Issues in farmer-buyer relationships and trade practices in Uganda

Recent empirical findings

Jörg Wiegratz
University of Sheffield, Department of Politics

SOAS, Agrarian Change Seminars
22.10.2009
Overview of the presentation

- Findings from two studies, research period 2007-9
  - ‘Case studies of lead firm governance systems in the context of commercialization of smallholder agriculture in Uganda’ (Wiegratz, Nyabuntu and Omagor 2007)
  - ‘The cultural political economy of embedding neoliberalism in Uganda: an analysis of changes in moral norms and trade practices in the rural economy since 1986’ (PhD research 2007-10)
    - www.shef.ac.uk/politics/research/phd/jwiegratz.html
Background study 1

- Five case studies of governance of value chains between lead firms and supplying farmers
  - Bee Natural Products (honey)
  - Sulmafoods (fruits/veg.)
  - Outspan (sesame/chili)
  - Ibero (coffee)
  - Jesa (dairy products)

- Extra study (different funding): Sameer and Paramount (both dairy) (not discussed)
Abbreviations

- Domestic Value chains (DVCs)
- Domestic Value Chain Development (DVCD)
- Lead firms (LFs)
- Smallholder farmers (SHFs)
- Lead farmers (LFAs)
- Supervisors (SVs)
- Support institutions (SIs)
- Private Sector (PS)
- Public Private Partnership (PPP)
- For the lead firms: BNP, SF, OS, IB, JE (PM, SE)
Research rationale

- Past studies: problems in agro value chain governance in Uganda’s agro-sector regarding business practices
  - Low level of: trust-based, long term oriented economic relations
  - Rather: short term oriented, on-off relations, low mutual trust/mistrust, opportunistic behaviour, malpractices
  - Low trust atmosphere shapes actors’ expectations re action motivations and practices
- Yet, relevance of meaningful buyer-farmers interaction for development of smallholder farmers (within Uganda’s neoliberal setting – which we largely take as ‘given’ in this study)
- Thus, what are the experiences of buyers who engage in direct and long term oriented relations with SHFs (‘developmental buyers’)?
Key research questions

- How did the relationship start between SHFs and the LF?
- What is the rationale of the relationship?
- What were requirements for SHFs to participate in the VC?
- Did SHFs fulfill requirements from the beginning, or, if not, did they receive assistance from LFs (others) to do so?

- What are different governance systems of LF? Rationale?
- What are the roles of the LFs and SHFs in a specific VC?
- What are forms, reasons, results of LF-SHFs cooperation?
- What are forms of cooperation among SHSs?
Key research questions, cont. (1)

- What are challenges/opportunities of the relationship?
- What are particular challenges/opportunities of SHFs?
- Which are SHFs’ improvement (upgrading) efforts? What are results of upgrading?
- What are overall benefits and costs for SHFs/LFs of being in the business relationship?
- What are lessons learnt for LFs and SHFs?
How did support institutions help the LF-SHF's VC?

How did government policies impact on the relation between LF's and SHF's?

How can Government (donor) programmes and policies support the VCs in future?
Hypotheses of the study

- All pretty much the basics of *conventional* value chain governance analysis!

- *E.g.*, production and trade dynamics at level of SHFs and LFs are related to forms of relationships between VC actors; and thus to forms of VC governance.

- *Network* relations with a LF offer better earning and upgrading conditions for SHFs than arms-length spot-market relations.
Hypotheses of the study, cont.

- Different governance forms require different degrees of farmers’ capabilities; integration into more relational governance modes requires a high degree of such capabilities.

- Enhanced skills and collective action of SHFs reduces governance costs and risks; so do enhanced opportunities to efficiently transmit knowledge/info between LF and SHFs.
Field research

- In-depth interviews with: LFs and SHFs.
- With the LFs: MDs, Farm Managers, SVs etc.
- With 2-4 farmers groups per case study
- With 3-4 support institutions per case study.

- Field research period: June-September 2007.
- Final document length: about 500pp.
Governance of VCs: Theory

- **LFs** are in a particular *functional position* in the chain, e.g. powerful buyers/retailers, processors

- Way in which the LF (powerful buyers/retailers, processors) of a specific VC *organizes, coordinates, monitors and controls*:
  1. Dispersed activities and inputs of the participating actors (to achieve certain functional division of labour in the VC)
  2. *Barriers* of VC entry and *spread* of skills, technology, knowledge, information, advise, finance, profits along VC

- Governance is typically required for specifications in terms of
  - **product** (design, quality, standards)
  - production **processes** and technology, and/or
  - **logistics** (quantity, delivery, scheduling)
Aspects of VC governance

- **Setting** rules that define conditions of VC participation

- **Incorporating/excluding** other VC actors accordingly, and **allocating** to them value-adding activities that LFs do not wish to perform

- **Monitoring** actors’ performance and rules’ compliance

- **Assisting** VC actors in meeting rules
Governance: WHY and HOW

Among main motivation for governance:

- **Product definition**: Buyer’s product differentiation strategy requires to provide suppliers with precise product specification + ensure that specifications are met.
- **Perceived risk of producer failure**: Governance is supposed to reduce that risk.

In some VCs: major governance work **not done by LF but few** (1st tier) suppliers, buying agents, government actors, consulting firms.
Different governance forms

- Varying coordination patterns: along a VC and between VCs:
  - **Arm’s-length relationship** (pure market relationships)
  - **Network-type relationships** (explicitly coordinated)
  - **Vertically integrated firms** (hierarchy, explicitly coordinated)

- Reasons for different governance types:
  - **Complexity** of transaction
  - **Ability to codify and transfer** information/knowledge
  - **Capabilities** of suppliers
  - Others: product or market features, technology, trade policies, social capital, trust, human resources, local collective action

- Also: differences in terms of **high-trust** and **low-trust VC**
Some implications

Important to understand:

- VC structure, functioning & change of governance modes along VC
- Ways in which LF might intend to incorporate and support SHFs and allocate new tasks to them
- Capability requirements for SHFs’ integration and upgrading in VCs

Quality of relation with LF vital for SHFs:

- LLL-approach: Local firms linking with buyers, leveraging know-how, skills, technology from these relations (to upgrade), and invest in learning
...in context of farmers’ development

- **Participating in VCs can be fast-track strategy for SHFs:**
  - To gain access to markets (LF as a gatekeeper), marketing channels, credit, technologies, knowledge, skills of the LF and thus mobilize farmers’ potential.
  - LF's put *pressure* and at the same time provide *assistance*.

- Again, note that this is the view of the *conventional VC approach* which is in parts insightful (but also tends to exclude important issues such as power, cultural political economy, moral economy, etc. which we turn to in study 2).

- For references on theory (for study 1 and 2) see Wiegratz et al. (2007a), Wiegratz et al. (2007b), Wiegratz (2009).
Selected findings
All LFs tried to link up and support SHFs

- All LFs have undertaken efforts to build direct and constant relations with farmers and build their productive capacities and group organization.

- There are various reasons for LFs to do this:
  - Strive for sufficient product quantity and quality
  - Control of diseases and pests in the production area
  - Meeting standards (traceability etc.) of the target market
  - Statutory regulation
  - Market dynamics such as enhanced competition (quality)
  - Interest in local development around the LF’s location
LF’ support relevant for SHFs’ upgrading

- Setting up a factory (or project office, ‘being visible’) in an area helps the LF getting security from local ‘stakeholders’ (farmers etc.) allowing the factory not to be a ‘white elephant’ but to be protected (in broader sense) by stakeh.

- LFs offer significant benefits to SHFs; the results of the cooperation are usually significant (farmers’ upgrading)

- Despite the upgrading efforts/results of LFs and SHFs, some LFs face a supply problem, others a market access problem

- LFs still noted deficits among farmers in terms of: adoption of improved agronomic practices, technology advancement, and risk taking behaviour, amongst others
Continuation!?

- LFs have to be ready to (continue to) invest in SHFs: innovation, inputs, training, advise, promotion of GAP (good agricultural practices), certification costs etc.

- Such efforts have a good chance to yield positive returns in the long run (if loyalty & market challenges can be kept in control)

- There are high expectations - among SHFs/stakeholders - that LFs further increase the scope of their support
LFS positively different from ‘other buyers’

- Farmers in all case studies appreciate the relation with their LF; despite respective challenges

  - Training, price, demand stability, increased business volume, technology & knowledge transfer, better agro-practices, various kinds of assistance, more trust-based (and at times partnership-like) relationships, motivation, learning by repetition, lower level of malpractices (if any) in particular cases, joint business projects

- Farmers: the LFs’ actions is different from other buyers/agents in the area; others mostly just purchase the produce but do not develop farmers capacities; they are often also less trustworthy than the LFs studied
Yet, LF face loyalty problems

Yet, almost all LFs suffer from the loyalty-problem: Farmers who benefit from the LF’s support sell to other buyers who have not supported farmers in any way, but can pay a higher price because they had not invested in farmers’ capacities (in VCD in general).

LF’s initial assistance resulted in a loyalty boost; this initial effect fades out to some extent over time.

LFs will have to find new ways of boosting (or ‘re-freshening’) the farmers’ loyalty in later phases of the relationship.
State support for LFs?!

- GOU has to consider the contribution of those LFs who are **pioneers** in developing a sub-sector in a particular area.

- Argument for special support (or protection) of the LFs efforts and investment into VCD in new sub-sectors to arrive at a social optimum (increased level) of such efforts.

- Without support (or protection from following buyers) in the early phase, the pioneer firm will invest less than desired; knows the following buyers will benefit from the capacity building of farmers and out-compete the pioneer on price (scenario of BNP and honey production in West Nile region).

- Market failures - information (‘discovery’) and training externalities of LFs’ actions - to be addressed by policies.
Difficult enforceability of contracts

- Some LFs face problem of enforceability of (supply and pay-back) contracts/agreements; dealing with defaulting farmers
- Deficient re-payment behaviour of farmers (‘other needs’)
- Enforcement of contracts is not yet feasible with SHFs:
  - Limited staff capacity of the LF to enforce contracts
  - Fear to loose reputation among farmers
  - Need for LF to keep farmers in the VC to ensure supply
  - Pressures from local politicians
- BNP approached NAADS (state agriculture programme) to help with price negotiations/farmers’ loyalty

Overall, highly relevant problem for VCD in Uganda (undermines & lowers LFs’ efforts)
The role of training and lead farmers

- LF s stressed the high level of training efforts needed to keep the farmers motivated, committed, knowledgeable.

- LF s often designate successful farmers as ‘lead farmers’ who act as role models and champions of any innovations the LF would like to push through the group of SHFs. The use of LFA is effective for farmer-to-farmer learning.

- LF SVs reported that they had to learn how (i) to interact with farmers, (ii) communicate information, (iii) make joint decisions, and (iv) be patient with farmers.
Some LFS have problem to expand their staff system adequately as their system with farmers expands.
Group formation and dynamics...

- …of farmer groups is a major issue in VCs. All farmers interviewed were organized in groups. Often, the LF has initiated the group formation process.

- The group arrangement has brought many advantages (input sharing etc.)

- Due to group processes, the output per SHF has increased, knowledge of best practices is shared by members

- However, weak group structures (generally institutions from grassroots to higher levels) remain a major challenge for most SHFs and respective LFs.
...are key and need to be addressed

- All LFs called for enhanced group organization. This issue should be of major concern for GOU.
- One LF: stated it would increase farm gate prices for farmers if there is a higher level of group organization (thus reduced LF supervision costs).
- LFs need to develop better **group oriented** incentives.
- Related challenge: to use farmers’ network which is applied to certain areas (to help each other in production) also for cooperation in investment, financial and other business issues.
Bulking challenge: logistics & practices

- Bulking of produce (farmers’ collective marketing) still faces challenges of:
  - Lack of stores in villages where produce can be bulked by SHFs as they wait for the buyer to collect and pay for the produce
  - SHFs wanting to be paid as soon as they deliver the produce to the store
  - Requires a LF' approach to foster gradual change in farmers’ practices (trust)
(Dis-)trust is another top issue in VCs

- Many interviewees - farmers and LFs - refer to trust as the basis of a mutual beneficial business relationship.
- LFs have usually a high awareness of the importance of trust and try to develop/deepen trust with SHFs; especially in absence of use of any/enforceable contracts.
- LFs are not always successful in trust enhancement due to:
  - High turn over, low job security/remuneration of SVs
  - Cheating of LF’s buying agents
  - Irregular payment of farmers
  - Logistical challenges, thus delayed picking of produce
  - De-campaigning of LF by other buyers and politicians
  - ‘Interference’ of other buyers into the VC - try to capture produce after LF has developed farmers’ capacities (price wars)
  - In one case, the LF and farmers call for intervention of GOU in the price setting (BNP)
How lead firms build/deepen trust

Farmers said the LF builds trust and relations with them by:

- Providing an assured market and taking all the farmers produce, buying from and working with a group for longer (time factor)
- Paying a more than average (local) price, paying regularly, being flexible in terms of payment methods and other matters
- Providing assistance (inputs, advise, visits, training, pre-finance)
- Fulfilling promises over longer period of time
- Being visible and approachable (factory shows commitment to the area), transparent and reliable
- Being part of farmers’ social life (develop a more social relation)
- Being concerned with SHFs’ development/well being
- Increasing farmers identity towards the LFs’ project
- Examples where trust has been improved by using an advanced machine for quality control/weighting
And how lead firms loose it...

Farmers: issues that undermine relations and trust between them and LF are **deficits of the LF** in terms of:

- Timely payment of farmers
- Price levels and price negotiations with farmers
- Flexibility
- Timely logistics arrangement to pick the produce
- Communication gaps
- High field staff turnover

Standards (organic, fair trade, quality and others) which require buyers and farmers to be in close contact - beyond mere transaction mode - have fostered relations and cooperation between farmers and buyers.
Mixed state efforts/results in supporting VCD

- Some cases where government programmes have helped the VC, LF and/or farmers in terms of training and equipment

- BNP-NAADS cooperation most advanced

- Other cases where government support in crucial issue areas is largely absent which leaves the LF with a considerable burden regarding VCD and farmers’ upgrading

- Some LFs noted to have overstretch their activity areas beyond core functions (training SHFs basics only, buying produce)
LFs search for cooperation with: support institutions and industries

- Getting stakeholders involved in development of farmers - major strategy of all LFs to reduce their VCD burden

- VC partners: NGOs, donor/state inst., input suppliers

- LFs take on a linking function for farmers

- There are a number of examples of good cooperation between LF and input suppliers; which can benefit SHFs
Support institutions/industries: +

- Impression: in terms of presence, more international than local support inst. are involved in VCD in cases studied

- Some support programmes/institutions outside the government realm do useful interventions

- There are examples where two/more support inst. partner with a LF and the partners compliment one another and improve the efficiency and performance of the VC
Support institutions/industries: -

- Uncoordinated interventions from different development agencies (incl. NGOs) can lead to ‘confusion of farmers
  - Organic farmers (or farmers close to them) advised to use non-organic chemicals/treated seeds
    - Organic VCs can loose certification/be sanctioned for years
  - Design of programmes show poor awareness of prevailing VC issues: farmers are supported in processing to become more independent from LF and sell at better price to any (non-developmental) buyer
  - Different quality standards being promoted in an area by provision of quality equipment which has lower quality level than the one promoted by the LF
Interventions that do not consider existing VC context properly (e.g. strategies of LF/farmers) can cause confusion in the VC and maybe leave farmers worse off:

- Link with LF has been cut; training, advice, market access not offered anymore by LF,
- Low quality equipment brings poor result (discouraged farmers)

Donors/support agencies: should be concerned with promoting a more harmonized system of standards, knowledge, practices etc. in VCs in an area
Public Private Partnerships for DVCD

- GOU has to clarify about its conception of PPP in DVCD, e.g. scope of support for LF governance systems, farmers etc.

- BNP-NAADS case shows: clarification necessary to which extent GOU wishes to engage with LFs not only on matters of production (training and equipment for farmers) but also marketing (loyalty, contracts, prices)
Indications that LFs have to improve:

- The relation with lead farmers (regularly getting their advice etc.)
- Improve communication (prices, strategies etc.)
- Improve field management (adequate level and remuneration of field staff)
- Work on loyalty challenge
- Enhance system of rewards and sanctions for farmers
Hypotheses confirmed

- Production/trade dynamics at level of SHFs/LFs are related to forms of relations between VC actors (governance)
  - Deficits in terms of loyalty/trust between SHFs and LF reduce produce that SHFs sell to LF, increase side selling
  - Organic certification requirements foster LF and SHFs to have a close & continuous relation which includes joint harvesting, quality checks, training; LFs need to build up field presence for that
  - Training, advice, pre-finance offered by LFs strengthens the skills and capacities and thus performance of SHFs
  - LFs link SHFs to SIs which again strengthens the SHFs

- Cooperation measures are result of advanced relations that are different from purely transaction based approach common in the agro sectors in Uganda
Hypotheses confirmed, cont. (1)

- Network relations with LF offer better earning/upgrading conditions for SHFs than arms-length spot-market relations.

- Different governance forms require different degrees of farmers’ capabilities; network relations have requirement for SHFs to enhance their skills in GAP, post harvest handling, sorting, storage etc.

- LFs offer assistance to raise the required skills, yet also demand that SHFs improve their work practices over time.

- SHFs need skills for communication, trust building and transparency vis-à-vis the LF; integration into relational governance modes requires a high degree of such capabilities.
Hypotheses confirmed, cont. (2)

- Enhanced skills and collective action of SHFs reduces governance costs and risks for the LF
  - Training provided to farmers reduce monitoring costs in later periods and increase business volumes
  - Enhanced farmer groups reduce coordination costs
  - Governance costs are reduced by enhanced opportunities to efficiently transmit knowledge/info between LFs and SHFs as a result of better group formation (farmers acting increasingly as one voice), improved communication practices of farmers and the increasing mobile phone use
Further research needed

- Role of LFAs as link between LF and farmer groups
- Role of SVs as links LF management - farmers
- Trust links in VC, loyalty cycles
- Practices of ‘non-developmental’ buyers
- How LFs spend money from external state/aid agencies
- LF’ claims re results of funded intervention (degree of ‘propaganda’)
- Politics of cooperation (e.g. limiting farmers’ ambition re processing)
- Connections between state/donor – LF (e.g., dairy, sugar, palm oil, ‘cuts’/shares for officials?, implications)
- Divide and rule strategies of LFs
- Inter lead-firms fights over ‘our farmers’ (politics of out-grower schemes in specific territories, in ‘liberal’ economy setting)
- CONVENTIONAL VC APPROACH cannot handle/seems not interested in: (CULTURAL) POLITICAL ECONOMY, e.g. MORAL ECONOMY
Study 2: Trade practices and moral norms in rural markets in neoliberal Uganda

- Research question: how have neoliberal reforms reshaped the moral economy in rural markets (& beyond)
  - Reforms aim at the emergence & consolidation of market society (free-market, capitalist social relations)
  - Includes a corresponding set of moral norms of behaving and relating to each other
    - Homo economicus, self-interest, individualism including individual gain-making and material success, utility maximizing behaviour, instrumental rationality, low other-regard and empathy, opportunism, transaction-based relations, money
Neoliberal moral restructuring

- Reforms, therefore, have to undermine, overwrite and displace pre-existing norms, values, orientations, beliefs, valuations and practices among the population.
- Attempt to change, directly or indirectly, *moral norms*: what is regarded as acceptable/unacceptable, proper/improper, legitimate/illegitimate behaviour in light of moral principles in the country.
  - Moral norms: standards of interaction concerning others’ welfare, norms: socially constituted reasons for actions.
- Changing the criteria by which people evaluate each other’s (and their own) actions.
The study of the moral economy

- All economic relations, practices & organisations have moral dimensions, preconditions, implications
- Various moral (and other) principles shape motivation & behaviour of economic actors
- An economic organisation (local economy/market) is shaped by people’s relationships, their statuses and positions in webs of kinship/community relations and their entitlements, claims, rights, obligations, duties
  - Different frames of reference: age, sex, community membership, position in kinship/community structure, etc.
Moral economy, cont.

- All economies are moral economies; all actors are moral actors (identities, motives, relationships, actions have necessarily a moral connotation)
- Actions are always ‘moral statements’
- Study of the moral economy: ‘a form of enquiry that examines how ordinary economic practices and relationships embody or affect moral dispositions, evaluations, rules, values, customs and norms’ (Sanghera et al. 2009); but also the study of the respective political-economic dimensions
- For details on references see e.g. Wiegratz (2009) and Wiegratz (forthcoming)
Methodology

- Around 50 elite interviews in Kampala (officials from state & donor agencies, NGOs & associations, journalists, academicians, religious leaders, elders, observers...)

- Around 100 interviews in Bugisu region in Eastern Uganda (in the town Mbale and surrounding districts of Mbale, Bududa, Manafa and Sironko) with smallholder farmers, traders and middlemen, elites; market practices were studied

- With assistance by research colleagues Samuel Bbosa, James Nkuubi and Fred Guweddeko

- Across agricultural sectors (maize, coffee, tomatoes, grains, cotton)

- Analysis of academic literature, newspapers, periodicals, songs

- Analysis offers an account of the dimensions, dynamics, drivers, reasons, tensions and consequences of some of the main characteristics of moral restructuring in the rural economy/community in neoliberal Uganda
Findings based on qualitative research

- Interviewees’ subjective views/perceptions, their experiences, interpretations & sense making of trends in liberalised economy (and society) since the late 1980s

- Some economists might dismiss this collection of peoples’ views as: ‘rumours from the village’
  - prominent World Bank advisor about results of qualitative poverty research in Uganda, as recalled by interviewee
Selected findings: overview

- Cultural (coupled with the political-economic) dimension of rapid neoliberal reform has negatively affected the relationships and trade practices between SHFs (peasants) and traders in rural markets.
- Higher levels of ‘malpractice’ and a change in their form (compared to earlier decades of agro trade).
- Malpractices include: deception, intimidation, theft, collusion, corruption, and various manipulations regarding price (misinformation, intimidation etc.), quality (e.g. adulteration, incorrect assessment) and quantity (weighted scales).
Malpractices

- Traders (middlemen/brokers) appear to have been the origin of many of malpractices that people identified.

- Some of the malpractices emerged, substantiated or mutated with an increase in product demand.

- Farmers estimated: about 7 to 10 out of 10 traders engaged in malpractices (traders mostly agreed).
  - Estimates of officials/donors/NGOs: 2-3/10 traders

- Partly in response, as well as for other reasons, some farmers also engaged in malpractices (though with much less frequency, scope and intensity than traders); tit-for-tat rationale (exporter, middlemen, farmer); ‘chains of malpractices’

- In some markets, rise of group of brokers with social power
  - more generally, intensified cut-taking culture, across the society, by actors with relative power (in public and private offices, etc.)
Many reasons for malpractices

- Malpractices existed in the decades prior to the neoliberal era
  - Yet, at lower level etc. (different political economy, regulation)
- Liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, neoliberal state
- Social buffers removed across the economy and society
- (Foreign) ‘investor’ discourse
- No/hardly any regulation of traders’ behaviour
- Officials don’t want to/cannot regulate markets/the economy (for ideological/political-economic reasons, hands-off approach)
- Neoliberal ideology/cultural political economy ‘prohibits’ to critique &‘regulate’ traders’ practices (sacred traders/businesses, covered)
- Farmers’ decline in their bargaining power vis-à-vis traders
  - Due to e.g. destruction of cooperatives (now individualized actors), cash needs, poverty, commercialised education/health sector, weakened public sector, etc.
Reasons, cont.: Neoliberal moral economy

- Negatives outcomes of neoliberal socio-economic reforms
  - Poverty, unemployment, crime, corruption, injustices, inequality, insecurity, rising costs of living, crisis of reproduction

- Poverty and (relative) wealth ambition

- Corruption sagas since the mid-late 1990s; political/bureaucratic elites engaged in power and wealth projects; self-interest over national interest, morally compromised & disengaged

- ‘New’ game in town: making money no matter how;
  - ‘freed’ economy/individuals: from (social, cultural/moral) ‘constraints’

- Era of increasingly unconstrained moneymaking, in which those with social, economic and political power pursue their self-interest almost without regard for the costs to others
  - Focus on quick profits (little regard for quality/longer-term considerations)
  - Increasing ability of the rich to ignore social conventions & constrains
■ This self-interest is being rationalised, supported and justified by a new set of neoliberal orientations, norms and discourses that increasingly govern Ugandan economy and society (as they do other countries)

■ Destructive norms and malpractices also spread in other sectors (education, health, general public administration)

■ Foreign (cultural-political-economic) drivers of neoliberal moral restructuring in Uganda include (many of the): donors/aid agencies, NGOs, organisations, special interest groups, companies including the media (DVDs, Premier League)

■ Event of competitive, multiparty democracy (rationale, tensions, corruption, malpractices etc.)
The tough rural moral economy of the 2000s

- Often substantial levels of deceit and/or corruption among those people who interact with farmers: those who buy farmers’ produce and sell them agricultural supplies, as well as shopkeepers, microfinance institutions, councils, courts, police officers, bureaucrats (e.g. some of those responsible for agricultural support, regulation of standards), politicians

- Farmers: critical of realities of neoliberal rural economy; often reasoned that malpractice are applied by the various actors to make/keep farmers poor and consequently govern & exploit them with more ease

- After many years of huge problems at the leadership level, revival of Bugisu Cooperative Union (despite significant political pressure against it) after a long struggle (of an alliance of farmers, elders, other concerned people and leaders) against the forces of the status quo

- A few other trends that seem to run counter to the spread of neoliberalism in the country (e.g. different business practices applied by some traders)
Concluding remarks

- Many respondents, and a growing public debate, invoked ideas like ‘moral degeneration’, ‘moral decay’ and ‘kiwaani’ (‘fake’, and the title of a popular song, which points to the role of false/deceptive/’unreal’ behaviour and things in contemporary Uganda)

- Noted a significant shift since the late 1980s regarding the way in which more and more Ugandans (are made to) think, feel and act

- Moral authority of most institutions diminished

- Notwithstanding the official rhetoric & statistics of reform success: ordinary people, in many ways, experienced manifestations of neoliberal pseudo-development

- Affects relations and practices of farmers and traders
Embedding a neoliberal business culture changes not only the political economy but also the moral order of local markets, communities and the country at large.

Hard to ‘reverse’ moral economy changes and trends: because of dynamics and cumulative effects of the changes in morality that have been taking place, coupled with the country’s political-economic situation (distribution of power/wealth in the country, interests/projects of the powerful actors including agents of neoliberal morality) and the radical reorganisation of the global political economy since around 1990s.

Trends in Uganda (and elsewhere) in 2009; future trends; future research…. 
Finally...

- See for further details (e.g. a summary of the PhD research findings and for other downloads): [www.shef.ac.uk/politics/research/phd/jwiegratz.html](http://www.shef.ac.uk/politics/research/phd/jwiegratz.html)
- See also future publications by the presenter
- For comments and further information please email to: j.wiegratz@sheffield.ac.uk
- Thank you for your invitation and your attention.