of a number of communities from the highlands together with the Municipality of Ibarra, in an attempt to reproduce the type of barter market taking place in Pimampiro. This market took place, weekly on Saturdays at the Obelisco square, offered by the municipality of Ibarra as the place where people could engage in the activities of barter. Two community leaders confirmed that the event took place thanks to the interventions of the community leaders organizing the people and the financial support of the local government. They envisioned to promote social values through the alternative economic strategies of barter, according to what they expressed in the interviews I made during these barter-markets. People in these markets where actively engaged in the exchange and expressed to be glad with the initiative and with the barter market because they had gotten a good number of products in the exchange. Still, I had questions on the *continuity* these Saturday's markets would have in the future if the financial resources failed to facilitate the mobilization of the participants to the point of exchange. Would they voluntarily organize themselves in the future and maintain the initiative? Questioning the continuity of these markets was raised by the reaction of participants when the buses that were hired to transport people from the lowlands to Ibarra failed to pick up people on time and as a consequence these failed to deliver people on time for the barter market. I saw people that seemed at first to have being very enthusiastic about the exchange, but after arriving late and finding all had been exchanged, they were disappointed and

sad, some were even angry with the local leaders. The people of the lowlands expressed their reaction was because “*they had lost a whole day, time and efforts*” to take part of the exchange to arrive when the exchange was already finished. This was because the exchange took place from its start in the morning hours.

Barter is a mechanism of socialization and cultural reproduction, that ensures food security and that as I argued in my discussion; “is based upon *the ownership of people and their own capacity, will or necessity to construct the barter*, because it holds a whole constellation of meanings, purposes and other specificities that are aimed at, next to economic benefit, by its participants and that ensures its *continuity*”. Prototyping then barter and markets of barter, without stronger roots and relations with the context and its social realities might result into failing, due a lack of continuity coming from a lack of real meaning and real ownership.

5.5. The Invisibilization or barter

Humphreys’ work and definitions focus on observed or *existing barter*. Not focusing on the processes by which barter became *invisible* and *underestimated*. However, Humphrey argues the misinterpretation of ritual practices and the idea of primitiveness. She also gives some clues on the *potential* of barter (systems) for social groups *to become and maintain autonomous*, by making groups of people less dependent on the use of money. The answer to the *invisibility of barter* and its *theoretical underestimation* lays in historical processes. Having a look to these historical processes contribute to confirm political and economic reasons for this; as well as the suggestions made by Hebinck et al (2015) on markets as *being places of social interaction institutionally regulated and embedded in historic repertoires*. In the case of barter; barter systems, these economic structures got destroyed by Western-Colonialism in the imposed penetration of colonial currencies (monetization) and economic system. (Guyer, 1985). Barter then became a “primitive practice”, linked to underdevelopment, justifying colonialist purposes and objectives. In her book called: “*Money Matters*”, (1985) Jane Guyer, economic anthropologist, describes in the historic events on the monetization of Western Africa the processes by which one-single currency (actual money and its concept), was enforced. She describes for example, how the prohibition of barter systems and demonetization of indigenous currencies took place Nigeria and how the relation between the absence of barter systems, means a high degree of monetization in precolonial Ghana, were local currency, such as iron pieces, functioned as well as objects of practical value to barter because this could be transformed into weapons or into agricultural tools. In the extensive research work, where she reflects on the social and political aspects of money and value and the impact of money for village communities; she also gives answer to the what now looks like an obvious and expressly *invisibilization* process of the social-economic networks of support used by the “uncivilized” and “primitive communities”, as the narrative in traditional economy describes people that used barter. In her contribution on the social history of Africa, Guyer describes how British pound sterling made its entrance as a single-currency by enforcing *military expeditions that aimed at subjugating recalcitrant “natives”*. She reflects on the processes she describes, as; “*destroying these social constructions*;

through the monopolization of commercial mechanisms and the instauration and legitimation of conventional commercial markets as the only means of development and progress, affects the communal systems created to maintain peace and social support". (Guyer, 1995). It is not the obsolescence of barter and barter systems what is entitled to give the image of archaism and primitiveness to these socio-economic systems and strategies, but rather it is its effectiveness in socially and economically organizing society and its potential for liberating people from the dependence on one single-currency, what lays as (historic) background.

5.6. Reflections on the research process: Researching Pimampiro's Modern barter celebration

Some social actors argued the significance of working on a thesis on an annual event, as it is barter in Pimampiro, because it was not part of systematic, frequent barter that would contribute more structurally to rural people's livelihoods. I think that investigating about barter in Pimampiro has significance; for the understanding and defining an invisible the practice that serves as a tool of inter-ethnic socialization, cultural and religious expression inside the Andean context. It serves to understand different barter types and to categorize barter specificities and contextual roles. This contributes to understand the socio-cultural context and the human and economic potential of the place where it takes place. Investigating on any kind of systematic barter becomes a tool in itself for exploring the social and political condition of the groups involved. In Pimampiro, it the aspect of interethnic relations which is interestingly present, functioning for the socialization of two highly different cultural groups. The penetration of market prices in traditional-considered practices. And the religious meanings and popular institutions governing the ritual around trade in the Andes where for me elements I discovered through the analysis of annual ritual barter. I also its social nature and understood that socio-economic strategies, need the social aspect to reproduce. I consider that discriminating the study of barter in Pimampiro due to its annual character is unjust, because it blinds for its significance and the knowledge it unfolds. On the other side, the annual character of the research object, makes research highly demanding in a short period of time. As it as well makes it difficult to explore on intangible different aspects of social rural life in this particular region, such as the ritualization of an economic practice and the *dept* of interethnic relations. Pimampiro barter is particular and has a strong sentiment among the people that *enjoys* taking part of it. Its preservation and continuity along the centuries, even when its material contribution, or gains, are perceivable just once a year and are consumed in a couple weeks. Suggestions for future research are questions raised during field research and in my reflections on the event relating to the subjective mechanisms for valuation and the influence of modernity and the late governments interventions aiming at transforming the tradition (or, National Patrimony) into a product for 'Tourism' to attract more participants and tourists and which evidences that the market is been affected by modernity and the market and the role of women.

In order to describe, in detail, the effect of *el cambeo* in Pimampiro in the livelihoods of people, a longer period of research might be required to further explore the region, to deepen in the socio-economic context and to adequately familiarize with the people and their cultural context. One pro would be to have proper equipment to record interviews. Limitations in my study are strongly related

with the *newness* of the theoretic field and the subject for me and the time I required to find and to select the adequate literature to understand barter from its origin. The simplicity of the phenomenon, obscures its complexity and the multiple aspects it has. Another limitation of the study is not been able to verify and to further explore my data and the concepts due to the annual character of the event taking place. Even when questions and a strategy was prepared for the gathering of data and the observation of the event, the overwhelming character of an unknown event involving a market, demands experience and continuation. Time, distances and financial means become then a limiting factor, issue to the study. In my own experience of the barter, I felt a bit shy to take part of something I was not really part of socially and culturally speaking. I conducted some exchanges but always feeling a bit insecure of what I was doing. Personally, I think it was fun to participate briefly, but I also considered that, minding the short-time and the overwhelming amount of speed exchanges taking place and all the interactions, I could better concentrate in the interactions of the original participants, just not to lose focus on the observation of the event and its dynamics.

I agree on that studying a globally used strategy can be complex due to the simplicity of a practice that is at the same time a socio-economic strategy. (Tocancipa, 2008). In a piece written by George Dalton he expresses a problem I confronted and that I had explore by myself, as I have no background in Economics Anthropology. There is a difficult relation between the narratives inside this science that seems divided and lacking of modern and adequate concepts for describing the phenomena and for understanding the background and motives for, for example, economic strategies such as *barter*. It is due to this reason that it is necessary to dig into the history of the development of society to understand that the answer for the question on, “why does barter still exist? Or, actually, why is barter a modern phenomenon?”, is *simply* that people are resourceful in finding ways to get a benefit and to construct their own economic mechanisms and systems, in ways that are specific to a context (wherein the parameters are different from other contexts), depending on its different dynamics.

I would like to cite Dalton’s piece of a paper wherein he explains the importance of understanding the debate between the narratives, so the reader understands I am not the only one that when *entering* the field of (traditional) economy and economic-anthropology needs to understand the history and the choice for the specific tools to describe (and to analyse) something far more complex than simplistic assumptions on *one and only* kind of logic-thinking, or rationality, constructing economic systems and mechanisms.

“Indispensable theoretical concepts do not magically construct themselves on command when they are needed. The whole history of the beginnings of sciences or of great philosophies shows on the contrary, that the exact set of new concepts do not march out on parade single file . . . some are long delayed, or march in borrowed clothes before acquiring their proper uniforms-for as long as history fails to provide the tailor and the cloth. (Althusser 1970:51). Economic anthropology has long been suffering from an adolescent identity crisis: somewhere between an adulthood characterized by sophisticated mathematical tech-niques (Finkler 1979; Pryor 1977) and highly abstract, often doctrinaire theory (Althusser and Balibar 1970), and a very troubled childhood complete with sibling rivalries and a domineering and prestigious parent discipline of economics. Not unlike many teenagers, economic anthropology cannot quite decide what to do with itself or how to do it; to focus on production or on distribution and exchange, to describe single economies or to compare several across cultures, to concentrate on precapitalist economies or on the more numerous economies manifesting combinations of capitalist, precapitalist, and noncapitalist formations. National and multinational units (Dorjahn and Isaac 1979; Wolfe 1977) and the world economy (Wallerstein 1974a, b) have now

become part of the genre of economic anthropology.” George Dalton, ed. Greenwich: JAI Press, 1980.
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5.7. Modern Policy and Modern Development Intervention through the practice of barter

Part of the process of invisibilization has been due to the (purposely) undermining of the contribution and the social purpose of barter systems in communal autonomous economic life. Western thinking and the idea of *rational choices* dominates the field of economy, setting as well the Western rational above all other rational thinking outside the Western *modern* thinking paradigm. The idea of the “rational” is a subjective argument in itself when it comes to the social and to the complexity of the whole that conforms the human-rationale, and its mechanisms, this explains why people behave in a certain form and why they act or adapt to circumstances in different ways. When observing different economic systems and strategies by which people organize their economic affairs, outside the Western cultural context, holding an uncritical view on formalist economic theory, might leave often times the modern Western-observer, or interventionist with ideas of underdevelopment, inefficiency, unfairness or simply not understanding how these different systems work or what are collateral gains aimed by these alternative economic systems or strategies. At the other, it delivers the same observer, or interventionist, a justification for disrupting, destroying and *invisibilizing* the potential of these socio-economic systems.

Implications of this research for policy and practice suggests that *arbitrarily intervening* in these ritual-practices or, destroying these creative social constructions by the instauration of globalized commercial and financial mechanisms and tools; affect the communal systems and their organisation, created to maintain peace and support. Ignoring these strategies, existing in the domestic and communal space, where relations of solidarity exist, having the effect of political cohesion; culturally and symbolically and which are not merely mercantile, could blind or obstruct the understanding and the study of these practices. Not taking into account their entire context and their nature, can as well have implications for the implementation of the practice, as in prototyping the practice, and for policy around its implementation, introduction or promotion.

The intervention, and development of policy, might contribute to the promotion, stimulation, reconstruction and preservation of barter systems, but that to be effective, social and political actors need to be conscious of the mechanisms that are behind barter systems and that make of these systems: *social-living organisms* and which cannot be considered or articulated as ‘copies’ of other barter examples, based on a mechanical practice. Meanings and political purposes can contribute to enrich the practice, but then still, it needs to *affect*, to be owned and to be co-constructed by its participants

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this research report barter as a contextual practice has been defined. Conditions for the creation and the perdurance as characteristics of barter ***reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, value and information*** suggested by C Humphrey, have been used in the analysis of the empirically observed Pimampiro barter market celebration case in 2018, in Northern Ecuador.

The conceptual tools offered by C. Humphrey contribute **to explain the persistence of barter** in Pimampiro until today **by defining the cultural, social, economic, political and religious parameters that play a role** in this barter and that form the contextual and dynamic elements that have maintained it until today.

Human agency is evidenced in the **influence people has on the dynamics of barter**. At the same time, the people exerting agency on the dynamics of barter are as well influenced or affected by external conditions. These parameters make of barter, and barter systems, **a highly adaptable, dynamic, contextual phenomenon**. The phenomenon of barter has for this reason more of a **complex and sophisticated socio-economic strategy** than of a repetitive, primitive practice, with no other purpose than merely exchanging goods; that contributes to broaden the spectrum of socio-economic resources and mechanisms of resilience of communities in economic and social marginalization

In the Andes, barter and barter systems are motivated due to cultural, religious, economic, political and environmental contextual conditions, that also contribute to perpetuate the socio-economic mechanism. I have suggested **that in the analysis of a contextual practice, context-based concepts are required**. In the case of the Andean Pimampiro, **the tools offered by Humphrey are complemented with context based concepts**, such as the ones offered by Nico Tassi, formulated on **the cultural Andean context** and on Andean socio-economic strategies.

Barter in the Andean context, and in any other context, is, or **can be, limited by governmental interventions and policies of the neo-liberal kind**, which obstruct the direct access to goods and services, autonomous choice and the creative resourcefulness by which people can decide, create and be empowered; by forcing people's integration to the central economic system, making people fully dependent of money, market prices, volatility and crisis. Barter can as well be limited by obstructing its social and dynamic construction with mechanisms of individualization and the institutionalization of profits.

Barter has been invisibilized due to historical processes aiming the introduction of colonial currencies and economic systems; deconstruct communal systems and to destroying native economic systems, currencies and strategies. The image of uncivilization and archaism and the undervaluation and misinterpretation of ritual-economic practices have been spread through classic economic theory. **I have contributed to its visibilization** by defining the practice of barter in the analysis of barter case in Pimampiro and **by bringing into the attention, concepts and data** that contribute **to unveil its social, dynamic and contextual nature**

Given that barter is a **practice constructed socially** in its own context, it explains for itself why barter and barter systems are **not simply to prototype**, or to introduce, where the conditions (***reciprocity, social relations, disintegration, value and information***) for barter are not constructed or do not exist.

In the case study based on annual event, there are factors that make the research a particular task, for example the geographical real range of the research in comparison with the narrowness of space in time for the observation of one-day event. In the one-day event, there is an overwhelming amount of information that it is almost impossible to catch it all in one day alone, even when having the research activities and questions prepared and planned. It demands different strategies from the researcher to cope and to gather the stream of new information and the analysis on an annual phenomenon.

Suggestions for future research are questions raised during field research and in my reflections on the event relating **to the subjective mechanisms for valuation** and **the influence of modernity and the late government's interventions** aiming at transforming the tradition (or, National Patrimony) into a product for 'Tourism' to attract more participants and tourists and which evidences that the market is been affected by modernity and the market **and the role of women**.

Finally, **the implications of my research for development policy and intervention** is that efforts on reproduction, stimulation, or preservation of barter markets and systems, require to integrate and should not undermine the social element. Due to the contextual and dynamic nature of barter, these systems require to be constructed by its participants. **The social (co)construction of barter would contribute to its perdurance and continuity and would contribute to the empowerment of its participants and the (degree of) autonomy.**

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