

**ZAMBIA'S FOOD SYSTEM: MULTIPLE SITES OF POWER
AND INTERSECTING GOVERNANCES**

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ETHICS

The School of Social and Political Studies places considerable emphasis on the highest standards of professional and ethical performance, informed by the code of research ethics of the College of Humanities and Social Science (<http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/Research>), which lays down the principles of dignity, respect, honesty, integrity, accountability, openness and leadership. The PhD proposal was reviewed by me and my principal supervisor, and was deemed to require 'Level One' clearance by the supervisor. Subsequent levels of ethical clearance were therefore unnecessary as the project proposal fulfilled the necessary ethical requirements for the type of research that would be undertaken. Under the broad remit of research ethics, Level One ethical clearance covered interviewing etiquette, issues of access, visas and research permits, researcher conflicts of interest, issues of consent and protection of research subject confidentiality. Where 'off the record' excerpts are included in the thesis, they are included for the purposes of the thesis only and consent was not given for any published material.

DECLARATION

Date:

I declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. Part of the thesis has been published in the article included in the Appendix.

Caryn Abrahams

PREFACE

An office near the Poultry Association of Zambia, which is located at the agricultural show grounds on the Great East Road in Lusaka, Zambia, is the base of a veterinary doctor who serves the agricultural community. She consults independently, but is the official vet of the Zambian National Farmers' Union. She unexpectedly gave me more insight into Zambia's food system than I anticipated when she forgot about an appointment with me and left me standing outside her office. Outside the office was a stack of cardboard boxed trays, tied together with twine. Inside each box there were ten day-old chicks. An elderly man came inside, took two boxes, looked inside them, and left. Eventually I followed the man, who by now had strapped his chicks to the back of his bicycle and was about to leave the show grounds. He has a small farm enterprise in a compound in Lusaka and sells live grown chickens at a local market in that compound.



Figure 1 Man with his bicycle

I also later found out that the vet was also an agent for one of the largest breeding companies in Zambia. She offered a one-stop-shop – chicks and the vaccines for small-scale rearing. And business was great; she had standing orders from over twenty small agribusinesses in the area, and because she is also a vet who could offer other services to smallholders, she is one of the

preferred agents for the breeding company. The breeding company relies on agents like her. These agents buy day-old chicks at a discounted rate in bulk from the breeder near Lusaka (the breeder often delivers) and supply an entire network of smallholders all across Zambia. This food system fascinated me. It was similar to what a typical 'value chain' is, yet the idea of a 'chain' just was not suitable. And a 'network' only described how small-scale farmers link to large breeding companies through intermediaries, but does not give us insight about why it works this way.

Zambia's food system is an eclectic mix of formal, high value industry based on the oversight of the Zambian National Farmers' Union (an agribusiness association), large capital investments, informal markets with its array of traders and vendors, and enterprise along this spectrum. Depending on which part of the spectrum is the object of inquiry, one could be faced with very different worlds. On the one hand, there are highly formalised contractual arrangements and large economies of scale in the poultry industry. International agribusinesses invest in the Zambian economy, recognising the buying potential of its growing urban middle class, and the country's openness to foreign investment. On the other hand, there is an interesting mix of formalised enterprise and informal supply chains which incorporates intermediary traders, or 'agents' who work without commission selling the company's product, or sourcing material for production. There are also large informal markets (wholesale and retail), which make up the larger proportion of urban food supply chains in Zambia. Urban food markets in Lusaka are hives of activity where farmers find a daily supply chain for their produce and consumers find accessible retail outlets. Traders are also integral players in linking farmers to markets and distributing food through their networks in and around the city. Small, medium and emerging commercial farmers use the informal market as their preferred supply chain. And although returns may not be as lucrative as formal contractual work, which itself is hard to come by, the urban market is a regular and more secure source of income, which of course encourages the growing proportion of enterprising small farmers in Lusaka. I had two questions, and they persisted wherever I went in Zambia: Why does the food system work this way? And how do I make sense of it?

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I am indebted to the many respondents in Zambia whose patience, kindness and input was an absolutely essential part of the research project. I must single out Dr Godfrey Humpwaye, Mr Matthews Ngosa and Mr Solomon Simutowe who made the research process so smooth and introduced me to many of my key respondents, Ndiyabonga! Thanks also to Mr Joseph Chalila at UNZA for Map 2. In Zambia, I am very thankful to Luwase Ndhlovu and her family for hosting me for the time I was Lusaka, and for making me feel like a part of your family, and to my dearest friend Enock Sakala for keeping me connected to your country.

I am also very grateful to staff members in the Centre of African Studies for providing constructive input through seminars, workshops and conversations at coffee mornings, to friends at the UN in New York – Monika, Simon, Sergiusz and Nikolai for spurring me on and helping

with my language issues and/or commenting on the Intro. Special thanks to Simon Yazgi who spurred me on and allowed me write up on his watch, members of the CAS reading group for detailed comments on earlier drafts, my examiners Stefano Ponte and Lawrence Dristas, and Sara Rich-Dorman.

I must make particular mention of my fellow comrades at CAS, without whom, I would not have been able to finish, and whose love, friendship, intellectual support, crazy antics, and hugs got me through so much, refined my thinking and made me a better person. Annalisa, Lord B, Rania, Paul Swan, Fishcakes, Lisa, Sabine, Laura, Setri, Shishu, Michael and Paul And, thank you so much; I love you guys! A 'shout-out' to my Brooklyn family, the Castros, who hosted me at the end of the writing process and bore with my antisocial behaviour and clutter but took care of me so well. To my Edinburgh family, Jacintha and the Skelms, Kate, Andrew and the kids, Annalisa, Rania, Scott and Helen, and my Yorkshire family Kath and Cliff Smith, thank you so much for bearing with and opening your home to me and for your love and friendship, Ndiyakuthanda! Written acknowledgements can never express the gratitude for my family at home. Thank you Mum and Dad for supporting me, praying for me, encouraging me and challenging me to trust God and to pursue my calling. Thank you for the sacrifices you've made for me to be able to be here, and your unwavering love and friendship; I am truly thankful. Thanks to my sister Claire and her husband Ralph for their love and support and to my darling Jaden, my favourite person in the world. I am also thankful to my cousins and my band who let me leave, and especially to Zama, who believes in me. This thesis is for Ma Pat and Lily Ma, my grandmothers. Finally, I am eternally grateful to Jesus Christ, who made my heart strong, and who has become more real to me during this pursuit of knowledge than ever before, I consider every achievement a loss compared to the all-surpassing wonder of knowing you.

ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to research on agrifood systems in Africa. The research agenda is especially relevant in the context of revived developmental interest in agrifood sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa. Existing scholarship has tended to focus on economic restructuring and the way supermarkets and agribusiness firms increasingly transform African food economies. This thesis is an empirically grounded research endeavour that presents insights about key dynamics in the domestic food system in urban Sub-Saharan Africa, as seen through the case of Lusaka, Zambia. It also challenges existing scholarship by looking at transformations in domestic political economy contexts in Africa that promote the development of agrifood systems. The thesis is concerned with (1) what shapes Lusaka's urban food system or what the key influencing factors are; (2) the institutions that are critical to the functioning of the urban food system; and (3) whether agribusiness firms and retailers govern economic interaction in Zambia or whether these firms and their economic interaction are governed by other institutions, and/or determined by the domestic political economy context. The thesis considers the changes in Zambia's food system which point to growth paths that are intentionally pursued to strengthen the domestic economy so that it meets domestic priorities. Unexpectedly, this is not the concern of the state alone, but also of agribusiness firms. Other fascinating contradictions also became apparent in the course of the fieldwork, which looked at large agribusiness in the poultry sector, the Zambian National Farmers' Union (ZNFU), the South African supermarket, Shoprite, urban markets, market traders and small-scale farmers, between January and November 2007. For instance, contractual arrangements between small-scale farmers and agribusiness firms are common, but the supply chain almost always incorporates intermediary traders; urban markets are formalising at management levels; and the supermarket faces growing pressure by the state to source locally. The methods consisted of in-depth interviews with the ZNFU, firms, farmers, traders, managers of urban markets and supermarkets, and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce. In sum, the thesis argues that urban food systems in Africa can be seen as situated or located in a domestic political economy, influenced by domestic and regional processes, and that they are the result of intersecting forms of governance by different firms and non-firm institutions. In offering a detailed case study of localised food systems in Africa, these findings lend to a robust research agenda on food studies and economic growth in Africa, and are well-placed to contribute to work on food security.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Globalization was supposed to eliminate this kind of recurring disaster. With economists radiating confidence about the new efficiencies of the global market, the need for food self-sufficiency seemed almost archaic. ... But it turned out that globalization did not really work for food. Mauritania [for instance] knows it must bear more of its own food burden. ...

"Everyone is out there protecting their own right now," said Joachim von Braun, director general of the District-based International Food Policy Research Institute. "And that isn't the way globalization is meant to work."

Washington Post, 28 April, 2008

'Africa: Where every meal is a sacrifice. Report for the Global Food'

I happen to believe this country must retain its ability to grow its own food. All too many people think that we can survive by relying totally on the world market. But we must learn the lessons of history - now, it seems to me in these currently dangerous times, more than ever. To sacrifice long-term security for short-term convenience would be utter madness, it seems to me.

Prince Charles quoted in *BBC News*, 12 November 2001

'Prince backs 'Buy Local Campaign'

The dominant narrative about the agrifood sector in Africa states that recent changes in Africa's agrifood economies are rooted in the reorganization and restructuring of the global economy, and therefore bound up with larger narratives about globalisation. In this context, it is surprising that even though academic scholars have highlighted the various ways that African economies have integrated and are integrating into the global economy, the same tropes that placed African

(agrifood) economies in an ‘exceptional’ category as compared to the rest of the world seem to be resurfacing. This thesis is concerned with domestic food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa within a broader understanding of how economies in the south are profoundly transformed by changes in the domestic political economy, the increasing importance of domestic institutions, and agrifood restructuring. The thesis shares an argument made recently by Economic Geography scholars that ‘sweeping statements and general explanatory frameworks do little to uncover the variety of different processes actually taking place ‘on the ground’ in African economies during this present phase of globalization’ (Larsen and Fold, 2008:9). Indeed as seen in the light of the recent food crisis, sweeping statements and general explanatory frameworks are not only contentious, but exceptionalise African economies.

For instance, where the ‘turn to the local’ and community supported agriculture resurfaced in the north, it was heralded as being able to revive economic growth in the north or to ‘compensate politically active consumers for losses in their purchasing power caused by higher food prices’ (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009:xi, Foreward to Clapp and Cohen, 2009). In the south, acute awareness of the need for food self-sufficiency in African countries and those in the global south is seen as an ‘archaic’ concern, understandable in the era of crisis, but in the words of IFPRI’s president quoted above, just not ‘the way globalization is meant to work’. And where comments like that of the Prince of Wales, although spoken in 2001, are applauded in the north perhaps resonating with the justification to bail out northern corporations, a similar comment by the political elite of the south might illicit the kind of response written in a special issue of *The Economist*, ‘How to Feed the World’ (21-27 November 2009) when a number of countries in the south instituted import substitution programmes:

The most important activity...is taking place at the national level. Here, the price rises of 2007-08 have unleashed an unprecedented pack of policies. Practically every developing country, however cash-strapped, has done something (often a lot) to help farmers...yet there are worrying signs that all is not well. For alongside the increases in investment and attention is something more insidious: a turn away from trade, markets and efficiency (*The Economist*, 2009: 77).

The justification by Malawi's President, one of the leaders who instituted a successful import substitution programme and who advocates a similar notion of self-sufficiency as the Prince of Wales, does not sound 'insidious' at all.

The [Malawian] President did say one time that he never, never ever again wanted to suffer the indignity of begging for food around the world and he has succeeded in doing that over the last four years (Francis Moto, High Commissioner of Malawi in the UK, 2009).¹

Understanding the domestic agrifood system in Sub-Saharan Africa

It is evident that there is both revived developmental interest in agrifood sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa, and a renewed commitment by public and private sectors in African countries to focus on self-sufficiency and growing the domestic economy. Renewed interest in agrifood sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa parallels growing attention on domestic political economies in emerging markets, and particularly in Africa (see Van Agtmael, 2008). Research on domestic political economies in African countries, institutional governance and the crucial role of these economies and institutions in food provisioning, economic development and poverty reduction is thus an increasingly pertinent concern.

How then should we think about domestic food systems in urban Africa? What are the changes in African urban food systems and what are the factors that have influenced these changes? And once we have unpacked the answers to these questions, what will this tell us about how urban food systems are governed and the institutions that govern economic interaction? In light of these questions, empirically grounded studies of agrifood systems in Africa at the domestic level are imperative. This thesis takes on the challenge of presenting an empirically grounded

¹ On the receipt of the Best Agricultural Development award at the Second African Business-CBC Annual Awards in London, 2009 [referenced as *African Business*, 2009]).

research endeavour, and providing insights about key dynamics in the domestic food system in urban Africa. It is concerned with (1) what shapes Lusaka's urban food system or what the key influencing factors are; (2) the institutions that are critical to the functioning of the urban food system; and (3) whether agribusiness firms and retailers govern economic interaction in Zambia or whether these firms and their economic interaction are governed by other institutions, and/or determined by the domestic political economy context.

The considerations listed above are important in the context of dealing with issues of access to food, investment in agrifood systems, and domestic economic growth in the agrifood sector – some of the most pressing questions that African states and other stakeholders are faced with. Indeed answering these questions is increasingly important if African countries take on the challenge of food self-sufficiency and growing the local economy. These considerations frame the research design and analysis in the thesis and allow me to assert, in this thesis, that there are significant transitions in Zambia's urban food system that (1) are rooted in the domestic political economy; (2) draw attention to multiple sites of power in the agrifood system; and (3) appear to be 'governed' by processes in the domestic context. I show, for instance, how the urban food system, with its many eclectic and juxtaposed facets, is the result of different historical processes and objectives or rationalisation, and cannot be confined to a single normative imaginary of how it will develop. It is neither formal or informal, nor modern or traditional. Indeed these dualisms are unhelpful because there are elements of informality or formality in the various economic interactions that are alluded to in the thesis, and for this reason, the term 'urban food system' is used. I also draw attention to those institutions that are central to domestic food economies in Africa but that are overlooked in recent scholarship on agrifood systems in urban Africa. These domestic institutions in turn have profound implications for how the agrifood system is governed influencing the strength and resilience of the domestic food system.

The focus on the domestic level, should not suggest that international restructuring of trade is not happening or that it matters any less. Indeed there is a wealth of scholarship on international

trade restructuring and agrifood globalisation, which I draw on in brief, since the ‘domestic’ or the ‘local’ is not a reified aspect isolated from ‘the global’. The rationale for focusing on domestic food system is to show particular processes at work and therefore highlight pertinent issues that are increasingly on centre-stage in policy circles because of the perceived failures of the global trade complex and the growing imperative to nurture the domestic economy. Since it is not the purpose of this thesis to engage with debates that critique a reading of the domestic economy which either privileges or sets itself against neoliberal globalisation discourses, one which is taken on by scholars such as Gillian Hart and Patrick Bond, the specific focus here is the domestic food system in African cities – what shapes it, what cultivates it, and what transforms it. The next section explains how I have framed this research project.

Engaging with academic debates, and original contribution

While the thesis is about understanding the domestic agrifood system in Sub-Saharan Africa, as seen through the case of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, I situate the study within a broader debate in Economic Geography on agrifood economies in African countries. I draw on different bodies of work to situate the research focus, given the focus on domestic agrifood systems, but a necessary point of departure is the literature on the spread of supermarkets and retail capital in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is an increasingly normative school of thought that has come to frame transitions in African economies. The overarching point of the supermarkets literature, which I expand upon later, is that because of global economic restructuring, increasingly open economies in the south and greater purchasing power of supermarket retail, urban food economies in the south are reorganised from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ because of the rapid spread of supermarkets, thereby transforming the economic landscape in cities and changing the way people provision food and the way producers operate.

According to scholars, the reorganisation and transformation have to do essentially with (1) changes in supply chain practises and how supermarkets source foodstuff or commodities thereby becoming a sophisticated and often preferred end retail market for producers in the

south; and (2) the demise of traditional urban markets and the tendency for supermarkets to succeed them (McCullough et al., 2008; Neven and Reardon, 2008; Louw et al., 2007). Although work on the spread of supermarkets in the developing south was undertaken in earnest after 2000, the past four years, since, 2007 has seen a significant tempering of enthusiastic claims that supermarkets transform the global south, or ‘more cautious voices’ as Tschirley (2009:3) terms it. The caution has come about in part because the ‘rapid spread’ of supermarkets in urban Africa has not been as wide-scale as first anticipated; in part because it had been ‘over anticipated’ (Humphrey, 2007:433); and in part because there is renewed interest in urban markets and this dominant form of food provisioning the African cities (Abrahams, 2010; Tschirley, 2009; Jayne, 2008; Minten, 2007)

The work presented in this thesis aims to investigate the ‘transformation’ of the urban food system by looking at the spread of supermarkets and agribusiness firms, and the urban market in the Zambian political economy context, by drawing on important bodies of academic scholarship to support the assertions in the thesis. This Introduction draws attention to bodies of work on food/commodity studies based in the discipline. These bodies of work either (1) form the basis of other studies, which I review in Chapter 3 (for instance studies on the supermarkets revolution in the south is based on earlier work on global commodity chains); (2) present critiques that can be transposed to add to the analytical framework here (for instance critiques of the commodity chains analysis in work on global production networks which urges a greater focus on domestic institutions); (3) or they provide a conceptual language to take forward the argument in the thesis (for instance, work on ‘the local turn’ in agrifood studies looks at ‘rationalisations’ that are inherent in the building and nurturing of localised/alternative food networks. I take forward the analysis by retaining some of the terminology from this wider framework, but focus on the literature on the ‘supermarket revolution’ and urban food studies in Africa.

The claims of my research project are as follows:

- 1) We are best able to examine the economic growth pathways, and ongoing, interconnected processes of change (or trajectories) in Zambia's urban food system through an examination of the domestic political economy;
- 2) Multiple sites of power in the food system, particularly those institutions that would be ignored in more normalising agrifood research approaches, constitute an integral part of the food system because they govern it; and
- 3) Given that there are multiple sites of power, the various firms and institutions in Zambia's food system clearly do not govern in isolation, but instead, intersecting forms of governance circumscribe and often profoundly influence agribusiness institutions.

In sum, the thesis argues that urban food systems in Africa can be seen as situated or located in a domestic political economy, which is influenced by domestic and regional processes, and are the result of intersecting forms of governance by different firms and non-firm institutions. The next section outlines the conceptual basis of the study.

The conceptual basis for the study

I situate the three claims mentioned above in wider bodies of work, which either provide a general basis and language toolkit in the discipline, or open up possible points of departure and critique, which are then further grounded in the specific literature that frames the research project as mentioned, some of which is detailed in Chapter 3.

<p>Claim 1: We are best able to examine the economic growth pathways and ongoing, interconnected processes of change (or trajectories) in Zambia's urban food system through an examination of the domestic political economy.</p>
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Understanding food systems through a wider consideration of the political economy is not a particularly groundbreaking endeavour. But it is a focus of work in the 1980s that has comparatively petered out in recent work. A brief reflection on this work allows me to recapture the earlier rationale of this work and thus support Claim 1.

Commodity Systems Analysis and Urban Food Economies in Africa

The notion of ‘food systems’ has been a feature in the academic literature in the 1970s and 1980s where scholars such as Friedland and Wallerstein deviated from what they termed traditional commodity studies. The approach, quite popular in the 1980s and 1990s, engaged with the central issue in the thesis that has to do with examining food ‘systems’ through looking at the political economy. According to one of its main proponents:

When commodity systems analysis began to emerge during the 1970s in the social sciences, there was already a well-established literature on commodities by agricultural economists. Much of this literature is extremely narrow, often focusing on price and markets and rarely venturing into the politics of commodities, institutional elements, and other aspects of commodity life. ... Sociologists, geographers, and other social scientists who became involved in commodity studies often approached their research with a specific problem generated within the discipline and literature; the focus was less on the commodity than what a commodity could illustrate about a research problem (Friedland, 2004:6.)

Although this work was not specifically targeted at Africa, it is a useful background literature because it distinguished itself from other food ‘study’ approaches which were for instance concerned with pricing markets, or technological innovation in grain breeds but less concerned with the ‘system’ that shaped how production was happening, the politics of demand and supply or the intricacies of labour organisation or cultural nuance that influenced innovation/prices/supply chain structure. Commodity studies, they argued, had more to do with finding about aspects about a said commodity where the focus was on anything from value to

technical measurements and specifications. The distinction made from food 'systems' research, is that the latter looked at a number of peripheral elements to food production, demand, labour, market related factors that were most often outside the scope of commodity studies.

Somewhat related, work on urban markets in Africa during the 1980s demonstrated a similar rationale. While food studies in Africa at the time tended to focus on famine and undernutrition, on the one hand or rural households and urban supply chains on the other, certain scholars such as Watts, Guyer and Bryceson argued that looking at 'urban food systems' represented the convergence of urban demand, consumption, changing priorities at the state level and broader political economy changes (Guyer, 1987:6 see below).

The study of urban food systems can provide the context for taking a broad systemic approach, in which the mutual implications of organisational form, power bases, entitlement rubric and material conditions can be traced over time. One can ask not only whether the system 'works' by some objective criteria, but such questions as ...what makes a particular niche in the market chain the unambiguous scapegoat of an infuriated elite or a starving crowd (Guyer, 1987:6).

Scholars also developed a methodology around both these approaches, the former drawing out five areas of focus that research could possibly base their system analysis on – 'production practises or labour practises; grower organisation and organisations; labour/the labour market/how workers organise themselves; science production and organisation; and marketing and distribution (Friedland, 1984) - which was later modified by Dixon (2000) to include regulatory politics and state-producer relations; and product design. The latter, focused either on writing a social history of urban food supply systems, which looked at colonial records, urban planning during colonisation and early independence (see Guyer 1987; Watts, 1987;

Bryceson, 1987), or on urban grain marketing and the state-agriculture complex (see Jayne, 1991; Good, 1988; Bates, 1989).

It is clear that these scholars did not focus on the system in its entirety, but based their work instead on an awareness of a wider political economy system in which food supply/provisioning occurred. Also, they used a broader understanding of the political economy to illuminate the setting in which certain phenomenon occurred, and the relations of power that shaped the system. Drawing on this idea of systems, padded out by recent work on innovation systems in international development policy arena, the use of ‘systems’ in this thesis invokes an awareness of the political economy in which food supply/provisioning occurs. Indeed a major part of this thesis makes the domestic political economy system visible – Claim 1.

As I mentioned earlier, research on commodity studies eventually petered out as the focus increasingly turned to globalisation and the influence of global capital, retailers and agribusiness firms. Another reason that the scholarship was later superseded is that the commodity studies work was critiqued because of its inherent dependency rationale that dynamics and processes occurring in the ‘developed’ core would ultimately influence developments in the ‘periphery’ which all functioned to keep the system intact (Raikes and Gibbon, 2000). What was retained is the focus on commodity chains, which were initially seen to tie the core and the periphery together in a food system.² The turn to commodity chains in some ways signalled a shift away from the commodity systems work toward how globalisation fundamentally transformed trade and economic interaction. This shift had a direct effect on perceived sites of power that influenced and governed food systems. Also, since the focus in Economic Geography scholarship seemed likewise to shift away from looking at the domestic political economy to the power of retail firms and international capital, domestic institutions also fell out of sight.

² The implicit idea of dependency later became the point of contention for other scholars who were to continue with commodity studies (Raikes and Gibbon, 2000).

The next section looks at the literature that is seen to supersede commodity systems analysis. The purpose of considering the rather lengthy body of work is to highlight the gaps in this work so as to open up the debate in order to investigate Claim 2 – or more pointedly to account for ‘multiple sites of power’ falling out of site in recent Economic Geography scholarship, and the shift to the normative account that supermarkets and agribusiness firms transform economies.

Claim 2: Multiple sites of power in the food system, particularly those institutions that would be ignored in more normalising agrifood research approaches, constitute an integral part of the food system because they govern it.

Existing agrifood approaches in Economic Geography/Sociology also provide a basis for thinking about some of the issues central to the thesis. What are the ‘normalising agrifood research approaches? What are the roots of these debates? And why are other ‘sites of power’ or domestic institutions overlooked in these approaches?

Economic Geography approaches

In the late 1990s and from 2000 onwards, globalisation was seen to fundamentally alter the way the world worked, particularly because it was associated with increasing industrialisation of production, including profound effects on food systems and commodity chains. It also altered the focus in academic studies.

Friedland (2004:**) puts it this way:

Another element was added to the research agenda with the advent of globalization studies as researchers understood that a new level of analysis was required to deal with the expansion of trade and the restructuring of commodity chains. Where, before, commodity production, distribution, marketing and consumption had been focused

around national and regional activity, increasingly economic action began to be organized globally. Agrifood social scientists moved into globalization analyses with rapidity and a globalization literature began to build.

In academic scholarship, the restructuring of the economy resulted in what Goodman and Watts (1994) refer to as the 'new agrarian political economy', which in turn resulted in a myriad of research foci including the industrialising reorganising of agrarian labour and global commodity chains. For Goodman and Watts, research on the late twentieth century 'agro-food system' is based on a 'desire to place agriculture, and the rural sphere more generally, squarely within mainstream theoretical debates on capitalist development is both admirable and necessary' (Goodman and Watts, 1994:5). For Marsden and other economic geographers in the 1990s, the 'new political economy' approach to agrifood restructuring focused on understanding food production and consumption in relation to industrial restructuring and regulation (see Marsden et al., 1996). For Friedman, it was placing an inquiry of agrifood restructuring and change in a broader understanding of food 'regimes' or historical periodisation which linked a particular food regime with an political economy analysis of a particular point in Western history (see Friedman, 1993). Raikes and Gibbon (2000) distinguish between this school of thought – the 'International Food Regime (IFR) theory' – and the concern of Wallerstein and others who were concerned with 'world systems theory' (WST), but at the same time draw out the benefit of bring these to foci together. They argue, in sum, that the political economy of agrifood restructuring is best seen through a study of commodity chains, supporting the work of sociologists such as Gereffi (see below), in which new forms of power result from the economic restructuring.

Here, as Raikes and Gibbon argue,

WST/GCC theory has the merit of focussing on the issue of power in relation to the restructuring of international economic relations, and at the same time embodies a fundamental recognition that both the precise location of power, how it is exercised, and

the restructuring process more generally, tend to be mediated differently on a commodity-by-commodity basis (Raikes and Gibbon, 2000:55).

The focus on distinct commodity chains ultimately paved the way for commodity or value chains analyses that are concerned with commodity (and agrifood) restructuring, the functional division of labour, and private forms of regulation. 'Globalising perspectives' within the broader discipline of Economic Geography, which amongst other things examined changes in agrifood global trade through global value chains, gained currency in the 1990s, and was based on how food regimes had changed over the previous few decades in Europe and North America (see Arce and Marsden, 1993; Friedman, 1993; Whatmore, 1994; Watts, 1996; Goodman, 2003; Daviron, 2008). This large body of work examines how food systems have changed as a result of globalisation and economic restructuring within a context of global trade regimes³ and liberalising food systems. Although international trade had been happening for over two centuries, the emerging research focused on a new era of global interactions in which transport and communications technologies have made trade more prolific than ever before (see Booth, 1985; Peet, 1993a; Peet, 1993b; Dicken, 2003). According to the literature that reviews the trends of globalisation over the past two decades on commodities (Dicken 2003; Goodman and Watts, 1997; Gereffi et al., 2005), there are three broad consequential trends or implications of the globalised trade systems. These are:

- (1) 'Oligopolistic rent seeking' and buyer drivenness: Increasing financialisation of international trade results in a fewer, more powerful players in the global economy. These powerful firms drive global trade and control all interaction along their value chains down to production. They have such power because they increasingly control or govern supply chains (firms downstream that manufacture/produce/market commodities).

³ The international/global trade (or food) regime is defined by Daviron (2008:47) as the 'set of ... policy objectives and instruments that have been adopted by a large majority of governments in a specific period of history...[taking] into account the existence of world norms that define the appropriate ...policy that should be adopted'.

- (2) Governance and entry control: Powerful actors in the global economy progressively standardise trade regulations and control membership into ‘the market’ (their global value chains). These regulations directly influence global trade policy and become, as it were, the rules of the game. The ‘rules’ are enforced and upheld by particular institutions (such as the World Trade Organisation or independent quality regulators), or firms given the increasing power of buyers. The way governance has changed has implications for entry barriers and has often resulted in exclusionary measures for producers.

- (3) Supplier adjustment: There is ever more stringent private regulation over participating in globalised commodity chains. These controls have implications for developing countries and producers in those countries. Producers have to comply with these regulations/standards if they want to supply global markets. The (in)ability of countries and its producers to meet global standards has led to trade exclusion and continues to lead to increasing inequalities in global trade.

Capitalist restructuring in this phase of globalisation means that for some theorists power resides in the hands of international private interests, essentially mirroring the structural adjustment strategies of the 1980s where control of resources and trade is taken out of the control of states. This resulted in structural changes; new private, buyer driven chains have restructured how production, processing and exporting happens. Larger, more established producers and exporters have the capacity to integrate into global markets and smaller producers, in a global regime of transaction, typically do not have the capital or volumes to enter in to such contracts. This had massive repercussions on global commodity prices – which are now set by the global market – and the ability for producers to cope with these changes). The three trends noted above also meant that transnational corporations merge, consolidate and ultimately come to control or ‘re-regulate’ trade (see Dicken, 2003; Farina, 2002). Those trends, then, represent the normative account of agrifood restructuring and indeed also economic development, since it not only has become ‘the norm’ but it represents the vision of supermarkets or high value agribusiness firms

as the vector or trajectory for developing a ‘modern urban food system’ as the thesis goes on to show.

Larger buyers take over smaller buyers, and exporter and processor functions. The entire commodity chain, which once would have many possible linkages, is now compressed or consolidated. Consolidation has happened so rapidly and so efficiently that in ten years, for instance by the early 2000s, four major agrifood industries collectively owned around 70 percent of global trade; five trading companies control around 40 percent of all fruit traded globally; and three international trading companies own more than 70 percent of global cocoa trade (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005:100, 105). Buyer-drivenness, or the tendency for buyers to drive the supply chain as a trend, is perhaps the most pervasive change in the way production, marketing and trade happens, affecting producers far down the supply chain (Gereffi, 1996). In light of this, it is perhaps unsurprising that ‘other sites of power’ or other domestic institutions fall out of sight of the analysis. That is, agribusiness firms and supermarkets become the epitome of the food system, and transitions in how these institutions govern, regulate or control supply chains or production become the focus of attention. As a result domestic institutions and domestic political economies more broadly have fallen out of sight in this literature.

In the literature, the focus on global ‘commodity’ chains later gave way to a focus of global ‘value’ chains. Where the commodity chains analysis drew out the linkages between producers and retailers and highlighted the power of retail capital along the chain, and its profound effect on commodity producers, the value chains analysis focused on the ‘geographical and organizational reconfiguration of global production’ (Gibbon et al., 2008:318) and codified knowledge along value chains. The two approaches themselves differ in terms of the depth of analysis, particularly of (1) quality standardization of global chains; (2) the forms of power and governance in the chain; and (3) the possibility for producers and other suppliers to upgrade functions to add value (see review in Gibbon and Ponte, 2005) – all of which are subjects rigorously undertaken in the GVC analysis. (Bair (2008; 2009) provides an excellent review, comparison and critique of both these bodies of work, drawing out their subtleties).

Despite the field of global value chain analysis having becoming a more nuanced field in recent years⁴, which does focus on domestic forms of regulation of quality, the literature on supermarkets and the domestic economy is based on earlier conceptions of global commodity chains – the spread of retail capital, its increasing power, and new forms of private regulation or buyer-drivenness– thereby translating this work to the domestic context. And it is this work that has come to inform analyses of food economies in Africa.

The rationale of translating this work on global value chains to domestic (or regional) supermarket/retail expansion may be explained by Pritchard and Burch’s argument that

Global agri-food restructuring needs to be understood as an intricate set of processes operating at many scales, and on many levels, rather than a unilateral shift toward a single global marketplace (Pritchard and Burch 2003: xi)

Thus, while the GVC literature continues to be a vibrant field in global studies, the ‘domestic turn’, which looks at similar processes of economic restructuring and the consolidation of agribusiness firms and supermarket retail at the domestic level, evokes earlier theorizations of agrifood restructuring, as I detail in Chapter 3, and has failed to refocus on the domestic political economy or domestic forms of governance.

In other words, although much of the work on agrifood economies seems to perpetuate a preoccupation with the global marketplace, another body of work has emerged over the past decade that is concerned with agrifood restructuring and what this means for domestic food economies. The focus has predominantly been on supermarkets and the spread of retail capital in the global south, which is also covered in Chapter 3. In sum, the agrifood literature suggests

⁴ The GVC approach lends a better understanding of the ‘interactions between public forms of governance (international and domestic regulation), private forms of governance (global business strategies, internal dynamics of coordination in value chains), and what falls in between (standard setting networks, label and certification initiatives, public-private partnerships) [because]... it is aimed at going beyond state-centric approaches to economic development (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005:xi).

that as economies progress, on indeed just during the period of economic restructuring, agribusiness firms – especially retailers – increasingly begin to regulate, control or govern economic trade through value chains which link up producers into contractual relationships with retail or agribusiness firms. These firms, in this view, are increasingly powerful because of complex control or governance structures that they enforce along the chain, and it is therefore conceivable that in the literature retailers or agribusiness firms are seen to transform domestic economies or become the markers or symbols of economic development in the south.

The GVC literature also has been critiqued for a similar omission. The GVC analysis has been critiqued in work on global production networks (GPN), which is formulated specifically *vis-à-vis* the GVC analysis to correct its shortcomings (Gibbon et al., 2008:316). Amongst other things, GPN theorists critique the GVC approach for the apparent disregard of domestic institutions and the overemphasis on the role of lead firms (its ‘top-heaviness’) (Palpacuer, 2008; Bair, 2008). Although the GPN work concentrates mainly on electronics commodities in Asia, it argues that firms are compelled to ‘territorialise’ or adapt to local needs and inputs, and it suggests that the value chains approach assumes ‘an image of a faceless juggernaut of globalisation under the control of transnational corporations’ (Dicken et al., 2001:106).

Instead, the GPN framework is frequently offered as ‘an antidote to the deficiencies of...prevailing... approaches’ where it considers:

[t]he broad range of nonfirm organization – for example...government agencies, trade unions, employers’ associations, nongovernmental organizations ... – that will (or may) shape the activities of firms in the particular locations absorbed into GPN (Coe and Lee, 2007:64, 66).

The work of Yeung, Hess, Coe, Lee and Dicken from ‘the Manchester school’, as Bair⁵ (2009) terms it, is concerned with how the spread of international capital relies on being embedded in local territories, and on the institutional dynamics in those territories.

Unlike work that privileges lead firms or retailers, GPN scholars argue that markets are embedded in a social context, and other local projects of economic transition (Bair, 2008:339). Drawing their rationale of institutional governance from scholarship on new institutional economics in Economic Sociology (Coe and Hess, 2004; Bair, 2008; Bair, 2009), they argue that other, non-firm institutions profoundly influence the way lead firms/retailers embed in the domestic economy, and that lead firms/retailers in turn modify their economic operations in relation to factors or cues from the domestic setting. Global production networks do not merely locate in particular places; they may become embedded there in the sense that they interact with and, in some cases, become constrained by the economic activities and social dynamics that already exist in those places.

They show through various case studies, mainly in Asia, how even though the same lead-firm rationalisations (about regulating quality) are present, there are also domestic rationalisations that regulate demand. For instance, they cite firms like Samsung-Tesco, in a multinational retail expansion project, have realigned their marketing and production strategies to the socio-cultural demand of buyers in Asia outside South Korea. This is more than just a case of advertising. Instead, the GPN approach argues that economic growth happens through relational network interaction, and that international firms are increasingly influenced by the domestic economic practises.⁶ The GPN rationale that I draw on, in critiquing the assumption that agribusiness firms/capital investment or retailers fundamentally transform domestic food economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, is as follows:

⁵ Bair’s (2008) and (2009) work reviews various economic globalisation discourses.

⁶ Technological demands in Asia, for example, shape the marketing strategy and product specifications in a way that is unique to that context. In this sense the strategy may be similar to adaptive marketing strategies, with the

Ultimately...when undertaking research on production networks, it is necessary to steer a delicate path between overemphasizing the transformative effects of transnational corporations in economies where they invest and overstressing the extent that national conditions shape their operations in particular countries. Instead the aim should be to explore the...mutual transformation of both the firms and places in which they are embedded (Coe and Lee, 2007:66 citing Dicken, 2000).

As Coe and Lee's quote above cautions, while understanding that foreign investment and international retailing chains transform certain countries, it is necessary to balance this understanding with how other sites of power (or other institutions) and priorities from that domestic setting, in turn, influences agribusiness firms and retailers. This is particularly important given that firms do not govern a passive, formless economic space. Instead, there are non-firm institutions that have agency and capacity to effect change in domestic economies. The mutual transformation of both the firms and places in which they are embedded has implications, for instance, for how the spread of supermarkets and agribusiness are understood in Africa.

Furthermore, as I detail in a subsequent chapter, the preoccupation with globalising transitions in economies has also resulted in urban food studies either subsumed in these debates or relegated to Development Studies (Abrahams, 2007). Academic scholarship on urban food studies in Africa dates back well before the 1960s. In recent years, one of the main rationales of this work, is to correct the preoccupations in the literature with those readings of the economy that was highlighted above. Porter et al (2007:116-118) argue that tracking the growth of urban food economies in Africa relies on a close reading of produce-market institutions, suggesting a different framework for thinking about African economies:

The neglect of research into produce-market institutions is symptomatic of the emphasis

key difference being that GPN relies on a territorialized set of networks of processors and technical support (see Dicken et al., 2001).

on overly economistic views of development, such as prioritizing liberalization. Such approaches have been underpinned by assumptions that economic institutions will automatically appear and market economies will be structured along the lines of European or North American capitalism (Porter et al., 2007:116).

Relegating work on urban food markets to development studies or to policy arena has not always been the case, and this another focus in the literature of the 1980s and 1990s that this thesis aims to contribute to. Urban supply systems in Africa from the early to mid-1980s were not only deemed to be instrumental in urban or African studies more broadly, but also came to stand for the confluence of a set of processes in African cities (Potts, 2006; Bryceson, 2006a). The focus in the 80s and 90s was on state marketing boards, the impact of neoliberal economic reforms, urban trading, but more recently, on intermediary traders. In the 1980s, urban food supply systems were therefore seen to emerge from ‘a confrontation of administrative, economic and cultural rubrics’ (Guyer, 1987:20) and embody the changing political and social priorities/concerns of the post-colonial state, which included supporting ‘peasant markets’, counteracting the negative effects of global market-determined oil and commodities prices, economic growth and overcoming urban poverty (Guyer 1987:22).⁷ But while Bryceson’s work in the 1990s (1993) retained the important focus of economic interaction of intermediary traders in East Africa within a broader political economy framework, as does Harriss-White in the case of India, recent work on urban markets tends to focus on the minutiae of trader relationships and networks of ethnicity or on markets for development. As a result, much of this recent work is much less focus on the political economy of the urban food system, than on ethnographic accounts of traders and their social networks (see Porter et al., 2005; Molony, 2009), on urbanisation, markets and the challenges that traders face which could be alleviated through policy intervention (see Porter et al., 2004; Porter 2006), or on urban agriculture (see Abrahams, 2007). While these the concerns mentioned above are important contributions to the field of African Studies and to scholarship on urban markets, focusing on the ‘informality’ of

⁷ The convergence of issues in urban food systems – political, economic, and social – as seen in this body of work, which I review in Chapter 3 – is an important reflection in this thesis.

these markets, the lack of governance, the minutiae of trader relationships or ethnic networks and how these markets represent survivalist form of livelihood rather than a legitimate and integral part of the domestic political economy, ignores the possibility of reading changes in urban markets as fundamental to urban food economies in Africa.

To recap: The work on economic restructuring and supermarkets offers an insightful account of how African economies have been restructured since other bodies of work have transplanted the broad principles of the approach onto a domestic reading of agrifood systems and the GVC approach is used to explain the transitions at a domestic level. Indeed this work shows that some of the processes of economic restructuring are still happening and the domestic realm represents a fascinating space where governance is being strongly regulated. However, if critiques of earlier value chains work is also taken note of, the second claim of the thesis – that there are multiple sites of power or institutions other than agribusiness firms and supermarkets that press for attention – presents an intriguing set of possibilities which the rest of the thesis takes forward.

Thus, where the literature on agrifood systems for the most part dualistically focuses either on the supermarket or agribusiness ‘revolution’ or on the minutiae of intermediary traders’ relationships, the thesis points to more hybrid forms of economic interaction that are neither formal or informal, and often incorporate both agribusiness firms and intermediary traders. These are important transitions in the agrifood sector which, I argue, are best understood by considering how these transitions emerge from the political economy system and therefore fit into a wider narrative of domestic and regional political economy changes. Looking at these broader political economy shifts allows me to draw out various rationalisations that seem to coexist in the domestic food economy, and provides some clues about what makes up the domestic food system.

In sum, taking this body of work into account, together with research on African food systems mentioned earlier, allows me to point to multiple sites of power (Hart, 2002:13) in Zambia's food

system, and to examine factors in the domestic context that influence international firms. In Chapter 5, I look at two institutions (the Zambian National Farmers' Union and the Lusaka City Market) that are integral to Zambia's food system, which would be overlooked in both the conventional food economies and urban food studies research.

The basis of third claim comes from the critiques of the previous two claims. In the thesis, once I have drawn attention both to how the domestic political economy has influenced the food system, and to the role of two key institutions in Zambia's food system, I consider this final claim by pointing to evidence of intersecting forms of governance and of how the power of supermarkets and agribusiness firms is circumscribed.

Claim 3: Given that there are multiple sites of power, the various firms and institutions in Zambia's food system clearly do not govern in isolation, but instead, intersecting forms of governance circumscribe and often profoundly influence agribusiness institutions.

A final body of work that provides the rationale for this final claim is the 'turn to the local' literature which argues against the dominant perception that supermarkets or large economies of scale, and agribusiness through global economic restructuring, are really what transform local economies. The localist literature, often critiqued for its defence, fetishisation or romanticism of the local as a way to assert an underlying race or class politics on food provisioning systems, subscribes to the idea that local imperatives drive the form of local markets, and are thus outside the remit of big business. Granted, the use of this work is ironic given that scholarship on 'local food networks', which looks at the shift/return to local consumption in the UK and North America is strongly associated with an arguably elitist northern pursuit (see Abrahams, 2007b). In local food networks in the north, buying food from local producers through farmers' markets or community cooperatives, thereby literally circumventing the control and supply of food by supermarkets and large enterprise, represents 'democratic/reflexive/socially just' food networks (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005).

Clearly, the form of ‘advanced capitalism’ embodied in local food markets in the north is different to the underlying form of local food markets in the south.⁸ What is interesting, in thinking about African food systems, though, is that informal markets in African cities can be seen to fulfil similar priorities:

- Democratic, in making food accessible to the urban poor;
- Reflexive, in ‘reflecting’ the imperatives in African countries to link farmers to markets and provide employment; and
- Socially just, in providing food, benefiting livelihoods and becoming a palliative of sorts to remedy the inability of the state or firms to meet such needs.

What is ‘alternative’ or seen as shift to the local can therefore be seen as those food provisioning systems that are outside the control of powerful firms, thus critiquing the idea that the spread of retail capital is ultimately what transforms or will transform food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (Abrahams, 2007). Instead, local provisioning networks that are ‘governed’ or influenced by domestic imperatives are fundamental to the food system. Incorporating the idea that firms do not only transform a place, but the place mutually transforms the firm and the importance of domestic forms of provisioning outside the remit of supermarkets, allows me to think about the domestic food system as productive, economically transformative, and based essentially on consumption.

Restating the Aims of the Thesis

The first aim of this thesis is to more closely consider factors in the domestic political economy that have influenced and continue to influence urban food systems in Africa, which I do using Zambia as a case study. The scale of my analysis is the ‘domestic food system’, and does not focus on the international or global factors, but acknowledges that this is an important area of inquiry in recent study. I argue that we are best able to examine the economic pathways and

⁸ See also Wilson and Rigg’s (2003) debate about whether the ‘post-productivist transition’ has happened in the south.

ongoing, interconnected processes of change in food systems through an examination of the domestic political economy. I consider in particular how factors and influences in the domestic political economy profoundly shape the urban food system in Zambia, thereby enabling certain economic growth pathways.

The second aim of my thesis is to point to important non-firm institutions that are fundamental to Zambia's food system. I draw on Economic Sociology and the work of Africanist scholars to argue that there are multiple sites of power in the food system that profoundly influence it.⁹ While the state is of course an important actor, I do not focus on new empirical material on the state since this is done in greater depth by other scholars (Jayne and Chisvo, 1991; Howard and Mungoma, 1996; Jayne and Jones, 1997; Jayne et al., 1999; Jayne, et al., 2006; Jayne, 2008; Dorosh et al., 2009). The focus therefore is on non-state and non-firm institutions. I draw particular attention to those institutions – namely the Zambian National Farmers' Union, seen as an intermediary institution, and the Lusaka City Market, part of the informal economy – that are ignored in recent agrifood research approaches.

The third aim of the thesis is to take forward the concept of governance, and naturally, this requires some discussion about what governance is, and how it is articulated and operationalised in the thesis. Governance is seen as the most important consideration when thinking about food economies in Africa (Fold and Larsen, 2008:26-36). The next section details my use of the term governance in this thesis.

The governance of urban food systems as used in this thesis

In this thesis 'governance', generally meaning the manner of governing, after Pierre (2000:5) and Williamson (1996:12), relates to how certain institutions (the mechanism of governance) mediate

⁹ I do not grapple with theories of power or discourse in this thesis, as examined by Foucault (1978, 1991, 1994), Lemke (2001), Granovetter (1992) and Hart (2002), for instance, but these works have shaped my thinking of power in the food system.

or regulate social or economic interaction by virtue of their authority or ascribed authority, and steer an economic or political trajectory and brokering certain goals. Indeed there are other definitions or implicit notions about what governance means in the literature.

In political science the term is most often associated with forms of governing outside the remit of the state (see Swyngedouw, 2005). In organizational studies, the term is most often associated with institutional power, from which the above definition derives in Economic Geography (see Amin, 2004). In development studies, governance is associated either with anti-corruption and accountable government – termed ‘good governance’ – or the activities whereby international aid or humanitarian organizations oversee the sourcing/distribution of water/food/vaccines or administration of donor funds (see Clapp and Cohen, 2009; World Bank, 2001). Stoker, in an article focused on public administration for UNESCO, neatly sums up the eclecticism often associated with the concept of governance:

The academic literature on governance is eclectic and relatively disjointed (Jessop, 1995). Its theoretical roots are various: institutional studies, development studies, political science, public administration ... Its precursors would include work on corporatism, policy communities and a range of economic analysis (sic) concerned with the evolution of economic systems (Stoker, 1998:18).

Despite the varied use of the term, Stoker continues to outline the benefit of the ‘governance perspective’ to a wide field of policy and academic research:

The contribution of the governance perspective to theory is not at the level of causal analysis. Nor does it offer a new normative theory. Its value is as an organizing framework. The value of the governance perspective rests in its capacity to provide a framework for understanding different processes of governing (Stoker, 1998:18).

It is precisely these ‘different processes of governing’ that I am interested in.

In agrifood studies, similarly, both the eclecticism and value of the ‘governance perspective’ is evident, which I briefly go on to sketch out.

(1) The developmental focus on governance in food studies has centered on the role of the international development community in managing and regulating food and humanitarian assistance through donor funds (see Clapp and Cohen, 2009). Here the primary concern is the changing mechanisms of managing food assistance to alleviate or mitigate food insecurity. Governance in this sense is about the role of these institutions to disburse, monitor, and evaluate assistance so as to provide adequate assistance but also necessary accountability to donors, and the growing tendency for food security to be managed in this way as opposed to states (Bardhan, 2002; Kamat, 2004).

(2) The most theoretically drawn out definition of governance in economic geography and agrifood studies is the ‘governance of value chains’. Here governance specifically means the division of labour along a value or commodity chain and the allocation of rewards and benefits associated with aligning functions to certain quality specifications (see Gibbon and Ponte, 2005; Ponte and Gibbon, 2005 (But governance was not always read this way in commodity studies as point 3 shows)). In GVC analysis as it has progressed further, the focus of governance has shifted from just the control or restructuring of commodity chains (or governance as buyer drivenness) by large multinational buyers/firms/retailers to ‘governance as coordination’ and later ‘governance as [discursive] normalisation’ (see Ponte, 2009). Governance in these terms is about the quality management and regulation of high value chains where different functions are regulated at different stages of productions/manufacture/retail (coordination) and where governance mechanisms are informed by discourses of quality and regulation (normalization).

(3) Earlier related work by Gereffi and Sturgeon (Gereffi 1996; Gereffi et al., 2005), as alluded to earlier, conceptualized governance as the control that buyers or retailers have downward on suppliers and processors, or the power that these buyers exert along the chain down to

producers. The form of governance is termed 'buyer-drivenness'. Although this definition has been superseded by the view of governance in commodity studies, mentioned above, it is the basis of recent scholarship on supermarkets in the developing south. There is a considerable resurgence in the idea of buyer-drivenness in recent literature and particularly the literature that looks at the spread of retail capital in Sub-Saharan Africa. As earlier noted, since the spread of agribusinesses and supermarkets through high value chains is quick becoming a hallmark of emerging economies in the south, commodity systems are seen to be increasingly regulated by private firms, and transformed through retail capital and the restructuring of supply chains. Governance here is now only about how retailers and firms now govern supply chains and transform economic interaction, but it is also crucially based on the removal of the state from food marketing systems and the rise in private regulation around agrifood production and retail. One of the most overt examples of this is a recent project entitled 'Regoverning Markets' which specifically focuses on the restructuring of agrifood chains based on the increased consolidation of agribusiness firms and the increased purchasing power of retailers – a feature of the early value chains literature in the early 2000s. Other examples from the academic literature of the new 'governance' of agrifood systems include the greater supply firm acquisitions of larger agribusinesses and a 'new wave' of economic interaction in Sub-Saharan Africa lead, driven and controlled essentially by agribusiness firms and supermarkets (see McCullough et al., 2008; Neven and Reardon, 2009; Louw and Emongor, 2004). Furthermore, supermarkets and agribusiness firms are seen to represent the panacea for agricultural development because they offer the opportunity for small-scale farmers to tap into more lucrative end markets. Governance, in this sense, therefore not only implies the power of supermarkets and agribusiness firms to control or regulate economic interaction, but it also has a 'normalising' element which posits these firms as the custodian of agricultural and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite these very varied conceptions of governance, in this thesis I use governance to mean the modes of regulating, controlling, overseeing and otherwise influencing economic interaction in Zambia's food system. My central rationale the fact that firms and supermarkets

are not the only players in African food economies. Instead they are a few of many other players or institutions, which each have an important role in the food system, and each have driving motivations or rationalizations that compel them to ‘act’ in certain ways, and specific ‘behaviour’ has implications for other actors and institutions in the food system. For instance I show later how the perceived power of supermarkets and agribusiness firms are significantly circumscribed because of the continuing importance of urban food markets which are increasingly being governed.

In addition, governance in this thesis is about effecting change so that it has a direct impact on the food system. As I show later, it is not only regulation or the lack of it that demonstrates governance, it is also about certain players/institutions lobbying other players to act in certain ways, or about certain players/institutions influencing other players, institutions or firms to conduct business and interaction in ways that meet the priorities/rationalisations of the former. For instance I draw attention to an agribusiness association that plays an important role in influencing agribusiness firms to train small-scale farmers to manage production etc., differently even though these farmers’ produce does not eventually end up as high value marketed commodities.

Drawing on a more wide-ranging perspective of governance in the food system, as seen in the case of Zambia, the third aim of this thesis is therefore to take forward the concept of governance. With evidence from Zambia's food system, I argue that governance is best understood as ‘mutually constituted’ because the agribusiness firms, the state, and other institutions do not govern in a vacuum, but in a context where there are multiples sites of power, several domestic priorities and intersecting governances. An understanding of ‘governance as mutually constituted’ and rooted in the domestic political economy, allows me to make sense of ‘unexpected’ forms of institutional governance in the food system. For instance, a case study in Chapter 6 shows that agribusiness firms that are primarily concerned with profitability are also interested in the economic development of the country they invest in – an ‘unorthodox’ priority perhaps. But it is a contextually grounded strategy that benefits firms because a growing

economy increases local income and drives consumption. These unexpected forms of governance challenge more static conceptions of governance in the literature.

Methodological Approach

While the disciplinary focus of the thesis is Economic Geography, there is no single approach to the study of food systems in Africa. Neither of the approaches briefly outlined above lend themselves to the complexity inherent in contemporary African agrifood economies. The revised conceptual framework drawn out in the thesis and its methodological approach, which I introduce above and detail in the next chapter, allows me to ‘make sense’ of the eclectic food system in Zambia with its apparent juxtapositions. In brief, the methodological approach taken in this thesis:

- (1) Relies on an interdisciplinary conceptual framework; and
- (2) Demonstrates an awareness of the domestic political economy ‘system’ that influences and shapes the food system.

The findings of the thesis are based on empirical fieldwork conducted in Lusaka, Zambia and Cape Town, South Africa between January and November 2007. The overall method of presenting data is a case study approach where the focus is the agrifood system as whole, with some focus on the poultry industry in Zambia. During 2007, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with members of the agricultural community in Zambia which spanned informal market managers, marketeers, small-scale farmers, emerging and commercial farmers, heads of agribusiness firms and supermarkets, members of the Zambian National Farmers’ Union and the Ministry of Domestic Trade. The research design, list and justification of sources, and methodology are detailed in Chapter 2. The thesis only presents a fraction of the data collected, uses ‘Content Analysis’ to analyse the information, and draws heavily on the conceptual framework to provide a rationale for the approach. Content Analysis, as outlined by Krippendorff (2004) is sometimes used as computed assisted data analysis software to code massive amounts of qualitative data. Although it is not used in this thesis in this manner, the conceptual basis of

Content Analysis (CA) is extremely instructive in this thesis since it is ‘an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent’ (Krippendorf, 2004:*xvii*). Content analysts examine data, printed material, images and sounds naming these ‘texts’ in order to understand both what they mean in the world to people; and what the information conveyed by these texts does to what we know. The purpose of the methodological approach is to enable researchers to plan and to critically examine the logic, composition and protocols in research methods, and most importantly it is used to estimate the likelihood of practical research designs to contribute to knowledge by (1) defining the terms of the analysis; (2) justifying the analytical steps; (3) demonstrating procedural logic; and (4) justifying inferences by a close understanding of the background context (*ibid*).

In other words, I base my research and evaluation on the implicit rationales of CA so that the choice of texts, the presentation of data, and the inferences that I draw from these texts/interviews all contribute to a robust and responsible representation of the field of study. In the Methods Chapter (Chapter 2), I expand on some of the points mentioned above. Here, I wish to reiterate that CA as a methodological rationale approach places a great deal of emphasis on remaining true to the context and basing inferences within a good understanding of the context, aware that texts also construct the object of study. In sum, given the complexity of urban food systems in Africa as exemplified in the Zambian case, the work presented in the thesis is an original contribution to food studies research, and therefore plays a part in rethinking responses to development of domestic food systems.

Clarifying the terminology used in this thesis

I am aware that certain terms that I use in this thesis may relate to different conceptual approaches, theories or disciplines, and indeed are more complex than I will describe here. Given these caveats, this section gives a brief clarification of a few of the key terms I use in the thesis, which are commonplace in food studies but may cause difficulty.

Systems

A systems approach, as alluded to earlier, is used to convey an awareness of certain determining factors that shape certain outcomes. In this thesis it is used to mean the larger domestic political economy and set of influencing factors that shape the food system. It is also used to show an awareness of the sum of the transactions, circulating knowledge(s) and interrelationships in the system that, with the range of actors, institutions, networks and relationships of power, subsequently shape that system (after Hall, 2002; Spielman, 2006).

(Domestic) Political economy

The term is not used as a theory here, but as a descriptor of the context which comprises of political and economic elements, for example I use the phrase ‘Zambia’s political economy’ in much the same way as scholars may use the term ‘Global political economy’

Agri-food

The amalgam term is taken to mean both agriculture (as in production) and food (as in the consumable product). In Economic Geography, the term agrifood suggests that these two aspects are indivisible, and are intricately rely on the other. When I use the terms ‘agrifood economies’ or ‘economies’, it usually points to how the literature has termed the country or context. So for example, I have inserted agrifood ‘systems’ to distinguish the approach in this thesis from other work that uses the term ‘agrifood/African economies’.

Institutions

After North (1991:97), ‘institutions’ are defined as ‘humanly devised constraints that structure political economy and social interaction’.

Africanist scholars/scholarship

I take this phrase to mean those scholars who focus specifically on African cases and the academic scholarship that result from the analyses of these cases.

Thesis Outline

The five core chapters that follow are briefly outlined here are followed by the conclusion. Between each of the chapters I have inserted a 'Road Map' interleaf to sum up what the previous chapter does and points to what the next chapter will focus on.

Chapter 2 details the research design, methodological considerations and methodologies used in this thesis. I justify the use of the case study, and explain the rationale for the conceptual and methodological approaches taken in the thesis.

Chapter 3 explains the conceptual framework in this thesis. In Chapter 3, I review the literature on agrifood studies as it relates to cases in Africa. In doing so, as I mentioned in this chapter, the conceptual basis for this study is a broader body of work that I reviewed in this Introduction. In Chapter 3 I go on to discuss specific bodies of work that focus on African food economies, or African food markets. The aim of the literature review is to draw on different bodies of work to formulate a working conceptual framework for this thesis. Although the focus is broad, it is weighted toward the Economic Geography (supermarkets) scholarship, since the findings of this thesis contribute to this body of work.

Chapter 4 answers the first research question: **What are the domestic political economy influences of the urban food systems in Lusaka Zambia?** In Chapter 4, I provide a detailed explanation of those factors in Zambia's food system that are influenced by broader political economy transitions at a domestic level. I argue that the complexity in food systems can only be

addressed through a nuanced understanding of how the domestic political economy influences the growth, resilience and role of the food system. Understanding key influencing factors allows make sense of the apparent juxtapositions the food system. I look at the early nationalizing period in post-independent Zambia, then move on to how Zambia was seen as a testing ground first for agricultural research innovation in the 1970s, for liberalization in the 1980s and for the expansion of South African business in the 1990s. I also show how the informal economy is a prominent feature of the economy. I conclude by pointing to rationalizations that appear to be shared by different actors, and that circulate in the food system.

Chapter 5 answers the second research question: **In addition to agribusiness firms, which other institutions are central to the urban food system, and what are their roles?** In Chapter 5, I consider two ‘home-grown institutions’ that demonstrate that there indeed are other institutions that are central to Zambia's food system. The Zambian National Farmers’ Union is shown to be an important intermediary institution that takes on the crucial task of developing the capacity of small-scale farmers and integrating the food system. The informal market is an essential part of the urban food systems in many African countries. The second half of the chapter draws attention to the institutional changes in these markets and to their crucial role in linking farmers to markets.

Chapter 6 answers the third research question: **Does the domestic political economy and non-firm institutions influence firms? And if so, how?** In Chapter 6, I take four agribusiness firms as case studies to consider whether other key institutions/players in the urban food system influence firms, or whether the power of firms are influenced by the priorities of players/institutions in the domestic political economy. I argue that by virtue of their embeddedness in the Zambian context, firms are profoundly influenced both by institutions such as the Zambian National Farmers’ Union and the urban market, and by other motivations that are central to African political economies such as nurturing the economy, and facilitating development of the agricultural sector. I point to a localizing trend – focusing on strengthening and nurturing the local economy – which these firms also surprisingly support. I conclude by arguing that there are intersecting governances at work in the food system.

In sum, each of these chapters addresses the key arguments in this thesis. Where research on supermarkets has tended to dominate recent academic debates, I critique this work by looking at other bodies of work and evidence from the field that challenge the assumptions in this work. Where the literature is weak in pointing to factors in the domestic and regional political economy that influence food systems in Africa, I fill this gap by providing a detailed examination of the domestic political economy as it pertains to the food system. Where the literature overemphasizes the dominance of firms in African food economies, I point to two domestic institutions that are considerably more powerful in the local food economy. And finally, where the literature argues that firms transform African economies, I counter this argument by arguing that factors in the context constrain the power of firms. I conclude the thesis by reconsidering the question of governance in domestic food systems. The definition of governance that I take forward in the thesis is what has been termed ‘institutionalist’ where governance is the particular role that certain institutions play in influencing potential economic pathways, in shaping the outcome of certain economic interrelationships, or in employing particular rationalisations in order to further or advance particular priorities. Taken together, African food systems are seen to include hybrid sets of interactions and rely on domestic priorities and motivations. The urban food system therefore can be seen as meeting local needs, adapting to domestic priorities and comprised of multiples sites of power and intersecting governances. Finally, I consider the implications of these findings and take forward a conception of intersecting governance as ‘mutually constituted’.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The initial plan of this thesis was to look at supermarkets and agribusiness firms in Zambia and show that because they are seen to be the market of economic progress, development and modernity, supermarkets and agribusiness firms in Africa do not only represent a shift for Africa, away from its 'developing status', but signal that African countries are in fact 'emerging market economies', as defined by Agtmael (2008) which are no longer characterised by ad hoc, traditional modes of economic interactions, but instead are transformed by retail capital. The framework would have relied quite heavily on postcolonialist approaches and focused on meanings, signifiers and representations. Indeed, during the pilot phase of my research, I looked for ways that pointed to a modernising trajectory in Zambia.

I soon abandoned the postcolonialist reading of the context because while it remains important to challenge the ways African countries are imagined and constructed (see Ferguson, 1996), I also wanted to make a clear contribution to the discipline of Economic Geography. I believed at the time that examining the food system in Zambia through a postcolonialist lens placed my research in a certain 'dissident' category that has a less obvious impact on existing work. I also saw my research and the PhD project as defining my work for the near future, at least. The choice to firmly ground my work in Economic Geography meant that I still kept open the option of making other contributions to Critical Geography and postcolonialist scholarship later, which I may not have had, had I done it the other way around. The next section restates the research questions, sets out the research design, details the methods used to answer those questions and points to their shortcomings, and discusses how I went about conducting and analysing the research.

Research Questions

Research question 1: What are the domestic political economy influences of the urban food system in Lusaka, Zambia?

Research question 2: In addition to agribusiness firms, which other institutions are central to the urban food system, and what are their roles?

Research question 3: Does the domestic political economy, and non-firm institutions influence firms? And if so, how?

Research Design

As mentioned in the Introduction, Content Analysis (CA) forms the ‘rationale-basis’ of my study. The focus of this methodological approach is to evaluate the ‘content’ of texts – images, sounds, interviews, printed material etc., – and present empirically grounded material in such a way that it is responsible to that context, and draws inferences that are validated either by other material or justified because of a robust understanding of the context. ‘Context’ here, although often a vague term, means place in the geographical sense which invokes an awareness of the societal, political economy, economic and/or developmental aspects that make up a place, amongst other factors.

Content Analysis, according to Krippendorf (2004), furthermore

- (1) Is not as open-ended and hermeneutical as ethnographies but guided or structured by research questions, as I have done;
- (2) Samples only relevant texts, and is therefore presumptive in that it chooses specific texts/sources for a purpose, as will be shown later and throughout the thesis. It also provides guidance about interview data transcription so as to ‘transform unedited texts or original images ... into analyzable representations’ (Krippendorf, 2003:84).

- (3) Demonstrates procedural logic, or a clear outline about why certain texts/sources are pursued and why certain inferences are made.
- (4) Places emphasis of credible sources, ‘bridg[ing] the gap between descriptive accounts of texts and what they mean/refer to’ (Krippendorff, 2004:85);
- (5) Makes the analysis work in relation to a close reading of the context so that it renders my assumptions and the appropriateness of my reasoning examinable; and
- (6) Acknowledges that sources proceed from contexts; that is that ‘the context directs the analysis of a text, and the results of the analysis contribute to a (re)conceptualisation of the context, redirecting the analysis, and so forth’ (Krippendorff, 204:86).

The main objective in this thesis is to *explain* what makes up the food system. ‘Explaining’ or ‘considering’ a subject, according to Blaikie (2000:14), involves ‘making intelligible the events or regularities that have been observed and which cannot be accounted for in existing theories’. We explain, follows Blaikie, ‘to establish the elements, factors or mechanisms that are responsible for producing the state of or regularities in a social phenomenon’ (Blaikie, 2010:69). In work on agrifood studies in Economic Geography, we have established that the current framework alone does not lend itself to explaining the complexity in food systems. There is no doubt that existing scholarship, particularly work on supermarkets, is drawn from a sophisticated methodological approach that looks at the hierarchical or network structure of interaction along value chains, and the circulation of codified knowledge between firm clusters or networks (see Gibbon and Ponte, 2005: Chapter 1-2). But because the conceptual framework overemphasises the transformation of African economies by supermarkets or agribusiness firms, the dome political economy falls out of sight and, as a result, so too do multiple sites of power and forms of governance outside the remit of supermarkets or agribusiness firms. The existing literature, therefore, cannot account for the ‘events or regularities’ that are observed in this context, nor can it draw out the ‘elements, factors or mechanisms responsible for producing and regulating’ these observable phenomenon in the food system. Answering the key research questions, then, relies very much on answering an underlying methodological question about how we are able to

capture, explain or consider the inherent complexity in the food system. Furthermore, to draw on CA again, research of this nature requires a responsibility to the place of study so that it results in a ‘quality of research findings that leads us to accept them on account of their contribution to public discussion of important social concerns’ (Krippendorf, 2004:314).

Research Strategy

The research strategy is qualitative, relying on meanings and interpretations of observed phenomena, and relating these findings back to the grounded theory (after Blaikie, 2000:114-115). This best suits the purpose of this research, because, in contrast to fields of study that are positivist or where there are objective truths to be gained, the nature of the research inquiry in this thesis relies on interpretation. Clearly there are certain knowable realities about the field of study, such as who the actors are, what the networks of interaction look like and how the chain fits together. However, what these interactions mean, for instance, in the case of intermediary traders, requires interpretation about, say, the changing nature of high value chains from ‘formal’ to incorporating elements of informality. And interpretation, in turn, must be shown to be credible by relying on other bodies of work that support the evidence (see Krippendorf, 2004:xvii), which I do throughout the thesis.

Second, the purpose of explaining what makes up the food system and considering why certain phenomena exist as they do, requires me to look at a coherent case study. Yin (1984) argues that case studies must be temporally and sector bound entities, suiting the Zambian agrifood industry as a case. Looking at the agrifood system in Zambia as a case study in this thesis enables me to point to reasons in interviews, observations and printed texts that convey why this is an important case, and how it is likely to contribute to knowledge, as set out below.

The case of Zambia's agrifood system

Zambia is a land-locked country in Southern Africa (see Figure 2, and my research case study is its capital city, Lusaka (circled in white).

Figure 2: Map of Zambia (**Source:** Zambian National Tourism Trust, 2009 (© A. Curtis))



Zambia's main revenue comes from copper mining activity in the 'Copperbelt' region. Although the Copperbelt has a larger population city than Lusaka, the capital has the highest population density and urbanisation has continued steadily. In the Copperbelt region, urban population expansion or decline is very much influenced by the intermittent growth of the copper industry. Agriculture has contributed nearly 20 percent to the county's GDP since the 1990s, and agricultural exports, mainly of tobacco and baby vegetable have doubled in the same time (CSO Agricultural Analysis Report, 2003). Grain for the domestic market, in addition to other commodities, is grown by small-scale farmers, who make up more than 75 percent of the agricultural population, and around 50 percent in Lusaka, even as urbanisation increases. In the country more broadly, the last census (CSO Agricultural Analysis Report, 2003), showed that there were almost two million small-holders in the country, of whom, 99.2 percent produced grain, and more than 26 percent reared poultry. The informal market absorbs the bulk of the grain grown in Lusaka both through the raw stock and as poultry inputs (CSO Agricultural Analysis Report, 2003).

The object of study is the agrifood industry with some focus on the poultry industry. As a study of the food system, it is important to cover the main blocks of the food system in the country. While it is outside the scope of this thesis to look at any of these blocks in great detail, it bears mentioning to demonstrate a broad awareness of the over food system milieu in which this study or the urban food system in Lusaka takes place. While the bulk of my research was conducted at agribusiness firms, as I detail later, I also conducted research in informal markets in Lusaka, particularly the Soweto and City Markets (see Figure 4)

(1) Maize

Maize is the main staple crop in Zambia, particularly in the central and Southern region, which is known as the 'maize belt'. It accounts for over a quarter of the total gross value of smallholder crop output in Zambia and almost half of Zambia's calorie intake (Govereh et al., 2008: 1). Although structural adjustment has affected a number of countries since the 1980s, the

intermittent liberalization of Zambia's maize industry is a recent focus of policy interventions. Unlike other countries which saw an incremental shift away from state control of grain markets and the disbandment of grain reserves, in Zambia, different governments pulled back control of maize markets. As Govereh et al explain:

Fifteen years after the initiation of agricultural reform programs in Zambia, maize marketing and trade policies are again fundamentally similar to the controlled marketing systems of their earlier histories. The Chiluba government deregulated maize prices and private trade in the early 1990s but retained a limited government role in the market and frequently arranged maize imports to ensure adequate food supplies during drought years. However, the Mwanawasa government, starting in the early 2000s, has substantially increased the role of the Food Reserve Agency (Govereh et al, 2008:v) .

Table 1 gives some indication of the production figures and Food Reserves Agency prices between 1991 and 2007. What is evident from this table is the changes in prices when the state bought grain from small-scale farmers or controlled imports, and when the Foods Reserve Agency was re-established absorbing over 80 percent of grain in some cases.

As scholars note

The well-documented decline in maize production has been driven largely by policy. During the 1992 to 2004 period, government support for maize production was reduced, but not withdrawn, as government treasury outlays for the purchase of maize were reduced, maize meal subsidies were eliminated, and massive fertilizer subsidy programs were scaled-back (Govereh et al., 2008: 7).

As a result of this shift, in the Northern region of Zambia, there has been substantial diversification into other crops, particularly cassava, which is also bolstered by improved seed varieties.

Table 1. Small and Medium-scale Maize Output, FRA Purchases and Purchases as % of Production

Harvest year	Marketing year	Smallholder Maize Production		Smallholder Maize Sales (tons) (c)	FRA domestic purchases (tons) (d)	FRA/Govt net maize imports (tons) (e)	Govt domestic purchases as % of marketed surplus from smallholder sector (f)=(d)/(c)
		PHS	CFS*				
1991	1991/92	1,227,627	1,097,000	607,961		85,400	
1992	1992/93	387,556	483,492	215,698		575,000	
1993	1993/94	926,508	1,597,768	641,922		400	
1994	1994/95	699,888	1,020,750	362,780		10,000	
1995	1995/96	575,288	737,836	264,724		108,000	
1996	1996/97	1,032,878	1,409,487	276,773	10,500	109,000	3.8%
1997	1997/98	756,560	960,189	184,976	5,000	70,000	2.7%
1998	1998/99	623,131	638,135	157,177	0	150,000	0
1999	1999/00	790,000	855,870	217,391	0	0	0
2000	2000/01	846,172	1,052,806	272,004	0	0	0
2001	2001/02	661,315	801,877	197,915	0	150,103	0
2002	2002/03	654,140	601,606	195,407	23,452	41,608	12.0%
2003	2003/04	850,871	1,207,201	291,462	54,850	0	18.8%
2004	2004/05	1,050,535	1,213,601	356,750	105,300	-22,098	29.5%
2005	2005/06	729,000	866,186	289,000	120,000	36,245	41.5%
2006	2006/07		1,424,438	426,000**	386,449	-230,000	90.7%

Source: GRZ, Crop Forecast Survey estimates, MACO; modified Post Harvest surveys, Central Statistical Office. FRA data files.

*CFS estimates include large-scale maize production. **preliminary estimate.

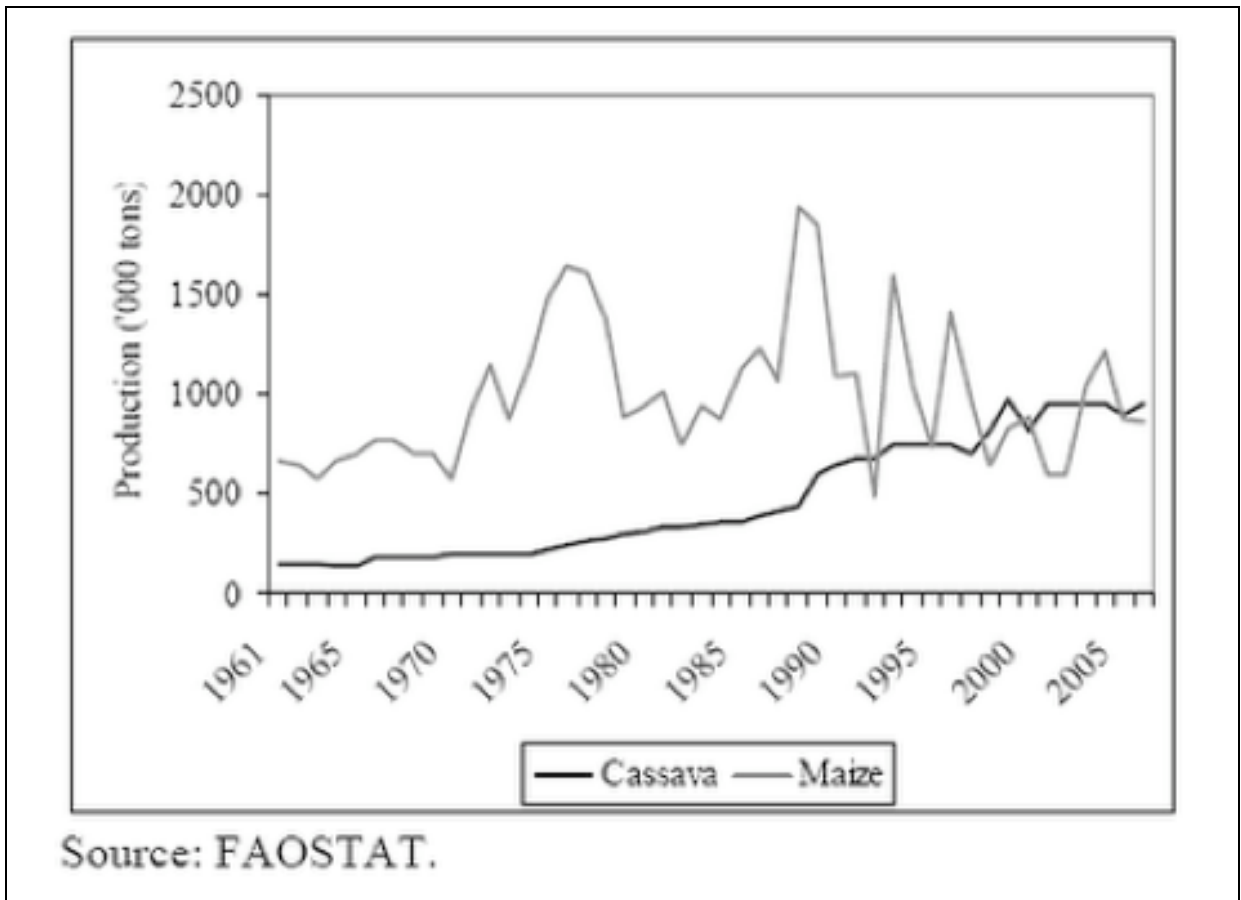
Maize of course, is not just a domestically priced crop, and has been subject to pan-territorial pricing since the 1990s (Dorosh et al., 2009). Regional maize trade is a major determinant of maize prices in Zambia particularly in drought years where the state is forced to import maize from the region, most notably South Africa which given the latter's economies of scale often causes further food prices stressors in Zambia. The main reason is because import permits are mainly given to large millers together with subsidies to import maize. As a result while the import costs are subsidized, subsidies do not reach consumers and the cost of food remains high since they are absorbed by millers, and private cross border traders often fill the gap of supplying cheaper grain to urban areas (Govereh 2007; Dorosh et al., 2009).

(2) Cassava

Cassava is another key staple in Zambia, particularly in the 'Cassava Belt' the Northern and Eastern provinces. The production of maize is influenced by international and territorial price fluctuations, periods of drought/rainfall and the cost of fuel, and this is less so for cassava production. Cassava, unlike maize, being a more drought resistant and, importantly, non-commercialised crop, has shown a steady increase in production figures over time. Figure 3 gives a sense of the steady increase of cassava in the case of Zambia.

In particular, the growth of in cassava production since the 1970s is in part as a result of farmers wishing to diversify their production which coincided with intermittent removal of maize subsidies and pan territorial maize pricing. For the most part, cassava is grown by small-scale farmers and remains an 'under-commercialised' market. The Food and Agriculture Organisation, the state and farmer associations have recently touted cassava as the answer to Zambia's food security woes because of the economic potential of cassava and maize flour blends and a vision of building cassava value chains. In addition, improved cassava varieties is, according to recent reports, able to yield over five times more produce than the same maize producing area.

Figure 3: Growth in production – Maize and Cassava



In the Cassava Belt, 90 percent of rural households and small-scale farmers produce cassava and in the Maize Belt, there is almost 15 percent production by smallholders. There has been a surge in production in recent years because of increased donor support, particularly the ‘Accelerated Cassava Utilisation’ task force that function with donor funds and expertise by USAID, the GTZ, SIDA, the FAO and the Agricultural Consultative Forum. The task force concludes that while the cassava production statistics are promising, the lack of commercial markets for cassava will eventually slow down. At present the challenge has been for the taskforce to encourage state and non-state domestic actors to ‘realise the economic potential’ of cassava which can be driven by agribusiness processors and farmers (ACU Task Force, 2008: Positioning the Cassava Value Chain).

(3) The Poultry Industry

The consumption of poultry is seen to represent rising urban incomes and in some cases, changing consumption demand by the Black urban middle class in Southern Africa (see Poultry Bulletin, 2002). In addition, small-scale chicken production and demand for live ‘village’ chicken is seen to characterise African agriconomies (see Guèye, 2000; Louw et al., 2007). In terms of the development of agricultural enterprise or agricultural industry, investment in large broiler economies of scale is seen to represent a growing or industrialising economy (see Liebenberg and Reid, 1996; Poultry Bulletin, 2004). Related to this, finally, is the fact that poultry production in Southern Africa is directly connected to grain production, particularly the staple crop, maize. Global maize prices and regional demand for maize then is implicitly associated with the poultry industry in Southern Africa, and the maize price often reflects demand for chicken (Grobler, 2001; Malibeng, 2005; Ngosa, 2005; Kaira et al., 2002). In Zambia, the poultry industry was seen to be Zambia’s ‘most outstanding success story’ because hybrid chicken breeds were also a result of increased agricultural technological innovation (Lombard and Tweedie, 1972:42). The poultry industry in Zambia therefore may convey more than just a set of value chain interactions, and we can interpret the changes in the poultry industry as relating to these broader sets of issues – rising urban consumption, growing economies and agribusiness investment – which is implicit in much of the analysis in the next few chapters.

Credible Sources (on and off the field)

The research design, as mentioned earlier, has to demonstrate ‘procedural logic’ that guides the kind of ‘texts’ we look for, whether it is the interview questions asked, or the archival material looked at. This lends credibility to the research process so that it is clear how ‘we have arrived at our judgements so that other researchers especially our critics can replicate it’ (Krippendorf, 2004: xxii). I explain below how I have arrived at my judgements about the sources I look for and what approach to take. I drew on a number of academic sources for this thesis which mainly focused on the Economic Geography-Sociology ‘nexus’. Indeed many of the scholars write in interdisciplinary journals and the debates draw on various theoretical frameworks within this discipline.

The academic work on African food economies, urban food supply and African agricultural development predictably is quite varied, and indeed more voluminous. Part of this, as Power (2003:26) notes, is because of the industry of African development that has churned out huge amounts of literature in the often shared international policy and development studies fields. One of the biggest challenges was finding the balance between covering a large body of work, and losing focus. Where I present the various bodies of work along more developmentalist lines, I do so with a clear focus on the Economic Geography literature, as detailed in the Introduction. After the fieldwork phase, my interest in African economic growth grew and I read the work of Amartya Sen, CK Pralahad, Antoine Van Agtmael, Sir Arthur Lewis amongst others, most of which I do not reference here, but nonetheless contributed to the implicit aim of the thesis to place consumption in Africa at the centre of my thinking and research.

In the field, the archival work that I carried out involved sifting through agricultural magazine journals and the grey literature on agriculture and economic development in Zambia. The latter were predominantly outputs by the World Bank, and held in the small archives of the Zambian National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) which I was allowed the privilege of using free of charge, and the agricultural archives in Johannesburg which had specialist magazine journals targeted to the Southern African poultry industry.¹⁰ The ZNFU headquarters in Lusaka, is based in the Agricultural Showgrounds (see map – Figure 3), together with the various commodity sectors associated with the ZNFU such as the Poultry Association of Zambia (PAZ). I used the Showgrounds as a central base (it was between the city centre and Mtendere, the compound in which I lived), a meeting point with key respondents and my research assistant, and as an office base. Although I could not confirm it, the state-of-the-art archival facilities was funded by an EU capacity building grant, which also funded good governance auditing measures twice a year.

¹⁰ Here I am thankful for assistance with sources of Prof. C. Mather who was conducting research on the poultry industry in South Africa at the time.

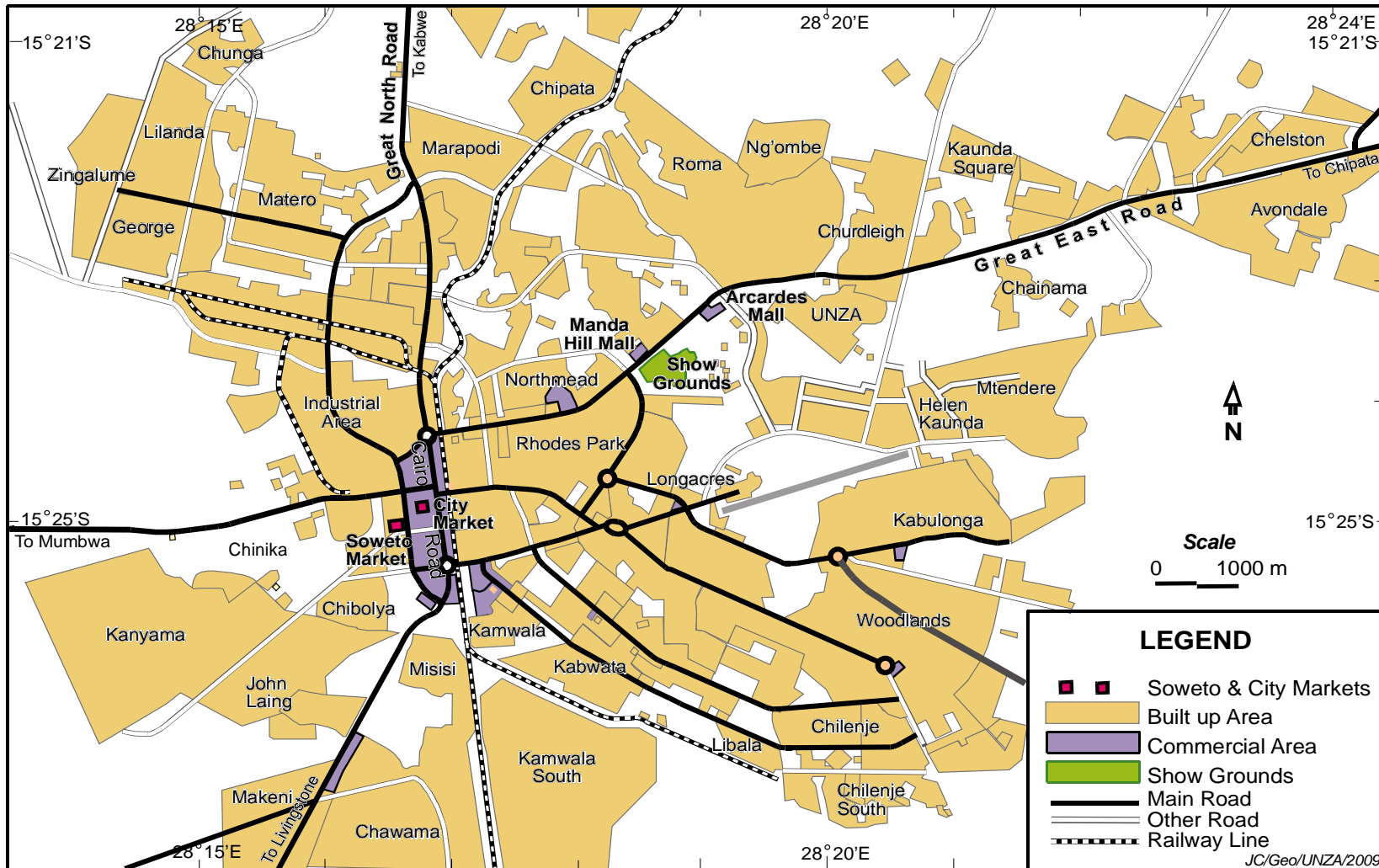
The justification of my choice of empirical sources and respondents also bears relating in some detail. (A full list is also provided in Table 1). Given that my initial approach aimed to consider the ways that the Zambian food industry was ‘modernising’ or evolving from a ‘developing country’ state to an ‘emerging market economy’ state, the sources that I looked for initially were mostly related to the ‘agribusiness’ side (which presented the challenge of making contacts, discussed later). Also, the methods related to the global value chains analysis, by definition, required me to look at the value chain, and because of the GVC conception of governance, to concentrate mainly on the firm and tracing the circulation of knowledge between ‘lead’ firms at different tiers. While the first phase of research focused on the limited number of value chains, a very small number that had second and third tier suppliers, it became clear that the conceptual framework of the thesis like the research design, needed to be much wider.

I initially targeted two of the large agribusiness firms that had an internet presence, and made contact with them via email and telephone. Tiger Animal Feeds is a subsidiary of a South African company (Meadow Feeds), and were keen to offer information. Zambeef was the largest agrifood firm in Zambia, which specialises in beef, leather, milk, and chickens (ZamChick). The company had recently won a tender to run the butchery in the South African supermarket Shoprite in Zambia, and thus ran a completely vertically integrated chain. While the prospect of conducting research with these two firms would have been an excellent start to a focus on domestic value chains, I quickly realised that there was a much wider political economy system that allowed the ‘classic’ commodity chains to function in quite unexpected ways outside Zambeef, for instance. And indeed that Zambeef was the exception. The central tenet of the value chains approach was that the global political economy gave way to the most logical form of transaction in this system – the global value chain – and attempting to look for the value chain would shape my thinking about the domestic, regional and global political economy that resulted in the urban food system as seen in the Zambian case. Instead of paying particular attention to those influencing factors, I would be zooming in on a slice of the food chain that may inadvertently sideline important insights about why the food system exists as it does. I realised, however, that the process of choosing the research pathway was very much tied to my understanding and reading of the

context in Zambia, and the research endeavour would be precisely about making the influence of the context explicit.

As I mentioned in the Preface, the turning point in my research design was the ‘man and his bicycle’ incident. It allowed me to see these seemingly isolated incidents of informality as part of a bigger system, and as a result I went about ‘examining’ the food system with all its composite parts. Although my examination of governance was not really well thought out at the time, the second and third phases of research allowed me to also look for other information sources outside the agribusiness firms, and ask different questions of the firms when I did conduct research with them. Instead of asking questions about how firms were transforming food economies in Africa, I wanted to explore how the context influenced the behaviour and strategies of agribusiness firms since the agrifood system is a product of the domestic political economy. Although the thesis required a broad research scope, it was still unfeasible to look in any great depth at the entire food system. What I chose to do, instead, was to concentrate on the insights that thinking about a wider ‘system’ would afford me. While I did not intend to cover the breath of Zambia’s food system, I did want to offer an assessment of the nature of the food system that would offer a concrete explanation of African agrifood economies in this era. Of course during the course of the writing up, the global financial crisis caused many policy makers (and states) to reconsider their position on the *laissez faire* economy, and to think about how to guard economies against further economic meltdown. One of debates that surfaced again, directed at the global south was protectionism, and the woes of looking inward, but instead, continuing to reduce trade barriers, while at the same time northern governments bailed out their domestic industries. Placing the domestic context at the centre of the inquiry is an important rationale that underlies the thesis as a whole.

Figure 4: Map of Lusaka, showing the Show Grounds and Urban Markets



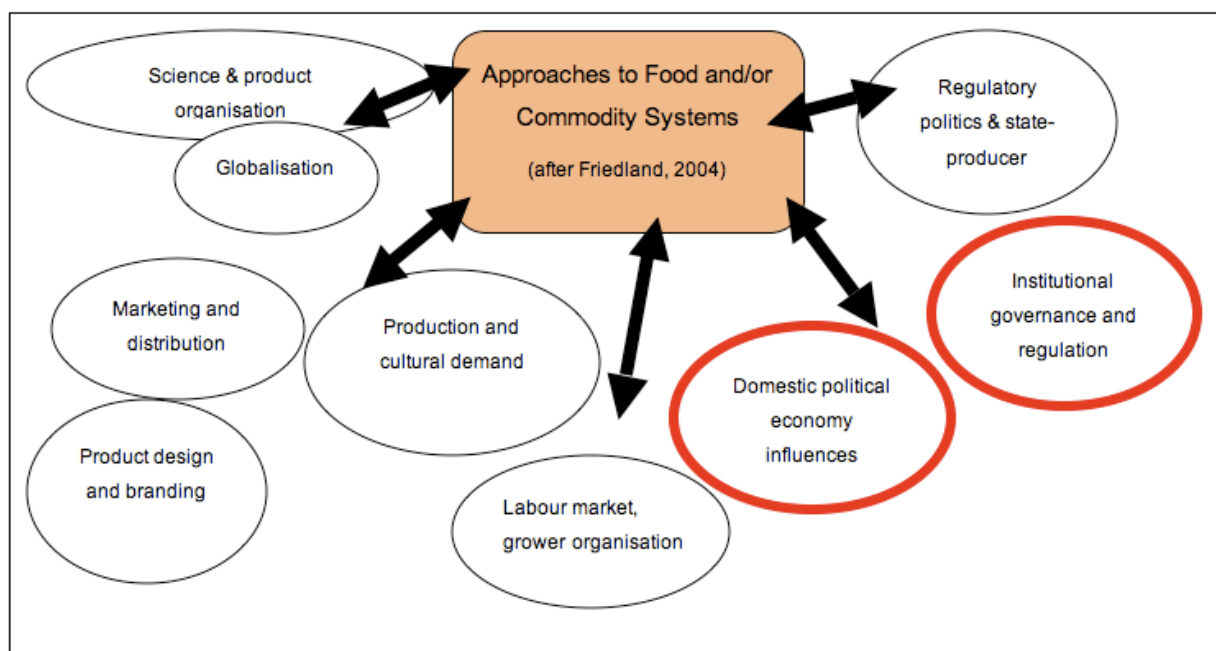
Source: Re-drawn from Greater Lusaka, 1:50,000 Surveyor General, Lusaka. 1986.

How do we find out about the food system, with its many facets, and where does this thesis delineate its focus?

The 'Systems' Approach

As highlighted in the Introduction, one of the foundational elements of this research is that it places importance on recognising the food 'system' or the political economy context in which the food system emerges. Friedland and others have postulated a number of methodological angles that researchers might demonstrate a broad awareness of the food system. Figure 5 below diagrammatically presents the 'angle' of this research focus.

Figure 5: Different approaches to food systems highlighting the approaches in this thesis



In addition to this focus, there is further justification of the use of a ‘systems’ approach found in the international development literature. The reason for drawing on this body of work to inform my research is that it makes future policy linkages discernable. I allowed a systems approach to inform how I read and look for sources, and how I evaluated them. The systems approach in International Development Policy circles is both a retrospective heuristic device and a methodological tool drawn from the field of ‘Innovation Systems’ (most notably used in Science and Development Studies). ‘Innovation systems’ is a complex set of ideas about how knowledge is generated and circulated, the institutional domains in which knowledge is produced and the innovations that emerge from this ‘system’ (Hall, 2002). It has been used as a developmental tool to look at agricultural marketing of potatoes in the Andean region, for instance, and the interrelationships between the public and private sectors, farmers and intermediaries to bring about the ‘innovation’ that will benefit farmers and other actors in the system (Devaux et al., 2009). In this approach, innovation is seen as any product, process, technology or institution that emerges as the result of different interactions and influences at the global, regional, national or community level, and benefits those in the system (Devaux et al., 2009:31; Smith, 2004; Ernst, 2002). It has also been used to look at agricultural research and how the contributing influences and capacities in that system allow certain research innovations to emerge (Spielman et al., 2008:1; also see Sumberg, 2005).

The rationale for drawing on this work is that the role of diverse institutional actors and interactions and the context within which these processes occurred is emphasised (Hall, 2002:44). It thus sits well with institutional approaches and supports the larger aim of this thesis which is to explain the shape of Zambia’s urban food system by looking at the domestic political economy and different institutions prominent in the agrifood system. Also, the system ‘way of seeing’, so to speak, is useful at every level of the research process – research design, methodological approaches and analysis as I show in other sections.

In sum, the ‘agrifood system’, as I have adapted it here can be seen outcome of a selected number of influences and interactions as seen through a series of explanatory factors – the domestic

political economy, domestic institutions and agribusiness firms. While there are of course other influencing factors or explanatory factors, such as globalising forces, the focus here is the domestic political economy and the sum of a selected number of interactions and interrelationships, and the institutions that govern these interactions.

This research design section therefore establishes that:

1. The objective in the thesis is to explain what makes up the food system
2. The research strategy is qualitative and relies on interpretation;
3. A 'systems' approach allows us explain the interlinking aspects in the food systems.

I now turn to the methodology used in the thesis to answer the research questions.

Methodology

As I pointed out earlier, the methods associated with Economic Geography approaches do not always lend themselves to the inherent complexity in Zambia's food system, indeed nor are they directly relevant for this study. But it is important to point out that looking at the value chain was an important part of my fieldwork mostly because this was the initial approach of the research. During the pilot phase of my fieldwork, which was conducted in March 2007, I was most keen on 'following the chain'.

To make initial contacts I emailed and called a number of poultry agribusiness firms listed on the Zambian Business Directory, ZamNet. Of the three people I managed to speak to, they all expressed willingness to meet with me when I arrived in Zambia, but explained that their broiler plants were outside Lusaka. At the time I did not think this would present a problem. I intended to hire a car, and find my way there. When I arrived in Zambia, however, I struggled to secure

appointments with anyone. Through a personal contact at the Geography Department at the University of Zambia (UNZA), I was introduced to a livestock vet who was completing his Masters research in Agricultural Science at UNZA. During the pilot phase of my research in Zambia (March 2007), Dr Zulu introduced me to Mr Matthews Ngosa, the Head of the Poultry Association of Zambia, who was ultimately my main contact, and research assistant. Mr Ngosa brokered the research process in introducing me to the key players in Zambia's poultry industry. Through his professional networks, I gained access to large processors, emerging farmers, stock-feed enterprises and broiler owners, and I also gained a level of credibility with these firms and actors that I would not have had otherwise. Mr Ngosa accompanied me on most of my research trips, often driving to farms and processing plants on the outskirts of the city and outside Lusaka, introducing me and accompanying me on tours of facilities. Mr Ngosa used the chance to watch me conduct the research which would be a beneficial skill for him in his professional development. During the subsequent phase of my research, which was conducted between July and November 2007, I met and conducted interviews with a number of key respondents, some of whom I interviewed in two phases.¹¹ Table 2 lists the specific number of interviews, the actors or categories of actors, the location and the selection criteria used in the fieldwork. The reason for including this is to demonstrate the empirical research that informs the conclusions in this thesis since only a small selection of the interviews are referenced here or quoted from.

¹¹ I also attended regional training sessions for small-scale farmers held by a large agribusiness firm, and was based at the agricultural show grounds in Zambia where I was given the opportunity to look at the agricultural archives at the ZNFU headquarters. I was able to conduct my research in informal markets through the assistance of one of the farmers would bring hundreds of chickens everyday to the market to sell. Mum Agnes, I called her, introduced to two of her trusted traders who showed me around the market, took me to wholesale areas and introduced me to traders and other intermediaries along the supply chain.

Actor/Category of Actor	No.	Location	Criteria for Selection	Type of Interview
Intermediary traders and/or transporters	8	Urban markets in Lusaka	Referral or recommendation by farmers or traders and/or agribusiness managers	Semi-structured and where possible, informal focus groups
Agents for agribusiness firms	8	On site at agribusiness firms/processing plants		
Traders/Vendors	20	Urban markets in Lusaka Residential Compounds	Random selection	Short, semi-structured interviews
Urban Market Managers	2 x2	Lusaka City Market Soweto City Market	On the basis of their position. Access through personal network with traders.	Semi-structured and in depth interviews
Non-firm, non-state institutions: ZNFU Poultry Association of Zambia	2 2 x2	ZNFU Showgrounds; On site at interviews with agribusiness managers	On the basis of their position. Access through personal network.	Semi-structured and in depth interviews
Supermarket Shoprite Agribusiness firms	2 6	Lusaka, Manda Hill Shopping Mall; Cape Town South Africa, Shoprite HQ	On the basis of their position. Access through personal network and availability.	Semi-structured and in depth interviews
Emerging farmers	2	On farms in Lusaka province	On the basis of their position. Access through personal network and the ZNFU.	Semi-structured and in depth interviews
State officials	3	At government offices, Department of Domestic Trade and Commerce	On the basis of their position, through personal network access and availability.	Semi-structured and in depth interviews

Table 2: Details of Interviews conducted

Interviews are a useful way of gaining information, but the weakness of the method is that the responses are often subjective. To balance out this subjectivity, I attempted to validate the responses by looking at the literature, which itself is a subjective exercise as Krippendorf (2004:41) argues, and conducted additional interviews with intermediary traders and farmers. I also looked at available work in the grey literature (which often was published by the World Bank perhaps pointing to a more institutionalised subjectivity), and other secondary literature to validate the findings. The archival work, consisted mainly of searching through material published by the ZNFU (the *Zambian Farmer*), other regional poultry industry publications (*Poultry Bulletin*).

Relating the findings to the literature and other material was in part an attempt to ‘triangulate’, or to corroborate my findings (Blaikie, 2000:33). The analysis relied on interpretation, processing the information and ‘look[ing] for meaning, and significance in the presentation of others’ (Krippendorf, 2004:85). Thus while there were many instances in the interviews where respondents represented a particular opinion, they also were relaying actual evidence of how the food system works, and with what rationalisation they govern it. The nature of social research, though, and perhaps most especially research on food systems in Africa, has a strong ‘social justice’ leaning. In Krippendorf’s view, this adds to its validity: ‘Research examining such public issues is socially validated by proponents and antagonists who worry about these issues and are eager to translate research findings into action’ (Krippendorf, 2004:314). So in thinking about how I demonstrate that the results presented in this thesis are credible, Krippendorf (ibid) argues again that demonstrating sensitivity to the context offers three kinds of validating evidence: (1) it justifies the treatment of a text or data as meaningful; (2) it justifies my abductive inferences; and (3) it justifies the results. Understanding the context is therefore fundamental to the research endeavour, to the credibility of sources and to the integrity of the analysis. In sum, the research methods presented here, although they each have weaknesses, together they provide me with a strong basis for the research project.

Conclusion

The research design, methodological considerations and methodology outlined in this chapter detail the rationale and justification used throughout the thesis and the research process. While some of the observations about the process itself are only seen retrospectively, the research experience that was very much a part of the telling of this larger narrative that underwent many changes. In the Conclusion, I reflect critically on the methodological approach in the thesis, and at the end of the chapter which follows (the literature review) I restate the methodological approach in light of the more detailed conceptual framework.

Roadmap

The next chapter reviews the literature. The first three sections respectively deal with (1) post - independence food marketing and economic reforms and briefly looks at the literature on food marketing in Africa, and also points to how food marketing in Zambia has been written about; (2) the literatures on food crises and survivalist initiatives which examine the crises of food systems in Africa more generally; and (3) work on informal food markets in Africa. The review of literature on informal markets in African cities is separated between the next two chapters – this following literature review and the subsequent, more contextually grounded chapter. While this separation of the literature risks the perception of a weaker analysis in the review chapter, I believe the literature on informal markets that is reviewed in this chapter adds to a more robust conceptual framework – which is the ultimate aim of the chapter. The second half of the chapter focuses on the literature on supermarkets and how they are seen to transform economies in the South, critiquing this work by looking at additional material in the ‘new retail geography’ perspective and highlighting the role of South Africa in Africa accounting for the dominance of supermarkets and agribusiness firms in this context.

CHAPTER 3: AGRIFOOD STUDIES: APPROACHES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Questions of evaluation raise the critical importance of politics in, for example, attempting to shift notions of evaluation to take full account of the rapid but unpredictable changes in the environmental context within which economies operate and to consider the environmentally appropriate and socially just time frames and discount rates for adjusting the norms and metrologies of evaluation.

Lee, 2008:1114

Introduction

In the literature, the focus on ‘food’ in African countries, has received considerable attention in the past few decades, whether it is about overcoming famine or food insecurity crises; the imperative for states and the international development community to strengthen export linkages; or the need for greater investment in agriculture.¹² Despite the sustained interest, the approaches taken to conceptualise food in Africa have shifted over time, often moving back and forth between more dominant schools of thought. For instance, as Guyer (1987) notes, the focus since the 1950s was on the innovative economic spaces in African agrifood trade mainly in Anglophone literature, but this quickly changed as the perspective of Francophone scholarship became more dominant in the Social Sciences, resulting ultimately in a ‘consensus’ in the field about the backwardness of African food systems in the years that followed. Potts (2008) similarly notes the shift over time in how informal agrifood supply chains (and the informal economy more broadly) were sometimes reviled and other times commended as a way to mitigate urban poverty

¹² Take, for instance, the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) funded ‘Making Markets Work for the Poor’ project (see <http://www.markets4poor.org>); the World Bank’s ‘Agriculture for Development’ focus in the World Development Report (WDR, 2008); and the focus on ‘Agriculture’ in the 2006 report *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth* (OECD, 2006) published by the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) and the Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET).

and food insecurity in African countries. Indeed history, it seems, is repeating itself as the international development community has a renewed interest in the promises of a Green Revolution:

Using agriculture as the basis for economic growth in the agriculture-based countries requires a productivity revolution in smallholder farming. Given Sub-Saharan Africa's unique agriculture and institutions, that revolution will have to be different from the Asian green revolution. How to implement it after many years of limited success remains a difficult challenge. But conditions have changed, and there are many local successes and new opportunities on which to build (World Bank 'World Development Report' WDR, 2008:1)

Once again, revolutionising agricultural productivity is seen as a panacea to 'Africa's food crisis' in providing technological solutions to increase the production of food in Africa, this time focused on African-led solutions and partnership.¹³ But the return to a Green Revolution, despite the failures of the project and the criticisms it elicited in the 1970s, and the resurgence of interest in the African food crisis between 2007-2008 can be seen in part as a result of the (re)current agenda of the development and knowledge industries (see Smith, 2005; Holt-Giménez, 2009¹⁴; Bryceson, 2009¹⁵). What is clear from shifts over time is that while the concern about food in Africa is driven by particular agendas, it also reflects broader shifts in geopolitics, and it results in particular imaginaries or conceptions of food systems in Africa. For instance as Smith (2003:5)

¹³ See 'What is AGRA's distinctive vision of an African Green Revolution?', AGRA, <<http://www.agra-alliance.org/section/about/faq#02>>

¹⁴ Holt-Giménez argues that '[s]olutions to the food crisis advanced by the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and mega-philanthropy, propose accelerating the spread of biotechnology, reviving the Green Revolution, re-introducing the conditional lending of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and re-centering the now fragmented power of the World Trade Organization (WTO) by concluding the Doha "Development Round" of trade negotiations. These institutions have a mandate from capital to mitigate hunger, diffuse social unrest, and reduce the overall numbers of peasant producers worldwide — without introducing any substantive changes to the structure of the world's food systems' (Holt-Giménez, 2009:1)

¹⁵ Bryceson (2009) points to more critical views: '[V]arious environmental and social activists suspect that [Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa] AGRA investments are intended to create new markets for western chemical and agro-industries, encouraging African farmers' dependence on non-sustainable agricultural inputs and favoring larger more entrepreneurial farmers at the expense of others.' (Bryceson, 2009:1)

and (Mitchell, 2002:25) note, approaches to food in Africa have created a particular imaginary of Africa that is environmentally deterministic, necessitating, for instance, disease or malnutrition control, population regulation, or technological solutions such as modified grain species, and the subsequent 'justified' intervention by development agencies. Yet it is also clear, as seen in the World Bank quote earlier, that there is a recognition that 'conditions have changed and [that] there are many local successes and new opportunities on which to build'.

Seen within this context, one might appreciate the complexity of the task of reviewing the literature on food in Africa, seen especially in the light of Lee et al's (2008:1114) comment quoted at the opening about how evaluating scholarship relies on seeing those projects/interventions in context, while recognising their power in reproducing a set of conclusions. As such, based on the key claims of the thesis as restated below, in this chapter I review only those bodies of work that provide an appropriate framework for this research, and concentrate predominantly on scholarship in Economic Geography (particularly the work on supermarkets). While the bodies of work are related, I have separated them in this review on the basis of how the debates are circulated in the literature. This Chapter concludes that by looking at different bodies of academic scholarship, food systems in Africa can be seen as situated or located in the broader domestic political economy, which is influenced by globalised and localised processes.

Understanding trajectories of change in African countries: Post-independence food marketing and economic reforms

In many African countries, after their independence, agricultural markets and prices of food were controlled by the state. This was as much a political imperative as it was an economic one (Bates, 1981). State actors had to ensure reliable food supplies to people and they had to grow the economy. State actors, therefore, controlled the marketing boards and sold to large private food processing facilities, who would buy exclusively from state reserves agencies. As Africanist

scholars note, controlling food marketing was also one mechanism, among many, to ensure political control of rural and urban constituencies (Boone, 1994; Bates, 1989)

In Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, state support guaranteed smallholder producers agricultural input subsidies, credit provision and assured producers that the state would purchase their produce (Jayne and Jones, 1997; Putterman, 1995). In particular, the state buying-station targeted those areas that had been excluded from colonial marketing regimes (Jayne, 1997). The state would also have direct control over food pricing and grain supplies, ensuring, for example, cheap food to urban areas through consumer price subsidies. Often the ultimate aim of such interventions was to ensure that the state would not need to import food. Such systems effectively made the state the main buyer and reseller of agricultural produce in most African countries, and the costs of marketing were transferred to the state treasury. In addition to this economic aim, state-supported agriculture also ensured more political aims: on the one hand, cultivating a support base – because well supplied urban constituency – and on the other, reducing overall dependence on settler (colonial) agricultural producers (Bates, 1976, 1981, 1989).

More generally, in Southern and East Africa, the aim of newly independent states to keep food prices low – which, as noted, was done in part to ensure political stability – made it increasingly difficult for African states to maintain the costs of collection, processing and distribution, and even more difficult for economic growth (Jayne, 1997). In Tanzania in the mid-1970s, for instance, Bryceson (1987:185) notes that there were serious bureaucratic and transport logistic inefficiencies in the grain marketing system that was controlled centrally by the National Milling Corporation. In other cases in Southern and East Africa, state control allowed opportunistic leaders to line their own pockets by monopolising transport or storage facilities, or by making sure that the produce from their farms received preferential access to national grain reserves (Bates, 1981:40). Duncan and Jones (1993:1496) suggest that the amalgam of debt, marketing inefficiencies, and bureaucratic incompetence made economic reforms unavoidable. Indeed it was

in the name of economic reform that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund justified African structural adjustment.

Many African states could no longer afford to maintain subsidising inputs, supporting transport and processing, and subsidising selling prices (Bryceson, 1993). High levels of indebtedness (and treasury losses) were compounded by increasingly dilapidated processing facilities and inefficient operations (Bates, 1989). For instance, Jayne and Jones (1997) show how in Zambia and Kenya state debt was in part because of low repayments from smallholders. Most Southern and East African states could no longer afford to subsidise the price of food to urban consumers (Pinckney, 1993). High levels of debt and high inflation often also had direct implications on the currency exchange and the capacity to import food (Pearce, 1991). In addition, Dorosh et al., (2009) and Diao et al., (2008) note that during this time many African countries became net importers because of the steep rise in food prices globally, and the high costs of food locally. Massive spikes in food prices sparked widespread riots in the late 1970s in many African countries because state marketing systems suppressed other marketing channels (Putterman, 1995). State control of agricultural production, marketing and sales meant that smallholders had no direct access to markets, marketing channels between the rural and urban areas were strained, and trade on the black market had even further escalated food prices (Guyer, 1987; Bryceson, 1993; Jayne, 1997).

As a condition for receiving loans from the World Bank and the IMF, many African states were coerced into removing agricultural subsidies, which rapidly increased food prices. As Jayne and Jones (1997:1512) notes:

Fiscal crises and increased donor leverage over policy pushed the grain marketing systems of Eastern and Southern Africa toward liberalization in the mid-1980s. After first trying to strengthen the performance of state marketing boards in the 1960s and 1970s, donors and international lending agencies began promoting the reform of food marketing and pricing as a central component of structural adjustment programs in Africa.

Economic liberalisation entailed the removal of state subsidies, cutting back on social spending and deregulating state control on trade, and resulted, on the one hand, in slightly lower food prices because of the opening up of private food marketing channels through urban traders (Bates, 1989; Bryceson, 1993; Guyer, 1987). On the other, according to Jayne and Chisvo (1991:319) state controlled supply chains were subsumed by larger commercial processors which escalated food transport costs because grain from rural areas had to be transported to urban processing plants and back to rural areas to be sold. In short, Jayne and Jones (1997) note that economic reforms resulted in decreased resources and public funds for smallholders – which meant smaller yields – and an increase in private traders servicing producers. Guyer (1987), Bates (1987) and Bryceson's (1993) point to the tendency for private traders to fill the gap of urban food supply where there were failures of public funds, in particular those that would serve urban informal markets. Despite the fruitful academic inquiry about traders and alternative markets, the literature continued to focus predominantly on the crisis of food in Africa and the interventions development agencies could make in response (Guyer, 1987: 5). The particulars of how reform happened in the *Zambian case* is discussed further in Chapter 4, but for now it is important to reiterate that we can understand food systems in Africa in a much more nuanced way if the post-independence political economy is highlighted.

Food crises and survivalist initiatives

In the 1980s, African state agricultural systems were characteristically seen to be 'a particularly detrimental combination of backward techniques and predatory state politics' (Guyer, 1987:3). An emergent literature in the early 1980s, during the 'great Sahel famine', focused on the crisis of state-controlled food systems, agricultural stagnation and the need to modernise agricultural systems (Guyer, 1987; see Bates, 1981).¹⁶ State controlled food systems became indelibly associated with 'intractable under-nutrition and malnutrition associated with drought, civil conflict, refugee camps and impoverished labour reserves' (Guyer, 1987:3, 2). The narrative

¹⁶ In part this literature focused on the Green Revolution and the way developing country producers could increase grain yield by adopting technologically modified varieties and inputs. Chapter 4 discusses this in greater detail.

justified intervention through food aid, and prescriptive policies for reduced state involvement in agriculture (Dorosh et al., 2009).

The literature from the 1980s therefore placed great emphasis on famine, crisis-ridden production, under-nutrition or the imperative for African states to further liberalise agriculture to escape these ills (see Riddell, 1997; Sarmiento, 1998; Bill, 1991; Raikes, 1985). The livelihoods approach, which emerged in the 1990s, exposed the ‘human face’ of crisis-ridden African agriculture by personalising the research on famine, vulnerability related to environmental degradation, under-nutrition and poverty at the level of the household (see Bernstein et al., 1992; Chambers and Conway, 1991). Much of this literature reflected how political, social, environmental and economic factors influence livelihoods.

Another body of work, which emerged from debates on the food crisis, focused on food marketing and on making food accessible to the urban poor. The body of work represents a more sustained focus even after the drought in the Sahel and the proliferation of developmental literature. Here one of the main thrusts of the research was on improving rural-urban linkages, and, more particularly, on the potential for urban agriculture to be an urgent and necessary coping/survivalist mechanism for the urban poor. In addition, urban production and marketing could have had the potential to curb inflation and stabilise food pricing, and, more importantly, increase people’s access to food through informal urban food livelihood markets or food vending (see Drakakis-Smith, 1991, 1997; Mougeot, 1999; De Haen, 2002; Porter, et al., 2004; Mougeot, 2005). The rationale for this type of research is perhaps best captured in this quote by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) cited in Devereux and Maxwell (2001:5):

‘a new kind of food system will be needed, no longer concentrating on meeting local subsistence needs, but instead supplying cheap, safe food to cities, in an integrated supply distribution chain’ (Devereux and Maxwell, 2001:5)

Urban food supply systems are thus often seen as strategic alternative income generating enterprises, and potential coping/survivalist mechanisms to urban residents in the developing world (Drakakis-Smith, 1991; Drakakis-Smith, 1997; Mougeot, 1999; De Haen, 2002; Rogerson, 2003). Urban food systems are seen to reduce poverty because they make food more accessible to urban residents and markets more accessible to producers. Its relatively small importance in national strategies and priorities has meant very self-secured vitality in some cases (Reardon and Gulati, 2006) and marginalised producer-communities in others.

Most often, urban food supply systems are closely associated with informal urban markets (see Rakodi, 2002; Rogerson, 1997). Although these supply systems, or alternative marketing channels mentioned earlier, have been a feature of African cities from pre-colonial days, through the colonial era and post-independence (see Guyer, 1987; Watts, 1987; Bryceson, 1987, 1993), they have become increasingly important in an era post World Bank and IMF reforms. According to Rogerson (1997:85), informal food markets have proliferated since the 1980s as a result of how communities and enterprise cope with an inability to meet the demands of the formal food economy.

Not only are they seen to 'fill the gap' of the formal economy, urban food supply systems are integral to the survival of cities in the south because of its 'contribution to local economic and micro-enterprise development, poverty alleviation and inclusion of the poor' (De Haen, 2002:3). For instance, in Ghana, 90 percent of the city's fresh vegetable consumption is from production within the city; in Shanghai, almost 90 percent of meat produce is through urban and peri-urban agriculture; and in Central and South America, alternative modes of food provisioning, through UPA and direct selling, become a necessary channel for small-scale farmers to survive (De Haen, 2002; Kwa, 2001).

Although some see informal food markets in Africa as progressively dwindling and retreating as supermarkets tend to dominate urban economic space (Reardon and Weatherspoon, 2003), in

policy development arena it is argued that urban food supply systems will become the dominant channel in reaching the Millennium Development Goals in developing world cities (Mougeot, 2005:3).¹⁷ As such, urban supply systems will play an increasingly a major part of state-driven food security initiatives (Mushamba, et al., 2003). Informal markets in Africa account for over two thirds of urban consumer expenditure (Jayne, 2008:109). In Mozambique over seventy percent of small-scale farmers retail their fresh produce through large wholesale wet markets because agro-processing chains are limited (Nair and Coote, 2007:1), and because Mozambique had a specific urban agriculture programme where food produced in the Green Zone around the main urban areas would supply the city (Ayisi, 1995; Ferraz and Munslow, 2000). In Zambia the statistics are similar; more than eighty percent of fresh produce is sold in informal markets. Small-scale farmers grow most of this produce and while not many of them supply to markets directly, the produce makes its way to urban markets through intermediaries (Hichaambwa et al., 2007; Haantuba and De Graf, 2008). This is also a trend in other countries outside Africa with similar political economies.¹⁸

Much of the discussion, with respect to informal markets in the ‘developmentalist’ literature, centres on issues of donor funding, de-criminalising urban agriculture, and aiding small-scale farmers (Mougeot; 2002; see also Devereux and Maxwell, 2001). Scholars suggest that one of the most pressing research concerns in food studies is how urban food systems work or indeed how they could work better, with the broader aim of linking farmers to markets and making food more accessible for the urban poor.¹⁹ Implicitly, this work recognises the importance of informal food markets in urban Africa although the main focus is policy intervention. Indeed one of the main

¹⁷ As I show in the next section, informal food markets are not only associated with development policy.

¹⁸ In Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, and the Philippines informal wet markets have formally employed a number of market management staff to regulate markets, to sedentary them into centrally contained zones and then to adequately manage them, which has proven to be a successful strategy in supporting informal markets. In other parts of Asia, commercial regulations may have in fact purposefully *discouraged* the informal sector to benefit and facilitate growth in the formal sector (Reardon and Gulati, 2006).

¹⁹ See Ngugi, 2006; Jayne (2008); Hichaambwa et al (2007) and McCullough et al (2008). This shift to linking farmers and markets is in part influenced by an understanding of how food systems are ‘re-governed’ by private enterprise. As I discuss elsewhere, changes in the global economy (and the way it is governed) has fundamentally transformed how we think about food systems.

problems of the literature is the seamless coupling of the informal economy with urban agriculture. As I mentioned earlier, there is substantial work on informal urban food supply systems that are not primarily linked to developmental policy, some of which I detail in the next section, and the rest in Chapter 4.

Urban food markets in Africa

As suggested in the Introduction, the work of Africanist scholars points to the fact that urban food markets are a permanent feature of African cities, and have not recently emerged in response to economic crises. In particular, Bryceson (1987; 1993), Bates (1981); Guyer (1987), Watts (1987) Porter et al (2004; 2007) and Porter and Lyon (2005) present detailed reviews of the history of urban food marketing in African cities – some over one hundred years. The body of work shows that urban markets have a longer history in Sub-Saharan Africa and they will continue to be a feature of the urban food supply system because of political economy changes and urbanisation trends. In some cases, in Sub-Saharan Africa and other countries in the global south, these markets are becoming a more ‘permanent’ feature of cities because municipal governments provide financial, infrastructural support or introduce protective planning and management regulations. This has meant the modernization of infrastructure or markets, and encouragement of retail innovation for small retail outlet stores through training programmes (see Tschirley et al., 2004; Reardon and Gulati, 2006; Abrahams, 2010).

Urban markets make food accessible to city residents, many of whom are poor. While supermarkets and other retail outlets make food available, many people living in urban Africa do not have (nor, in fact do they need) access to these outlets. Access to food is influenced by other factors including urban poverty and vulnerability, the accessibility of urban markets, and individual consumers’ access to transportation and refrigeration. For this reason, argue Tschirley et al (2004a:2), in Africa, informal markets are by far the most important retail outlet of urban residents. Furthermore, Abrahams (2007b) argues that informal retail outlets and traditional markets continue to be the choice of urban residents because they facilitate food networks for the urban poor and for culturally diverse communities in parts of urban Africa. A large percentage of

urban consumers in Africa continue to have low disposable incomes and ‘their shopping patterns are tied to low value-added goods, in small units, with minimal processing and packaging purchased from informal markets and smaller retail outlets within walking distance of their homes’ (Jayne, 2008:129). In a detailed presentation report by Tschirley (2009), he presents excellent graphical evidence providing evidence of sustained lower retail prices of urban markets in Zambia, and the small percentage of retailed food from supermarkets as compared to urban markets (Tschirley, 2009), concluding that despite almost fifteen years of supermarkets penetration in the country that ‘the “traditional” sector will dominate for many years, though supermarkets are likely to grow (Tschirley, 2009:12) because the food system is not becoming increasingly homogenous as promoters of the supermarket revolution initially assumed. Despite the importance of urban markets, Tschirley notes some of the major challenges to overcome if urban markets are to flourish and grow, viz., ‘woefully inadequate investment’, lack of physical facilities, cold chains, market information, grades & standards and frequently dysfunctional management (*ibid.*).

Despite these challenges, which as I show in the case study are already being resolved, the point is that urban markets do not only represent more accessible food systems for consumers; while in the literature ‘informal’ markets are often associated with unsophisticated or risky forms of food supply that often involve exploitative transactions (Porter et al., 2004), because they are tied to lower costs of food, local sourcing of produce, a guaranteed consumer base and, sometimes, quicker transportation within the network or supply chain through intermediaries, they are also the preferred supply system for small-scale farmers.

Informal food markets are only one part of a large commodity and service exchange sector that is integral to the functioning of cities (Bryceson and Potts, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Potts, 2006). The informal economy in Africa is not as it is often categorised – temporary, flailing and survivalist. On the contrary, it absorbs more than half the urban workforce in Africa and accounts for more than two thirds of its economic exchange (Simone, 2005). It is increasingly seen by African states as vital to the urban economy and is often protected by state legislation

and non-state lobbying. Tschirley et al (2004a-b) argue that investment into traditional format markets should be the more urgent policy priority in thinking about food security, access to food and food in emerging market economies. While large retail outlets may offer new retail opportunities for automobiles and electronic high value goods (Coe and Lee, 2007) food supply in traditional formats proves more resilient (Abrahams, 2008; Tschirley et al., 2004b).

Indeed, the supermarket is not the only option for farmers to sell to; informal markets still cater to the majority of urban residents in African cities. In Nairobi, only 10 percent of the urban residents' budget is spent at supermarkets, and supermarket expenditure as a whole is by the wealthiest 20 percent of the urban population (Tschirley et al., 2004). Haantuba and De Graaf (2008:212) note similar evidence in Zambia. They confer that 'supermarkets still account for an insignificant proportion of produce sold' in Zambia. Because of this, the literature (notably articles from a FAO-funded publication) notes that other retail formats that are still important in urban Africa must become the central focus of donor, state and agribusiness investment and/or partnership:

Modern retail chains are growing fast, drawing in new sources of investment, and opening new reliable markets for higher value produce... For many smallholders throughout the world, and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the challenge of participating in modern, organized chains is eclipsed by the more fundamental challenge of participating in any market (McCullough et al., 2008:*xix*).

A solution to this, according to the literature, is to invest in domestic market and transport infrastructure, build capacity of small farmers to 'meet the demands of the market', lowering transaction costs and increasing access to high value markets and inputs (*ibid*). This is similar to Tschirley's (2009) argument where he highlights the potential of urban markets, with the caveat that these markets need management and facilities to be upgraded. Have there been recent developments in urban markets in Africa in terms of management or upgrading quality? The research that I present in the chapters that follow, confirms that indeed there are significant developments in urban markets, and these have important implications for understanding urban food systems.

In sum, while there may still be forms of economic exchange that are considered illicit and indeed are illegal, the informal economy is considered to 'fill the gap' of ineffective national provision. And unregulated spaces of economic interaction often means that markets are not included in literature on urban African economies, or if they are they are dualistically removed to the periphery of these debates as economic networks outside mainstream. This has two implications: first, a normative vision is created which places the supermarket as the end point of a vector for economic development where, for example, 'informal' or 'traditional' markets are seen to give way to 'modern/formal' modes of food provisioning and economic interaction. The traditional-modern or formal-informal dualism is thus entrenched, as is the normative ideal of how economies progress. Both this dualism, and the idea that as economies evolve from informal to formal the dominance of supermarkets is inevitable, are never more evident as they are in the supermarkets literature which argues that the spread of retail capital signals the transition of an economy and the demise of traditional forms of retailing. The second implication of research on urban markets being relegated to peripheral debates, or development studies, is that research on the spread of supermarkets as the dominant trend in urban Africa has taken centre-stage or come to define work on urban African economies, without any challenge. One of the intentions of this thesis is to challenge the work on the supermarket revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Supermarkets, it is argued in this literature, represents a shift from traditional to modern modes of food provisioning as the chain from farm to retail moves from being unregulated to regulated by firms, and the literature often cites the 'demise of the informal sector' as an defining outcome of the spread of supermarkets and agribusiness firms in urban Africa. The importance of urban markets in African economies, given their centrality in urban economies noted above, and as I argue elsewhere (Abrahams, 2010), specifically contests the assumption that supermarkets transform the face of food provisioning in urban Africa. The next section looks more closely at the supermarkets literature.

The Supermarket Revolution

It is commonplace to view food economies as evolving and transforming along a teleological trajectory from traditional to modern food supply systems (see McCullough et al., 2008). The transformation directly impacts on procurement, processing, and retail, and the various actors along the value chain. In the developing South, the beginning of this trajectory is small-scale farming, lower-quality processing, and informal/traditional modes of retail such as wet markets. The zenith of the transformation is the modern supermarket, and the high-value, high-quality modes of sourcing and procurement that supermarkets demand.

And indeed there is much evidence of the spread of supermarkets in terms of volume and investment: Reardon and Berdegúe (2002:373) argue that “shares of various types of food retailers in the national retail sectors of 12 Latin American countries...constitut[e] 90% of the region’s economy”. This is by far the dominant share of retail capital in an emerging market economy where economic markets may not be perceived to be advanced. In South Africa, supermarkets represent less than “2% of all retail outlets, [but] a rough estimate of the share of supermarkets in total food retail in South Africa is around 50-60%” (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003:4). The success of formal retailing in Kenya is based on its sheer volume: “34 chain-supermarkets; 10 hypermarkets (100 super-market equivalent [and] 117 small independent supermarkets in Nairobi... with a metro-population with about 2, 5 million” (Kenyaweb, 2002 as cited in Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003:7). According to this literature, Kenya is by comparison a late starter as compared with South Africa (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003). Irrespective, Kenya’s supermarket growth is comparable to South Africa’s, which boasts on average “39,5 supermarkets per million people (similar to the rate in Argentina and Chile)” (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003:3). In Brazil, Farina and dos Santos Viegas (2002) argue the phenomenon of investment by retailers is in part driven by economic stabilization and liberalisation, and the increase in spending in consumer markets. In six years the number of the largest food companies in Brazil had doubled (ibid.). In the past decade, South African market share of the top three supermarkets – Pick and Pay, Shoprite and Checkers

have increased exponentially. In addition, other grey economist research notes that in Africa, the spread of supermarkets and capital investment in retailing is evidence of the increasing wealth of developing countries, and the tendency for these economies to evolve into emerging markets (Van Agtmael, 2008:10; Reuters, 2007; EIU Zambia, 2006; EIU Zambia, 2008). While the GVC literature is concerned with export and inter-continental chains, between consuming countries and producing countries, the ‘supermarkets and agrifood restructuring’ literature (and evidence in popular literature) shows that retail investment in Africa is happening by African countries expanding their reach on the continent.

However, while investment and volume of supermarkets in emerging market economies is a significant determinant and ‘fast-tracker’ of transformation, Humphrey (2007:434) questions whether it is enough to warrant a generalisable ‘reach impact’. The theoretical trend is often given greater import than the actual cases show, and should be countered with considered research in variable environments (ibid.) that includes the myriad of food economies in the said location (Abrahams, 2007a; Tschirley, 2004b). As mentioned in Chapter 1, there has been growing caution on the part of scholars in the past few years in estimating the spread of supermarkets in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the literature that has promoted the metaphor of an overwhelming tide of supermarket takeover as in a ‘revolution’ (sic) that overcomes existing food economies completely transforming the face of food provisioning, most of sub-Saharan Africa is seen to be amongst the ‘last wave’ of countries catching the supermarket tide. Other developing countries, particularly those in Latin America and Asia, are understood to be the second and third waves respectively (Humphrey, 2007). Implicitly asserting that the succession of waves is related to ‘the natural course of things’, the ‘first wave’ of the supermarket revolution in Europe and North America was seen to initiate the process (Neven and Reardon, 2008). Also, the vision of ‘the natural course of things’ where the supermarket would be the zenith of economic development, is linked to how the global economy has been restructured – which was detailed in Chapter 1. Value chains – that link large-scale commercial farming, value-added processing,

and high-value marketing, often on the global market – have become increasingly specialized, capital-intensive, and consolidated. Where in the past different actors or firms would occupy different functions along the chain, retailers increasingly control all aspects along the chain, increasing quality, decreasing throughput time, and maximizing profits. This global reorganization relies on consumer demand for quality or processed food. Retailers ‘meet’ this demand by passing it on to suppliers who in turn consolidate, modernize, and upgrade their operations in a complex, technology intensive system. Most significantly, these structured systems bypass ‘traditional’ markets because the latter remain inefficient in meeting the quality and safety specifications, and the logic is that systems of exchange gravitate towards greater efficiency. As mentioned in the Introduction, the rationale behind this work is global economic restructuring and the rise of buyer-driven or retail-led chains that link up producers to retailers in formal, contractual relationships based on adding value to commodities. In short, though, the innovative focus is on how structured systems bypass ‘traditional’ markets because the latter are seen to be inefficient in meeting the quality and safety specifications. Supermarkets are not only seen as the marker for economic transition, but they also come to represent economic evolution. High value chains and supermarkets are seen to be the harbinger of progress for food systems in emerging economies from traditional markets to modern retail, and there is little recognition in this literature of its modernist assumptions. The dominance of supermarkets in the developing South, particularly Africa, is seen as the end point of a normative trajectory along which food systems transform, and has become a popular research focus despite evidence that urban markets continue to dominate, as already mentioned, and that the success of supermarkets depends very much on a political economy environment that facilitates their dominance, as we will see later.

Supermarkets and the demise(?) of ‘informal/traditional’ modes of food retail

Indeed there are cases of a recognisable shift from informal, fragmented retail structures toward sophisticated and concentrated formal retail structures like supermarkets and large format hypermarkets, in the literature (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002; Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003; Louw et al., 2007; (Haantuba, 2007; Reardon and Berdegué, 2002; Farina and dos Santos

Viegas 2002). In many areas, there has been a progressive demise of small shops and informal food market outlets. The increasing dominance of supermarkets and large discount stores is evident even in remote rural areas of the developing world (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003). The arguments are related: On the one hand, where people may have done their food shopping in the past at a number smaller stores and informal markets scattered across town, and this costing more, consumers are now able to purchase all their food in a supermarket which offers cheaper, safer food. On the other, the literature also attests to the fact that the greater purchasing power of large retailers, has indeed led to the shift from many, decentralised 'traditional' stores to larger, centralised supermarkets (Faiguenbaum, et al., 2002; Farina, 2002, Ghezan, et al., 2002). In other words, economic markets are seen to have shifted from fragmented local markets to more centralised formally retailed wholesale markets and that this has had detrimental effects on traditional informal stores, as well as consumption choice (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003:8). The literature cites cases from Latin America to support these arguments. Formal retailing has resulted in the demise of state storage facilities and public distribution centres in Brazil (Farina, 2002:449), locally- based '*feria libre*' in Latin America (Reardon and Berdegue, 2002), and 'mom and pop stores' in Argentina and Chile (ibid.). Because the domestic market changes with development in general (Weatherspoon, 2003:8), larger supermarkets are seen to replace the traditional stores that are aimed at the poor consumer segment in the local neighbourhood (Farina, 2002:445). The conclusion in this scholarship is that traditional retail formats in emerging market economies (informal wet fresh produce markets) will 'progressively' demise (Neven and Reardon, 2008). Yet as much as this evidence points to an apparent trend, one has to ask why, given this dominant assumption about the retreat of urban markets, do these markets continue to play such an important role in the urban food system in Africa? Notwithstanding the idea that urban markets will progressively demise, what are the factors that promote the longevity and resilience, or demise and retreat of these markets? Does it merely happen as 'the natural course of things'? Or does the domestic political economy play a role in determining the eventual outcome of the urban food system?

Champions of the supermarket 'revolution' base their conception on a teleological model of food economies seen predominantly in North American and European contexts. It is thus

unsurprising that the demise of other, less-consolidated, capital-intensive, informal and/or traditional forms of retail is seen as a 'necessary progression' towards the inevitability of better, more modern retail chains (read supermarkets). In South Africa, while supermarkets are seen as the obstacle to the growth of small enterprises, the former do not necessarily demolish the latter (Mather, 2005). Contrary to the implicit assumption in the supermarkets literature, the dominance of supermarkets in a particular economy does not just happen because supermarkets have 'awoken 'sleepy' domestic food systems' or swept through cities of the developing South because the political economy is open for foreign investment and private local investment in retail as Weatherspoon and Reardon argue (2003:402), while those processes may indeed have been the case. Nor is it based solely on the fact that supermarkets have greater purchasing power and supply chain penetration.

Larger supermarkets replace traditional retail outlets as a result of deliberate economic changes. Both the success of supermarkets and the dwindling of informal economic spaces result from the removal of funding from state storage facilities and public distribution centres, and attempts to quash the informal economy (Abrahams, 2010; McCullough et al., 2008). And for this reason one of the overarching policy concerns in the literature is how to increase investment, improve management systems and encourage development of urban markets.

It is necessary therefore to highlight factors in the domestic political economy, as seen in the literature, that drive or resist the process, and not merely essentialize the apparent pressure on informal economies or traditional modes of retail as the natural evolution of food economies. If we have to look for evidence in the literature of institutional policy shifts that profoundly affect (a) the spread of supermarkets or (b) the demise of the 'informal' sector, we have to reflect on the changes in the institutional system that supports informal modes of food retail leads to a more accurate assessment of transitions in local food economies. Institutional support (or, conversely, protracted repression) of informal markets has direct implications for resilience or decline of informal markets in the supermarket 'tidal wave'.

(a) Economic policy regulation that encourages supermarket dominance: Take the ‘first wave’ countries, for instance, since the 1930s, North American and British supermarkets have grown through economic policy that fostered rapid expansion, consolidation, and the investment strength that would inevitably drive out competition. The demise of the ‘traditional’ food economy in these contexts is related to purposeful economic policy mechanisms that encourage the growth of capitalist firms (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002). In Wrigley and Lowe’s book based on ‘New Retail Geography’ in Europe and North America, with a focus on the United Kingdom, they argue that the spread of retail capital was the result of ‘regulatory practice at the local and national scales...local modes of regulation, and central-local state relations’ (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002:115) amongst other things which I will briefly touch on. First, the spread of retail capital was not seen as the ‘natural course of things’ or some predetermined trajectory, nor was the process static and inevitable. Instead, the growth of supermarkets happened as a reaction to regulatory rules governing capital accumulation, and thus did not result in ‘mass-produced’ models of urban retail, but showed ‘how contrasting national regulatory environments can produce very different corporate and spatial structures (Ibid, 2002:119). Second, for 50 years, from the 1930s, the rapid increasing in concentration of agribusiness firms and supermarkets in the UK meant that power shifted to retailers, a situation unlike that of North America. For the same 50 years, in North America the growth spurt and eventual dominance of supermarkets was restrained as a result of ‘price discrimination legislation...aimed at protecting the smaller trader, via criminal indictment of the leading US food retailers at the time’ (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002:120). The ‘first wave’ was not as cogent. Third, in the UK, the concentration of retail capital was bolstered if not driven by the post-war regulatory environment, removal of anti-trust legislation and a period where

Regulatory conditions which many academics have regarded as being supportive of the emergence of that period of rapidly escalating profitability, increasing concentration, and frantic new store development in the food retail industry which characterized the late 1980s and early 1990s in the UK (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002:120).

Fourth, it is not so much as the increased purchasing power of agribusiness firms and retailers

automatically meant that retailers controlled or governed production and consumption. Instead, this also was a result of the broader domestic political economy that facilitated the dominance in private forms of regulation governed by supermarkets and other large agribusiness conglomerates.

Private interests have been generally empowered in the formulation and implementation of...regulation. ... rather, they are increasingly delegated by the state mane of the key regulatory responsibilities which previous accrued to [state] agencies (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002:121).

Indeed as they go on to show (p123), hybrid forms of ‘private-interest’ state governing mechanisms was a cause and consequence of the growth of retail power, and therefore changed the way the state and firms governed the food economy. In sum, what is seen as a teleological certainty in the literature *viz.*, that supermarkets transform food economies in the south misses the important point that there is an existing regulatory political economy environment that influences the spread and success of retail power – whether that is to promote or to circumscribe it. I show in the subsequent chapters, and in the following section, that this is indeed also the case in African food systems, as seen in the case of Zambia. While I do not allude so much to the state regulatory environment, the point is that there is a broader political economy that profoundly shapes the growth and behaviour of supermarkets in Sub-Saharan Africa as seen in South Africa’s role in the Southern African region since the South African supermarket, Shoprite, is the dominant player.

In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, there is similar evidence that the spread of supermarkets is not the ‘natural course of things’. The removal of trade sanctions against South African companies happened to coincide with liberalization drives in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus from the mid-1990s – the inappropriately named ‘second wave’ – there was massive investment in African countries north of the Limpopo in Southern Africa. Indeed, as I mention later in the thesis, Zambia was seen as the main testing-ground for South African operations outside the country and has often been termed ‘South Africa’s doll-house’ (see Saunders, 2008). Between

1994 and 2004, South Africa had become one of the top investors in Africa, often replacing formally European companies that had been tied to the colonial state (Games, 2004:12). In 2001 alone, South Africa was listed as the second biggest investor in the Southern African Development Community region with investment of R14.8 billion, (the next highest country investor was the UK at R3.98 billion), with multi-state deals leading at R27 billion (Games, 2004:19). While the level of investment did not always stay that high, South Africa remains among the biggest trading partners of many African countries, but the trade balance remains skewed in South Africa's favour in almost all instances (Games, 2004:20).

Power is seen to have shifted to the South African retailer and other businesses in many African countries not just because these firms grew too large for the already saturated South African market as is often assumed (see Mather, 2008). Miller (2004, 2005, 2008), Simon, (1998:6) and Saunders (2008) suggest that the spread of capital across South Africa's borders on the continent was an extension of the apartheid project where white-owned agribusiness firms and retailers looked for cheap labour and 'easy' land access in other African countries. Bond (2004), in another vein, argues that the dominance of South Africa in the region has 'subimperialist' overtones and had to do with neoliberal discourses of accumulation in the 'new South Africa's government'. Third, the spread of South African retail was bolstered and driven by tax holidays in investment hungry countries, and by concessions for loan repayments back home so that South Africa could pursue a path of economic development through its Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy. In other words, many countries not just in Southern Africa, had actively invited retail investment by offering tax holidays and subsidies on leased land for a limited time in the mid-late 1990s (see Wilkinson, 2008), and states are often still keen to do so because supermarkets represent modernisation (Kenny and Mather, 2008:1). Finally, the power of South African agribusiness firms and retailers is not an automatic outcome of their geographical spread or their buyer-drivenness over producers and other economic functions along a value chain. Instead, it is because of extended apartheid policies that impacted on labour sourcing in countries where the supermarket expanded into as well as preferential financial arrangements from the South African Reserve Bank for companies sourcing labour and supply chain commodities from South Africa. Atkins and Terry (1998:140) explain:

Similar developments have taken pace in Tanzania, where Tanzanian Breweries has been taken over by South African Breweries (SAB). As part of the agreement with the South African Reserve Bank to release funds for the takeover, the new company has had to use as many South African raw materials as possible [and thus one] main benefactor of this policy is the South African sugar industry which supplies refined sugar.

In sum, in these two cases, the UK and South Africa, we can see that capital expansion of retail does not happen naturally or independently. In the first case, the eventual dominance of supermarkets in the UK and North America is the result of deliberate economic policy shifts and a supportive regulatory environment. In the second, the dominance of the South African supermarket chain in Sub-Saharan Africa is not because Africa is the last frontier to be overcome by the ‘supermarket revolution’. Instead, it is because of regional political economy changes that drove and fostered the expansion of agribusiness and retail power. Indeed this is not to say that global restructuring of trade had nothing to do with the consolidation of firms and spread of capital. Quite clearly these global processes played out in the domestic and regional political economy as other authors have noted (see Bates, 2008; Daviron, 2008; Mather, 2008; Gibbon, 2008; Ndulu, 2008). However, at another level, as in the cases highlighted above, one must see regional and domestic political economy influences as central to transitions in domestic food systems in Africa, and these influences must allow one to challenge the assumptions of the supermarket revolution. Similar reasoning challenges the assumption that supermarkets are increasingly dominant in Sub-Saharan Africa because they replace and progressively cause the demise of ‘traditional’ segments of the urban food system in Africa.

(b) It is not just regulatory support for supermarkets that have spurred their growth, it is also the regulatory policy environment that inhibits, or encourages the ‘informal’ economy. While much of the evidence for this assertion relates to the empirical material presented later, the first part of the story, as seen in the literature, demonstrates that in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Lusaka, Zambia, there is evidence of institutional support for the protection of so-called informal or traditional food markets.

Tranberg-Hansen (1997, 2000, 2004) notes that the building of Lusaka's three largest 'public' markets was funded internationally just after independence in 1964. The so-called 'ultra-modern market' was funded in the 1990s by the Israeli government and became the site of the Soweto Market, replacing a central open area known by traders as Soweto. What made the market 'modern', and increasingly formalized, was primarily the built-up infrastructure that would house hundreds of market stalls: an indoor space, built-up and lockable trading 'booths', access to water in the market (albeit limited), and market roads and road enclosures where market sales could be conducted efficiently. In the late 1990s, Lusaka markets received funding from the European Development Fund to upgrade their infrastructure and market facilities. Part of the municipal response to this was the demarcation of a bus station near the trading area, which was designed to 'bring in the market'. This represents concrete recognition of the importance of the central markets for urban residents (and town planning), and this early effort at investing demonstrates the escalating significance of local food economies to authorities. As my empirical research shows later, in 2007, a formally regulated Markets and Bus Station Act was instituted, which specifically addresses issues of management and representation in informal markets and transport networks, and places the control of markets and bus stations under management boards. This Act is the basis for the discussion of the changes in Lusaka's food system as it relates to the urban markets. Also, as is evident in this section, and as will be made increasingly clear in subsequent chapters, the term informal is increasingly becoming obsolete because of how these urban markets are either being regulated or how urban traders are being incorporated into more formalised economic linkages with agribusiness firms and small-scale farmers. For this reason, in the rest of this thesis what has been termed 'informal' markets are now termed 'urban markets' except where I cite a specific perception of markets as informal in the literature.

To conclude this supermarkets section, it is not only that African economies or economies in the global south provide a 'fit' for the advancement of supermarkets because of their liberal economic policies or the aspirations of the urban middle-class consumer, that Africa is the last frontier to which retail investment is attracted, or even that as African economies progress, 'informal/traditional' modes of food provisioning eventually give way to 'formal/sophisticated'

modes of retail. Instead, where all these processes are evident, they happen on the basis of (a) institutional economic policy reforms and (b) regional political economy changes in developing countries. The perceived tendency for supermarkets and agribusiness firms to dominate African economies is similarly dominant in the academic literature. This literature increasingly guides/supports policy decisions and recommendations, particularly in donor-led initiatives to link farmers to high value supermarket chains in African countries. However, as this section argues, the assumptions of the supermarket revolution as positioned in the literature must be challenged.

Localising food networks

While the last three sections focused on literature that explored the trends of globalised agribusiness, I turn briefly to a body of work that deliberately adopts an alternative view to scholarship on globalised economic processes. The literature on local or alternative food networks²⁰ attempts to look beyond processes of globalisation, ‘redeem’ some of the features of ‘pre-globalised’ food networks and practically reclaim food systems so that they are, for instance, local, purist, organic, rain-fed, community-based, or in short alternative to ‘conventional’ mass-produced, technologically intensive and geographically global food networks. While this activist or policy driven shift has recently become a formal (or institutionalised) feature in the UK and North America, there are important caveats that are important for the focus on urban food systems in Africa in this thesis.

The interest in alternative food networks has emerged ‘in part a consequence of consumer reactions to a range of environmental, ethical and health concerns which are associated with ‘conventional’ food supply systems’ (Maye and Ilbery, 2007:149). According to food geographers, industrialised agrifood system fail to secure environmental sustainability, transparency in terms of production, food safety or socially responsible sourcing methods

²⁰ see Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2002; McCarthy, 2006; Maye et al, 2007; Trauger, 2007; Holloway et al, 2007; Maye and Ilbery, 2007; Goodman and Goodman, 2007; Torjusen, 2008

(Ghezán, *et al.*, 2002; Du Toit, 2001; Campbell and Coombes, 1999; Doel, 1996). As a result, the turn to the 'local' in the literature, which is also mirrored in European and North American agricultural policy, aims to promote lagging rural regions in the north, and move toward a more 'reflexive politics' of food that is 'socially just'. DuPuis and Goodman (2005:359) note that in 'Europe, localization has become integral to a new E.U. system of devolved rural governance to enhance rural livelihoods and preserve European heritage'. But some authors suggest that it is not just an implied shift, but instead that food system localization is a fundamentally 'political' strategy of alternative agrifood movements in Europe and the United States whereby a class of consumers ultimately drive food reform and 'save the food system' (Allen and Hinrichs, 2007:255).

The research, with social activism undertones, has often been associated with elitist class politics and is fundamentally exclusionary, and scholars in the sub-field of Critical Geography (see Campling and Bernstein, 2006; Berg, 2004) take task with the romanticism of this work and call for an understanding of local food systems that 'put localist actions on a better political footing, one that can contribute to a more democratic local food politics' by placing 'the local food system debate into the larger debate over devolutionist forms of governance (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005: 360, 356).²¹ As Dupuis and Goodman go on to argue, the (re)turn to the local

does not address the political driving forces behind the reconfiguration of space and scale or the new forms of commodification of territoriality. The local as an arena of political-economic struggle and socially constructed scale of accumulation remains an opaque category, conceptually and empirically, a veritable black box (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005:364).

Although DuPuis and Goodman's work relates to northern contexts, the 'arena of the local' bears on our thinking of urban food systems in Africa. While food systems in urban areas in African countries are intricately linked to processes of globalised economic change, these spaces are also arena of 'political-economic struggle', and this 'struggle' or contestation provides insight into

²¹ Also see Bernstein and Campling (2006a), Abrahams (2007a) and Binns et al, (2007).

localised sets of practises (Abrahams, 2007). While the precise insights from the localisation literature are different to what food system might mean in urban Africa, the idea of local or contextual embeddedness in this literature helps us understand how the political and social imperatives of the 'local' profoundly influence food systems.

This is important for the purposes of this thesis because it is possible to see how institutionally and locally supported production and consumption systems have led to a sustained food economy that exists in a global context with local values (Allen and Hinrichs, 2007:255). I draw on this work because it provides a useful vocabulary to examine 'localised' food systems in Zambia. Although the rest of the thesis does not use the concept of embeddedness, localised food systems are used to represent the political and social imperative that arise from actors, institutions and historical factors in the context, which shape the food system.

Conclusions

This chapter began by reviewing the literature on how food in Africa (or urban agricultural systems) has been understood over time, and then discussed the shift from state-controlled food systems to liberalised economies after structural adjustment programmes. It traced the literature on food and agricultural systems in African countries post-independence where scholars focused on newly national marketing boards, the political and social imperatives of African states, and the impacts on the food systems because of increasing debt and inefficient bureaucratic structures. Social historians who reviewed food systems during the 1980s argued that understanding the multifaceted nature of African urban food systems relied on an interdisciplinary and contextual approach. It then went on to concentrate on the literature on the spread of supermarkets in Sub-Saharan Africa and the perceived drivers of this process. This section formed the bulk of this review since it is the most dominant conception, in the literature, which seeks to account for the changes in African economies, and to project a growth path for African economies along the lines of supermarket dominance. Finally, I briefly highlighted a body of work that is concerned with re-localising food systems. Although the focus on localisation reflected a particular moment in

European and British (rural) agricultural policy and greater interest in issues of consumption, there are important themes that emerge from this literature that point to how the trend toward localisation that appears to be growing.

This chapter also demonstrates that there is no single approach to the study of food systems in Africa, which relates in part to the fact that the food system is so multifaceted, and in part to the perspectives in different disciplines. Work on informal markets for instance, has either tended to concentrate on (1) more anthropological elements of African urban food systems particularly in the work on social networks of interaction, or (2) urban informal food systems in Africa as survivalist or emerging as a coping mechanism in the face of other economic pressures. As such, the body of work on informal markets tends to exceptionalise African economies or, as Leys (1994) suggests, romanticise the economic interactions produced by poverty and food insecurity. Through the case of Zambia's food system, Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate how examining the urban (informal) economy and processes of informalisation meaningfully contributes to our understanding of agrifood systems in Africa.

Work on how agribusiness firms have profoundly transformed food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, in the past five years has become less disciplinary bound. Instead, because the approach emerges from a broader conception of how economies transition, particularly in this 'phase of globalisation', the changes in food economies in the south have become an important consideration. This chapter points to the inherent normativeness of the approach as seen in the way it asserts the dominance of supermarkets, and agribusiness firms and inadvertently overlooks the agency of non-firm institutions that may influence economic interaction in that context (to recall the GPN approach mentioned in Chapter 1). The factors that influence the power of supermarkets presented here tempers the idea that high value chains linked to supermarkets are themselves the panacea for economic development in African countries. Instead, they place the importance of supermarkets and high value chains linked to agribusiness in perspective, detailing the importance of the domestic political economy and, within that context, the role of supermarkets in the urban food system. Where the literature is weak when it comes to presenting

the domestic political economy environment that shapes urban food systems since there is an overemphasis on the power of supermarkets, this section urges the necessary emphasis on historical political economy factors, other institutions, or the governing role of those institutions in shaping African food systems. Where the literature fails to show how the power of supermarkets is contingent upon domestic and regional economic policy regulations, and institutional change of urban markets, the subsequent chapters of the thesis take on this challenge.

Finally, the work on localisation adds to our conceptual toolbox by highlighting ways in which there may be other imperatives in the food system that are not entirely tied to globalised economic interaction. This work provides us with a framework of drawing out those elements of the food system that may relate to other political or social agenda that influence food system such as nurturing the domestic economy, or developing productive linkages between small-scale farmers and markets. These imperatives also point to other sites of power in the food system, and challenge the idea of a single trajectory of growth in food economies.

More ‘material’ conclusions from this literature review point to the ‘makeup’ of food systems in Africa. From the discussion in the chapter we can conclude that food systems in Africa:

- Are rooted in the domestic political economy context;
- Incorporate elements of informality and formality;
- Are the result of economic restructuring;
- Are also the result of domestic political economy transitions and regional economic processes;
- Embody a number of priorities – developmental, political and economic; and
- Comprise multiple sites of power – urban markets and non-firm institutions.

I am aware that drawing out these characteristics, in an attempt to get beyond the apparent dualism in the literature(s), risks generalising or essentialising economic interaction in different

countries on the continent to this framework. As Africanist scholars, note, drawing on postcolonialist perspectives, it is important to include literature that is not conventionally associated with certain places, and not to privilege a reading of African political or economic spaces, for instance, that is linked to discourses of either development or neoliberalism and the pathways inherent in these discourses (see Abrahamsen, 2003:191; Power, 2003:126).

If we are to construct a conceptual framework on food systems in Africa, therefore, we need to make use of multiple conceptual lenses that will allow an empirical study that is relatively unhindered by these discursive categories, or at the very least, aware of them. The various bodies of work reviewed in this chapter, and the essential features of food systems in Africa alluded to above, contribute to a conceptual framework for the rest of the thesis. It also allows us to see food systems in Africa as situated or located in domestic political economies and profoundly influenced by processes of change at localised and regional scales. In sum, the cumulative conceptual foundation drawn out in this chapter frames the empirical examination in the rest of the thesis and gives us a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary ‘toolbox’ that informs the analysis of the empirical insights.

The crucial next step, as outlined in this literature review chapter is therefore to look at (1) agrarian transformation and agricultural marketing post-independence in African countries; (2) the process and effect of neoliberal reforms and the liberalisation of the economy – which includes the spread of (South African) agribusiness firms and supermarkets; and (3) the informal economy. This is the focus of the next chapter. It is also appropriate here to recall some of the methodological considerations that have framed the empirical examination as set out in the next three chapters.

Restating the methodological considerations

Drawing on the conclusion in this literature review chapter – that food systems in Africa can be seen as situated or located in a domestic political economy context and influenced by various

domestic and regional processes – this final section links the conclusion to the three research claims stated earlier in the thesis, and briefly recalls the methods I have used to acquire the kind of information that would be necessary in supporting these claims.

Now that we have a basis in the literature/grounded theory to think about African food systems as situated in a domestic political economy context and influenced by various domestic processes, and we see the benefit of employing a systems approach, we are able to examine:

- 1) The pathways/trajectories of growth in Zambia's food system and the ongoing and interconnected process of change in the system that subsequently reworks it;
- 2) Multiple sites of power in the food system, particularly those that would be ignored in more normalising agrifood research approaches; and
- 3) Intersecting governances in the agrifood system and those factors in the domestic political economy that influence the power of agribusiness institutions and supermarkets.

On the first point, in Chapter 4, I go about contextualising these broader concepts to Zambia. To do so, I examine the different pathways of growth, or trajectories, in Zambia's political economy as it relates to the agrifood system, and the interconnected aspects that have influenced and continue to influence Zambia's food system. I look more closely at the historical context using a combination of methods such as archival work, secondary reading, and interviews as appropriate. As highlighted in the Introduction, since I draw on inductive and qualitative epistemological traditions, the analysis in this chapter both draws on and contributes to a construction of the context (as set out by content analysis methodology). In addition to the literature reviewed in this chapter, the rationale for this empirical chapter is drawn from the work of Jane Guyer, Deborah Bryceson and Gillian Hart in their understanding of (1) ongoing and interconnected processes of change that occur in African economies; (2) the underlined importance of seeing economic interaction and processes of change as rooted in the domestic political economy; and (3) multiples sites of power, or the balance of power, that influence(s) economic interaction.

On the second point, Chapter 5 argues that there multiple sites of power in the food system, and as such, the chapter examines two important institutions in Zambia's food system, the Zambian National Farmers' Union and the Lusaka City Market, which would typically fall out of site in a more conventional value chains approach. As I point out in this chapter, the rationale of this chapter is to directly address the assumption that supermarkets and agribusiness firms fundamentally transform (or even revolutionise) food economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since the aim is not to quantitatively measure the 'impact' of these institutions in the food system, the methodological approach infers the importance of these institutions based on their function in the food system (as an intermediary institution in the case of the ZNFU and as an accessible market for small-scale farmers and urban consumers in the case of the informal market). The empirical evidence presented here is based on narrative interviews and secondary material, where possible.

On the final point, Chapter 6 is concerned with how the control or governance of supermarkets and agribusiness firms is significantly tempered or circumscribed by the governing behaviour of other institutions and by rationalisations that are fundamental to Zambia's political economy.

Roadmap

The previous chapter discussed the various ways agricultural and food systems have been written about, roughly, over the past forty years, and how food systems in Africa, particularly, have been understood. The next chapter starts out by briefly outlining why it is important to focus on the historical context, using important texts on African food supply systems as a rationale. It then emphasises various aspects of Zambia's recent history that influence the agrifood system by drawing on various bodies of academic scholarship, and, where appropriate, it links these historical influences to recent changes in present day food system. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the first research question: In what ways is the food system influenced by political economy factors?

CHAPTER 4: ZAMBIA'S AGRIFOOD

CONTEXT: KEY INFLUENCES IN ZAMBIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

Introduction

In physics, when an object is moving, and several forces act on that object, the combined effect of those forces results in a shift of that object's direction or pathway. The resultant direction is invariably altered, because it is the cumulative outcome of different influencing forces. But this is not physics, the forces are not always external, and the Zambian food system includes various actors and institutions that have a significant part to play in shaping it and influencing its direction. In this Chapter, I examine the different factors that have influenced, and continue to influence, Zambia's food system and have also resulted in a particular trajectory. In other words, in addressing the complexity of Zambia's food system, with its many juxtapositions, this chapter aims to highlight key influences in Zambia's recent past and in some instances, reflect on how these influences intersect to result in the food system we see today. The rationale for this chapter is drawn from Gillian Hart's (2002:13) use of the phrase 'multiple trajectories', in political geography²², to articulate multiple sites of power that shape and influence a given 'object of study'. Hart's conception sits comfortably alongside the 'systems approach' because it incorporates notions of interconnectedness and continuity, which is precisely the motivation of this chapter. Hart's definition of trajectories 'convey[s] the ongoing processes through which sets of power-laden practices in the multiple, interconnected arena of everyday life at difference spatial scales constantly rework places and identities' (Hart, 2002:13). Although this chapter does not look at 'places' or 'identities', the (often implicit) idea of trajectory or is taken to mean the ongoing, interconnected, political practises and processes that constantly rework Zambia's food system and the broader political economy that shapes the food system.

²² Hart examines how globalisation is destabilised because there are multiple sites of power at work locally that push development trajectories into multiple, and unexpected directions.

I am aware that taking this approach risks suggesting that there is a scientific way of ‘measuring’ these influences or a resultant ‘direction’. Ferguson (1999:x) accurately captures the sense of unease present when researchers attempt to map a neat story line of a set of occurrences from a range of different approaches.

More theoretically, we might well be suspicious of criticisms of inevitable linear teleologies and progressive successions of epochs that proceed by constructing their own inevitable linear teleologies and successions of epochs...But it remains true that something has happened in recent years...the “rolling back” of the state, the abandonment of the goal of industrialization, the commitment to what are euphemistically called “market forces” and “private enterprises,” and the shattering of expectations for economic convergence with the West, all come together to create a very real end...of at least the grander versions of the development project in Africa (Ferguson, 1999: 247).

This is especially poignant for this thesis given the varied conceptual approaches used over time by researchers discussed in Chapter 3. Yet, as Ferguson continues, there are particular aspects in Africa’s recent history that tell a story of how change has happened in many countries on the continent. While Ferguson later introduces the ‘development project’ in Zambia, his conclusion resonates in work on Zambia’s food system.²³ There are particular changes in Zambia’s food system that can be traced to definite aspects, or as Ferguson puts it ‘start point[s] of a particular trajectory’ in its recent past (p247).

In the Introduction, I drew attention to research by Africanist scholars working in the 1980s and 90s on urban food systems. It bears reiterating relevant points here to frame the approach in this chapter. *Feeding African Cities* by Jane Guyer (1983) and *Liberalizing Tanzania’s Food Trade* by Deborah Fahy Bryceson (1993) outline important considerations for framing research on

²³ Ferguson also makes the important point that the story of economic growth in Africa cannot be told without understanding the larger project of development that influenced countries in the south.

urban food supply systems in Africa. I base the discussion of Zambia's historical context, as it relates to food systems, by drawing on two distilled reflections from these texts. Bryceson's work places value on the political economy and the balance of power that together influence economic interaction in urban food systems (Bryceson, 1993). Guyer advocates an interdisciplinary approach which will 'provide a coherent set of lenses that can reconstruct a knowledge base around urban food systems' (Guyer, 1987:5).

Given the above caveats, and the reiterated approach, how do we 'make sense' of Zambia's food system, with its many facets and juxtapositions? And how do we explain in which ways the food system is influenced by the political economy context? Earlier descriptions of Zambia's food system conveyed the stratified food systems made up of a large proportion of smallholders, a small, but growing number of medium-scale (emerging) farmers, and commercial farmers who are linked to larger economies of scale and integrated agribusiness firms. Besides just 'making sense' of the food system, there are also useful insights to be gained from understanding the food system and the influences at different scales. For instance, one of the biggest challenges that face the agricultural sector in Zambia is supporting and growing the food system at all levels. Tackling this challenge requires us to understand the sum of factors that impact Zambia's food system, and, in turn, the historical, regional and political economy context. It also requires us to recognize that these influencing factors do not operate in isolation, or within a vacuum.

The rest of this chapter discusses a few of these influencing factors, paying particular attention to how they interplay. The purpose is not to capture every aspect of influence or site of power, but rather to highlight important considerations relevant to the study. What this chapter does is argue that Zambia's food system looks, acts and grows as it does today because particular contextual factors influence it. More than just Ferguson's idea of 'events' or 'historical moments', this chapter links the reviewed historical and contextual factors to 'rationalisations' that are at work in the food system.

The first section discusses the ideological projects of colonialism and the Zambian variant of the post-colony – Zambianisation – which included the nationalisation of agriculture and marketing boards, and state control on all aspects of food supply through providing input and retail subsidies post-independence. The second section then examines the effects of globalisation and economic reforms. Neoliberal reforms are seen to significantly influence food systems in Zambia, and even more given that the government continues to intermittently control the food system. Another important aspect of Zambia's food system is the effect of the international agricultural research agenda or the 'globalisation of knowledge', particularly in maize production, discussed in the third section. The final section captures the pivotal role of a South African enterprise in Zambia's food economy. Consequently, Zambia's openness to foreign investment has resulted in the dominance of South Africa in the Zambian economy, but also interesting growth pathways in Zambia's economy. The fourth section has to do with the changes in urban informal as they pertain to Zambia's food (supply) system.

The chapter concludes that the system seems to hold together through certain tacit rationalizations that are still at work today. In sum, the chapter aims to present some of the complexity in Zambia's agrifood system so that the political economy context is seen to substantively contribute to the present day food system in Africa. The chapter relies on secondary and tertiary data from interdisciplinary sources, and independent archival research and interviews.

The Zambian agricultural narrative

Zambia, formally Northern Rhodesia, gained independence in 1964 from colonial rule and marked this liberty by changing its name. Even though the name had changed, the legacies of the colonial state were still keenly felt in Zambia, most notably in the agricultural community. Colonial rule created a very distinctive feature in Northern Rhodesian agriculture, as it did in many other countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. It divided agriculture into a wealthy white settler system on the one hand, and a class of African peasant farmers on the other (see

Bernstein et al., 1992).²⁴ Bryceson (2009) notes that peasant agriculture was annexed because of forced residential and poll taxation. This, she argues

forced rural producers to earn cash for tax payment, generating the foundations for the continent's agricultural export economy based on the beverage crops of coffee, cocoa, and tea and several food and fibre crops including peanuts, cashew nuts, tobacco, sugar, and cotton (Bryceson, 2009:1).

During the colonial period, African smallholders were also a pivotal part of the domestic food market. Despite trying to restrict Black African participation in the maize trade, smallholders contributed significantly to domestic food markets even though they were not paid equally for their grain. The maize trade was not only tied to export, but was used to supply the growing urban settlements along the line of rail in Northern Rhodesia (McCann, 2005; Guyer, 1987). Colonial authorities also used a wealthy, indigenous but opportunistic land-owning class to benefit settler agriculture (Bates, 1976, 1981).

In Zambia, after independence, this system of agriculture continued to dominate mainly because of the now settler-run 'Commercial Farmers' Bureau' (CFB), an association to protect and advance the interests of white commercial agriculture, which administered exports. Good (1988) shows that members of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, who were motivated by 'nationalistic politics and economics' and involved in large-scale farming, urged the newly independent government to intervene in the settler-dominated agricultural market (Good, 1988:201). In response to this pressure, in 1971 the newly independent Zambian state declared that the CFB would also include commercial African farmers, and would now be called the 'Multiracial Commercial Farmers' Bureau'. This change did not lead to white commercial farm dispossession as it did in other African countries. The Zambian government initiated this non-threatening move in part because it still stood to benefit from white commercial agriculture, and wanted to send a

²⁴ Bernstein's introduction in this edited collection also makes reference to literature on the indigenous elite class who bridged this divide.

clear signal that white commercial farmers would not be dispossessed of their land.²⁵ Many export farmers did leave, but the maize farmers and grain millers who stayed continue to play a pivotal role in Zambia's commercial agriculture sector, which now incorporated a large percentage of smallholders.

Another body called the *Zambian Farmers' Union* was initiated entirely by highly politicised groups of 'peasant' smallholders who could produce large enough quantities of grain for domestic trade. Over two thirds of the agricultural population at that stage were small-scale farmers. While the *Multiracial CFB* was spun as a way to peacefully integrate black and white commercial agriculture in the national economy, the highly politicized *Zambian Farmers' Union* was promoted as a nationalizing mechanism. Bryceson explains that

peasant cash crop producers provided the political force behind the national independence movements that swept the African continent in the 1950s and formed the foundation for the economies of the newly independent countries that came into being in the 1960s (Bryceson, 2009:1).

Thus, in the *Zambian* case, both the political elite African farmers and the large percentage of peasant agricultural groups were seen to have motivated initial changes in *Zambian* agricultural. These changes were influenced ultimately by then President Kenneth Kaunda's ideal for 'Zambianisation', as I go on to discuss further.

Nationalism and its influence on agriculture

Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's first president, stirred his people with the political ideals of taking back what was lost and redeeming the glory of the nation through the ideal of 'Zambianisation', which was the more emotive term used to encapsulate nationalization through 'taking back'

²⁵ In the literature this form of socialism is called Fabianism. It is argued to be the ideology responsible for post-independence revolution through peaceful means while gradually becoming market-driven. Fabianism captured many of the returning *Zambian* political elite who had complete higher education in Europe at the time when Fabianism was the leading influence (See Ndulu et al, 2008 for a detailed discussion on this argument).

agriculture, and other commercial enterprise such as mining. He encouraged the mostly rural population to return to the land, which was also politically strategic for Kaunda because it guaranteed a strong rural support base among the large proportion of small-scale farmers, and it also rationalized the control of public enterprises, not unlike other newly independent African states.

Zambianisation meant that the government controlled agricultural marketing boards, effectively monopolizing industry through price controls and subsidies for commercial agricultural trade. Increased agricultural output of staples, during Kaunda's first term in office, were collected through cooperatives and sold through the National Agricultural Marketing Board (Namboard). National policies favoured small-scale farmers through pan-territorial pricing, the cooperative buying scheme through Namboard even in remote areas, and input subsidies (Dorosh et al. 2009). Also, where colonial marketing boards (also using maize from African smallholders) aimed to supply maize grain to local and regional markets to feed the growing mining towns, Zambianising the line of rail in urban food supply became increasingly important (Bryceson, 1983; Bates 1991). In other words it was not only important for government to control production and trade, but also food provisioning.

By the mid 1980s the largest grain millers were also nationalized to ensure control on food prices; national policies also subsidized the price of maize to urban consumers. The Zambian government thus controlled both domestic exchange of food, imports and exports through Namboard (Dorosh et al., 2009; MSU paper; Haantuba and de Graf, 2008; Jayne, 2008; Wood, 1985). The gains of this period were short-lived, however. The next major occurrence that influenced the trajectory of agrarian change in Africa was the Sahelian famine in the 1970s. Wide scale drought, led ultimately to the death of hundreds of thousands of people in the Sahel belt of countries. This crisis reshaped aid interventions in rural development already existing in African countries to a focus on agricultural innovation and the modernization of African agriculture to meet environmental challenges.

The globalization of knowledge and its influence on agriculture

As a result of broader environmental challenges in the region, the reshaping of donor development intervention, and changes in the global financial architecture, Zambia's agricultural narrative includes technological innovation in agriculture. Zambia's Green Revolution, and the related Integrated Rural Development Program, on the surface resulted in higher yields and increased livelihoods security for the rural population, but it also caused social inequality and environmental damage. Smith (2005:649) argues that this was not simply the case of increasing yield or better livelihoods or uneven social consequences and environmental risks for small-scale farmers. Instead, agricultural systems in Africa, he argues, are part of a much larger developmental project where international agencies and research centres (as part of competitive national innovation systems) aimed to exert continued control through the transfer of existing technological innovation and development (Smith, 2005:647). This 'globalization of knowledge' (Smith, 2005:649) signalled an era of 'modernization' and 'progress' in Zambia and other countries in Africa and Asia. For almost the first fifteen years of independence, many of these countries were used as testing grounds for new maize varieties by development agencies and international agricultural institutes, and Zambia was seen as the golden example.

McCann (2005) notes that in the late 1970s various international donors aided the Zambian government, through the Mazabuka Maize Research Institute, in developing a variety of maize that was high yielding, and was adapted to local conditions. Howard and Mungoma (1996:1) state that 'for the past 20 years, Zambia has provided a unique laboratory for examining the impact of institutions and organizations on the development and dissemination of maize technology'. The Green Revolution promised higher yielding seed that would support and modernize the country's efforts to 're-agrarianize' rural society (Fenichel and Smith, 1992). Little and Watts (1994:9) recount how, in the 1980s, farming contracts elsewhere in Africa were justified by knowledge services (and funding) provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which was the main instrument for rural development in Africa. The combination of international

donor funding, globalised knowledge through Centres of Excellence, the rural development project in Africa, and re-agrarianisation created a situation where modernization, progress and agrarian transformation through technological means were indelibly linked. And these intersections did not only benefit researchers or agribusiness firms.

Politically in Zambia, rural development through technologies was strategic because it meant that smallholders could benefit from their own 'modern' farming strategies, and earn a place in local or international markets, and their success translated to support for Kaunda's government. Staple grain was most successful, followed by the poultry sector. British scientists together with their South African counterparts in the poultry industry, developed a breed of chicken adapted to the Southern African climate (Ross Breeders, personal communication, 2007).²⁶ Thus, outside of the domestic grain trade, poultry became the single largest agricultural enterprise, with an all important export supply chain to Zaire (the DRC). The Zambian government's Rural Poultry Development Scheme (which ended a few years later) provided extension services for the poultry industry, and Israeli technical aid personnel farming supported cooperatives in the Copperbelt region (Lombard and Tweedie, 1972).

Another reason why the yields of agricultural innovation were promising and politically strategic is because it was tied so closely to Zambianisation. Over the next fifteen years, up to 1990, maize production increased by 137 percent and small-scale farmers were producing 80 percent of Zambia's output (McCann, 2005:160). But that success was not sustainable, and even if it were, it was doomed to failure. According to McCann,

Zambia's progressive policy of subsidizing small farmers in areas remote from towns and transportation quickly became the prime target of new liberalizing ideologies sweeping through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The organizations that had generously pushed loans on to Zambia in the 1970s now sought economic reform and made Zambia's maize system a target (McCann, 2005:164-5).

As the next sections go on to show, the Zambian government and its policies were caught between Zambianisation ideals, pleasing the same international donor community that demanded reforms, and aspiring toward modernization or industrializing agriculture (Ferguson, 1999:8).²⁷

Neoliberalism and its influence on agriculture

In the late 1970s and early 80s, Zambia had become the darling child of the international media and a symbol of ‘emerging Africa’. Because of the country’s success in mining, and the modern agricultural system it had developed, it was seen to be a ‘middle-income country’ with

prospects for “full” industrialization and even ultimate admission to the ranks of the “developed world” (Ferguson, 1999:4-6).

But declining copper prices and a slumping global economy resulted in a sharp downturn in Zambian exports that rippled through the economy. The IMF and the World Bank put this down to mismanagement, and the incapacity of the state – a recitation that provided justification for economic reforms in Zambia and elsewhere. The justification was often veiled in statements such as this: ‘Unless economic transformation [is] embraced, the established and debilitating linkage between weak state and backward peasant agriculture would almost certainly continue unabated’ (Good, 1988:203).

Zambia’s economic decline was a sad reversal of the once promising modern Zambian image, argues Ferguson (1999:4). The economic decline nonetheless continued, and coupled with increasing debt during the mid-1980s, Zambia became a prime target for economic reforms. The IMF and the World Bank continued to coerce Zambia to remove state subsidies on agriculture,

²⁶ The literature on this particular point is limited.

²⁷ At present, agricultural research and innovation is carried out by a special unit in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Agricultural Consultative Forum, and a donor-supported partnership between stakeholders in the local and international community on agriculture.

decrease social spending and lessen support for public goods such as marketing boards and state storage facilities (Jayne, 2008; Dorosh et al., 2009; Jayne et al., 1999; Howard and Mungoma, 1996).

Kaunda's government, because of its *Zambianising* ideals and the successes it had already shown in the agricultural sector, on the one hand, and increasing external debt and pressure by the donor community on the other,

had little choice but to yield to the demands made by lenders for measures of “structural adjustment” of the economy [but this was] implemented on an on-again, off-again basis throughout the 1980s by a government that alternated between capitulation and defiance and carried through more consistently since the election of the Chiluba government in 1991 (Ferguson, 1999:9).

Kaunda's government had an understandably unsettled stance on liberalization during the ‘Second Republic’ (Kean and Wood, 1992). Zambia's Fourth National Development Plan (1989-1993), which crossed over the Kaunda and Chiluba regimes, was more favourable to foreign investment in agriculture than the three previously had been because there was support among government officials who stood to benefit from their agricultural enterprises and landholdings (Good, 1988).

There were a few notable examples of the increased openness to neoliberal reforms. South African agribusinesses courted the *Zambian* agricultural community in the hope that they could expand into the newly liberalizing market, and, according to anecdotal evidence, the *Zambian* state retail company approached the South African supermarket chain, Shoprite, to ‘help liberalise state owned supermarkets’ (Personal Communication, Head of Shoprite Africa Operations, Cape Town, January 2007). In the last few years of his rule (1986-1990), Kaunda flitted between liberalizing and protecting local agriculture. This was also related to his last efforts at holding on to power before the election in 1991. To appease and gain support from the

agricultural community who were keen to compete in an open market, and to gain favour from the international development community, he removed state subsidies (from millers) and agricultural inputs. This had an effect on both the agricultural community because input costs could not be met, and urban residents because the cost of food was no longer subsidized, resulting in urban unrest. Another escalating contributor to food protests was evidence that the National Agricultural Maize Board officials pocketed much of the profits from its agricultural marketing enterprise. Food protests quickly escalated into violent riots where eleven people died. Kaunda promptly retracted his early decision to liberalize the food economy, and instead asserted the importance of state control of agriculture (New York Times, 1986). He reinstated subsidies, and made up for the state's financial losses by using funds from public sector development from donors (Chicago Times, 1986). The maize price dropped irredeemably, in 1990, when Kaunda announced another round of agricultural subsidy cuts, this time because of the mismanagement of other funds. The Zambian state was faced with the challenge of increasing food prices, risking further riots or continuing to subsidise farmers and agrifood costs, but lose donor funding.

As a response to Kaunda's inconsistent policy that ultimately increased poverty and hunger, the nation made their voice heard by voting for his political rival in the 1991 elections. From the beginning of Frederick Chiluba's regime in 1991, his government was open to economic liberalization and was praised by the World Bank and IMF for 'embracing' change and finally removing its trade barriers (Brambilla and Porto, 2006:1). In the words of the researchers from the Economist Intelligence Unit, Chiluba's regime 'gave way to an aggressive neoliberal economic strategy that embraced wide-ranging structural adjustment programmes and privatization' (EIU, 2006:5). Zambia reduced its own investment on public goods like state marketing facilities, storage companies and agricultural boards. Namboard disbanded, but the government retained a Food Reserves Agency from Namboard's stock. The Israeli government and later the European Union invested in previously state-owned wet markets, urging markets to commercialise instead of privatizing (Tranberg Hansen, 2004; personal communication, Lusaka Municipality, 2007).

Over the next five years, the state sold off its assets and within a year most of the state-owned enterprises were liberalized. Investment poured into mining, and international interests bought textile and agricultural industries and many of the key processing companies (Brambilla and Porto, 2006; Deininger and Olinto, 2000). The National Import and Export Corporation, which was the state's main retail outlet, was bought in 1995 by the South African supermarket chain Shoprite, and two large, South African-owned private grain milling companies entered the scene. One bought out the National Milling Corporation, and the other was an expansion of South Africa's milling company, Tiger Brands.

Liberalization did not happen after a fixed moment, instead can be described more as a trajectory that set Zambia, as it did other countries, on a particular course. First, in Zambia, the liberalisation project was never 'completed'. It is still on-going even though Kaunda's era, with its stop-and-go revolution (as Howard and Mungoma (1996) term it) is long since passed. And even though maize was one of the last industries to be liberalized in Zambia (McCann, 2005), it still remains a highly political crop. The Zambian government continues to intermittently control the maize industry. For instance, during high yield harvests, it enforces tighter control on imports and exports, and in lean seasons, it releases control to the private sector to 'lobby' for importing agricultural inputs (Dorosh et al., 2009; Jayne et al., 1999). Most recently (2008) its tussle with the Zambian National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) about the Food Reserves' Agency is telling.

The government recently announced that in order to stimulate the private sector and encourage small-scale farmers to sell to high value chains, it would dramatically reduce the amount it would buy for the Foods' Reserve. This drastic change was vehemently opposed by the National Farmers' Union. According to the union, a reduction in state purchasing would lead to exploitative selling arrangements with unscrupulous traders and a massive grain glut. Instead, the ZNFU lobby urged the state to reduce its support for agriculture in tandem with the gradual growth of the agribusiness sector. Despite this, the agricultural ministry went ahead with its decision based on alleged 'cooked minutes' of state-private sector consultative meeting (ZNFU Press Release, December 2008). The state also faces continual critique by the ZNFU for its

prolonged monopoly on the fertilizer industry and its unsustainable commitment to subsidise fertilizer inputs.

Interestingly, one would expect the ZNFU, which is a private business association, to back the state's neoliberal agenda; instead, it recognizes the developmental imperative of the state to nurture the economy and not liberalise it too quickly or drop barriers too far. Although I discuss this further in Chapter 6, it is important to demonstrate persistent elements of Zambia's food system here. This quote from my research in 2007 reflects the agribusiness community's ongoing frustration with the Zambian state's 'on-again, off-again' liberalization strategy, yet at the same time it reveals the compulsion to nurture the emerging Zambian agricultural economy. I use the excerpt to round this section off and to capture the characteristic sense of 'restlessness' in Zambia's food system that is suspended between liberalizing and protecting local agribusiness, much like Kaunda's 'stop-and-go' agricultural revolution.

Now we're running into a slight problem; the millers here are often tempted to do bran exports, they do export maize bran and wheat bran to the neighbouring countries ...and end up creating a huge shortage in the country, which is what we're going through right now. We cannot find maize bran for love or money. ...In a free market system, if those guys can sell their products for a better price outside the borders, then we as local users should be paying that price... Although I'd like the bran export to stop, it's a two-edged sword, because I also want there to be a free market system. (Interview, Head of Tiger Animal Feeds Zambia, August 2007).

The characteristic sense of restlessness of the agrifood industry in Zambia seems to emerge from conflicting national and neoliberal 'rationalisations', both of which constitute the context and motivate certain viewpoints and activities. Even though these two processes are distinct, in the agrifood system, one can understand the difficulty of separating them out. In Zambia, the 'stop-and-go revolution', intermittent price controls and the characteristic challenges that are faced by

newly liberalising economies suggest that we need a revised approach. For the most part, accounts of agrarian change in Africa assume a divide between the nationalising and liberalising processes, and as such failures in economic development are attributed to continued state ‘interference’ (see Bates, 2008:175). As a result, certain theorists do suggest that the kind of restlessness depicted in this chapter represents the ‘growing pains’ of an economy in transition from state to free market governance (see Collier and O’Connell, 2008:76). That economic growth is still embedded in a state-governed political context, is according to some, precisely at the heart of conflict in urban Africa (see Collier, 2008:1).

The case of Zambia’s food system shows that ‘embeddedness’ is by no means a simple or neat idea. Indeed some researchers critique the idea of embeddedness, arguing that if ‘the economic’ is embedded in ‘the local’ (political or social) that these are two distinctive wholes (Swyngedouw, 2004:25; Gibson-Graham, 2002:29). Instead, the constant struggle, or tug-of-war if you like, between nationalising and neoliberalising priorities must allow us to think of the context as a flexible space that is constantly negotiated and shifting, and not as a fixed entity upon which external economies are embedded. For the purposes of this chapter, it is useful to draw out the way these distinct priorities together constitute and shape the Zambian context wherein the agrifood system exists. The next section builds on the discussion of the neoliberal shift in Zambia, and relates it to a third more geographical aspect that influences Zambia's food system.

South Africa’s role in the Southern African region and agribusiness investment

As noted in the previous chapter, the expansion of South African agribusiness is one of the most visible effects of market liberalization on food economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Zambia is the biggest recipient of South African foreign investment in agribusiness. Fortuitously for South Africa, Zambia’s ‘full’ liberalization during Chiluba’s reign, which roughly coincided with the

end of Apartheid in 1994, resulted in 'new respectability on the region's policies and projects, catapulting South Africa from pariah to regional liberator' (Miller, 2008:1). Based on South Africa's dominance in the region, mentioned earlier in the thesis, this section reiterates the role of South Africa in Zambia's food system, and closes with recent evidence that Zambia is increasingly guarded against this dominance.

South Africa is the largest foreign investor in the rest of Southern Africa because of its strong economic position in the region (South African State of the Nation Report, 2006). The Zambian capital, Lusaka, is 'seen by many South African businesses as a typical regional city [and] a regional testing ground of sorts...[sometimes termed] South Africa's doll-house' (Saunders, 2008:1) – a quote I alluded to earlier. South African business expansion usually begins with Zambia; companies test-ran their capital expansion on Zambia, and then expanded elsewhere. This was most evident in the food retailing industry (ibid). But there continue to be mixed feelings about South Africa's role in the region, which also relate to Zambia's priority to nationalise and further develop itself into a neoliberal economy.

On the one hand, South Africa is seen as a key part of the strategy for strengthening regional integration in globalised agricultural trade. This is important to build an economically strong and competitive regional community. Former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, encouraged countries in the region to deepen, and often fast-track, their neoliberal policies to attract foreign investment (Saunders, 2008). He couched this blatantly pro-market view in the ideology of the African Renaissance, and this sat well with other newly liberalising African countries. It produced a sense of regional camaraderie: 'South Africa is a friend, a strategic partner and a stable country for business (Kenyan High Commissioner cited in BDFM, 2008). On the other hand, South African agribusinesses are seen as bullies who are not afraid to exploit economic relations with its neighbours (see Miller, 2008). For instance, much like other countries, the South African (national) Reserve Bank supports South African investment initiatives so long as it contributes to benefiting South African labour. At the same time, South African companies come under vitriolic attack because of its labour policies in the Southern African region (see Miller,

2005a; 2005b; 2008).

In Zambia, the hostility towards South African firms, particularly supermarkets and agribusiness firms has its roots in issues of both foreign ownership and labour. This has taken the form of protests outside stores and scathing press campaigns. The South African supermarket, Shoprite, has come up against intensely negative publicity in the past five years because of policies that favour South African employees in management positions in its Zambian outlets (Miller, 2004, 2005). Antagonism towards the conglomerate has also been directed at sourcing and procurement practices that are partial to South African – not Zambian – suppliers, even when produce is available in the country. Agricultural unions in Lusaka have accused Shoprite of actively excluding local farmers from supply chains (personal communication with CEO of the ZNFU, November, 2007). In response to the criticism levelled against its reluctance to source locally, the supermarket has been at pains to demonstrate examples of its local investment: it has pointed to upgrading assistance provided to the Zambian milk and chicken processing industries, and asserted its commitment to local sourcing by arranging large publicity events through Freshmark, Shoprite's fresh produce procurement wing (personal communication with Shoprite's Director of African Operations, January, 2007). The hostility towards supermarkets, more generally, and escalating incidents of civic and legal contestation of supermarket practices in Africa are surprising given the favourable treatment of supermarkets, and the transformation they generate, in much of the academic literature.

South African agribusiness and retail expansion is successful in Zambia because (1) in the 1990s, Zambia offered preferential tax holidays for investment; and (2) South African businesses had well-established themselves domestically in South Africa. The ability of these companies to take over existing food enterprise was strengthened by an open economy in Zambia. Also, South African agribusinesses were more powerful competitors in the region, and Zambia was considered a safe investment, far enough away from South Africa's borders. The role of South Africa in Africa has received quite scathing criticism from authors who argue that the tendency for South Africa to over dominate (food) trade in the Southern Africa region can best be described as sub-imperialism (Miller, 2008; Kenny and Mather, 2008; Saunders, 2008).

Apart from the South African supermarket Shoprite (see Chapter 6), other agribusiness involvement in Zambia is also fraught with ambiguity, as in the case of Tiger Animal Feeds, discussed below. In Tiger's case, we can see the tension between protecting South African industry and, to use Coe and Hess's (2006) phrase, 'strategically territorialising' in Zambia.

Subsidiary of the South African firm: Tiger Animal Feeds

Tiger Animal Feeds has been operating in Zambia since 1996 (for eleven years at the time of the fieldwork). It is exclusively an animal stock feed manufacturer, and a subsidiary of a South African company. Tiger is part of the Meadow Feeds branch of the South African owned Astral Group of agribusiness companies that split with Tiger Brands South Africa.²⁸ Astral (SA) is a poultry company, with interests in feed companies and other poultry processors across Southern Africa.²⁹

The company has come under criticism in the past for preferentially sourcing South African maize for their feeds, and now ensures that where possible, all its sourcing is local (Personal Communication, Tiger Animal Feeds, Lusaka, August 2007). One of the directors of Tiger, who later verified his statement by showing me company reports, asserted that where possible,

In terms of procurement and sales... we procure all our raw materials locally. The only thing we, and I believe all other stock feed millers bring in is our soya and premixes (the vitamin and mineral packs we use in the feed) because they're not manufactured here in Zambia and are essential. Anything that is produced here that can be used we use here. So

²⁸ The company could not register under the Meadow Feeds brand as it did in our Southern African countries, thus retained the name Tiger. Tiger Brands, the South African company, is fairly influential in the downstream (retail) enterprises of agricultural production particularly bread, and other highly processed foodstuff. The company has of late attempted to rescue itself from a number of price fixing scandals and anti-competitive incidents. Tiger (Z), thus, is at pains to remove itself from Tiger Brands (SA).

²⁹ The company provides stock feed that is already mixed with micronutrients and antibiotics in 25 or 50kg sacks, or in bulk with a minimum weight of 20 tons. They also offer sales and animal nutritional support as well as soil testing and expert assistance.

we do support the local agro industry quite strongly...but if the situation dictates, then we have to adapt, I mean if there's no product, we need to bring it in. Otherwise we buy locally wherever we can, whenever we can, that is definitely our preferred supply network.³⁰

Tiger's sourcing practises are related to remaining locally competitive and escaping negative publicity for sourcing from South Africa. Despite this, there are ongoing allegations that feed inputs (such as bran), available much more cheaply in South Africa, are being smuggled in (personal communication, respondent from the *Zambian National Farmers' Union*, November 2007, Lusaka). Unlike other companies that seem to 'localise' (see Chapter 6), Tiger Animal Feeds appear to vacillate between its territorial 'commitments' in Zambia, and its duty to the South African company. This is particularly important because maize prices in the Southern Africa region are often subject to fluctuations influenced by costs in South Africa. And more expensive (or protected) local prices in Zambia (through bans on imports) means that the company could sell feed to Zambian farmers brought in from South Africa at a fraction of the cost, but they remain constrained by trade barriers. The opposite is also true, Zambian feed exports, such as soya, could be exported competitively, but intermittent national export controls makes the market extremely volatile. This excerpt, from a lengthy interview, gives a sense of the ambiguity that a South African agribusiness manager feels in Zambia, where there are seemingly conflicting priorities in the Zambian context that influence business: protecting the domestic market, liberalising, becoming competitive and developing economically. I include this quote because it captures different rationalisations that are at work in Zambia's food system and thereby points to its complexity.

You've got two choices, you can either lobby government and ask them to close the borders and to stop bran exports, and we [the local poultry industry] do that through the ZNFU [Zambian National Farmers' Union]. ZNFU is still assessing the situation. Will the poultry industry suffer? That's on the one hand, in the poultry industry, it will make things

³⁰ Interview, Tiger Animal Feeds Zambia, Lusaka, July 2007.

more challenging, but you know one has to decide and this is what government has to decide is whether they're going to support a free market system or not. Either one or the other. This half-half, sometimes exports are banned, sometimes there's an import duty, sometimes there isn't, you know it's a mess. ...

We've had exactly the same problem with the soya right now. Soya, the guys [Zambian soya producers] could export their soya, let's say for argument sake, for \$360 a ton, and then government brought in a ban on soya exports, the price went from 360 to 260 because there was too much soya, but you've also got to look at your cost of production. It costs 320 a ton to produce soya, so you also can't muck around with the guys taking advantage of the free market system by exporting their product, because how are the farmers supposed to make a profit, how are they supposed to stay alive, how're they supposed to make money?³¹

What this suggests is that both the South African supermarket and the agribusiness do not 'descend' on a blank slate as suggested in the 'supermarket revolution'. Even though they influence Zambia's food system, there are also on-going processes of change, constantly adapting policies and important priorities in the Zambian context that influence the way business happens. It is therefore important to recognise that the factors that influence the food system in Zambia are also in turn influenced by other forces. In Chapter 6 we look more closely at how different influencing or governing factors play off against each other. That said, it is still important to understand that in Zambia, South African business investment significantly influences the food system.

Thus far, the chapter has focused on three aspects that influence Zambia's food system. These aspects do not 'affect' the Zambian context as if they are external forces and the context is a

³¹ Interview, Tiger Animal Feeds Zambia, Lusaka, July 2007.

blank slate. Instead, the ‘context’ is constituted by interaction between different institutions, and different rationalisations – protecting the domestic economy, liberalising, and economic growth. Development concerns, and political and economic priorities are inserted at every level, and as such, are not ‘embedded’. Although there may be many other influencing factors, this chapter will focus, finally, on the informal dimension of the agrifood system. Jane Guyer notes that informal urban markets can ‘also be legitimately claimed to represent important sites for focusing on larger social processes which link local, regional, national and international arena because the organizations which achieve these articulations are generally urban based’ (Guyer, 1987:6).

Urban market economies

As a short introduction to this section, it is appropriate to describe urban food markets in Lusaka at present. What we see, though, is only the outcome of a much larger process of informalisation that is integral to Zambia’s political economy. Urban markets are made up of two types: (1) larger wholesale markets (wet markets), which are on average two square kilometres in size, where large amounts of fresh produce are sold; and (2) smaller retail markets that range from small *tuntemba* (trading stalls, literally table of economy) clusters in residential areas to 500 square metre demarcated spaces in the city, where one is either able to buy a number of things – food, electronics, CDs – or have tailoring, photocopying, or hairdressing done. The municipality regulates both these market types, even though a few are still under the ‘control’ of trader associations. There are also various types of traders: intermediaries or *agents* (as they call themselves, who bring produce to wet markets on behalf of farmers; transporters; marketeers (who are basically vendors); and resellers, who buy from wet markets to resell in urban retail markets or *tuntemba* in-and-around the city and in residential areas.³² Typical examples of wholesale markets would be the BH market for fresh produce and Mims market for live chickens. Outside the BH gates, sugarcane and coal traders line the road, and inside there is a colourful array of foodstuff – large heaps of cabbages, *impua* (a light yellow-coloured vegetable similar to

³² Bryceson (1993); Tranberg Hansen (2002); Coen-Flynn (2005) Porter et al (2004; 2006) provide further detail on urban traders.

mini-aubergines), wild fruit³³, large aluminium baths filled with rice, dried beans, small dried *Kapenta* (5mm-long fish), and neatly set out sacks of onions and boxes of tomatoes. BH was first the main trading area of commercial farmers during the colonial period. It is now an open field where scores of intermediary traders sell produce from farms outside the Lusaka province. BH is attached to the large Soweto retail market that extends on both sides of the railway tracks in central Lusaka. During the colonial period, informal retail markets such as Soweto developed along the line of rail to 'feed the city'. The wet market remains crucial to the urban food supply system because foodstuff makes its way in and around the city through traders, and it aids accessibility to food to Lusaka's population.

'Mims Gate' is the poultry wholesale area between the Soweto and City retail markets in central Lusaka (see Figure 3). Every day of the week except Sunday dozens of intermediaries or farmers drive in their vans and trucks filled with hundreds of live chicken into Mims. One farmer explains:

I bring mainly around 200-250 a day. Selling all depends how the market is, today is very slow. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are good. People buy one day, they skip a day. Mainly they are traders; very few buy for their houses. Some even buy a hundred. Some even 150. Some come here, they hire vehicles, some come with their buckets and dishes, some they just use their trailers. We have different prices. Some are selling for 15, 14. I started this morning with 14, now I'm selling at 14 500. Our farm is called Leopard. It's 2km away. I bring my chickens here, but people from Soweto market come all the way to the farm, or the traders from here. Every two weeks we have about 2 500 [chickens].
(Interview with Mims Gate Farmer, Mum Agnes, July 2007).

As noted in the above excerpt, Mims area closes at eight am to prohibit large numbers of consumers from buying at wholesaler prices. Instead traders buy at Mims and resell in residential

³³ Masau is a small gooseberry-type fruit sold loose, but measured in tins. They come from Chilundu, the area that borders Zambia and Zimbabwe.

compounds or just outside the Mims Gate. This is a highly competitive retail area that is fuelled by a rise urban consumer demand for chicken.

From the research conducted in urban markets in Lusaka, the importance of these retail spaces is clear. Wholesale markets frequently supply smaller retail markets in and around the city, and in residential compounds. Urban retail markets dot the urban landscape in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, and, because they are more proximate to urban residents, these markets create a more effective and accessible food supply system. For instance, in Mtendere, one of the compounds in Lusaka, there are a number of informal retail markets that sell foodstuff, live chickens and other commodities. The market stalls are built of corrugated iron, wooden beams, chicken wire, plastic, mobile pergolas, or a combination of any of these. Food traders do not expect to make huge profits, and often younger members of the family are left at stalls while older family members either have barber, construction, braiding stalls nearby, or work elsewhere in the city. These stalls are, then, an additional source of income for urban households. In cases where these market stalls are the primary form of income, neighbourhood residents support them. Most neighbourhood consumers purchase small quantities of foodstuff daily, and often on a meal-to-meal basis. This is because a large percentage of people do not have access to refrigeration. Urban retail markets enable the urban poor to buy fresh foodstuff, and as noted in the previous chapter, is central to the urban food provisioning complex in many Sub-Saharan African countries.

Urban wet markets and *tuntemba* in Lusaka are physically accessible to consumers and traders because of the adjacent public transport system, and the high percentage of these outlets in residential compounds. These markets are central to making urban food markets accessible for small-scale farmers and urban consumers, and increasing gainful employment in the informal sector. Given this, informal urban food markets are a crucial element of the Zambia's food system. They are neither ad hoc or survivalist and they have not recently arisen as a contingency plan to address poverty or food security concerns, even though they often do. Urban markets are established features of the city, rooted in historical political economy changes, in particular the failures of formal agricultural networks and the mainstream neoliberal economy. While such

markets are a common feature in urban Africa and there are many accounts of them in the literature, what makes this one worth attention are the recent development in the management of the market.

Informal food marketing in Zambia pre- and post- colonization

‘Informal’ modes of food exchange have long been a feature of the African city as briefly introduced in the previous chapter. Newly independent African states only inherited ‘controlled maize marketing systems’ from the colonial government (Jayne, 2008). This was true also in Zambia’s government. The urban economic base in colonial Northern Rhodesia (pre-independent Zambia) was copper mining. ‘Urban’ labour reserves sprung up along the line of rail, and urban populations needed food markets. Colonial authorities bought maize from small-scale farmers and urban traders controlled its sale in residential urban markets (Guyer, 1987). In addition to urban markets, a petty trade class soon emerged from black urban residential enclaves. Informal economic activity included food stalls, various artisanal and textile repair crafts and hairdressing. Colonial authorities were opposed to such unregulated capital accumulation, and instituted hawkers’ licence fees that were at times up to ten times more than the Native Tax. Of course this was a political decision to cripple economic activity that colonial authorities could not control. A vendors’ boycott in Lusaka, in 1956 eight years before independence, was one of the most notable forms of resistance to colonial authorities. It came to define the strength of the local market, a market that formed around a colonial food marketing system (Turok, 1989:33).

Traders in urban residential markets were also relatively successful because before Zambia’s independence, African traders were prohibited from trading in major urban spaces (Rogerson, 1991). Nonetheless, the petty economy, as it is termed by Rogerson (1991) sprung up around mining towns (similar to the way they had around South Africa labour reserves). Markets in industrial colonial towns, of course, were unlike other urban markets in Africa. In Nigeria markets were formed because of rent-seeking African elites, and religious trading networks (Porter et al., 2004; Watts, 1987). The urban food economy in the Tanzania’s Dar es Salaam, was based on the confluence of administrative, economic and cultural controls of priorities (Guyer,

1987:20). And had it not been for mobile (migratory) urban populations, ‘upwardly mobile African informal trade not limited to only a small political and economic space in which an institutionalised wholesale market with petty traders might have developed’ (Guyer, 1987:22). This was similar to the Zambian case where colonial systems controlled the movement of urban consumer through travel restrictions; and both the larger wholesale grain trade in cities through its own marketing system, and the smaller petty economy through taxes.

In the aftermath of colonisation, notes Bryceson (2006b:4), newly independent African states faced the overwhelming challenge of providing food for the large urban population or face civil upheaval. On the one hand, this need was met by ‘insecure’ economic exchange where the entire spectrum was visible: ad hoc, often illicit and illegal spaces of exchange, to non-formal alternative economies. In Zambia, government rarely inspected informal markets in residential areas on the urban outskirts (if ever). However urban wholesale grain (and other produce) markets were pivotal to the political process.

Maize, as noted before, is the strategic political crop in many African countries because it is both the most dominant crop for consumption, and economic exchange is more frequently measured through its trade. Thus, it

became the cornerstone of an implicit and sometimes explicit ‘social contract’ that the post-independence governments made with the African majority to redress the neglect of smallholder agriculture during the former colonial period...The social contract also incorporated the belief that governments were responsible for ensuring cheap food for the urban population (Jayne, 2008:110-111).

Massive amounts of state spending were directed at this social contract through subsidies, input assistance and controlled marketing boards, as discussed in the Zambian case earlier, of course related to the need for government to secure a support base. While government controlled the marketing channels, private traders were crucial in the market in filling the gap of inefficient

cooperative structures through Namboard (Zambia's national grain marketing board). So while small-scale farmers sold grain through cooperatives to Namboard. Private traders, who had cross-border economic networks frequently 'competed' with Namboard by offering farmers a higher price (Dorosh et al., 2009).

The marketing of grain and the collection of rain reserves post-independence effectively functioned through urban markets. Because of 'lagged' public policy during the intermittent economic reforms in Zambia between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s (which partially and inconsistently liberalised then re-nationalised agricultural production and marketing), food markets remained an integral feature of the urban food supply system. Over time, public investment and policy choices also sporadically raised and reduced the importance of urban markets in state-led agricultural marketing efforts (Jayne, 2008). This did not change the fact that both urban consumers and a large percentage of small-scale farmers still relied on urban food markets – both the wholesale wet markets and the retail markets. And together with increasingly tenuous formal employment opportunities, and other economic reforms, such as the removal of the state in social provision and the removal of agricultural subsidies, urban markets in Zambia were to become an integral part of the food system.

Zambia's on-again off again state control of grain markets – given the input subsidies, its pan-territory pricing system, and milling subsidies – led to a financial crisis. As Jayne reiterates, this gave international lenders increased 'leverage over domestic agricultural policy starting in the 1980s, which [eventually] culminated in structural adjustment programmes' (Jayne, 2008:111). In the case of Zambia, this made both the (often unscrupulous) trader, and informal urban markets central to food exchange. Economic reforms are seen to be the most compelling reasons driving the informal economy as a consequence of increasing urban poverty and food inflation, the reduction of state provision of services and levels of employment, (Rogerson, 1997)³⁴.

³⁴ Rogerson (1997) reviews the rise of the informal sector, and highlights the underlying reasons that drive the persistence of the informal economy in Africa and relates these to the negative effects of neoliberal reforms on

In Zambia long-term traders and retrenched workers, who together made up the informal economy, rioted in 1990 (Kaunda's rule) in response to numerous government attempts to regulate the informal sector or prohibit trade through licenses, levies, taxes and/or relocation (Tranberg Hansen, 2000:244). Government often enforced these prohibitions through violent eviction of traders from public spaces where they violated trading by-laws. Crucially, the market riots in 1990 were also linked to removal of the (milling and input) maize subsidy that would increase the cost of food and affect selling prices of grain. Because urban prices were no longer subsidised, traders may have been able to 'fill the gap' in urban food provisioning (albeit often exploitatively), and they would also have been pivotal in filling the gap of the collapsed marketing board. Informal sector prohibitions thus fuelled intense anger from market traders who were twice marginalized (Tranberg Hansen, 2000).

This was also a pivotal moment in Kaunda's 'falling out of favour'. Again, in 1993 (Chiluba's first two years in office), the Lusaka City Council organized a street clean-up campaign that included policemen and the military. There were violent riots, between traders and armed policemen, which led President Chiluba to make a public statement denouncing the violence. The vast majority of traders interpreted this as green light for street trading and market traders. Street vending stalls/*tuntembas* from then on time were nicknamed 'the office of the president' (Hansen, 2000:245).

urban populations. Increasing urban poverty and food inflation, the reduction of state provision of services and levels of employment are seen to be the most compelling reasons driving the informal economy. Ineffective formal markets and inadequate economic strategies to address the needs of the urban poor necessitated unregulated enterprise to fill these gaps (Rogerson, 1997). A state that is focused on its market integration and absent municipal structures clearly could not adequately deal with a growing urban population. The rapid increase in small, informal enterprises and economic activities throughout Africa, in the 1980s and 1990s, is a reaction to economic restructuring in favour of the formal economy. This system is a coping mechanism that counteracts the economic strain of loss of employment or the inability to find work in the formal sector, and mitigates against food insecurity. That being the case, a large proportion of the urban poor has 'resorted to' undertaking activities in the informal sector (Meikle, 1999 as cited in Rakodi, 2002:38/9).

Regulating 'informal' trade

In West and East Africa, unlike in Southern Africa, private agricultural trading was severely undermined by colonial authorities because traders tended to be politicised through associations. The marginalisation of private traders in Southern Africa, as Porter et al³⁵ (2007:118) note, meant that market trading networks have not become as established as they are in West Africa in the few decades that followed:

African marketing in southern African countries such as Zambia was actively and institutionally undermined in order to protect large-scale European farmers from competition. West African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, by contrast, retained vigorous traditional systems of periodic marketing that interlinked vast regions: these are well documented and remain crucial to current patterns of urban food supply (Porter et al., 2007:117).

That informal food marketing channels through traders are less established in Southern Africa than in West Africa, does not take away from the fact that they are an important part of Zambia's economy, and this is progressively recognised in policy circles (Porter et al., 2007:120).³⁶ The Zambian state is increasingly wary of opportunistic trade associations that adopt a political guise while enriching the association's overseers. But this also highlights the state's determination to control politically strategic informal markets. And this also has an historical basis. Close monitoring and quails-regulation of urban markets is related to an unremitting tension between formal and informal retail enterprise in Zambia. Tranberg-Hansen notes that in the mid-1990s informal market associations were 'increasingly hostile, negative, [and] pitted against economic policies of the state'. This situation was compounded by strong reactions to foreign retail investment 'accentuated regulations that contain and control opportunities for informal activities on the home front' (Tranberg-Hansen, 2004:77).

³⁵ The work is part of an ongoing research endeavour funded by DfID, and amongst other aims, looks to further research on traders in West and Southern Africa including Zambia.

³⁶ See also Dorosh, 2009; Hampwaye et al. (2007); Porter et al. (2007, 2004); Porter and Lyon, (2005); Tranberg Hansen (2002); Jayne et al. (1999); and Seshamani (1998).

One such example of this antagonism is a disagreement between the Zambian National Association of Marketeers (Zanama) and municipal state authorities (personal communication, Soweto Market Manager, March, 2007). In 2007, Zanama urged traders to hold back levies, and it illegally issued trade space, and allegedly had used the crisis to line their own pockets by taking two fees, one for market facilities and services (that it had no way of controlling) and one for 'political representation'. The Municipality retorted with preferential treatment of non-aligned traders, and actually raising market and facilities' fees. Since then, the local municipality began, in earnest, to develop a 'management model that would be self-sustaining, self-managing and self-regulating' (Rogel et al., 2007:8) with the help of international donor funds. The management of urban markets represents an important development in an already dynamic segment of the Zambian food system. An important indication of this change is the case that I introduce here, but follow up on in Chapter 6.³⁷

In 2007, at the time of my fieldwork, a Markets and Bus Station Act was instituted to regulate Zambian informal trade markets and traders' marketing actively.³⁸ The act specifically addresses issues of management and representation in markets and transport networks, and places the control of markets and bus stations under management boards consisting of representatives of local authorities, marketeers, bus operators, consumers, and other relevant stakeholders. It is intended to 'enable consumers, vendors and other stakeholders to participate actively in making decisions that have a bearing on their welfare'.³⁹ In addition, it also prohibits private trader associations within markets, and has resulted in strong opposition by self-interested market association leaders. Supposedly, it is motivated by a more broad transition in Zambia toward accountable and transparent governance. Mr Kachingwe, who is the market manager of the Lusaka City Market (LCM) argued that the act: 'said to marketeers, *this is yours*

³⁷ See also Abrahams (2010).

³⁸ The Markets and Bus Station Act, 2007: Number 7 (157-180). Lusaka Municipal Government, Government Printers, Church Road, Lusaka. 12 April 2007

³⁹ Henry Kyambalesa, 2007: 9-10. Party Presidential Address, Henry Kyambalesa, President, AfC Party <<http://www.agenda123.com/html/Message.pdf> >

- the board and the reinvestment for improvements of markets' (Interview, Municipal Manager of the LCM, 2007). The adoption of the act thus represents an interesting change in the relationship between the informal economy and government. It also highlights an unexpected change: the neoliberal process of commercialising informal markets is seen to benefit the informal economy and traders, while at the same time ensuring state control of informal markets to a certain extent. This is indeed an important development that warrants further inquiry, since, in Zambia, as I go on to show elsewhere, the proactive response to support the local, 'informal' food economy emerges from this context. There are clear changes in the domestic food economy to do with the increased formalization of traditional markets, and institutional transformations at this level assert the resilience and importance of these markets. The institutional transitions transform local food economies because they facilitate efficient, transparent, and increasingly quality-based food networks. In essence, while urban retail markets still have the look of traditional, wet markets, they are becoming increasingly formalized at other levels of the supply and management chain, and this is the locus of their resilience – a reason for terming these 'urban' and not 'informal' markets.

To sum up this section, unlike the other three aspects which influenced the food systems mentioned earlier, informal modes of transaction are very much a part of the food system. The urban market fills the gap for foodstuff unavailable or inaccessible through more formal channels, and it becomes the so-called 'office of the president', because it creates employment for the majority of urban residents, and its importance, politically and economically, is recognised by state structures. Similar to the three other aspects of Zambia's political economy, informal modes of transaction do not happen in isolation, but are outcomes of other political and economic processes in the food system. As such, as I describe in the next section, 'informalisation' is a growing trend in Zambia's food system particularly as it is appropriated by large agribusinesses. Since the 'informalisation' of usually 'formal' commodity chains also poses the problem of terminology, 'hybrid' forms of economic interaction will be used with the caveat of explaining how the modes of interaction are changing.

The four aspects highlighted in this chapter are not only important because they allow an investigation of the agrifood ‘system’ (in Friedland’s terms) in Zambia, but also because they allow us to understand the ‘resultant direction’ of Zambia's food system. As discussed in the introduction, each of these aspects constitute Zambia's food system as we know it today, provide an explanation for some of the current changes we see in the food system, and gives us an indication of those changes that we may see in coming years. With the background as laid out in this chapter, how do we make sense of the food system, with its juxtaposed set of interactions?

Making sense of Zambia’s food system

Given a more robust conceptual framework that pays special attention to the domestic political economy and having looked at those factors which have influenced and continue to influence food systems, the visible elements of the food system are defensible. Most importantly, this approach helps explain some of the perplexing contradictions in the food system, because we have a wider awareness of the factors that have influenced it. Although the analysis of Zambia's food system in this thesis is not yet complete, it bears testing this chapter’s findings against the following description of Zambia's food system.

Zambia's agrifood system is an eclectic mix of formal, high value industry based on the oversight of the Zambian National Farmers’ Union (an agribusiness association), large capital investments, urban markets with its array of traders and vendors, and enterprise along this spectrum. As mentioned in the Preface, depending on which part of the spectrum is the object of inquiry, one could be faced with very different worlds. On the one hand, there are, what are considered to be, highly formalised contractual arrangements and large economies of scale in the agrifood system. International agribusinesses invest in the Zambian economy, recognising the buying potential of its growing urban middle class, and the country’s openness to foreign investment. A few of these companies have expanded from its South African base; one such South African firm is Shoprite, the supermarket, whose investment on the continent rakes in more money than its South African domestic stores. Shoprite caters to the high-end consumer

bracket and constantly faces reprove from the Zambian government because its sourcing practises often disadvantage local Zambian producers.

On the other hand, there is an interesting mix of so-called ‘formalised’ enterprise and ‘informal’ supply chains which incorporates intermediary traders, or ‘agents’ who work without commission selling the company’s product, or sourcing material for production. One such example of this hybrid form of interaction, recalled in a later chapter, is a large milling company that was formally a Zambian national asset. The ‘National Milling Company’, which retains the name, sources most of its grain from small-scale farmers in Zambia and sells stock feed to large and emerging meat producers both through ‘agents’ or intermediaries scattered all over the country. While the work rate of agents is recorded, there are no legally binding contracts, but instead there are reciprocal trust arrangements.

Urban food markets in Lusaka are hives of activity where farmers find a daily supply chain for their produce and consumers find accessible retail outlets. Traders are also integral players in linking farmers to markets and distributing food through a web of networks in and around the city. Small, medium and emerging commercial farmers use the urban market as their preferred supply chains. Although returns may not be as lucrative as formal contractual work, which itself is hard to come by, the urban market is a regular and more secure source of income. And this encourages the growing proportion of enterprising small farmers in Lusaka.

We can ‘make sense’ of Zambia's food system if we see the present-day, eclectic and juxtaposed food system as a product of different influences. These influences, in turn, emerge from the confrontation between seemingly polarised sets of economic enterprise. Three examples illustrate this point

First, in the case of Ross Breeders or the National Milling Corporation, which I explore in greater detail later, large and vertically integrated agribusiness firms exist alongside more ‘hybrid’ enterprises, which incorporate ‘informal’ (or contractual) supply chains and business

arrangements based on trust. This is as a result of neoliberal reforms and large capital investments in the agribusiness sector, but also a very uneven spread of wealth across the vast population, which is the case in many African countries. Indeed the large proportion of informal employment is also a result of neoliberal reforms and the response of the state to the pressure to liberalise. But the state's commitment to informal traders, and the increasing recognition of the importance of traders, is both a political and stopgap strategy – to maintain votes, and to support the informal economy's employment capacity. Here, we see how the failure of protective national strategies creates the opportunity for a closer, and unexpected, connection between 'formal' agribusiness and 'informal' elements of the economy – resulting in hybrid forms of economic interaction.

Second, in the case of the urban market, in Zambia in the 1990s, the threat of supermarkets to the informal economy in Zambia was evident in the initial tension generated by market traders through riots about forced removals, trading licences, and increased food costs (Tranberg-Hansen, 2007). The pressure on the informal retail sector represented by the failure of states to invest in public goods like wet markets and wholesale distribution areas is irrefutable (Jayne, 2008). In post-independence Zambia, pressure on existing production systems, failed state-led agricultural enterprises, and empty retail outlets fraught with mismanagement alongside moves to rapidly liberalize the economy, created the ideal climate for foreign investment in retail. In the early 1990s, food riots sent ripples through the economy. The privatization of the public sector, massive economic restructuring, grain gluts, and a defunct agricultural grain reserves board compounded these riots. Local markets and traders, and others, protested against supermarkets – the visible face of economic liberalization. It is significant that supermarkets became the embodiment of antagonism towards the interrelated economic reforms and state failures in protecting food markets. James Ferguson notes that, in Zambia, food prices increased by 650 percent in the post-liberalization decade, making the economic shift a raw reality for urban residents (Ferguson, 1999:4). The 'supermarket transition' as a proxy for the broader shift in the food economy is thus not a naturally evolving process. Nor does it represent the demise of the 'informal' economy. The growth and dominance of supermarkets presents only one element of a larger, more resilient narrative. That these two very different forms of economic retail and food provisioning exist alongside each other, attests to the wider political economy system that allows

each to thrive and growth, but not at the expense of the other. As argued before, this is because both the success of supermarkets and the dwindling of informal economic spaces result from the removal of funding from state storage facilities and public distribution centres, and attempts to quash the informal economy.

Third, assumptions about ‘informality’ and ‘formality’ or informal vs. formal economic interaction do not hold in the case of Zambia. Indeed these problematise the dualism. Urban markets are increasingly being regulated by the state because ‘efficiency’ and ‘strategic management’ is no longer the exclusive domain of formal commercial enterprise nor is ‘ungovernance’ linked to urban markets. Also, because the state increasingly recognises the importance of the urban market in providing employment, markets for small-scale farmers, and accessible food retail outlets for urban residents – things that the state is frequently called on to do. Likewise, large agribusiness benefits from informal contracts with small-scale farmers because they are able to acquire the necessary volumes cheaply and regularly, while at the same time contributing to the livelihoods of those small-scale farmers. As I discuss in the Chapter 6, although this is clearly profitable for the company, it does not necessarily benefit the company.

In understanding how the food system fits together and why it ‘looks’ as it does with its characteristic juxtapositions, we are also able to consider how it may look in years to come. Some theorists may assume that this eclectic scenario represents ‘an economy in transition’ (see Louw et al., 2007; Onumah et al., 2007; Procter, 2007), as more traditional modes of retail are (painfully) giving way to agribusiness and high-value supermarket trade. However, considering this as a hybrid food system, in which there are multiple demonstrations of progress and development, is perhaps a better construct that does not necessarily point to a traditional food system evolving into a modern food system, but instead creating a ‘mélange’ of possibility⁴⁰ where the hybridity and eccentricity of Zambia's food system makes sense if we distinguish a complex set of processes happening simultaneously.

Conclusion

Instead of focusing on how changes in the global political economy affect African agrifood economies, this chapter explains the ways in which Zambia's food system is influenced by different factors in the domestic political economy context. And although the literature on the spread of supermarkets and agribusiness firms dominates scholarship on African food systems, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that process represents only one of a number of factors that influence African agrifood economies as seen in the case of Zambia. It is therefore important to draw out these influences in particular to counter a major critique of the dominant and normative approach to food in Africa in Economic Geography, *viz.*, that the normative approach does not acknowledge the domestic political economy context or the changes in agrifood economies that are influenced by aspects in the domestic political economy.

These influencing aspects also demonstrate, in Bryceson's terms, the balance of forces that are at play in the present day food system, and thereby come to characterize it. It is therefore important to draw out these influences because they help us to support the aims of the research project which are to (1) recognise multiple sites of power in the local context; (2) understand ongoing processes of change in that context; and (3) point to different forms of governance in the food system. In this chapter three aspects are seen to influence the food system: nationalisation, (neo)liberalisation, which includes South Africa's role in the region, and informalisation. Thinking of the interlinking (inter-temporal) aspects as rationalisations, best captures both the material and ideological factors that shape/influence the food system, and allows me, in subsequent chapters, to more concisely articulate the motivations of different institutions and the intersecting governances in the food system.

⁴⁰ The notion of hybridity has its roots in critiques of cultural globalisation (see Nederveen Pieterse, 2002) and in postcolonialist theory (see Kelsall and Ellis, 2006; Raghuram and Madge, 2006). Nederveen Pieterse (2003:274) uses the term 'mélange' to capture the mix of cultures or identities in a globalised context.

In addition, highlighting the aspects that influence Zambia's food system is important because these aspects are not unique to Zambia, perhaps with the exception of South Africa's involvement in the economy, and thus lend to a more general framework of thinking both about food systems in Africa. In thinking about food systems, then, examining the domestic political economy accounts for the continuing imperative for the state to control agricultural systems in Africa. But at the same it also points to the fact that there are also competing priorities to liberalise the economy and to ensure that domestic food needs are taken care of. Existing food systems, such as urban markets, then, either embody these shifting priorities, or fulfil the role of urban food provisioning. For instance, this chapter shows how, despite the 'neoliberal turn' the government also continues to intermittently subsidize the cost of milling in the aim of contributing to cheaper prices for food.

Finally, the domestic political economy environment includes different rationalisations and is the product of different influences. This is not to suggest that the domestic political economy is fixed or static, indeed quite the opposite. The various aspects that are shown to have shaped Zambia's food system, presented in this chapter, are themselves the result of a shifting and transitioning political economy context. The domestic political economy context, then, comprises the influences, sites of power and rationalisations within it. As Hart (2002:13), and other scholars⁴¹ note, outlining how certain explanatory factors have come to influence a given outcome – in this case the Zambian agrifood system – lends to a sense of interconnectedness and continuity in that given area. In Hart's terms, we can see the Zambian food system as comprising ongoing processes through which sets of power-laden practices in the multiple, interconnected arena of everyday life at difference spatial scales, such as the influences or explanatory factors mentioned in this chapter, constantly rework that food system (after Hart, 2002:13).

⁴¹ See Gibson-Graham, 2002 and Swyngedouw, 2005

Roadmap

The previous chapter closed off with showing how understanding the broader domestic political economy context of Zambia's food system helps us understand interactions within it. The chapter that follows is concerned with uncovering two key 'sites of power' in Zambia's food system and draws on the institutional turn in the literature. I use two key institutions as a case study to illustrate the importance of recognising multiple sites of power in the food system – the Zambian National Farmers' Union, and the Lusaka City Market. I look specifically at a new Markets' Act. The weight of the discussion in this chapter, then, is on the farmers' union because by now, given the discussion in previous chapters, the role and importance of urban markets are well known.

CHAPTER 5: HOME GROWN INSTITUTIONS: ZNFU AND LUSAKA CITY MARKET

*Building up Africa's institutions is vital, even if that means slower growth.*⁴²

Introduction

There is a growing consensus that as economic growth happens in Sub-Saharan Africa it is as a result of institutional governance. As the above quote suggests, institutional governance and the role of institutions in economic growth in African countries are also important concerns in the international development community. These concerns span a range of sectors from agriculture, to healthcare and education,⁴³ and relate to capacity building of state institutions; strengthening governance systems; and supporting the work of non-state institutions through donor funding, technical expertise and knowledge transfer, amongst other ‘good governance’ concerns.⁴⁴ This emerging discussion about institutional governance parallels a shift in Economic Geography scholarship, generally termed as the ‘institutional turn’ (see Amin, 2004:51).

⁴² Thandika Mkandawire, Director of the UN Research Institute for Social Development in UN, 1998

⁴³ See for instance: Capacity building grant for health care institutions in Africa by the Wellcome Trust *Medical News Today*, 2009 < <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/156170.php>>; Institutional development in Africa Research consortium (of ODI staff) funded by DfID and the Advisory Board of Irish Aid < www.institutions-africa.org>; and a recent (2003) United Nations University and World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) publication (Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2003) entitled *Reforming Africa's Institutions: Ownership, Incentives, and Capabilities*, in particular Part III that focuses on developing institutional capacities in the public, private and informal sectors (see Tripp, 2003; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2003b).

⁴⁴ Although this is not the focus of this thesis, there is increasing concern in international development circles on ‘good governance’ or the imperative for public institutions to manage funds properly, reduce corruption and increase transparency, while at the same time instituting World Bank and IMF related neoliberal policies and undertaking economic reforms (see Ng and Yeats, 1999).

Institutionalist perspectives recognise the collective, political and social foundations of economic behaviour (Amin, 2004), and have their roots in Granovetter's (1982) conception of weak and strong ties. Amin notes that as geographers have rediscovered the work of Michael Polanyi and Granovetter, there is a greater recognition that economic markets are integrally linked to 'the social and political', and that this interaction is the basis for economic development. The rediscovery 'is [thus] also based on the insights of institutional economic theory, particularly its explanation of why territorial proximity matters for economic organization' (Amin, 2004:51).

Thrift and Olds (2004:62) put it this way:

this realization of the social nature of markets has changed the idea of the market as a neutral arena in which pure exchange takes place to an arena in which there are complex moral and institutional orders regulating not only the conduct of exchange but also what is defined as exchange in the first place.

Two important tenets of (new) institutional economics, and innovations systems scholarship are that institutions (1) 'operationalise particular political and developmental priorities' (North, 1991:97); (2) structure political economy interaction, and (3) influence and regulate the circulation of knowledge in systems (Hall, 2002:148). Although structuring, operationalising or influencing political economy priorities or interaction, this does not always happen on the basis of formalised regulation or control. Instead, it happens on the basis of tacit social knowledge(s) in shared economic-social space, which can be termed 'rationalisations'. The idea of rationalisations incorporates shared knowledges and other non-tangible, but durable, factors that influence development, generally labelled 'informal institutions' or 'weak ties' such as mutuality, social priorities, trust, and shared identities (Granovetter, 1982).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Elsewhere in the economic development literature, 'local needs', 'growth priorities' (Sartorius and Kirsten, 2007), 'culture' (Thrift and Olds, 2004), 'societal norms' (Du Plessis, 2006), the 'local setting' (Jütting, 2003), and 'multiple agendas' (Mercer et al, 2003) are concepts often used to capture the non-tangible factors that influence economic development.

A similar definition is used in Economic Geography scholarship where institutions exist to drive or influence certain kinds of interaction or to drive/influence certain political economy priorities. While the literature includes quality agencies, certification bodies, trade regulatory institutions and other civil society organisations. Yet in agrifood scholarship, given a shift in conception to the increasingly dominant role of agribusiness firms and supermarkets as ‘the new masters of the food system’ (Wrigley and Lowe, 2002:124 citing Flynn and Marsden, 1992), in the way they are seen to drive the food system, influence political economy interaction and transform economic space, these are increasingly seen as the institutions that govern trade. In addition, as Wrigley and Lowe (2002:122) note, the increasing dominance of private-interest regulation and the shift away from public-interest regulation, means that private interest firms will likewise tend to dominate the view of institutions and institutional governance in the literature. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to answer the second research question ‘In addition to agribusiness firms, which other institutions are central to the food system, and what are their roles?’, and in so doing to point to multiple sites of power in the food system.

The first institution that I discuss – the Lusaka City Market (LCM) – is an informal urban market. The Lusaka City Market is becoming increasingly formalised because the municipal state structures have changed the way it governs the market. Data for this chapter are drawn both from empirical sources gathered during fieldwork, and other, relevant sources such as the Markets and Bus Station Act (2007) and news articles. Where appropriate, I use additional literature to support the analysis, and draw attention to the shared rationalisations embedded in the institutions.

The second institution I look at – the Zambian National Farmers’ Union (ZNFU) – is essentially a business association that represents farmers and agribusiness in lobbying the state, but also is remarkably influential in developing the agricultural sector in Zambia. The Zambian National Farmers’ Union (ZNFU) is an interesting case to look at because although it is an agribusiness association, which ultimately protects the interests of the commercial agricultural sector in Zambia, its emergence in Zambia, post-independence, means that it adopts a developmental role in supporting small-scale farmers (see Chapter 4), and is proactive in building a sense of cohesion

in the food sector (see *Zambian Farmer*, 1999). The ZNFU in some ways also appropriates a political rationalisation, as evidenced by its role as an ombudsman of sorts that calls the state to account for neoliberal decisions that debilitate local production.

Urban Market Institutions: The case of the Lusaka City Market

In keeping with the purpose of this chapter, which is to point to non-firm institutions that are overlooked in normalised accounts of agrifood economies, this section deals with the urban market as a one key institution in Zambia's food system. The informal market is typically not seen as an institution because the trade within this market is associated with the lack of both regulation and governance, i.e., its informality. Indeed Meagher (2007:499) argues that economic restructuring policies have reinforced patterns of 'ungovernance', which may be seen in informal markets. Conversely, more formalised economic interaction is seen to be facilitated through agribusiness institutions and supermarkets because these institutions govern and regulate trade. Another reason is that the informal market is often seen to be an ad-hoc, transitory collection of enterprises that has sprung up as a means to survival, and that will eventually give way to 'serious' economic linkages. Colin Leys' *Confronting the African tragedy* (1994) on the informal economy in Africa is perhaps the most brazen example of this perception:

Contrary to the wishful thinking of some observers, this [the informal economy] is part of the pathology of Africa's collapse, not a seed-bed of renewal. Anyone who believes that, for example, carrying sacks of cocoa beans on bicycles along devious forest tracks to sell them illegally across the frontier is more promising for the economy than taking them directly to the port by truck, is not to be taken seriously. People resort to the second economy for survival, to escape the predations of the corrupt and parasitic state machinery, that is all.

As I argue elsewhere, (Abrahams, 2010:122), the idea that informal markets will eventually give way to more formal modes of food provisioning assumes a natural process of economic evolution, or as Porter et al put it, 'that economic institutions will automatically appear and

market economies will be structured along the lines of European or North American capitalism' (Porter et al., 2007:116), a quote I alluded to earlier. Instead, where informal economies have dwindled in the south, it is typically the result of state removal of funding for state storage facilities and public distribution centres, and not their 'natural' demise. Indeed the removal of state funding for informal markets often went hand-in-hand with the idea that in promoting and protecting the formal economy the country would progressively transition into a more 'sophisticated' economy (see Simone, 2005:3).

But given the definition of an institution as a constraint that structures, influences or drives particular forms of political, economic and social interaction, the informal economy is certainly an institution. And the crucial next step is examine how this institution governs or mediates/regulates economic interaction. Although the importance of informal markets was not always recognised in Zambia, it is an interesting case given an increase in state investment to develop and to formally regulate informal urban retail markets. The case shows that instead of demising, informal retail markets in Zambia are becoming increasingly formalized at other levels of the supply and management chain.

The changing informal market institution in Zambia

In Zambia, the Markets and Bus Station Act⁴⁶ was instituted in 2007, as mentioned in the preceding chapter. The Markets and Bus Station Act formally regulates the management of the market and insists on a board of representation in market management that includes traders, marketeers, municipal actors and customers for the protection of all traders, and transparent financial accounting for levies and infrastructure developments in the market. Under the Act, private trader associations are prohibited to operate in markets, ensuring that the vulnerable traders are protected from the kind of opportunism often evident in markets.

⁴⁶ The Markets and Bus Station Act, 2007: Number 7 (157-180). Lusaka Municipal Government, Government Printers, Church Road, Lusaka, 12 April 2007

As mentioned before, the market manager of the Lusaka City Market indicated that the Act effectively gave marketers a sense of ownership of markets and the developments in those markets. (Like it said to marketeers, this is yours - the board and the reinvestment for improvements of markets. Interview with the manager of Lusaka's City Market, November 2007, Lusaka).

Local politicians, keen to distance themselves from 'questionable' trade association alliances also support the new market regulation: The Act, they claim 'will certainly enable consumers, vendors and other stakeholders to participate actively in making decisions that have a bearing on their welfare' (Kyambalesa, 2007).⁴⁷

That the Act has been institutionalised seems to point to broader transitions in Zambia toward local economic growth, accountable and transparent good governance, but also to the pervasiveness of neoliberal governing principles. The Act can therefore be seen as a mechanism that will re-govern informal markets. This institutional regulation raises questions about what now constitutes an 'informal' market since the assumption that informal markets are characteristically 'ungoverned' does not hold true in this case.

The formalization of erstwhile unregulated forms of governance in markets has meant that trader associations have ceased to 'disrupt' market enterprise, and traders feel free of the political pressure that was linked to the often-exorbitant 'market' fees they would have to pay the associations (personal communication, Lusaka, November, 2007). The transparency in management, sanitary infrastructure, representation of traders' rights, and the opportunity to voice their needs, according to many traders, make the market levies they pay justifiable (personal communication). But the turnaround in management represents more than just efficiency in the market retail enterprise, but has significant long-term economic potential in terms of being the harbinger of transformation in what is often seen as a flailing informal economy. The new informal market is a prototype of sorts that is poised to guide the development

and reconstruction of all the other markets in Lusaka. As a result of its apparent accomplishments, the Lusaka City Market has secured further donor funding and support from the state municipality. The manager of the Soweto (and BH wholesale) markets in Lusaka puts it this way:

It's part of development, because we are moving from that scenario, like at BH [unregulated wet market] to this one, in Zambia, I think the government is going into modernising the market. You see the new developments with the construction at the Soweto market; two other markets are being built in the Copperbelt. So in Zambia there is some sort of development, a new change, a new culture. The government now is quite alert on how these markets have to be managed and has come up with the new market Act...Right now you see people scattered, operating along the road, we have plans so the structure will not remain like this. We are on course to change Kamwala, Lusaka City and central markets, Soweto markets; we are going to develop this place. We are going to fix this road, tar it, the problem is our government is struggling a little bit; you can see the poor buildings. We need to make sure that the structure you see here will be upgraded. So that when you come back you will see a different Lusaka. We need to compare with Joburg especially this 2010 World Cup we are going to attract people and small businesses...

Although I do not discuss the apparent 'modernisation and progress' undertone in the thesis, it bears pointing out that formalising the market also represents a shift in how these markets are perceived – as disorganised and ad hoc to increasingly organised. The model of informal market development has begun to inform market management practices of other markets, including training market managers and publicising the Markets and Bus Station Act.

The Lusaka City Market is not only active in maintaining a good 'image' in terms of cleaning up otherwise disarrayed areas, but the market managers, with consent of the board, have also begun

⁴⁷ Henry Kyambalesa, 2007: 9-10. Party Presidential Address, Henry Kyambalesa, President, AfC Party

to invest in the infrastructural upgrading and formalization of other markets even those outside the Lusaka region.⁴⁸ The formalization of the informal market is obviously a process, according to the managers, and includes future plans such as the formation of new wholesale areas and the development of existing areas, the provision of cold-storage facilities, and investment into local sourcing for the market that may for the moment address transportation. While all of this is yet to happen, the institutional support of the informal food economy and traditional forms of retailing through processes of formalization and commercialization have important implications for the strength of the informal economy, for linking farmers to markets and for making higher quality food more accessible urban consumers (see McCullough et al., 2008). And of course this has implications for the perceived dominance of supermarkets in African cities:

The market is not going anywhere. People misinterpret the extent to which the market is transforming, even though it is informal. This market is becoming...more sophisticated, especially in terms of how it is managed. This is just starting. It's not to revitalize a city market that is dying; it is to better manage a very successful one. There is evidence that supermarkets may be stealing some of our consumers, but there will never come a day where this market will have to close because the supermarket has taken over (Interview with Lusaka's City Market Manager, November 2007, Lusaka).

The changes in informal market institutions signal profound 'symbolic' transitions in urban food systems in Africa. In this context, the changing market represents the inclusion of the urban poor (given increased access to food), and small-scale farmers into in urban food markets or value chains, thereby signalling an economy in transition. Small-scale farmers, under this new Act are in theory less vulnerable to unscrupulous traders who are in turn less vulnerable to corrupt trader

<<http://www.agenda123.com/html/Message.pdf> >

⁴⁸ 'We have had only part of the local authority budget in the past, now we can redistribute our own takings entirely. Since 1997, the government gets part of the profit from the market enterprise, now we can contribute more to the coffers of the national or local authority, so now there is the real potential for markets to contribute to the government's economic growth. In the Chinolia Market, the water system was done by us, Lusaka City Market, we invested 40 Million (ZKwa - £5130) to Chongwe Market, and 40 million to the Kauma Council, 20 Million to the Kawambwa market in the Northern Province and 100 Million to the Nyumbayanga Market in Woodlands [Lusaka]' (Interview with the manager of Lusaka's City Market, November 2007, Lusaka).

associations since urban markets will progressively be managed by representative boards made up of traders, community members, and farmers.

For instance, in theory, the new management of urban markets will mean that trader associations will cease to disrupt market enterprise, guarding against the kinds of problems in 2009. In 2009, President Rupiah Banda faced severe criticism for his decision to issue the title deeds of the Chisonke Market in Kitwe to a marketeers association (ZANAMA), which was a similarly questionable alliance that had initially promoted the institution of the Act (see the *Zambian Chronicle*, 2009). Political 'interference' in markets and the recent Chisonke debacle is a further indication that informal markets are recognisably lucrative and that because they are governed, or appropriated, to political ends, they are a vital part of the urban economy.

In sum, these changes in the food system will also have implications for further state investment in informal markets, perhaps along the lines of informal markets in Asia, where for instance, supermarkets in China have a large space for wet markets in the supermarket, cold-storage facilities are installed in Thai markets, or the Indian state institutes protection of informal markets through policy (see Reardon and Gulati, 2008). This section demonstrates that just as work on supermarkets has shifted from looking at the intricacies of commodity chains, even though certain scholarship still does, to looking at how a shift in regulations and regulatory mechanisms profoundly affect economic interaction. I reflect on some of the implications flagged up here in the conclusion.

The Zambian National Farmers' Union

The Zambian National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) is an agribusiness association at the forefront of agricultural growth and development. It mediates between government and the agricultural community (including agricultural service providers e.g., veterinary services). As outlined below, the ZNFU has its roots in colonial agricultural administration in Northern Rhodesia. The union now brands itself as the frontrunner of preserving and encouraging the local agrifood economy.

More recently, it has received international donor funding from the European Union to promote good governance of extra-state institutions (see *DED*, 2008).

While there are a few secondary sources in the agricultural archives of the ZNFU,⁴⁹ the history of the institution is best narrated by the (now) President of the ZNFU,⁵⁰ Mr J. Zimba, who was at the time drafting a formal document that was to later provide information for the ZNFU webpage.⁵¹ The interview is quoted here at length.

The Zambian National Farmers' Union as it is known today was founded in 1905 as a Commodity association that was started by tobacco farmers. The European settlers were tobacco farmers in Northern Rhodesia's Eastern Province. The driving factors then were issues of market and trade; they used to grow tobacco here for the Southern Rhodesia market, which was the Salisbury market. But they were complaining of poor prices, lack of representation at tobacco floors. So this is how they formed the Northern Rhodesian Farmers' Union. It used to lobby for better prices and other issues that would scale up the tobacco industry. From 1905 it continued as a small commodity association, right until the 1940s or 1950s. This is when it became more like for the country but for commercial purposes [representing Northern Rhodesia as a whole]. That means it was dominated by settlers.

Then at independence, the Union changed its name, it became, the Commercial Farmers' Bureau after 1964. The CFB, by this time, had only one or two black farmers, the rest was still commercial white farmers, and the focus still was to lobby for the farming community, for better prices, good policies and incentives. By 1992, the Commercial Farmers' Bureau was losing influence and one of the factors that were identified was that

⁴⁹ Mostly World Bank documents and press releases.

⁵⁰ At the time of the interview (July 2007), Mr Zimba was the deputy president of the ZNFU, and the president, Mr Guy Robinson was abroad.

it had no national character; it just handled one category of farming. Starting in 1980 the bureau was limited to commercial farmers only and that meant that there was even a colour divide, and that meant that government didn't take them seriously even when they were lobbying for genuine things, they'd say 'it's just a corporate club' they're just trying to foster their own interests and success. So from 1990 [the CFB] tried to encourage small-scale farmers to join the union. It was still called the CFB, but the name was misleading.

So it was in 1993 that the Commercial Farmers' Bureau changed its name to the Zambian National Farmers' Union and also they changed the constitution to include all categories of farmers – small scale farmers, large scale and commodity associations. [The body] became more national. It had captured a number of small-scale farmers who by then had no proper representation. To ensure more farmer affiliation, they also made their membership subscriptions not restrictive. What they did was, the member was asked to pay according to his or her capacity. The commercial farmers would declare how they are doing that year and they would discuss an agreeable amount, maybe 0.002 percent, the small scale farmers had to pay a flat fee or maybe two or three dollars, so that means we had a lot of small-scale farmers coming on board, and at the same time as that we are giving the farmers' union the numbers they needed to start lobbying effectively' (Interview with the deputy president of the ZNFU, July 2007, Lusaka).

While the Commercial Farmers' Bureau was a new body formed at independence, it still consisted of a larger majority of settler commercial members, and the transformation of agricultural institutions was still very much at the forefront of the Kaunda Zambianisation project in the early years of Zambia's independence, as noted in an earlier chapter.

⁵¹ See www.znfu.org.zm

Zambian agriculture was internally and politically transforming, and because of the on-again, off-again economic reforms for almost two decades, the ZNFU came to embody the priorities of the agribusiness community. Also, because of constant upheaval with the state marketing boards, the ZNFU – as a less politicised business association – began to take over the crucial role of agricultural development. The task was daunting, to be sure, because the agricultural sector was highly fragmented. Yet the ZNFU quickly became a trusted institution because it also seemed to have a strong nationalising focus, demonstrated in part in its commitment to small-scale farmers.

As an agricultural institution, the ZNFU brings agribusiness, small-scale farmers, agricultural cooperatives, and commodity associations together to enable it to, in political economy terms, ‘capture the apparatus of the state and make it serve their own political and economic interests’ (Gilpin, 1991:425). More than just ‘bring them together’, for this suggests a more romantic role, the ZNFU is concerned with the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, and, to bring this about, it takes on a strong capacity-building/developmental role. While the Ministry of Cooperatives and Agriculture (MACO) presides over issues of land, fertilizer subsidies and import/export restrictions, the ZNFU, is concerned with competitiveness, and the growth and development demands of the agricultural sector.

...Give us ten years, you will see a very structured agricultural industry, and that's what we striving for at ZNFU that's why we are bringing together all major players in the industry so that there is rational investments and development, otherwise, if we are doing things on our own and they are doing things on their own, that will delay the restructuring of the agricultural industry in reaching a level where it will be very competitive. And it delays other objectives, like contribution. We contribute between 24 and 28 percent to our national economy...it could be more (Interview, D. President of the ZNFU, Mr. J. Zimba, July 2007, Lusaka).

In keeping with its historic legacy, the ZNFU is comprised of a number of commodity

associations, and one such is the Poultry Association of Zambia (PAZ) that was established in 2000 (personal communication, PAZ director, Mr M. Ngosa, March, 2007). PAZ is seen as the mouthpiece of the entire poultry industry in Zambia (Poultry Bulletin, 2001:148), and aims to tackle 'head-on, the difficulties faced by the poultry industry by liaising with government through the ZNFU to power input costs and to drive demand to enable growth and diversity' (SADC Poultry Liaison Committee, September 2006). It represents more than half the districts in Zambia, and of this over 75 percent are small-scale farmers. PAZ is 'driven to enhance the capacity of members through measured production, improved marketing and access to technical information, lower input costs and lobbying government' (PAZ Brochure, 2007). It focuses specifically on the poultry industry and its objectives are: to maintain disease-free status in Zambia (a rare, and highly valued status for the region and other developing countries); to 'support, promote, develop and protect' the interests of members and the industry; and to foster a 'sustainable internal trading mechanism' in Zambia (Poultry Bulletin, 2002:40).

As an intermediary institution, the ZNFU facilitates this through circulating knowledge and providing targeted knowledge services, and more specifically, through regular surveys, biannual agricultural trade fairs (sector networking), needs analyses, workshops, SMS (text messaging) pricing services for commodities, and publications for specific commodity associations. Agricultural trade fairs and workshops are perhaps the most structured and extensive strategies of 'cultivating' and nurturing the capacity of the agricultural community. Trade fairs attract producers, and network technology providers, seed producers, millers, supermarket buyers, and visitors from the region interested in leasing land for agriculture in Zambia. In sum, these measures are designed to support and 'upgrade' the agricultural sector and in particular those small-scale farmers who are looking to expand and enter what is now termed as the 'emerging farmers' market. This resonates well with both systems and institutional approaches where the ZNFU is concerned with improving cultures of innovation, and knowledge and information sharing (Amin, 2004; Smith, 2005). Below is a brief example of how the ZNFU circulates knowledge through the food system.

ZNFU and knowledge circulation: The “SMS Trade/Market Information System”

In June 2008, the Food Reserve’s Agency announced a new round of purchases from maize growers. The price was agreeable to the ZNFU, whose only concern was that the FRA only had two collection depots per district, which means that farmers would have had to travel anywhere up to 100km to the depots. The ZNFU knew that traders would fill this transport need, but were concerned that they would also take advantage of small-scale farmers. This had been a huge problem in the past, and had adversely affected maize prices. Since 2007, the solution was to implement a short messaging service (SMS) that would be jointly run by the ZNFU and two mobile phone operators, which would make commodity prices instantly available to small-scale farmers, provided the farmer had access to a mobile phone. The FRA depots debacle is just one of many examples where commodity price information would curb the tendency for traders to take advantage of farmers. A press release was issued and circulated by the ZNFU to urge farmers to make use of the SMS service.

The ‘SMS Trade/Market Information System’ is updated bi-weekly, and takes global market prices for maize, any Zambian price stabilisation mechanisms (import/export bans), and transport costs into consideration in calculating prices. Farmers can SMS for up to nine commodities, including maize, sorghum, millet, beef and pork, in each Zambian districts. They can also gather information about traders operating in that district and, subsequently, buyers. An examples of the kind of information available from the Market Information System website is included below (see Figure 4).

According to a recent report for the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), which coordinates trade between African Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Union,

Farmers told ZNFU, in a user survey at the end of 2007, that they had more confidence when dealing with traders and that they increasingly saw themselves as serious partners in

their transactions. Traders, although many were sceptical at first [sic], also benefit as they now deal directly with farmers avoiding the need to share profits with middlemen. In the short time the project has been running there are already definite signs that relationship between farmers and traders is greatly improving.⁵²

The messaging service is also in place in other contexts, most notably India, and is becoming increasingly accessible in Zambia because the ZNFU together with other corporate sponsors and mobile phone operators intermittently arrange discounted mobile phone drives (personal communication; see also Goudappel, 2009).

What is happening in Zambia is part of a larger move to incorporate mobile phone technologies into agricultural development in Africa (see Molony, 2009), and symbolises the shifting nature of knowledge or commodity circulation in agricultural systems in the global south because of technological innovation (see Smith, 2009). Most importantly for this section, is that the ZNFU, not the agricultural ministry, is pivotal in driving the initiative. This suggests that the agribusiness association is a key institution in circulating knowledge by supplying the necessary market information to producers.

Figure 6: SMS/Agricultural Information System showing commodities and traders

⁵² Goudappel, 2009: Issue 47: Market information systems, ICTUpdate. The body is also part of the (Internet and Communications Technologies for Development) ICT4D Community of the Development Gateway Foundation. See <<http://ictupdate.cta.int/en/Feature-Articles/Sending-the-right-message>>

Zambia National Farmers Union
No Farmer, No Food, No Future

Commodity Prices

Tel +260 1 252649
Fax +260 1 252648

ZNFU Head Office
Showgrounds
Lusaka, Zambia

Home SMS Info FAQ Contacts & Legal Information Visit the ZNFU main site

PRICES IN LUSAKA

These prices are updated weekly. If you have not found any buyers in the district you asked for, try again choosing a different district or the province as a whole. You can also choose to see the best prices for all provinces by choosing All provinces and All districts.

Price	District	SMS	Trader	Phone
K350.00	Lusaka	supelsk	superior Milling Address 8	N/A
K350.00	Lusaka	Natilsk	National Milling Cairo Road Contact Phiri	01 982282
K350.00	Lusaka	Applsk	APG Address 2	N/A
K350.00	Lusaka	Ghirisk	Ghirardi Milling	N/A

COMMODITY PRICES

Commodity: All

Province: Lusaka

District: All

Submit

Source: <http://www.farmprices.co.zm/index.php> [Accessed 2010]

The agricultural ministry, MACO, in an attempt to become more proactive in supplying information to the agricultural community in Zambia, has recently launched its partnership with an Agricultural Information Systems project, funded by the international development community. The eRails 'African Portal on Agriculture' is meant to provide the agricultural community in various African countries the opportunity to share and gather information for users in the country, put up a website or provide information and feedback to donors.⁵³ The larger eRails project is still in the pilot phase, and is being used extensively by Mauritius and Uganda, for instance, but as yet, MACO has not even created a country profile on the site.⁵⁴ Given the centrality of the ZNFU in innovation in the agricultural sector, it is surprising that the recent partnership, between the Ministry (MACO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation on creating information systems for African agriculture does not include the ZNFU, but is a 'Ministry-led' initiative called 'Zambia Agricultural Research for Development Information

⁵³ The initiative is jointly developed by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the ISICAD working group at the (German) Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food (BLE).

Network (ZAR4DIN)'.⁵⁵

ZNFU and its state lobbying role

A second important role of the ZNFU is its role as a 'watchdog' or ombudsman of the agricultural sector in Zambia (see *Zambian Farmer*, 1998a-c). It is concerned with the *agribusiness* aspect, and this suggests that the institution is central to formulating or regulating Zambia's national investment policy in agriculture:

The focuses for these associations are information, production technology and the third is research and development. Basically those are the major issues. [But] we actively are involved in investments, in particular investments in the agricultural sector, by giving position papers, policy advisory notes. On specific points we are a watchdog, working to protect the interests of the farming community, be it small farmers, companies and everything (Interview, D. President of the ZNFU, Mr. J. Zimba, July 2007, Lusaka).

As suggested in the above quote, because the ZNFU represents farmers and businesses in the agricultural industry, it also firmly lobbies the agricultural ministry on the behalf of its constituents, and in this sense acts as a watchdog of the agrifood economy. An example of this is a case in 1996, where the state Agricultural Sector Investment Programme funded by Japanese, Swedish, German donors faced formalised outcry from Zambian farmers for the ASIP's planned support of non-indigenous farmers (*The Zambian Farmer*, 1996). The strength of the ZNFU and the key reconciliatory role it played in the Zambian food economy was one of the key reasons this programme fizzled out in the first year of its existence. In fact it was the lobbying prowess and the membership integration of agribusiness and small-scale farmers of the ZNFU that fundamentally challenged the Agricultural Ministry. Had the ministry and the ASIP forged ahead, it would have 'drive[n] a wedge between commercial and small-scale farmers within the ZNFU ranks and would [have] shatter[ed] the image painfully cultivated by the ZNFU of being Southern

⁵⁴ See www.erails.net by date March 2010.

⁵⁵ Following Smith (2009) there is opportunity to think this through in regards to '*Science and Technology for Development*' (the title of Smith's book) for future research.

Africa's most racially integrated farmers' union' (The *Zambian Farmer*, 1997:10). In the view of many, this was the defining moment that made the ZNFU a more trusted institution with regards to agricultural matters than the Ministry had been, and also fundamentally restructured the ministry (The *Zambian Farmer*, 1997, Editorial).

Another, more recent example was when a new Value-Added Tax on agricultural inputs and outputs was overturned when the Poultry Association of Zambia, among other commodity divisions of the ZNFU, presented projections of how those sectors would be affected (personal communication, Head of PAZ, March 2007, Lusaka). The head of the Poultry Association of Zambia (PAZ) later added:

As a result it's much more difficult for our government to look the other way and ignore the problem. Our strength is the unity we have. If we wanted to, we could bring agriculture to its knees.

Despite this self-assertive position, the ZNFU does keep the ministry in check and often publicly calls the government to account (through the media and open meetings) when it makes decisions that disadvantage the local economy.

New institutional economics (NIE) literature allows us make sense of the position of the ZNFU. An institution is often 'called upon' or it takes on responsibility to perform a crucial intermediary function between the state and society (Alence, 2004:163). In the case of the ZNFU, it functions as an intermediary institution, often facilitating growth as a proxy for state incapacity, or in challenging the state when it does not act in the best interests of the agricultural community. And furthermore, it is ZNFU, not the state that is seen to work in the best interest of the sector, thereby fulfilling a quasi-developmental role.

Second, Fligstein (2002:671) notes that intermediary institutions between 'market-building and disciplining state decisions' have a fundamentally political role, and institutions that appropriate this role 'drive a 'compelling vision' of national/sectoral competition'. In this way, the ZNFU as an institution is particularly powerful because it serves a political function, and appropriates

developmental and neoliberal rationalisations to both assert its importance in the agrifood economy and to challenge the state's policies that ironically often do not seem to support the agricultural community.

Another interesting dynamic added to the complex nature of the ZNFU is that it functions through funding support of the EU. Thus while it is veritably a local institution, its centrality in the Zambian food system is maintained by funds from the international donor community, and one that governs (in GVC terms) value chains through agricultural regulation. While the ZNFU is pivotal in the domestic economy, it is also presumably a key intermediary institution that facilitates Zambia-EU trade through those commodity associations that are linked to GVCs, particularly tobacco. Although a comparative analysis of this is not within the scope of this thesis, it opens up important areas of research worth investigating in future studies.

In sum, governance of the agricultural sector between the ZNFU and the agricultural ministry means that they each have a common agenda of local/domestic economic growth. Where the ministry reacts to neoliberal demands, the ZNFU keeps it in check and 'disciplines' its behaviour. And ironically, as mentioned in a previous chapter when the state's announcement that the Food Reserves Agency was to massively cut down on its intake to stimulate private sector growth, the ZNFU will sometimes assert a strong position against neoliberal courses of action despite it being an agribusiness.

The extra-state business association oversees how policy decisions are made and implemented, and is to this extent political. Alence (2004:165) argues that this type of intermediary institution curbs the kind of neo-patrimonialism that is increasingly evident in other emerging market economies and that inevitably damages their development progress. Also, an institution between the state and society has a crucial role to play in 'influencing the alignment between governments' immediate political incentives and the requirements of longer-term economic development' (Alence, 2004:165).

In sum, as seen in the ZNFU case, because the institution is deeply rooted in the domestic political economy, it is able to appropriate developmental, political and neoliberal rationalisations at various times to benefit the business sector. Even though there are complex linkages with EU donor funding, this extra-firm, extra-state institution is central to the food system in Zambia. It mediates between the state and agribusiness firms, and facilitates greater cohesion and competitiveness in the agricultural sector.

Conclusion

This chapter draws attention to two non-firm institutions. In answering the second research question – in addition to agribusiness firms, which other institutions are central to the food system, and what are their roles? – this chapter points to multiple sites of power in Zambia's food system. While the role of the informal economy is noted in previous chapters, this chapter drew attention to one recent change in the governance of the market. In particular, though, the chapter concentrated on the *Zambian National Farmers' Union*.

What does this suggest for Africanist research?

The changes in informal markets have profound implications also for scholarship on urban African economies. First, the institutionalization of state regulation onto markets changes the 'ungovernable/unregulated' image of markets, and there is evidence to suggest that this will be a growing trend elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, given the existing and growing recognition of the importance of the informal economy, there is further opportunity for challenging dualist accounts of economic development in Africa, and as I reflect on the Chapter 7. Third, and most importantly, there are important developments that will ultimately benefit small-scale farmers, traders, and urban consumers. The changes at an institutional level in markets are precisely how agribusiness firms have developed – as the result of changing institutional governance. And as noted in Chapter 3, these changes are seen to fundamentally

restructure economic interaction. The key difference here is that urban consumption is at the centre of transitioning informal markets.

Reflecting on the changes in the institutional system that supports informal modes of food retail leads to a more accurate assessment of transitions in local food economies. Institutional support (or, conversely, protracted repression) of informal markets has direct implications for resilience or decline of informal markets. This means that the ‘traditional’ market as an increasingly higher-value end-retail opportunity is not impossible. Upgrading of the market infrastructure has the potential to create profitable economic exchange where local producers may find a preferred market. It thus not only tempers the enthusiastic claims of the supermarket revolution, or the normalizing power of firms, in regard to linking farmers to profitable, modern markets, it also has implications for them primarily related to urban food consumption. Urban consumers have other choices about where to buy food. Accurate assessment of the extent to which supermarkets and agribusiness firms have transformed or will transform the region can only be undertaken when these other sites of power are made visible. Using the case of Lusaka’s food economy, this chapter shows that agribusiness firms and supermarkets are not the only players in Africa’s food economy, neither are they the most dominant. Institutional support for the informal food economy and traditional forms of retailing enhances its strength and resilience. These institutional interventions have implications for the future potential of the retail enterprise, as for the progressive development of informal market economies.

The case of the ZNFU also suggests that where extra-state, extra-firm agrifood institutions exist in African countries, they may be more influential in those food systems than initially thought. That an institution such as the ZNFU is so proactive in developing the domestic agricultural sector in Zambia, and is supported by the international donor community, suggests that it is a prototype of sorts in African food systems. It is therefore surprising that the ZNFU rarely features in the academic literature on Zambian food systems (except perhaps in the documents these

works reference).⁵⁶ If we see these transitions in light of the work on global production networks, where there is a greater emphasis on the agency of domestic institutions, and the way that Economic Geography scholarship, as it pertains to the literature on supermarkets, currently views governance,- as driven by supermarkets and agribusiness firms – then it is not presumptuous to say that an omission of this sort seriously skews academic research on African agrifood systems. This case, in conclusion, demonstrates the importance of domestic intermediary institutions in food systems in Africa, and compels a rethinking of academic scholarship on agricultural value chains/networks/systems.

The transformation of food economies must be based on an accurate assessment of local consumption demands and existing forms of power such as the ZNFU and urban markets. Reorganization of the local food supply system essentially must be the factor that signals transformation in Africa's food economy, as seen through these cases. In sum, the resilience of urban markets and increasingly formalized processes that govern transformation in these markets, together with the strength of an institution such as the ZNFU, compel a more critical reading of the changes in African agrifood economies. And this has implications for how we think about the food system and the forms of governance that shape, influence and regulate certain priorities and political economy interaction. This chapter has provided an empirical examination of two institutions integral to Zambia's food system that would be overlooked in a more normative account of economic development in Africa which is based on the vision of supermarket as the vector for economic transition. The next logical step in understanding Zambia's food system is to build on our understanding of multiple sites of power, but considering how factors in Zambia's political economy influence agribusiness firms. Examining governance, in its changing forms from multiple sites of power in a dynamic and changing political economy context, is bound to highlight interesting and perhaps unexpected interactions. 'Firms and Embeddedness' is the theme of the final empirical chapter of this thesis. The chapter suggests that there is a turn to the local in the sense that various institutions

⁵⁶ See Dorosh et al, 2009; Jayne, 2008; Haantuba, 2007; Haantuba and De Graf, 2008; Hichaambwa and Tschirley, 2006; Hichaambwa et al, 2007a, 2007b).

in the food systems, including international agribusiness firms, increasingly prioritise Zambia's economic development and strengthening the domestic food system.

Roadmap

The previous chapter looked at two kinds of institutions that do not typically feature in the Economic Geography literature. In the case of Zambia, these institutions – the national farmers’ union and the urban market – are both integral to the food system.

Thus far, we have systematically gone through the following stages:

- (1) A ‘system’ is understood to be the most appropriate approach for understand the agrifood ‘sector’ in Zambia;
- (2) The political economy that underpins the agrifood system in Zambia is shown to be a crucial consideration in Africanist agrifood research; and
- (3) The importance of non-firm, non-state institutions, which are integral to the food system, is highlighted.

The next chapter is concerned with how the context profoundly governs firms that are embedded in that context – not primarily the other way around. Since it is outside the scope of this thesis to look at how each of the institutions or actors in the food system govern and how they are governed by factors in the context, I have chosen four cases which each demonstrate different factors in the context that govern the functioning/growth/objectives of the firms.

CHAPTER 6: FIRMS AND EMBEDDEDNESS IN ZAMBIA: THE INFLUENCE OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ECONOMY

Ultimately...when undertaking research on production networks, it is necessary to steer a delicate path between overemphasizing the transformative effects of transnational corporations in economies where they invest and overstressing the extent national conditions shape their operations in particular countries. Instead the aim should be to explore the...mutual transformation of both the firms and places in which they are embedded (Coe and Lee, 2007:66 citing Dicken, 2000).

Introduction

Until now, the thesis has presented a conceptual framework that places importance on the domestic political economy and demonstrates an awareness of the ‘system’ that shapes the food system as we know it and accounts for the eclecticism in it. I have argued that without an awareness of those institutions that are central to the food system both in terms of food provisioning, and those institutions’ roles in governing the food system, scholarship on African agrifood systems is lacking. Yet the overarching assumption in Economic Geography that agribusiness firms transform African economies still dominates academic scholarship. The chapter following weighs up this assumption by looking at agribusiness firms and assessing the extent to which they transform economic interaction in Zambia’s food system, and the extent to which they, themselves, are transformed by embedding in this context. The quote above, which is also mentioned earlier in the thesis, provides the rationale for this inquiry. What is the mutual transformation of the firms and the places in which they are embedded? One of the most important findings in this chapter relates to how the domestic political economy determines how firms govern economic interaction in the food system.

The Influence of the domestic political economy: Strategically ‘localised’ agribusinesses

The four cases highlighted in this chapter show how the domestic political economy context profoundly impacts on firms that are embedded in Zambia. These firms adapt to the local context in interesting ways in an aim to enhance the competitiveness of the industry, and in so doing, they unexpectedly fulfil the role of growing the domestic economy:

- 1) The National Milling (NM) Corporation has a strong commitment to sourcing local maize from small-scale farmers as the input for stock feed for the poultry industry. While this has historical roots, as shown in Chapter 4, it also the most logical supply base because more than 70 percent of farmers are smallholders.
- 2) Hybrid Poultry Solutions supplies day-old chicks to its outgrower farms linked exclusively to Hybrid - a typical model for agrifood theorists that are concerned with linking farmers to high value chains through outgrower schemes. Even though this firm represents high value economies of scale, socioeconomic factors in the context mean that there is a limited consumer market to supply to.
- 3) Ross Poultry Breeders is also a highly industrialised agribusiness firm, yet its business model centres on informal marketing through agents or traders. Ross also runs training workshops for small-scale poultry farmers providing support to the fledgling industry while growing its customer base. As such it adapts to the Zambian context in unexpected ways.
- 4) The retailer Shoprite is perhaps most candid about its role as ‘businessmen, not politicians’ in its defence of its sourcing practises (which often are criticised for not supporting the local economy). Yet, in light of work done by other scholars, the supermarket’s role in the economy appears to be tempered or disciplined by the state.

Ironically, these cases allow us to see how the local political economy environment constrains or influences the firm, thereby determining the form of economic interaction it is involved in, and not primarily the other way around. They also point to an increasing trend toward informalisation in these larger economies of scale. The industrialised part of the food system in Zambia is, as yet, still limited; its consumer market for processed food is small, and this has implications for the

agribusiness community, and in particular, for how firms concede that the socio-economic context ‘governs’ how they do business. This suggests that there are political and local developmental factors in the local context that transform and often profoundly circumscribe the way agribusiness functions in those areas.

The chapter concludes with a fifth and final case on the ‘Proudly Zambian’ campaign. It is included because it raises critical questions about how we consider the context of intersecting governances. Whether the negotiations of power and interacting governances should be read as the ‘growing pains’ of a transitioning economy, or as intangible forms of governance that reflect the nature of the domestic or localising food system, is a question that is explored in greater detail in the thesis conclusion.

Supporting the agrifood system: The case of the National Milling Corporation

The National Milling (NM) Corporation was a parastatal entity until 1996, and is one of the two larger stock feed companies in Zambia. It is now owned by a multinational corporation (Seaboard Kansas) that invests in agribusinesses in emerging markets with the potential for high consumption growth. National Milling buys maize from commercial and small-scale farmers and processes it into maize meal for human consumption, and maize grain stock feeds for livestock production. The company has three depots, two of which are also processing plants, located in a central area of the Zambian capital, Lusaka (apart from almost 60 depots nation-wide). The main Lusaka plant has a daily turnover of, on average, 30 tons. Lusaka is often the most accessible point for farmers and intermediary traders.

This is not a linear input-output chain, however. Small-scale farmers are offered a preferential rate for the smaller quantities they bring in, and this encourages them to expand production and keep the quality consistent. This is termed ‘upstream supply’. The company also gives incentives

to medium scale maize producers – credit, packaging and transport provision – so that the company has efficient, quality downstream supply chains for the grain feed.

Maize meal and grain feed is generally sold directly to other processing companies, maize wholesalers, and poultry farmers. The downstream supply chain occurs through ‘agents’ that have firm orders to buy a certain quantity, and then privately resell. Besides being customers of the NMC, they are not contracted to the company. They are however, given a substantial discount if they are reliable customers. These agents (or intermediaries) often are also targeted by suppliers of chicks and other inputs, so that those suppliers can piggyback on the networks of intermediaries to sell their products widely. NMC often makes transportation available to intermediaries, as do other chick suppliers. This benefits the company so that it has a captive, well-supported market, while still maintaining a ‘development ethic’:

We have developed arrangements with hatcheries that distribute day old chicks. One of our strategies is to transport both the feed and the chicks. The main reason for this is to add or to encourage development to the area. They are like our agents of development so we take care of the needs of the area (Interview, Managing Director of the National Milling Corporation, Lusaka, July 2007).

Despite the fact that the NMC is ultimately a business, it has a strong commitment to developing the local economy. In part, this is because the Zambian managing director is a ‘stalwart’ of Zambia’s agri-industry and was involved in national agricultural union development long before Seaboard takeover of the NM, and has been involved, for over thirty years, in Zambia’s food economy in nutrition, policy development, and agriculture-industry publication. The MD opposes the image of a corporate social responsibility, and asserts that the company is interested in building the national economy and investing in development locally

... to build capacity, networks and infrastructure. Because of the small volumes that are sometimes bought or sold by us, there is the potential of it being commercially feasible. I see this as a future investment. We’ve had, over the past five years, a minimum of 50

percent growth in sales, and most of the growth has been seen in just the last three years (ibid).

One particular farmer, who has recently begun to expand his smallholder poultry business, affirms the supportive role NM plays in agribusiness. He notes that the NMC has recently changed its supply and support policy to meet some of the challenges that small farmers face, in particular the provision of credit and the accessibility of agricultural extension services that extends to coupling supply inputs for farmers (personal communication, Owner of Tasheni Poultry Farm, Lusaka, November 2007).

The case of National Milling suggests that the agribusiness firm may not appropriate a 'developmental rationalisation' for the sake of gaining profit, although this may well be the case. More importantly, it appropriates a developmental rationalisation because it is in the firm's best interest to do so. National Milling's future growth is bound to the local context, and its operations are reliant on the forms of interaction at work in that context. The model of buying and selling feed, and the way the company makes credit, transport and other services available is not so much that it supports the local economy necessarily, but that it is governed by forms of interaction in the domestic political economy context that circumscribe how the company operates. What we see is that, in practice, the rationalisations that make a firm a neoliberal subject and those that underpin development are woven together. Development, and support for small-scale farmers is tied to economic growth, the competitiveness of a firm and successful business practise.

As we see in the next case, the domestic pole context also appears to determine the behaviour of other agribusiness firms. And this has implications for the food geography literature and its enthusiasm that agribusinesses and supermarkets revolutionise African economies.

Limited consumer markets vs. agribusiness growth: the case of Hybrid Poultry Solutions

Hybrid Poultry Solutions supplies day-old chicks either to its own processing firms or to other producers, businessmen, farmers and processors. The company, and the poultry industry at large, is influenced by domestic and regional political economy changes, and has noticed

...substantial growth in the last three years because of the copper boom in the Copperbelt in terms of new miners therefore more money on the street; government investment in infrastructure [roads]; and the demise in Zimbabwe ... investment found its way to Zambia (Interview with the manager of Hybrid Poultry Solutions, July 2007).

Even though this high-value supply chain suggests success as a large industrialised poultry agribusiness, Hybrid's manager is hesitant to conclude that this points to the 'transformation' of Zambia's food economy because the consumer market for high value foodstuff is limited. He argues that expansion of the poultry industry will be ultimately ineffective in a broader economic environment that cannot absorb increased production, despite the growth in agribusiness:

If you look, there's already four major plants [processors] here, ZamChick, Verino, Eureka and Crest. All of them are sitting on stock except Verino which means that even with today's production of dressed chicken, we're overproducing at the moment. If I have to double the capacity here, I'm not going to sell more locally, I'm just going to pinch market share from the other competitors. I'm not going to create massive growth in sales (ibid).

Tempered with massive growth in sales, is the recognition that for the vast majority of urban consumers:

spending power is growing but isn't growing enough. There [are] still a lot of people below the poverty line. If we grow by 1kg per person per year it's seen as phenomenal growth but that only pushes it to 5kg [per person, per year], and average in South Africa in 22kg, Brazil is 36kg and the UK is 38kg (ibid).

Hybrid's growth is limited because it recognises that competing with other agribusinesses for the same market share is in fact counterproductive in a context where the consumer base is growing slowly.

In the case of Hybrid, while there are certain drivers that encourage the expansion of the firm, in reality, these firms can expand only so far as the market is able to absorb the product. One of the premises of the value chains approach is that linking farmers to markets through outgrower contracts will decrease poverty and increase food security. This of course assumes that the high value product is consumed elsewhere, because it is too high value (expensive) for the vast majority of local consumers to afford. Little mention is made about domestic consumption. In Zambia, the market for the consumption of high value produce is not big, and export chains are limited to speciality produce. Therefore, in practice, the local market tempers the power of agribusiness firms in the food economy.

Cultivating the food industry: the case of Ross Breeders

According to many in the poultry industry in Zambia, Ross Breeders is a key player in the region (Poultry Bulletin, 2000). The company is part of Country Bird Holdings in South Africa, but unlike other South African subsidiary companies, Ross buys all inputs that are available locally in Zambia, and 'ploughs 90 percent of the profits back into development in Zambia' (personal communication, Director of Ross Breeders Zambia, Mr C. Lindsay, August, 2007).

Of the 800 000 day old chicks Ross produces per month, more than half go to small-scale producers and the rest to commercial broiler production firms. The supply chain is therefore pivotal to Ross's enterprise, and while there are a few large lorries that arrive from large firms such as ZamChick, thousands of day old chicks make their way from production plants to small-scale farmers through intermediary traders or 'agents' as they are called by Ross's Director. One such agent is the ZNFU's veterinarian who receives around a hundred boxes of day-old chicks (ten per box) at the ZNFU's show grounds. From here, small-scale farmers from the Lusaka area fetch as many boxes as they have purchased and transport them home (see Preface).

Ross's Director, Mr Lindsay explains: 'when we first came we had a few guys on a bike and slowly we invest in that and our business has grown'. Ross's supply network relies primarily on agents who either contact Ross or are approached by Ross to sell day old chicks to small-scale farmers outlying areas. Agents, are middlemen who themselves buy from Ross and resell, and the transaction is based very much on the agent's ability to pay Ross upfront upon delivery. They also get a five percent commission from the chicks sold. A verbal commitment to buy has to be firmed up three weeks in advance by the agent, and agents are given three months to demonstrate that they have the ready market to sell on the chicks they buy from Ross. Ross, as an incentive, delivers consignments to certain areas four to five times per week. The remarkable span of Ross' network is very much dependent on intermediaries.⁵⁷

The main rationale for increasingly employing agents as a preferred network strategy is related to Ross's plans for expansion, and protection of the existing production base:

when your production gets to the stage when you actually now need market, that's what you need to expect...so ...we'll expand out until we have enough volumes to make expansion feasible. [Points to an outlying area eastward] We've got a good population here, a good growing area; you've got nice towns set up here, not just farming populations ...so basically to get your product down there [where there is little development]the cost is going to be obscene (Ibid.).

Interestingly, Ross projects expansion of the industry based on urbanisation trends and the transition of planning in various municipalities from agriculture to other economic trade-related

⁵⁷ Ross has a number of agents in Lusaka and other provinces in Zambia, and two in the DRC: '[Points to a map, northward from Lusaka. We have] 12 agents in Lusaka, two in Kabwe, one in Kapri Mposhi, two in Ndola, two in Luacha, two in Kitwe, one in Chingolo, one in Chilabongwe, two in Lubumbashi, that's the DRC, but we drop the birds here [points to the border town], they come to fetch it, the border post, that's a bit like the wild west' (personal communication, Mr C Lindsay).

activity. The future of the poultry industry is an important consideration for Ross, as noted in the following example.

Ross hosts a number of road shows or on-site training days to provide a service to small-scale farmers and agents. At these events, poultry industry suppliers or upstream processors provide guidance, samples and show-and-tell advice centres to emerging farmers to access the inputs and information for markets. The Ross event, hosted in August 2007 at the parent breeding facility 60 kilometres from Lusaka city, attracted a large number of emerging farmers and included a day-long series of workshops where farm experiments were used to teach broiler growers the intricacies of poultry farming. Ross Breeders' motivation for providing this type of service was to establish a ready market that would be profitable and would grow with the company by cultivating supportive relationships with loyal agents and customers. The rationale is that if farmers are provided with inputs without experience in how to rear chicks, Ross will always have a future market and at the same time it will enhance capacity and ensure success of small-scale farmers so that Ross remains competitive and continues to contribute to development:

We have a formal side, and large economies of scale, but at the same time it's a growth economy (ibid.).

Ross's model of business is influenced by priorities in political economy to such a degree that its projected growth follows patterns of local consumption and urbanisation closely. Its dual concern with economic success of the firm is indivisible from activities that may be considered 'developmental'. The Ross case is a good example of where a firm has a concerted developmental rationalisation while at the same time recognises that growing the business relies very much on informal supply chains. In this case, Ross's territorial embeddedness is guided by a contextually sensitive knowledge of the local economy and its growth path. In short, it adapts to the Zambian context so efficiently that the firm is seen as an exemplar to other agribusiness industries in Zambia (personal communication with Mr M. Ngosa, director of the Poultry Association of Zambia). The case of Shoprite demonstrates that far from the supermarket

revolutionising Zambia's economy, there are certain factors in the domestic context which circumscribe its business.

Domestic challenges to the supermarket revolution: the case of Shoprite

Shoprite opened its doors in Zambia in October 1995. Before this time, the state-owned company, called the Zambian Import and Export Company, was the only formal-format outlet in the country. Shoprite bought the Zambian Import and Export Company (NIAEC) in 1995 and absorbed all of the senior managing staff, which included my main respondent, Mr C. Bota, now the Head of Shoprite's operations in Zambia. Mr Bota narrated the series of events that resulted in Shoprite move into Zambia in the 1990s, and went on to provide an account of how the supermarket impacted the Zambian economy and the aspirations of people.⁵⁸

By this time, just post liberalisation, the second regime post independence, things had dwindled down to a halt trade wise. This was a combination of issues, nepotism being one. For instance NIAEC had an ex-army officio as its head. At the same time there was massive economic decline, plus the world ethos was changing given that just five years before this was the massive capitalist turnaround in government. Post-1994 was an era of wholesale privatisation, and naturally the trade sector was one of those to be changed, entirely. There was no recapitalisation and no continuation of products and services particularly in the retail environment. It was quite chaotic. There were food shortages, and even basics like cooking oil was very scarce. People used to get up early in the morning and queue for basics. Sometimes you'd queue for three days and nothing. if you notice

⁵⁸ Excerpts from this interview are quoted here in length in part because researchers had been refused interviews with any Shoprite staff since 2003, particularly with domestic, Zambian staff because of a critical appraisal of Shoprite's impact on the labour sector in Zambia – Darlene Miller's research (personal communication, the Head of Shoprite's African Operations, Mr G. Fritz, Cape Town, January 2007). Thus the interview is a rare example of personal communication with Zambian staff. I was quizzed at length in South Africa by Mr Fritz about the intentions of my research, which, at the time was geared more toward a narrative of the modernising Zambian food economy. Mr Fritz refused permission for me to speak with Zambian staff, asserting that it was not company policy for researchers to speak with local staff (because of Miller's research) but instead had speedily made arrangements for me to meet with his South African counterpart in Zambia. I gained access to Mr Bota through personal contact with a Zambian bureaucrat, and later found out through conversation with Mr Bota that he was the anonymous primary contact of Darlene Miller's research about Shoprite's labour policy. This accounts for the way the interview seems to shift from being accidentally critical of the company, to providing a PR message.

people getting into a queue everyone would run to join it. It sounds funny now, but you know if there was a queue there was the opportunity to get some or other needed commodity.

So before '95 there were shortages, price controls and scarce basic commodities. In June '95 people who could afford it would get their families to buy goods from outside and bring them in cross border. Come October 26 1995, it was unbelievable. Shoprite SA came in international fashion, not as a minor enterprise coming to help out a poor economy build itself; it came in with international style. ...Shoprite had transplanted itself into the Zambian market. First development was along the line of rail, and they covered all nine provinces.

As I noted earlier the success of supermarkets in urban Africa and their dominant status in the food economy are based on a number of factors: rapid urbanization and the growth in urban incomes and higher consumption aspirations of the urban middle class or indeed perceptions of it, the partial demise of the informal/traditional food economy, an increase in foreign direct investment of retail multinationals, and their role in fast-tracking commercialization of production and processing to meet their demands.

As a general trend in urban Africa, the openness of economies and the aspirations of the urban middle-class consumer offer considerable profit potential and high investment yield for retail companies who look to expand their enterprise on the continent. A recent finance-media publication notes that: 'Africa is the last emerging market . . . [and African growth] is one of the most interesting parts of the market at the moment.' This is primarily because of the 'more interesting opportunities in the consumer space [where retail] firms could be beneficiaries of an expanding middle class' (*Reuters UK*, 2007).

The shift in aspirational consumption based on higher urban incomes is seen to be the pull factor

for retail investment and the exponential growth success of supermarkets in emerging markets (Miller, 2008). While rapidly expanding urban populations and increasing incomes provide the necessary environment for convenient, accessible, and varied food choices, the presence of upwardly mobile consumers with changing consumption patterns is seen to be a necessary condition for supermarket share growth. As the head of Shoprite's operations in Zambia explains, while this was indeed the case in Zambia, the supermarket did not cater for everyone, and was inaccessible for the majority of the population:⁵⁹

People became accustomed to this lifestyle, their habits started changing. They began to trust the prices and they became used to the standardization of quality, branding. . . . You could trust the product; it wasn't going away, so people's lifestyles changed. They filled their lives with Shoprite. The buying mentality of the housewife, and everybody, got accustomed to that international standard. Before this, people couldn't care less about quality, when the product was actually there, "who cares; it was a parastatal". But that's if you could afford it.

Haantuba and de Graaf (2008:210) note that in Zambia 'supermarkets still account for an insignificant proportion of produce sold'. Mr. Bota also comments on the tendency for Lusaka-based supermarkets to cater for the higher-income consumer. He notes that Shoprite did not initially anticipate the fact that the food sales needed to be accessible to local consumers:

Mongu, [does] not have this range; this range is for people like you and me, the traveller, tourist; the high income bracket. The Mongu range only included basics like oil, sugar, flour, maize meal, soaps; the basic range. The guy that could afford a wider range was probably rich enough to drive to Lusaka for it anyway. The lower income provinces, we knew we weren't going to sell him snoek or prawns; we'll sell what's caught in the river. We made the silly mistake of not studying the ethos of the people and sold fish, but they could get fish from the river, and it was free.

⁵⁹ Elsewhere in Africa, as I showed in previous chapters, only a small percentage of the urban population purchases food stuff from supermarkets.

In the Zambian case, Shoprite, the South African supermarket prefers not to procure in Zambia because local production (in)capacity and quality, or lack of it, often falls short of meeting the participation demands by supermarkets (personal communication, Head of Shoprite's African operation, January 2007, Cape Town). This is put down, simply, 'to the issue of quality'. Yet it has political implications because, as Miller (2008:4) notes, exclusionary standards based on low-quality and quantity claims are often used to justify exploitative business practices even when capacities and quality are present.

Is it a logistical business issue, or is it political? This rather amusing quote tells one side the story – that it is logistical:

People look at us and want us to be the saviours of Africa in terms of small-scale farmers ... we can't. ... We can't. In a [social responsibility] programme, a hundred people growing onions tomatoes and beans, it's a small community, they give their tomatoes to their family and friends and they also sell in the street, whatever's left, Shoprite must buy. How do we do it? Firstly who do we sell it to, the whole community's growing tomatoes? (Interview with the head of Shoprite's African operations, January 2007, Cape Town)

There is another contradiction here: on the one hand the struggle between local producers and the supermarket giant is an isolated, depoliticized transaction based on quality or logistical sale. On the other, in much of the international development literature, supermarkets are now seen as the transformative force in local economies, and as 'partners' in social development to increase the capacity of small-scale farmers to be included in supermarket supply chains (see Haantuba and De Graf, 2008; Timmer, 2008). Clearly, in Zambia, the supermarket does not see its role as particularly developmental – beyond its corporate social responsibility projects. And beyond its foreign retail expansion, the comparatively few urban consumers, and the limited markets for small-scale farmers, claims that supermarkets 'revolutionise' the food economy in Africa are substantially exaggerated.

Another side of the story, though, is that domestic institutions in Zambia, together with the state, are determined to coerce Shoprite to adhere to legislation about sourcing. According to Mr Bota,

In 1995, we were importing something like 85 percent of our fresh fruit and vegetable. At that stage, Shoprite's attitude was, the quality is not good enough for us; [but] it's still good enough for the market. It's just you and your husband growing in their back yard somewhere...now, twelve years later, and this may shock, or surprise, but not altogether overwhelm you; 12 years on, we source around 95 percent of our fresh produce locally. What we import is what we cannot get, or we don't grow locally. Other processed foodstuff, we have increased to around 60 percent local supply.

Mr Bota at this stage may have been giving me the classic public relations line here from Shoprite, also on its Freshmark website (Freshmark is the procurement label of all Shoprite's fresh produce), often contradicting other evidence that shows that the supermarket sources most processed foodstuff from South Africa (see Kenny and Mather, 2008; Miller, 2008). Indeed a later conversation with Mr Bota suggested that he, in his own capacity and not speaking for the company, thought quite differently, but his position soon shifted.⁶⁰

My personal position... Yes, come and invest in my country, take your benefit as a corporate entity, but buy from my people. On the record, in terms of government regulation on international retail, these companies are quietly pressured to do so [source locally]. Government has quietly, but persistently put pressure on us to make it happen here.

...but we cannot just accept anything, it's like "we understand you're poor, but we've got a business to run". Mostly, we have grown with suppliers, we've asked some to move/relocate, and others, we've gone the distance for up to the twelve years we've been here to train, inspect, state regulations about branding, bar-coding, packaging etc. But we

still have Big Brother government that are checking up on whether we are meeting regulations about local sourcing....⁶¹

Kenny and Mather (2008:1), and Saunders (2008) argue that Shoprite faces increasing pressure from the Zambian government to adhere to national regulations about sourcing and labour practises, and in this way, the state ‘disciplines’ the supermarket. As Kenny and Mather (2008) note, there are efforts in Zambia in place to compel supermarkets to conform to domestic sourcing. Mr Bota also notes that this is increasingly the case, even though Shoprite appears on the surface to be ‘doing its bit’, but in his capacity as a Shoprite manager, he reflects the platitude of the company when he asserts that it is ultimately a business (‘we cannot just accept anything, it's like "we understand you're poor, but we've got a business to run"’).

The above excerpts indicate that Shoprite is embedded in the Zambian context and its activities are part of a much broader set of transitions in the local context. Indeed, as Jayne argues

Far from being an irreversible tsunami...supermarkets are one of many forces affecting the evolution of food systems in developing countries. The evolution of food systems and their distributional effects are also being fundamentally driven by local demographic, institutional and technical change, as well as by history (Jayne, 2008:109).

While the local context and transitions within it influence the supermarket, to suggest that the context erodes the power of the supermarket would be an overstatement, because supermarkets prove to have an edge.

⁶⁰ On this point, he added that I could use the information in my thesis, but was to keep my sources anonymous in other publicly accessible reports (and to send him a copy).

⁶¹ At the time of interviews, Freshmark, Shoprite fresh produce procurement wing were hosting a conference in Zambia to showcase its existing and planned local sourcing initiatives, many of which were corporate social responsibility initiatives that Shoprite management at HQ felt invariably had led to bad publicity when the project was over (referring to the tomato project above). Mr Bota noted, off the record again, that even though he was the local spokesperson for the campaign, he was not included in any of the campaign planning and consequently could not voice an opinion about the fact that no-one from the agricultural ministry or the farmers’ union had been invited.

Because supermarkets in Africa are also predominantly large foreign investors, their ability to fast-track processes in the broader environment (upon which they symbiotically exist) are not only limited to the actual commodity supply chain. Supermarkets are also engaged with political-economy processes through which they may induce the supermarket revolution by taking advantage, as they have done, of political-economy opportunities like deregulation and liberalization projects in order to gain a greater foothold in the economy. More recently, players in the agro-food industry have become more heavily represented than ever before in regional trade negotiations, and this is not surprising because the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has recently ratified its free trade area (2008). Retailers and other regional investors drive a hard bargain to make sure that the trade negotiations happen in their favour. In Zambia, the presence of South African supermarket management at SADC trade negotiations often outweighs that of the Zambia's foreign trade contingent. The head trade negotiator of Zambia's Foreign Trade Department in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry confirms:

Retailers have a huge stake in this whole thing. It's all about export credit guarantee from the side of the retailer. They are powerful players in this whole process. In fact we can say that the process is driven by South African retailers. Wherever Shoprite goes it tries to open up the markets and become a very strong bargaining voice in these meetings. And they have more strength because they are also of course tied to the investment side. At these negotiations, South African retailers come in their number to these meetings and they fight hard so that commodities where they don't have market hold are relaxed.

Although the Zambian state intermittently controls trade barriers, this strategy is not conducive to steady growth of the agrifood sector. Increasingly, as GVC scholars note, there are factors in the 'global market' that influence, for instance, the cost of fuel and global commodity prices that states have little control over. In addition, there are regional influences at work that likewise are difficult to overcome. Shoprite, for example, in regional trade meetings, lobbies in favour of more open liberalization policies in Sub-Saharan Africa for its further expansion plans.

Preliminary conclusions on the ‘local turn’ and the influence of the domestic political economy

Agribusinesses that are based in Zambia, particularly those that are subsidiaries of larger international food conglomerates, are clearly important players in the local food economy, as they are elsewhere. In Zambia, many of them have tailored their enterprise to meet local parameters and have targeted both their retail and supply at smaller scales. For instance, larger and increasingly more economically successful enterprises in the poultry sector have hybridized conventional agribusiness with a particular form of informalised supply and/or distribution. Conventional out-grower schemes linked to contracted poultry farming have developed very localized distribution networks that rely on smaller-scale distribution networks to areas in and around Lusaka, even where supermarket purchases are possible.

This is mirrored by ‘strategic territorialisation’ of international agribusiness outside the poultry industry: Parmalat, the dairy conglomerate, is another example. Parmalat Zambia has so localized its supply chain that it now sells single-use sized sachets (25 ml), and has a central depot where vendors with little refrigeration, if any, can buy between 20 and 100 sachets to sell informally. The point is that large agribusinesses rely on local contextualization, and that in this case, they recognize the dominance of lower value retail opportunities.

At the same time, there seem to be a shift toward the local – strengthening, nurturing and developing the local food system. For instance, domestic institutions such as the Zambian National Farmers’ Union recognize that integrating the large percentage of smallholder farmers-cum-entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector is an important strategy for growth of the domestic industry. The ZNFU proactively allocates funds to develop the capacity of small-scale farmers and to support the growth of the domestic industry so that it is increasingly self-sufficient and competitive in the region. Agribusinesses that are now embedded in the local economy also appropriate this kind of developmental rationality and see building the domestic economy as their

foremost priority. The Markets and Bus Station Act, discussed in the previous chapter, can also be seen as an organizing strategy to upgrade and build up the domestic (informal) food economy making it a more accessible and competitive market for consumers and farmers. International agribusiness investment has been met with an organized strategy to upgrade the domestic food economy (both formal and informal), to invest in it, and to integrate it with local production and processing enterprise. Researchers suggest that local food economies in Africa ‘discipline’ foreign retail capital to align with domestic economic growth, and that while changes have occurred in the local food supply economy because of the impact of supermarkets, they have not entirely shaped the nature or direction of the local food economy. While these appear to be isolated incidents, we can see a set of rationalizations at work here: growing the economic competitiveness of the country; protecting and re-regulating local markets; and investing in capacity building for small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs. In some ways this can be seen as a concerted effort by various commercial and small-scale players in the agro-food sector to ‘keep it local’ in terms of sourcing, supply, and retail. But is there a real trend toward localisation?

Perhaps a more overt example of localization in Zambia is the Proudly Zambian campaign. Even though this institutionalized campaign is only in its beginning stages, and is yet mired in red-tape in regarding an effort to acquire Zambian Bureau of Standards approval, the rationale of the campaign resonates strongly with other evidence in Zambia that point to the localization of the economy there are also other precedents in Zambia’s local economy that point to this localizing tendency.⁶²

The Proudly Zambian Campaign

‘Buy Local’ advertisements in Zambia have, until recently, been used by private firms for marketing purposes. There are a number of examples of this local-looking marketing efforts in Zambia for products and services attached from anything from enamel paint, maize meal,

Zambian mobile phone services and livestock sales with a variety of different labels: 'Proud to be Zambian', 'A Product of Zambia', 'Proudly Zambian', 'A Truly Zambian initiative', 'Be Zambian, Buy Zambian'. And this is not limited to 'indigenous' Zambian firms alone. Even some international agribusiness investors add a 'Truly Zambian' label to their brand.

In the case of other food commodities, there are a number of brands that hope to attract consumers to choose foodstuff (or beer) that is familiar or national. Some of these signifiers link to identity, cultural or national consumption and others are linked to supporting or building the national economy. For instance, Dar Beef Company's brand is 'Let Zambia Grow'. Another example a local fermented maize-meal drink (shake-shake) brand whose slogan is 'Drinking the one you know' (see Figures 7 and 8).

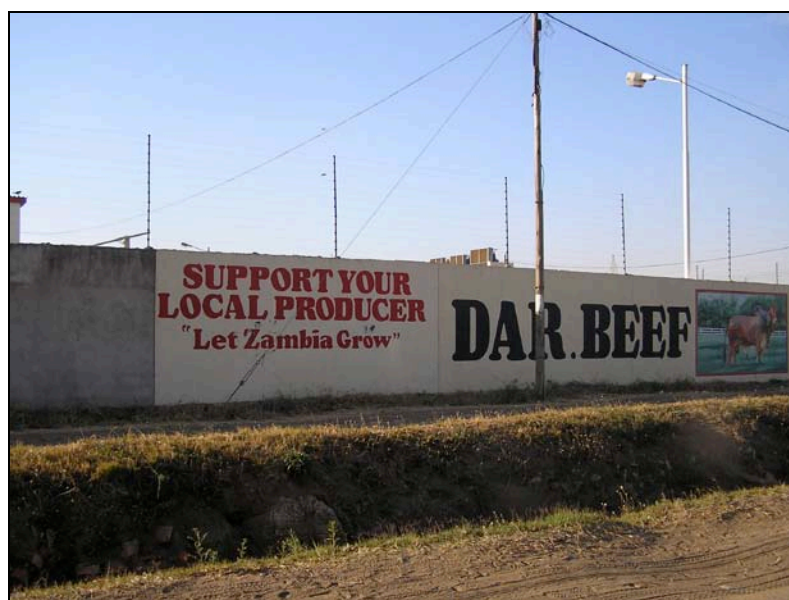


Figure7: The Dar Beef brand: 'Let Zambia Grow'

⁶² I have written about the localisation trend in other contexts on the African continent (see *BBC Focus on Africa Magazine*, 2009, issue 1).



Figure 8: A local shake-shake brand's slogan 'Drink the one you know'

But there is a recent formal *Proudly Zambian* campaign that began in 2007. According to the manager of *Proudly Zambian*:

[The campaign] will encourage and support both the supply and demand side of enterprise, supported by state financial intervention, through, a statutory body called the Zambian development Agency housed in the Department of Industry. One of the main reasons for this campaign is to encourage discernment of consumers who, at present, do not seem to have a choice. The one thing the campaign tries to fight against is compromises on quality. More recently, in fact last month [October 2007], a consignment from Zambia travelled to South Africa to attend workshops etc with the *Proudly South African* think-tank. That [the *Proudly South African* campaign] is the model we are using, wholesale [sic]. ... [We want to] make Zambian products that will be attractive to the local market: quality, able to withstand competition from export markets, and cater for domestic demand. (Interview with

Economist at Ministry of Domestic Trade, Ms M Lungu, Manager of the *Buy Zambian* Campaign, Lusaka, November 2007).

The project is modelled after South Africa's *Proudly South African* brand, a collaborative between the public and private sectors. In Zambia the project is state-driven, and not without its controversies. There are two incentive schemes planned for the 'buy-in' of the project. One is access to the marketing strength of the campaign through labelling and quality certification linked the Bureau of Standards. The second is preferential access to government procurement, and perhaps a guise for state control of enterprise and the potential for opportunism. Also there is the problem of ideology versus implementation; the project does not have a fixed deadline for its rollout, and will depend on an intensive capacity building drive for the state Bureau of Standards and government staff. Despite this, the project manager was optimistic: 'supporting local business, that's our focus as well as nation building' (ibid).

The cases above all highlight that 'territorial embeddedness' as a concept does not fully capture what is happening in the Zambian context. A range of actors and institutions are situated in the Zambian political economy, appropriate a shared set of priorities and rationalizations in order to grow and protect the local economy. It can therefore be seen as much as a political process as an economic one.

Conclusion

Drawing attention to cases where the domestic political economy context determines or influences the shape of the food system, it is possible to make sense of apparent contradictions in Zambia's food system and to think critically about the issue of economic development. With an awareness of the food 'system', a greater appreciation of the mutual transformation of

agribusiness and retail firms and the local place in which they are embedded is also made possible.

But the cases and analysis presented in this chapter also raise a number of questions? How should we conceptualise governance? And what is the importance of understanding governance in the context of food studies research? Given that firms and other institutions do not act in isolation in the food system, the interaction between different actors and institutions are profoundly interconnected, and reliant on each other. But as institutions change, as small-scale farmers expand, or the socio-economic environment improves, what will this for how the food system and forms of governance will change? These questions are answered in the final chapter of this thesis, which follows.

Roadmap

Thus far, the thesis has answered the three main research questions:

- 1) What are the domestic political economy influences of the urban food systems in Lusaka Zambia?
- 2) In addition to agribusiness firms, which other institutions are central to the urban food system, and what are their roles?
- 3) Does the domestic political economy and non-firm institutions influence firms? And if so, how?

The key arguments as drawn out in the thesis are that:

- 1) We are best able to examine the economic growth pathways, and ongoing, interconnected processes of change (or trajectories) in Zambia's urban food system through an examination of the domestic political economy.
- 2) Multiple sites of power in the food system, particularly those institutions that would be ignored in more normalising agrifood research approaches, constitute an integral part of the food system because they govern it; and
- 3) Given that there are multiple sites of power, the various firms and institutions in Zambia's food system clearly do not govern in isolation, but instead, intersecting forms of governance circumscribe and often profoundly influence agribusiness institutions.

The final chapter of this thesis discusses the implications of these findings and reflects on the research process.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to contribute to a broader research agenda concerning agrifood systems in Africa. In the thesis I argue that we are best able to examine the trajectories and ongoing, interconnected processes of change in food systems through an examination of those aspects in the domestic and regional political economy that have influenced the food system. Second, I have argued here that there are multiple sites of power in the food system, and examining the roles of domestic institutions – particularly those institutions that may be ignored in conventional agrifood research approaches – and their role in the food system, are central to agrifood scholarship. And third, in a phase of globalised economic interaction, agribusiness firms and supermarkets are seen to govern all functions along commodity value chains down to producers. But given that there are multiple sites of power, the domestic political economy determines the economic interaction that agribusiness institutions engage in. In this chapter, I elaborate on each of these dimensions by summarizing the analysis in preceding chapters and linking key findings to other approaches in the literature. I sketch out how these interpretations both relate and contribute to research on agrifood systems in Africa, and I detail a revised conception of governance. I conclude this section by reflecting on the research methods, expressing the limitations of my research methods, and outlining future areas of research.

Zambia's food system: a product of its domestic political economy

Agrifood scholars who were concerned with the wider political economy system in which food supply and provisioning occurred urged a study of food systems. Looking at food systems, as opposed to commodity supply networks or the intricacies of the chain of food trade, while a worthwhile pursuit, yielded little in terms of why certain interaction occurred. Indeed looking at food systems in Africa and how these systems of interaction and exchange were embedded in broader political changes was a similar focus of Africanist scholars. Taking my cue from these scholars, the thesis presented the multifaceted and often eclectic nature of urban food systems in Africa as seen through the case of Zambia. Where the literature was weak in appreciating the

political economy context, the multiple sites of power in the food system and the mutual transformation of firms and the places in which they embed, an awareness of the 'system' provided the justification for challenging the literature and filling its gaps. In sum, the thesis shows that food system is the product of political economy processes and the regulation that accompanied those transitions. For instance, during the early years of independence, nationalizing and developing domestic agriculture was the major part of the political process. While this is interesting to know as background, understanding the extent of what was an essentially state-driven undertaking, as a deeply rooted 'national development' rationalization in Zambia, allows us to recognize a similar rationality in present day state policy, and in the efforts of other non-state institutions in Zambia's food system. An important difference is that it is not so much 'nationalist' as it is protective or supportive of the domestic economy and committed to making food accessible to the urban poor. And this rationalisation still has implications for the way, for instance, the state enforces and removes trade restrictions intermittently, or how the business association supports and protects a growing economy.

Related essentially to World Bank instituted structural adjustment programmes, neoliberal reforms are a second important aspect that has influenced Zambia's food system, as it has in the global south more generally. Economic reforms account in part for the dominance of South African agribusiness and retail firms in Zambia, and for neoliberal changes in the domestic economy such as growing economies of scale in agribusiness and efforts to increase the competitiveness of the food sector in the region. I show that neoliberal priorities do not circulate in the food system in isolation, as if they have replaced or subsumed priorities to develop and nurture the domestic economy. In turn, these twin priorities account for the way international agribusiness firms adapt or localise to meet the demands of the domestic context, particularly in the way it supports small-scale farmers – the dominant percentage of Zambia's population. Importantly, supporting (and appeasing) the large population of small-scale farmers was a key priority of Kenneth Kaunda's government. That an agribusiness association is a trustee of agricultural development suggests that the priority is as much a political and developmental

priority as it is a neoliberal one that is about to 'cash in' on the productive capacity of Zambia's large small-scale farmer population.

The informal economy is the third aspect that has shaped Zambia's food system. Informal markets in Lusaka have their roots in colonial time urban planning, and over time have been seen both as an urban nuisance and as a vital source of economic growth to the city. There are recent changes in Lusaka's markets that point to the increasing 'formalisation' of the so-called 'informal' economy in terms of the infrastructural running of the market. These changes mean that the urban market is a more permanent feature of the domestic food economy and should not be seen as ad hoc, survivalist or transitory.

While the network transactions within the markets may have not changed in decades, another key change in the food system is the 'informalisation of economic engagement, which is increasingly prevalent in Zambia's economy and the food system is no exception. Take for instance the way large agribusinesses rely on casual procurement, marketing or sale of produce, and more crucially, traders. The 'informalisation' strategy works firstly because of the large percentage of smallholders able to supply grain or buy day old chicks to rear and sell in outlying villages without contractual arrangements, for example. But it is also linked to a rationalisation that circulates in the agribusiness community, related to the imperative to grow slowly with a slowly growing consumption base, and with the forms of interaction that exist. Rapid growth through larger economies of scale would require more investment and not as much return on the higher value product because there is a limited consumer market for formally marketed foodstuff. Agribusinesses often cannot afford to transport commodities from/to out-lying areas, and thus rely on informal economic networks of traders.

There appears to be a shared rationalisation that since the majority of the country's farmers are small-scale, and informal modes of transacting are best suited to this context, making use of trader networks and encouraging these networks by linking small-scale farmers to agribusiness

enterprise will inevitably grow the economy and have a knock-on effect on the consumer market. This scenario seems to suggest that developmental, neoliberal and informalising rationalisations circulate in the food system to contribute to contextually specific agribusiness strategies and a 'shared' imaginary of where the food system is going. The chapter on Zambia's agrifood context concludes by restating the importance of understanding the domestic political economy in food studies. Without this understanding, agrifood research remains dualised, and efforts to think through policy implications may subsequently be one-sided.

Multiple sites of power in Zambia's food system and the impact of 'context'

Since the 1980s, there have been significant changes in the global economy that have restructured the way food economies are governed in Africa. In part this is related to increased investment by international agribusiness firms as part of a worldwide shift to consolidate trade. As countries liberalised and progressively deregulated control over agricultural enterprise, production systems are increasingly seen to be controlled by agribusiness firms.

That global economies have been restructured over the past few decades is indisputable. However, although international agribusiness investment, particularly in retail, signals a new phase in global economic interaction, agribusiness firms do not replace existing modes of economic agrifood transaction, nor do they nullify existing governing structures. Instead given the inherent hybridity of the system, the 'governances' of agribusiness firms, the Zambian National Farmers' Union and urban markets reflect multiple sites of power in Zambia's food system.

The ZNFU

The ZNFU, as an intermediary institution, represents agribusiness firms and producers, advises and supports agribusiness innovation strategies, influences the circulation of knowledge in the food system, and acts as an ombudsman of government agricultural policy. Another of its key

priorities is providing expertise, training and opportunities for productive market chain integration for small-scale farmers, and as such, it plays a crucial developmental role in the agrifood system. Although the ZNFU is funded in part by international donors, it is very much a custodian of the local food economy. The centrality of ZNFU in the domestic food system relates to its rootedness in the country's political economy, and the way, as an institution, it has changed over time to represent actors and firms in and reflect the priorities of the food system. Crucially, the priorities of the institution are not related to neoliberal rationalisations alone. Instead, the ZNFU's concern for cultivating and strengthening the food economy reveals a developmental rationalisation, as does its determination to lobby the state on its policies that challenge the growth and protection of the sector. In addition, the way the ZNFU governs also reflects both the resultant hybridity of the food system, and its trajectory of change, a point of discussion in a subsequent section.

The ZNFU case has a number of implications both for understanding the food system, and for rethinking governance. First, the role of the ZNFU underscores the hybridity and interconnectedness of the food system through its mediating role between agribusiness firms, farmers and the state. Integrating farmers to markets or creating high value chains for development, is not as seamless as 'linking' producers to markets or 'kick-starting' value chains. Instead, the engagement between actors in the food system is part of a much larger interconnected set of priorities, rationalisations and political economy processes as seen in this case. Second, the case also points to the dexterity of the food system: the ZNFU responds to the needs and priorities of the food system and reflects the changing political economy of the country as it relates to the agrifood sector. Third, the lobbying role of the ZNFU, as an intermediary institution, shows that there are determined political engagements that relate to the domestic agrifood sector, and this engagement has implications for the functioning and growth trajectory of the food system. And the dexterity of the system suggests that as the agrifood system/economy strengthens, the role of the institutions in the system will adapt in accordance. But is this rather fluid system conducive to stability in the long term? The supermarkets literature suggests not, but that instead, these modes of economic interaction will eventually give way to economic

interaction governed and regulated by supermarkets and agribusiness firms, and that this 'modern', supermarket-driven food system ultimately is what will benefit African economies.

A fourth contribution of the case study relates to the literature. In the case of Zambia, a relatively typical growing African economy, both the engagement between the state, agribusiness and farmers, and the dexterity of the systems of governance challenge the normative economic geography approach that uphold a vision of supermarkets and large economies of scale as the vector for developing a "modern" urban food system. In contrast, what we see is an ongoing, fluid engagement that relates to changing priorities while maintaining existing rationalisations. And because this type of economic engagement is shaped by processes and regulation in the domestic political economy environment, and advances the priorities of this context, institutions act in ways that will strengthen the domestic food economy. And finally, forms of governance that are geared toward strengthening the domestic food economy have an important impact on the food system because they facilitate creative interaction between members of the agribusiness community, resulting in capacity building investment, and, as far as possible, reduce risk for small-scale farmers or protect farmers from the kinds of price and resource risks they might otherwise face because of erratic state policy.

'Informalisation'

Urban markets in Zambia, likewise, are an important part of the food system because they link farmers to markets and make food accessible to urban consumers. By all accounts the informal economy should be giving way to more 'sophisticated' modes of retail, and its centrality in a growing African economy should be dwindling. However, the recent changes in Zambia's urban market, in particular the institution of the Markets and Bus Station Act of 2007, point to the revitalisation of the urban economy. In the literature, informal forms of governance are seen to shape markets or informal transaction. In the case of Zambia's food system, 'informal institutions' such as trust and social networks exist as they have for decades, but two more recent changes disrupt the informal-formal dualism. Urban markets which are generally considered 'informal'

because of the lack of regulation, now have formalised sets of governance practises in the market through the new markets Act. Larger economies of scale, on the other hand, typically considered formal, and highly regulated, now employ sometimes un-contracted traders and intermediaries to effectively run the enterprise.

On the first point, at the time of fieldwork in 2007, the Markets Act had been introduced in only one of Zambia's larger markets, and more recently the model as been used elsewhere in the country (in the Copperbelt and Kitwe). Representative management boards (including traders, marketeers, farmers, consumers and the local municipality) are seen as a first step into what politicians and market managers term the 'modernisation' of the market even though the changes predominantly affect the market infrastructure. For instance, changes in urban markets encompass the building of formal market spaces, the collection of levies and the provision of water and electricity. As a future strategy, markets managers also foresee the building of cold storage facilities that would reduce producers' and traders' risk associated with intermediary transactions. Changes to the infrastructure means that urban markets are not a transitory part of the city. On the contrary, they are seen as strategic zones of investment that are part of urban planning.

Moreover, the Act represents the increasing governance of the second economy, most often termed the 'informal economy'. While interactions between traders often are difficult to regulate, formalised governance of the market suggests that support for the second economy is increasingly seen as a legitimate and necessary means to economic growth and food security in the city. Formalised institutional governance in this case also represents the 'space' for informal enterprise to thrive, for farmers to find markets for their produce, for urban traders to operate locally, and ultimately for urban consumption demand even though there are still significant challenges. And, finally, this has implications for how we think about urban food systems in Africa. Urban markets in Africa do not represent a passing phase of economic growth, but instead, they represent the dynamism in the food system, and this compels a revisiting of food systems research that takes note of the institutional changes in these spaces.

The second aspect of 'hybrid' forms of governance in Zambia's food system has to do with the way agribusiness firms integrate intermediary traders into high value chains without contractual arrangements, but on the basis of reciprocal trust relationships (personal communication). The key difference with this kind of hybrid governance, as compared to the case above, is that it appears to be a temporary mechanism that is used to grow the domestic food economy. Implicit, therefore, is the idea that once the domestic economy develops, there may be less need for large agribusiness firms to make use of 'informalised' networks through traders. And what does this suggest about the trajectory of the food system and the 'structures' of governance? In this case, firms employ informal supply chain arrangements as a stopgap solution to ensure that their enterprise also meets the demands of the domestic economy in this phase of its growth.

On the point of the trajectory of the food system, given the way high value chains are seen to develop, stopgap informalising measures may indeed progressively give way to more formalised supply chains as firms grow and consumption demands increase. However, as McKenzie (2006) notes, comparatively stronger economies, in which there are more established commodity exchange systems such as financial trading markets, have relied and continue to rely on informal forms of interaction that are often tacit. Similarly the study of Innovation Systems and GVCs, shows that knowledge (or commodities) circulates through tacit interactions which are not captured by formal contract. Furthermore, as institutionalist theorists in Economic Geography and Sociology return to Granovetter's work on the strength of weak ties, 'informal institutions' such as social networks are recognised as a growing trend in economic development. Thus while research on urban markets shows a trend toward formalisation, we can expect that the 'restructuring' or development of food systems in Africa will not follow the same trajectory as it has in Europe or North America where 'informal' modes of food provisioning gave way to 'formal' ones. But when it comes to how economic interaction happens, and how it is governed, the dualised terms are obsolete. Taken together with the set of interacting influences and rationalisations in the food system in Zambia, the multiple sites of power, and the inherent hybridity of the food system, governance cannot be the domain of a particular set of firms

through a specific set of interactions. Instead, forms of governance are shaped by the context, perhaps most overtly seen in the case of agribusiness firms.

Agribusiness firms

Given the interacting agrifood *system* in Zambia, firms govern in unexpected ways because their behaviour and interactions are determined or influenced by the political economy environment and other players in the food system. In the case of Zambia's food system, agribusiness firms that are primarily concerned with profitability also appear to be interested in the economic development of the country they invest in because the growth of the firm is bound up with the growth of the local economy. This is primarily because of the domestic consumption capacity, but it is also because of the large number of small-scale farmers in Zambia. In this sense, other institutions and other political economy influencing factors constrain the influence of firms, and challenges the assumption that firms transform African economies as if those economies are impressionable blank slates. While firms indeed can and do adopt certain strategies in order to gain a foothold in the economy, some of the strategies appear counterproductive to their growth.

As a second set of findings, firms do not necessarily 'territorialise' or embed in the local economy as if firms are independent of that context. Instead, agribusiness firms are part of the domestic food economy, and they make concerted efforts to 'invest' in the food sector through training programmes and locally appropriate supply chain practises. The strategy here is therefore not one of territorial embeddedness. Indeed to think so suggests that productive enterprise is always the 'global' penetrating the 'local', and that economies only progress because of this kind of intervention – a point that Gibson-Graham (2002) makes incisively.

While it is clear that agribusiness firms have often emerged as the result of international or regional merges and acquisitions, these firms operate as domestic firms, aligning themselves to the country's needs and priorities, and taking over some of the developmental functions that are associated with the state. In this case we can appreciate, perhaps more overtly than in other cases,

the shared rationalisations that circulate in the food system and the impact of the context on firms. The shared priority of nurturing and growing the local economy in Zambia's food system is thus intertwined with a profit making rationalisation, and within this system, firms and the influencing political economy context are mutually constituted. In the case of Shoprite, they are strong-armed by the state to do it, and they do not romantically adopt the priorities of the place in which they are embedded by are coerced to do so, as mentioned below.

Third, the domestic political economy environment does not just influence the behaviour and economic prowess of firms; there are other governance structures that circumscribe the power of the firms, seen most evidently in the case of the South African supermarket Shoprite. Shoprite faces increasing pressure from the state to source locally, or as seen in the work of Miller (2005; 2008), to adhere to domestic labour regulations. The supermarket's power is circumscribed because it is not a free or autonomous institution that is disembedded. Quite the opposite, supermarkets are embedded firms, which 'territorialise' because of particular rationalisations, and the political economy in which they are embedded (or territorialise), such as Zambia, regulates, or as Kenny and Mather (2008) argue, disciplines the supermarket. Whether it is territorial embeddedness, localisation or the strong arm of political will, the fact that agribusiness firms and supermarkets adapt to the demands and priorities in the domestic political economy, has implications for the dominant contention about supermarkets as revolutionising local economies and for how governance is conceptualised.

Governance reconsidered

Economic geographers note that governance is perhaps the most important consideration in agrifood research in Africa. The conception of governance has shifted over time as debates have progressed in the Economic Geography literature, from how production/processing is controlled or regulated by supermarkets or international agribusiness firms to the allocation of costs and rewards following the division of labour in value chains, to how discourses of quality have come to shape expectations of value and meeting regulations. But while there has been a shift in concept over time in the globalisation economic geography literature, the literature on

supermarkets and agribusinesses in Sub-Saharan Africa – most notably outputs from the project ‘Regoverning Markets’ – retains a concept of governance that has to do with how supermarkets and firms transform economies and dominate trade because of increasingly stringent regulations. Furthermore, governance here fails to consider important changes in the domestic political economy and the role of domestic institutions pivotal to agrifood systems. For example, the ZNFU’s overseeing and nurturing role in the food system widens our view of governance. The ZNFU represents producers and agribusinesses, lobbies the state, and is at the forefront of developing the agricultural sector in Zambia. It is also pivotal in the circulation of knowledge in the food system. The ZNFU as an intermediary institution influences the governance of agribusiness firms and the state, and enables particular interactions while responding to immediate domestic priorities. Yet it is ‘governed’ from below, by a ‘voting’ constituency of farmers and agribusinesses that legitimise the role of the ZNFU. In addition, The ZNFU functions in part from donor funding and has to constantly demonstrate ‘good governance’ mechanisms. The richness of the above case would be missed in a conventional view of governance. Indeed not recognising other sites of power in the food system renders the focus on governance is static and limited. A limited conception of governance, in turn, has implications both for how economic interaction and economic development are seen to happen, and for related policy recommendations that result (as is often the case).

Indeed conceptions of agrifood system governance have changed over time, at an obvious level, as a result of actual changing forms of governance as economic restructuring has occurred in the 1980s-1990s. It is therefore perplexing that these conceptions present a frozen view of African agrifood economies as if these economies only transition in response to the governance of economic restructuring through agribusiness firms and supermarkets. On the one hand, the way the food system is governed reflects a particular time and a particular set of priorities. They are the material outcomes of changing priorities and needs, and they are governed differently at different times. This of course is nothing new. On the other, however, the notion, in the literature that governance of agrifood economies is the domain of agribusiness firms and supermarkets, is not necessarily because it is ‘true’, but because this era of neoliberal discourse shapes the way

economic development is constructed/read in the literature. Economic development is seen to be driven by the demands of 'the market', as if this is some primordial entity that inevitably leads to the retreat of the state and other non-firm institutions in regulating or governing capacities. Our understanding of governance must therefore attempt to move beyond a neoliberal economic discourse and highlight other forms of power. In the case of urban food systems in Africa this would mean a shift away from the dominant conception of supermarkets and agribusiness firms as transforming local economies.

For instance, in this era, the state is caught between integrating into a global economy, pleasing donors and nurturing the domestic economy, the form of governance by the state encompasses intermittent trade barriers, prescriptions to international investors about labour or sourcing practises, or devolving power to agribusiness associations. Our reading of governance must therefore respond to those interactions in the food system which are determined by domestic political economy motivations and outside dominant conceptions of governance. The present era mentioned above must shift our conception of governance so as to recognise the priorities that prompt certain forms of governance, and not the other way around.

From the analyses in the thesis, it is clear that in the dominant economic geography approach, power is situated or embodied in certain firms or certain interactions. However, in the case of Zambia's food system also presented in the thesis, I have shown how there are multiple sites of power in the food system that act in the food system simultaneously. Looking at the food system as a 'system' allows us to both recognise these sites of power, and to begin to understand how they interact. And it is this conception of governance I wish to take forward.

Intersecting governance(s)

Domestic institutions and agribusiness firms govern the food system in distinct ways, and so constitute multiple sites of power. Governance here is defined as the tendency for an institution to further particular priorities or to oversee and promote particular economic interaction, or

otherwise influence or regulate the way economic interaction happens. In this view, the way firms or other institutions govern the food system determines the success of the food system, and vice versa. If therefore there are multiple sites of power, it stands to reason that different actors govern in different ways. That this happens simultaneously is more complex to understand.

Institutions advance certain priorities or goal, drive the direction of economic growth and pursue certain ends. The way these institutions or actors achieve this aims is a mode of governance. In the supermarket literature, the goal or priority of the supermarket or agribusiness firm is to gain profit from retail, provision foodstuff, and maintain a level of quality. The mode of governance will obviously fit the priorities of that firm. And since the goal of the supermarket is not economic development, the forms of regulation or governance will not automatically result in economic development. Yet it is ironic both that the spread of supermarkets is so strongly related to economic development in the literature, and that supermarkets are seen to be the panacea for rural development in the way they link small-scale farmers to high end markets. It is therefore unrealistic and quite surprising that growth of agribusiness firms and supermarkets is expected to solve the growing needs of the urban poor – particularly in terms of food provisioning.

Other institutions, such as the agricultural unions and urban markets, on the other hand, advance other priorities, such as nurturing the domestic food economy, supporting small-scale farmers, facilitating adequate markets for farmers and contributing to food provisioning and economic growth. If these are the goals of these two institutions, it also stands to reason that the way they will govern will relate to meeting those goals. Expecting these institutions, together with state institutions to solve some of the developmental problems faced in African countries would be more appropriate. And it would be a more judicious use of donor funding as opposed to linking farmers to supermarkets or high value chains.

Why then, do some firms appear to share similar priorities as the agricultural union, for instance, in their aim to nurture the economy? Given the above discussion, it is not only about romantic benevolent impulses. Since they are each embedded in the local context, they each wield power within the broader food system, and they each drive particular goals – why the need to share

priorities and advance aims that are often not in that institution's best interest? On the surface it is about growing the economy so that each institution will eventually share in the rewards of economic development. In actuality it is because firms, the state and other institutions do not govern the food system in isolation. Indeed since each institution is embedded in the domestic political economy, it means that there are a common set of priorities, needs and rationalisations that are also ensconced in that context. An institution cannot govern a particular 'domain' as if that domain can be neatly demarcated from the rest of the domestic political economy. The juxtaposed and interconnected nature of the food system means that governance must also be interconnected, or it must intersect.

It is not simply 'who governs whom' here. Although the form of governance is shaped by the particular priorities of that institution, it is ultimately and determined by other intersecting modes of governance. So for instance, the supermarket's power is circumscribed by state regulation about sourcing, destabilised by producer and supermarket labour riots, and also influenced by changes in urban markets, and changes in the regional political economy.

Governance of the food system, therefore, is not the domain of one institution, or set of firms, and indeed intersecting governances are operationalised to meet multiple priorities. Thus while governances intersect, they often implicitly contribute to a shared goal, which in contradicting the *laissez faire* assumptions of a free market economy, also has certain implications for how the agrifood system is thought to progress. The messy assemblage of different forms of governances confirms that the food system is not one "thing" transitioning to another "thing". It is an interconnected system of oversight, regulation, support and drivenness of the food economy. as a policy outcome, if governance is indeed one of the most important factors that ensures economic development or that farmers link to markets, or that food security is achieved, then these institutions must each be included, not only in facilitating value chains, but as pivotal to meeting the needs of African economies.

'Where to? ': Trajectories of change in Zambia's food system and future research

While it is difficult to speculate how Zambia's food system will 'look' in the few decades, there are trajectories of change that are visible now. And given the last point that governance is time-bound, these foreseeable changes open up important areas of future research.

The first foreseeable change in Zambia's food system relates to increasingly localisation of the economy most explicitly suggested by the Proudly Zambian campaign. Indeed this relates to securing adequate food supplies for the domestic economy, protecting and nurturing the local food system, and 'keeping it local' as a strategy to build the competitive ability of the agrifood industry. Nurturing domestic economies is particularly important in an era where global trade is increasingly insecure, but is not necessarily a 'popular' solution. The recent economic downturn caused by the property market slump in the north has resulted in states bailing out companies and caused researchers and analysts alike to rethink the idealised 'free market economy'. Issues such as protectionism, localisation and strengthening the domestic economy, often associated with more left-leaning economies, are increasingly taking centre-stage. In tandem with other research from the global south, an important area of future research will be rethinking the perceived insularity of African economies in the global economy as a strategic solution to future crises. Indeed this research will also contribute meaningfully to debates about African economic development. Another important inquiry for future research is the idea of 'localisation', and whether, and in what ways 'localising processes' might challenge assumptions of 'the global economy'.

The second foreseeable development in the food system relates to the concerted strategy by firms, producers and the ZNFU to integrate the domestic food economy by linking farmers to markets. But this will not necessarily encompass linking local farmers to distant markets, or disembedded value chains, but rather, it will encompass making immediate domestic markets more accessible to small-scale farmers and traders, and by continuing to foster a greater sense of cohesion in the

already interconnected food system. A future area of research might include more ethnographic accounts of how farmers are linked to markets in Zambia and how these interconnections relate to how the food system is governed.

I anticipate finally, that the most formidable challenge that faces the Zambian food system relates to changes in the regional political economy and in the global economy. Regional changes include regional trade agreements, such as the SADC free trade area mentioned above. A critical future area of research concerns the changes in Zambia over the past two years after the free trade area came into effect. This research will have implications for assessing South Africa's role in the region and, more generally, understanding the complexity of regional trade arrangements in economies that are seen to be developing or emerging. This is an important link to make because, not only are regional economies the trend in the global south, there is also greater south-south coordination and ongoing north-south trade agreements between individual countries.

Less related to changes in the Zambian context, but instead to the outlined findings of the thesis, a final future area of research will be examining governance, as contoured in the thesis, through a postcolonialist lens. This would include a more discursive interpretation of the findings, to consider productive ways of rethinking the global-local or informal-formal dualisms, and challenge the normativeness of existing approaches.

Reflections on the research journey and methodological approaches

In reading over the conclusions and insights drawn in all the chapters, the importance of the research design is paramount, in particular, the interpretative approach inherent in content analysis and the adoption of a systems approach at every level of the research inquiry.

First, and most importantly, the systems approach was a useful device to delineate the conceptual position in this thesis, by prioritising the domestic political economy as the central theme in the

research endeavour. Had I not made use of the systems approach in this thesis, while I may have been able to, for instance, convey the complexity of a poultry chain; map out how South African capital has resulted in large economies of scale in Zambia; or precipitate interesting meanings for the quality of a certain breed of chicken – the analysis would tell me little about the changes in the domestic economy that profoundly influence what is happening in Zambia. As a final reverse scenario, had I looked at value chains or trade networks in urban markets, while I would have gained other insights such as being able to trace complex economic interactions and social relations, I would not have been able to see those interactions as a more inter-temporal outcome of various influences, rationalisations and changes in the food system. Second, thinking of the ‘system’ has allowed me to more clearly outline the methodological approach in the thesis. The rationale is not to examine smaller networks but instead to explain the way the system ‘works’ and, in so doing, to make different interactions in the system visible.

Third, adopting the approach has also enabled me to consistently communicate the analytical meaning of the ‘food system’ through the term ‘system’, and to draw a distinction between value *chains* and other *network* approaches, which as heuristic devices are less able to capture influences, institutions and processes of change outside the chain/network. The food ‘system’, then, can account for the smaller interactions implicit in the system, and also the changes that occur in the system. While the smaller transactions and networks (the ‘what’) are an important focus in thinking about the food system we can link this to broader political economy processes at the national, regional or global level (the ‘why’), and also consider trajectories of change (the ‘where to’).

Content Analysis underscored how important it is to appreciate the context within which one works, in this case the Zambian agrifood context. It also aided credible source gathering, use of sources and research analysis. It allowed me to have greater sensitivity to those factors in the domestic political economy that created confusion and complexity so that in unpacking the complexity, I would maintain credibility in the inferences that I made about certain texts/interviews.

There are of course also methodological limitations of this research project. The first relates specifically to the systems approach. While I was able to capture a number of institutions and influencing aspects, the conceptual approach also inadvertently creates a blind spot because, for instance, policy instruments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives are not explicitly dealt with, neither were the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers on Zambia included in the analysis although these formed part of my larger background reading. Another blind spot relates also to the scale of the analysis. While the insights gained from the governance aspect of the thesis are significant, 'governances from below', for instance the way traders, supermarket labourers and producers reappropriate power, is not overt. A third oversight, which relates to food studies research in general and is not specific to this thesis, is that consumers are not included in the analysis, and consumption is implied.

There are also a few conceptual difficulties or limits of this project. The first is that the analysis here is less about generalising the findings in the Zambian case to other African countries, than it is about replicating a similar methodological or conceptual approach. My initial assumption was that the Zambian case would tell us something about economic development in Africa. Given the analysis in the thesis, Zambia's food system is, instead, a useful case study to draw out methodological approaches to the study of African economies. Thus the thesis does not explain what African food systems 'are', ontologically speaking, but rather, how we can understand the range of influences and governances that comprise and shape those food systems. The hesitance in the thesis to draw out theoretical nuances that would challenge more discursive accounts of African economic development, or grapple with questions of modernity, relates to the fact that the purpose of the thesis is not a postcolonialist critique – often the only conceptual space for this kind of discussion. The research presented in this thesis is, however, clearly applicable and generalisable to other contexts as a methodological approach, and contributes to work on African food economies by offering an in-depth case study on Zambia's political economy context as it relates to the agrifood sector.

Second, using such terms as ‘African economies’, ‘urban Africa’ or ‘African food systems’ risks essentialising the variety of economic interactions in different countries and regions, and suggesting there is a single economic interaction or set of governances in the continent, which is a struggle faced by other African Studies scholars who also work within disciplines that do not explicitly problematise such generalisations.

Third, the limit of this project is that in suggesting the ‘time-boundedness’ of governance, where the analysis itself is a time-bound product. A revised framework, as set out in this thesis, which is drawn from a closer examination of the context, perhaps best encapsulates the zeitgeist of present-day agrifood systems. But it is also time-bound, reflecting a particular snapshot reality. Furthermore, and related to the limits of content analysis where the context is constructed, the context from which Zambia's food system emerges has a limited lifespan, and the context, is inherently a malleable and transforming space. The difficulty is that given such language as ‘transition’ and ‘trajectories of change’, the Zambian food system as theorised in this thesis, based on research in 2007, is a different system three years on.

In this thesis, in sum, instead of focusing on value chains that link farmers and production networks in Sub-Saharan Africa to high value markets in the north, which is the dominant approach in the literature, I examine the more localized urban food systems in Zambia's capital, Lusaka, and from this basis I examine the trajectories of change in the food system. I also weighed up the assumptions of the other substantial body of work that dominates academic scholarship – the transformation of African economies by supermarkets. Instead, I showed how even the spread of supermarkets is dependent on the domestic and regional political economy environment that facilitates it. A systems approach allowed me, to make sense of the political economy context; to appreciate how this context influences firms; and to recognize both multiple sites of power at work in the food system and intersecting patterns of governance that result in an increasingly localizing economy.

By asking about the Zambian food system, in the ways that have been done here, the findings lend to a more robust research agenda on food studies and economic growth in Africa, and are well-placed to contribute to work on food security. I argue that there are aspects in Zambia's broader political economy that profoundly influence its food system. The case of Zambia's food system points to tacit rationalisations that investing in and strengthening the local or domestic economy is ultimately what will grow firms and transform African economies. Finally, once we are able to appreciate both the complexity of domestic political economies in Africa in which agribusiness firms, agricultural unions and urban markets are embedded, and the trajectories of change and intersecting governances at work in the food system as I have done in the Zambian case, we may be better able to find solutions to the challenges which relate to food crises and economic development in African countries.

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APPENDIX