



Mapping cassava food value chains in Tanzania's smallholder farming sector: The implications of intra-household gender dynamics



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ABSTRACT

A gendered mapping of the structure and coordination (functioning) of traditional cassava value chains is important for marginalized groups such as women in rural development. In contrast to global high value chains, traditional food value chains and associated gender relations as well as power dynamics within households have received little attention. We conducted a cross sectional study in Kigoma, Mwanza, the coastal region, and Zanzibar Island in Tanzania. Data were collected through structured interviews conducted with 228 farmers, combined with key informant interviews, direct observations, repeated household visits, and literature review. The results of the study revealed that there are weak linkages within the cassava value chain, which is highly gendered. While production and processing nodes of the chain, which commenced from villages, were dominated by women and children, women were not well-integrated within high value nodes such as marketing in urban areas and cross-border trading, which were dominated by men. Transportation of cassava to highly lucrative markets was also dominated by men. Cassava processing was conducted at the household level as well as within small-scale cooperatives, with the major portion of this work being done by women. Supporting institutions were found to be involved in the supply of planting material, training, and the provision of processing equipment. In general, men played a prominent role in the control of resources, marketing, and income. In conclusion, the mapping of cassava value chains could help to identify avenues for understanding of poverty, enhancing food security, upgrading capacities, reducing gender inequality, and enhancing women's participation in marketing and income control in the cassava value chains.

1. Introduction

The impacts of agricultural growth and development on poverty reduction and the promotion of food security may be at least three times greater than the combined impacts of other economic sectors within developing countries (de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2010). As reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2015, most contemporary discourses on global development center on issues of food security, poverty reduction, and gender inequality. For this study, we adopted a conceptual framework that brought together a gender focus at the household level with a pro-poor value chain approach to analyze, in a coordinated manner, a comprehensive range of cassava-related activities and constraints relating to input supplies, production, processing, governance, supporting infrastructure, and credit and marketing. Application of the value chain approach for examining the development of agriculture commodities has been identified as an

important strategy for enhancing efficiency and coordination. It also plays a critical role in enabling policymakers, development practitioners, donors, and academics to develop an understanding of cassava production methods, processing and marketing, and the gender and power dynamics between actors at the levels of both the household and the value chain (Kaplinsky and Morris, 2000). This is because the use of a value chain approach enables the identification of gaps and interventions that can benefit marginalized groups such as women and the poor (Coles and Mitchell, 2010). A value chain is defined as a range of activities that are required to bring a product from its conception, through its design, sourcing of raw materials and intermediate inputs, processing, marketing and distribution, to the final consumer (Kumar et al., 2011). Gender is used to describe all the socially given attributes, roles, activities, and responsibilities connected to being a male or a female in a given society. Our gender identity determines how we are perceived, and how we are expected to think and act as women and

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men, because of the norms and values of the society.

Lengiso et al. (2016) asserts that to date, there is no empirical evidence available regarding the extent and market integration and related income changes affecting women's intra-household bargaining position in agriculture commodity chains. Similarly, Coles and Mitchell (2010) argue that there is a dearth of empirical evidence on women's control of productive resources and their roles in decision making and access to markets for male-dominated export and staple food crops. Njuki et al. (2016) noted that women's control over income from agricultural activities particularly the intra-household allocation of income between men and women, or the extent of women's ability to make decisions about purchases can enhance their decision-making and increase their bargaining power, which can in turn give them a voice, both within the household and at the community level. This therefore implies that there is need to investigate intra-household gender dynamics within agriculture commodity chains such as the cassava value chains. Integrating women into agricultural value chains without creating an imbalance in intra-household power relations requires a holistic, critical, and coordinated approach for understanding these value chains, with a view to identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for women to participate in the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural commodities. Nakazibwe and Pelupessy indicate that studies regarding agriculture commodity value chains have tended to focus on governance structures associated with value chains at the global scale, with only a few studies having been conducted at the national and local scales at which value chains operate. Most studies on agriculture value chains have targeted high value cash crop commodities such as organic cashew nuts, sweet potato, fresh fruits, vegetables, tomatoes, onions (Jeckoniah et al., 2013), cocoa, maize, rice, cotton, and avocado (Oduol et al., 2013). There is a paucity of empirical studies related to the mapping of traditional low value chain commodities such as cassava that have incorporated a gendered analysis at the household level. Moreover, Jeckoniah et al. (2013) have noted that the focus of most value chain studies has been on facilitating linkages of smallholder farmers to markets aimed at reducing their poverty and increasing their profits. Much less attention has been paid to the impacts of these value chains in relation to changes in the traditional roles and relations of women and men as well as other specific actors. The few studies that have considered gender have focused exclusively on modern value chains. Thus, Dolan (2001) examined how female farmers were disadvantaged within contract farming schemes in Kenya's horticultural export sector. Jeckoniah et al. (2013) also analyzed gender roles and relations along a high value onion chain in Tanzania. Barrientos et al. (2001, 2003) have reported on the exploitation of female farm workers in South Africa's deciduous fruit sector. Maertens and Swinnen (2009) have also examined the gendered consequences of modern supply chains. Specifically, they conceptualized the mechanisms whereby women were directly affected by modern supply value chains.

An exception to the focus on high value or modern chains is a study conducted by Andersson et al. (2016) who examined the cassava leaves value chain, focusing on how their markets were organized and who benefitted from participating in this chain and how. This study also examined the chain's structure and gendered dynamics in Mkuranga District of Tanzania. However, the study did not include other popular and important cassava products such as fresh tubers, processed cassava flour, and cassava four products like scones, biscuits, and bread and did not, therefore, provide a complete analysis of the cassava value chain. Maertens and Swinnen (2009) emphasized that most of the existing studies and discussions on agricultural commodity value chains have paid insufficient attention to gender concerns. Moreover, of the few studies that have addressed these concerns, none have investigated how the roles and relations between men and women are influenced and changed at the household level and the impacts of gender inequality resulting in skewed participation and benefit sharing within households. Most of these studies (e.g., Andersson et al., 2016) have only

examined changes in gender roles and relations at the level of the value chain, and do not, therefore, constitute exhaustive analyses of the cassava value chain. Therefore, there is a need to conduct comprehensive mapping of the traditional cassava food value chain that incorporates gender roles and relations in developing countries such as Tanzania. Mapping the behavior of men and women within the contemporary cassava value chain offers us a window for identifying gender-based constraints and opportunities for upgrading the cassava value chain. The overall objective of this study was to investigate the structure and gender dynamics of the traditional cassava food value chain. The study was organized around the following set of broad research questions: What is the structure of the gendered cassava value chain in smallholder farming systems? What are the gender dynamics of this chain? Who participates and at what points in the chain? Who has access to and control over resources in the value chain? Some of the specific questions that we investigated were: Who are the actors in the cassava value chain, and what are the roles of women and men as well as other stakeholders? How has the operation of cassava value chains transformed the roles and relations of women and men at the levels of the household and the value chain? What challenges do women, men, and other actors face through their participation in the cassava value chain?

Farnworth (2011) have reported that developing gender-focused policies will ensure higher agricultural production and productivity and generate a large number of social benefits with respect to value chains. This can also speed up the adoption of innovations, raise household incomes, and lead to improvements in child health, nutritional, and educational levels thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. Investing in women farmers and increasing their effective participation in value chains, enhances the potential of value chains to become an agent of sustainable social transformation (Farnworth, 2011). Further, empirical evidence from this study provides development agencies and donors with information on where exactly to target their efforts in upgrading the cassava value chain.

2. Unpacking gender and the cassava value chain

2.1. The cassava value chain

Cassava is one of Africa's most important food crops. It is the second most important staple food crop after maize in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in western, central and eastern Africa. This crop is widely consumed because of its high calorific value and because it is the cheapest source of energy (Howeler et al., 2013). Following cassava's introduction into Sub-Saharan Africa in the 16th century, its high levels of resilience and adaptability to a wide range of ecological conditions have ensured its sustained production over many generations in this region (Adebayo et al., 2010). Its low input requirements make it a particularly appropriate crop that can be produced by marginalized groups with a lack of resources such as smallholder women farmers. Cassava is mostly cultivated in the humid forest zones and the sub humid savanna regions of Africa and South America, as well as in some parts of Asia. Over the last 10 years, annual yields of cassava tubers have increased by 1.18% annually, while production has increased by 0.67% annually (FAOSTAT, 2015). Cassava augments the incomes of farming households, generating employment opportunities, and can potentially benefit women as a result of reduced food prices as well as more convenience for traditional products. Nweke et al. (2002) indicated that cassava is not just a women's crop; the more commercialized it becomes, the greater men's participation in its production.

Tanzania, which has a typical African agro-based economy, was selected for the study. In this country, approximately 80% of the population depends on small-scale farming for their livelihoods and around 20% of the GDP is derived from the agricultural sector (Eskola, 2005). Cassava is mostly produced in the following regions in Tanzania: the coastal, northern, eastern, and Lake regions, as well as in Zanzibar

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