

## Socioeconomic studies on selected cassava markets in Nigeria



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# **Socioeconomic studies on selected cassava markets in Nigeria**

**Edited by**

**C. Ezedinma, L. Sanni, and R. Okechukwu**

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## Preface

This publication contains three socioeconomic case studies on the marketing of cassava-based products in Nigeria. Three principal cassava traditional products are discussed: *gari*, cassava chips, and *fufu*. In this document we present a brief but perhaps undocumented case study of cross-border trade in cassava-based products in Dawanau market, Kano; an interesting comparative analysis of marketing of *gari* in Benin City and Enugu; and an assessment of how traditional institutions and market information have aided the marketing of *fufu* in Ifo, Ogun State, all in Nigeria.

Trade in traditional cassava food markets has developed and maintained long standing channels with the movement of *gari* and chips from distant markets in south and central Nigeria through Dawanau market to international markets in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Northern Cameroon. The traditional market institutions and information systems have also grown and adapted to the trade in perishable commodities from cassava such as *fufu*. Understanding these traditional marketing systems is important as we strive to use cassava as a basic raw material for agroindustrial development in Nigeria.

We believe that lessons can be drawn from these marketing and trading systems as Nigeria strives to develop its cassava subsector. One important lesson is that there are already dedicated markets for cassava-based products in Nigeria, such that the drive towards the industrial utilization of the commodity as a basic raw material should take into cognisance the key actors in the whole commodity chain. Presently, farmers are not producing for the industrial market because it literally does not exist. The agribusiness and industrial sector of the cassava subsector will therefore have to produce cassava raw material to satisfy their needs. Otherwise there may be a significant displacement of farmers, traders, and processors whose livelihoods depend on the traditional cassava food market as described in this document.

## Cross-border trade in cassava-based products in Dawanau market, Kano, Nigeria

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### **Introduction**

Nigeria grows more cassava than any other country in the world. Its production is currently put at about 34 million tonnes a year (FAO 2004). Total area harvested of the crop in 2003 was 3.1 million hectares with an average yield of about 11 tonnes per hectare. The production of cassava is concentrated in the hands of numerous smallholder farmers located primarily in the south and central regions of Nigeria.

In 2002, cassava gained national prominence following the pronouncement of a Presidential Initiative on cassava. The intent of the initiative was to use cassava as the engine of growth in Nigeria. If investments in the downstream sector of the cassava industry are made more effective, cassava can be used to improve rural and urban income and employment in Nigeria. But unknown to many Nigerians, cassava had long been exported to the Sahelian countries of West Africa through Kano, a long standing trade route dating back to precolonial times. Traditionally, Nigerian farmers, processors, and traders seem to have responded to the demand for convenience foods from cassava especially *gari*, *fufu*, and cassava chips in urban centers and across Nigerian borders. The objective of this report is to bring to light the key actors in the cross border trade for cassava-based products originating from the major cassava producing zones in Nigeria.

### **Method of the study**

This study was conducted in Dawanau market, located in Dawakin Tofa local government area of Kano State, Nigeria. Kano is located in northern Nigeria and is dominated by the Hausa Fulani ethnic group. Other important ethnic groups include the Igbo, Yoruba, Kanuri, Nupe, Tiv, and Arabs. In terms of agroecology, Kano is located in the northern Guinea savanna belt of Nigeria.

Modern Kano State was officially created in 1967 and in the late 1990s, Jigawa State was carved out of the state. Kano has a population of seven million people by 1999 estimates (www.). Hausa is the dominant language though English, Pidgin English, and Arabic are also spoken. There are several markets such as the Sabon Gari and the Kano Central markets, but Dawanau market is the largest agricultural commodities market in West Africa and is dedicated to cross-border trade. The market is also an assembly market for dry cassava products as well as for several other agricultural commodities, relying heavily on supplies from the assembly or interior rural markets within and beyond the state.

A purposive rapid appraisal (PRA) was used to generate information for this paper in Dawanau market in May 2005. Several representatives of market groups and associations were interviewed purposively at the market. These groups include the Dawanau Market Traders Association, officials of the *Gari* Traders Association, porters, long-distance traders from rural markets to Dawanau market, and cross-border traders from Niger Republic. This was supported with observations and social interactions within and outside the market premises.

Information was obtained from answers that were received from respondents to a designed checklist of questions. The research used both individual and group interviews. In many cases, while a respondent answered, colleagues sitting around concurred when they agreed and gave different observations when they did not fully agree. The research drew on local researchers and interpreters who had knowledge of the market as well as the necessary languages. Data analysis was mainly qualitative seeking trends and patterns emerging from the interviews. Responses are summarized in this report.

### **Key actors and barriers to trade in Dawanau market**

Kano has been a center of business dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Dawanau market in Kano State started developing in 1985, about 20 years ago. It is also a depot for such cassava products as *gari* and chips from all cassava producing zones of the country. The market has been the largest in terms of cross-border trade since the war in Côte d'Ivoire affected other trade routes such as the Sikasso, Korhogo, and Bobo-Dioulasso triangle located, respectively, in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Bukina Faso in the Sudano Sahelian belt of West Africa (Dahou 2004). The Danwanau market is a wholly private sector initiative. In the early 1980s, the local government council at the price of ₦50/plot allocated land to interested traders to build shops. Warehouses were also built on individual effort. An apex body, Danwanau Market Development Association, governs the market. According to the secretary of the association, Alhaji Ahmed Imam, Dawanau market is divided into five sections. Zone B or Yan Gari is the cassava section. This section also has its functionaries. The Chairman *Gari* Dealers Association is Alhaji Abu Mohammed; the Vice Chairman is Alhaji Mohammed Danjuma, while the secretary is Mallam Yau Tumfafi. The association is open to all ethnic groups since trading activities in the cassava commodity chain covers all ethnic groups in Nigeria. There are 2048 stores in the cassava section in Dawanau market dealing with cassava products alone. There are also other *gari* and cassava stores and dealers in Kano city. Stores can be rented for between ₦15 000 and ₦30 000 per annum depending on the size and location. To join the trade you must register with the *Gari* Dealers Association, after

which you are attached to a dealer/trader for at least one year as an apprentice. After one year your master will guarantee that you can be a trader and that you are of good behavior. The association due is ₦5 000. Other levies include welfare dues of ₦100/month, and a monthly toll to local government of ₦50. The welfare committee gives a sum of ₦10 000 to members' family on the death of a member. Taxes and tax clearance are done with the State Ministry of Commerce.

Even though traders in the market pay tax, there is very little government support to the market. Traders are willing to pay more tax for government to fence the market to ensure security, provide electricity and water, and tar the roads inside the market to help reduce loss of products especially during the wet season when market roads are bad and impassable. However, the association does not have the political clout to influence decisions in government.

### **Key actors**

The key actors in the cassava trade are itinerant wholesale traders or dealers (*delali*), transporters, porters, millers, and *dan komision* agents who identify and arrange transportation for traders. These agents usually liaise with truck drivers on behalf of traders and are paid a commission of about 10% for this service. Transporters currently charge about ₦500/bag for a 15-tonne lorry load capacity and ₦400 for a 30-tonne capacity (trailer load). The rate may be reduced to ₦350 if the trader personally arranges his own transport. Transporters prefer to travel overnight from the supply markets in Nigeria because of fewer disturbances and checks by the police and road traffic marshals. Railway transport is not used even though it would have brought down costs. However, railway lines do not run across many of the supply markets in the south. Cross-border traders prefer to buy cassava in chip form. The millers located in the market break down the cassava from chunks to chips. There are over 100 mills providing this service in Dawanau market. Millers charge ₦40 per 100-kg bag to break the chunks to chips and ₦250 per 100-kg bag to grind the chips to flour. The mills are diesel and/or petrol powered. Porters for loading and offloading charge a fee of ₦20 per bag. Itinerant traders may travel to source markets to buy cassava with or without money. Dealers take the goods from the farmer or trader and sell for them in Dawanau market. They charge a commission of ₦100/bag sold of either product.

The language of trade is mostly Hausa. The currency of trade is the Naira. Traders from other countries are made to exchange their money at the Bureau the Change at Wapa in Kano. There are also traders in cowpea, which is imported from Niger, who assist with the exchange.

Traders in Dawanau market obtain market information from the destination markets in the south through the use of mobile phones. Information is also obtained from drivers, other traders who have recently arrived from the southern markets, and from former or serving apprentices purposely located in these markets.

Cassava is not the only commodity exported across the border from Dawanau market. Other products exported include yam, sorghum, maize, sweetpotato, Irish potato, and wheat. Commodities imported into Nigeria include cowpea, millet, animals, hides and skin, fresh milk, and date palm.

## Trade barriers

Traders interviewed from Niger Republic informed that there are several (4 to 6) checkpoints on the way to Niger. Except for one point at the Niger border, all other checkpoints are located in Nigeria. Drivers pay a sum of ₦2000 to customs and other officials per (10 wheel) lorry load at each checkpoint. At the Niger checkpoint drivers pay only ₦500 to officials. The traders who hired the vehicle pay this sum collectively to the driver who pays at the checkpoint. Cross-border trade is not considered smuggling but these “predatory” techniques employed by government officials are considered as barriers by cross-border traders. Very little paper work or records are kept at the borders to determine the volume of trade.

## Cross-border trade in cassava-based products

The cassava export trade through Dawanau market started to satisfy the need for food during the deficit seasons in the Sahelian countries and not necessarily as an ethnic (niche) market. The trade is driven by the need to sustain the food security needs of such countries as Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, and some parts of Northern Cameroon. Trade in cassava products has been increasing over the last 20 years due to increase in the population of the destination countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger. Two major cassava products, *gari* and cassava chips milled from cassava chunks, are exported from Nigeria to these Sahelian countries (Fig.1.). In Danwanau market, cassava chunks are broken into chips thus adding value to the product which is further milled to flour at the point of destination.

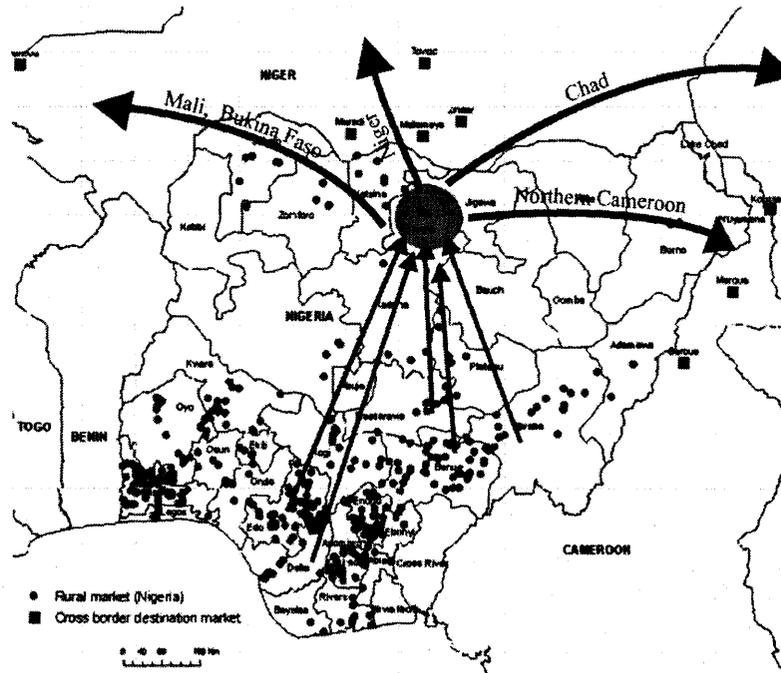


Figure 1. Major gari and chips supply–demand zones through Dawanau market, Kano, Nigeria.

## The supply markets and domestic trade routes

The source markets for cassava chips/cassava chunks to Dawanau market are Doma and Adogi in Nasarawa State, Tala and Mutum Biyu in Taraba State, and Zakibiam area in Benue State. The minor supply zones are Talata Mafara in Zamfara State, Ringim in Jigawa State, Danbatta in Kano State, and Ilorin area in Kwara State. The latter areas are sources of supply during times of scarcity.

The supply markets for *gari* to Dawanau market are located in Benue, Delta, and Edo states. Other minor supply zones for *gari* are in Kogi, Nasarawa, and Taraba states. For both products, the relative volume of trade across the border is in the ratio of 60% for *gari* and 40% for chips.

## The destination markets and trade routes

Nearly 50% of *gari* is sold to Nigeriene traders who come to the Dawanau market. The balance is sold to Chad, Mali, and Northern Cameroon. Certain areas in Northern Cameroon (Garoua, Kaele, Maroua, Mokolo, and Kousseri) prefer high quality *gari*.

In general, cassava chips is exported through the informal trade to Maradi, Zinder, Matameya, Dan Magaria, Dousou, Tawa (in Niger), Bamako (in Mali), and Ougadougou (in Burkina Faso). There are two cross-border trade routes for cassava products to Niger. The first is a direct route from Kano through Danbatta, Kazaure (both in Kano State), to Sandaru (Katsina State), Daura (Katsina State) to Tessau (Niger). The second is from Kano, through Katsina to Maradi. This route also supplies all the other border towns in Katsina State such as Jibiya. There are also two northeast routes from Kano, Maiduguri to Kousseri (Cameroon) to Ndjamena (Chad) or Maiduguri through Maroua to Garoua (Northern Cameroon).

Traders from Dan Magaria (in Niger) come to buy cassava products on Fridays and those from Maradi (also in Niger) buy on Tuesdays. These days are dictated by the market days in both destination towns. Traders from Jibiya (a border town in Katsina State) buy cassava products from Dawanau market on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. They do not buy on Wednesdays. These groups of traders also sell to Nigerienes at Jibiya.

What drives cross-border trade in cassava is the desire to meet food demand in the destination countries especially during the dry, hot, and hungry season months. The dry/hungry period ranges from February through March to April every year. Because of the capability to store in warehouses, Dawanau traders have been able to even out (stabilize) supplies such that there is little seasonal variation in the market supply during the year. *Gari* trade is lowest in August.

In Niger, cassava chips are consumed as flour mixed with cowpea flour and dry vegetable leaf flour and eaten with groundnut oil and pepper in a popular food called *dan wake*. *Gari* is taken with cold water and sugar. Eating *gari* in the form of *eba* is not common in the Sahelian region.

## Volume and value of trade

Cassava product prices are seasonal. The highest price months are from February to April. This season is considered the peak season in Dawanau market. The months of lowest prices are October, November, and December which falls within the harvesttime for especially the grain crops. Depending on the source market, traders buy cassava chunks at between ₦1500 and ₦2000 per 50-kg bag and sell at between ₦3000 and ₦3600 naira. *Gari* is also purchased at ₦1500 to ₦2500 from the source markets and is sold at ₦2000 for a 35-kg bag and ₦3900 per 50-kg bag. However, we observe that traders make money through speculation: they buy when prices are low, store, and sell when prices are high. This explains the numerous warehouses in Dawanau market.

The *Gari* Dealers Association started keeping records consistently on the number of lorries that offload at the market from the 7 March 2005. The volume and value of trade for week 9 of 2005 is presented in Table 1. This gives an indication of the value and volume of cross-border trade in cassava export in northern Nigeria. The volume of trade in week 9 alone is about 1455 tonnes of *gari* and 1734 tonnes of chips. This gives an estimated value (gross) of ₦72 750 000 (or US\$546 992.48) for *gari* and ₦52 941 000 (or US\$398 052.63) for chips. Even though the volume of *gari* sold in week 9 in the market is less than that of chips, the value of gross income from *gari* is 1.37 times higher than that from cassava chips.

If we assume that the volume of trade is the same for 50 weeks in a year, the estimated volume of fresh roots dedicated to cross-border trader through the Dawanau market would amount to 551 100 tonnes of fresh root per annum. This amounts to about 1.5% of Nigeria's total cassava production in one year valued at nearly ₦6.67b (or US\$501m). A market that absorbs about 1.5% of Nigeria's output is significant. The volume of cassava that leaves Nigeria's northern borders through Dawanau market is large.

**Table 1. Volume and value of cross-border trade in week 9 for *gari* and cassava chips, Dawanau, Kano, Nigeria.**

Date	<i>Gari</i>		Cassava chips	
	Volume (t)	Value (N)	Volume (t)	Value (N)
07/03/2005	240	12 000 000	246	861 000
08/03/2005	300	15 000 000	222	7 770 000
09/03/2005	135	6 750 000	282	9 870 000
10/03/2005	285	14 250 000	465	16 275 000
11/03/2005	150	7 500 000	189	6 615 000
12/03/2005	120	6 000 000	276	9 660 000
13/03/2005	225	11 250 000	54	1 890 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>72 750 000</b>	<b>1734</b>	<b>52 941 000</b>

Estimated on the basis of number of lorries that off-loaded in a day.

*Gari* is estimated at a price of ₦50 000/tonne and chips are estimated at ₦35 000/tonne.

## **Conclusions**

One fact that comes out very clearly from this study is that Nigeria has a cross-border (export) trade for cassava-based products. This trade is in the hands of small- and micro-scale farmers and processors in the rural hinterlands and wealthier itinerant traders and dealers in Dawanau market, Kano. The trade has generated certain value-added enterprises such as milling of sun-dried cassava chunks to chips and flour before export. It is obvious that for Nigeria to diversify its export options it needs to support small- and medium-scale agribusiness ventures in the cassava downstream sector. Large-scale enterprises would exclude a majority of important stakeholders in the cassava economy.

The implication for research and development is to focus attention on improving yields per unit area and reducing the cost of cassava production in the cassava supply zones. The major supply zones are states in the central and southern parts of Nigeria. Another important point is the rapid multiplication and dissemination of improved high yielding cassava varieties that are resistant to cassava mosaic disease to the supply zones in the middle belt and southern Nigeria in order to improve producer prices and encourage further commerce in the commodity.

Kano is the gateway to trade in the north of Nigeria. Therefore, there is an urgent need to provide infrastructure especially roads, electricity, and clean water in Dawanau market. The cassava supply zones also need roads, railway, and other infrastructure to facilitate trade and reduce transportation costs.

Further comprehensive economic surveys on the value and volume of import and export trade in staples in Dawanau market will be required to ascertain whether Nigeria has a net trade balance in its cross-border trade.

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## Marketing of *gari* in Benin City and Enugu, Nigeria

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### Introduction

*Gari* is a fermented and roasted granular product from cassava. It was considered a poor man's crop until recently. It is now elevated to an urban convenience food. It is a cheap and ready source of vital energy. *Gari* production involves peeling, grating, dewatering, fermentation (optional), sieving, frying, and bagging of cassava tubers after harvest. This process gives white or creamy white *gari* while the addition of palm oil prior to dewatering adds a yellow color to *gari*. Yellow *gari* is preferred and can cost twice as much, making it less available to poorer households. *Gari* is commonly consumed either as a paste made with hot water and eaten with vegetable sauce or soaked in cold water with sugar, coconut, roasted peanut, fish, or boiled cowpea as complements. A report by Phillips et al. (2004) reflects that cassava (*gari*) is truly a national food with an urban market presence. Cassava *gari* appears to be a "food of choice" even in the face of alternative food options in urban areas (Maziya-Dixon et al. 2004). It is mainly produced for domestic markets but presently, some of the dry processed food products from cassava (such as *gari* and *fufu* flour) are known to be finding their way to emigrant Nigerian communities in the United States and Europe (Dipeolu et al. 2002). It is also an important commodity in cross-border trade (Ezedinma et al., in preparation).

The goal of this report is to examine some critical marketing institutions with a view to assessing whether the urban and rural poor are excluded since *gari* has gained prominence in all the urban centers of Nigeria. An understanding of the issues identified in this study will provide policymakers with a better view for improving market access for the rural and urban poor to safeguard their food security and their livelihoods. The objective of this report is to explore issues pertaining to the *gari* commodity chain and its relationship to urban market institutions, transport infrastructure, security, and associations.

### Study location

This study was conducted in two urban markets in Enugu and Benin City. The urban markets are major consumer markets for *gari* in the southeast and south-south of Nigeria

relying heavily on supplies from the assembly or interior rural markets within and beyond the state. Enugu is in the southeast geopolitical zone dominated by the Igbo ethnic group. Benin City is in the south-south zone with a mixture of many ethnic groups but most influenced by the Binis and so Pidgin English is the common mode of communication. In terms of agroecology, Benin City is located in the rainforest belt of Nigeria while Enugu is located in the derived savanna belt. In Enugu there are three major urban markets: the New Market, the old Ogbete market, and the Awkunanaw suburban market. In Benin City there are also three markets: the Oba market, the New Benin market, and the Ikpoba Hill market. In Enugu, the New Market is the major urban market for *gari* while in Benin the New Benin market is the major market for *gari*.

## Methods

A purposive rapid appraisal (PRA) was used to generate information in Oba market and Ekiuwa market both in Benin City and the New Market in Enugu in December 2004 and January 2005. The markets were also revisited at later dates. Some of the supply markets were visited in both Edo and Enugu states to observe the nature and ways in which the wholesale traders conduct their business. There was purposeful sampling of informant traders. The snowballing approach was employed during interview with interviewees recommending other people to be interviewed. This was supported with rapid observations and social interactions within and outside the market premises targeting market women, hawkers, drivers, local authorities, inspectors, and passers by. Some government regulators were interviewed at the local government level.

Information was obtained from answers to a designed checklist of questions. The research used both individual and group interviews. In many cases, while a respondent answered, colleagues sitting around concurred when they agreed and gave different observations when they did not fully agree. The research drew on local researchers and interpreters who had knowledge of the markets as well as the necessary languages. Data analysis was mainly qualitative seeking trends and patterns emerging from the data. Responses are summarized in this report.

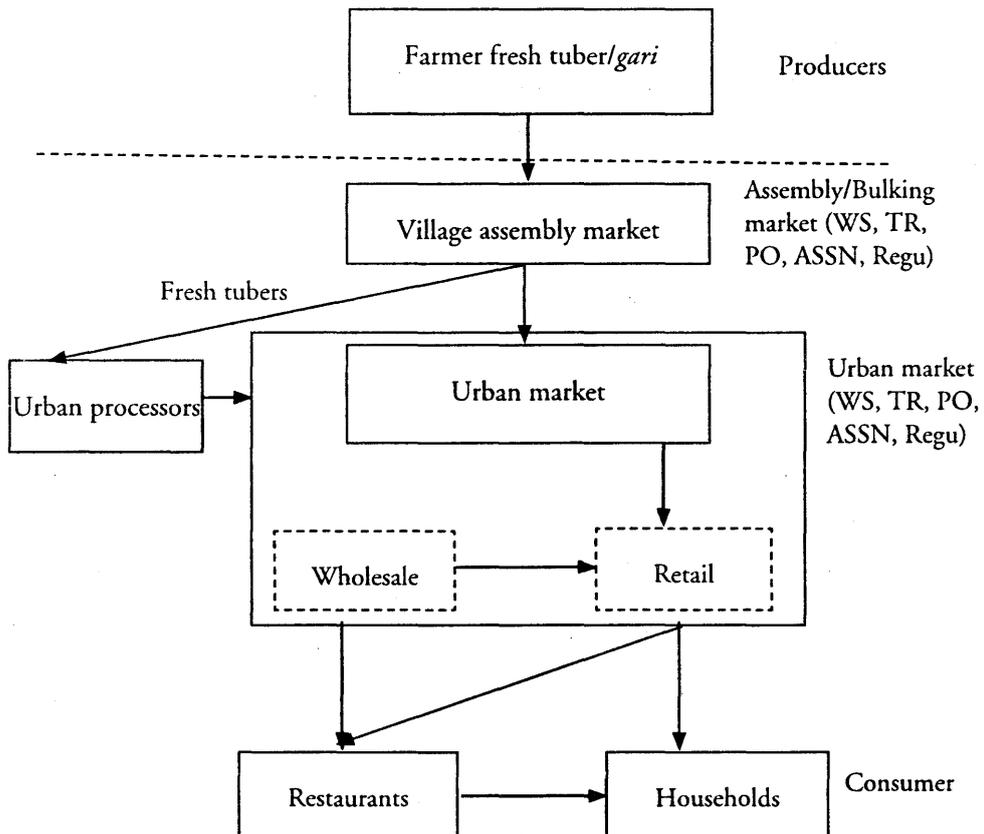
## The commodity chain

Figure 1 gives a generalized overview of the *gari* commodity chain in the study locations. *Gari* is produced from cassava. The farmer in rural-based communities produces cassava. Women are the primary producers of cassava in the two study areas. The farmer may process cassava into *gari* or sell cassava tubers to the rural processor who converts it to *gari* and transports the product to the rural market for sale on market days. For the purposes of this study we begin our analysis from the village assembly market level. Within the village assembly market the processor sells to the wholesale trader who bulks *gari* in such markets for the urban market; 90% of the *gari* is taken to urban markets. The processor at this point is also a retailer in the rural assembly/village market.

Rural processors are too atomized and the quantity of *gari* produced per household or processor at the rural market is too small to warrant travelling to urban markets. The

processors cannot make any reasonable income if they have to travel long distances to sell small quantities of *gari* in urban markets. Their function is to add value by processing cassava into *gari* at the rural level and make a little income above the fresh root price. The farmers and processors who bring their *gari* to the urban markets are those who live close to the market and may have engaged in urban farming in the periphery of the cities. They have no other market but the daily urban market to sell their *gari*.

There are also urban processors who buy fresh cassava roots from the farmers at the village market or even from the farm in the village, transport to the city, and process into *gari* for sale in the urban market. It is often argued that this process is more expensive as cassava tubers contain 70% water. But observations indicate that distances travelled by such



**Figure 1. Commodity chain of *gari* in Enugu and Benin City markets.**  
 WS = wholesale trader, TR = retail trader, PO = Processor, ASSN = market associations, REGU = market regulators

processors are not too far from the city. However, the majority of the *gari* that is sold in Enugu and Benin City is moved from the rural assembly markets to the urban market. The price of *gari* varies through the year. It is cheapest in the months of July to September and most expensive from December to April. This is because the prices of tubers are also expensive at this time. As the dry season advances from November to March, the soil cakes and it becomes very difficult and arduous to harvest cassava roots. This cost is transferred all the way down to the consumer. Prices also vary from year to year (Table 1). In Nigeria *gari* prices exhibit cyclical peaks and troughs due mainly to the inability of markets to absorb supplies. As a result in the years when cassava is scarce the price goes up and farmers are encouraged to plant; production goes up in subsequent years and the price comes down prompting farmers to plant less until the price goes up again in a cycle of approximately two to three years.

**Table 1. *Gari* nominal and adjusted prices, 1993–2000.**

Year	Nominal price (Naira) *	Inflation rate % **	Index	Real price adjusted for inflation using 1993 as a base year
1993	14.41	67.20	1.00	14.41
1994	10.19	57.00	1.67	6.09
1995	16.05	72.90	2.63	6.11
1996	24.05	29.30	4.54	5.30
1997	29.54	8.50	5.87	5.03
1998	25.28	10.00	6.37	3.97
1999	19.25	6.60	7.00	2.75
2000	20.67	6.90	7.47	2.77

Source: \* = Projects Coordinating Unit, Abuja.

\*\* = Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report and Statement of Account (Different Editions).

Such cyclical changes cause price instability and significantly increase the income risk to producers. However, in real terms (taking into consideration inflation) the price received by farmers has reduced considerably. The decline in real prices for *gari* suggests the diversification into other commodities for which cassava can produce efficiently. These products include starch, ethanol, flour, and pellets, which are primary products for the industrial and feed subsector.

### Wholesale traders

There are two types of wholesale traders. The first are those who travel to the various rural/assembly markets, bulk *gari* in bags of 40–120 kg from the farmers or processors, and transport the bags to the urban market. This group of traders may sometimes be referred to as itinerant traders or wholesale assemblers. Assembly/source markets in Ebonyi State account for 70% of the *gari* that is supplied to the New Market in Enugu State. However,

if traders at Enugu are running out of stock they go to a nearby supply market at Ugwuogo Nike and/or Oye Emene in Enugu State. All source markets for *gari* to the Oba market in Benin come from within the (Edo) state. While the Enugu *gari* market is a 5-day market, the major day of sale of *gari* at Benin is Tuesdays. This is because the wholesale buyers travel to the assembly markets in rural areas on Monday, and then arrive in the new Benin market on Tuesday.

The second group of wholesalers are those who depend on the travelling wholesalers. They purchase in bulk from the itinerant wholesale traders and eventually sell to the consumers sometimes in another market. For instance, it was observed that wholesale traders in Oba market also buy *gari* from traders in the New Benin market. This category of wholesalers does not travel far distances but awaits the arrival of the first-line wholesalers.

*Gari* is sold at the wholesale and retail levels by both men and women at both the New Market Enugu and Oba market Benin City. At Enugu the Igbos and a few Yorubas dominate *gari* trade. At Benin, a lot of ethnic groups from southern Nigeria are involved in the trade. The Hausa ethnic group is not involved in *gari* trade in either market. The relative poverty of wholesale traders is manifested in their inability to absorb disasters during setbacks in their activities. Otherwise they are relatively richer than most key actors in the chain especially the porters, drivers, retailers, security personnel, and processors.

### **Retailers**

Retailers can be divided into those who own the stall or have long leases from local authorities and other traders who rent from the stall owners/tenants. Stall owners are relatively rich since they have the ability and influence to obtain market stalls in the first instance, while the other traders may be poorer or operating on a smaller scale. Retailers buy from wholesalers and sell to urban consumers. There are also retailers operating in rural areas.

### **Market information**

Traders require information concerning the price of *gari* in different rural areas, and the price in the urban areas. Prices are determined by level of demand, availability (scarcity) of *gari*, and type of *gari*. There is no deliberate action to control volumes in the rural markets. The volume that comes into the market determines prices.

Retail and wholesale traders obtain information about market prices from other markets through informal meeting points or from colleagues/friends in the market, and from transporters/drivers. Sometimes, a spy visit is undertaken for this purpose.

Channels of information include personal communication, and mobile phones, either owned by traders or through patronizing kiosks. However, most traders in the rural/assembly market where there is no network for GSM neither operate nor patronize kiosks. For those who make use of mobile phones, they call their business colleagues, friends, relations, and neighbors. Respondents feel that the cost of operating a mobile phone is prohibitive even though it facilitates marketing at both rural and urban markets. Drivers are another important source of information. Many of them have mobile phones and use these to talk about market price situations to trader friends and driver colleagues.

Prices are broadcast on radio and there is a farmer radio program on the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Enugu, that has been running for the past 20 years. Traders and farmers listen to this program *Ndi olu ubi ndewo nu* on FRCN in the local language. However, the lack of standardization of weights and measures limits its usefulness.

Information is also required on the location of areas of good quality. The issue of certain locations being known for the quality of their *gari* is very interesting. This is a form of “branding” whereby processors and others can add more value to their products and therefore reduce poverty. Historically, *gari* was of low quality characterized by high moisture content, high fiber content resulting from poor sieving, and large coarse texture. This was before the advent of the grater in the 1970s when *gari* processing was done for domestic consumption. But with development and diversification in traditional menus, marketing of *gari* for cash has given rise to competition just as it has equally been elevated to a full occupation for some people. Each processor therefore strives to improve the quality of her *gari* (most processors are female) in order to have more buyers, attract more money, and sustain her business. Competition has given rise to the production of high quality *gari* and some areas or processors are noted for this.

### **Credit provision**

The informal credit market is the only form of credit system that is accessible to the poor and semiliterate trader and other actors in the *gari* food chain in the study area. The study did not find any informal credit and no dedicated customer relationships at the wholesale–processor level or wholesale–farmer level. This is because the processors are mainly subsistence and transient farmers who rely on the money realized from the sale of the cassava product to solve family problems. They are not regular in the market with *gari* but appear with the commodity subject to the availability of raw materials and/or financial need.

There are several types of informal credit systems in addition to lending between individuals. The *akawo* is a daily contribution especially by retail traders. At the end of the month, contributors are paid their total contributions and they can start the next month’s contributions. The *akawo* operator moves from person to person collecting individual contributions, which is recorded in a small book. The *akawo* keeps very good records and there is very little administration as he records the amount contributed immediately in the presence of the contributor and moves on to his next client. How does he get paid? Usually, the first amount contributed in the first day of the month by the trader belongs to the *akawo* operator. This suggests that the more clients, the more income he earns even though the amounts contributed per individual is relatively small. The amount contributed per person is an individual decision but it could range from as low as ₦10 to ₦100 per day. Monies collected are kept in a safe or in a bank depending on the level of literacy of the *akawo* operator.

The second type of informal credit system is the *isusu*. The *isusu* is a thrift society usually based on town/village union or groups, associations, or cooperatives. Each thrift society (*ndi meeting*) is unique, hence several rules and norms may guide contributions, interest rates, borrowing, and payback periods. In each group there are executive officials

comprising the president, vice president, financial secretary, secretary, and treasurer. Each member of the society makes monthly contributions. Amounts contributed may be optional or may be fixed by the society but are usually large. In cases where the amount is fixed it could sometimes be used as a form of savings in which the proceeds are shared in turn on a rotational basis. For instance, a group of 30 women may decide to contribute money and all the monies contributed go to one member in month A. In month B contributions go to another member and so on until each woman in the group has taken her turn and another process may begin this time with perhaps a higher amount of contribution per person or some persons may drop out of the next round of contribution or new members may join. In this type of savings group no member is allowed to leave the group until all have benefited from the contributions. There are however several difficulties in trying to maintain such groupings.

The members of an *isusu* can ask for loans from their contributions to be repaid with interest. Non-members are also allowed to take loans but at a higher interest rate. For some thrift societies members may pay a monthly interest on loans of ₦40 for every ₦1000 borrowed with a pay-back period of one year. Other types of thrift societies operate a shorter time period of six months with a cheaper interest rate of ₦18 for every ₦1000 borrowed or as low as ₦9 interest for every ₦1000 borrowed. Members are entitled to borrow as much as two or three times above their contributions as loans from the *isusu* society. Repayments are made on a monthly basis but sometimes the society accepts repayments of both principal and interest or the interest only may be paid on a monthly basis and the principal is repaid at the end of the negotiated period.

There are hundreds of such informal credit institutions and groups in both the Benin and Enugu markets. These credit societies provide the engine that oils the informal trade in *gari* and other commodities. There is usually no collateral attached but guarantors of high social standing serve as sureties. For defaulters, the guarantors are held responsible. The guarantors either repay the loan or facilitate its recovery.

For retail traders, credit in kind is sometimes provided by the wholesale traders especially in the Enugu market but is subject to payment immediately sales are over. This is a credit facility usually advanced by the wholesaler to his regular and credible retailer. There are also credit facilities to customers who regularly buy from the retailer but have no cash on a particular market day to pay for the transaction. According to one respondent, "we sell on credit usually to regular customers but not always. About one out of 10 customers do ask for credit". They cut across civil servants, neighbors, friends, and well-wishers whose background (village, place of work, etc.) is well known to the retailer. The customers normally give time for the repayment. For civil servants, it could be at the end of that month. For friends, neighbors, and relations, it is normally after the sale of particular goods or receipt of a certain amount of money, details of which must be brought to the knowledge of the seller. Incidentally, the credit beneficiaries do not pay any extra money as a condition for this mode of transaction. Rather, the *gari* traders regard it as good will and a good customer relations' strategy.

There have been occasional defaulters but the traders stopped selling to the particular defaulters on credit. Traders complained of the difficulties they face when their civil servant customers are not paid their salaries:

*No salary. No market. 2003 Xmas was good. 2004 Xmas was bad. Why? Because government no pay salary. If you pay salary, Market women go get money and children will go to school.*

*In those days, women do not pay school fees but men. Today, women pay school fees because there is no money from their husband. We women do not want our children to suffer. We have to source for other means of getting money to pay school fees. We may have to sleep with men to get money. We are not happy. Please help us.*

For vehicle owners and drivers, there is a hire purchase system for vehicle purchase, which some drivers patronize. This helps them to acquire a vehicle and pay back the cost of the vehicle after one year of use. Again there are state government schemes that provide vehicles on loan to drivers. However, details of who has access to this were not available.

We conclude that the informal credit institutions have been able to respond to the needs of key actors in the market based on trust. Trust is a very important aspect of social capital. The issue of trust and the pattern of building it are some interesting facts that came out during observations in the markets.

Trust building begins with how traders identify themselves in the market. Unlike in the western world, where an individual is identified by name and a fixed address, market traders identify themselves on the basis of their villages, towns, and ethnic group (in the case of Benin City). For instance on a return trip to one of the markets, the study team had to identify one of the respondents, a woman, on the basis of her complexion and village of origin (*nwanyi ocha nke onye Abagana* literally translates to the light skinned woman from Abagana town). The village of origin (family ties, ethnic ties) and apprenticeship formed the basis for trust and reciprocity. This is further fortified if the individual actor identifies with his/her town or village union/group in the city. These bonding mechanisms provide the platform and the basis for trader-to-trader credit both in kind and in cash as well as trader to customer credit both at the wholesale and retail level. There is also interethnic bridging, which is often facilitated through interethnic marriages. In cases where there is interethnic access to credit it is tied to interethnic marriage between families. Friendship is also another very important aspect of social capital that can bridge interethnic access to credit.

Because informal credit institutions are hinged on social capital, formal credit institutions may have a lot to learn. One advantage of the informal system is the reduced paper work and responsiveness of the informal system to the needs of the poor trader.

### **Transport institutions**

Various types of vehicles are used to transport *gari* from the rural assembly market to the urban market. These include lorries (508 model, 911 model), pickup vans or Austin diesel engine trucks, or trailers. Motorbike transport (*okadalina-aga*) is normally used for intracity distribution and wheelbarrows are used within the market or from market to nearby homes

(family/small restaurant use). In the assembly market, wheelbarrows are used to assemble the bulk before loading them onto the lorries for evacuation.

In Enugu, transporters come to the New Market and pick buyers to the rural market and convey them back after their purchases. Both goods and passenger are conveyed together to and fro and this is not usually a smooth, pleasant, or comfortable ride. There has been some effort to improve intercity road infrastructure especially in Enugu and Edo states. However, rural dirt roads are still repaired only seasonally (sometimes by communal effort). The maximum distance travelled from the rural market to the Oba Market Benin is 90 km (Table 2).

**Table 2. Distance of *gari* supply markets to Oba Market, Benin City.**

Name source mkt	LGA source mkt	Dist rural mkt (km)
Abudu	Orhionwan	90
Ebue	Uhumwode	55
Ehor	Uhumwode	60
Ologbo	Ikpoba Okha	14
Ugbogiobo	Ovia North-East	62
Urhonigbe	Orhionwan	50

Transport fares change between destinations and are a little high when going to the rural market because few vehicles travel that route. The charges are influenced by distance, type of vehicle, and fuel price. Transport fares for goods are determined by bargaining with the driver since transport fares for the passenger are usually fixed. Also availability of lorry/truck can influence fares. The fare for *gari* transported alone is lower than when someone accompanies the goods. The weather/climate can also influence the fare. During the rainy season one makes extra effort to protect the *gari* from getting wet. If the road is poor/muddy, a higher fare is usually charged. The number of days a driver will be away from home also influences fare price. On the average, the cost of conveying *gari* from the source markets to the Enugu New Market is about ₦3/kg.

Routes with a lot of police and local government checkpoints attract higher fares. Unfortunately there is no route without unofficial tolls. It was actually observed that the number of police and local government checkpoints increases on market days on all the routes. The drivers "settle" the police and local council posts whenever they are encountered. Some of the traders interviewed maintained that these extra expenses are not built into the selling price. Rather the forces of supply and demand determine prices. Many others felt that the extra costs are included in the transport cost but are finally borne by the consumer. Because the transport owner is familiar with the route, he has foreknowledge of the extra costs ahead of plying the road which he includes in his transport charge to the *gari* trader who passes it on to the retailers.

The price is also affected by fuel prices which have tripled in nominal terms since 1999. The government, through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC),

the Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC), and the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association (IPMA), regulates access to fuel. Sometimes petrol station dealers collude to deliberately hoard fuel in order to push up prices. This is no longer common but happens towards festival periods. Once there is scarcity, prices of fuel increase and this reflects on the cost of transportation. Once government policy affects factors of transport such as fuel prices, the transporters do not consult each other but individually bargain with the *gari* traders. Lorry owners/transport owners initiate the fare change and pass it on.

The research has identified the important role that transport unions play. The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) sees to the welfare of the transporters, ensures that vehicles are in good condition, maintains the park, renders security services at the motor park in conjunction with market leaders and local government authority, and mediates on behalf of drivers in civil matters. NURTW also settles cases between drivers and police and fights illegal extortions from the local council. The Union's welfare services include visitation for drivers involved in accidents, death, and marriages.

Everyone has access to the vehicle park provided the person is not a criminal. To become a member of the transport union a potential driver has to register with up to ₦5000 excluding the drinks and kola nuts that are required for union leaders. The candidate will also bring two guarantors of high social standing who may have some relationship with the Union. The candidate also signs an undertaking to be of good behavior.

Drivers pay a levy of ₦20 before each trip out of the market at Enugu and Benin City to the local branch of NURTW. The leadership of the local branch of NURTW collects the levies. Taxes for the NURTW are not fixed but in most cases 10% of income is remitted as tax to the local council.

The drivers ply familiar routes but they have to register with the transport workers union every morning they arrive at the motor park and choose their route. However, someone can hire (charter) your vehicle to a different destination. The Union can also plead with drivers to ply destinations where there are more passengers or seek their consent to return if the timing is late to pick remaining passengers to specific destinations. The availability of *gari*, type/nature of road, weather/climate, and presence of police/toll collectors are factors considered by the driver before choosing a route. Hostility of communities to certain tribes and communal clashes can affect transporters. This is, however, not common in the study area but is found in the Niger Delta region.

Members who violate the driving rules or loading rules such as jumping the queue at the motor parks are suspended but members are expelled for such offences as robbery or murder. Expelled/suspended members are not allowed to enter the motor park to off-load. When a vehicle breaks down another vehicle is called upon to complete the journey. In that case, the *gari* is reloaded at cost to the *gari* owner. But the transport cost is borne by the transporter whose vehicle broke down. This is an understanding by members of the Union and they also go out of their way to help each other out in such instances. This support is important in the absence of any formal type of insurance.

The drivers insured their vehicles because the police would not permit them to use the vehicles otherwise. They do not believe the insurance firms will pay claims in the case of

damage to their vehicle. They only did this because it is a requirement by the police. Most have third-party insurance or act insurance. The comprehensive insurance scheme requires more money to obtain and many drivers do not use this type of scheme. The third party insurance scheme is cheaper.

Drivers also use mobile phones to reduce the risks associated with travel. Recently there was a robbery incident along Enugu–Abakaliki route. The Police were called by mobile phone and they responded quickly and caught the robbers. The drivers also use mobile phones to warn colleagues about the presence of police and road safety personnel on the road. They also inform trader friends and driver colleagues about weather and market price situations.

### **Control of market space**

Stalls in the Benin City and New Market Enugu, are organized into sections by category of wares and goods that are sold. This is often referred to in the local market parlance as “lines”. Thus there is the textile line, the baby ware line, the grains (beans and rice) line, etc. The size of stalls at the Enugu market is about 14 × 10. But stall sizes vary depending on the physical location in the market. The traders within the food commodity wing (or line) have full, walled-out stalls but those in other wings, like the baby ware line, have smaller stalls. The type of goods sold therefore affects the stall size.

At Benin, there are also stalls but the *gari* traders do not get them. *Gari* traders sell in open spaces, along the road where stalls are allocated to other foodstuff sellers, or pay for a section of another person’s shop. Unlike traders in rice and beans who dominate the food market section because of an organized market association, the *gari* traders sell their goods along the market thoroughfare and parks. In Benin, traders reported that they are fed up of so many taxes and rent charges. They paid heavily to secure a small space or pair with a shop owner who may be selling other commodities like rice, beans, and yam. Apart from paying to shop owners, they also pay local tariff and taxes to the local government authority.

The daily toll and market levy is a major source of revenue for the local government where the markets are located. But it does not seem as if the returns from the toll and levies are used to the benefit of the general public. For instance, there is no public toilet in any of rural supply markets. Even in the urban markets that were visited, the distant public toilets are not maintained and parking space is a very big problem.

Stalls are rented from stall owners. Most stall owners are not traders. At Enugu some traders have successfully purchased their stalls from the original owners, but a lot of the traders are tenants. The same holds at the Benin market. The original owners of the stalls are indigenes who purchased the stalls at approved rates from the local government council at Oredo. The local council determines the allocation of stalls. In principle these stalls are to be allocated to any Nigerian citizen irrespective of his origin. This hardly ever happens. It is obvious that the first lines of people who are informed of the construction (not sale since it is at the construction stage that the stalls are allocated) of new market stalls are the indigenes of the local council or state. Invariably these also fall within the local ethnic group. It is usually the wealthier indigenes in the council and the civil servants of the council or

state who purchase these stalls at first. They may then resell to others at a more exorbitant price. These secondary owners may be non indigenes who actually need the stalls. It is also known that some nonindigenes may collaborate with their friends who are indigenes. This friend may front for his nonindigene friend to bid for the stalls at approved rates in the local council. Obviously poorer traders especially at the retail level are inadvertently excluded. This explains why many *gari* retail traders sell in the open.

A trader at Enugu said some of them applied to the local government council with a processing fee of ₦250, and that a few months after they were allocated space on which they built their stalls. Applicants paid a nonrefundable fee of ₦250 for the application form when they applied for stalls at Enugu. There was also an unofficial agent fee of ₦5000–₦10 000. The original owners either sell their stalls to traders or rent them out. Some others partition the standard stall into two, use one, and rent the other. There is no age limit for those who wish to obtain stalls. What matters is the ability to pay the rent and obey market rules. Every adult from 18 years and above can own a stall but traders of a lower age (mainly hawkers) can sell within the market. For the *gari* traders who sell along the road, they pay a fee of ₦20/day and obtain a ticket from the council officials to permit them to display their wares in the market.

However, a *gari* trader in Enugu said she heard an announcement of stall sales on the state radio before she applied and got it. Application for stall allocation by the local council had closed long ago because there are no free stalls or spaces. Hence as more people enter the market to sell their wares they have to do so in the open spaces. This indicates that there is still a demand for stalls but that the supply by the local council is restricted. The council is no longer building new stalls because of lack of space for expansion in both markets. However, new entrants may have to go through agents to find a landlord who will rent, share, or evict an incumbent tenant.

Annual rent for stalls is about ₦12 000–₦18 000 paid to the landlord, but the stall owners (landlords) at Enugu pay only ₦50/annum to the local council. It is the responsibility of the tenant to also pay the market premises fee of about ₦350/annum to the local government. A landlord/trader said he pays ₦50/annum to the local government and about ₦350/annum to the management of the market. A tenant said some people pay ₦1000–₦1500 per month to stall owners. At Benin, tenants pay a rent of ₦10 000–₦12 000 to landlords and ₦200/shop for security annually.

Traders may lose their stall if they do not pay rent and mandatory local government dues/levies or if they use the stall for criminal purposes or engage in ritual practices. These laws are enforced by the market association leaders either at the apex level or at the zonal level depending on the magnitude of the offence. Forfeited stalls revert to the local council, which reallocates it to another person after exhaustive handling of the case that led to the forfeiture. In some instances it must be determined whether the stall has to be re-acquired from the landlord by the local council or the tenant has to be evicted by the landlord and the stall reallocated by the landlord or the local council. But this does not happen often. In case of death of a stall owner the stall is transferred to the next of kin.

## Roles and organization of trader associations

There is a difference in the composition and functionality of market associations in Enugu and Benin City. However, it was confirmed (through triangulation) that the *Gari* Traders Association exists only at the wholesalers' level in both Benin and Enugu markets. There is a *Gari* Traders Association—New Market *Gari* Traders Association—in the Enugu New Market. The Association in Enugu New Market strives to ensure the security of its members, takes care of their social welfare (burials, etc.), provides financial assistance, and acts as a pressure group against undue treatment. They do not exclude anybody from selling *gari* in the market. Both members and nonmembers are allowed to sell. Membership is voluntary.

The wholesalers appear to have some control over the prices in urban markets if they decide to sell limited quantities to shore up prices especially during the rainy season when the prices of *gari* begin to drop. Wholesale trader groups through informal meetings attempt to set prices but the extent to which they are able to do this is not known. Some evidence suggests that associations can use their influence over supplies to help traders involved in accidents. Associations often impose embargoes on off-loading new supplies for one or two days to allow for exhaustive sale of the consignment involved in an accident. But this is only where some quantities were recovered. Usually once a truck of *gari* is involved in a fatal accident others will automatically avoid going to the assembly markets for bulking and delivery as a mark of solidarity to the victims and as a form of insurance. For traders involved in an accident, there is no other provision to recover any lost money (or property). There is no form of insurance except perhaps to fall back on the support of the extended family, friends, and colleagues.

In Benin no trader associations were observed for *gari* in the Oba Ekenwa market, but there is a *Gari* Market Association in the new Benin market. The itinerant wholesale traders first assemble *gari* from various sources in the New Benin market and then the intercity market wholesalers purchase from them and move to other markets in Benin City. These markets include the Oba Ekenwa market and the Sakpoba market also in Benin City. This is perhaps why there is no *gari* traders association in the Oba market in Benin City.

In Benin the *gari* traders are not organized especially at the retail level because many retail *gari* traders are transient and so may not enjoy the privileges that the grain traders have. Grain (rice and beans) trade is a long-distance trade and may involve a relatively heavier capital outlay at the wholesale level than *gari*. Grain traders are therefore relatively wealthier than *gari* traders. It was possible to find a major rice or beans seller, selling some *gari* but not a major *gari* seller selling rice. However, *gari* traders have localized arrangements on the allocation of space for selling *gari* as explained earlier.

There is a global market traders association that often liaises with the local council. This traders association is for all traders in the Enugu and Benin markets. Each market has an association with an apex chairman, secretary, financial secretary, provost, treasurer, and public relations officer. There are also associations within each market along trade lines. Along the trade lines such office functions are replicated in each of the markets. At Enugu, the market is divided into 12 zones; each has full functionaries. This private (informal)

sector market management is in charge of assigning trade lines in the market. Each trade line has a representation in the zone association and each zone has a representation in the apex market association for each market.

The market management sends reports to the local council. In some instances a major trade line or a zone (e.g., the Timber Traders Association or the Spare Parts Traders Association) within the market may wish to break away from the market and find new land and better space for their trade. In some cases they may purchase an expanse of land from the local council, and build stalls and allocate to their members. In other cases, the local council may build the stores and take full responsibility for allocating stalls. The association facilitates the local council in bringing the information closer to the traders, assembling the applications, and undertaking a preprocessing scrutiny. The important point is that the local government council assigns the land or the stalls at a cost to the trader associations. The apex market association also has committees for such services as security, cleaning the market, and sanitation.

In Benin, it is believed that the Oba of Benin has some influence over the selection of the chairman of the market association for Oba Ekenwa market. In Enugu, the chairman is often appointed following a voting process but it is usually won by men of means that are very well known in the market. The differences lie in the history, location, and ethnic mix. Benin City has a rich history predating the colonial times in Nigeria. It used to be the capital of the old Benin Kingdom. Vestiges of this kingdom still exist with the hereditary kingship of the Oba of Benin. The Oba still has some influence on the socioeconomic life of the city. There are however several ethnic groups in Benin City. The city is located in the central and southern region of Nigeria. Enugu city grew out of racial mixing in the colonial times. It became the headquarters of the Eastern region immediately after independence. The predominant ethnic group in Enugu is the Igbo.

### **Security**

Crime within markets increases the costs of traders and can affect the poorer participants as they are less able to absorb disasters. There is private security provided in both Benin and Enugu markets. At Enugu, zonal leaders of the market association as described earlier provide security in each section of the market. These informal vigilante groups supported financially by the traders are partitioned into zones of the market. Different zones are in charge of patrol according to a roster. At Benin, the traders within the market hired a security outfit to ensure security in the market. The outfit is called Gadsak International Security.

The market leaders in both markets collect levies from traders to pay the security outfits. At both markets, the market leadership committee makes payments to the security groups through their group leaders. Monthly payment at Enugu is based on the revenue realized by the apex association office. In some cases a percentage of revenue accruing from the zonal associations to the leadership is paid to the security outfit, usually 10%, and this is preferred by the security outfit or vigilante group. Generally they are paid ₦2000/month/person at Enugu. At Benin, each shop pays ₦200 for security per month. Traders who operate from houses near the market hire their own personal security guards in Benin. They usually pay their respective landlords for security provision.

Both men and women are accepted into the security outfit because there are certain cases that will require a woman to do the investigation. Such offences involving women require that women investigate. No ethnic group is excluded in the security outfits but the individual must speak the local language. There is also no religious bias in recruitment.

The functions of the security outfit are: dismissal of suspected thieves, guaranteeing payment of losses in the market (the security outfit is made to sign an undertaking that it will pay for any losses/stolen property of any trader in the market after business hours), and ensuring that individuals adhere strictly to close of business time. The market closes at 6 pm and defaulters are penalized. Security contractors provide security to buyers and sellers during the day and at night for the stored products. They encourage concerned traders through moral support, securing positions in the market, and management of conflicts between members and among colleagues. There is security assurance and guarantee against loss of goods/commodities. The market stakeholders develop confidence in the market and do not panic for loss of goods.

The security organizations report to the trader associations. Defaulters who fail to comply with punishment by the security outfit or zonal security committee appear before the market leadership committee of the apex association on security matters which is the final decision taker of all civil matters. Usually force is applied to ensure that people/marketers comply with rules. The security contractors at Benin have regular meetings (monthly) with the traders' security committee to discuss and share experiences as well as talk about the need to obey security institutions. The noncompliance costs to disobedience of vigilante law could be dismissal from the market or financial penalty, depending on the offence.

For criminal matters the case is taken to the police. However, traders complained about the ineffectiveness of the police. Even though the monthly entitlement of security personnel is small and demoralizes security employees, marketers have more confidence in the vigilante group than the police. They complained of double standards in dealing with policemen. The market has experienced theft on many occasions but not theft of *gari*. Because theft is a criminal matter, culprits are handed over to the police. But this is only when the suspect is caught red-handed. There was an instance when robbers were caught at night. They were held till morning and handed over to the market management who handed them over to the police. One of the respondents said:

*"We are usually disappointed by cases referred to the police ...for instance a case of stealing of iron rods/pillars used in building shops was handed over to the police. For more than one year, the case was not charged to court".*

The police may also require that vigilante groups be registered with them. This is a rent seeking device by the police, which may force security fees paid by traders upwards.

Urban vigilante youth groups otherwise called area boys or *agbero* exist in the market but do not serve as a security outfit for the market because they are considered to be of questionable character. They are usually at the periphery of the market and are not allowed access inside the market by the security men on duty.

There have been fire outbreaks at both the Enugu and Benin markets. At Enugu, the fire started at night in various sections of the market. Only a few portions of the market were left unburnt. The traders, vigilante group, fire department, and men of the civil defence society worked to put the fire out. At Benin, in year 2000 there was a fire outbreak during which most shops were burnt. In both markets there was no insurance; people had to source their own funds to rebuild. Unlike in many countries where fire hydrants are usually provided in public places such as markets, both the Enugu and Benin City markets do not have fire hydrants. The fire services department at Enugu is usually available when they are contacted for fire outbreak but lateness and insufficient materials for fighting fire characterize the department. Civil defence group members also help in such cases at Enugu.

### **Consumption and food safety**

Safety of *gari* in public places is questionable given the widespread inadequacy of current regulation and institutional and physical infrastructure (notably street vendor's access to water). Most restaurant owners reuse (dirty) water to wash plates and the washing bay looks dirty. Based on various forms of *gari* in the market, the issue of packaging and storage can bring serious dangers for urban consumers especially the less privileged ones.

On safe consumption of *gari*, most Benin consumers informed that Benin has been the home of *gari* for centuries and there have been no cases of health complaints after taking *gari*. They are of the opinion that the addition of palm oil might have contributed to maintaining the safe consumption of *gari*.

Enugu consumers informed that yellow *gari* is less acceptable than white *gari*. Because of the addition of palm oil and the hygroscopic nature of the commodity, yellow *gari* is susceptible to microbial attack during storage and this informed the preference for white *gari*.

According to government regulators, most of the regulations exist to guide free and fair marketing of *gari* and other food commodities at local, state, and federal levels. These regulations seek to provide wholesome, safe, and affordable food products to the urban and rural poor. The producers and traders flout the regulations most of the time. There is a public health law of 1963 volume 6 Chapter 103 which deals on effluent control and channelling of processing activities like cassava processing to *gari*. The law states that processors like *gari* processors should channel the effluent of *gari*, which is highly toxic and constitutes environmental nuisance to a closed catchment chamber or pit, which must be emptied at full capacity.

However, enforcing such regulations is difficult as much of the processing is carried out in homes. There is also a consumer protection law of the Federal Government of Nigeria and a state byelaw dealing with food generally in the market (including *gari*) that empowers local authority and health inspectors to inspect food, condemn food, and prosecute defaulters of unwholesome foods. This regulation is part of the Public Health Law, section 34, 1976.

The federal standards for *gari* are applicable to any trademark prepacked *gari* factory while byelaws are used for lower processors and handlers of *gari*. Local government health inspectors and other regulatory agencies reported that they visited markets daily and carried

out monthly assessment of foodstuffs in the market including *gari*. They also stated that there is some level of monitoring going on in the hospitals to detect any case(s) of food poisoning. There is also some evidence of traders self-regulating through trader associations. The market women informed that they are well organized so that no trader can sell inferior *gari* to customers. On further probing of what happens if a trader sells low quality, they responded that they would eject such a trader from the market or hand him/her over to the law enforcement agency.

There is some evidence that suggests that the environmental inspectors have minimal impact on the trading system. Interviewed traders reported that "some of the inspectors will first taste *gari*, check for dryness, toilets, washing bays, cleaning towel, and eating places for restaurants and the next thing will be, madam pay your environmental sanitation fee". Market traders observed that even though these occasional visits pushed them to keep the market clean, there is extortion of the little profit they were making from sales of *gari* especially as the market is not receiving any other form of assistance from this group of government workers.

In response to this, in Enugu market, most restaurants owners selling to various actors in the market belong to an umbrella association, which serves as protection against harassment by the agents of government especially local government officials. One of the restaurant owners informed that before they had an effective association, some government officials usually ate food without paying and this had resulted in a series of conflicts in the past. Since the establishment of an umbrella association, no government officials are allowed to eat free food. A chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and publicity secretary govern the association. They meet monthly and all restaurants have an automatic seat at meetings. The association also provides assistance in times of difficulty such as robbery and fire outbreak. The association is like a pressure group and a welfare group. It is also a medium for effective communication. Since food safety is an important issue, the association ensures that all restaurants are in a good clean environment with simple hygienic practices. In Benin market, there is no such association.

### **Weights and measures**

A wide variety of weights and measures are used in the different markets. These include bags (ranging from 25 to 100 kg), basins (large and small), paint containers (painters), and cups. It should be noted that the wholesale traders do not usually carry a weighing scale and it is not likely that a full 100-kg bag will weigh 100 kg. Visual methods and hand lifting based on experience are used to assess weights and volumes. This may limit the opportunities for those without the experience or knowledge of assessing different measures.

Measures used for *gari* sales are very important at the retail level because it is the tool of transaction at which the many retailers come in contact with consumers. Each has its price tag and each is used to service a particular type of consumer/buyer. Therefore the market has been able to break down volumes to suit consumer pockets. In Enugu, cigarette cups, milk cups, bowls, and bags are used as measures compared to what operates in Benin City, where bags, plastic bowls, and basins are used as measures. At point of sale *gari* is measured

in cups, four-liter paint buckets, and basins. There is no imposition of any measure/weight by the government. Customer relations are usually maintained with the principle of *jara*, which is the additional amount of *gari* that the retail trader is willing to discount before the customer pays. For instance, the retail traders believe that if they give an additional one to two cups without payment the customer might seek them out the next time she comes to the market. Some retail traders give one or two handfuls as *jara* instead of one or two cups (or other types of measure).

The issue of different types of measure brings to the fore the issue of standardization of measures which is a major hindrance in the provision of a market information service. Because there are so many types of measures information has to be standardized on a unit basis. There are those who believe that the existing measures are standard enough while others, especially in government circles, believe that government should introduce standard measures. But one point with respect to market information is that broadcasts in local language must include the local measures for a better appreciation of the market prices in each locality.

Even though there are no official weights and measures, the majority of the traders and consumers agree that they are happy with the present market measures. However, a silent few (poor consumers and market actors) informed that there is always a combination of concealment and display with weights and measurement of *gari* especially during the dry season when *gari* is relatively expensive. One of the traders adduced to the fact that in the early days of the market there were a few cases of malpractices and such defaulters were suspended from trading in the market for three months. They were reabsorbed due to the intervention of the local government authority and since then, there has been very good compliance with the standard weights and measures in the market.

In Benin market, there have been rifts between *gari* traders and other traders or traders versus consumers when it comes to full measurement of *gari* using basins (2.7 kg). These cases were settled by the local government authority and at times law enforcement officers who normally act through the market association. They make use of an amicable settlement in the first instance and if it fails, apply force by taking the culprit to their station for further interrogation. Most traders are scared of this procedure because they eventually paid some token money to the respective law enforcement officer as *gratis*. For this reason, they tend to comply with providing satisfactory measures.

## Conclusions

In conclusion we maintain that wholesale and retail traders are key actors that need to be supported within the framework of traditional market institutions. This is because they are relatively poor and the majority of traders in the *gari* trade are women. This observation has obvious implications for family welfare and livelihood in the urban centers. Support for the female *gari* trader means improved family livelihood and welfare in the urban cities.

The marketing actors operate primarily within well-organized but informal market institutions even though formal government (state and local government) institutions are imposed to govern and administer these markets. The formal systems such as credit

institutions have failed to cater to the needs of the urban trader and key market actors who are predominantly poor and noninfluential citizens of the state. However, the traditional market institutions have shown that they can maintain effective marketing systems because they are trust based. Rent seeking activities by official agents reduce the benefits of traditional marketing systems especially to the poor. It is no wonder that market actors have very little respect and trust for local government and other types of officials in the urban markets. It is therefore recommended that the government (including federal, state, and local government) build on the strengths of the traditional institutions in maintaining balance and keeping order in the urban and rural marketing system in Nigeria. An appropriate entry point may be through building on the successes of the informal credit system, which is built on social capital in order to service the voiceless majority, namely the relatively poor women *gari* traders in both Benin and Enugu markets.

The study has shown that most *gari* traders have to sell in open spaces as they cannot have access to stalls. This is due to the policies of selling subsidized stalls to richer, well-connected people. There is also an absolute lack of trust for government-operated security agencies. Government should therefore learn from the informal security services in order to improve the State Police activities.

The wide range of weights and measures also adversely affects the poor. Introduction of standard weights and measures by the central and local government will do well if there is a stringent action to compel introduction and implementation of common standard weights and measures to the Nigerian markets. Formation and strengthening of commodity associations is necessary bearing in mind that commodity association will serve as a good forum to reach out to the grassroots, regulate pricing, ensure quality of *gari*, and maintain the market in terms of good hygiene. The forum is also a good therapeutic and welfare medium to distressed members.

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## Traditional institutions and market information in the cassava *fufu* market at Ifo, Ogun State, Nigeria

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### Introduction

Some previous studies have examined the cassava *fufu* market in southwest Nigeria. These studies focused on understanding the market network and channel, transport, weight, and measures (Dipeolu 2001); credit provision, gender and ethnicity (White 2002); food safety, agroprocessing, and value addition (Sanni 2003); role of government agencies; and other external actors (Adebayo 2003). The main gaps noted in these studies are the issues of alternatives to traditional market institutions, market information, and market security. This project provides an opportunity to fill these gaps and build on existing knowledge of the marketing system for cassava *fufu*.

Cassava *fufu* is widely consumed in rural and urban areas in Nigeria, especially among poor households. It is a cheap and ready source of vital energy among this category. But processing is important for cassava because of the short shelf life of the roots after harvesting (typically less than two days). Even more important is the need to target cassava *fufu* marketing such that the product reaches the final consumer with minimum delay (the shelf life of the wet paste is about seven days). An understanding of the issues identified in this study will provide policymakers with a better view for ensuring that adequate and safe foods are available to urban and rural consumers. The objectives of this current effort are to:

- Identify the gaps in the understanding of the structure, conduct, and performance of the cassava *fufu* market.
- Examine the market information system for cassava *fufu*.
- Determine the efficiency of traditional institutions in the management of cassava products.
- Explore security issues in the conduct of the cassava *fufu* market.

### Method

A checklist of key information required to shed light on the important issues being investigated in this study was drawn up mainly from personal experience in *fufu* market research, the literature, and peer comments from the Nigerian Food Market Network's meeting held

in December 2004 in Abuja. Primary data were collected using the checklist as a guide in leading discussions with key informants representing the range of stakeholders in the market (market administration, transporters, *fufu* processors, traders, cart pushers, cassava farmers and sellers, stall owners, open space *fufu* sellers, local government officials and their contractors, and members of the Odua Peoples' Congress operating in the market). This was complemented with observations over a period of three market days and focus group discussions disaggregated by activities in the market. Data analysis was mainly qualitative seeking trends and patterns emerging from the data. Additional data were collected after comments were received from project coordinators on the initial draft report. These additional data were used to explore in greater detail the emerging patterns and trends from the data.

### **Positionality of the researcher**

My entry into the *fufu* market is purely as a researcher whose main interest is seeking an understanding of the *fufu* marketing system such that economic or technical interventions in the marketing chain would not negatively impact on local processors and cassava farmers. My years of service as a field level extension officer in Ogun State and thereafter as a rural development researcher have given me a bias towards these groups (local processors and farmers) in studying and discussing development issues.

### **Ifo *fufu* market**

Ifo *fufu* market is located in Ifo Town along the Lagos–Abeokuta highway in Ifo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State. It is a major assembly market for wet paste *fufu*. It serves the marketing needs of *fufu* from processors who come from towns and villages within an estimated 40-km radius of the town. Most of the *fufu* assembled in this market is targeted to various locations in Lagos metropolis.

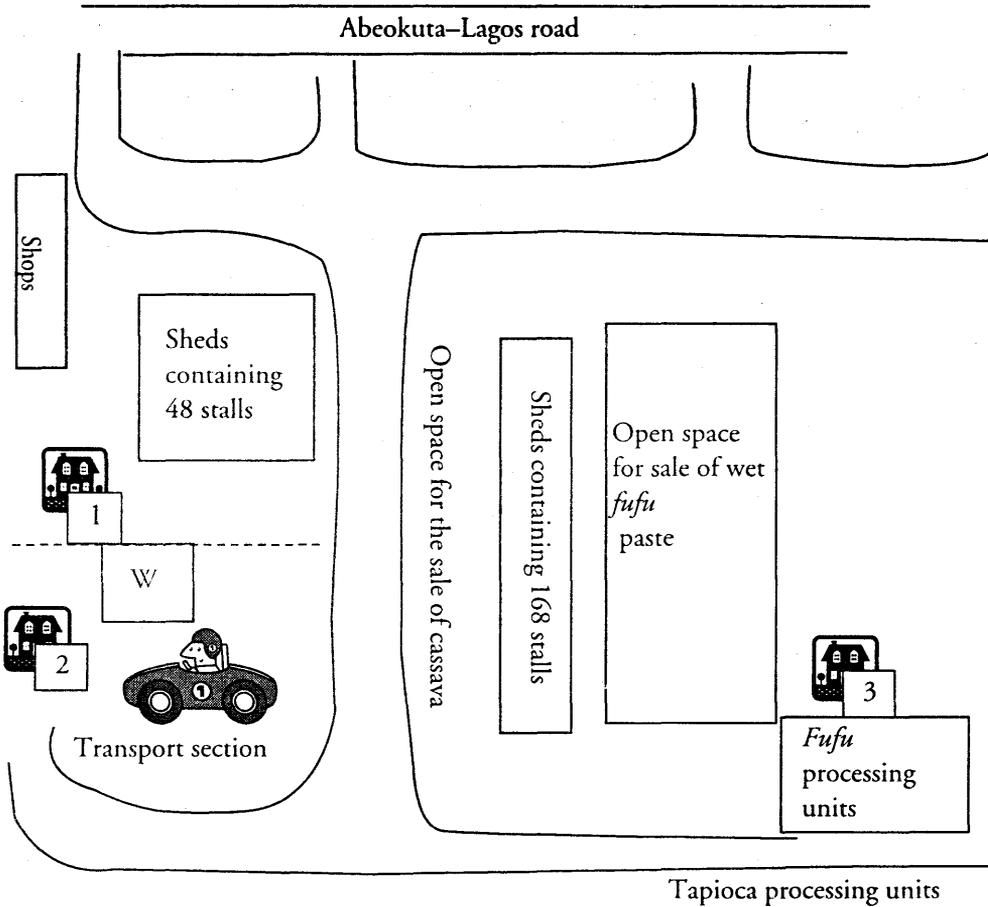
There are nine concrete sheds in the market, each of which is split into 24 half-wall stalls. Nine of the stalls were allotted to *lafun* and starch sellers while the remaining are occupied by wet paste *fufu* sellers. Cassava roots are sold in the open space adjacent to the larger shed (Fig. 1).

The location of the market along the Lagos–Abeokuta highway makes it very easy for market actors from both Ogun and Lagos states to patronize the market. Most of the buyers found in the market come from various locations in Lagos such as Apapa, Ajegunle, Agege, and Mushin. Sellers are mainly from Ilaro, Arigbajo, Pakoto, Ifo, and other surrounding villages.

The market becomes fully operational as early as 7am. By this time, cassava processors begin to arrive from villages within a 40-km radius of the market and able-bodied young men (between 14 and 40 years old) are engaged in off-loading, repackaging, and reloading of cassava roots and *fufu* wet paste in the market.

### **Market participants**

Table 1 summarizes the key actors and their roles in the *fufu* market. This study focused mainly on the wholesalers, retailers, itinerant sellers, packaging/baggage handlers, stall owners, market association, and local governments operating in the *fufu* market at Ifo, Ogun State, Nigeria.



**Key**

-  Access roads within market
-  Baba 'Loja's office
-  Transport office
-  OPC'S office
-  Waste ready for collection

**Figure 1. A sketch of the layout of Ifo fufu market.**

**Table 1. Key actors, their composition, and their specific roles in the cassava fufu market.**

Actor	Local term	Role	Gender	Ethnic group	Relative wealth/poverty
Cassava farmer	<i>Agbe</i>	Cultivates and sells cassava roots either directly to processors or through intermediaries	Men and women	Mainly Ohori, Yoruba	All categories
Transporters Head portage, bicycle riders, motorcyclists vehicles (usually vans and trucks)	<i>Olokada or animoto</i>	Transfer cassava roots from point of harvest to point of processing	Mainly men for motorized transport but all categories for head portage	Yoruba, Ohori, Igede	Poor for nonmotorized, increasing order of wealth with level of motorized transport
Processors	<i>Onifufu</i>	Convert cassava roots to wet <i>fufu</i> paste	Mainly women engaging children and other women as paid or unpaid labor	Yoruba, Igbo	All categories
Transporters—Mostly motorized	<i>Onimoto</i>	Transfer <i>fufu</i> wet paste from point of processing to points of sale	Men	Mostly Yoruba, Hausa	Not poor
Wholesaler	<i>Alarobo</i>	Buys larger quantities usually for many processors or other forms of arrangements	Women	Yoruba, Igbo	Not poor
Retailers	<i>Onifufu</i>	Buys small quantities—sometimes in a deferred payment arrangement with a wholesaler or processor. May cook before sale	Women	Yoruba, Igbo	Poor
Itinerant sellers	<i>Onifufu</i>	Mostly cooks a small quantity and uses head portage directly or uses children to hawk the ready-to-eat <i>fufu</i>	Women sometimes engaging the services of children	Yoruba, Igbo	Poor
Restaurant/bukateria owners	<i>Olunjé</i>	Either buys wet paste and cooks for sale to customers or buys ready-to-eat <i>fufu</i> for resale	Women	All groups	All categories
Packaging/baggage handlers	<i>Alaru</i>	Found mainly in assembly market for packaging and repackaging wet paste <i>fufu</i>	Young men	Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo	Poor
Market associations* <i>Fufu</i> processors <i>Fufu</i> sellers <i>Fufu</i> transporters Cassava sellers Market administration	<i>Egbe onifufu, Egbe animoto, Parakoyi</i>	Dictate and negotiate prices and rates, represents their respective groups. Settle conflicts. Sometimes responsible for security	All categories	All categories	All categories
Local government	<i>Ijoba Ibile</i>	Charge rates, sometimes build and maintain market locations. Sometimes responsible for security. Settle conflicts	All categories Mainly men	Yoruba	Relatively wealthy or simply seen as more powerful
Others Food sellers Water sellers Any other?	<i>Olunjé, olami</i>	Meets some basic needs of all market operators	All categories	All categories	Mainly poor

\*These are associations of the various groups in the rows above. Market administration however has representatives of all the associations in it.

## Gender roles

The specific roles of the different groups found in the *fufu* market disaggregated by gender are presented in Table 2. It is important to note that the various groups in the market consider ownership of a vehicle a major sign of wealth. The vehicle owners in the *fufu* market are the key officials of the various associations in the market. This suggests either that the relatively wealthy actors in the market get elected to the associations' offices or that becoming an officer of an association accords privileges that makes a market actor a vehicle owner in the market. When these positions were posed to different groups in the market, they declared the former with an understanding smile.

Furthermore, even though it is observed and confirmed that driving is clearly a male only activity in the market, many of the female officials of the market associations also own vehicles, which are driven by men.

**Table 2. Specific roles of different gender in the *fufu* market.**

Gender	Age range	Role
Men	20–70 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selling cassava roots</li><li>• Cart pushing</li><li>• Packaging cassava products</li><li>• Transporting cassava products</li></ul>
Women	20–70 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buying, selling, and reselling of <i>fufu</i> and raw cassava</li></ul>
Children (both sexes)	14–18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cart pushing</li><li>• Hawking of other food products (usually for their mothers)</li></ul>
Boys	12–18 years	Loading and off-loading lorries
Key officials of all associations (both sexes)	20–60 years	Owners of the vehicles operating in the market

## Roles of ethnicity and ethnodomination in the market

Overall, the Ifo *fufu* market is run by the Yoruba (Table 3). This is simply because Ifo is a Yoruba town, subject to Yoruba traditional authorities headed by the Oba (Oluomo of Ifo). In terms of visibility (estimate of population) the market is dominated by Yoruba people followed by Igbo people. In terms of activity, the *fufu* wet paste section is dominated by the Igbo and Yoruba; cassava roots is dominated by the Ohoris, Yorubas, Igedes, and Igbos; *lafun* processing and selling, starch processing and selling, and tapioca selling are dominated by the Yoruba; and tapioca processing is done by a Beninese woman.

**Table 3. Roles of main ethnic groups found in the *fufu* market.**

Ethnic group	Roles
Yoruba	Transportation, wholesale, stall owners, retail cart pushing, security
Igbo	Selling and buying of cassava roots and <i>fufu</i> wet paste
Ohori	Selling of cassava roots
Igede	Selling of <i>fufu</i> wet paste
Hausa	Cart pushing, driving

There is an active cross-border trade in tapioca along the West African coast from Lagos to Accra. It was found that there is no particular area of the market assigned to tapioca sellers. The tapioca sellers are dispersed throughout the market. There are no associations or groups of tapioca sellers. It was revealed by the Otun Iya Oja (a Chieftain of the Market Women Group) that tapioca processed in Togo is smuggled into Nigeria through Agbalata Market in Badagry (a Nigeria–Benin border town in Nigeria) via Cotonou in the Republic of Benin. She said that tapioca is smuggled into Nigeria because they understand that there is a ban on the importation of cassava products by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The black market is very active in the border towns for changing the naira into CFA and vice versa.

The Beninese woman processing tapioca in Ifo market is only taking advantage of the demand for tapioca in Nigeria to process and sell to traders from Lagos thereby reducing the inherent risks of smuggling.

### **Control of market space**

Market space is controlled by the Baba 'Loja (or Iya 'Loja, if the position is occupied by a woman). The Baba 'Loja is the titled chief superintending the market and representing the traditional authorities vested by the Oba (Oluomo of Ifo). All actors in the market, including local government officials, recognize him as the highest authority in the market. In the absence of the High Chief, his or her role can be performed by the Deputy (Balogun Oja/Seriki Gbogbo gbo or the Otun Iya 'Loja) (Figure 2).

An applicant desirous of a market space would liaise with the Head of Section (Olori/Alaga), who will make a case for the applicant before the Baba 'Loja or his deputy who then allocates a space (this can be a shed or an open space). The leaders of the market decide where the applicant would stay based on existing vacancies. The allocation of spaces in the market attracts a fee payable to the contractors appointed by the local government (LG) to collect such revenue in the market. The contractor is responsible for maintenance of stalls and other facilities and remittance of an agreed sum to the LG.

### **Market turnover**

During three consecutive visits to the market, it was established that operations at the *fufu* market usually end at about 4.30pm. At this time, an estimated 150 bags (25 kg of *fufu*) is left over. On the other hand, cassava roots are never left over. Sellers somehow find a way of disposing of all the cassava roots brought to the market in any particular day. It seems that a

deferred payment arrangement is usually struck towards the end of the market period where the buyer stands at great advantage to dictate the lowest price of the day for cassava roots.

In the case of leftover wet *fufu* paste, market operators adopt various methods to preserve it till the next market. The most common method is by pressing to reduce the moisture level such that the paste becomes a cake, which has a longer shelf life. Another method is by packaging in water and airtight polyethylene bags. Some of these are, however, sold before the next market day. Where sellers are unable to sell the *fufu* paste or cake for up to eight days, the product becomes inedible. The color would have changed from white to yellow. In this case, the paste or cake is discarded as waste. This is not a common

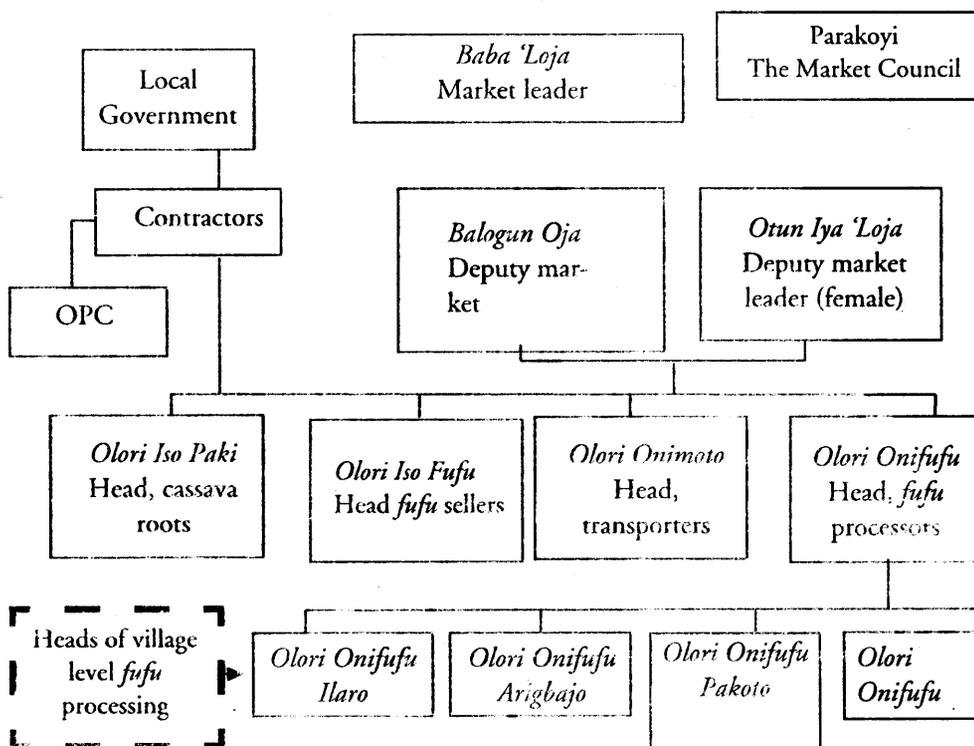


Figure 2. Organization of the Ifo *fufu* market.

### Laws and regulations guiding access and conduct of the *fufu* market

*Fufu* processors explained that there is a law guiding the quantity of bags of wet *fufu* paste that can be brought to the market on any specific market day. This law is a collective decision of *fufu* processors to allow the association to better manage the price negotiations between them and the *fufu* sellers.

The law is binding on all processors bringing *fufu* wet paste to the market irrespective of their tribe or position in the market hierarchy. The first level of monitoring is at the village level where the head of the *fufu* processors at this level ensures that all processors under her care comply. At the market, it becomes the responsibility of the section head to monitor and ensure compliance.

The sellers of cassava roots do not have a similar law determining the quantity of cassava roots that can be brought to the market. However, there are laws specifying the fees and taxes paid in the market. Two of these are by all categories of sellers of cassava and cassava products in the market.

These are:

- Parakoyi (currently ₦40) payable every market day to the office of the Baba 'Loja. Part of this money is used for sweeping the market and removal of waste at the end of each market day.
- LGA tax (usually ₦10/bag of cassava product) collected by the contractors appointed by the LG. This is different from rent payable by market participants for allocation of space.
- The head of the cassava roots section collects a fee from transporters (lorries). He charges between ₦60 and ₦100 on each full lorry load of cassava roots.
- The head of the cassava roots section also collects 10% of total fee charged from other subsection heads in the transportation section of the market.
- In addition, most market actors pay association dues. The association dues for the transporters have not been collected for sometime now because new officers are yet to be elected.

### **Market chain and market information system for cassava *fufu***

Figure 3 depicts the marketing channels for cassava *fufu*. The short shelf life of the products makes it imperative that the product reach the final consumer as soon as possible. The *fufu* market is operated such that this is achieved with minimum level of waste. *Fufu* processors and transporters remain the key that ensures that this marketing arrangement functions with minimum friction. First, processors ensure that the final stage in the processing of wet *fufu* tallies with the day preceding the market day. From this period, the transporters come in as the main instrument to facilitate delivery at the market and from the market onward to secondary markets and the final consumers in various parts of Lagos.

This cycle requires that information is available to all the key market actors as required. For instance, stall owners need to have a good idea of the quantity of wet paste *fufu* to expect on each market day, the traders from various locations in Lagos need to prepare ahead for any modifications in price on each market day, and the transporters need to be aware of when to pick up and make deliveries.

The market associations are the main source and manager of information in this marketing arrangement. As such, each group of market actor has its own association all of which

meet under the umbrella of an overall head of the market (Baba 'Loja). When important information is intended for the entire market, the Baba 'Loja summons a meeting of all unit secretaries through whose offices the information is shared.

### Market information

The main information that different categories of actors in the market seek is the price of their products and services. They are usually interested in knowing when it is increasing or decreasing. Market actors also seek information on other market outlets where their products can either be bought or sold.

The most important channels that market actors look to for information are the transporters, the general office (Baba 'Loja's Office), and their colleagues. Usually individual actors' personal network becomes a major asset here. Where there is a change in market price of any product or service in the market, those closer to the Baba 'Loja often have the advantage of early knowledge in the information system.

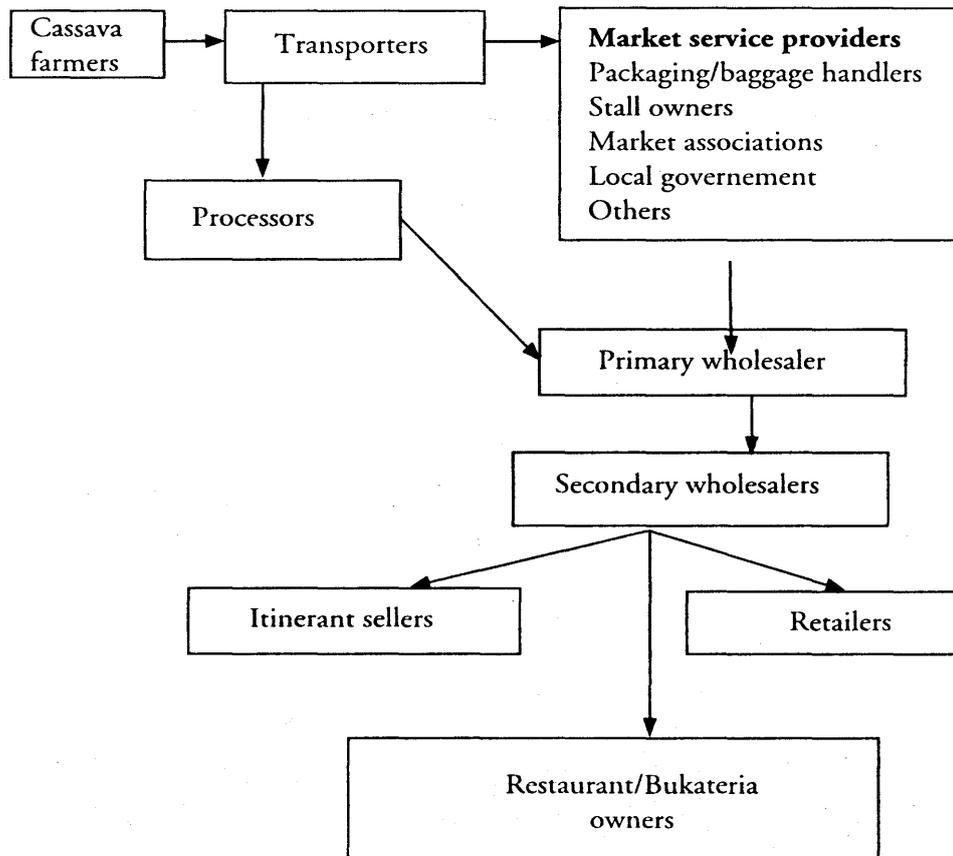


Figure 3. The cassava *fufu* marketing chain in Ifo *fufu* market.

Overall, because of the nature of the job of transporters, they are usually in touch with at least two ends of a link in the marketing chain. They therefore stand out as the main group that provide an early warning system on return from a trip to either end of the marketing chain.

All the market actors interviewed agree that mobile phones are good in spreading market information and all those who do not have would love to have one. Most of the poorer actors lament their inability to afford it. Some who can buy the hardware complain of the high cost of maintaining it.

### Degree of transparency of market operation

The *fufu* market operation appears to be very transparent. Leadership crises could be observed from the repressed tones and knowing glances exchanged when issues bordering on transition from one set of officers to another were mentioned throughout the period of the study.

The information in Table 4 was sought particularly to affirm the degree of transparency in the market. Almost every other market actor could provide information on the prices of goods or services provided by other actors in the market chain.

**Table 4. Prices charged for different services and products at various levels in the *fufu* market.**

Product/service	Price attainable (₦)
Buying 25-kg bag of wet <i>fufu</i> paste	500
Reselling 25-kg of wet <i>fufu</i> paste	700
25 kg cassava roots	580–650
Cart pushing (25-kg load)	40
Packaging and loading (25-kg load)	50
Head portage (25-kg load)	20
Transport to Agege, Lagos	300
Transport to Mushin, Lagos	350
Transporters Association ticket	100
Commission to Head, Cassava roots section	80–100

**Note:** Even though members of respective associations or product/service groups, in practice, agree upon these prices, individual members may bargain for a higher or lower fee for favored customers.

When compared with information obtained in the study by Dipeolu and Ayinde (2003), the share of the various actors from the primary wholesalers' price and the secondary wholesalers' price has changed (Table 5). The primary wholesalers seem to have become better off while the secondary wholesaler has become worse off. But while the processors' share of the primary wholesalers' price has fallen from 81% in 2003 to 60% in 2005, it has increased when compared to the secondary wholesalers' price (36% in 2003 to 37.5% in 2005). From a rural development perspective, this implies that between 2003 and 2005, the changes in the economy of the marketing system have been favorable to the grassroots.

**Table 5. Market margins of *fufu* wet paste traced from Ilaro through Ifo *fufu* market to Pen Cinema market, Agege, Lagos.**

Market chain	Price of 60-kg bag of wet <i>fufu</i> paste		
	2003	Adjusted 2003 values (factor=1.15)	Current study (2005)
Point of processing price	₦284	326.6	₦1200
Transport cost	₦ 24	27.6	₦ 100
Point of wholesale purchasing price	₦308	354.2	₦1680
Primary wholesaler selling price	₦350	402.5	₦2000
Primary wholesaler margin (%) (4)-(3)/4	12%	12%	16%
Processor share (%) (1)/(4)	81%	81%	60%
Transportation cost	₦ 62	71.3	₦ 250
Point of secondary wholesaler purchasing price	₦412	473.8	₦2400
Secondary wholesaler selling price	₦800	920	₦3200
Secondary wholesaler margin (%) (9)-(8)/9	49%	49%	25%
Processor share (%) (1)/(9)	36%	36%	37.5%

Source: Updated from Dipeolu and Ayinde (2003).

It is important to note that seasonal variations in the prices of cassava and cassava products are common. Prices are usually lower in the wet season when harvesting is less tasking and therefore attracts lower costs. Dipeolu and Ayinde (2003) data were obtained in November 2002 while the data for the current study were obtained in January 2005. Both studies were therefore conducted within the dry season when the prices of cassava roots and cassava products are more likely to be at their highest in the year. Since the data for the Dipeolu and Ayinde (2003) study were obtained early in the dry season compared to the mid-dry season for the current study, slight variations in the prices are to be expected.

Another variation in the prices of cassava roots and cassava products is the biennial cyclical movement in prices as a result of farmers' reaction to price changes in the cassava market. If the prices of cassava and cassava products are high in a year, farmers' increase the land area cultivated in that year. This increase in land area cultivated results in a higher quantity supplied of the cassava roots in the next year, thereby forcing prices down. Some farmers often refuse to sell their cassava roots in that year and also refuse to cultivate new land, hence keeping prices low until the second year. The situation changes in the third year when the quantity supplied falls below quantity demanded and prices rise again. This cyclic movement seems to have been at comparable stages when the data for the Dipeolu and Ayinde (2003) and the current studies were collected.

For these reasons therefore, an attempt was made to express the 2003 prices in terms of 2005 prices using the ratio of price of rice (a common staple in Nigeria) in Ifo in November 2002 (₦64.25/kg) and January 2005 (₦73.81/kg) as the factor. Even with this adjustment, there has been an increase in the real price of *fufu* wet paste.

### **Traditional institutions in the management of cassava *fufu* market**

The market is segmented into six different product units. These are *fufu* wet paste (dominated by Igbos and Yorubas people), cassava roots (dominated by Ohoris, Yorubas, Igedes, and Igbos), *lafun* (Yorubas), starch (Yorubas), tapioca sellers (Yorubas), and tapioca processors (Beninois). Each unit of the market has its operational head (Olori or Alaga). At the time of the visits, the transport section was in transition, so only a caretaker was in charge of the transportation office. The reason for this is that the term of the immediate past officers of the *Fufu* Transporters Association had just ended, so a caretaker was appointed until fresh elections could be conducted.

The traditional institutions in the management of cassava *fufu* market are:

- The Parakoyi—this is the Baba ‘Loja-in-Council. It is made up of old people who could be retirees from government parastatals, old soldiers, and lorry owners under the headship of the Baba ‘Loja. The Parakoyi settles disputes, and quarrels among market actors, and refers cases that get out-of-hand to appropriate quarters (usually the Police). Parakoyi is also a term used to describe a form of tax payable on goods brought to the market. The market is a scheduled 5-day market, but skeletal services are available on other days. Arrival for each scheduled market day begins the night preceding it.
- The Odua’a Peoples’ Congress (OPC) is another traditional institution in the market. The Congress is employed by the market contractors (commissioned by the Local Government) to serve as day and night guards.
- Only the Baba ‘Loja or his representative has the authority to change things in the market.

### **Security issues in the conduct of the cassava *fufu* market**

The OPC is a dominant ethnic militia group throughout Yorubaland. The group was invited by the contractors to provide security for the market. This was due mainly to perceived inefficiencies in the operations of the Police and the experiences of unresolved security breaches on the part of the Police by some market actors. The main concern of the OPC is to prevent theft in the market. Security issues do not influence food supply to the poor. Neither do they result in the exclusion of any group. Some market actors praise the efficiency of the OPC even in cases where the Police have been helpless. Usually, the OPC traces and finds the culprit, and executes extrajudicial punishments. The mere presence of the OPC in the market place was reported by many market actors to be enough deterrent for antisocial behavior.

### **Discussion of main findings**

Marketing is the sum total of all business activities involved in the movement of commodities from production point to the point of final consumption. The need for marketing arises with the production of a surplus (Olayemi 1972; Adekanye 1988). It is widely reported in the literature that the marketing of agricultural products is done in mostly unorganized

markets in Nigeria. This study appears to challenge this position given that clear lines of organization can be discerned in the marketing of cassava *fufu*.

Furthermore, marketing has been viewed as the crux of the whole food and agricultural problem in Nigeria (Adegeye and Dittoh 1985; Okunmadewa 1995). They posit therefore that it would be useless to increase the output of agricultural commodities and equally futile to set up optimum standards of nutrition unless means could be found to move agricultural commodities from the producer and at prices affordable to the consumers. The ability of a marketing system to effectively and efficiently perform its developmental functions depends on the ease with which price changes and responses are transmitted spatially and temporally between contiguous market pairs for a homogenous commodity. This in turn depends on the availability and effectiveness of marketing infrastructure like storage and transportation facilities, communication networks, and access roads (Mafimisebi 2001; Mafimisebi 2002). To a great extent, this study has demonstrated how the marketing of a traditional product could meet this challenge. The cassava *fufu* market is transferring a product with very short shelf life to meet urban food demand with a commendable level of efficiency.

This study has confirmed the findings of Wan (2001) that the food market is not having any impact on gender relations and women's subordination. The overall head of the market could be male or female and women dominate all the market functions except transport. Even in the case of transport, some women own vehicles, which are driven by male employees.

Information is scanty in the literature on the role of ethnic domination in food markets. In this study, the domination of the Yoruba ethnic group is evident in the *fufu* market at Ifo. Even though there are no laws excluding other ethnic groups from operating in the market, all the traditional institutions and the market associations are dominated by the Yoruba.

The findings of this study confirm the conclusion of Shepherd (1997) that producers and traders require a range of different types of marketing information. In addition to prices and supplies, information is required on alternative channels, quality, means of payment, and financing. The study also reaffirms the importance of traders' personal network and social capital in obtaining market information (Lyon 2001). The closer a trader is to the Baba 'Loja or the transport office, the more access that trader is likely to have to important market information. The studies of Smith and Luttrell (1994) and Lyon (2003) have demonstrated this assertion.

This study reaffirmed the findings of earlier studies that the power to control prices and supplies depends on the ability of market associations to act as cartels (Smith and Luttrell, 1994). The various market associations in the Ifo *fufu* market are very strong in dictating prices of various products and services in the market. They even limit the quantity of products that can be brought to the market on any given market day to retain their control over the prices of such products.

The reasons for forming associations in agricultural markets have been outlined in earlier studies (Whetham 1972; Smith and Luttrell 1994). These reasons were re-echoed in this study. A key finding that emerged from this study, however, is that associations are not

necessarily a cohesive whole. There are issues of conflict within market associations that may hinder their effectiveness in meeting the expectations of their members. Such conflicts were felt in the various discussion sessions in this study.

The domineering influence of market associations emphasized by Adubi (1996) is also evident in this study. Noncompliance to association rules attracts heavy penalties that often result in exclusion of such erring parties from the market. This study did not, however, perceive the roles of market associations in the negative sense evident in the work of Adubi (1996). Market associations are essentially filling a void that could hinder the smooth operation of the market. These roles ensure the regular flow of products through the marketing chain by retaining a pragmatic market price even in the presence of potential great fluctuations in the supply, protecting the rights of their members to fair dealings in the market, and ensuring that the threats of conflict are nipped in the bud.

The presence of the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the Ifo *fufu* market affirms the position of Alemika (2003), Gore and Pratten (2002), and Aboderin (2003) on the role of youth vigilante groups as important features of the Nigerian nation state. As some market actors put it: "the mere presence of the OPC in the market place is enough deterrent for any antisocial behavior".

### **Good practice emerging from the study**

Traditional market institutions are essential components of marketing systems. The search for alternatives to these should be done with great care. This study has shown that traditional market institutions can maintain effective marketing systems when interference from external forces do not erode their strength in maintaining balance and keeping order in the market system. The central role of market information as the driving force of a transparent marketing system is clearly observable in this study. Modern communication gadgets such as the mobile phone were recognized by all categories of market actors as desirable in making market information widely available. It was deduced that such gadgets aid in increasing the disparities in access to market information between rich and poor actors. It is important, therefore, that policies seeking to make such gadgets accessible to market actors should also create avenues such as public pay phones that the relatively poorer market actors can use. The failure of the Police to provide adequate security in the market was mentioned by several respondents in this study. As far as the market actors are concerned, the youth vigilante group or ethnic militia is welcome relief in improving the security situation in the market. Their presence gives several market actors a feeling of security which is important for efficient market operations.

The need to target cassava *fufu* marketing such that the product reaches the final consumer with minimum delay (the shelf life of the wet paste is about seven days) is the evident guiding principle informing the structure, conduct, and performance of the *fufu* market. As such, policies to influence this marketing arrangement with a view to ensuring that adequate and safe foods are available to urban and rural consumers must learn from this.

### **Specific recommendations for the *fufu* marketing system**

There is a need to improve market linkages in the cassava *fufu* market. Currently, the market

wet paste *fufu* to other parts of southwest Nigeria. The role of market associations in negotiating prices for goods and services in the market could be expanded to searching for other outlets for the cassava *fufu*. This way the system of controlling output to suit market demand can be replaced with one of optimum production to meet the needs of a diverse market.

The promotion of functional market associations is useful. They provide an organized entry point for discussing improvements to the *fufu* processing and marketing system and new market opportunities. Most *fufu* marketers rely heavily on trusted market relationships; the associations therefore provide a forum for creating such assurances before their members embark on any new initiatives or take major risks.

The incidence of leftovers in the *fufu* market, though not widespread because of the control mechanisms put in place by the market associations, makes the search for shelf-life enhancing technologies important. Currently, some processors use a double packaging method to extend the shelf life of wet *fufu* paste. This method and others emerging from careful research could be promoted in processing and marketing locations.

Another technology that could increase the shelf life of *fufu* wet paste is the production of *fufu* powder which has the potential to be a time, labor, and energy saving activity in the production for most consumers of *fufu* and may provide a new dried product, which can be marketed. Earlier works on this by Sanni (2003) provide a major starting point for this.

Low-tech, low-cost improvements to processing, marketing, and information sharing will facilitate greater efficiency in the *fufu* marketing system. The introduction of new technologies may however create a need dynamics in the marketing system such as increasing the disparities between the poor and the rich and creating new power blocs in the marketing system, which may give rise to conflicts that were not there before. It is important therefore that new technologies be carefully studied and the potential effects clearly understood before their active promotion is encouraged in the system.

New capital-intensive technical interventions aimed at commercializing *fufu*, if found to be technically and economically feasible, could most easily be targeted at processors with the wherewithal to adopt them in the first instance. Several large-scale *fufu* processors have substantial financial capital and appear to be interested in expanding their activities. However, there is a risk that this approach may provide more direct advantages to richer members of the community (although, of course, more employment opportunities may be created). Efforts can be made to encourage the participation of less elite groups, by utilizing the cooperative mechanisms for pooling resources. Alternatively, processing and marketing arrangements that allow large pro-

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