

Structural dysfunctioning and production relationships in the village palm oil plantations of Tiapoum In the south east of Côte d'Ivoire

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Abstract:- The purpose of this paper is to analyze the nature of the production relationships between the planters and the development agents, such as the managers and delegates of the agro-industries (PALM-CI and DEKEL OIL) and the supervisors of COOPALM Adouvlaï cooperatives involved in the development of palm oil growing in Tiapoum. It helps understand the economic behaviour of the above mentioned stakeholders in a context of a structural crisis marked on the one hand, by the reduction in the purchase price of the palm bunch and the absence of a consensual mechanism of regulation and control of oil production and, on the other hand, by the spatial domination of PALMCI in this locality. The data analysis was carried out using the systemic method. This method allowed us to understand the strategies developed by the different actors to maximize their profits. The observation, interview and documentation techniques and research tools (interview guide) were mobilized to collect data from the field. The present production proposes a contribution to the discussion of the differentiation of production relations in the peasantry in the context of structural crisis. Thus, faced with socio-economic stakes, agro-industries implement the sponsorship system to maintain the farmers' dependence. This system allows the delegitimization of cooperatives among the farmers. This situation creates a mistrust between the development agents such as PALMCI supervisors, cooperatives, etc. and farmers and allows the emergence and assistance of direct buyers.

Keywords: *Mode of production, conflict, planning, mistrust, dysfunctioning.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The regulation of production relations is one of the prospects sought by industrial capitalist companies in traditional societies in Africa in general, and namely the Ivorian authorities (Affou, 1980). Thus, after the independence, the Ivorian State implemented development projects through the state support structures (SODE). These structures emphasized the extension of shrub crops (coffee, cocoa, etc.) and food crops (rice, cassava, etc.), funding of inputs and marketing of farmers' products through a planned network of exchange (Sawadogo, 1977, Ziké, 1990). As a matter of fact, the planning allowed the creation of a national market in order to absorb the totality of the peasant production, but also and above all to standardize the production relations between peasants and development agents (Badouin, 1967). This planning was initiated in coffee and cocoa crops and reached its peak through the growing of palm oil, which was one of the first crops to benefit from two development plans called Palm Plan (Badouin, 1967, Sawadogo, 1977). Funded by the State of Côte d'Ivoire, the international investors (FED, CCCE, BIRD, BEI, BNDA, CAA) and the private sector, the first palm plan allowed the creation of agro-industrial complexes made of ten oil mills. This plan also made it possible to produce 76,500 hectares of palm trees, that is to say 49,000 hectares of industrial plantations and 27,500 hectares of village plantations under the responsibility of SATMACI from 1961 to 1963 followed by that of SODEPALM in 1964 (Minagra, 1999; Firca, 2009). The second "Palm Plan" was carried out from 1985 to 1995. At a total cost of 90 billion CFA francs, it enabled the creation of 58,000 hectares including 13,940 hectares of industrial plantations, 41,060 hectares of village plantations, an oil mill (Firca, 2009). It enabled the funding on credit of many village plantations (seed and fertilizer supplies, etc.) thanks to the Extension and Renewal Funds (FER) and the social fund (Dian, op.cit.). These funds contributed to reducing the cost of creating village plantations. However, from 1981 to 1990, the cost of agricultural raw materials declined drastically on the international market. The Stabilization Fund is no longer in a position to ensure the continuation of investments as planned (Ziké, op.cit.). Faced with this new constraint, the Ivorian authorities tried, in consultation with producers and consumers, to find definitive solutions to price fluctuations. Given the impassibility of the interlocutors and the deterioration of the situation of the Caistab, which has become inoperative, the State is no longer able to subsidize inputs to farmers (Griffon, 1991). In this context and under the multiple pressures of the

Bretton Woods institutions, the Ivorian government had been forced to liberalize the agricultural sectors in general and that of palm oil in particular (Cirad, op.cit, Minagra 1996).

Thus, Decree N° 946-338 of June 9, 1994 on the withdrawal of the State authorizes the liberalization and privatization of the State assets. Liberalization is therefore aimed at instilling a new dynamic by bringing endogenous development through the participation and accountability of farmers through decentralized structures. To do so, the State sold 75% of its assets to PALMCI as for the palm oil sector (Minagra, 2001). These measures are applied in the village palm oil plantations in the Southeast in general and in Tiapoum in particular. In Tiapoum, the system for post-privatization supervision and marketing was controlled by the Transitional Management Body (OTG) from 1996-1998. At the end of the mission of this structure in 1998, the farmers set up an Economic Interest Grouping (EIG), which aimed to structure them in cooperatives to harmonize the production relations between growers and agro-industries. Thus, the first cooperative PALM EHANIA was created in 2002, followed by the cooperative COOPALM Adouvlaï in 2006. Despite the partnership agreements between PALMCI and COOPALM Adouvlaï cooperative, there is a multiplicity of production rapports in the village palm oil plantations. This study aims to analyze the differentiation of production relationships between farmers and development agents in the village palm oil plantations. The article is structured in three parts, namely the conflicting relationships between the development agents, the passivity of planters to the actions of development agents and the symmetrical relationships between the village actors.

II. METHODOLOGY

The field surveys were carried out in three villages of the sub-prefecture of Tiapoum, namely Bouadoua, Edjambo and Tiapoum village. There are several types of production relationships between the producers and the development agents. Data collection techniques favoured the observation which allowed to discover a formal and an unofficial marketing circuit, to identify the intermediary merchants in the locality. The individual interviews and the *focus groups* were carried out with the players according to their position in the society. The individuals who were interviewed were leaders of mutual aid groups, supervisors, direct buyers, delegates of the supervisory structures, village and community leaders, youth leaders and the sub-prefect of Tiapoum. The accidental sampling technique made it possible to interview 16 people taking into account their direct or indirect relationship with the supervision and marketing of village production. To do this, a maintenance guide was used. The systemic method was used for the analysis. It enabled to understand the strategies implemented by the different actors to control the production identified as the zone of uncertainty.

III. FINDINGS

The support structures such as SODEPALM, PALMINDUSTRIE, FER and banks were of major importance in the development of palm oil production in Tiapoum. As a result of the privatization, these structures changed prerogative in the governance of peasant resources by empowering farmers. This decision was not without consequence on the relations of production in the village palm tree plantations.

Three points enable to identify the different relationships between the actors involved in the village plantations:

- conflicting relationships between the development agents;
- farmers' passivity to the actions of the development agents;
- symmetrical relationships between village actors.

3-1. Conflicting relationships between the development agents

Conflicts are inherent in all human societies. Touraine (1976) defined a conflict as an antagonistic relationship between two or more units of action, among which one tends to dominate at least the field of their relationship. Thus, following the legal battle between PALM-CI and the PALM EHANIA cooperative, the supervision and collection of village production raise important economic issues which lead to conflicting relations between the development agents. The understanding of the nature of the relationships between the development agents can be analyzed in two ways:

- conflicting relationships between the development agents regarding the management;
- conflicting relationships between the development agents concerning the collection.

3-1-1. Conflicting relationships between the development agents regarding the management

The monitoring entails in giving the agricultural itinerary to the farmers. It consists in offering agricultural advice to growers from the supply of the input to the marketing of palm seeds.

Since the creation of COOPALM Adouvlaï, there has been a problem of leadership between this cooperative and PALM-CI in terms of village supervision. Thus, PALM-CI initiated initiatives to organize the farmers around village representatives (delegates) to slow down the growth and progress of the cooperatives in general and COOPALM Adouvlaï, especially in the locality.

F.L., Manager of COOPALM Adouvlais gives the reasons for the conflict between PALM-CI and his cooperative:

"Our agribusiness PALM-CI is against our partnership in a diplomatic way. This structure is a cold monster. It encourages the creation of "associations" to fight against our cooperative. Between 2009 and 2010, there was a manager of PALMCI named Mr. N. This gentleman was opposed to the creation of cooperatives. The only cooperative he wanted to see was COPALEN, he was against the other cooperatives. He did not want other cooperatives to be created, but why? Because the individual (independent) planter is a user who has no one to follow his production, he has no one to follow his claim to PALMCI. Imagine a user who is not member of any cooperative and every month, the assistant officer would take at least 100 to 200 kilograms. You are an assistant agent, you have 1000 planters who are not enrolled in a cooperative and you take 100 kilograms from each farmer. That is 200,000 kilograms. This weight multiplied by 50 AF. That makes 10 million a month. If anyone wants to remove this from your mouth, will you agree (Talking to me)? There are also the unspoken matters. You also take a planter like the Minister E. A. who alone produces 500 to 1,000 tons per month. If there is no one to follow the assistants will shop at his stock. Criticisms of cooperatives are attempts to deprive planters of their due."

In light of this interview, it is clear that the individualization of the planters is a situation encouraged by PALM-CI. This structure sponsors some planters to annihilate any cooperative consciousness in the locality. That is why it pre-finances the inputs of individual planters under its responsibility. In reality, this initiative makes the users become financially dependent. This analysis confirms the thesis of Meillasoux (1982) who thinks that capitalism (agro-industry) creates a proletariat-peasant who receives from capitalism only the means of the immediate reconstitution of its labour force and not those of its maintenance and reproduction, which means he obtains himself within the framework of the domestic economy.

A.D. one of the delegates of PALM-CI in Tiapoum adds more precision on the association sponsored by PALM-CI saying:

"Our association is not a cooperative recognized by the State. The cooperatives recognized by the State are not so many, here, there is the cooperative of Edjambo. We are an association of palm tree planters. We exist as cooperatives but we are not cooperatives. We are the ears or the spokespeople of the planters in each village. We are called the delegates. We are the intermediaries between the growers and PALM-CI. We are the delegates chosen by the planters themselves. We raise the difficulties of planters in PALM-CI. PALM-CI is our guardian. When the members of our association have an input problem, we inform PALMCI. If they need tools, we contact PALM-CI. PALM-CI's sayings are transmitted to the planters. "

This statement of the respondent: "Our association is not a cooperative recognized by the State" reflects the financial hegemony of PALM-CI in the locality. It introduces a policy contrary to the convention signed during the liberalization. During the agreement to liberalize the sector between the State and PALMCI, it was agreed that the cooperatives should be allocated the supervision. This speech also shows the non-formalization of the structure sponsored by PALMCI. Moreover, it presents the disorder and non-mastery of the sector by the Ivorian authorities, despite the regulation of cooperative associations in rural areas in accordance with the requirements of the law of the Organization for the Harmonization in Africa of Business Law (OHADA). According to this organization, the cooperatives are companies that must hold annual general meetings. They have to pay state taxes. Thus, economic interests lead the private and / or state structures involved in the field of institutional regulation to practice sponsorship. On the other hand, there is also the agro-industrialist PALM-CI's will to dominate faced with the cooperatives' lack of means in the locality.

In Tiapoum, three types of cooperative associations compete for the supervision of planters. There are the associations sponsored by PALM-CI: the coordination of the palm tree planters of Tiapoum, the cooperative recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture: COOPALM Adouvlais¹ and the association sponsored by the FIRCA: La PALM lagune.

The interview with K.G, a trainer of PALM-CI in Tiapoum village clarifies this reality:

"FIRCA is currently working with the cooperatives. It finances certain cooperatives that do not even deserve the name of cooperatives. These cooperatives are marketing structures; they do not supervise the planters. Only COOPALM Adouvlais deserves this name. It is the PALM-CI supervisors who are on the ground. In Ebouinda, we have the cooperative La PALM lagune. This cooperative has a trainer who I myself trained and who does not even have the diploma. This co-operative is sponsored by the uncle of this trainer who is working at FIRCA. In reality, this behaviour of the managers of FIRCA targets the funds of support devoted to the planters but which do not reach the latter "

¹ According to the Departmental Manager of Agriculture, COOPALM Adouvlais is the only sub-prefecture cooperative that pays its taxes and holds an annual general meeting.

In the light of the foregoing, it must be said that the pursuit of economic interests, namely the supervision bonus, planters' support fund, etc. lead the managers of the structures such as PALMCI, FIRCA to encourage the creation and subsidization of cooperatives whose main role is the marketing of planters' products. Thus, during the period of unproductivity (about three or four years) most farmers do not benefit from the agricultural monitoring of these cooperatives. The concomitant presence of the cooperatives sponsored by the agro-industrialists and state structures in a village environment is likely to create a strong competition between the cooperatives on the one hand, and cause a disruption in the marketing of the products because each structure will look for the profitability of its investments. Conflicts also arise at the collection level.

3-1-2. Conflicting relationships between the development agents at the collection level

At the end of the post-electoral crisis, the village plantations saw the presence of small oil mills such as AGRIVAR and agro-industries such as DEKEL OIL, PALM-CI in Tiapoum. This presence led to a competition, a logic of continuing the production between small oil mills, COOPALM Adouvlaï and PALM-CI. To collect a considerable amount of production, each actor has assigned supervisors and delegates in the villages.

Table n°1: Number of supervisors and delegates of the development structures

Structures Localities	PALMCI		COOPALM Adouvlaï		DEKEL OIL		TOTAL	
	Supervisors	Delegates	Supervisors	Delegates	Supervisors	Delegates	Supervisors	Delegates
TIAPOUM	2	4	2	2	1	1	5	7
EDJAMBO	3	0	2	2	1	1	6	3
BOUADOUA	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	3
TOTAL	6	6	4	4	3	3	13	13

Source : From our 2014 investigations

In light of this picture, we notice a relatively strong presence of COOPALM Adouvlaï actors (supervisors, delegates) or 2/3 of the development agents in the locality of Edjambo. The table also shows a strong presence of the agents of the agro-industries (PALMCI and DEKEL Oil) in the Bouadoua locality, that is to say 100% of the actors. This strong presence is explained by the mistrust of the farmers of the cooperatives following the failure of PALM EHANIA in the locality. In addition, the limited financial resources of COOPALM Adouvlaï limit the scope of this structure. This characteristic refers to one of the elements of the analysis of the vicious circles of development, namely the weakness of the investment capital of development structures in general and the cooperative structures in particular during the disengagement of the State from the shrub industries (Treillet, 2005).

The continuation of the village production of palm tree is reinforced by the intervention of several actors in the village plantations.

This situation is related by A.D. one of the delegates of PALM-CI in Tiapoum:

"When the AIPH price is set, (now it's 48,000 F per tonne) each company develops its policy to capture the production. Thus, some can add a bonus from 2 to 5 FCFA per kg, the representative of such a company can say that the AIPH price is 48 AF but my company can pay 50 AF, it is a field work done by the representatives of the companies. Thus, we pay the production for PALM-CI, others do it for DEKEL Oil, COOPALM Adouvlaï "

The analysis of this discourse reveals that all the structures (cooperatives, PALM-CI, DEKEL Oil, etc.) develop strategies for storing a large amount of agricultural production through their representatives, PALMCI clerks, assistants, supervisors, delegates, drivers, etc. who are on the ground. This situation contributes to the

perpetuation and the institutionalization of direct purchase but also the conflict between the actors deployed on the ground. Moreover, the pursuit of this objective of collecting the maximum amount of agricultural production leads to the embezzlement among the actors. This reality is highlighted by C.A., a private carrier in Bouadoua who asserts that:

"The theft exists everywhere, at the weighing machine bridge, the clerks steal from us, they snatch us. They do not take enough seeds, they can take five (5) kilograms on each truck to put on their number. At the end of the month, they can end up with millions. That is the reason why the weight they give to planters is often less than what is declared on their receipts. At PALMCI, for example, the clerks sort the green regimes in our cargoes, and put them aside. They put the truck back on the weighing bridge for weighing. The weight decreases enormously. These clerks do not return the green fruits, they recover them without the knowledge of their officials. They get rich with impunity. The sector is organized to impoverish the farmers".

The difference between the tonnage delivered by the driver to the planter and that of the clerk of PALM CI fuel conflicts between the clerks and the drivers. This situation shows the absence of a mechanism for controlling and regulating the production of planters in village plantations.

The conflicting relationship between PALMCI, DEKEL OIL, cooperatives and private drivers for the profitability of their activity is one of the reasons for the farmers' passivity and mistrust of development actions.

3-2. The passivity of planters to the actions of development agents

Since the disengagement of the planters of the sector, the economic actions that are the supply of plant material, phytosanitary products, etc. have been undertaken by the development agents for the valorization of the village plantations. However, despite these actions, the planters are wary of the support of these development agents. This part allows to highlight the reasons for this behavior through the relationships of the planters with the agents of development.

3-2-1. Relationship between planters and cooperatives

The legal battles between PALMCI and PALM EHANIA caused structural dysfunctions in PALM EHANIA which is unable to pay and to supervise its members. The cooperatives created following the failure of PALM EHANIA have difficulties to mobilize the peasants in the sub-prefecture.

This situation is addressed by S.K., former delegate of PALM EHANIA and deputy head of Bouadoua Sokoura, who says:

"Cooperatives are structures meant for stripping planters of their money. We must be objective, I tell you that PALM EHANIA had nearly 6000 adherents. I was a delegate of PALM EHANIA, this structure took us 200,000 AF for the construction of a plant managed by the planters. In Edjambo at this time, we had more than 100 planters who gave 200,000 AF, that is to say 20,000,000 CFAF francs. When the problem arose, PALMCI did not reimburse our 200,000 CFAF, this amount remained unpaid. PALM EHANIA also did not repay our money. That is the reason why some planters prefer to deal directly with PALMCI".

It can be said that the cooperatives through PALM EHANIA have lost their credibility with peasants. For the latter, the cooperatives represent structures to subject the planters. This reality is consubstantial with the economic stakes with the PALMCI but also with the disrepute of the leaders of the cooperatives. This situation is confirmed by the analysis of Faussey-Domalain (2000) that supports that the cooperatives are victims of the gabegie of their leaders. The latter mobilize or embezzle funds from cooperatives to their personal needs.

The problems that led to the failure of the first cooperative of the locality still remain. They are the source of hostilities between the cooperatives and agricultural producers in village plantations. Moreover, new problems have emerged which encourage the passivity of planters to cooperatives. The words of O.R.S, one of Edjambo's executives illustrate this fact:

"Even the cooperative COOPALM Adouvlaï took fertilizer about 250,000 CFAF on our account with our number. They sold all the fertilizer without the members of the cooperative having their shares. At PALMCI, we were deducted. When I complained, the officials of the cooperative Adouvlaï said that they would remedy the problem. This theft was not followed up. As they knew that we were illiterate, they robbed us. They knew that the planter could not control his deductions because he could not read."

From the foregoing, it can be pointed out that the farmers' passivity with regard to the aid and the subsidy of the cooperatives stems from the mistrust of the planters. Planters often do not understand all the provisions of the subsidy contracts due to their relatively low level of education. Moreover, they have no means to follow the deductions by the cooperatives. Thus, the passivity of planters allows to minimize the risks associated with abusive deductions by the cooperatives.

The abusive deductions imposed by the cooperatives force the planters to renounce the loans of these structures. Thus, the disinterestedness of the planters is justified by the remarks of S.P., a sexagenarian planter in Bouadoua. He says:

"Before, we were given fertilizer. Today, if you contract a loan with a cooperative operator, if the price of the fertilizer must be 70,000 AF, you will pay more than 300, 000 AF. If you come to show them the deduction orders they would say it is the machine that made the mistake. The problem is that the cooperatives are no longer credible to us."

The credibility of the cooperatives is put to the test after the failure of the cooperative PALM EHANIA. In Tiapoum village, most planters prefer to deal directly with the agro-industries rather than being affiliated to cooperatives. As for Bouadoua, the planters are all individual planters. The cooperative COOPALM Adouvlaï is strongly represented in Edjambo because of the presence of its headquarters in this locality. Despite this presence, some planters prefer to be independent users. Faced with the criticisms, F.L., *Manager of COOPALM Adouvlaï* claims the problems of personal conflicts and grudges to justify the reluctance of the planters vis-à-vis their activities. He says:

"What deceives the planter is when he sees that a person is appointed to a department of agriculture with all the conveniences of his work, a car, a house, etc. For example, a departmental Manager of rice in Yamoussoukro shall not walk to work, he needs a 4X4 car. The peasant who has been living there for 30 years, and yet have no cabin will say the same thing, he will say that the young manager has just arrived. He is driving a 4X4, his house is air-conditioned. But, what he will forget is that from first form until university, his parents spent lot of money for his education. He won't consider things like that. He will not calculate the time it took before becoming what he is today. That's the difference, when you're sent to school you are not meant to become poor like the one who sent you to school. When planters see us in comfort, they think they are stolen. I take the example of the former Manager of COOPALM Adouvlaï. When he started he had a small car. When he paid a Mercedes, the planters said it was with their money. Then, he opted for a 4X4, it was the height. One cannot attend school, returns to the village- even if it is in the framework of work-and be on the same footing as the planters. They themselves earn more money than us, they have a bad way of managing their income. Yesterday the 15th was the payroll here at the headquarters, some planters earned 3 million. But, these same people will come to apply for loans in less than a week "

Through this discourse, the passivity of the planters is related to the apparent socio-economic success of the agents of development. Moreover, the hostility of the peasants to the cooperatives is linked to the problem of the composition of the members of the cooperatives and the ethnic conflict. The cooperative COOPALM Adouvlaï is chaired by a Guéré and managed by a Sénoufo. Thus, the chief of the village of Edjambo and some notables N'zima are affiliated to another cooperative of the sub-prefecture of Maferé COPALEN located more than 20 kilometres managed by some N'zima. This situation is illustrated by Faussey-Domalain (2000). The analysis of Faussey-Domalain in the Akyé country shows that the rejection of the Baoulé supervisor is linked to his ethnic inferiority according to the Akyé custom. In fact, for the Akyé natives, a Baoulé cannot teach them a knowledge because he is of an inferior social class. It is this same conception which is current in Tiapoum.

3-2-2. Relationship between planters and PALMCI supervisors

The supervision aims at promoting the planter, that is to say to follow the evolution of the the planter's production until the evacuation of the harvest in the factory. This function enables to establish trust, complicity between the planter and the supervisor, his "benefactor". In the area of the survey, this confidence is undermined by the attitudes of certain supervisors.

K.A, the district chief of Krissian in Edjambo, denounces the resignation of the supervisors of their original mission.

"Go tell the PALMCI officials that the planters say they are thieves. In front of the cooperative, there are three piles of bunches, among these piles, one belongs to the supervisor B. of PALMCI. The task of the supervisor is to help the planter but today such is not the case. B. bought a pickup truck for seeds. Where did he take that money? In addition, he has money to make direct purchase. This gentleman begins by collecting his own production before taking that of the planters. You have arrived at a time when there are many trucks. Between 2010 and 2011, the village production was rotting, the supervisors blackmailed the planters and encouraged them to buy directly. At that time, if you were asking questions, the planters would lynch you."

When one analyses the matter, the supervisors have become economic operators. They benefit from their position through the collection and marketing of products. Many of them even have palm tree plantations. This situation often causes them to be unavailable for the agricultural monitoring of village plantations. It also raises doubt among planters as for the origin of the economic goods which these supervisors possess (houses, vehicles, plantations, etc.).

Faced with the criticism, A., a supervisor of PALMCI in Edjambo says:

"Before we came here, there were crooked supervisors who did" fake tricks" on the planters' accounts. The planter can end up with 1 to 2 million credits on his account. Now the planters are being monitored. In fact, planters carry a poor management of their plantation and income"

According to the latter, the planters' passivity is due to their lack of organization. This situation is reflected in the analysis of Affou (1987) who thinks that planters have no rigor in the management of their substantial income. As for Faussey-Domalain (op.cit), he thinks that the loan causes the planters' income to be in deficit.

2-3. Relationship between planters and carriers

The development of the sector of the collection and transport of palm bunches is undoubtedly linked to the liberalization of the sector. The "boom" in this sector of activity is recent and goes back to 2011. The multiplicity of trucks considerably reduces the profit margin of the old carriers. This situation is described by C.A., a private carrier in Edjambo:

"With the multiplicity of collection trucks, this activity is no longer economically profitable. Before, three to five trips per day could be made during the milking period and 2 trips during the off-peak period. Today, it's hard to make two trips a day during the milking period given the number of vehicles waiting in the factories."

There is a reduction of the carriers' income because of the great number of pickup trucks in the community. Sixteen trucks were identified in the studied area, three in Bouadoua, six in Tiapoum village and seven in Tiapoum and Edjambo. In fact, the carriers are paid according to the number of trips. With the multiplicity of collection vehicles, carriers have an irregular income. They develop non-regulatory strategies to increase their gain. A.A., a notable from Tiapoum, clarifies these strategies:

"We do not have the means to control the weight that the carriers give us. This year is better, in the previous years, when you had a tonne, the carriers would give you 600 kg. The carriers who pick up the production are real thieves. Their weighing machine is adjusted. For example, if 100 kilograms appear, you would normally have reached 150 or 200 kilograms. Now that there are enough KIA trucks, we are sorting the drivers. You can appeal to the carrier that is credible to you. Since then, the theft has greatly diminished."

It can be said that the practices of fraud on the weighing machines create a climate of mistrust between the carriers and the planters. Thus, divergences and conflicts emerge between the planters and the planters on the production of the latter. This happens because planters forecast their production. To lessen the impact of these inconveniences, planters seek their social capital based on ethics, religion, etc.

Faced with these criticisms, C.A., a private carrier in Edjambo puts:

"The planter is never satisfied because he makes estimates after his harvest. This harvest is equivalent to 10 tonnes. When you come to collect and the harvest is below his forecast, he believes that you have robbed him. While some of the bunches you took on the road may have fallen out. You reach the weighing machine bridge, the weight may be lower than the one you recorded. You may not know what happened on the road. So we have to take that into account. What can you do it when there is a reduction in tonnage? For example, if you weighed two tons the weighing machine bridge comes out three tons, in this case there is a surplus. The surplus is yours. On the contrary, if the weighing machine indicates a ton instead of two in this case it is a loss. The thousand kilograms are divided in proportion to the number of planters involved in the loading, ie the weight of each planter is reduced. However, the planters already have their ticket. Often, the calculation is wrong, the clerks make the correction at the office. It is a stroke of luck, one can win or lose. Once, after loading at the level of Djemissoukro, I slipped, half of my cargo fell into the water, there were at least 100 kilograms lost. Fortunately, the account I had previously made was wrong. At the weighing bridge there was a difference of only 10 kilograms. We cannot tell this to the planters who do not try to understand."

The activity of the carriers has social risks due to accounting errors. In addition, independent factors can reduce the carrier's weight. This situation contributes to exacerbating the conflict between the carriers and the planters on the one hand, and allows to maintain symmetrical relationships between the village actors.

These individuals are attracted by the important monetary gains of this sector. Thus, to take advantage of their activity, they recruit drivers according to their ethnicity.

3-3. Symmetrical relationships between village actors

Exacerbated mistrust between the planters and development workers has given birth to the assistance of some agricultural workers and some experienced planters, as well as the intrusion of intermediary buyers into village plantations.

3-3-1. Collaboration of agricultural workers in the exploitation of farms

The drop in the price of tonnage of palm bunches has led to the absenteeism of planters in village palm tree plantations. The farmers choose the contribution of agricultural workers for the valorization of their plantation of more than one hectare. O.S., an unskilled worker in Edjambo gives the explanations of the planters' choice.

"If the landowners lend a plantation of more than one (1) hectare to the women, they are unable to maintain this entire plantation. They will use two or three lines of palm tree to grow cassava or condiments. That is why we are solicited by the planters. They are approaching us despite their monetary difficulties and we discuss."

Legally, no written contract links the unskilled workers to chief farmers. But the prestige and the honour of the valorization of the plantation allow the chiefs of farmers to respect his word after the harvest. The latter shall pay the unskilled worker according to the terms of the contract. It can be the *aboussan* (sharing into two equal parts) or the *abougnon* (giving one third to the unskilled worker) as for the production of the palm tree or any other culture. These practices lead to food security, but also enable to solve specific problems.

3-3-2. The assistance of experienced growers

The experienced planter is a producer who has many years of farming practices. He has acquired considerable experience in the knowledge of the agricultural itinerary. In Tiapoum, several PALMCI technicians retrained for a new career in planting. This is the case of G.A. former technician at PALMCI and municipal councilor at the town council who explains that:

"I was a technician at the PALMCI laboratory for 20 years. Today, I am retired, I am solicited for my agricultural advice. The planters prefer me at the expense of the supervisors because I have six hectares of plantation that are very profitable for me.

As GA points out, farmers prefer to solicit the support of resource persons who are able to apply their theoretical knowledge (professional experience) in the production of palm tree. This situation stems from the fact that the farmers give more credit to the empirical reality, that is to say the success of the plantation rather than the speculation of the supervisors.

F.L., a Manager of COOPALM Adouvlaï, gives more details on the assistantship of the peasants:

"In reality, planters are generally victims of their lack of modesty. They act by imitation and prefer the advice of a cousin or a brother rather than following those of the supervisor. With the current market system, price fluctuations, course mechanism etc. are too complex for the planters. They then prefer to turn to informal practices to survive." Through this interview we note that the farmers think that their status as planters or sons of planters as well as the number of years spent in the cultivation of palm trees gives them all the knowledge related to this culture. They therefore refuse the theoretical agricultural advice of a monitor to solicit a successful brother or cousin regarding this culture. The experience is thus a key variable which gives notoriety to the planters able to give advice to the beginning planters.

3-3-3. Assistance to direct buyers

A direct buyer is a trader, an intermediary merchant who buys the production of the planters on behalf of the agro-industries or for his own account. In the latter case, he owns an artisanal oil mill. These merchants maintain customer relations with the planters by assisting them financially or materially during periods of death, marriage, etc. This speech of C. F., a small planter in Edjambo gives details:

"I prefer the direct purchase because the buyer often does me favours in the village. In addition, because we are relatives, he puts 2 CFAF on my kilogram".

Considering these sayings, we might say that the exchange between the peasant and the merchant is not based solely on market principles (price). This merchant exchange is enshrined in social relations which lead the merchant to assist the peasant during ceremonial acts (marriage, baptisms, etc.). This explains a relationship between the peasant and the merchant. This fact supports the thesis of Granovetter (1985) who thinks that individuals on the market are not "atomized". On the contrary, they maintain personal relationships, forge links of friendship and fidelity sufficiently recurring so that it is possible to reconstitute the overall structure of the network of relations that runs through the market. This work enables to break the image of a self-regulated sphere since personal relations interests intervene in the functioning of trade or, to put it differently, since market participation does not destroy social relations. The structural embedding thus reflects the contextualization of market exchange in the form of interpersonal relations.

IV. CONCLUSION

The pursuit of the monetary gain by the agents of development led to a positioning conflict between the co-operative COOPALM Adouvlaï and PALMCI. This conflict exacerbated the mistrust between farmers and development workers. In fact, the development structures' logic of positioning consisted in granting loans to their members. However, the modality of payment of these loans was binding for the planters. Thus, the planters adopt hostility ratios to development actions and, at the same time, develop solidarity relations based on social hierarchy, women's collaboration for land valuation, mutual assistance relationships based on affinity networks and customer relationships.

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