

# **Heart and Struggle: Life in Nakasero Market 1912-2015**

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## Abstract

This thesis generates an account of life in a marketplace in Kampala, Uganda, through an ethnographic engagement with its vendors, traders, hawkers, transporters and service providers. It traces the development of Nakasero market from a colonial facility to a dense assemblage of products, peoples and practices from across Uganda and the broader region. Faced with the challenge of getting along amid ongoing processes of social, economic and political change, I argue that people in the market invest considerable time and energy in relationships and associations, drawing together ideas and practices from institutions with long histories in Kampala and Buganda.

Nakasero market has been witness to many of the political and economic disturbances of postcolonial Uganda: from the Asian expulsion and the *magendo* (black market) of the 1970s, to the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and privatisation initiatives of the 1990s. However, rather than being passive recipients of these events, people in the market have engaged in collective subjective practices to reinterpret and remake them, producing alternative visions of social and moral prosperity.

The findings of the thesis inform two separate literatures. First, they challenge studies of change in urban African settings conducted under the meta-narratives of 'crisis' and 'informality', which tend to conceal the multiplicity of forms through which life in the city is articulated and expressed. Second, they suggest the need for post-structural accounts of African cities to consider the enduring role of cultural idioms, such as that of 'heart' (*omutima*), in shaping the actions and perspectives of urban African inhabitants.

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## **Acronyms**

BANGAWA	Baganda <i>Ngabo</i> Workers Association
KCC	Kampala City Council
KCCA	Kampala City Council Authority (post-2012)
NAMASITE	Nakasero Market Sitting Tenants Limited (rival group)
NMSVT	Nakasero Market Sitting Vendors and Traders Limited
NRM	National Resistance Movement (ruling party)
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
USh	Ugandan shillings
US\$	US dollars

USh 2,500 = US\$ 1 (exchange rate as of 01 January 2014)

## Glossary

<i>abantu abawansi</i>	common people
<i>abakazi ba tawuni</i>	town woman
<i>amanyikiddwa</i>	a known or popular person
<i>boda-boda</i>	a motorcycle taxi, or motorcycle taxi driver
<i>duka</i>	a shop (Kiswahili)
<i>dukawallah</i>	a shopkeeper (Kiswahili)
<i>ebikyaafu</i>	dirt, pollution
<i>ensiitaano</i>	struggle, effort
<i>ettoffaali</i>	a collection for the Buganda monarchy ('bricks')
<i>fasi-fasi</i>	a person who carries luggage ('space-space')
<i>Ganda</i>	shorthand for the institutions of Buganda
<i>Kabaka</i>	the king of Buganda
<i>Kabengo</i>	an open area of the upper market
<i>katale</i>	a market
<i>Katikkiro</i>	the prime minister of Buganda
<i>kaveera</i>	a plastic bag, or person who sells plastic bags
<i>Kibuga</i>	the historical capital of Buganda ('town')
<i>mailo</i>	land allocated to the Buganda kingdom in 1900
<i>magendo</i>	illicit economy, black economy
<i>matooke</i>	a green cooking banana
<i>mupya</i>	a newcomer (pl. <i>bapya</i> )
<i>muyaye</i>	a thief or thug (pl. <i>bayaye</i> )
<i>obumu</i>	solidarity, unity
<i>obuyambi</i>	assistance
<i>okwagalana</i>	to love one another
<i>okwanjula</i>	marital introduction (in Buganda)
<i>okufaayo</i>	to care
<i>omutima</i>	heart (pl. <i>emitima</i> )
<i>ssente</i>	money
<i>toninyira mukange</i>	an outdoor night market selling cooked food

# Chapter 1: The Market in the City, the City in the Market

## Arriving in Nakasero market

“One goes to the market to participate in the world. As with all things that concern the world, being in the market requires caution. The market – the essence of the city – is always alive with possibility and danger. Strangers encounter each other in the world’s infinite variety; vigilance is needed. Everyone is there not only to buy and sell, but because it is a duty. If you sit in your house, if you refuse to go to market, how would you know of the existence of others? How would you know of your own existence?”

Teju Cole, *Every Day is for the Thief* (2014: 57)

“Markets are important for building society [...] People come from all over the country and learn to lose their bad habits and to be in one line; to have a good heart and to help others.”

Edward Walusimbi, 35, airtime vendor

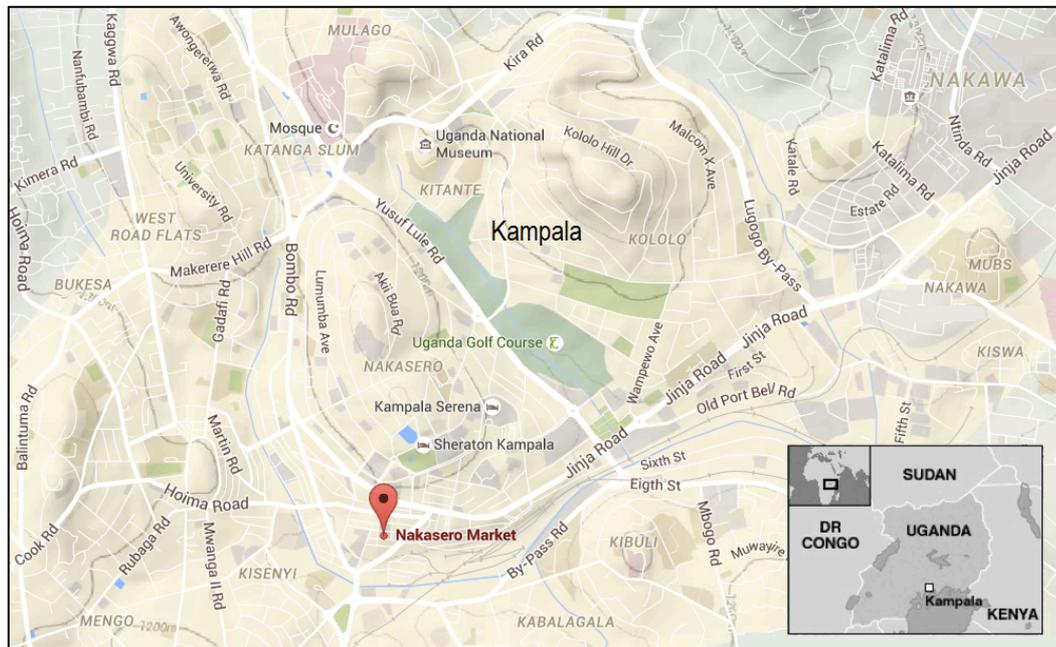
“These days people in the market are many, and their hearts are not good [*emitima gyabwe mibi*].”

Jane Nalumu, 69, tomato vendor

The market, much like the city, is often described in terms of density; as a concentration of diverse peoples, goods, hearts and habits. The experience of being in the market provides a reminder of the wider human challenge of how to live cooperatively within a finite space; to get along amid diversity. The task of succeeding in the market – of navigating its possibilities and dangers – requires the identification of rules and relationships among the apparent messiness of everyday life. This task is particularly daunting for the outsider, unversed in the rituals of market language and negotiation. However, it also places demands on the long-term vendor, the hawker, and the rubbish collector, confronted by the waxing and waning of market institutions and the frequent disruptions of price fluctuations and electoral cycles.

I arrived in Kampala to conduct research in a market that according to sections of the government and media had become out of place in the centre of Kampala; a congested and ‘dirty’ place that placed a burden on the

infrastructure of the city.<sup>1</sup> Nakasero was literally and figuratively in the shadow of the architectures of modern Kampala, hemmed in by multi-storey apartment blocks, hotels and supermarkets. Although historically central to Kampala's development – providing an accessible supply of food, employment and accommodation to urban migrants – the market had come to be regarded by many to be antithetical to its future. Plans for its demolition and redevelopment into a 'multi-storey commercial complex' had been in place since as early as 1993, attracting the attentions of a range of business tycoons, politicians and developers. The Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) took over management from a group of vendors in 2012. Protests took place and vendors were exiled, some even killed. Nevertheless, people continued to arrive in the market every morning – some waking up in the market after sleeping there – to take tea, exchange news, play cards and sell fruit and vegetables in the close confines of their stalls and spaces. In spite of new obstacles and adversities, people in Nakasero market continued to face the challenge of getting along.



**Map 1.** Location of Nakasero market in central Kampala, between the hills of Nakasero and Mengo (after BBC 2007, Google 2015)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See New Vision (2007) 'Nakasero market to be razed – Ssebagala,' 12 February; (2007) 'Are we seeing the last of markets in Kampala?' 04 June; (2007) 'All city markets must be modernised, says Otafiire,' 27 June. The New Vision is one of three major newspapers in Uganda.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Nakasero' is used here as shorthand for Nakasero market, with the exception of passages describing the historical development of Nakasero hill.

When people in Nakasero spoke of the market, they spoke not of an abstract place of work but a social institution; a 'village,' 'school' 'garden' and 'pharmacy' for the 'common people' (*abantu abawansi*). They emphasised the challenges of increased competition, inconsistent supply, and the rising cost of education, marriage and burial; problems faced by many other urban inhabitants. In response to these difficulties, people looked to institutions within the market for guidance, rather than the city council (KCCA) or Ugandan government. Market committees, savings groups and burial societies were tasked with appeasing tensions and resolving challenges. However, at the time of my arrival, many of these institutions were thought to be in state of disorganisation and decline, dating back to the takeover of the market by the KCCA in 2012. Long-standing vendors felt that the market had become 'dirty' (*kyaafu*), insofar as various people, products and practices had been displaced. They described a loss of solidarity (*obumu*), love (*okwagalana*) and care (*okufaayo*). While there was recognition of the historical work of the market in 'building society' through the integration of people with different 'hearts' and 'habits' (Edward Walusimbi, epigraph), there was a sense that this task was getting away from them, as evidenced by the proliferation of people whose hearts were 'not good' (Jane Nalumu).

My journey to Nakasero was motivated in part by my reading of research on livelihoods in urban African settings. For the past thirty years, much of this literature has drawn on some conception of the 'informal,' an umbrella term, generally used to describe the activities, institutions and spaces thought to have emerged from the 'urban crisis' that swept much of the Global South in the 1970s and 80s (Bromley, 1978; De Soto, 1989; Fernández-Kelly & Shefner, 2006; Hart, 1973; Potts, 2008). During this period, the interrelated processes of economic decline, structural adjustment, political instability and mass urbanisation created a demand for new markets outside of the regulations of government, designed to service people's on-going needs for food, shelter and transport.<sup>3</sup> Economists subsequently took an interest in the economic potential of such markets (the 'informal economy'), while geographers and political scientists studied the rules and networks that govern them ('informal institutions').

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<sup>3</sup> The term market here refers to both spatially confined marketplaces (such as Nakasero) and unconfined economic markets (e.g. for housing and labour)

The resultant scholarship has provided useful insights into the diversity and economic potential of these markets (see Grimm et al. 2012; Sparks & Barnett 2010), and the nature of their political organisation and integration (see Lindell 2010; Meagher 2010). However, they have largely failed to shed light on the social forms through which markets are articulated and expressed, and their relationships with institutions, such as those organised around culture and religion, that existed long before the supposed crises of the 1970s. These forms and relationships are important insofar as they tell us about the trajectory of change in urban African settings over the longer term, independent of preconceived notions of 'development' or 'crisis'. They remind us that cities are not simply centres of economic production or arenas of political contestation, but are places where people eat, sleep, work, play, pray, converse and quarrel on an everyday basis.

The limitations of the above literatures are partly a result of the restrictions of the concept of 'informality' and its focus on what is absent, rather than what is present and what has been present historically in urban African settings (Guyer 2011; Mbembe & Roitman 1995). However, these limitations are also a consequence of a methodological emphasis on enterprises, networks and elites over situated values, practices and institutions. In the absence of ethnographic insight, this emphasis has tended to conceal the complex and composite nature of social life, depicting people "as engrossed in public spectacle, as people without hearts and without compelling personal concerns" (Wikan 1990: 35). The task of restoring hearts and concerns to debates about change in urban Africa requires a different methodological approach; it calls for an ethnographic engagement with places such as Nakasero market.

This thesis is the product of such an engagement. It seeks to restore people's hearts and personal concerns to debates about change in urban African settings through an ethnographic investigation of social and moral life in a Ugandan marketplace. Rather than describing life in Nakasero through a series of political and economic conditions, the intention is to explore the collective subjective practices through which people interpret and remake these conditions (Tadiar 2009). My guides in this task include urban anthropologists (Elyachar 2010; Rosen 1984), social historians (Hanson 2003; Obbo 1980), market ethnographers (Kapchan 1996; Pietila, 2007) and

theorists (Mamdani 1996; Mbembé 2002), whose contributions are outlined in the sections that follow.

The first of these sections places the enquiry of the thesis within the social and moral language of the market, providing an outline of local understandings of heart (*omutima*) and struggle (*ensiitaano*). The following sections seek to establish the contribution of this enquiry to the wider field of scholarship on African markets and cities respectively, focusing on what I term the *crisis*, *dualist* and *realist* genres of debate. The chapter ends by presenting a map of the thesis as a whole.

### **Investigating social life in Nakasero: two concepts**

This thesis works with two premises; first, that life in Nakasero market is articulated and expressed through a number of social and moral forms, and second, that these forms have histories that predate the supposed urban crises of the 1970s and 80s.<sup>4</sup> This section seeks to develop a conceptual approach appropriate to the task of investigating these premises through an engagement with the language used by people in the market. I will then outline the value of this approach in relation to broader debates in the scholarship on African markets and cities.

Ethnography is deployed here with the objective of restoring social and moral concerns to studies of urban African life. As such, the aim is to privilege the values, concepts and categories invoked by people in Nakasero market. Nevertheless, there is a need to link these values to the broader systems of material and symbolic relations that give them meaning and significance – systems that often slip in and out of popular consciousness.<sup>5</sup> The two concepts presented here – *heart* and *struggle* - emerged out of my interactions with people in Nakasero market. Rather than fixed analytical constructs, they may

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<sup>4</sup> Forms are understood in the broad Simmelian sense as ways of “being with and for one another” (Simmel 1950: 43). This is to say that: “our intelligence, will, creativity, and feeling work on the materials that we wish to wrest from life. [...] We give these materials certain forms and [...] use them as elements of our lives. But it happens that these [forms], in a peculiar manner remove themselves from the service of life that originally produced and employed them [...] They come to play freely in themselves and for their own sake, [they] become supreme values” (ibid.: 41-42)

<sup>5</sup> Waquant (2002: 1523) asserts that when conducted “under the banner of raw empiricism”, ethnography “reduces sociological analysis to the collection and assembly of folk notions and vocabularies of motives” - an argument that has sparked a prolonged debate between the French and American (Chicago) schools of sociology.

be understood as 'ideal types' that provide a point of departure for the analysis of the thesis (Weber 1949).

### ***Heart / omutima***

Cited in the testimonies of Jane and Edward in the epigraph, notions of 'heart' (omutima) are often invoked to praise and condemn the behaviour of others, reproducing the market as a moral environment. For example, when asked how they decide how much money to give collections for their neighbours' medical fees, bail or burial, people emphasised 'we first look at their heart' and 'it depends how their heart is.' A person's 'heart' in this sense was understood as a record of their moral engagement in Nakasero, including their contributions to the collections of others.

People who are 'good-hearted' (*owa kisa*, also 'merciful'; 'kind') are generally understood to assign value to the livelihoods of others in their negotiations, and to give in accordance with their wealth. Conversely, people who are 'bad-hearted' (*wattima*, also 'cruel') are seen to assign negligible value to others' livelihoods and to give in ways that are not in keeping with their wealth. In this way, heart is a *relational* concept that establishes a connection between the morality of the individual and that of the wider group. If the spread of 'good hearts' (*owakisa*), as envisaged by Edward, was seen as a symbol of moral integration and order in Nakasero, then the proliferation of 'bad hearts' as envisaged by Jane, was understood to be a precursor to moral disintegration and disorder.

The concept of 'heart' is closely associated with that of 'wealth in people,' (Gluckman 1941) which came into currency in African studies in the 1980s. China Scherz (2014) links the two concepts in her monograph *Having People, Having Heart*, which presents a critique of Western notions of independence and self-reliance. Drawing upon a case study of an international NGO in rural Buganda,<sup>6</sup> she shows that the NGO staff's isolation from local patronage networks and refusal to give 'handouts' were seen as a violation of local moral frameworks of patronage and 'having a heart for helping others' (*omutima*

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<sup>6</sup> *Buganda* is the region, *Luganda* the language, *Kiganda* the culture, and *Baganda* the people. The short form 'Ganda' is used throughout the thesis as short form for *Kiganda* and *Baganda*, as is common in the Ganda literature (Hanson 2003; Scherz 2014)

*omuyambi*) (ibid.: 142). In this context, inequality and dependence are not a concern in and of themselves; rather it is the breakdown of practices of helping and giving that is the ‘focus of moral anxiety’ (ibid.: 96).

### ***Struggle / ensiitaano***

The English word ‘struggle’ is emblazoned on the sides of the wooden wheelbarrows used to transport goods in and out of the market. This term, and its Luganda equivalent, *ensiitaano* (also ‘survival’) describes the process of making a living in challenging circumstances. It is used to invoke both the physical activities of work – of lifting, carrying and cleaning – and the ability of these activities to provide access to valued economic resources. ‘Struggle’ has been popularised in Ugandan hip-hop music, for example in the work of Bobi Wine and Jose Chameleone, while ‘*Ensiitaano*’ was the name of a popular TV drama that explored the difficulties of family life in Kampala between 2003-5.

People in Nakasero often invoke notions of struggle in order to defend their livelihoods in the market. For example, during a protest against the sale of the market in 2008, vendors held up signs that read: “*Temwagala tulye?*” (“Don’t you want us to eat?”).<sup>7</sup> Recognising and supporting the struggle of others was understood to be an important way of demonstrating heart (*omutima*) in the market, particularly for people seen to be better off. For example, when asked about why she paid a young man to carry her rubbish to the dump everyday, a female produce vendor explained: “these people, they are trying to survive”.<sup>8</sup> Moral notions of struggle and survival date back to the early colonial period when shifts in political economy forced sections of the Ugandan population to migrate to urban centres in order to retain access to food, healthcare and education.

The notions of *heart* and *struggle* are taken forward into the thesis not as a monolithic framework, but a set of moral assemblages that provide both a ‘guide for action’ and a tool in ‘struggles over work and worth’ in Nakasero (Wacquant: 2002: 1514). The literature on markets in Africa reminds us that places such as Nakasero are not settings in which social and moral forms are passively accepted. Rather, they are sites in which dominant ideas are negotiated and transgressed.

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<sup>7</sup> This event is described in Chapter 6.

<sup>8</sup> This interaction is described in Chapter 3.

## Markets as distinct social fields

*“The marketplace was the centre of all that is unofficial; it enjoyed certain extraterritoriality in a world of official order and official ideology, it always remained ‘with the people’”*

(Bakhtin 1984:153)

The Bakhtinian marketplace of the Renaissance and Middle Ages was understood to be a symbol of ‘freedom, frankness and familiarity,’ removed from the structural control of the church and crown (ibid.). Its temporary suspension of ‘official order’ provided a setting for social experimentation via festivals of the strange, the grotesque and the ‘other.’ Contemporary markets have also been described as sites of transition, which put “all rules of appropriate behaviour into question” (Kapchan 1996: 29). However, no two markets are the same. The *forums* and *agoras* of Ancient Rome and Greece are different from the *souks* and *bazaars* of North Africa and the Middle East, which in turn are distinct from the *mercados* of South America and the floating markets of South-East Asia. These differences relate not only to their economic organisation, but also to their social and political functions; for example, Ancient Greek *agoras* were meeting places first and marketplaces second.<sup>9</sup>

While some markets developed within existing cities, for example in response to the demands of expanding urban populations during European industrialisation,<sup>10</sup> others formed the basis of the city itself, for example in the cases of the markets of Gao and Timbuktu. In this way, the history of a market – its particular social, economic and cultural forms – is entwined with that of the society in which it is situated. The market borrows institutions from broader society and adapts them in line with its own purposes, generating its own distinctive way of life. A ‘semi-autonomous fieldsite’, it is able to “generate rules and customs and symbols internally”, but is also vulnerable to “other forces emanating from the larger world by which it is surrounded” (Moore 1973: 720).

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<sup>9</sup> The market *place* here is distinguished from the market *principle* - while the former may be understood as “a specific site where a group of buyers and a group of sellers meet,” the latter instead “entails the determination of labour, resources, and outputs by the forces of supply and demand regardless of the site of transactions, [which] can and often does operate outside the market place.” (Bohannon & Dalton 1962: 2–3)

<sup>10</sup> Such as the original Spitalfields market in London and the Marché Beauveau in Paris

It is possible to identify two branches of scholarship on African markets, both of which place analytical emphasis on gender. The first branch focuses on the socio-economic dynamics of marketing as experienced by women (Clark 1994; House-Midamba & Ekechi 1995; Robertson 1997; Sudarkasa 1973). Within this scholarship, Gracia Clark's (1994) *Onions Are My Husband* remains pre-eminent. Drawing on over ten years' research in Ghana's Kumasi market, which has a similar design and history to Nakasero, Clark details the market's development as a 'mosaic' of spatial systems inhabited by hierarchies of gender, ethnicity and class (ibid.: 6; 126). She argues that flexibility and variation are essential characteristics of the marketplace system, enabling it to maintain connections with commercial and non-commercial activities amid shifting conditions. This variation imbues the market with an ambivalent character, providing "an effective basis for resistance at one point and an equally effective instrument of domination at another" (ibid.: 124). Clark argues that female traders in Kumasi have overcome numerous political and economic challenges by engaging in what she terms 'egalitarian multilateral relations' (ibid.: 217). However, since the late 1980s, these relations have become increasingly characterised by dependency and dominance; a shift that Clark attributes to the desperation generated by structural adjustment programmes.

The second branch of scholarship explores the potential of the African marketplace as a locus for the transformation of gender roles through an epistemological focus on gossip, ritual, joking and storytelling (Kapchan 1996; Pietilä 2007; Wiley 2014). Within this scholarship, Deborah Kapchan (1996: 29) investigates women's emergence in the Moroccan *suq*, a domain formerly dominated by men, on the premise that the market constitutes a "forum for transition" enabled by its "intensification of social license". Kapchan argues that by entering the marketplace, Moroccan women are breaking down gender boundaries by earning money for activities previously conducted out of obligation (food preparation, cooking, sewing). As such, the commodification of relationships and services in the market has enabled the emergence of new social forms and discourses. By documenting transgressive speech acts, Kapchan shows that subtle changes in representations of self and other occur through market talk, and that these changes have the potential to produce shifts in broader society.

Tuulikki Pietilä's (2007) study of economic liberalisation in Kilimanjaro works with a similar set of premises. She finds that 'negotiability' is a key characteristic of Kilimanjaro markets, which provide a setting in which people manipulate and experiment with moral ideas and social relations through gossip (ibid.: 32). As such, rather than being "embedded in predefined social relations", the morality of the market is constantly renegotiated, providing it with a morally suspect character. These observations bring into question the utility of fixed notions of 'moral economy' or 'gift logic' for understanding relations in the marketplace (Mauss 1954; Scott 1976). Instead, Pietilä argues that female traders respond to price fluctuations, seasonality and strangeness by invoking ideas of kinship and patronage. They seek to 'domesticate' the marketplace through appeals to the personal, converting the 'symbolic value' of honesty and trustworthiness into the 'material value' of profit (ibid.: 59).

These understandings of the marketplace as a socio-economic system (Clark 1994), a forum for transition (Kapchan 1996) and a site of domestication (Pietilä 2007) provide fruitful points of departure for the enquiry of the thesis. What roles do registers of kinship, patronage and domesticity play in producing social and moral life in Nakasero? To what extent are these registers the product of historical processes of state formation? How far do people value social and moral transition, rather than inertia as a feature of market life? The following section situates this enquiry in relation to two genres of literature on African cities.

### **African cities and the ubiquity of 'crisis'**

It is possible to identify two genres of literature around which debates on life in African cities have been historically located; a *crisis* genre, enamoured of urban geography and political science and a *dualist* genre, associated with functionalist anthropology. The following two sections outline these two sets of debates and contrast them with those occurring in Nakasero market. I argue that while 'crisis' and 'informality' have become popular placeholders for researchers conducting work on African cities, they conceal the multiplicity of forms through which urban life is articulated and expressed. In this sense, they function as a type of 'meta-narrative' which pre-empts social scientific argument by "making shifts in analytical scales look natural, as in the alleged need to 'situate' the particular in 'wider' contexts" (Englund & Leach

2000: 225). I try in this thesis to give people in Nakasero market the opportunity to define the contexts of their beliefs and practices. While notions of crisis, exploitation and marginalisation enter into their accounts at certain moments, they are not seen to delimit the possibilities of life in the market.

Janet Roitman argues that we live in a world of 'crisis' (2013). Exploring its construction as an 'object of knowledge', she argues that crisis is a 'transcendent placeholder' that allows one to think 'otherwise,' providing space for previously obscure modes of thought or action (ibid.). Seen this way, the term has long been employed by researchers on the African continent to import arguments and theories developed in other parts of the world.<sup>11</sup> Studies of urban Africa have been particularly drawn to narratives of 'crisis' (Stren & White 1989; Lugalla 1995; Meagher 1995; Bond 2000; Tostensen et al. 2001). These studies proceed from normative understandings of how cities should function, centred on the role of the state. They argue that the institutional and economic crises of the early postcolonial period resulted in an urban crisis, consisting of government failure, environmental decline, overburdened infrastructure, impoverishment and pervasive informality (Calas, 1998; Rakodi, 1997; Tostensen et al., 2001). For example, Tostensen et al. (2001: 10-11) write:

"Since independence, states have failed to provide institutional and legal frameworks for the overall development of cities. Instead, individuals and firms are exposed to obstructionist legal norms, corrupt civil servants and pervasive informality."

Social, cultural and religious institutions are generally absent from such debates, or, when present, are understood as *responses* to the deficiencies of the state, rather than phenomena that predate it. As such, the relationships they engender are often understood to constitute a temporary burden rather than an enduring basis of social and moral life:

"To be sure, African cities and towns are marked by profound crisis. The visible face of this crisis is the endless vistas of shantytowns and the *burden* of self-help

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<sup>11</sup> A *Web of Science* search for published articles whose titles contain both the words 'Africa' and 'crisis' returns 649 results, spanning the period 1955-2015 (as of August 2015). Viewed sequentially, these articles peaked during the periods of 1984-1988 (110) and 2011-2014 (82).

and *abandonment* that they imply [...] the shanty city is by and large the real African city.”

Pieterse 2011: 6 (emphases added)

For Pieterse, the image of the shantytown, similar to that of the congested municipal market, symbolises crisis insofar as it represents a diversion from modernist conceptions of urban development, implying an associated ‘burden of self-help’. By situating social practices in the wider context of state fragmentation and decline, ‘crisis’ pre-empts an analysis of how these practices may be central to the social reproduction of African markets and shantytowns.

It is possible to identify a second branch of scholarship that provides a more critical contribution to debates in the *crisis genre*. This literature proceeds from a critique of state-society relations in the wake of the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. Rather than focusing on the ‘crisis’ of the urban system *in toto*, it emphasises the marginalisation and exploitation of a particular class of urban residents and workers through processes of state neglect and withdrawal (see Davis 2006; Lindell 2010; Meagher 1995; 2010).<sup>12</sup> Through a focus on social networks and associations, this branch of scholarship provides a more nuanced and ambivalent account of the forms of ‘self help’ invoked by Pieterse by describing their provision of forms of identity, affiliation and protection, in addition to new modes of marginalisation and ‘capture’ (Meagher 2010). Nevertheless, the role and value of such networks and associations is conceived almost entirely in relation to state (or ‘formal’ market), and their ability to provide access to the types of services and resources presumed to be essential to a functional urban society; services and resources that are often at a distance from the concerns of people in Nakasero market.

Taken as a whole, the ‘crisis’ scholarship gives prominence to a social reality in urban Africa in which day-to-day life takes the form of a volatile struggle for survival, where “the misery or, at best, pluckiness of individuals engaged in the search for viable livelihoods has edged out any sense of a collectively coordinated urban vista” (Bryceson 2011: 274). As such, possibilities for

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<sup>12</sup> Meagher (1995: 259) argues that this literature shifts focus “from informality represented as a marginalized sector to ‘informalization’ conceived as a wider economic response to crisis”.

sustained forms of collaboration and association – for example, formed around local cultural idioms – tend to be foreclosed. Achille Mbembe (2002: 4) has written of a historical representation in African studies in which “to differ from something or somebody is not simply *not to be like* (in the sense of being non-identical or being-other); it is also *not to be at all*,” to be nothing. In a similar way, ‘crisis’ strips African urban populations of the possibility of normalcy by distracting attention away from the functional, the mundane, the day-to-day. This distraction is not only of theoretical significance; it manifests itself in the blank spaces on maps and in planning documents – spaces where a great many people work, rest and play on a day-to-day basis. After enquiring about the apparent absence of Nakasero market in the ‘Proposed Kampala Physical Development Plan’ 2012, I was told plainly by a Kampala City Council Authority official: “that space can be utilised for something else.”<sup>13</sup>

Two implications emerge from the persistence of ‘crisis’ narratives in cities such as Kampala. First, they posit a spatialised ‘other’ (whether marginal or *marginalised*) who struggle to demonstrate that what they do matters, irrespective of its conformity to the theories of urban planners and researchers. Second, they obscure more pressing questions and concerns on how urban spaces are experienced as social and moral environments, such as those raised by people in Nakasero market. The following section relates these questions to a different set of debates within the field of urban anthropology.

### **Anthropology in the city: from the dysfunctional to the elusive**

Structural accounts of the African city are not confined to the disciplines of geography and political science. Much of the scholarship of colonial anthropology was underpinned by a dualist conception of African society in which the ‘modern’ town is detached from the ‘traditional’ countryside. As such, rural-urban migration was a cause for considerable concern. Southall and Gutkind (1957: 210) for example write of the ‘urban problem’ resulting from African migration to Kampala in the 1940s and 50s:

“The general apathy and very low degree of participation by the great majority of residents in parish affairs [...] proceeds from the high mobility and ethnic heterogeneity of the population [and] the lack of any widely agreed scale of values

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Press Relations Officer, KCCA, 22/05/2014

for the systematic ordering of relationships between persons of different ethnic origin, of different skin colour, different wealth or different occupation. There are only incomplete and conflicting views and attitudes [...] without any authoritative organ of reconciliation.”

If the *crisis genre* views African cities as political and economic systems regulated by the state, the *dualist genre* views them as discrete social systems governed by culture and ethnicity. From this perspective, cities such as Kampala, and markets such as Nakasero, may be characterised as dysfunctional insofar as they fail to integrate different groups into a social and cultural system recognised by the analyst, producing ‘only incomplete and conflicting views and attitudes’ (Southall & Gutkind 1957: 210). This understanding underpinned colonial attempts to segregate the ‘traditional’ way of life of the tribe (*kisendji*), from the ‘civilized’ way of life of the towns’ (*kizungu*), where each posed the threat of contamination to the other (Epstein 1967: 279). It also perpetuated a longstanding association between the city and the ‘alien’ and ‘immoral’ in Africa (Teppo 2015: 284), which continues to resurface in a variety of different guises (see Frankland 2007; Obbo 1980; Ogden 1996).

The dualist genre also had a legacy in the Chicago school of sociology, where Robert Park and students of his such as Louis Wirth (1938) approached the modern city as a site of the breakdown of community ties, taking inspiration from European theorists such as Durkheim and Simmel. The genre proved remarkably resilient in Africa in the decades following colonial rule, despite the attempts of a number of scholars, predominantly associated with the Rhodes-Livingstone institute, to document the connections between urban and rural life (Gluckman 1971; Mayer 1971). However, it has since given way to what has been termed a ‘realist’ (Guyer 2011) or ‘post-normative’ turn (Brennan 2013), following a sustained critique of structural approaches in the 1990s. Contributing to this critique, Mbembe and Roitman (1995: 235) advocate a theorisation of the African city not as a preconceived system but a “routinization of a register of improvisations lived by people”; shifting emphasis from the domain of ‘crisis’ to the ‘banal’ and everyday (1995: 235).

Scholars operating within the *realist genre* have responded by suppressing structural concerns in order to explore the ‘invisible city’ (De Boeck & Plissart

2004), the 'elusive city' (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008), and 'the city yet to come' (Simone 2004). The methodological imperative here is to 'walk the city' rather than gather subjective accounts of it, documenting symbols, expressions, opportunities and constraints as they present themselves: things that 'burst out of the conventional forms and [have] not yet taken a newly conventionalized shape' (Guyer 2011: 475). Established social science concepts such as culture, ethnicity, gender and class are relegated in the search for 'new forms of sociality and new topographies of propinquity' that emerge where material infrastructures break down (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 231). The resultant image of the African city is one of a highly contingent and provisional landscape that cannot be understood through any single set of rules or relationships.

This period of epistemological renewal has been long overdue in the study of African cities. However, in doing away with structural and historical analysis, the 'realist' scholarship runs the risk of simply reversing dystopian visions of life in urban Africa; of seeing only possibility where there was previously constraint; sociality where there was previously conflict; improvisation where there was previously infrastructural failure. More significantly, its suppression of subjective accounts represents a diversion from the conventional ethnographic goal of prioritising the categories and concepts of the (urban) respondent. In Nakasero market, people's invocation of notions of heart (*omutima*) and obligation were suggestive of the need to take seriously the historical cultural spaces in which African cities are situated, whilst being wary of the limitations of any single cultural framework.

The work of Lawrence Rosen and Julia Elyachar is notable for its conceptualisations of social life in polyethnic urban environments. First, Rosen (1984) writes of the centrality of *negotiation* in social relations in the city of Sefrou, Morocco. He argues that these relations are not determined by 'ascribed status or kinship' but that rather one must 'constantly construct an image of oneself and a web of relationships' appropriate to the task at hand (ibid.: 8). As such, relations of kinship, patronage, friendship and political alliance 'are inherently matters to be bargained over' (ibid.: 70-71). The relationships created by and through these acts of bargaining are often flexible and transitory, suited to a particular place at a particular time. They operate in an environment of uncertainty, producing a degree of 'orderliness'

in a world that people fear may give way to ‘disorder’ at any moment (ibid.: 8). However, for these negotiations to work, participants must share a number of basic principles and orientations. It is the job of the ethnographer to discover these principles and orientations and, in the case of Nakasero market, identify the source of their perceived disruption.

Second, Julia Elyachar (2010) writes of the *communicative channels* developed by women working in Cairo, Egypt. She demonstrates how these women use acts of movement, conversation and visitation to create channels through which resources such as information, goods and emotions can flow, enabling their survival in the absence of state support (ibid.: 459).<sup>14</sup> Through the maintenance and extension of these channels, everyday activities such as greeting, chatting and messaging constitute important forms of social action, or what the author terms ‘phatic labor’. However, microfinance initiatives and other NGO projects have sought to render these channels visible to a wider public, making them accessible as ‘an economic infrastructure’ geared towards the generation of private profit; a change that the author argues has compromised much of their historical flexibility and utility.

These formulations are of value to the thesis insofar as they provide a mode for thinking about the various ways in which people interact in Nakasero, without reducing these interactions to the predetermined logic of a single framework.

### **Outline of the thesis**

This thesis seeks to restore people’s hearts and personal concerns to debates about change in urban African settings through an ethnographic engagement with a historical marketplace. It begins in the ethnographic present before departing on a journey through the history of Nakasero (and by extension Kampala), returning to the present at its end. The intention is to introduce the reader to the social and moral forms that underpin day-to-day life in the market before tracing the development of these forms over time. By the end of the thesis, I hope to show that the challenges of life in contemporary Nakasero

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<sup>14</sup> Elyachar’s (2010: 459) ‘communicative channels’ arguably invoke the same phenomena as Clark’s (1994: 217) ‘egalitarian multilateral relations’, described above.

are not seen as a series of absences, but are rather understood as the latest episode in a long history of ideas, practices and institutions.

The following chapter outlines the details of my methodological engagement in Nakasero in order to anchor the reader in the processes that produced the thesis. It provides an account of my entry into, departure from and return to the market, including a discussion of positionality, ethics and the 'violence' of fieldwork (Hastrup 1992). Following this, Chapter 3 provides an introduction to day-to-day life in Nakasero through the movements and activities of Alex Sserwanga, a rubbish collector in the market. It uses Alex's daily interactions as a basis to explore the ideas and practices through which market life is negotiated and expressed.

The next two chapters explore the historical development of these ideas and practices in the colonial and postcolonial eras. Chapter 4 traces the colonial history of Nakasero from the time of the creation of first market in Buganda in 1882. It explores the original organisation and function of the marketplace, and its role in producing 'citizens', 'subjects,' and other categories of person that still resonate in Nakasero today (Mamdani 1996). Chapter 5 then investigates the postcolonial history of the market, focusing on people's experiences of the ruptures of the 1970s and 80s. In a departure from much of the institutional literature, it argues that the unsteady and unpredictable character of the state under Amin provided space for the emergence of new market people in Nakasero and new expressions of market life.

The following two chapters explore life in the market before and after the takeover of the market by the Kampala City Council Authority in 2012. Chapter 6 traces the rise and fall of the vendors' own management of the market between 2007-2012. It argues that the reign of the vendors came at the cost of the infiltration of powerful external interests into the social channels of the market, creating new patterns of violence and division. Chapter 7 then explores the role of voluntary associations in contemporary Nakasero. It argues that when faced with challenges of various dimensions, people in the market continue to create, join and participate in collective institutions, and that many of these institutions are rooted in cultural and religious practice. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a summary of the findings and implications of the thesis.

## Chapter 2: Researching and Relating in the Marketplace

"If texts are to be more than literary topoi, scattered shards from which we presume worlds, they have to be anchored in the processes of their production, in the orbits of connection and influence that give them life and force."

Comaroff & Comaroff (1992: 34)

"I enter Nakasero market early on a wet Friday morning, surveying the scene from a second floor restaurant. From here the market resembles an ant colony, with long lines of porters, hawkers and customers weaving their way through narrow corridors between fruit and vegetable displays, some carrying boxes on their backs. Friday is the busiest of the three official market days on which trucks and lorries ensure a plentiful supply of produce. I move down to the market floor but find my attempted introductions are cut short by the hurried gestures of customers and terse responses of vendors once it's clear I'm not a conventional customer: "You don't want vanilla? We have other things - Ganja?" I strike up a conversation with a young man who is quickly scolded by a woman of similar age for neglecting customers at his stall. People push me forwards. There is no space to sit. The ground is covered with pea casings that squelch underfoot. Putrid smells emanate from the rubbish heap. After an hour or so I return to the restaurant."

Field diary, 4 October 2013

Prior to arriving in Nakasero, I had reflected on the importance of selecting my interlocutors carefully, of being mindful of gatekeepers, of describing the purpose and potential implications of my research at length (and in multiple languages, if necessary). However, such challenges were quickly dwarfed by that of simply *moving*, of learning how to read the market's ebbs and flows and to position myself in situations in which opportunities for observation and interaction might arise. In this way, the practice of research, like that of vending, required experimentations in moving, conversing and exchanging; experimentations that occasionally sat uncomfortably with prevailing ethical and methodological guidelines in the social sciences.

This chapter explores the challenge of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a setting characterised by social density and diversity. Responding to the Comaroffs' challenge, it attempts to anchor the reader in the processes and

relationships through which the thesis was produced, including their ambiguities and flaws. The first section explores the epistemological and methodological implications of the enquiry of the thesis. Following this, the research design is presented in full, including a discussion of sequencing, sampling and access. An account is then provided of the methods used in the field and their respective limitations. Finally, consideration is given to the issues of language, positionality and ethics, including a discussion of the potential 'violence' of fieldwork (Hastrup 1992).

### **Researching the market: epistemological considerations**

This thesis is concerned with social and moral life in a Ugandan marketplace, driven by a theoretical interest in restoring people's hearts and personal concerns to debates about change in urban African settings. It takes the form of what has been termed an 'extended case study', concerned not with offering a holistic view of a society, but rather with providing an understanding of the *social processes* that may be abstracted from a particular sequence of events (Burawoy 2009; Flyvbjerg 2006; Mitchell 1983). As such, inferences are based on the 'validity of the analysis' and the logic of the theoretical reasoning, rather than the representativeness of events (Mitchell 1983: 190).<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, attempts are made to broaden out the analysis through the inclusion of historical and archival material, based on the understanding that social processes in Nakasero market are partly the product of events further afield.

To return to the questions posed in the previous chapter: How do people get along in the market? What types of values and institutions are important in this process? How did they develop, and what were the sources of their perceived disruption? These queries are based on an understanding of Nakasero market as a delimited social space,<sup>2</sup> a container of diverse peoples, practices and institutions, rather than an indeterminate sphere of exchange. This understanding provides an important methodological point of departure insofar as it places emphasis on *people* over goods, and on situated *values*,

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<sup>1</sup> This reflects the distinction between 'logical' and 'statistical inference' (Mitchell 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Although temporal and contested, it was possible to define the broad spatial boundaries of the market by asking people. These were understood to extend out beyond its legal jurisdiction onto Market Street and Dastur Street, but not beyond.

*practices* and *institutions* over dispersed networks and enterprises.<sup>3</sup> The methodological imperative was to generate a descriptive account of social life through an ethnographic engagement with the people who spend time in the market; to ‘follow the person’ rather than the ‘object’ or ‘metaphor’ (Burrell, 2009: 182). This entailed a certain dedication to ‘thickness,’ or the privileging of ‘richness, texture, and detail,’ over ‘parsimony, refinement’ and (statistical) ‘elegance’ (Ortner 1995: 174).

Ethnography has received recent attention within the scholarship on African cities as part of calls for a ‘return to the field’, proposed to challenge narratives of crisis by documenting the ‘present’ and ‘already there’ (Guyer & Hansen 2001; Guyer 2011; Hansen & Verkaaik 2009). Its purpose in this context – as in the classical sense – is to “grasp the native’s point of view” and document the “imponderabilia of actual life” (Malinowski 1922). A growing number of what Jane Guyer (2011) terms ‘realist’ ethnographies have taken up this mantle in Kinshasa (De Boeck & Plissart 2004), Johannesburg (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008), Dakar, Pretoria and Douala (Simone 2004). In a departure from conventional social science epistemologies, their methodological instruction is to ‘walk the city’, to document ‘entire landscapes’ and to explore the “disjunctures [...] between life, death and their transformations” (Guyer 2011: 480–486). Such interpretive (and often indeterminate) methodologies allow for the generation of evocative accounts of the ephemeral and fragmented nature of ‘actual life’ in the African city. However, in the absence of more conventional methods, they dampen the role of history and political economy, reducing the authors’ ability to describe trajectories of continuity and change over a longer period. In response, my methodological approach was not to ‘walk the city’ but to sit down – when there was space – in the market.

I conducted participant observation over a period of 12 months between 2013-2015 as part of a process that was punctuated by contradictions, misrecognitions, and shared experiences. This method was supported by a more structured series of life history interviews, surveys, and a substantial, if eclectic collection of historical market reports, records and media reportage.

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<sup>3</sup> The alternate categories here often form the methodological point of departure in studies of economic anthropology and geography (see Guyer 2004; MacGaffey 1991; 2005; Meagher 2010).

The study's methodological framework thus took inspiration from more structured anthropological approaches, such as that present in Rosen's (1984) *Bargaining for Reality*.

Interviews were used to generate subjective accounts of market life, in line with the thesis' interest in elucidating people's hearts and personal concerns. Meanwhile, archival methods uncovered material from which a partial social history of the market could be resurrected. The history of the market occupies a more significant portion of the thesis than originally anticipated, due to: *i*) the sheer number of social, economic and political conjunctures that have occurred in and around Nakasero market over the past century, *ii*) the relevance of these events to the challenge of getting along in the market, and *iii*) the distance between people's experiences of these events and their popular characterisation in the institutional literature on Uganda. The limitations of participant observation, interviews and archives will be reflected upon below, following a discussion of the issues of sequencing, sampling and access.

### **Sequencing and sampling**

I began by attempting to gain an understanding of the basic social and political organisation of the market through a series of semi-structured interviews. These interviews asked people for their views of the proposed redevelopment of the market, providing a basis for distinguishing different groups and interests. I considered these interviews to be the starting point of a longer process of introducing my research to the market and acquiring a license to conduct more intensive forms of participant observation and 'deep hanging out' (Geertz 1998). During this period, I took intensive Luganda lessons, started to build relationships with participants and assistants, and attempted to demonstrate some level of cultural competency.<sup>4</sup> I began conducting meaningful participant observation after approximately a month (see 'Access' below), and continued this for the duration of my fieldwork. The survey and life history exercises were conducted during the final months of fieldwork to take advantage of established rapport and trust, while market records were collected throughout, as opportunities arose.

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<sup>4</sup> This process was also assisted by the disciplinary efforts of people in the market, some of which are described below

Participants were selected through the process of ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser & Strauss 1967), a self-conscious process through which people, events and scenarios are selected for their ability to construct a particular research case or ‘corpus’ (Bauer & Aarts 2000). These cases included everyday interactions in the market (Chapter 3), experiences of market life in the pre- (Chapter 4) and post-colonial period (chapter 5), the vendors’ own management of the market (Chapter 6), and the role of voluntary associations in the market (Chapter 7). Different accounts were sought for each case ensuring variance of age, gender, profession and ethnicity where possible until a point of saturation was reached, or no new perspectives were forthcoming. In practice, many of my first participants in the study presented themselves, or were selected partially on the basis of ease of access in terms of their temporal and spatial availability (see below). However, following this, I made conscious and strategic efforts to extend the methodology to marginal spaces and populations in the market, for example to those working in the chicken department and around the rubbish dump. The survey drew upon a more conventional, semi-random sampling method, which is described below.

### **Access**

Prior to the start of fieldwork, I visited the market offices in order to obtain the consent of market leaders to conduct research in Nakasero.<sup>5</sup> However, I declined offers of official market tours and introductions, conscious of the recent history of division in the leadership of the market (Chapter 6). Consequently, I was left to discover the market for myself through experiences such as those described in the epigraph. After a few days, I began varying the times and points through which I entered the market, experiencing more success during the quieter afternoon hours. The people most receptive to my presence in the market during this time were predominantly young men, spatially concentrated in the Kabengo and on Jamaica corner (described in the following chapter). Many of these men fell into the category that Michael Agar (1980) terms ‘professional stranger handlers’ or people accustomed to pursuing and interacting with market outsiders. Agar warns of the handler’s

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<sup>5</sup> The market had attracted a fairly regular stream of passing researchers in recent years, generally interested in conducting interviews with the leadership, as part of studies on ‘informal’ working associations and the politics of local service provision in Kampala.

propensity to produce limited and rehearsed narratives in order to satisfy the researcher, whose interests he or she is often familiar with (ibid.: 85).

Such traits were arguably in evidence in the market, for example, in the men's requests for sponsorship for their children's school fees. However, I found them to be productive guides and companions during the early stages of my fieldwork. They are among the most mobile groups of people in the market, often working simultaneously as hawkers, service providers and middlemen and were able to provide introductions to people in other areas of the market. Furthermore, many of them occupied an insider/outsider status in the market, symbolised by their location on its fringes. As such, they were happy to engage in the discussion and critique of various interpretations of market life, which was of considerable value to my analysis. One unforeseen consequence of my early association with these groups was the heightened suspicion of me by long-established vendors in older areas of the market, who were critical of the moral character of the young men in the Kabengo (see 'Positionality' below).

My entry into the market was also eased by the immediacy of commercial transactions, which provided a departure from the more uncomfortable social scenarios produced by structured interviews. I made a point of conducting my personal shopping in Nakasero, developing relationships in the process. During this time I was also unwittingly involved in a number of transactions involving the payment of hidden taxes and fees negotiated by my handlers. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I asked David Ssenonga, a generous participant in the study, about the times he had collected money from my transactions in the market without my knowledge. He responded matter-of-factly: 'it is how we make business', and made a point of distinguishing my initial status as a 'tourist' in the market (*omulambuzi*) - a morally legitimate target of 'business' - from my present status as a 'friend' (*omukwano*) - a more problematic target. These transactions were described enthusiastically as a 'welcome to Nakasero!' by people in other areas of the market; a ritual demonstration of the gap in knowledge between the market insider and outsider, from which a modest profit can be extracted. However, as I spent more time in the market, this gap began to narrow and I found myself expected to provide more overt forms of material assistance, such as contributions to weddings and burials, discussed under 'Ethical entanglements' below.

After a few weeks in Nakasero, I had set up a relatively long schedule of interviews, synchronised with the ebbs and flows of market life and people's individual obligations. Between these events, I spent time in the Kabengo and on Jamaica corner, and shadowing sympathetic interview participants in other areas of the market. One limitation to taking a rather broad approach to the early stages of fieldwork was the increasing amount of time taken up by greetings and goodbyes. Although notoriously lengthy Kiganda greetings are shortened in the city, they are of no less social and cultural significance, and their neglect can generate ill feeling. Furthermore, while such rituals may be managed to some extent in residential settings, they are largely inescapable in an open market of over 10,000 people. Consequently, I developed a method of walk-and-greet that I had observed others using, with mixed success.<sup>6</sup> This formed part of the process of learning to navigate Nakasero as a social space: taking the aisle with the gregarious plantain vendors when there is time, and the side-passage with the napping onion vendors when late for an appointment.

## **Methods**

### ***Participant observation***

Originally envisaged by Malinowski (1922: 25) as a means of realising a person's vision of their *world*, participant observation is now often deployed towards more modest ends, following a sustained critique of the possibility of studying a society *in toto*. For the purposes of this thesis, the phenomena under observation were people's *practices* and *interactions* in the market and the *ideas* through which these were described and rationalised. It was hoped that participant observation would generate first-hand accounts of social practices and interactions, whilst at the same time developing relationships through which participants would feel comfortable explaining these interactions. This formed part of an attempt to overcome the limitations of a methodological reliance on testimony, which tends to produce ethnographic accounts "based on what people say they do, not on what researchers see

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<sup>6</sup> People occasionally approached me to say that they had seen me earlier in the day but that I had not yet visited them. One vendor advised a friend of mine on her arrival in the market: "That man will make you tired! He walks around the market all day" (18/06/14).

them doing” (Bleek 1987: 315). However, my own experiences of participant observation were limited by my understanding of Luganda, which is described below.

After two months of introductions and interviews, I looked for what might be understood as an apprenticeship in the market. Justine Batanda, a papaya vendor working from the edge of a stall by the Kabengo agreed to let me help her two to three days a week while her sister was away. Putting my teachings from the Kabengo into practice, I sat in the aisle holding up healthy specimens, attempting to entice customers with sympathetic greetings and prices. Success required an ability to match customers with produce: large, high-quality papayas for people who were known to spend money in the market, smaller ones for those who were not. After two months with Justine, I negotiated a similar role with Daniel Achieng, a vegetable vendor of Kenyan Luo descent operating in the Parkyard area of the market. In both cases, I was regarded as something of a novelty by passing customers. Rather than ceasing to be a ‘disturbing element’ (Malinowski 1922: 8-9), the aim was to tailor my *disturbances* to the job, in keeping with the prevailing ethic of salesmanship.

Gracia Clark (1994; 2008) has written of her time working in Kumasi market as a process of slow advancement towards adulthood. Regularly scolded and shooed away in the beginning, she was gradually invested with responsibilities until she was finally deemed capable of working without supervision. My attempts to work in the market affected a similar change in my relationship with people in Nakasero. Women began to reprimand me on my appearance; stating, for example, that my trousers which were discoloured from the dust of numerous *boda-boda* rides, were ‘dirty’ and demonstrated that I was ‘not serious.’<sup>7</sup> Similarly, men were quick to critique my transgressing of cultural codes, for example when I attempted to greet people while eating. I soon heard of rumours circulating that I was a spy (*mbega*) for President Museveni and Hassan Basajjalaba (an unpopular business tycoon who had attempted to purchase the market). Daniel Achieng said that he

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<sup>7</sup> I noted the use of this exact phrase in reference to my appearance on 29/11/14 and 27/02/14. The instruction to ‘be serious’ (*mumalilivu*) was frequently used by market leaders over the tannoy system – for example in relation to the need to report crimes and to contribute to the restoration of the tombs of Buganda at Kisubi. A serious person is someone who is seen to uphold their interpersonal responsibilities in the market, demonstrating respect for themselves and others.

suspected some people were 'jealous' that I was working with him.<sup>8</sup> I was arguably experiencing the trials of market entry, described in the following chapter. My entry was further complicated by the fact that I was not working in the market in order to make a living, at least in the obvious sense. This observation created anxiety insofar as it raised an unsettling question: if I was not generating income from the market then where was it coming from? Who were my patrons and where did my obligations lie? I sought to provide some reassurance by talking plainly about my research and by returning to present some of my findings (discussed under 'Ethical entanglements' below).

I was able to generate group ethnographies in other areas of Nakasero by participating in a broader range of activities, for example by attending meetings, shelling peas, playing cards and *Ludo*, watching football and sleeping in the market overnight. Additionally, I arranged to shadow more mobile members of the market, and also accepted invitations to visit people in their homes and places of worship. I generally spent four to six days a week in the market during the period October 2013 – June 2014, and again for a month in April 2015. Observations were recorded in field diaries, in which alternate pages were dedicated to description and analysis. Two areas of the market in which I was unable to conduct meaningful participant observation were the livestock (chicken) and butchers' sections, due to restrictions of uniform and religious affiliation,<sup>9</sup> so descriptions of these areas rely more heavily on narrative accounts.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Interviews and surveys***

A total of 61 interviews and 3 group discussions were conducted with current or past members of the market, and 3 interviews with members of external institutions, such as the Kampala City Council Authority (see Appendix B). Interviewees were given a choice as to where the interview would take place,<sup>11</sup> in what language (Luganda or English), and how it would be recorded

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<sup>8</sup> 27/02/14

<sup>9</sup> People involved in meat preparation were required to wear white overalls and gum boots, and to be of Islamic faith.

<sup>10</sup> The experiences summarised here were published as a case study in the SAGE Research Methods series (see Monteith 2014a).

<sup>11</sup> Dictaphones in the market were seen to be symbols of journalism; a profession with a poor reputation in central Kampala owing to its perceived role in sowing social and

(verbatim recording or written notes). The majority of interviews took place in small restaurants just outside of the market, and were conducted by the researcher and a research assistant. Different types of interviews were used to elicit different information: semi-structured interviews designed to generate broad accounts of contemporary market life, life history interviews designed to generate accounts of the historical market, and follow-up interviews designed to probe an emerging theme or recent event. Following Wacquant (2002: 1480), it was hoped that life histories would uncover the connection of “the local world of the vendors to the major institutions that co process them” – such as the legal system and labour market – “reveal[ing] the pathways in and out of that world”. An open style of questioning was used throughout in order to avoid pre-empting the significance of particular events and institutions, and to encourage the role of the participant in constructing the conversation.<sup>12</sup> Audio recordings were transcribed and translated by research assistants, who also recorded the original version of key passages in Luganda. Material gathered from interviews (as opposed to conversations or observations) is referenced as such in the thesis (e.g. ‘interview on 12/04/2014’).

Interviews are forms of social interaction highly susceptible to prevailing relations of power (Ellen 1984). As such, verbal testimony shouldn’t be taken at ‘face value,’ but instead contextualised and approached as one of a variety of different forms of communication (Jackson 2012). Life history interviews entail additional complications, for example, Fabian (1990) has observed that people’s experiences of the present often diverge from the narrative accounts they produce *ex post facto*, which conform to particular modes of storytelling. There is no neat methodological trick for overcoming such challenges. Here it is hoped that the discussions of positionality, ethnical procedures, language and research assistance provide a context against which the reader can evaluate the presented data. This data is then supported as far as possible by other material in the thesis, including reports from a range of different institutions (market, government, media and academia).

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political division, particularly in the lead-up to elections, so I took care not to use them.

<sup>12</sup> For example (in the semi-structured interviews): “What challenges do you face?” and “What are your plans for the future?” rather than “What do you think of the KCCA / redevelopment plans?” and (in the life history interviews): “How was life during Amin’s time?” rather than “What did you think of the Asian expulsion of 1972?”

Surveys were conducted in order to generate comparable demographic and economic data in different areas of the market. A socio-economic survey was conducted in May 2014 across the entire market, in order to allow for a systematic analysis of spatial inequalities in the market relating to income and background.<sup>13</sup> The survey sampled every fourth business present in the market including self-employed service providers, such as bag carriers. By this time people were familiar with my presence in the market, and often whispered the responses they did not want their neighbours to hear. The seven that refused to participate were mostly unfamiliar, and refused on the basis that participation was unpaid or that they did not have time. I also conducted a price survey in order to compare the average prices of 14 common items across different areas of the market (May 2014). The results of both of these surveys are presented in the following chapter.

### ***Records, articles and archives***

An eclectic range of records, articles and archives were examined in order to reduce the thesis' reliance on the techniques outlined above. Within the market, I obtained the records of the market disciplinary committee which sat between 2009-2012. These records comprise the proceedings of 67 cases, including complaints, witness statements, judgements, summonses and apologies, written in a mixture of Luganda and English. I was also granted access to the records of central market institutions that organise collections for members' burial and medical costs. 78 cases of assistance are described between June 2011 and March 2012, detailing the nature of the event, the identity of the beneficiary and the total amount raised. Finally, I employed a participant in the market (Edward Walusimbi, Jamaica corner) to keep a record of the announcements made over the market tannoy system. 252 announcements were recorded during the period October 2013-June 2014.

Outside the market, I acquired copies of over 500 media articles relating to city markets from four national newspapers (New Vision, Daily Monitor, Observer and the now defunct Crusader) dating back to 1990, with the assistance of Anthony Tukwasibwe at the Centre for Basic Research. Finally, I made visits to the Uganda National Archives at Entebbe in June 2014, and the

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<sup>13</sup> The total number of participants was 229, and the response rate 97 per cent.

British Archives at Kew in November 2014 in order to obtain material on the colonial market. All articles and records written in Luganda were subsequently translated into English, with the help of research assistants. I provide the full references for media articles in the footnotes in order to provide the reader with a context (date, title, origin) against which they can situate the information cited.

### **Language, assistance and analyses**

“But you know we are using these English words; sometimes they cannot describe what we are saying in Luganda.”

Robert Balugave, after describing the market as a ‘society’, Kabengo<sup>14</sup>

Although it is a diverse cultural environment, Luganda is the *lingua franca* of Nakasero market, and people arriving from other regions of Uganda and East Africa emphasised its importance to getting along in the market. New arrivals are required to learn the language and to learn it quickly in order to participate in the social life of the market and avoid being ‘teased’ and ‘talked about.’<sup>15</sup> Researchers are arguably no different in this regard, though frustratingly, I found Luganda difficult to pick up. Two months of intensive language lessons provided me with a basic understanding, enabling me to participate in fairly structured interactions which I continued to build upon through lessons and a further eight months spent in the market. By the end of fieldwork, I had what might be described as an intermediate level, sufficient for relaying basic messages and understanding key instructions and explanations. In line with my experiences as an apprentice, I had progressed from an infant to an adolescent. However, virtually everyone working in the shops were able to speak English, compared with just over half the people working in the stalls, and a quarter of those in working in the open areas of the market.<sup>16</sup> As such, I was able to adopt different linguistic strategies in different areas of the market with the help of research assistants and translators.

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<sup>14</sup> 18/05/2014

<sup>15</sup> Phrases that originate from an interview with a produce vendor from Bugisu, describing her entry into the market (21/02/2014).

<sup>16</sup> This is based on the albeit imperfect inference that 96, 57 and 26 per cent of these populations have completed secondary education respectively (S4; author’s survey, May 2014).

When conducting participant observation, I focused on describing unfolding scenarios and interactions rather than semantics. When people provided references or explanations that I could not follow, I asked them to spell them out or write them down. Some of my closest participants would also occasionally act as interpreters. I employed two official research assistants (RAs) with contrasting backgrounds. Mable Male was a Muganda woman in her thirties with little formal training but considerable research experience and social confidence. She was a prominent member of a local Pentecostal church and the proprietor of a craft shop in Kampala. She had worked on other research projects and was familiar with the demands and anxieties of doctoral fieldwork (see Bremner 2013). I also worked with Douglas Nsibambi, who had recently completed formal research training at Makerere University in Kampala and had experience of working for local NGOs. Douglas was in his twenties and the younger of the two. While Mable occasionally joined me in the areas of the market with higher proportions of women and older vendors (the market stalls), Douglas accompanied me in areas dominated by young men such as the Kabengo, where he was able to pick up more nuanced interactions. Beyond this, I experimented with different approaches in different areas. For example, when women in one section of the upper stalls took a dislike to Mable, I found it more productive to work alone in their area of the market.<sup>17</sup>

As Robert Balugave observed, translation can be a poor transporter of meaning. When conducting interviews in English, I asked participants for the Luganda versions of key categories and phrases, in order to retain these in the analysis. A Research Assistant was present for all of the interviews conducted in Luganda, to act as a translator. Recorded interviews were then translated and transcribed by two other assistants (Angella Wassajja and Maxima Tibwita), with whom I met on a regular basis to discuss the meanings of key phrases. I have endeavoured to keep the original Luganda terms in the final thesis wherever possible. Quotations translated from Luganda are referenced

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<sup>17</sup> She was accused of having '*lugezigezi*,' which is roughly equivalent to being a 'busybody,' exhibiting tones of condescension, an issue that had not cropped up other areas of the market. This finding was illustrative of two of the themes explored in the rest of the thesis: *i*) the considerable concern people had for issues of personality and moral character in Nakasero, and *ii*) the social tension that typifies relationships between people who share similar socio-economic characteristics (the narcissism of small differences).

as such in the thesis (e.g. 12/04/2014, Luganda). All others are presented in original English.

The above methods generated a mass of survey findings, interview transcripts, records, archival materials and ethnographic notes and recordings. Analysis of these materials was an iterative process that began in the field. Transcripts of interviews and conversations were subject to narrative analyses (see e.g. Mason 2004) and notes and records were ordered by content (Silverman 1997). A general picture of a case was developed, for example of vendor-customer relations in the Kabengo, which then became more vivid and elaborated as additional information became available. Care was taken to distinguish between primary (notes, observations) and secondary data (records and reports), and between observed behaviour (*practices, interactions*) and narrative account (*registers*). Issues of positionality and reflexivity were considered concurrently.

### **Positionality**

"You are like *kusuku* [parrot], you see everything."

Moses Bemba, 27, Kabengo<sup>18</sup>

"I wish you could spend a week in my skin, *then* you would see."

David Senyonga, 33, Matugga Town Courthouse<sup>19</sup>

Taken together, Moses and David's statements present a paradoxical account of the view of the outsider in social research; presented with an opportunity to observe many things, their presence has a tendency to shift the arrangement of the objects of observation. While Moses was making a passing comment, David was talking about a sequence of events in a local courthouse. Court officials had just approached me, somewhat anxiously, to ask which case I was there to observe. David suspected the officials subsequently brought this case forward in the proceedings in order to appease me and facilitate my exit, something that was possible, but difficult to verify. For him, the salient category of my identity in that moment was my race.

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<sup>18</sup> 05/05/2014

<sup>19</sup> 03/04/2014

Race appeared to frame many of my interactions particularly during the early stages of fieldwork, when I was often greeted with shouts of '*muzungu!*'<sup>20</sup> Attempts to emphasise my professional identity as a researcher rather than a journalist or NGO worker were largely met with indifference.<sup>21</sup> The historical role of the white European in Nakasero market as recalled by the majority of its inhabitants, is one of the prosperous patron and customer (as distinct from the Indian or Chinese customer).<sup>22</sup> The decline in European and North American visitors to the market in the era of the supermarket has arguably only enhanced their mythical status, while historical stereotypes of the exploitative and miserly Indian customer persist.

Writing of their experiences of fieldwork among Kampala's Ganda population in the 1950s, Southall & Gutkind (1957: 215) assert that "sinister motives are regularly attributed to the simplest activities of Europeans", and that "it became distinctly unpatriotic and almost immoral to express any other feeling but that of hatred toward [Europeans]". In contrast, I found my British/European positionality problematic for altogether different reasons, such as its encouragement of deference and rehearsed narratives of need.<sup>23</sup> This change is arguably attributable to shifts in the political economy of Kampala over the past 60 years, such as the rise of the aid and entertainment industries, and the particular history of Nakasero market as a place designed to service the commercial needs of the city's European population. As such, I was a familiar and generally welcome type of outsider.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A Kiswahili word literally meaning 'aimless wanderer,' now used by people across East Africa to denote someone with white skin.

<sup>21</sup> Ben Jones (2015) has written of the irrelevance of such categories, which foreign professionals are often very concerned with to his participants in rural Teso, who instead see Europeans as a single category of persons able to command considerable resources.

<sup>22</sup> These were used to denote racial rather than national categories; for example, people described as 'Indian' or '*Bwindi*' were often of British, Pakistani or Ugandan nationality.

<sup>23</sup> For example, one participant told me that he didn't think himself 'worthy' of having a friend from the UK (23/04/2015), while another said that only 'white people' could attend to the 'problems' of Uganda (16/06/2014).

<sup>24</sup> Marsha Henry (2014) has noted the unique ability of white male researchers to 'bulldoze' their way through fieldwork encounters in African settings. During the 'Hidden transcripts' panel of *Nordic Africa Days 2014*, a female British researcher of Indian descent described being told to go and do research 'in her own country' during fieldwork in East Africa, while a white British male noted that his arrival in a rural fieldsite was greeted by a local chief banging on a drum and shouting "The white man is here! Come out of your houses".

As I spent more time in the market and began participant observation in earnest, I found that other aspects of my positionality came under scrutiny. In addition to comments on my dress and (non)observation of cultural codes, I was asked about multiple aspects of my identity and purpose: 'Who did you come with?' 'Do you have a wife?' 'Who is paying for you?' 'What is your [football] team?' 'Do you know x (often a European in Kampala or a Ugandan in the UK)?' 'What do you think of homosexuals?' 'Are you a man of the king [*Kabaka*]?' 'Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?' Just as I attempted to place people in the market, they attempted to place me, although our categories and concerns often differed. Their interest was predominantly with my biography and moral character rather than my research project: whether I was a 'good person' (*obuntu bulamu*), with a good/generous heart (*mutima bulamu*) and therefore someone it would be beneficial to get to know and to get along with. My research assistants went through a similar process; for example, one was asked directly whether or not she would be an 'easy person' after she had asked a probing question in an initial interview. As in my own methodology, verbal questioning was often augmented with observations of my behaviour (market vendors have an acute understanding of the limitations of testimony), such as my interactions with other groups in Nakasero, and my contributions to market collections.

Of my biographical characteristics, my status as an unmarried male arguably provoked the greatest curiosity in the market. After enquiring, a number of older male participants, particularly those of Islamic faith, offered me their daughters and nieces in marriage, often expressing tones of bafflement when I attempted to decline and change the subject.<sup>25</sup> More significantly, this status injected a sense of ambiguity into my interactions with unmarried women. Following the completion of an interview with a female vegetable vendor in the upper market, she stood up and asked whether we would now go back to her house. Other female participants subsequently asked me whether I was interested in starting a relationship with them,<sup>26</sup> while an elder lady in Parkyard counselled that women in the market 'cannot fail to go [home] with

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<sup>25</sup> 07/10/2013

<sup>26</sup> I was quickly absolved of any notions of my irresistibility by follow-up statements such as 'OK, I give you my number and you find for me another *mzungu*' (04/06/2014). Lively debates often then ensued on how 'useless' and unreliable Ugandan men are, which appeared to mirror discussions on demanding and unreasonable Ugandan women in the Kabengo.

you if you ask.’<sup>27</sup> At least three different things were going on in these interactions. First, my personal and cultural credentials were being assessed; on one occasion a participant asked an RA ‘*amanyi okusaga?*’ (‘Does he know how to joke?’) prior to exclaiming ‘*jagala gwe!*’ (‘I want you!’).<sup>28</sup> Second, a public performance was being enacted, which often generated laughter and entertainment during more monotonous periods of the day. Wiley (2014: 118) has observed the use of jokes by Mauritanian market women as a means to engage and critique issues of gender and social hierarchy, while, Kapchan (1996: 3) has noted the marketplace’s shifting of “intimate forms of domestic, sociable and work encounters” into the public sphere. Third, a sincere request was being made; a number of people had furthered their social and economic position in the market by starting relationships with farmers and suppliers, and nothing was lost by asking.

I attempted to navigate such situations through the reciprocation of humour and laughter, methods that have long been deployed to manage relationships characterised by ‘social conjunction and social disjunction’ in African societies (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 91).<sup>29</sup> Having come through these early interactions, I established a level of rapport with female vendors across a range of different areas of the market, and was able to sit – by this point I was offered paint tins, produce crates and boxes as makeshift seats – and take tea during quieter periods of the day. I also worked alongside Justine Batanda, and was referred to as a ‘son’ (*mutabani*) of a number of the older women in the market, with whom I conducted life history interviews. Nevertheless, I had easier access to social spaces inhabited by men, such as the Ludo tables, card games, restaurants, and bars (often for watching football). I was also more likely to be invited to the homes and places of worship of male participants, which gave me a greater insight into their lives and relationships outside of the market. Although this is an important limitation, it is one that I hope can also open up new lines of enquiry in the literature on African markets, which have

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<sup>27</sup> 22/02/2014

<sup>28</sup> 14/06/2014

<sup>29</sup> The significance of my given name in the market also oscillated between the realms of sincerity and humour. *Senfuka* is a name associated with the Ngeye (colobus monkey) clan, which is respected and well represented in the market. However, it is also associated with the verb *okufuka*; ‘to urinate,’ and a name often given to incontinent children. Needless to say I was only aware of one of these interpretations at the time I began wielding the name in the market. Its deployment was met with solemn respect in some quarters and unrestrained laughter in others.

historically been the domain of female researchers (see e.g. Clark 1994; Guyer & Hansen 2001; Kapchan 1996; Pietila 2007; Wiley 2014).

Market leaders were another category of people with whom my interactions were somewhat restricted. The recent history of the leadership of the market is fraught with political division and rumour, and at the time of my fieldwork, representatives of the Nakasero Market Sitting Traders and Vendors Ltd (NMSTV) were locked in legal battles with the city council over the ownership and planned redevelopment of the market. Members and ex-members of the NMSTV leadership repeatedly asked who was funding my visit and were very skilled at evading requests for interview. A further complication in this relationship was my early association with the young men in the Kabengo and on Jamaica corner (my early handlers), a group that was often the target of the disciplinary measures of the leadership until its replacement by the city council in 2012. Some leaders had asked why I had chosen to associate with 'those *bayaye*' (morally deviant persons, often associated with crime). In response I emphasised the need to talk to everyone in the market as part of my research, avoided contentious topics and attempted to adopt a deferential and unthreatening tone.<sup>30</sup> As time went by, a number of market leaders softened their positions and agreed to interviews. The leaders of historical market committees agreed to share market records, but did not want me to write official requests. Following these interactions, I discovered that NMSTV leaders had informed rival groups (also vying for control of the market) that I was an investor and a representative of the construction industry who had come to help them realise their plans for the redevelopment of the market.<sup>31</sup> In this way, the ambiguity surrounding my identity and purpose in the market was used as a resource by groups of people in the market; in this case to instil apprehension in rival groups.

Georg Simmel (1950) has written that the stranger produces a 'specific form of interaction' based on a combination of 'nearness and distance, indifference and involvement' that encourages both openness and objectivity. My experiences suggest that this interaction depends on: *i*) the relationship (real

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<sup>30</sup> A historical strategy deployed in feminist research. Linda McDowell (1988: 167 ) notes that when the researcher is seen as "unthreatening or not 'official,' confidential documents [are] often made accessible, [and] difficult issues breached relatively freely."

<sup>31</sup> Interview with NAMASITE director, 07/05/2015.

or imagined) between the researcher and the categories of person that matter in a particular setting, *ii*) an investment of time that is sufficient to allow people to make their own assessment of this relationship. For example, while my role as a white European male stranger or ‘tourist’ initially provided access to certain groups in the market (young men, professional stranger handlers), it restricted access to others (established vendors, women). One of the challenges of dense, open fieldsites such as the marketplace is that one is constantly under observation, and so proximity to one particular group is often achieved at the expense of distance from another.

Of course, issues of positionality are not limited to data collection, and my way of seeing the world also underwrote the processes of analysis and writing. I attempted to temper this both by practicing reflexivity and presenting part of the analysis and written thesis to participants in the market to obtain their feedback. This presentation formed part of a return visit to Nakasero, described below.

### **Ethical entanglements**

“He will steal the secrets your grandfathers hid under their carpets.”

Male fish vendor, 81, lower market stalls<sup>32</sup>

“Those *bazungu*, they don’t give anything back.”

Male butcher and youth leader, 32, market offices<sup>33</sup>

The two quotes above both emanated from people on the fringes of the study, offered as advice to participants I was in the course of interviewing or talking to. In both cases the response of the participants was to laugh them off (humour as a tool for managing social disjunction); the first speaker was dismissed as a ‘crazy’ old man, and the second as someone who was embittered on account of a previous encounter with a German researcher.<sup>34</sup> Their laughter served to diminish the social tension and potential

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<sup>32</sup> 20/03/2014, Luganda

<sup>33</sup> 18/06/2014

<sup>34</sup> He had apparently given the researcher a tour of the market, granted her several interviews with market leaders and organised her transport in Kampala, but then never heard from her again despite a promise to keep in touch – an experience that he recounted on several occasions.

embarrassment in each scenario. However, it provided no answer to the issues raised by the two men: what (if any) form of reciprocation was being invoked here? And what obligations did this invocation infer on the researcher, above and beyond the completion of their research? These are not comfortable questions to contemplate. Truman et al. (1999) and Becker & Aiello (2013) have written of the contribution of fieldwork to inequality. Hastrup (1992: 122) goes so far as to say that the activity of fieldwork “implies a degree of violence on the ethnographer’s part” insofar as “any scientific discourse must make claims to speak over and above the acts observed or heard”, and thus over and above the projects of the participants. This section attempts to respond to these questions, following a more procedural discussion of research ethics.

### ***Informed consent vs. ‘fruitful misunderstanding’***

It is possible to distinguish between two modes of ethics encountered during social science fieldwork. First, ethics as a bureaucratic procedure, involving standardised guidelines, proposals, assessments and committee meetings (the ethics of the academy), and second, ethics as a practice or lived experience, involving a complex web of partially obscured exchanges, expectations and misunderstandings (the ethics of the fieldsite). While one of the objectives of the former mode of ethics is to prepare the researcher for the latter, there remains an inevitable gap between the two, in which considerable ambiguity resides (Punch 1985; Silverman 1997).

Prior to my arrival in the market, I devised a set of ethical procedures covering access, incentives, consent, risk, confidentiality and feedback, which were cleared by the relevant departmental and governmental bodies (the DEV ethics committee at UEA and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology). After locating suitable times and places to enable me to provide people with a meaningful introduction, I presented myself as a researcher (*omunoonyereza*) who was interested in the social organisation and history of the market. For those that were still present after this introduction,<sup>35</sup> I

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<sup>35</sup> Just as I modified my movements in the market in order to encourage participation, people modified theirs in order to avoid it. In one case, a produce vendor stated that they would like to participate in an interview, but that they couldn’t possibly leave their stall. As I turned to talk to one of their neighbours I noticed them walk away from their stall at pace - a definitive, non-verbal expression of refusal.

outlined what participation in the research would involve (interviews, observations), the options for participation (participation in interviews and/or or observations, non-participation), and subsequent rights to anonymity and withdrawal, assisted by Mable or Douglas.

After this initial introduction, three groups of people presented themselves: *i*) those that gave consent to participate; *ii*) those that delayed or evaded a definitive response (e.g. 'I am busy now; come another time'); and *iii*) those that declined participation. For the first group, an attempt was made to overcome some of the potential pressures of the initial interaction by planning the start of the research activity a few days' distance away, and scheduling a visit or phone call by the research assistant before this time, in order to recap the exercise and give people another opportunity to decline participation without me being present. In this way, the research assistants acted as ethical intermediaries during the early stages of fieldwork, and approached informed consent as a process rather than one-off event. The second group were approached again at a later date (usually after they had had more opportunity to observe my presence in the market), and the third group were not contacted again, although some did volunteer to participate later. Verbal consent was obtained again immediately prior to the interview or period of observation. People who subsequently entered the spaces and scenarios in which I was a participant observer (and who I felt could contribute to a particular case) were approached individually and asked for their consent. All non-consenting persons were omitted from my field notes.<sup>36</sup> All names have been anonymised in the thesis, although people's professions and ages are provided to provide an indication of their socio-spatial position in the market, and the historicity of their experiences.

Although no one under the age of 16 was included in the study, a few participants may be classed as 'vulnerable,' due to their permanent residence in the market and fairly frequent use of alcohol. Particular care was taken when seeking the consent of such people, for example by approaching them during the morning, giving them time to respond, asking other participants to describe their experiences of participation to them in their own words, and

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<sup>36</sup> There were only two cases of people refusing participation in and around areas in which I was a participant observer, and they were both content for me to continue observing others.

discussing the admissibility of the consent obtained with the RAs. A small number of additional people approached me to request that I interview them, which I generally did to express gratitude for the offer, and conscious of the bad feeling that could be created by a public refusal.

Christian Lund (2014: 6) describes a similar situation during his fieldwork in Niger. He explains taking advantage of an “unanticipated boon of ‘free’ information,” while his participants benefitted from the opportunity to talk to him “on the off chance that their [land] grievance might be heard,” and with “certainty that it would be seen.” He attributes such exchanges to an ‘ethics of fruitful misunderstanding,’ through which both researcher and researched knowingly (though not maliciously) interpret the research process in line with their own interests. This practice was certainly in evidence in Nakasero, for example, in the case of the leaders depicting me as a redevelopment agent.<sup>37</sup> More generally, however, people saw the research process as a somewhat exotic opportunity in which to insert themselves, which brought benefits to some but not to others.

### ***A ‘token of appreciation’ vs. an ethical obligation***

Financial incentives are generally discouraged in the social sciences, insofar as they are seen to constitute a form of coercion (ESRC 2010; Homan 1991). Participants in Nakasero were told that they would receive no financial compensation in return for their participation in the study. However, soft drinks were offered during afternoon interviews, and food offered (to a maximum cost of US\$ 5,000/US\$ 2) for those that took place over lunchtime as a ‘token of appreciation’ (ESRC 2010). Nevertheless, people requested various other forms of financial assistance during the early stages of fieldwork. I came to realise that such requests did not come from a misunderstanding of the consent procedures (the ethics of the academy), but rather from the gap between these procedures and the workings of relationships in the market (the ethics of the fieldsite). While the principle of non-reciprocation enshrined in the procedures was permissible during my initial interactions, when no obligations had been made and no favours

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<sup>37</sup> As another example: I once attended the training of Nakasero market netball team and was taken aback by the warm welcome I received. I later heard that the coach had told the players to expect the attendance of a ‘talent scout’ from overseas.

exchanged, it became problematic as I became more integrated into the social fabric of the market through spending time and developing relationships with people. As Simone (2014: 18) observes, a practice such as an engaged conversation or interview is more than a particular 'technique' or way of doing something "for it entails obligations to others who have also 'practiced'". The idea that such obligations could somehow be defined, delimited and controlled prior to the commencement of a particular interaction or relationship was not familiar to people in Nakasero.

Scherz (2014: 2) has written that strategies of self-making in Buganda involve 'creating and using networks (which are often hierarchal) to secure support (which is often material).' In this context, the better off 'have a moral obligation to take on clients' (ibid.: 2). Part of my strategy for managing my own obligations was to avoid invocations of wealth, and to reiterate my status as a 'student' researcher (a category familiar to a number of people in the market) as distinct from a member of the salariat.<sup>38</sup> In the end, I generally refused individual requests for assistance, but contributed to collective endeavours, such as collections for weddings, burials, medical fees and bail, in line with the contributions of 'high earners' in the market. I rationalised this as a compromise between the ethical world of the university and that of the market, which would not cause significant disruption to either. Of course, the task of conceptualising a single mode of ethical engagement with a large and diverse group of people is an impossible one. However, one advantage that the ethnographer has in reconciling the ethical 'gap' between the academy and the fieldsite is that of *time*. While official ethical procedures tend to advocate a position of 'no harm,' based on the typically brief interaction between researcher and participant in the medical sciences, ethnography allows for the gradual construction of an ethical position through the iterative process of interpreting and responding to the requests of one's participants. In this way, I was able to make decisions, to seek feedback on these decisions through the

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<sup>38</sup> This does not excuse the state of my trousers. Indeed, criticisms of my appearance were arguably really about my perceived failure to conform to the role of a prosperous patron in the market. Chabal & Daloz (1999: 42) assert that the decision "not to display wealth opulently" in many African societies is tantamount to "an admission of collective low self-esteem."

enquiries of the RAs and various channels of gossip in the market, and to use this feedback to inform future decisions.<sup>39</sup>

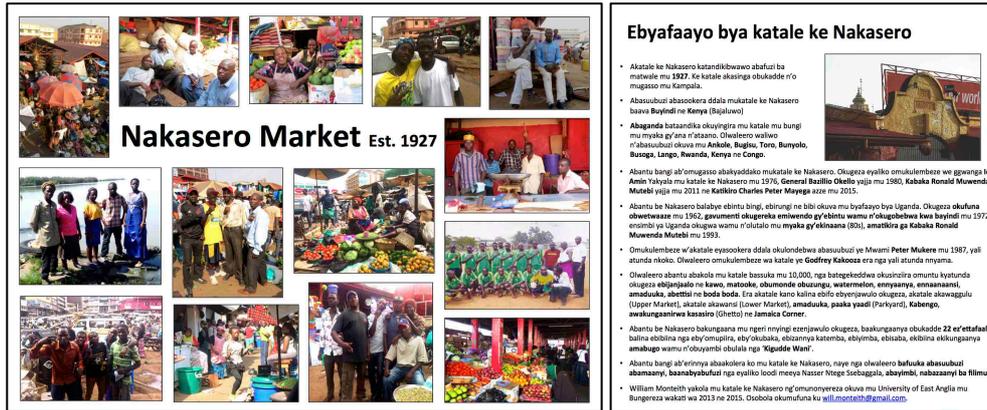
### ***Dissemination where 'possible' vs. prolonged engagement***

The act of coming back is a powerful one in Kampala, where researchers and NGO staff are notoriously transient, and friends and relatives leave for Europe, North America and increasingly the Arab Gulf States for indefinite lengths of time (Twesigye 2014). During my last months in the market, a number of people asked me “When are you coming back?” They had asked the same question previously when I returned to the UK briefly at Christmas, but on that occasion I was able to give a definitive answer. My vague response of “Soon I hope” was broadly consistent with institutional ethical guidelines on feedback, which advise researchers to disseminate their findings to participants where ‘appropriate’ and ‘possible’ (ESRC 2010), conditions that are often undermined by time and funding constraints. However, this was unsatisfactory; I was leaving indefinitely, without having reciprocated in a meaningful way.

After returning to the UK, I successfully applied to the British Institute in East Africa (BIEA) for funding to go back to Kampala. I returned to the market in April 2015 to present a short history of Nakasero, based on life history interviews, archival and grey material, accompanied by a photo collage of images of the market (see Plate 2.1). I disseminated 200 laminated versions of the history and collage (in English and Luganda) and organised small groups to discuss and critique their content. The idea behind this was to generate research outputs with less ‘violent’ levels of abstraction than the thesis that could be of greater interest to people in Nakasero. The materials were well received; the laminated copies were displayed in prominent places in people’s homes and stalls and several people remarked that they had learned something new about their place of work. The activities also prompted previously reluctant members of the market leadership to request their own discussion.

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<sup>39</sup> After the arrest of one member of Jamaica corner (see Chapter 7), I learned that its leaders had met to discuss the situation, and that one person suggested asking whether I could post the remand fee. The group eventually decided to run their usual collection in the market and to inform me of the situation after it was up and running. In this way, my contribution came through an existing channel in the market, rather than bypassing or replacing this channel.



**Plate 2.1** Copies of the market history and collage presented to participants in Nakasero

I also distributed drafts off some chapters from the thesis as part of an attempt both to familiarise participants with the ultimate 'product' of the research process and to provoke discussion and critique of its content.<sup>40</sup> While the historical chapters were reduced to a summary, I presented a full draft of Chapter 3, "Twenty-four hours in Nakasero", to the five participants whose interactions it describes, Alan Sserwanda, Frank Motovu, Margaret Abuya, Stephen Kalule and George Mirembe.<sup>41</sup> I gave copies of the written draft to the four of them that were comfortable reading in English, and presented a verbal summary to the fifth, translated with the help of Mable.

There was a general pattern to their feedback. First, they all began by drawing attention to factual errors, generally relating to dates, distances, and the spelling of places and relatives; for example, Margaret began by stating, "William, you have many corrections!" Second, they reflected positively on its detail: "it is very fine, you have written very well and understood!"; "it is clear" and "you give a lot of detail".<sup>42</sup> Third, and in different ways, they appeared slightly bemused by the presentation of the material. George said that the events I had chosen to include, particularly those relating to football, were 'funny' (in both senses of the word); Margaret said that she had not expected Alex to figure so heavily in her 'story;' and Alex asked why I had not included any photos of him.

<sup>40</sup> Duneier et al. (2014: 269) write that "the greatest and often only recompense the ethnographer can give the informant is to try, to the extent of his or her limited ability, to get the story right."

<sup>41</sup> Interviews on 18/04/2015 (Luganda), 18/04/2014, 23/04/2015, 05/05/2015 and 23/04/2015 respectively

<sup>42</sup> Quotes from Frank, George and Stephen respectively

Finally, after reflecting on his experience, George summarised his view of the value of the chapter in relation to other representations of Nakasero and Uganda:

“In my view, people in England don’t care about Uganda, unless they are thinking about a place for travelling, because it is labelled ‘Pearl of Africa.’ At least they can hear about our lives here, because it’s not easy to do what we do here. They don’t come here [Nakasero]... at least now they can know they can come to the market and no one will beat you, people here are friendly and that they can be with us, not only in the *Serenas* [executive hotels]... Even Rio Ferdinand [a footballer, previously of Manchester United] has invested in projects in Kampala – even if you don’t meet him, you can feel proud, you know he came to our country, that he cares for our country. You know, God blesses you, he gives you money so you can help others, not to sit on it.”

His testimony draws upon notions of assistance and obligation that underpin day-to-day life in Nakasero. It invites researchers to use their resources and findings in ways that challenge dominant representations and encourage acts of ‘care’. Prolonged engagement (engagement beyond the fieldwork period) may be considered of ethical value insofar as it maintains the channels through which such expectations can be expressed and reflected upon. Although a certain violence of abstraction is inevitable in any PhD thesis, the revisit enabled people in Nakasero to know and to speak about my project, and allowed me to demonstrate an investment in the projects of others.

## **Conclusions**

This challenge set at the beginning of the chapter was to anchor the thesis in the ‘processes of its production,’ providing a context against which to situate the analysis that follows. A number of these processes have been described together with their tensions and limitations. Significant among these limitations were the researcher’s positionality and entry into Nakasero, which provided greater ethnographic access to young men in the market. Interviews, surveys and records were also incorporated into the methodology in an attempt to widen the analysis and shed light on the historical development of social practices. The following chapters have been shaped by these methods in different ways. Chapters 3 and 7 combine observations and narrative

accounts in order to situate the reader in the contemporary market, while Chapters 4, 5 and 6 draw upon life history interviews, records and grey literature in order to trace its development through history.

### Chapter 3: Twenty-Four Hours in Nakasero Market

“In the market there is room, a niche, for everyone; there is always a place on the fair-ground for him and always some mediator or other to link him with all the others.”

(Sinha 1968: 2)

As the sun rises in Kampala, it sheds light on a variety of activities and exchanges that began under the darkness of the previous night. Just south of Kampala Road, among high-rise business premises, shopping arcades and construction sites, young men offload large sacks of carrots, onions and potatoes from trucks arriving from the far east (Mbale) and west (Kisoro) of Uganda. Half-bent under their weight, the men carry the sacks down the narrow pathways between colourful fruit and vegetable displays, shouting ‘*fasi fasi!*’ (‘space, space!’) as they pass waitresses carrying steaming cups of lemongrass tea. They deliver the sacks to wholesalers engaged in animated exchanges with early-morning customers negotiating on behalf of restaurants and hotels. All around them the roads swell with vehicles transporting people to the nearby taxi park.<sup>1</sup> Soon, the carriers’ work will be done and they will be free to converse and drink tea on the edges of the market. As they rest, others will arrive to start their day’s work in Nakasero.

This chapter provides an introduction to day-to-day life in Nakasero market. It seeks to understand the production of social and material life in the market through the movements and interactions of five different people, connected by the work of Alex Sserwanda, a rubbish collector in the market.<sup>2</sup> While much of the ethnographic scholarship on urban Africa focuses on the social and moral worlds of discrete constituents, such as the young male ‘hustler’ (Frankland 2007; Jones 2010; Weiss 2002) or the female market vendor (Clark 1994; Kapchan 1996; Musisi 1995), this chapter focuses on the interactions between different groups of people, and the social and moral forms that give these interactions meaning and force.

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<sup>1</sup> Kampala has a daytime population of approximately 4.5 million and a night-time population of 1.5 million. The majority of people working in Nakasero depart the city in the evening.

<sup>2</sup> The particular day covered is Sunday 15/06/2014, although the majority of the interactions described here take place on a daily basis.

As Alex makes his rounds in the market, he engages in a number of interactions through which information, goods and labour are exchanged. I argue that these interactions are interpreted and reproduced through an assemblage of ideas drawn from: *i*) material imperatives of survival and accumulation, *ii*) moral notions of *heart* and redistribution, and *iii*) collective memories of the past. While these assemblages do little to challenge stark socio-economic inequalities in Nakasero, they situate these differences within the context of a functioning market society, connecting the work of different groups of people and providing meaning to their interactions.

### **Dawn: waking up on Market Street**

Alex Sserwanda spends the night in Nakasero market sleeping on cardboard packaging emblazoned with the logos of 'Tru-Cape Pears' and 'Gadco Oranges.' He is woken in the doorway of a hardware shop on Market Street (see Plate 3.1) by Frank Motovu, who arrives to open the shop at around 06:00. It is already light and the road is alive with activity as day-vendors arrive to set out their produce on cloths and wooden stalls. Wearing a stained linen shirt, torn brown trousers and plastic flip-flops, Alex gets up to acknowledge Frank's arrival before crossing the road to the Ghetto where a group of men are resting among wooden crates and wheelbarrows (see Map 3.1).

Different areas of the market are named after the different populations and activities that characterise them. The Ghetto is the area adjacent to the rubbish dump where the men who collect rubbish in the market socialise and rest. Its name is a reference to the struggle (*ensiitaano*) through which men in the area make a living.<sup>3</sup> Like 'Jamaica corner' in Nakasero and 'Benghazi' in nearby Kisekka market, it invokes a certain style that renders the space more accessible to young men.<sup>4</sup> The Ghetto is the only area of Nakasero where smoking (tobacco and marijuana) and drinking (cane spirit) take place. The sweet and putrid scent of rotting fruit and vegetables intensifies as the rubbish dump grows and the heat rises over the course of the day. Like most of the men here, Alex makes a living transporting rubbish to the dump from different

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<sup>3</sup> The English term 'struggle' is embossed on the handles of wooden wheelbarrows in the market.

<sup>4</sup> Brad Weiss (2002) notes that such styles simultaneously invoke a connection to a global identity (and related notion of masculinity), and an ambivalence about this connection.

areas of the market, drinking in-between shifts to dull the smell of the debris.<sup>5</sup> His job is a common entry point for men arriving in the market with no significant social or economic capital, but a willingness to engage in demanding forms of physical labour. It provides an average daily income of US\$ 11,000 (\$3.87 USD), varying according to the number of established customers. Together with the *fasi-fasi* (carry)<sup>6</sup> and *kaveera* (plastic bag) boys,<sup>7</sup> the men in the Ghetto are the most mobile group in Nakasero.



**Plate 3.1.** Nakasero market at dawn, looking east down Market Street: the market shops are visible on the right of the picture, the open Parkyard on the left, and the Upper Stalls at the back

Alex arrived in Nakasero in 2012. An orphan, he was brought up by his grandparents in Rukungiri district in Western Uganda. He dropped out of primary school in order to help them cultivate a small piece of land in the village. Three quarters of the men in the Ghetto are without a secondary school qualification (see Table 1.1). At the age of 20, Alex left the village for Kampala in search of work and income. He chose Nakasero because it was known to be a ‘very rich market’ in the city.<sup>8</sup> Initially struggling to find a way in, he survived on donations from fruit and vegetable vendors, posing as a

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<sup>5</sup> Rubbish collectors without written contracts like Alex perform more than half of all waste collection activities in the Global South (UN Habitat 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Young men who transport crates and boxes of produce across the market.

<sup>7</sup> Boys and young men who sell plastic bags in the market and offer to carry customers’ shopping.

<sup>8</sup> The quotes provided here all originate from an interview with Alex in Luganda on 15/06/2014, unless otherwise stated.

farmer collecting for his pigs. Alex describes being beaten and chased away by other men in the Ghetto during this period: a common experience for young men entering the market without prior contacts or capital. Eventually, Alex was employed by a female stall vendor who paid him USh 500 (£0.11) to carry her rubbish to the dump everyday. Seeing that he could do the job ‘well’ and for a ‘cheap’ price, her neighbours started to employ him and he built up a regular base of six clients. Alex spent some of these earnings on tobacco, which he shared with other men in the Ghetto, gaining their acceptance in the process. He says he first made friends with ‘big men’ – literally, men of a bigger physical stature – in order to guarantee his safety in the market. Describing his relationship with Nakasero, says he ‘loves’ it ‘very much’ because it ‘feeds’ him (*kekandiisa*) and has enabled him to save money and purchase livestock for his family in Rukungiri.<sup>9</sup>

Table 1.1 Survey results by market area<sup>10</sup>

Area of market	Avg. daily profit (USh)	Avg. time in market (years)	Median age	% Male	% Ganda	% Completed secondary (S4) education	% Married	% Entry facilitated by family <sup>11</sup>
Shops	149,000	7.4	35	55	94	93	61	52
Upper stalls	48,000	11	39	13	63	57	50	55
Lower stalls	32,000	10.7	38	73	78	49	63	58
Parkyard	23,000	5.9	31	31	72	49	59	44
Kabengo	24,000	4.9	27	60	80	33	40	13
Ghetto <sup>12</sup>	11,000	1.2	20	100	43	26	9	20

Alex’s residence in the market exposes him to aspects of the Ugandan legal system largely avoided by day vendors. Since 2012, he has been arrested on multiple occasions for offences under the Vagrancy Act (1824), which is used to remove people viewed as ‘unproductive’ from the city centre after dark. Paradoxically, Alex has also been arrested for working in the market, since the Kampala City Council Authority (and its employees) have legal jurisdiction over the cleaning of public places in the city. After their arrest, detainees in

<sup>9</sup> Ferguson (1999) writes of the role of livestock in enabling people to maintain a symbolic presence in the village while working in town.

<sup>10</sup> Author’s survey, conducted May 2014 (n = 229, response rate = 97%)

<sup>11</sup> These numbers reflect the response ‘family’ to the question “how did you enter the market?”

<sup>12</sup> Including *kaveera* & *fasi-fasi* boys who work around the Ghetto.

Kampala are taken to prison farm facilities such as Luzira where they are retained on recurrent cycles of remand until a guarantor offers to post bail.<sup>13</sup> Alex's most recent arrest ended at Nakasero Police Post, when one of his employers secured his release with a loaned payment of US\$ 15,000 (\$5.20). As a 'low income' worker, Alex hasn't been able to maintain payments for a room in Kampala. However he says that Frank's shop offers him a safe place to sleep at night.

Sitting in front of his laptop in his shop across the street, Frank describes his feelings on finding Alex and others in the doorway each morning: "I feel sorry because I know they are poor people [...] they give my shop security at night and I know they are not thieves".<sup>14</sup> Brought up in Kampala, Frank began working for one of his mother's four businesses in Nakasero in 2010 while studying for a degree in microfinance.<sup>15</sup> His entry into the market was eased both by his family connections and the entry barriers that protect the shops from the more intense forms of competition present in other areas of the market. However, his rapid ascent was seen to contravene local processes of advancement in Nakasero, and other vendors were initially reluctant to greet him: "When elder shop owners see a young person working in a shop like me, they feel bad, they expect that you have to be in the market for thirty years for that." There is an expectation that socioeconomic progression in Nakasero requires a certain investment of time, irrelevant of a person's prior contacts or capital.

After opening the store in the morning, Frank fields calls from customers, suppliers and associates, including his mother who frequently travels to China and Dubai in search of new exporters. He wears a lightly coloured linen shirt, black trousers and shiny black shoes – the uniform of 'serious' (*siriyaasi*) men of business in Nakasero. Hardware was first introduced into market shops in the 1990s, having been previously been the reserve of Indian businesses on adjacent streets. Business here takes place at a more relaxed pace than in other

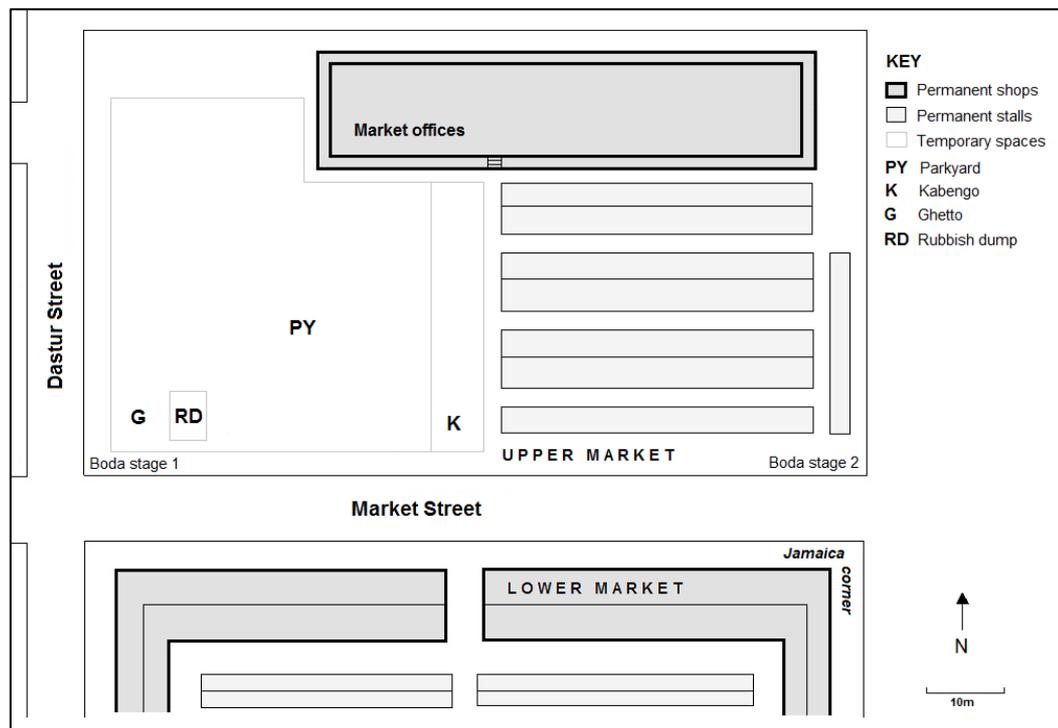
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<sup>13</sup> Of Uganda's 32,000 prisoners in 2010, 19,500 (61%) were on remand, where most will remain for a number of years. The official capacity of Uganda's prisons is just 13,000 (IWPR 2010).

<sup>14</sup> His testimony adds weight to the historical understanding that rough sleepers contribute to public security through their provision of 'eyes on the street' (Jacobs 1961; Whyte 1943).

<sup>15</sup> Over 50% of people working in the shops in Nakasero have a qualification from tertiary education (author's survey, June 2014).

areas of the market as goods are non-perishable and profits do not require large numbers of transactions.



**Map 3.1** Upper Nakasero market, central Kampala

Recalling his early memories of the market, Frank describes taking part in an overnight protest in 2008. He attended with his mother and two sisters, following the leaking of a KCC report revealing plans to sell off the market.<sup>16</sup> Emphasising the ‘excitement’ of the event, he concedes that it wasn’t until he “grew up” that he understood why his mother had taken him. The protest was an important act in ‘defence’ of Nakasero; a place that has since become fundamental to his life; “everything I eat, I drink, I use, it comes from Nakasero Market.”<sup>17</sup> His business has since enabled him to move into a 2-bedroom house with his wife in Kitende, following their marriage at St Mary’s Catholic church in 2013.

When describing other people in Nakasero, Frank differentiates between ‘high’- and ‘low earners’, a common distinction in the market. While the former are understood to be well educated and to sell ‘many items’ in covered shops and stalls, the latter are seen as largely uneducated (‘without maths and

<sup>16</sup> The protest is described in detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>17</sup> The quotes provided here all originate from an interview with Frank on 16/06/2014, unless otherwise stated.

English'), and capable only of 'small' business in the open areas of the market. These two categories of person are also invoked through the binaries of big/small (*nene/tono*) and known/unknown (*amandyikidwa/atamandyikidwa*). Different people are also associated with different spaces and goods. For example, while 'high earners' are seen to sell 'first class' produce from permanent shops and stalls, 'low earners' are understood to sell 'third class' produce from the open areas of the market. As a vendor in the Upper Stalls explained: "We sell things which are first class; if I get lower class things I can give them to [Alex]."<sup>18</sup> For his part, Frank stresses the importance of supporting low earners by offering them work and advice, on the understanding that "the market is supposed to be for poor people". He also notes the practical importance of such support in deterring people from 'pickpocketing' and 'stealing'.<sup>19</sup>

On first inspection, Alex and Frank's daily interaction represents a simple exchange that is of practical benefit to both men: Alex enjoys the relative shelter of a shop veranda at night while Frank receives security for his shop. However, both men understand this interaction with reference to moral notions that transcend their individual roles in the market. First, they invoke an idea of the market as a shared resource or social institution that is capable of providing for all those that live and work there. As such, it is important to negotiate and defend one's position as a 'market person'; in Alex's case through gifts, labour and physical confrontations. Second, they suggest that the proper functioning of the market is underpinned by an ethic of reciprocal obligation, which compels 'high earners' such as Frank, to offer work and support to 'low earners,' such as Alex. This ethic is closely related to that of *omutima omuyambi* ('having a heart for helping others'), which has a history in Ganda social practice (Scherz, 2014). Third, they describe notions of social affinity cultivated in opposition to the institutions of the Ugandan state, such as the police and city council, and passed down between generations during communal protests and events.

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<sup>18</sup> Male produce vendor, upper market stalls, 18/04/2015.

<sup>19</sup> Another shopkeeper explained: "I want the thieves to be working so they are not stealing from me [and] the boxers to work so they are not boxing me!" (30/04/2014).

### **Morning: cleaning in the Upper Stalls**

Alex leaves the Ghetto at around 09:00 and walks through the Parkyard and Kabengo to oldest area of the market, the Upper Stalls. The early wholesale trade has subsided, giving way to retail trade and the arrival of domestic customers. The Upper Stalls is home to the relatives of the first Kenyan Jaluo traders in Nakasero working in booths constructed from wood and corrugated iron. The majority of people here are women, sitting in pairs in front of colourful displays of fruit and vegetables – apples, oranges, grapes, pears – originating from as far afield as Egypt and South Africa. The stalls are decorated with newspaper clippings and pictures of Monsignor Aloysius Ngobya,<sup>20</sup> Kabaka Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II,<sup>21</sup> and Wayne Rooney.<sup>22</sup> CBS Radio Buganda is playing in the background and a faint scent of spice hangs in the air.

The majority of customers in the upper market originate from outside Uganda. Sudanese, Chinese and first- and second-generation Indian migrants purchase produce in kilograms, rather than the ‘heaps’ preferred in the open areas of the market. Higher rents mean that this is generally the most expensive area of the market to purchase goods, so vendors emphasise the quality and diversity of the produce on offer. Social and commercial interactions are regulated by a number of common principles. For example, immediate neighbours are prohibited from selling the same goods as one another. As such, there is generally a rotation of four categories of goods: domestic fruit, domestic vegetables, imported fruit and imported vegetables. Different categories of customer are associated with different categories of goods, leading vendors to state: “I am selling for the Indians” or “these things are for the Chinese”.

There is a common understanding that the customer is the active agent (or ‘King’) in the market. Once a customer has shown interest in another vendor’s goods, even if only by standing in front of their stall, no other vendor is allowed to address them until they have actively broken off negotiations by physically leaving the area around the stall. To do otherwise is to violate “the firmest and most universal convention” of the market (Clark, 1994: 129), and likely to lead

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<sup>20</sup> A former Catholic priest, Ngobya is the leader of a religious sect in Uganda called the Faith of Unity and Oneness, which is described in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>21</sup> The current king of the Buganda kingdom

<sup>22</sup> A football player in the English Premier League

to an accusation of 'stealing' other people's customers.<sup>23</sup> Taken together, these understandings serve to preserve the bargaining position of vendors while furthering certain forms of solidarity and reducing the possibility of conflict. As such, while the spatial organisation of Nakasero market broadly adheres to a commercial logic, for example through the clustering of 'first class' goods in the Upper Market, the organisation of goods and relationships within many of these areas reflects an understanding of the market as a social and moral space.

Passing customers are called with the 'tongue' (*olulimi*, also 'language').<sup>24</sup> Female vendors use gentle but persuasive language that invokes relations of kin and patronage, such as 'brother,' 'sister,' 'mama,' 'boss' and 'master,' observed in other African market settings (Kapchan 1996; Musisi 1995; Pietilä 2007). They also engage in gender politics by emphasising male household obligations through prompts such as 'for madam!' or 'for the kids!' An elder female vendor likened her customers to women (*abakazi*) who she feared becoming 'divorced' or 'separated' from (*okwawukana*) as a result of their contact with hawkers on the outskirts of the market.<sup>25</sup> Idioms of kinship, marriage and 'divorce' reflect vendors' attempts to 'domesticate' the marketplace and render it readable (and profitable) through appeals to the personal (Pietilä 2007). However, this process can also engender feelings of envy and jealousy, for example on the occasion of a customer's perceived elopement.

Women working in the upper market call out to Alex as he makes his way down the aisle between the first rows of stalls, '*Alex jangu*,' ('Alex come') '*Kasasilo jangu*,' ('rubbish come'). His first job is for Margaret Abuya, a young Kenyan woman who runs a family produce business at the end of the row. Margaret greets Alex and he then begins sweeping the debris behind her stall into two piles, separating rubbish for the dump from salvageable 'second' or third class' produce that can be sold in the Ghetto. As he sweeps, Margaret passes a box of grapes to an Indian customer, and asks him why he did not visit her after temple the preceding Sunday.

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<sup>23</sup> Researching Kampala's night markets, Musisi observes the use of disguised language in the regulation of such situations, including metaphors such as 'step not in my throat' (do not take my customer) (1995: 133).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with spice vendor, lower stalls (10/11/2013)

<sup>25</sup> Interview with female produce vendor, lower stalls (01/11/2013)

Margaret's parents moved to Uganda from Nyanza, Kenya, in the 1950s, where her father worked for *British American Tobacco* before saving enough money to start a business in Nakasero. Born in Kampala, Margaret was sent with her two sisters to Nyanza, Kenya, to attend school. She eventually returned to Kampala in 2011 to enrol in a degree course in Computer Engineering at Mukono Christian University, which she completed while helping her mother out with the stall on Sundays.<sup>26</sup> The majority of women in Nakasero enter the market as apprentices in shops and stalls; a process that involves familiarisation with the rules and rituals described above.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the work of carrying, bag vending and rubbish collecting, this work is normally grounded in a fixed space in the market. Both male and female vendors made links between mobility and the 'confusion' of women (seen above as a precursor to divorce or separation). Furthermore, they noted that mobile jobs generally require 'strength' and involve exposure to forms of dirt that would be damaging to a woman's reputation. Pietilä (2007) observes in Kilimanjaro markets the expectation that good men should be 'hotter' and more prone to movement than women, who are expected to be 'colder' and more settled. Excessive physical movement on the part of women is thought to indicate sexual and moral laxity.

Of the few women working in jobs involving movement or animal waste, such as hawking and live chicken vending respectively, the vast majority were either unmarried, or working with their husbands. Similarly, those working in the open areas of the market generally seen to be more damaging to a woman's reputation were more likely to be unmarried and less likely to have entered the market through family connections (see Table 1.1). A male vendor in the Parkyard noted: "Women here, they are stronger than other [non-market] women; they can become aggressive, they don't fear men."<sup>28</sup> As such, it could be said that Nakasero offered a space for the 'transition' of gendered norms of behaviour (Kapchan 1996). However, women were also frequently sanctioned through the invocation of these norms. For example, a young Mugisu woman

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<sup>26</sup> Margaret's quotes originate from an interview conducted on 23/04/14.

<sup>27</sup> On requesting a space in the market in May 2014, a (female) research assistant was advised by vendors to first seek work as an apprentice.

<sup>28</sup> Male Parkyard vendor (38), 05/06/2014. Nyanzi et al. (2005: 13) note that market trading in Southwest Uganda earns women masculine names such as '*kiwagi*,' characterised as "independent, rebellious and insubordinate".

working in the Parkyard area of the market described being constantly accused by her female neighbours of being a 'husband snatcher' during her first months in Nakasero.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, when rules on customers were transgressed, vendors often attacked the physical attributes of their neighbours, stating for example: "you are a fish [*ekyenyanja*] that doesn't bathe", "... customers want me; they don't want your rotten figure [*ffiga vundu*]."<sup>30</sup> Finally, female vendors were frequently accused of engaging in witchcraft – often, but not always by other women – particularly during periods of business success.<sup>31</sup> Such accusations served to place limits on individual accumulation, functioning as what Geschiere (1997) terms the 'shadow side' of kinship, or the stick enforcing the redistributive ethic of *omutima omuyambi*. Labels such as those of the 'husband snatcher,' the 'dirty' vendor and the 'witch' (*omulogo*) invoke a moral transgression that rationalises the social and economic isolation of the accused, rendering them 'nonrelational persons' (Englund 1995). As such, they were used both as weapons in personal disputes and tools in broader debates on the social and moral organisation of the market.

For her part, Margaret recalls being 'teased' during her initial period in the market, but like Frank, was spared more substantial forms of attack by virtue of her family connections in Nakasero. Such teasing subsided after she had mastered Luganda, which she did fairly quickly with the assistance of friends and family. Her mother gave her a Luganda name, *Namuddu*, after the nurse that delivered her, in order to assist her integration. Margaret nearly left Nakasero in 2012 after being exposed to police tear gas on a day in which opposition leaders visited the market.<sup>32</sup> A number of people provided similar accounts of having 'eaten' tear gas, which often drifts over the market in the

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with female produce vendor, Parkyard (03/05/2014). She summarised the experience: "When you are a newcomer (*mupya*) people bully you, but now people fear me".

<sup>30</sup> Observed following an event in which an elder vendor was perceived to have taken the customer of a younger neighbour. Such calls were accompanied by provocative body movements such as hip rotations; performances that encouraged the laughter of those gathered around.

<sup>31</sup> This gendered dimension of the experiences of new-entrants in Nakasero is supported by the records of the market disciplinary committee (2009-2012) in which 15 out of 22 people (68%) accused of fighting or using threatening language were men, and 24 out of 24 people (100%) accused of witchcraft or rumour mongering were women (Monteith 2014b).

<sup>32</sup> NTV (2012) "Police teargas opposition leaders", 21/05/2012 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3MoseWcFmU>, accessed 20/04/2015)

aftermath of nearby protests and political rallies.<sup>33</sup> Police operations had become so commonplace that vendors had developed systemised responses to tear gas exposure, such as the sharing of water and towels, and the allocation of groups of men to transport injured persons to the sheltered lower market.<sup>34</sup> After her own experience, Margaret vowed never to work in Nakasero again, but later reconsidered following reassurances from her family.

Reflecting on what Nakasero means to her, Margaret says she feels ‘proud’ to work in the same place as her parents, and that people often approach her to ask after them. Her stall is a registered business that raises a profit of between 60-100,000 USh (£14-23) a day, qualifying her as a ‘high earner,’ based on Frank’s dichotomy. In addition to a base of regular market customers, she also supplies produce to a chain of restaurants in Kampala, and to safari lodges in two of Uganda’s national parks. Fulfilling these orders requires access to transport (a company vehicle) and flexible credit facilities from suppliers, resources that only established stallholders are able to draw upon.<sup>35</sup> She is also supported by her husband, who supplies produce from Kenya. Also JaLuo, he attended the same Pentecostal church as Margaret in Kampala, where they married in 2012.

Discussing Alex’s work in the market, Margaret says she employs him because he is ‘cheap’ and ‘dependable.’ She adds that the work is ‘hard’ and “these people, they are trying to survive”, drawing upon similar notions of livelihood and support to those invoked by Frank. Customers in the upper market also invoke notions of ‘support’ and ‘promotion’ when describing their decision to employ *kaveera* boys to carry their shopping for them.<sup>36</sup> In addition to a daily payment of between USh 1,000-2,000 (negotiated according to the amount of work to be done), Margaret also supports Alex in other, unspecified ways. For

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<sup>33</sup> Interviews with male grasshopper vendor (11/10/2013), male fruit vendor (16/10/2013), female fruit vendor (19/06/2014), and male chicken slaughterer (17/12/2013)

<sup>34</sup> Interviews with male chicken slaughterer (17/12/2013), female fruit vendor (19/06/2014)

<sup>35</sup> Transport constitutes the most significant expense of marketing in Uganda. Fulfilling orders for hotels and lodges usually requires an initial outlay of over USh 1 million (\$333); capital that very few market businesses possess. Suppliers will only extend such credit lines to businesses with permanent premises (shops or stalls) and a history of successful repayments.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews conducted with male produce vendor in the Parkyard (29/11/2013) and female customer (16/06/2014) respectively.

example, she has previously secured his release from the local police post through payments to police officers.



**Plate 3.2** Margaret's mother (right) stands behind the family stall in 1980. The stall appears much the same today (photo courtesy of Margaret)

Margaret also stresses the importance of the labour conducted by Alex and his colleagues in the Ghetto for the cleanliness of the market, establishing a connection between their work and a larger project in the market in which many people are invested. By employing Alex, Margaret fulfils her obligation to keep the area around her stall free from dirt without carrying out this labour herself; labour that could cause damage to her reputation. When I asked one of Margaret's neighbours why she didn't do the work herself, she responded assertively: "Because we are women!"<sup>37</sup> The enforced cleaning of public spaces was a popular punishment of the market disciplinary committee (Monteith 2014). In this way, Margaret's employment of Alex enables her to navigate two important frameworks in the market; she shows *heart* by fulfilling a moral imperative to be a good patron and to 'feed others,' while simultaneously distancing herself from activities and debris that may undermine her status as a respected female vendor and 'high earner' in Nakasero.

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<sup>37</sup> Female produce vendor, Upper Stalls, 18/04/2015

### **Afternoon: customer calling in the Kabengo**

Alex works in the Upper Stalls until just before midday, transporting rubbish back to the dump in time for the arrival of the KCCA disposal truck. The departure of the truck marks the end of his morning's work. He purchases *katogo*<sup>38</sup> from a restaurant in the upper market for USh 1,000 (\$0.35) and heads back to the Ghetto, where other men sitting on wooden crates are taking tea and chapatti (USh 500, \$0.18). Lunchtime is the quietest period of the day in the market, animated only by the work of waitresses who carry hot, heavy plates of food from market restaurants to vendors in their shops and stalls. Women chat and read newspapers in their stalls, while men migrate to ludo and *omweso* tables on the outskirts of the market.<sup>39</sup> Two waitresses carry plates of beef (USh 5,000, \$1.70) and fish (4,000, \$1.40) to Margaret and Frank respectively, who take time to eat with their neighbours.

Returning with his *katogo*, Alex passes through the *Kabengo*, where he nods to acknowledge Stephen Kalule, a produce vendor selling coriander and spring onions from two plastic sacks on the edge of the market. The *Kabengo* is a thin corridor that lies between the Upper Stalls and the Parkyard, between the oldest, permanent area of the market and the newer, open area (see Map 3.1). This a location provides vendors with access to local customers shopping in the open areas of the market and international customers heading in and out of the stalls. People working in the area attribute its name to its geographical primacy, understanding it to mean 'slope', 'veranda,' and 'entrance'.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, vendors in the stalls describe it as a 'pain in the body' or 'stomach' – a metaphor for the role that it plays in separating them from their customers.<sup>41</sup> Official translations of *kabengo* as 'enlarged spleen' (Murphy 1972) suggest that the name originates from the complaints of people working outside the area and has been reinterpreted by those working within it.

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<sup>38</sup> Boiled *matooke* (green cooking banana) prepared with beans or offal.

<sup>39</sup> *Omweso* (or mweso) is a historical *mancala* ('count-and-capture') game played throughout Uganda, thought to have been introduced by the Bachwezi people of the ancient Bunyoro-kitara empire. It is played predominantly by elder men on a board consisting of 32 pits and 64 stones.

<sup>40</sup> Interviews with male *Kabengo* vendors (16/12/2013, 04/11/2013 and 29/11/2013, respectively)

<sup>41</sup> Interview with female produce vendor, upper stalls (07/05/2014)

Wearing a bright pink polo shirt, jeans and trainers, Stephen shares a plate of food (US\$ 4,000, \$1.40) with two of his neighbours. Vendors in the Kabengo are among the youngest in the market, with an average age of 27. However, unlike those in the Ghetto, many hold aspirations of returning to school to attain a secondary qualification (currently held by one third; see Table 1.1). Low levels of capital and high levels of competition mean that they remain low-earners relative to Frank and Margaret and their neighbours in the shops and stalls. Lacking access to permanent storage facilities,<sup>42</sup> vendors here purchase sacks of produce in the morning wholesale market that they sell on in loosely assembled heaps and bundles over the course of the day. Rather than paying rents for permanent facilities, they are charged a daily fee of US\$ 1,000 per person by the KCCA. The spatial organisation of the Kabengo reflects the municipal politics of the day; adhering strictly to the contours of the pavement during times of active KCCA operation and spreading far out into the road during periods of inactivity (for example, on Sundays and election days). Stephen explains: “KCCA is like electricity, they come [gestures with a rapid hand movement] and we move, they go [moves hand back] and we move back.” His metaphor is strengthened by the bright yellow uniforms worn by KCCA enforcement officers; a colour that is understood to invoke fear in hawkers.<sup>43</sup>

The absence of physical infrastructure in the Kabengo encourages the innovative use of space, allocated through processes of jostling and negotiation rather than formal contractual agreement (see Plate 3.3.). As one of Stephen’s neighbours explains: “We make our own market.”<sup>44</sup> Entry requires the consent of one’s neighbours, established through prolonged social engagement and the exchange of favours such as watching a person’s produce while they are away. This consent is usually established over an extended period while a prospective entrant is working as a *kaveera* vendor or apprentice nearby. However, it may be accelerated by non-market connections (e.g. family ties) and payments of money. New entrants generally begin selling in the road on the outside edge of the Kabengo, and gradually work their way inside (Plate 3.3). Selling on the road entails the risk of having stock confiscated by KCCA enforcement officers, who demand negotiated amounts of money for its return.

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<sup>42</sup> Storage constitutes another of Clark’s (1994) bases of power in African markets

<sup>43</sup> Interview with female drinks hawker (33), 05/11/2013, Luganda. Mobile vending is illegal under KCCA law.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with male Kabengo vendor, 14/02/2014



**Plate 3.3** Young men selling produce on the edge of the Kabengo as taxis pass by on Market St. The legal edge of the market (the pavement) is hidden beneath the sacks and chairs.

In the absence of allotted facilities, vendors demonstrate ownership of space through performances of social confidence, drawing upon registers of gestures unique to this particular area of the market. For example, many of the young men adopt martial identities through pseudonyms such as ‘Sergeant,’ ‘Soldier Boi,’ ‘Golola’ (a famous Ugandan boxer) and ‘Ogugu family’, a fictitious name for a kin group sharing a three-by-two metre space. These identities are constantly promoted and defended; for example, ‘Sergeant’ was more commonly referred to as Kasigiri (‘charcoal stove’), on account of his notorious temper. These performances are also used to attract customers. Vendors in the Kabengo use playful language delivered through combinations of speech, singing and rap. Different categories of customer receive different treatment. For example, elder Ugandan customers are addressed in respectful terms, such as *Nyabo* (‘Madam’), *Muzee*, (‘Elder’) ‘Sister,’ and ‘Brother,’ which mirror those used in the Upper Stalls. In contrast, younger customers – particularly those of the opposite sex – are met with calls such as ‘hey baby!’ ‘big arms!’ and ‘long time!’ The language itself is also adapted. For example, East Asian customers, receive calls of *Xiansheng!* *Huang gwa!* And *Cong!* (‘Mister’ ‘Cucumber’ and ‘Spring onion’) in Mandarin, and South Asian customers are greeted as *Bani!*

*Gajara!* And *Bhindi!* ('Boy',<sup>45</sup> 'Carrot', and 'Okra' in Hindi). Loose cultural references such as 'Jackie Chan!' and 'Salman Khan!' are also commonplace; anything to gain the attention of a potential customer.

Stephen and his neighbours occasionally address non-Luganda speakers with crude phrases such as *Muzee binnyo!* ('Mister [bad] teeth'), and *Mama kabina!* ('Mama ass'), provoking the laughter of their neighbours. Reflecting on his calls, Stephen explains that he often uses 'big' and 'stubborn words' in order to 'disturb' customers on their route through the market. Similarly, others emphasised the need to wake up 'sleeping' customers who would otherwise walk past them.<sup>46</sup> In this way, the spatial and economic position of the Kabengo has produced its own set of social practices distinct from those in other areas of the market. Stephen concedes that these practices would not be acceptable in the market stalls; the domain of their 'elders' (*abazeeyi*) in the market.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the Kabengo remains bound by a number of the principles and rules of the broader market; for example, vendors and customers are rebuked for using swearwords.<sup>48</sup> There is also a physical intimacy to vendor-customer interactions in this area of the market. What initially appears to be a tense confrontation – serious expressions, raised voices, physical gesturing – often reveals itself to be a spirited, pre-rehearsed ritual. For example, it is not uncommon to see male Indian customers using playful jabs, pushes and headlocks as they negotiate the price of garlic and coriander. Customers also receive names that play on their personal traits, for example 'Bruce Lee' for a Chinese customer known for his tough negotiating style.

Stephen was brought up in Luwero District, 40 miles from Kampala. He left school after senior three and moved to the capital to live with an older brother. At 17, he started working in a bookstore on a street adjacent to Nakasero,

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<sup>45</sup> One vendor explained that this is how Ugandan men used to be referred to by Indian businessmen in Uganda (as an infantilising refrain) so vendors in Nakasero decided to use it back (interview with male PY vendor, 06/05/2014).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with PY vendor, 06/05/2014

<sup>47</sup> The quotes provided here all originate from an interview with Stephen on 07/05/2014, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>48</sup> For example, I observed Robert, one of Stephen's neighbours, stating to an Indian customer in English: "You cannot curse, it is not good." The customer had been shouting at another boy for short-changing him. Robert reassured the customer that his accusation was valid but that it didn't excuse the use of swear words (02/05/2014).

occasionally picking up produce from the market for his boss. After several months, he decided to leave the job in order to try to sell *kaveera* in the market, fulfilling a desire to be self-employed. Stephen describes his initial months in the market as a “struggle to get known [*amandyikidwa*]”. Before deciding to employ a *kaveera* boy to carry their shopping, customers ask nearby vendors of their reputation in the market, of whether or not they are a ‘good boy’ (*omwana mulamu*). This period was particularly difficult for Stephen, who had to sleep in the market for a year after falling out with his brother.<sup>49</sup> He describes building relationships with vendors in the Kabengo by helping them with tasks such as carrying produce to their stalls, showing them that he was not a ‘bad boy’ (*mwana ekibi*) in the process. A number of young men in the market are concerned with asserting their status as a ‘good boy’ (*omwana mulamu*) as opposed to a *muyaye*.<sup>50</sup>

A ‘good boy’ is generally understood to be someone who uses their full family name as opposed to a pseudonym, abstains from crime, drugs and alcohol, and ‘speaks well’, by addressing people clearly and confidently in a register that is appropriate to their respectability and status. One customer in the market explained: “Low income workers have to behave so that they can get customers [through] customer care [and] speaking well.”<sup>51</sup> A common critique of younger members of the market by their older colleagues is that they don’t know how to ‘speak’ (*okwogera*). Stan Frankland (2007: 40) has noted an expectation for Ugandan youth to be “deferential, subservient and immune to the fashions of the West.” Success in the open areas of the market requires young people to ‘speak’ in multiple registers; to master the soft, deferential tones expected by customers and suppliers as well as the loud, self-confident performances anticipated by neighbours and competitors. It was with reference to this process of learning how to speak (in addition to that of learning how to do business), that people described the market as a ‘school’ (*essomero*).

If it is the labels of ‘witch’ and ‘husband-snatcher’ that are most feared by women in the market, is it that of the *muyaye* (‘thug,’ ‘idler,’ ‘defiant’), or ‘bad

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<sup>49</sup> Something that he hadn’t told any of his colleagues (he used to leave the market then return to sleep) and didn’t tell me until the time of my revisit 12 months later, arguably due to the reputational implications described in the following paragraph.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with *kaveera* seller (07/11/2013), interview with carrier (05/11/2013)

<sup>51</sup> Female customer, 40s, 06/05/2015

boy' that threaten the reputation of young men. Writing about Nakasero market in 1990, Alja Naliwaiko asserts that *bayaye* (pl.) are people associated with "theft, robbery and organized crime' who are 'lost' in relation to the 'moral values of their society" (1990: 61). Many stall and shop vendors in the market also associated this label with being an 'idle' and 'criminal.' To be idle, in this sense, is to not be *seen* to be engaged in a valued socioeconomic activity. As a man on Jamaica corner explained: "The *bayaye* are those that make people think 'ah, how is he working and making money?' they can't see."<sup>52</sup> Like the dirty vendor and the husband-snatcher, the *muyaye* is a non-market person, for who normal patterns of relation and obligation may be suspended. Success for young men in and around the Kabengo therefore requires the careful navigation of these categories; of presenting oneself as a 'good boy' rather than a *muyaye*. These labels serve important functions for potential employers and customers insofar as they provide a degree of predictability and trust in interactions with unfamiliar people.<sup>53</sup>

Stephen worked as a *kaveera* boy for three-and-a-half years. In his last year, he saved a modest amount of capital (US\$ 200,000, \$70) and began consulting vendors on buying and selling produce. He was allowed a small space in the Kabengo on account of the fact that he had 'stayed long in the market'; he had also participated in the sit-in protests in 2008 alongside Margaret's mother and Frank and his family. Like Alex, he is single and spends his Sundays in the market before watching football with his neighbours in the evening. Many of the young men in the Kabengo opt to remain in the market after completing their stock, preferring the company of those in the market to those outside it. It is not uncommon for Stephen to spend over eighty hours in Nakasero in the course of a week.

Stephen's relationship with Alex could be described as casual. They engage in occasional bets and debates on topics ranging from the outcome of boxing matches in Los Angeles to the time it takes to get to Fort Portal for a burial. However, Stephen and his neighbours rarely enter the Ghetto. Pooling resources, they contribute between 500-1,000 US\$ (\$0.16-0.33) each for the

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with spice vendor and middleman (30/04/2014)

<sup>53</sup> One elderly tomato vendor described this a key problematic of market life: "You know, people you have just met, you cannot tell what their behaviors are" (Interview, 26/02/2014).

cleaning of Kabengo each evening by Alex and his colleagues. Explaining why he makes this contribution, Stephen says: “As you know, everybody depends on each other”. However unlike Frank and Margaret, he makes no mention of sponsorship or support, or of the categories that differentiate him from Alex in the market. As such, his status as a ‘low earner’ arguably frees him from some of the ties of obligation felt by people who are seen to be better off in the market. He credits Nakasero with enabling him to overcome many of the challenges he has faced, providing him with a means to look after himself, to rent his own room in Kampala and to send money to his family in Luwero.

### **Evening: making a deposit in the *House of Faith***

Nakasero wakes from its afternoon slumber at around 16:00 as commuters start to filter through on their journeys back from work. The vendors in the Parkyard and Kabengo rearrange their stock, balancing shiny, unblemished fruit on top of neat piles of less desirable produce. The edges of the market bulge as customers conduct quick transactions by the roadside to avoid entering further into the market. Stephen calls out to customers in the Kabengo, while Alex embarks on a second round of the upper stalls, adding to the rubbish dump before the next visit of the KCCA truck. Frank and Margaret begin counting their takings and checking stock levels in preparation for closing.

On his final round of the market, Alex passes a man with a large blue book who is engaged in an animated conversation with a vendor in the Parkyard. This man is wearing dark navy jeans, a collar shirt, a baseball cap and glasses, a formal appearance that contrasts that of many of the people around him. As he passes, Alex drops USh 2,500 into his hand. Without breaking his conversation, the man places the money in his pocket and marks a number under a column in his book. This man is George Mirembe, the proprietor of *House of Faith*, a savings and moneylending business in Nakasero. George does his rounds of the market in the late afternoon and evening hours, after vendors have earned money from their day’s activities. He has around 500 customers who deposit relatively small amounts of money with him on a daily basis, which they then withdraw in full minus a service charge at the end of each month.<sup>54</sup> As he

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<sup>54</sup> This amounts to a charge of between 2-3% of the total amount saved, rounded up to the nearest thousand

passes through the Kabengo, people approach him and either push crumpled notes into his hand or pull them from it.

George's family has been involved in the market for three generations. His grandmother Jane, whose views on the market form part of the epigraph in Chapter 1, first set foot in Nakasero in 1963, a year after Uganda's independence. After working a period in the morning wholesale market, she persuaded suppliers to bring tomatoes to Nakasero, a move that George describes as 'brilliant' and 'very clever'.<sup>55</sup> Tomatoes have since become a permanent fixture in urban Ugandan diets as an accompaniment to the staple foods of *matooke* (green cooking banana), *posho* (maize meal) and cassava. Today the tomato department in Nakasero employs around 200 people, many of whom are George's relatives. His mother Sophie followed his grandmother into the market, and he began to accompany her during school holidays. He proudly recounts an occasion at school when a teacher asked him pejoratively: "Do your parents work in the market?" after he had raised his voice in class.

George's mother died just two years after she had introduced him to the market, marking the start of a period that George describes as the hardest of his life:

"I tried to learn her business but I couldn't because I was young, I was seventeen or eighteen so my auntie took over, but for me I had established my life in the market. I had to complete at least O-Level [secondary school qualification] but no one could pay for my school fees so I started working here at night, and in the morning I [would] go to school. I pushed to Senior Four, I passed, I had a brother and I paid for him also [...] It was hard, working the whole night without sleeping – in the morning when you go to class, it was hard. I decided 'let me settle,' what I have got is enough for me to establish my life, so I gave my life to the market. That was 2004 - in 2004 I started working seriously in the market."

George's testimony reinforces the notion of the market as a social institution, as something that is more than the sum of its products and peoples; something that people may give their life to. When describing his work in the market, George often talks in terms of 'service,' service to his family, to his

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<sup>55</sup> The quotes provided here all originate from an interview with George on 17/02/2014, unless otherwise stated

'people' in the market and to God. The name of his business, *House of Faith*, invokes this notion of service, as well as that of trust, an essential feature of any successful savings business.<sup>56</sup> George's customers attribute their decision to save with him both to his long family history in Nakasero, and to his 'fear of God'; associations that provide a certain degree of reliability to their transactions, which he fosters by sharing stories of his family and preaching gospel sermons on his rounds.



**Plate 3.4:** Aerial photograph of customers walking through the Parkyard in the early evening

George started his business in 2006 with three friends he had grown up with in the market, initially offering services to people in the tomato department. Vendors in Nakasero prefer the personal, flexible banking services which facilitate daily savings to the more formal services of the commercial banks on Kampala Road. Organisations such as *House of Faith* effectively socialise people's obligations to save money. The practice of saving is grounded in a relationship with someone who has a personal knowledge of their lives, their income and their obligations. George said of one of his customers: "She used to save 150, then I kept coming and inspiring her and now she saves 300

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<sup>56</sup> When asked why she chooses to save her money with George, one of his customers explained: "He has the fear of God" (female produce vendor, Upper Stalls, 22/05/2014). The role of Pentecostal Christianity in the market is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

[thousand shillings]!”<sup>57</sup> This process encourages people to earmark money for particular expenses such as school fees, protecting it from the competing claims of others. Unplanned withdrawals, i.e. withdrawals that do not take place at the end of the month have to be personally negotiated with George.

After building up a base of customers, George decided to begin issuing loans through *House of Faith*:

“I had a vision about collecting money together; I discovered that if Mr. Boto is faithful, I can give him your money together with mine and solve his problem. Then the next day, he brings back your money, and the next time you are in trouble, I can give you Mr. Boto’s money. That is the system I introduced here. But you know the difficulty; some people are not trustworthy...”

When deciding whether to make a loan, George consults people’s individual savings histories. However, he draws upon an intricate knowledge of their biographies, their families, and their most pressing domestic expenses; for example, he rarely sanctions business loans close to the start of the school term. This knowledge also extends to a concern with people’s hearts. He explains that while men have ‘a strong heart; a heart that doesn’t fear to sin’, women tend to have a heart that is more ‘human’ and ‘kind.’ As such, when a man tells you he will bring money back in a month ‘you know it will be two months at least’, whereas most woman will complete payment within a month. Women also tend to use loans for one-off payments that can be anticipated in advance, such as school fees (86% of such loans went to women) rather than higher risk business investments. This understanding has led George to pursue a policy of lending to men through their wives in cases where they both work in the market.<sup>58</sup>

Table 1.2 provides a summary of the loans made by the *House of Faith* over a three-month period in 2013-14. 68 per cent of these were for business purposes, for example, the purchase of stock and equipment or clearance of debt, and 32 per cent for personal or domestic purposes, such as rent payment (5%), school fees (14%) and medical costs (5%).

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<sup>57</sup> 02/05/2014

<sup>58</sup> Though these are recorded as loans to men in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Profile of loan recipients at the *House of Faith*, based on 3 months' records<sup>59</sup>

Area	Male	Female	Total recipients (%)	Median loan (USh)
Upper stalls	19	23	42 (34%)	200,000
Parkyard	14	26	40 (33%)	100,000
Lower stalls	3	15	18 (15%)	200,000
Kabengo	12	1	13 (11%)	100,000
Ghetto	4	0	4 (3%)	30,000
Office (leaders)	5	0	5 (4%)	350,000
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>57 (47%)</b>	<b>65 (53%)</b>	<b>122 (100%)</b>	<b>137,500 (\$44 USD)</b>

By issuing loans, *House of Faith* connects the fortunes of people across the market, drawing on the profits of a person in one area to provide for the rent or school fees of someone in another:

“I see them, I save their money [...] Some are *bayaye*, they steal people’s money, some they steal necklaces [...] I always give them ideas, I always try to show them that you can work and earn something [...] I’m happy that I’ve transformed some people’s lives; I lend them other people’s money so they can do what they want. Some even had no rooms [...] I have helped them, they rent their own houses, they save that little money, at the end of the month they pay the landlord, so for some their lives have changed.”

George’s testimony emphasises his role in the transformation of the lives of low earners in the market by providing advice and moving money into places where it is seen to have more social efficacy. This role enables George to acquire large numbers of savers (or followers), which are of benefit to his business. His is a more visible role in the market than that of the silent patron, arguably represented by Frank and Margaret. However this role comes with relatively high levels of socioeconomic risk.

Newcomers in Nakasero are required to develop a savings profile and to identify two guarantors in the market before they are eligible to receive a loan. However, these loans are issued on the back of the savings of other members of the market. As such, George manages his relationships with high earners in the market very carefully, so that he is able to anticipate large

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<sup>59</sup> These months – January and July 2013, and June 2014 - were the only complete records available during fieldwork (others are incomplete, or kept in other locations)

withdrawals in advance. The market's socio-spatial hierarchies make it more difficult for George to reject the requests of elder vendors in the shops or stalls, a number of who are members of his extended family. Accordingly, he navigates people's requests through his movements in the market, and has developed an array of indirect, non-verbal modes of refusal. For example, he evades areas in which an influential person has requested an unserviceable loan, and avoids the market altogether (by sending his brother in his place) when there is no money left for loans at the start of the school term.

*House of Faith's* visibility and familiarity in the market have also made it a target for theft. During a period of violent clashes over the ownership of the market in 2007, George's bag was stolen from the market office as he prepared to pay out people's savings from the previous month, resulting in a loss of US\$ 3 million (\$993).<sup>60</sup> Unwilling to compensate for the loss, his friends and partners left him to run *House of Faith* on his own. He took out a personal loan from the bank in order to repay his customers. Since 2007 the business has suffered three further incidents of theft, costing over US\$ 19 million (\$6,291). The latest incident in September 2014, involved an attack on his cousin, who was transporting money from the bank to the market. This event more than any other forced George to reconsider his future in Nakasero. However, buoyed by the reactions of customers – some said they could wait for their money, while others provided a contribution towards the loss<sup>61</sup> – he decided to re-mortgage a small plot of land, his most significant asset, in order to repay the money.

After taking Alex's 2,500 shillings, George also collects Margaret and Stephen's savings for the day (US\$ 20,000 - \$6.50 from bot), while Frank places his takings in a safe. Describing his business, Margaret says she saves with George because he is a 'good man' who has been in the market a long time, and that he charges low fees. She also saves with another organisation in the market, moving her savings from each into a bank account at the end of each month. Stephen has saved with *House of Faith* for eight years and credits it with helping him build up the capital necessary to start selling in the Kabengo. He also acknowledges the role George has played in his life more broadly, by encouraging him to 'work hard' for a steady income rather than 'cheat' for a

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<sup>60</sup> The events leading up to this incident are described in chapter 6.

<sup>61</sup> Supported by interviews with *House of Faith* customers, 06/05/2015, 08/05/2015

quick one. George is often called upon to mediate bets and disputes in the Kabengo; a role he also performs as the referee of market football matches and the administrator of his church in Katwe.

George's relationship with Alex is more complex. Alex first heard about George and *House of Faith* in 2012, after asking others in the market where they save their money. Impressed by Alex's ability to save US\$ 5,000 (\$1.70) a day from cleaning in the market, George introduced him to his church and found him a place to live nearby. He also advised Alex to stop drinking alcohol and save money for gumboots and gloves that would improve his working conditions. Reflecting on their relationship, Alex emphasises that while George is a 'born again' who doesn't drink alcohol, his own work in Nakasero requires him to drink. He struggled to keep up with the rent payments on the house George found him, and went back to sleeping in the market again. George says that other people in Nakasero subsequently questioned him about his association with Alex, suspecting him of having stolen things in the market. The two men stopped meeting socially in 2013, but Alex still saves his money with George and describes him as a 'very good friend'. Although visibly disappointed by Alex's reluctance to change his life in the ways he had envisaged, George maintains that he still has 'the possibility to change'. Among the loans listed in Table 1.2 from June 2014 was one to Alex, recorded in the House of Faith book as: "5,000 – *mmere*" (food).

Darkness is falling on the market as George collects the last of people's savings for the day. The shops and stalls have closed, marking the end of Asian and European custom in the market. Frank is already on his hour-long drive home to Kitende in a Toyota Corolla loaned to him by his mother. Margaret, meanwhile, takes a 20-minute *boda-boda* ride back to Kigusu, arriving home in time to watch a South American soap opera. In addition to her savings in the market, Margaret takes home US\$ 30,000 (\$9.80), which she spends on transport, food, phone credit and DVDs. George is the next to leave, taking a 30-minute *boda boda* to Katwe. He is carrying over US\$ 100,000, but only uses about 20,000 (\$6.50) for transport, food and phone credit, keeping the rest for emergency loans and payments.

Still in the market, Stephen and his neighbours in the Kabengo and Parkyard light candles around the last of their produce. The edges of the market

resemble a series of shrines; pyramids of tomatoes, cucumbers and mangoes laid out on the floor, illuminated by flickering candlelight. African customers continue to buy as they pass the market on their way home from work. Stephen leaves after selling the last of his produce at 21:00. He occasionally stays overnight in order to count the produce trucks arriving in the early hours of the morning, enabling him to estimate which goods will provide the best returns the following day. Today however he takes a *matatu* taxi from the Old Taxi Park to Kawempe (USh 1,500, 40 minutes), where he shares a room with a younger cousin. He takes USh 15,000 (\$4.90) to cover the costs of transport and food, which he shares with his cousin.

As Stephen arrives home, only Alex remains in Nakasero, attempting to sell off the last of the produce he has salvaged over the course of the day while sharing a small bag of *waragi* (gin) with his neighbours in the Ghetto. Young men begin to gather on the corners of the market, anticipating the arrival of the produce trucks. Some of these men enter the city to work at night. The first truck arrives on Market Street just after midnight, loaded with large sacks of carrots. The group of men nearest to the truck clap their hands in anticipation, joined by a small number of women who have been resting inside the entrances to nearby shops. Subgroups quickly emerge – male farmers and suppliers stand on top of the truck and shout prices down to female buyers, who employ young carriers (*fasi-fasi*) to take the sacks inside, where they will be sold in the morning wholesale market. Many of the *fasi-fasi* first enter the market on the supply trucks as the relatives, employees and/or stowaways of farmers and suppliers. Their origins reflect the provenance of the produce they are carrying; for example, the *matooke* carriers can be heard communicating in Runyankole (from the Ankole region in Southwest Uganda) and the carrot and onion carriers in Lusoga and Gisu (from Busoga and Bugisu in Eastern Uganda respectively).

As the next series of trucks arrive, Alex crosses Market Street and sets up his makeshift bed for the night. After saving USh 2,500 with George and spending 2,000 on food and 2,000 on drink, he has USh 1,500 left, which he will put towards a new shirt and pair of trousers from nearby Owino market.<sup>62</sup> Lying

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<sup>62</sup> Owino market is the hub of the imported second hand clothes market in Uganda – see e.g. BBC (2015) ‘Where do your old clothes go?’ (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30227025>, accessed 20/02/2016)

down in the entrance of Frank's shop, Alex is surrounded by other people sleeping in the market, young and old, men and women, around 100 in total. He turns and attempts to get some rest before Frank's return in the early morning.

## **Conclusions**

Alex Sserwanda's daily movements and interactions in Nakasero provide a window through which it is possible to observe the organisation of social and material life in the market. People describe Nakasero with reference to notions of socio-spatial hierarchy; 'high' and 'low earners,' 'first' and 'third class' produce, and 'open' and 'closed' areas of the market. Different areas of the market involve different rituals of entry, methods of sale and norms of social interaction. Interactions within and across these areas are situational in ways not captured by dualistic commercial roles, such as those of the vendor and customer, associate and competitor, employer and employee. Similarly, sociological frameworks of friendship or kinship are ill-suited to a setting where the use of terms such as 'friend' and 'brother' is highly contingent. Instead, relationships develop around particular practices, such as the of cleaning a person's stall, the sharing of their space or the saving of their money, insofar as these practices are understood to entail obligations to others.

Obligations in the market are regulated by ideas rooted in Buganda cultural practice, including the moral imperative to show 'heart' by extending assistance to people of lower socioeconomic standing ('low earners'). For example, Frank emphasises the importance of providing support and advice to poorer members of the market, while Monica and George describe their relationships with Alex through notions of support and survival. These obligations may be enacted or refused through a range of moral categories, including those of the *muyaye*, the good boy, the husband-snatcher and the witch; categories that are actively negotiated by young men and women in Nakasero. Nevertheless, they provide a degree of orderliness to people's interactions in the market.

While the structuralism of colonial anthropology often essentialised cultural frameworks of kinship grounded in ethnicity, the post-structuralism (or 'realism') of much recent work on African cities has tended to relegate

historical and cultural analysis in search of an image of the 'elusive' city produced through everyday acts of improvisation (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008; Simone 2004a; 2004b). I have shown in this chapter that while relationships are actively negotiated in Nakasero market, these negotiations take place within a cultural space that places limits on what can be negotiated with whom. To put it another way, people's ability to improvise access to valued resources in the market is circumscribed by logics and categories that have long histories in Buganda, the cultural region in which Kampala is located. The following two chapters explore these histories in relation to the development of the first markets in Kampala.

## Chapter 4: “First Let There Be a Market”: Nakasero in Colonial Kampala

“The markets have made it open - you make your own business, you make your own market. Now everyone wants to make money through the market.”

Deogratias Baguma, 78, customer and retired hotel manager<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the Asante in Ghana (Clark 1994) or the Yoruba in Nigeria (Sudarkasa 1973), the Baganda do not have a historical association with the marketplace.<sup>2</sup> In precolonial Buganda, people acquired resources through intricate ties of reciprocal obligation that connected chiefs to their followers (Hanson 2003). Deogratias Baguma, who first set foot in Nakasero market in 1958, emphasises the influence of markets on socioeconomic relations in the region. However, by making things ‘open’, markets were initially criticised by the Baganda for eroding the obligations of their leaders.

This chapter traces the development and management of Nakasero from the creation of the first market in Buganda in 1882 to Uganda’s independence in 1962. It situates Nakasero within the social and political history of Kampala and Buganda on the understanding that many of the forms and practices of the contemporary market can be traced back to the colonial and pre-colonial eras. The chapter relies heavily on external accounts of the market gathered from historical texts and archival materials. These accounts are brought together in ways that shed light on *i*) the institutions behind the establishment of the first markets in the Buganda, *ii*) the groups of people present in these markets, and *iii*) the categories with which these people were managed and understood.

I argue that the dualities present in the historical production of Kampala, between the British colonial township and the Buganda capital; the European ‘citizen’ and the African ‘subject’, shaped the development of Nakasero market (Mamdani 1996). A product of the segregative planning of the colonial administration, the groups that succeeded in the market in the early colonial period were those that best fit the dominant categories of British colonial economy, such as those of the ‘genuine’ Indian trader and the ‘diligent’ Kenyan labourer. In contrast, local African men and women were categorised and

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<sup>1</sup> 23/02/2014

<sup>2</sup> 67 per cent of people self-identify as Baganda (author’s survey, June 2014)

controlled through the labels of the 'petty trader' and 'town woman'. However, the growing demand for labour in the capital rendered the territorial segregation of racial groups unsustainable. As the physical link between the rural and the urban economies, Kampala's markets became the first sites of interaction between the Asian, African and European populations, in which dominant ideas and categories were both reproduced and contested.

The chapter starts by providing a brief history of the Buganda kingdom, drawing out two theses that I argue are particularly relevant to the historical development of markets in the British and the Ganda capitals: Mahmood Mandani's (1996) *Citizen and Subject* and Holly Hanson's (2003) *Landed Obligation*. It then describes the creation of the first market in Kampala and the origins of Nakasero as an Indian bazaar. Following this, the different models of marketing in Kampala and Mengo are identified. Finally, I provide an account of the rise of a group of African migrant traders; the Kenyan Luo, in the years preceding Uganda's independence.

### **Buganda and the colonial encounter: a brief history**

Buganda rose from modest beginnings to become one of the largest and most powerful central African kingdoms by the end of the nineteenth century (Hansen 1984; Karlström 1999; Thomas & Scott 1935). Historically, the basic ecological unit in the region was the hill (*mutala*) surrounded by lush banana gardens, which formed the basis of Ganda economy, sociology and nutrition. Clanship was the primary marker of Ganda identity and solidarity, and political accountability was provided through decentralised networks of chiefs. Local *bataka* (clan chiefs) were accountable to regional *bakingu*, who, in turn were accountable to the *Kabaka* (king) through the *lukiiko* (council of chiefs) (Green 2010). Goods were provided through exchanges of gifts, and chiefs were responsible for 'feeding' their followers, who would withdraw their allegiance if they felt mistreated (Hanson 2003). The wealth of the kingdom was partly generated through war and the subjection of neighbouring peoples, such as the Banyankole and Abanyambo, who paid an annual tribute to the monarchy (Mamdani 1976).

The capital of Buganda (the *Kibuga*, or seat of the king) was a 'proto-city' that was moved upon the ascension of each new ruler (Southall 1967). From the

time of Kabaka Suunna II's death in 1856 to the arrival of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in 1890, the Kibuga had moved ten times, finally settling around Mengo hill, where Kabaka Mwanga II established his palace in 1885.<sup>3</sup> For much of this period, the Kibuga was considered the most populous urban agglomeration in the East African interior, connected to the countryside by elaborate networks of chiefs (Fallers 1960; Hanson 2003). Early European visitors remarked favourably on its organisation, praising the maintenance of the roads, which were regularly swept on the orders of the Katikkiro (the prime minister) (Roscoe 1911).

The slave trade reached its peak on the East African coast in 1840 and brought about a period of social and political change in Buganda. Muslim traders arrived in the region from the Swahili coast in 1854, heralding the kingdom's first contact with imperialist capitalism (Médard & Doyle 2007). Traders bartered cloth for ivory and slaves, turning the region into a production zone that disrupted the ties of reciprocal obligation on which political accountability had historically rested (Hanson 2003). The Protestant Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived in Buganda from Britain in 1877 and the Catholic White Fathers from France two years later. Both traders and missionaries were warmly welcomed by Kabaka Muteesa I, who lavished them with gifts of land and goods and invited them to preach in the region, motivated by a desire to weaken the religious monopoly of the *bataka* chiefs (Mamdani 1976).<sup>4</sup> All three groups: Muslim traders, Anglican and Catholic Missionaries, succeeded in converting substantial numbers of followers. However, they also sowed new divisions in the Kabaka's court, sparking two civil wars firstly between Muslim and Christian converts (1888), and then between the victorious Protestant and Catholic factions in the Battle of Mengo in 1892. Frederick Lugard led the Imperial British East African Company into Buganda in 1890 and settled the Battle of Mengo in favour of the Protestants. He later succeeded in securing Buganda and then Uganda on behalf of the British, as part of the protracted scramble for Africa. The Uganda Protectorate Agreement of 1900 set out the legal basis for indirect British rule in the

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<sup>3</sup> Mengo is currently located within the Lubaga division of Kampala. The term 'Mengo' is often used as a catchall phrase both for the spatial area of the Kibuga, and the institutions of the Buganda government. Here its use denotes the area around Mengo hill.

<sup>4</sup> The *bataka* led the worship of deities called *lubaale*, who were considered to be former clan members (Green 2010).

region, including the rule of the colonial township authority in Kampala and Nakasero.

There is a substantial literature on Ganda history, based predominantly on the journals of Speke (1863) and Stanley (1878), the writings of Apolo Kagwa,<sup>5</sup> and the reports and correspondence of the Catholic Mission Society and British East African Company. This scholarship explores the development of the kingdom from the sixteenth century onwards from a variety of different perspectives. For example, Karlström (1999) has examined the historical significance of the institution of kingship, Green (2010) has written of clanship and ethnicity, Kodesh (2010) of violence and public healing, and Médard (2006) and Mamdani (1976) of capitalist market exchange. However, there are two further contributions that are of particular value in understanding social and political change in and around Nakasero market.

First, Mahmood Mamdani's (1996) *Citizen and Subject* provides a valuable contribution to understandings of the state in Africa that finds particular resonance in Uganda. Mamdani argues that the colonial state was bifurcated, creating one set of rules and institutions for European 'citizens' in urban centres, and another for African 'subjects' in the countryside. While 'urban power' spoke the language of 'civil society and civil rights', 'rural power' spoke that of 'community and culture,' and each was seen to pose a threat of contamination to the other (ibid.: 18).<sup>6</sup> As such, colonial towns and cities developed a range of legal and moral mechanisms for classifying, disciplining and removing transgressive subjects. Although these mechanisms were deracialised at independence, Mamdani argues that they continued to reproduce a division between urban citizen and rural subject along social and economic lines.

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<sup>5</sup> The former Prime Minister of Buganda, and the region's foremost ethnographer.

<sup>6</sup> As with the division between the 'traditional' and the 'modern,' the civic/customary dichotomy has been critiqued on account of its reduction of social and political life to two ideal types. For example, Mbembe (2001:25) notes that "[African] knowledge is the product of several cultures, heritages, and traditions of which the features have become entangled over time." It is useful then to think of the development of Mengo and Kampala in terms of processes of entanglement, or 'cultural sedimentation' (Spiegel 2015: 1). Nevertheless, *Citizen and Subject* remains a useful device for identifying the emergence of distinct types of social and moral forms in and around colonial townships.

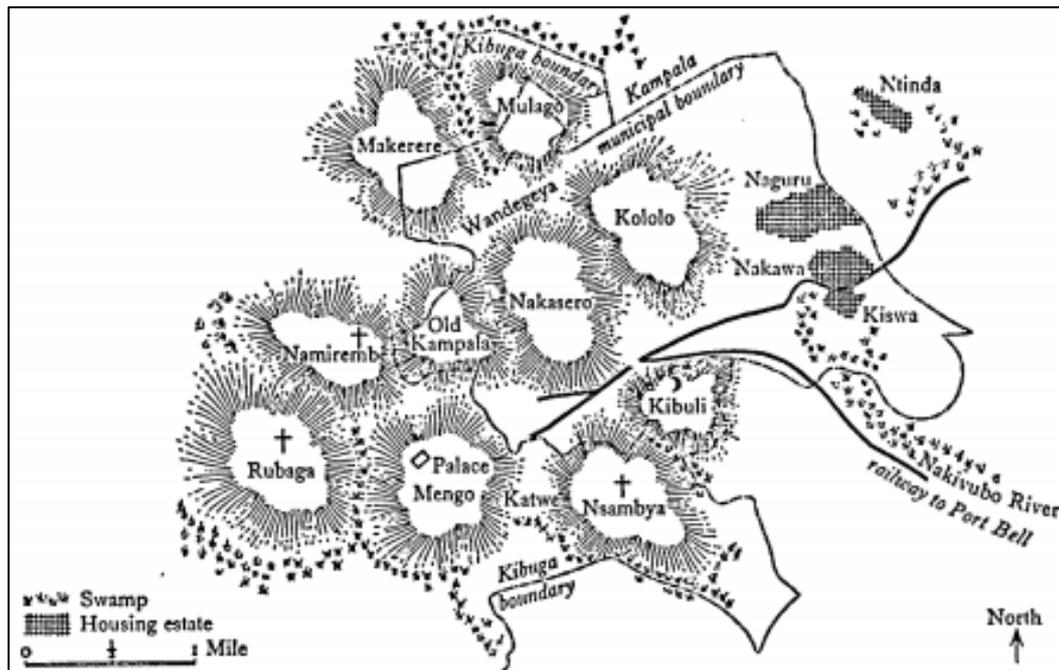
Second, Holly Hanson's (2003) *Landed Obligation* traces the historical relationship between love and power in Buganda, and the significance of this relationship to the functioning of Ganda systems of governance. She demonstrates how decentralised ties of reciprocal obligation were essential to the social and political production of the kingdom, and how the disruption of these ties – associated with the colonial project of a modernising bureaucracy – resulted in escalating violence and disorder. Power was not a zero sum game in which people only had it for as long as others didn't have it, but was rather something that had to be assembled; which people only had as long as others *agreed* that they had it. As such, leaders had to appear good-hearted (*owa kisa*) or risk losing the support of their followers.

Hanson's thesis is of value to the study of Nakasero market insofar as it provides a historical reading of the relationship between political economy and social and moral institutions in Buganda, and the ways in which these institutions both subverted and were subverted by the British colonial project. Put another way, the meeting of citizen and subject in urban centres resulted in the production of new forms of social and moral interaction that are still visible in places such as Nakasero market. The following section provides an account of the establishment of the first markets in Kampala, starting with that of *Mwanakuyeequilira* ("the child buys for himself") in 1882.

### **Merchants, missionaries and monarchists: the establishment of the first market**

Travellers to Buganda in the late nineteenth century found modern-day Kampala spread out over three hills: Mengo, the capital of Buganda and location of the Kabaka's palace, Rubaga, the site of the French Catholic mission (*Pères blanches*), and Namirembe, the home of the Protestants (see Map 4.1). Mengo was much the larger of the settlements; home to approximately 77,000 Baganda, while Rubaga and Namirembe housed under a European missionaries and their followers (Mamdani 1976: 34). Traders from Zanzibar and Khartoum arrived in both settlements with cloth to trade for ivory and slaves. However, there were no marketplaces in the capital. Instead, trade took place inside people's private homes. The Kabaka attempted to regulate these exchanges by levying excise taxes on food products, livestock, and manufactured goods, and customs duties on regional trade (ibid.: 31).

Furthermore, the palace made direct demands of rare and valuable goods, often on pain of death (Hanson 2003: 95).



**Map 4.1** Map of the hills of Kampala-Mengo, including the boundaries of the Kibuga and colonial township (after: Southall, 1967: 298)

Marketplaces were present in the Great Lakes, however they were restricted to borders and ‘no man’s lands’ located between different kingdoms; for example, at the border of Buganda and Bunyoro, where barkcloth could be traded for salt and iron tools (Médard 2006). Accustomed to exchanging goods through gift exchange rather than selling them for profit, the idea of a merchant’s profit was largely unfamiliar to the Baganda. In contrast, the European missionaries saw the marketplace as a civilising institution, essential for the social and economic development of the country. Philip O’Flaherty of the Church Missionary Society met with the Kabaka to discuss the matter in 1881:

“The king asked me the other day as to how he could enrich his country. I gave him a few items of information. First let there be a market. Not where the King can sell his surplus supplies, but a market for the people. Where the peasants can buy and sell, make profit and get supplies [...] This seems to be the last country in the world that God made; for everywhere else in all the world they buy and sell, and have markets, and become rich thereby.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> O’Flaherty to Huchison, Rubaga, 12/07/1881: 3-4, G3/A6/01881/75, Church

His testimony invokes an understanding of the marketplace as a natural feature of human societies, present in all God's kingdoms except Buganda. The market is seen both as a supplier of resources and wealth, and as a place 'for the people,' removed from the interventions of the ruling elite. This understanding of the market as a place of extraterritoriality is reminiscent of the Bakhtinian marketplace of the Renaissance and Middle Ages. For the missionaries, this extraterritoriality provided the possibility of an alternative food supply that would reduce their reliance on the Kabaka during a time of unprecedented religious conversion (Médard 2006).<sup>8</sup>

For the Ganda monarchy, in contrast, the market presented an opportunity to exercise control over an economy that had become decentralised since the arrival of caravan trade in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Following the advice of the missionaries, Kabaka Muteesa I opened the first market in the capital on Palace grounds on the 2 February 1882 and offered some of his cattle for sale (Médard 2006). The market was named *Mwanakuyeeguilira*; literally "the child buys for himself", or more substantively, "the people feed themselves" (by buying from the market). The idea of the market as a place capable of 'feeding' people independent of their broader kin or clan networks is one that still has resonance in Nakasero today (see Chapter 3). However, the naming of *Mwanakuyeeguilira* implied a level of independence largely lacking in the market itself. The palace fixed the prices of the commodities on sale, inflated the prices of items desired by foreigners, and prohibited the sale of luxury goods outside the market (Médard 2006; Temple 1964). Taken aback by the palace's intervention, the missionaries described the controls as 'absurd,' and complained that food had become more expensive since the establishment of the market.<sup>10</sup>

Following the establishment of *Mwanakuyeeguilira*, Muteesa pledged to build a number of other markets in the Kingdom and to sell his cattle there.

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Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham (c.f. Médard 2006: 159).

<sup>8</sup> The Catholic White Fathers later defended markets against the interventions of both the monarchy and the British colonial authorities (Médard 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Hanson (2003: 94-98) provides an analysis of the relationship between changing patterns of trade and modes of social and political organisation in Buganda during this period.

<sup>10</sup> Diary of Rubaga, 26/02/1882, Archives des Pères Blancs, Rome (c.f. Médard 2006: 161, note 68).

However, his particular model of marketing did not find favour with the Baganda. People responded with the phrase *Kabaka akowadde* ('The Kabaka is becoming selfish') on the grounds that cattle were previously given as gifts to meet expressed needs and cement alliances (Médard 2006: 165 note 92). The monarchy's support for markets was seen as an attempt to loosen its obligations to the people, destabilising the ties of reciprocity that had been the historical basis of accountability in the region. The proliferation of markets had the dual effect of distancing people from the Ganda ruling elite, whilst creating new arenas of opportunity for other, local leaders "free from the risks of requisition and jealousy" (ibid.: 165).

A crude analysis of the establishment of Buganda's first market might present it as evidence of the dawn of a broader transformation from a 'gift' to a 'market' economy; from a society based on parentage to one based on class (Polanyi 1944). However, on closer inspection, Mwanakuyeeguilira provides an example of the malleability of markets in the face of powerful ideas and interests. Although the 'market place' was present, 'the market principle', as understood by the European missionaries, did not determine the acquisition and exchange of goods (Bohannon & Dalton 1962). Rather than becoming the public place of 'the people' envisaged by the missionaries, Mwanakuyeeguilira was planned and regulated by the Kabaka, offering favourable terms of trade to *his* people, for whom the goods on sale were symbolic of his power. Muteesa took a European institution and adapted it in line with Ganda modes of social and economic organisation. The result – a centrally regulated marketplace – was not something that was recognisable either to the missionaries or to the Ganda people. However, it was a model that was to become familiar in the kingdom and to be reproduced by the British colonial administration in the creation of Nakasero market.

### **Colonial arrival, territorial segregation and the birth of Nakasero market**

Prior to his arrival with the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) in 1890, Lugard had been invited by Kabaka Mwanga II to stay as a guest of the Protestant mission on Namirembe hill. However, driven by a desire to establish British military presence in the region, Lugard erected a fort on the

adjacent Kampala hill to the dismay of the Ganda monarchy.<sup>11</sup> The four hills of Mengo, Kampala, Namirembe and Rubaga were for a time considered as one municipality. By 1892, two regular markets were held in the capital; Mwanakuyeeguilira market, located at the end of the King's road between the hills of Rubaga and Namirembe, and a Basoga market on Makerere hill to the northeast. The latter market – named *Kagugube* – was established by traders from the kingdom immediately east of Buganda, where markets have a longer heritage (Médard 2006; Temple 1969).<sup>12</sup> Temporary Swahili and Nubi markets were also established in close proximity to Kampala hill, serving the increasing numbers of ambassadors, traders and travellers that were passing through.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the century, political differences between the British and Ganda administrations were visible in the socio-spatial arrangements of their settlements. In 1890, the British settlement on Kampala hill was dwarfed by the King's capital in Mengo. However, the British settlement expanded quickly, developing the administrative, sanitary and financial institutions deemed necessary for accommodating European and Asian visitors (Calas 1998). Although the British authorities established their administrative base in Entebbe, some 30 kilometres south of Kampala, trade continued to flourish around Lugard's fort and Kampala was soon designated the commercial capital of the Uganda Protectorate (Munger 1951; Thomas & Scott 1935).<sup>14</sup> Kampala's history may therefore be understood as one of a 'Commercetown' as opposed to a 'Court town' or 'Coketown' based on Hannerz's (1980) categorisation. In contrast to the urban agglomerations that developed on the Copperbelt (Coketowns) whose reliance on a single industry tended to foster the development of heavily regulated, paternalistic social structures,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Unimpressed with Lugard's actions, the Baganda lengthened the name of the hill to *Kampala Alizala Bigwe* ('the white man's selection of Kampala will result in strife') (Hanson 2003: 115). The original name of the hill was derived from its herds of impala.

<sup>12</sup> Its name is an amalgamation of the words *Katale ka Gugube* ('market of [a person called] Gugube').

<sup>13</sup> Zanzibari merchants arrived via the coast in the mid-century. The Nubi, in contrast, were descendants of the Khedive army, which, having established garrisons along the Nile in Sudan, retreated south to Lake Edward in modern-day Uganda. Lugard integrated 900 of them into his army in 1891, bringing them and their families to Buganda (Hansen 1991: 563-5).

<sup>14</sup> For example, the IBEAC imported approximately 2,000 shipments of tools, cloth and consumables between 1894-1895 (Thomas & Scott 1935: 341).

<sup>15</sup> See Epstein 1967; Ferguson 1999.

commercial townships were understood to produce diversified social structures organised around discrete economic activities; structures that were not conducive to the neat separation of citizen and subject.



**Plate 4.1** 'Market scene at Namirembe, Mengo,' from Hattersley's *Uganda by Pen and Camera* (1907). It is possible that the market depicted is the original Mwanakuyeequilira market

British influence in Buganda was enshrined in the Uganda Protectorate Agreement. Signed in 1900, the agreement officially divided *crown* (British) from *mailo* (Baganda) land, while the Uganda Townships Audience (1903) gave power to the British Governor to define the boundaries rules and taxes of towns (Southall & Gutkind 1957: 4). These laws were underpinned by a tacit agreement between the colonial and Ganda authorities that the Kibuga was to remain the domain of the local African population, and Kampala that of Asians and Europeans. For the British, this segregation was understood to serve sanitary and economic functions; enabling the Protectorate to manage public health in Kampala without being required to extend public services to the Kibuga (where revenues would be lower). For the Ganda administration, the division served to protect the Kibuga – the emotional centre of the Kingdom – from the interventions of the British.<sup>16</sup> The Katikkiro had previously written to the colonial authorities to inform them of the palace's "very great fear" that

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<sup>16</sup> The separation remained in place until 1967, when the *Kibuga* was incorporated into the newly formed Kampala City Council.

“the Europeans in their place [will attain] a great power over our Kibuga”.<sup>17</sup> It was a source of considerable distress to the Baganda that Kampala was becoming the more prestigious of the two capitals.<sup>18</sup>

The British settlement continued to expand over the hills to the northeast, away from the Kibuga (Calas 1998). In 1902, a new British fort was constructed on Nakasero hill, where the District Commissioner’s office was re-located. In 1906, the borders of Kampala were redefined as a three-mile radius of Nakasero hill, including the valley to the south, which served as a green *cordon sanitaire* between the colonial capital and the Kibuga.<sup>19</sup> The colonial authorities designated the area a ‘European quarter’ (the domain of the ‘citizens’) in which ‘native settlements’ (‘subjects’) were strictly prohibited.”<sup>20</sup> The name Nakasero (‘place of the little basket’) can be traced back to attempts to excavate a lake from the Nakivubu channel at the bottom of Nakasero hill with the use of small baskets in the previous century (Snoxall, 1946: 45). However, people in the contemporary market understand it as a reference to the first basket carriers (now *kaveera* boys) working in the market.<sup>21</sup> Hesketh Bell, the then Commissioner of the Uganda Protectorate, describes the view from Nakasero hill in 1906, in a letter addressed to his ‘little Auntie’:

“Kampala is spread over several square miles of land and covers seven round hills, each about three or four hundred feet above the surrounding land. One hill is occupied by the little King’s enclosure, and is called Mengo, another by the C.M.S. Mission, called Namirembe, and on top of that one is a very imposing looking Cathedral, built entirely of palms and reeds, with an enormous thatched roof [...] On another hill is the White Father’s Mission, with a big church [...] On another, and that is where I am now writing from, is the Sub Commissioner’s house and also the residences of several other European officers. It is called Nakasero, and from it one has a beautiful view over the whole of the

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<sup>17</sup> Sir Apollo Kagwa to Sir Harry Johnston, 22/02/1900, Buganda Archives file s.12/00, Kampala

<sup>18</sup> Commissioner Wilson writes in 1907, “So strong and wide-spreading has been the influence of Kampala that its name is superseding that of Mengo, especially in the outlying countries.” (Southall & Gutkind 1957: 3).

<sup>19</sup> The new border was a source of considerable aggravation to the Baganda authorities, who managed to negotiate a reduced area in 1910 (Calas 1998: 61).

<sup>20</sup> Sadler to Principal Medical Officer, 18/02/1902, S.M.P.J. 72, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe (c.f. Gutkind 1963: 22).

<sup>21</sup> The use of the name ‘Nakasero’ predates the market (for example in Bagshawe’s journal in 1902)

surrounding country. All these hills are about a mile and a half distant from each other, as the crow flies, and in beneath them, in the hollows, lie the native huts and gardens. Nakasero is the largest and roundest of all the hills and has been set aside as the principal trading centre. Already, on its flanks, there are several traders' factories and Indian shops, and in a few years time, there will probably be a great development of the place."<sup>22</sup>

Bell's letter identifies the dominant institutions in Kampala at the time; the Ganda palace, the Catholic cathedral, the Protestant church, the British colonial offices, each casting a shadow on the 'native huts and gardens' beneath them. Furthermore, he makes a perceptive prediction about the rise of Indian commerce on the slopes of Nakasero hill, between the citizens at the top and the subjects in the 'hollows'.

A market was present on Nakasero market's current site as early as 1905 (Temple 1964: 165). Temple (1964) asserts that Nakasero was the successor to the Basoga market, Kagugube, which alongside the Kabaka's market in Mengo was the only other regular market in the capital at the time.<sup>23</sup> However Médard (2006: 162, note 79) casts doubt on this claim when he describes the distance between the two sites as being approximately two kilometres. Correspondence between the British Land Officer (Allen) and Chief Secretary in 1910 appears to support Temple's original thesis. In a letter entitled "Rearrangement of Kampala plots in connection with New Market", the Land Officer provides guideline prices for new plots of land made available "by the removal of the market to a new site".<sup>24</sup> Although no specific locations are mentioned, he notes: "[the] plots are much sought after", which, together with his emphasis on '*the* market,' suggests a scale and location that could have only been satisfied by the (now defunct) Kagugube market. Furthermore, the 1912 Kampala planning scheme locates 'Market Street' in the space that now bifurcates Nakasero market (Kendall 1955). These details are significant

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<sup>22</sup> Heasketh Bell's letters, 24/05/1906, RCMS 36/4/1, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Cambridge. Kindly provided by Holly Hanson.

<sup>23</sup> Temple does however make the false claim that that Kagugube was established from the Kabaka's original market (moved from Mengo), when both markets were visible on maps of Kampala in 1892. This claim created a common misunderstanding that Nakasero Market is derived from the Kabaka's original market (as opposed to a British colonial market).

<sup>24</sup> Land Officer Allen to Chief Secretary, 20/06/1910, L.O.M.P 317/10, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe.

insofar as they underline Nakasero market's origins as a centrally planned colonial project, as opposed to a Ganda institution.

Situated at the angle of two major arteries in the capital (the current Kampala and Entebbe roads), Nakasero market started out as a non-African enterprise, designed to service the commercial demands of a prosperous, non-land-owning community of citizens (Calas 1998).<sup>25</sup> The colonial authorities saw it as a key site of commercial dominance and an important source of income in their quest to turn Uganda into a profitable colony; for example, administrators proposed increases to market taxes on the basis that “[market] dues should be a considerable source of revenue to the Protectorate.”<sup>26</sup> However, although the European population sought control of the marketplace, they did not plan to trade within it.<sup>27</sup>

### **Nakasero as an Indian bazaar**

Georg Simmel (1950: 1) writes that trade has historically been “the sphere indicated for the stranger”, who intrudes as a ‘supernumerary’ into a particular socioeconomic order. In colonial East Africa this role – a liminal role between citizen and subject – was historically fulfilled by Indian migrants. The first market at the bottom of Nakasero hill took the form of an ‘Indian bazaar’; a heritage that is still visible in the spice stalls in the lower market, the *dukas* (two storey shops) on Market Street and the Shiva Temple immediately to the south (Gombay 1997: 73; Muwonge 1977: 73; Omolo-Okalebo 2011: 79). To the north, Luwum Street was originally named Visram Street after Allidina Visram, one of Uganda's first and most successful Indian businessmen (Asiimwe 2009).

The history of Indian participation in British colonial enterprise in East Africa dates back to the late nineteenth century when the British agreed to safeguard the political interests of the Indian population in Zanzibar in return for their furthering of British trade interests (Mamdani 1976). Outlining the economic plans of the Uganda Protectorate in 1900, Special Commissioner Johnston

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<sup>25</sup> An understanding that has a legacy in contemporary descriptions of Nakasero market as the ‘*katale ka muzungu*’ (market for whites).

<sup>26</sup> Acting Chief Secretary to Kampala District Commissioner, 11/05/1910, T.P.624, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe.

<sup>27</sup> Although they did stimulate demand as customers.

asserted that the territory was an ideal sphere for the expansion of Indian commerce, owing to the willingness of the Indian population to engage in forms of trade that were unappealing to Europeans (Thomas & Scott 1935). His successor subsequently declared that “[Uganda] will never be a white man’s country,” and should instead be planned as “the America of the Hindu.”<sup>28</sup> The first sizable Indian population on the East African mainland were indentured labourers from Punjab, Sind and Bombay who arrived at the end of the century to work on the construction of the East African railway. Meanwhile, Goans were recruited to work in the colonial administration<sup>29</sup> and traders from Gujarat followed the import-export trade from the coast to the interior (Gregory, 1993; Prunier, 1990; Ramchandani, 1976). As a result, the Indian population that took root in Uganda was a rich tapestry of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Buddhists and Jains, speaking a variety of languages and engaged in a broad range of economic activities. However, the single stereotype of the ‘exploitative’ Indian trader was to dominate popular representations of Ugandan Asians, with grave consequences for their future in the country (Furedi 1974). The origins of this stereotype, which Twaddle (1975) argues too few scholars have been willing to address, can be partly traced back to the segregative planning of colonial administration.

The land agreements that accompanied the establishment of the Protectorate prohibited the purchase of land outside gazetted towns by foreigners. Such laws effectively prevented the ruralisation of the Asian community in Uganda, just as they prevented the urbanisation of the African population (Gregory, 1993; Ramchandani, 1976). Indian traders became the link in the import-export economy; the *dukawallah* (from Swahili; ‘shopkeeper’) who connected the ‘native’ producer ‘in his home’ to ‘the wholesale business houses’ in town (Thomas & Scott 1935: 353). They operated from the *duka*; a two storey building in which traders slept above the shop, and the *bazaar*; a gazetted, wooden market, where producers would come to offer their goods. The politics of the Indian trader were the politics of the marketplace. As Mamdani (1976: 84) observes:

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<sup>28</sup> Hill 1961: 219-225 (c.f. Byerley 2005: 125)

<sup>29</sup> Goans in East Africa established themselves as a ‘separate racial entity’ with closer ties with Europeans on account of their Catholicism and mission education (Thomas & Scott 1935: 353).

“[The marketplace] was the political embodiment of the vision of the successful trader who must realize his objective position as that of a middleman [...] who to survive must understand the vagaries of the market and learn to bend his operations in harmony with these changes.”

Unable to challenge the terms of exchange established by the colonial administration, the Indian *dukawallah* instead sought to maximise his or her profits within these terms. The position of Indian traders within the colonial economy meant that they had no need to establish relations with persons outside the marketplace, creating a social distance from the African population that became “expressed in an intense racial consciousness” (Mamdani 1976: 109).

Access to labour was provided through kin and caste relations, a system that reproduced the commercial dominance of a small number of castes: the Ismailis the Lohanas and the Patidars.<sup>30</sup> Each of these groups formed associations in order to defend communal political interests; for example under the leadership of the Aga Khan, the Ismailis developed an internal taxation mechanism to raise money for members in need of assistance (ibid.: 82). Relatives were brought to markets as shop assistants or agents for other businessmen, saving money until they were able to rent a stall or *duka* of their own, a system that continues in Nakasero today (see Chapter 3). This reliance on kin and caste relations excluded Africans from the colonial marketplace, with the exception of a small number of physical jobs such as that of carrying (the *fasi-fasi*), for which traders would often employ an African *bayi* (boy). Mittleman (1975: 229) notes that Asian-African relations ‘rarely extended beyond those of buyer-seller and master-servant.’ This limited socioeconomic relationship formed the basis of the enduring notion in Nakasero that Indians are miserly and “do not treat people equally”; a critique framed around notions of *heart* and reciprocal obligation.<sup>31</sup>

For the majority of Africans, entry into Nakasero market in the early colonial period was only possible as a small-scale producer. Godfrey Ssenoga, an elder

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<sup>30</sup> In 1954, approximately 80 percent of the 5,819 Indian trade license holders came from three groups (Mamdani 1976: 81)

<sup>31</sup> Interview with male boda boda driver, 04/10/2013

fish vendor in the contemporary market, provided an account of the bazaar which had been passed down from his father:

“[When] the Indians came [...] they had to make a centre where they could get things to buy and exchange from India. They established a small market here, where they could get onions and spices [...] The market was established mostly for spices, not for local food like cassava and so on, because that was for our indigenous people. When the spices were brought in here, indigenous Africans began digging them and selling them here. Even my father used to come to sell spices in the market every morning [...] he was working in the palace but he was farming the spices as an extra business.”<sup>32</sup>

Godfrey’s account demonstrates the changing relationships between different peoples, products and practices during the early colonial period. The social and economic forces unleashed at the beginning of the twentieth century created a situation in which it was logical for a Muganda to cultivate produce that was alien to their diet and never grown before in their soil, and sell it to Indian traders working within a British colonial township. However, in spite of these changes, it was still possible (and desirable) to retain a job as a gardener at the Kabaka’s palace. In this way, a generation of African people were learning to negotiate different socio-economic spheres and to navigate divergent registers of norms and values. In short, they were acquiring the skills necessary for life in the market.

However, it would be some time before they were physically present in Nakasero. In 1913, following a number of plague epidemics, the Kampala township authority hired a consultant (Simpson) to evaluate the state of sanitation in the capital. His report was highly critical of the state of hygiene in the township and focused particularly on the area around the bazaar. Health officials were particularly concerned to limit the movement of people, animals and insects in order to prevent the spread of disease.<sup>33</sup> The report concluded: “No measure short of removing the Bazaar to a position of safety where it will be well separated by an open zone from Europeans [...] is likely to be really

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with male fish vendor (lower market), 09/10/2013. Translated from Luganda.

<sup>33</sup> The minutes of a planning board in 1922 suggest moving police lines “at a maximum distance from the bazaar with a view to protecting the former from plague rats” (Muwonge 1977: 75).

effective” (cited in Mirams 1930: 4).<sup>34</sup> Simpson’s report resulted in the creation of the Kampala 1919 Planning Scheme, which introduced cordons of green space in the city, segregating the European, Asian and African populations on sanitary grounds (see Map 4.2).<sup>35</sup>

Mbembé (2002) argues that that the regulation of sanitation and waste was central to the British colonial project of a modernising civilisation, and played a key role in producing abjection and difference in the colonies. Records in Kampala demonstrate the speed with which health concerns mapped themselves onto dominant forms of racial discrimination. For example a Land Officer expressed concern that “a European trader with small means may be prepared to *take the risk* of living among the Indians for the sake of more quickly becoming rich” (Mirams 1930: 4, emphasis added). However, the Governor of the Protectorate (Jackson) was anxious about the commercial cost of a complete separation of the European and Asian populations. It was therefore decided that the bazaar would remain in its location at the bottom of Nakasero hill, but that the space would be carefully separated from European residential areas.

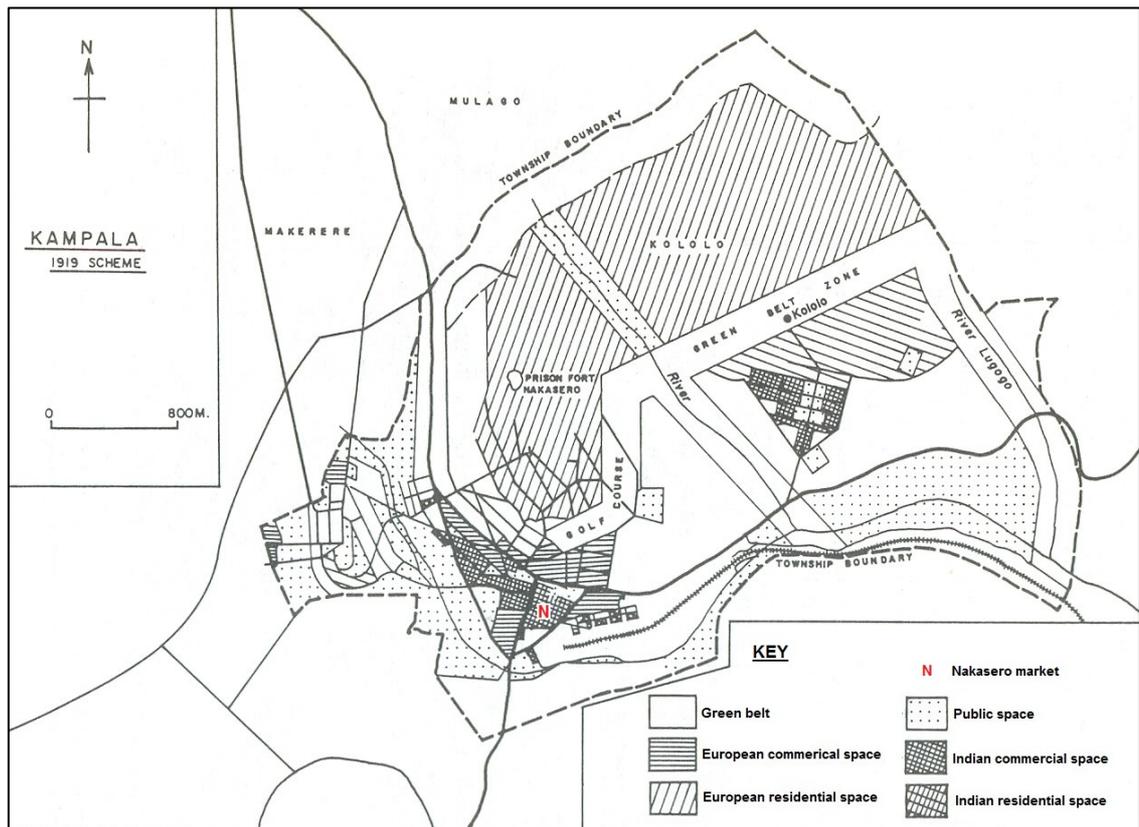
Table 4.1 Resident population of Kampala Township 1892-1959<sup>36</sup>

Date	European	Asian	African	Total
1892	5	1,070	-	1,075
1911	147	680	800*	1,627*
1921	-	-	1,200*	3,941
1935	700	3,500	2,200*	6,400*
1948	1,639	9,150	11,905	22,904
1951	4,250	17,000	17,000	38,250
1959	3,179	19,500	24,056	46,735

<sup>34</sup> Writing 17 years later, Mirams described the area around the market as evidence of “[a] state of chaos and almost licensed breach of all reasonable development” (1931: 26).

<sup>35</sup> The scheme’s central focus on hygiene is reflected in the composition of its committee: a Principal Medical Officer, a Chief Sanitary Officer, a Land Officer, a Director of Public Work and a Medical Officer for Kampala. Reflecting on the implications of this focus, Calas remarks dryly, *‘la ville hygiénique n’est pas noir,’* (1998: 64). Byerley (2005) observes the same segregation in Jinja, while Brown (2014) has explored its legacy in terms of the inequalities of sanitation provision in contemporary Kampala.

<sup>36</sup> Figures provided from Temple, 1968 and Southall & Gutkind, 1957 (the latter indicated with \*)



**Map 4.2** Segregated land use in Kampala Township, 1919 (after Calas 1998: 62)

The 1919 planning scheme located Nakasero market in an area in the centre of Kampala, labelled ‘Indian commercial space,’ which remains the central business district today (see Map 4.2). To the east of the market was an area designated ‘European commercial space’ and to the north, beyond a green belt, ‘European residential space.’<sup>37</sup> A combination of ‘green’ and ‘public’ space shielded this entire area from the boundary of the township, and the African settlements beyond it. Photographs and records of this period convey three trends that were of relevance to the production of social and moral life in the township. First, the African population was largely excluded in Kampala (see Table 4.1). Second, there were low levels of social density and interaction relative to that present in the contemporary capital (see Plate 4.2). Third, there were a relatively high number of law enforcement officers upholding municipal laws (described in the following section). Taken together, these trends limited possibilities for expressions of social and moral life in Kampala that diverged from those promoted by colonial political economy.

<sup>37</sup> In Luganda, these areas were to referred to *Kiyindi* (“for the Indians”) and as *Kijungu* (“for the whites”) (Asiimwe, 2009: 330).



**Plate 4.2:** 'Kampala, Street in Bazaar,' from Uganda Society Album, 1930, sourced from the Uganda Museum. The start of the bazaar is visible in the centre of the picture, with a row of *dukas* on the left and a uniformed policeman standing on the right

However, these limitations were temporary. The paradox of the racially segregated colonial township was that the more it grew, the more dependant it became on the local African population to meet its demands for construction and transportation (Mamdani 1996). Following the release of a report revealing that the anopheles mosquito did almost all of its biting at night (Njoh 2008: 589), Africans were permitted entry into British townships as 'temporary townsmen' during the day on the condition that they left before nightfall (Southall & Gutkind 1957). Thomas & Scott (1935: 276) observe that by the 1930s, approximately 4,000 African labourers were arriving in Kampala every day. This diurnal pattern of migration continues today as people such as Frank Motovu, Margaret Abuya and George Mirembe make their way to Nakasero market. As such, the spatial segregation of citizen and subject became temporal. Nakasero was then, and remains today, more 'African' during the day, and more dangerous for the African population at night, owing to the enforcement of a range of disciplinary measures.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> This temporal experience of fear and danger has been observed in a number of other urban African settings (Hansen & Verkaaik 2009; Nuttall & Mbembe 2008; Simone 2004).

## **Producing 'genuine traders' in Kampala Township**

Nakasero market was rebuilt in 1927 in response to increased demand and ongoing concerns about sanitation. Much of the infrastructure of the contemporary market dates back to this time; symmetrical rows of wooden stalls covered by corrugated iron roofing, surrounded by concrete shops or lockups, which separate food and produce stalls from the street (Plates 4.3, 4.4). Its design is that of an archetypal colonial market, comparable to the central markets in Komasi in Ghana,<sup>39</sup> Koalack in Senegal, and Bobo-Diasolo in Burkina Faso. Planners and researchers contrasted this design with that of markets in the Kibuga (the Buganda capital). Whilst Nakasero was "arranged to an orderly plan, built of permanent materials, furnished with concrete benches, stalls with roofs and car parks alongside them," the Kibuga markets were dismissed as chaotic spaces constructed from temporary materials – "thin, flimsy, wooden poles, reed mats, corrugated iron and old paraffin tins" (Temple, 1969: 350).<sup>40</sup>

These contrasting designs reflected contrasting functions. Large, permanent market structures in Kampala served to centralise production and distribution, driving economic efficiency while limiting space for middlemen through increased rents. Conversely, the smaller, decentralised markets in the Kibuga catered for the needs of residential areas, selling smaller quantities of products for which there was constant demand; cloth, dried foods, and produce sold predominantly for domestic consumption (Thomas & Scott 1935: 353). These two categories of market produced different categories of people; a market for the 'citizens' or 'genuine traders' who were predominantly male and of Asian or European descent, and a market for the 'subjects' or 'petty traders,' who were both male and female and of African descent. This section explores the regulation of 'genuine' trading in Kampala while the following section examines the emergence of 'petty' trading in the Kibuga.

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<sup>39</sup> This is the location of Gracia Clark's study (1994). She describes its construction by the British colonial government in the Gold Coast in 1925, two years prior to Nakasero.

<sup>40</sup> Other scholars have also reproduced this order-disorder dichotomy. Writing in the 1960s, Mukwaya describes Katwe market in the Kibuga as "a drab and dirty little place lacking the colourful variety of country markets or the orderly arrangement of the municipal market" (1962: 656).



**Plate 4.3** The entrance to lower Nakasero Market, constructed in 1927, with the Shiva Temple in the background<sup>41</sup>



**Plate 4.4** Indian shops in Nakasero market, on the corner of Market and Dastur Street, circa 1950<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> After Brian J. McMorrow 2012 (<http://www.pbase.com/bmcmorrow/image/63363803>, accessed 20/02/2016)

<sup>42</sup> Provided by Doreen Adengo via personal correspondence.

Like the European missionaries before them, British administrators promoted markets by appealing to notions of 'free trade'. Colonial officers reported instances of price fixing with irritation. For example, after discovering orders from the municipal authority to fix prices and reserve priority of sale to government officials in Jinja market, District Commissioner Cooper wrote to the Provincial Commissioner to complain:

"These two orders were unfair and I have therefore arranged that in the matter of buying and selling there is to be fair barter, prices [are] to be in accordance with the custom of Buganda, and that there is to be no priority of sale to anyone."<sup>43</sup>

Cooper's testimony advocates the fairness of a market free from government regulation. However, by appealing to local custom,<sup>44</sup> he flattens the differences between British notions of market exchange and Ganda systems of reciprocal obligation, in which it may be logical for different people to pay different amounts for the same item (according to their socioeconomic position). More significantly perhaps, such notions of 'fair barter' were at odds with the stringent restrictions on African entry into colonial marketplaces.

In 1901, the Protectorate government introduced the Trade Licencing Act, which effectively prohibited small-scale trade in colonial townships. Administrators described the purpose of the licenses in official correspondence:

"In regard to traders' licences, this was meant to safeguard the *genuine trader*, as the *small native* could not trade or undersell the genuine trader, since he had to take out the same licence. The commissioner's object was to remove the *small petty pettifogging traders*, whose object it was to undersell the *genuine trader*."<sup>45</sup> (Emphases added)

This correspondence provides an insight into the categories through which colonial markets were regulated and understood, including those of the 'petty' ('small') and the 'genuine' (big) trader, synonymous with the 'native' subject

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<sup>43</sup> Cooper, District Commissioner Kampala to Provincial Commissioner, 11/12/1910, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe

<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that Jinja is located in Busoga, though it is on the border with Buganda.

<sup>45</sup> A7/misc/13/02/1901, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe (c.f. Médard 2006: 166, note 97)

and non-native citizen respectively.<sup>46</sup> These categories bear some resemblance to those of the 'high' and the 'low earner' in the contemporary market (see Chapter 3), albeit positioned within a different cultural framework. While high and low earners are understood to exist in moral and material *relation* to one another (through the exchange of labour and provision of support), the genuine trader was seen to be in need of *protection* and *segregation* from the petty trader. As such, rather than defending the livelihood of the low earner, the notion of the 'petty trader' sought to denigrate and undermine it.

Describing the potential of the Ganda population, European officials identified "a general absence of the basic commercial attributes – integrity, assiduity, acumen and thrift" (Wrigley 1956: 216). From the British colonial perspective, a person's status in town was based on their economic productivity combined with a racialised conception of their economic potential ('the small native'). In contrast, Ganda conceptions of status were related primarily to the amount of followers a person had, on the understanding that resources were only valuable insofar as they enabled the 'feeding' of others (Hanson 2003; Scherz 2014).

Writing of other barriers to African entry into colonial markets, Byerley (2005: 173) asserts that the enforcement of stringent building regulations including entry covenants of US\$ 3,000 in town markets were one of the most powerful weapons in the "*de facto* segregation of different racial groups" in the Protectorate. The only African traders to survive these restrictions were a small number of Muslim chiefs who had managed to sustain networks with Arab and Swahili traders from the pre-colonial era (Mamdani 1976). Colonial officials projected a vision of the market as a centre of production in which the presence of the African petty trader posed the threat of social and moral contagion. The nature of this threat is captured in the report of a government researcher in colonial Lusaka:

"It is not undesirable for an African to make money, but the danger lies in the

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<sup>46</sup> Kate Fox (2005: 294) has written of the historical prejudice against trade in English culture, remaining from "the days when the aristocracy and landed gentry – and, indeed, anyone wishing to call himself a gentleman – lived off the rents from their land and estates, and did not engage in anything so vulgar as the making and selling of goods."

second fascination of marketeering, for added to the financial reward is the attraction of a leisurely way of life. The man is his own master: he does not have to follow the grind of monotonous labour; and chatting and gossiping in between sales is a way of life that has compensations even in cases where the cash receipts are not as big as from labor. In a great many cases this desire for the leisurely life has developed into loafing, paid loafing, for there are a few shillings profit to be made [...] Such profits are not deserved, and they are earned by a lazy man or unemployed worker at the expense of the consumer.”<sup>47</sup>

This passage demarcates African markets (both as principles and places) as dangerous insofar as they enable colonial subjects to escape the demands that had been placed on their labour. In Buganda, these demands were generated by the colonial authorities’ simultaneous enforcement of land reforms and poll taxes; developments that forced the African population to engage in labour “outside the realm of Ganda productive activities” (Hanson 2003: 154). Mbembé (2001: 31) writes of the role of such reforms in integrating the “political with the social and ethical” while “subordinating all three to the requirements of production and output”. This act of prioritisation is not one that would have made sense to the local African population, for whom historical modes of exchange and accumulation were predicated on social ties. Furthermore, scholars in other African settings have noted the role of chat and gossip in producing important forms of social affiliation (Kapchan, 1996; Pietila 2007) and ‘phatic labor’ (Elyachar 2010). In this sense, the colonial authorities failed to see the potential contribution of chatting and gossiping to the social reproduction of the colonial economy. Instead, they passed legislation intended to restrict the social or ‘leisurely’ activities of the African population, including laws prohibiting the daytime consumption of alcohol, following a prolonged debate on the issue of ‘natives and liquor’ (Omolo-Okalebo 2011: 196).

If trade licenses, building regulations and entry covenants sought to dissuade the entry of petty African traders into Nakasero market, other directives provided mechanisms for their forced removal. Laws against ‘idle and disorderly’ persons adopted from the UK Vagrancy Act 1824 came into effect in Kampala in the early twentieth century to facilitate the removal of persons

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<sup>47</sup> Brelsford, W. (1947) *Copperbelt Markets: A Social and Economic Study*, Lusaka: Government Printer: 34-35.

marked unproductive from the township. Regularly enforced in markets, these are the same laws used to remove people such as Alex Sserwanda (see Chapter 3) today. The laws were enforced by the township police force together with appointed market masters. The masters were usually African ex-civil servants with no prior connection to their appointed market, paid a commission proportionate to the market dues they were able to raise.<sup>48</sup> This arrangement placed significant powers in the hands of the masters, who were able to use their position between the traders and the authorities to leverage rents and favours in the market.<sup>49</sup>

Taken together, these regulations and restrictions reproduced the subjugation of the African population, who had no rights under the colonial state. However, rather than the straightforward segregation of 'citizen' and 'subject' (Mamdani 1996), they facilitated an elaborate process of attribution and assignment designed to discipline different bodies "with the aim of making better use of them" (Mbembé 2002: 113). The good African townsman – the 'good boy' or *bayi* in Nakasero – was understood to be hardworking and to abstain from drink, gambling and ambiguous social pursuits, much as he is today. More importantly, however, he was subordinate to an employer, rather than pursuing self-employment (or self-mastery) through engagement in petty trade. This restriction effectively reduced African work in Kampala to 'the lowest common denominator' of unskilled labour (Mamdani 1976: 35). Markets were therefore seen as subversive spaces insofar as they tended to shift and obscure dominant relations of labour: in the absence of a visible employer, where does people's money come from?

Southall and Gutkind (1957: 148) observe the following interaction between a Ganda customer and shop attendant in Kampala during the late colonial period, after a boy had just delivered them beer:

Customer: "That young boy has a lot of money, does he steal it?"

Shopkeeper: "No, he does not, he works very hard to bring water to us and he is a *good boy*."

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<sup>48</sup> This system continues today as the KCCA records and analyses the revenue submitted by individual revenue collectors in each market, comparing their performance.

<sup>49</sup> Middleton notes the power of market masters in his study of markets in the West Nile (1962: 561-78).

The category of the 'good boy', which remains so important to the social and material organisation of the contemporary market, arguably has its origins in the colonial township, derived from a need to label the socioeconomic status of young African men (employed or self-employed; subservient or subversive).

If the category of the 'good boy' was predicated on the need for male African labour in the township, colonial political economy provided no such space for female labour.<sup>50</sup> Instead, the category of the 'town woman' became synonymous with that of prostitute (Davis 2000; Ogden 1996). Like men, women also arrived in Kampala in search of economic opportunity. However, rather than participating in waged labour, they sought out diverse opportunities generated by the large concentrations of single men in the capital (Obbo 1980). The first African women in Kampala generated an income through activities such as food preparation, beer brewing and sexual services, domesticated forms of labour for which the colonial economy had created significant demand (Obbo 1975; Southall & Gutkind 1957: 51-65). However, rather than appreciating the contribution of such activities to the social reproduction of the labour force (and thus to the colonial economy), colonial administrators sought their restriction and prohibition.

Mission doctors and early colonial officers expressed concern about the role of prostitution in spreading venereal diseases. Again, such concerns quickly mapped themselves onto dominant categories of gender and race. Officials in Kampala saw in 'town women' the threat of moral contagion and the disintegration of the 'traditional' realm in which the African subject was supposed to reside; the place of 'proper women' was in the rural marital home rather than in town (Frankland 2007; Ogden 1996). Notions of female transgression was also reproduced in ethnographic accounts of the time, which remarked on African women's "insatiable appetites for sexual pleasure" and the 'inordinate importance' sexual satisfaction had been 'permitted' to assume in Kampala (Southall & Gutkind 1957: 72; 106). Christine Obbo (1975) argues that the Vagrancy Act was used specifically to harass women and the poor, who were frequently targeted in raids. However, as opportunities for women were being closed off in Kampala, alternative pathways were opening up in the Kibuga.

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<sup>50</sup> Although precise figures are hard to come by, Wallman (1996: 9) notes that colonial Kampala was characterised by a very high male/female ratio.

### **The emergence of alternative markets and categories in the Kibuga**

As Kampala's economy developed, increasing numbers of men and women moved to the fringes of the township, driven from rural areas by the need to generate a cash income in order to meet the rising costs of food, transport, taxation and school fees. By the 1930s, the population of the Kibuga had risen to over 30,000; five times that of the colonial capital, with a larger proportion of women (Calas 1998).<sup>51</sup> In the absence of colonial regulations, markets began to flourish, often developing on routes leading into Kampala on the edges of the 'green belt' (see Map 4.2). Unlike those in the township, these markets attracted a broad base of people, including the 'petty' traders prohibited in Kampala. A sporadic group of traders on the side of a road effectively became a market when they agreed to pay fees to a landowner, who was subsequently required to return a monthly sum to the palace. Daily fees were charged in place of monthly rents, facilitating a flexible model of marketing in which people could arrive on any given day and spread out their produce on a mat (see Plate 4.1), as remains the case in the open areas of contemporary Nakasero market.

However, the Buganda authorities had also become alert to the potential of markets as centres of revenue generation. The palace established four markets of its own in the colonial period, each managed by an appointed market master. Temple (1969: 350) asserts that fences were placed around the perimeter of Kibuga markets "in order to facilitate the work of the market master", suggesting that the task of collecting market fees and dues was never a straightforward one. In this way, despite their apparent freedom and distance from the colonial capital, markets in the Kibuga were nevertheless subject to the regulations of a centralising authority. In 1931, the Kabaka appointed a sanitary board for the Kibuga, including a Sentala (chief market master), however he did not share the colonial authorities' obsession with sanitation. The board made minor improvements to refuse collection in the markets, but was hampered by a lack of powers and finance (Southall & Gutkind 1957).

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<sup>51</sup> Although there is a paucity of figures for this period, by the late 1950s 69.9 per cent of Kampala's population was male, compared to 60.3 per cent in the Kibuga (Parkin 1969: 6)

The flexibility and accessibility of the Kibuga markets made them particularly attractive to women, many of who had to combine work with domestic responsibilities or had entered commerce after leaving a childless marriage (Mukwaya 1962). Of the dozen or so Kibuga markets that sprung up in the late colonial period, those at Lugala (I), Kasubi and Bakuli were run entirely by women, while female vendors were in the majority in the Nsambya and Nateete (I) markets (Temple 1969: 357). In contrast, the township markets were both planned and run by men, reflecting a male bias associated with the broader project of colonial economy (Badcock 2014; Greed 2003). The Kibuga markets sold meat, fish and staples such as matooke and maizemeal in contrast to the Asian and European produce sold in Nakasero market. They were also at the centre of a nascent economy in cooked food, driven by the large numbers of single male migrants in the capital. While butchering remained the exclusive domain of men, the production and sale of cooked food was carried out solely by women, as it is today. As such, the gender composition of markets often followed logics of commercial specialisation. Nevertheless, the entry of women into new commercial arenas generated a growing sense of moral anxiety.

In the precolonial era, women seeking to escape marriage in Buganda were required to gain the allegiance of a chief in another village. The chief would allocate them a place to live and a banana garden to cultivate in return for their assisting of his wives (Davis 2000). Such women were known as *banakyeombekedde* ('free women') whose work was largely unstigmatised on account of the fact that it was for other women, rather than for unmarried men. The existence of the *banakyeombekedde* demonstrates that women in Buganda were able to achieve a level of independence long before they moved to town. However, this category was differentiated from that of the *bakirerese* ('restless people'), who were understood to be transient men or women who would move between dependant relationships rather than seek independence (ibid.). Obbo (1980) argues that female *bakirerese* were highly mobile, and often returned to their villages with new ideas, clothes and methods of food preparation. However, unlike the *banakyeombekedde*, the *bakirerese* were stigmatised on account of the fact that they used sex to achieve economic goals and performed domestic duties for men who they were not married to (Davis 2000). As such, the *bakirerese* were more vulnerable to the label of the 'prostitute' (*malaya*).

The land reforms negotiated as part of the 1900 Protectorate Agreement enabled Ganda women to purchase and inherit land, providing them with possibilities for economic independence. Although still under considerable social pressure to get married, a number of women decided to combine being a wife with becoming an economically independent land owner, increasing instances of marital dispute and separation (Obbo 1980). In this way a new group of landowning *banakyeombekedde* emerged, many of whom moved to town in order to boost their income, adapting their skills to work in new commercial arenas. However, a number of the emerging economic opportunities in the Kibuga involved the provision of goods such as cooked food to strange men. As such, historical distinctions between the *banakyeombekedde* and the *bakirerese* – and by extension the *malaya* – began to disintegrate. Before long, the colonial category of the ‘town woman’ (*abekazi be tawuni*) began to be used in opposition to that of the ‘proper woman’ (*omukyala omutufu*; also ‘married housewife’) in the Kibuga (Davis 2000; Ogden 1996).

The ambiguous marital status of many of the women entering the Kibuga was the source of considerable anxiety in the palace. In 1917, the Katikkiro ordered the arrest of “all women who do not live with their husbands” (Davis 2000: 39). In 1941, the Buganda government introduced the Prevention of Prostitution Acts, which defined as a prostitute “any woman who habitually gives her body indiscriminately for profit or gain, or who persistently indulges in promiscuous intercourse with men though she derives no gain or profit thereby” (ibid.), effectively criminalising the presence large numbers of women in town. Southall and Gutkind (1957) subsequently observe the rise of ‘*mukwano* relationships’ (friendship unions) alongside ‘formal marriages’ (performed according to custom or religion) and ‘free marriages’ (long-term cohabitation) in the late colonial period. *Mukwano* relationships were understood to be temporary and involved greater degrees of negotiation, for example over what forms of domestic labour were to be performed for what amounts of money. As such, women engaged in *mukwano* relationships and free marriages were more likely to be labelled as *abekazi be tawuni* (‘town women’).

It is worth noting that changes to dominant patterns of marital relations were not only a concern to men and government officials. Southall and Gutkind

(1957: 167) observe the complaints of Gisu market vendor in Mengo in the 1950s:

"It is bad the way men make us work. We are just like the train working all the time. Men should marry us and look after us well and give us food and love us [...] If men loved us and looked after us there would be less trouble here [...] I have had four children and they are all without a father."

Her testimony is used to support the authors' argument that the 'worst evils' of urban life arose from the "gradual commercialisation of stable and traditional relationships" (ibid.: 58). Similarly, a married Ganda woman in Middleton's (1962: 570) study projects anxieties about single women onto the urban environment itself: "Shops are where you find loose women [...] there they meet strangers who entice them away and secure them."

Markets were and are seen to pose similar dangers. For example, in contemporary Nakasero market, Edward Walusimbi, whose words form part of the epigraph in Chapter 1, explained that he could not bring his daughters to the market because of the risk that men would 'confuse them' and seek to sleep with them.<sup>52</sup> As both a response to and a result of these anxieties, women created their own markets and carved out their own niches in the markets of others. Many of these markets were to be the sites of more dramatic changes in gender relations in the postcolonial period, described in the following chapter.

### **Urbanisation and the rise of the Jalu trader in late colonial Kampala**

The growth of the Kibuga markets did not go unnoticed in Nakasero. Indian traders in and around the market, organised through the Indian chamber of commerce, wrote to the Kampala Town Clerk in 1948 requesting the incorporation of the markets in Katwe and Wandegeya into the Township in order to put an end to 'unfair competition'.<sup>53</sup> Their letter reproduced the racial divisions invoked by the colonial authorities, claiming that the Kabaka's government helped 'Africans' in order to 'drive us away'. Traders in Wandegeya market responded by banning Indian traders and forming a

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<sup>52</sup> Airtime vendor in the Parkyard, 15/03/2014

<sup>53</sup> Indian chamber of commerce to Kampala Town Clerk, 18/11/1948 (Muwonge, 1977: 76-77)

'Buganda Traders Union,' which ran the slogan: "the African should be left alone for the sake of his own development" (Gutkind, 1963: 222). Increasing levels of political activity in the Kibuga markets created a new understanding of the marketplace as a site of anti-government mobilisation.<sup>54</sup> This concern, together with the familiar challenges of sanitation and revenue, led the colonial authorities to expand the borders of the Township in 1938 to include the areas around Wandegeya and Katwe (see Map 4.2). Furthermore, they passed the Markets Act 1942, which established: "No person or authority other than (a) the administration of a district, (b) a municipal council, (c) a town council, shall establish or maintain a market". The extraterritoriality of the marketplace was under attack once again. The Buganda authorities fought to retain control of revenue collection in the Katwe and Wandegeya markets, sparking a prolonged diplomatic standoff with the British administration (Gutkind 1963).

By the 1940s, the success of Indian commerce in Nakasero had seen many traders move from market stalls to the *dukas* that lined Market Street. However, the colonial authorities continued to restrict opportunities for African trade. In addition to trading licenses issued at the start of the century, the 1933 Native Produce Marketing Ordinance restricted the wholesale purchase of goods to a small number of 'reputable firms' in order to limit the 'indiscriminate' 'itinerant traders' who damage the 'legitimate wholesale trade of Uganda' (Uganda Chamber of Commerce 1933, cited Mamdani 1976: 165). Again, the trader's legitimacy was conceived of in terms of their contribution to centralised modes of colonial production (favouring purchase for export, over domestic distribution), and their spatial stability and hence *visibility* to the colonial administration.

A small number of African traders sought to move into the spaces vacated by their Indian counterparts. However, they were late to the market. Even when they were able to pay for expensive premises and licenses, African traders were unable to compete on the same terms as their Asian counterparts. Stonehouse (1960) provides an account of trading relations at the time. Asian

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<sup>54</sup> Most notably, Katwe market forged a reputation for anti-government mobilisation that remains to this day. In 1949, the Bataka Party was formed in the market; the first political party opposed to both the British and the Ganda authorities. Carol Summers has written extensively about broader political tensions in Buganda under late colonialism (see Summers 2005a, 2005b).

importers would place an order with a British firm who would then deliver goods on credit of three to six months. The importer then sold goods on to a wholesaler on the basis of a promissory note payable in three months. Following this, the wholesalers sold on to a series of sub-wholesalers on the same arrangement. Finally the sub-wholesalers sold onto retailers in places such as Nakasero. African traders attempted to enter the market on the bottom rung. One trader described his experience in a letter to a British newspaper in Uganda in 1946:

“We Africans are anxious to start trading among our own people but are at a loss to know how to buy on a basis that will allow of a margin of profit. Many have tried and failed owing to sheer ignorance. Those with sufficient capital to sell goods to Africans for resale, they are defeating themselves. On the other hand, to buy goods at retail prices does not allow of a margin of profit. Many [...] could with the help of some advisor start a small shop if he knew where to buy goods at wholesale rates. Could someone not tell us where the traders buy their goods?”<sup>55</sup>

His testimony provides an insight into the legacy of the segregation of the colonial economy; a legacy of day-to-day frustration that was to resurface in a popular boycott of Asian traders in 1959.<sup>56</sup>

The advent of a post-war Labour government in the UK led to a relaxing of the segregative policies that had been a hallmark of the colonial administration of Kampala. African settlements were constructed for the first time in the Township, and by 1948 the African population had grown larger than the European and Asian populations combined (see Table 4.1).<sup>57</sup> The main beneficiaries of these changes were the African migrants who had struggled to settle both in colonial Kampala, due to racial segregation, and the Kibuga, due to the cultural and economic dominance of the Baganda. By 1957, it was estimated that around 100,000 Africans lived within a five-mile radius of the

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<sup>55</sup> C.f. Mamdani 1976: 169

<sup>56</sup> The boycott targeted Asian traders' activities in rural areas, a domain in which they were thought not to 'belong', through boycott, arson, and violent attack. Low (1971: 158) asserts that the event was "by far the most singularly successful [act] in ejecting Asian traders from the Buganda countryside".

<sup>57</sup> The settlements at Kisenyi and Mengo are the subjects of Southall & Gutkind's study (1957).

colonial capital (Musisi, 1995: 125), of which the majority (51.2%) were non-Ganda (Parkin 1969: 7).

The Kenyan Luo emerged as the largest and most influential group in the new settlements (Southall & Gutkind 1957). East Africa's 'chief railway tribe,' the Luo worked on the line between Kisumu and Kampala, which was completed in 1931 (Lonsdale, 2010: 30). They were brought to Kampala to work as domestic hands in British households, many of which were still located on Nakasero hill. There they developed closer ties with Indian traders (as both customers and employees) than with the local African population. A second wave of Kenyan migrants arrived in search of factory work following the Mau Mau uprisings in Kenya in the 1950s and the expansion of manufacturing in Uganda. Margaret Abuya's father arrived to work for *British American Tobacco* during this period, while Frank Motovu's mother began working as an assistant in an Indian-owned shop in Nakasero.<sup>58</sup> It was not long before a strong Luo presence was felt in the market. Deogratias Baguma, who arrived in Kampala from Ankole to work in the Speke Hotel, describes Nakasero market at the time of his first visit in 1958:

"It was the main one in the country, the central one, built by the British government. People who dominated here they were from Kenya, because they had experience with vegetables, cultivating these vegetables. [...] They came with the British government, being their housekeepers and houseboys. [...] The Baganda were not making a good market. They were not business people. They were relying on government as the ones having money, they didn't have knowledge. They could have been the ones doing that job, but then because of the prize of becoming top class in Uganda, they became lazy [...] They were content with their land, rich land; employing people from elsewhere in Uganda to work for them. These people [Luo] came from nowhere, now they are the people who have got money!"<sup>59</sup>

Deogratias' understanding of the history of Nakasero as a Kenyan market or a Luo *chiro*, is supported by Temple's (1964) survey, which shows that 54% of traders in the upper market were Kenyan, of which the vast majority were

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<sup>58</sup> Monica and Frank are introduced in Chapter 3.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with market customer (78) 23/02/2014

Luo.<sup>60</sup> His testimony reflects some of the broader economic trends at the time; for example, the reliance of the Baganda on income generated from land and government employment. However, he connects these trends to popular cultural tropes, such as the notion that the Baganda were ‘lazy’ on account of their privileged position within the protectorate. Similarly, Ganda members of the contemporary market asserted that their ancestors were not accustomed to or interested in working in colonial Nakasero.<sup>61</sup> Seventy years after Kabaka Muteesa I’s establishment of Mwanakuyeeguilira, the Baganda were still suspicious of the centrally planned marketplace, and the socioeconomic relationships it implied.

This avoidance was partly due to the availability of other opportunities. The expansion of the colonial administration and relative expense of training and recruiting Indian civil servants had led the British authorities to invest more in the education of the Baganda in mission schools, and to the opening of technical colleges in and around Kampala, including Makerere University. Religious education was seen to be central to the production of social and moral order in the colonies. Mamdani observes that those who passed through the new colleges became medical, agricultural and engineering officers, while those who failed became “dispensers, police subinspectors [and] clerks” (1976: 158). In 1953, 40% of graduates from Makerere were Baganda (ibid.: 163). Godfrey Ssenoga recalled that Kabaka Muteesa II encouraged his people to take their children to school, and that Makerere became a “school for clever people and for the children for those big people [...] children of the chiefs.”<sup>62</sup> These children took over “the homes, the salaries, the privileges, and the attitudes of departing colonials” and became the *bagudde mu bintu*; the rich people “who had fallen into things” (Hanson 2010: 168). They demonstrated their place near the top of the class hierarchy through the construction of ‘elaborate homes’ and the “conspicuous consumption of imported goods” (ibid.: 163, c.f. Waliggo, 1976: 161). Accordingly, the division between citizen and subject was reproduced by a new generation of Ugandan institutions and administrators, albeit along

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<sup>60</sup> The Kenyan Luo constituted only eleven per cent of Kampala’s workforce in 1969 (Parkin 1969), which would suggest that they were particularly successful in the market.

<sup>61</sup> Interviews with George Mirembe, a moneylender (17/02/2014) and Godfrey Ssenoga, a fish vendor (09/10/2013, Luganda) respectively.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with a male fish vendor (60s), 09/10/2013

socioeconomic rather than racial lines. The decision to prioritise the funding of elite schools and universities over the rural network of 'village schools' in Uganda created a legacy of rural-urban inequality (ibid.).

The Baganda were also themselves significant employers of migrants. Both land-rich Ganda chiefs and relatively poor Ganda tenants were able to attract workers from across Uganda and the Belgian colonies. In 1940, 75 per cent of immigrant labourers in Buganda were working for the Baganda rather than the Europeans or the Asian commercial class (Karlström 1999). Hanson (2003: 166) attributes this trend to Ganda adherence to "non-commodified forms of social relationships" that were valued by African labourers. Jane Nalumu, the grandmother of George Mirembe,<sup>63</sup> talked of her childhood in Wakiso district in the 1940s and 50s:

"We grew up digging in our gardens. We used to eat the food we were growing; we never used to buy any food. Bananas used to ripen in the gardens. We used to grow potatoes and coffee, my father was very rich and grew a lot of coffee."<sup>64</sup>

Like Jane's family, many land-owning Baganda continued to make a living from the banana groves they had cultivated for hundreds of years, while selling other crops on the colonial market. However, historical modes of Ganda social organisation were undergoing significant change.

Appointed chiefs in Buganda lost much of their credibility as 'protectors of the people' owing both to colonial control of pathways to political power, and the disruption of lineage networks by the increased independence of women and the possibility that heirs may commodify their assets (Hanson 2003: 166). In response, thousands of people 'replicated chiefship on a tiny scale' by becoming owners of relatively small parcels of land (such as the *banakyeombekedde*) and offering reduced levels of protection and patronage to followers, who included people cultivating their land (ibid.). As such, Ganda expressions of reciprocal obligation were being developed in new arenas, with new groups of people, as part of new relationships. Of particular relevance to the future of Nakasero market was the understanding that labour is

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<sup>63</sup> George is proprietor of *House of Faith*, introduced in the previous chapter.

<sup>64</sup> Interview on 22/02/2014, Luganda

intrinsically a social relation, and an activity that entails obligations beyond the payment of a salary.

In the meantime, the Kenyan Luo were given space to carve out a niche in Nakasero, taking advantage of social and commercial connections to Western Kenya to import and sell carrots, onions and beans.<sup>65</sup> By the late 1950s, over a quarter of produce on sale in Nakasero came from Kenya (Temple 1964).<sup>66</sup> However, collaborations between Luo and Baganda, in business or marriage, were uncommon. Luo often attributed this separation to ‘differences in our customs’, their egalitarian social system contrasting with the hierarchical organisation of the Baganda (Parkin 1969: 285). Like the Indians before them, they protected their interests through political associations, and brought with them traditions of unionism developed in Kenya (Mamdani 1976: 238). Luo vendors and traders established clan-level institutions for burial (including repatriation), dispute resolution and saving, which continue to function in the contemporary market (see Chapter 7).

As Ugandan independence drew nearer, the ongoing transfer of resources from rural areas to urban centres, including those of education and healthcare and education, brought increasing numbers of Baganda to Kampala. In addition to mounting opposition to the Asian community, anti-colonial sentiment was fuelled by the decision by the British Governor Cohen to exile Kabaka Mutesa II in 1953 on account of his support for an independent Buganda. After signing a revised Buganda Agreement (1955), Mutesa returned to a hero’s welcome, having been seen to stand up to the British authorities.<sup>67</sup> Wary of growing nationalist sentiment and the prospect of political instability, the Kenyan Luo presented themselves as “law-abiding, passive urban workers”, unwilling to organise politically against the Baganda

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<sup>65</sup> They were able to take advantage of both the infrastructures of the colonial economy (the East African railway) and their physical position within it (on the flanks of Nakasero hill). In 2014, Uganda agreed a US\$ 8billion deal with a Chinese company to rebuild the 19<sup>th</sup> century rail network, including connections to Rwanda and South Sudan. When announcing the deal, government officials emphasised the role of the railway in cutting the costs of exports such as coffee and oil (rather than its enabling of passenger transport or livelihoods, for example). In this way, they demonstrated a prioritisation of ‘production and output’ comparable to that of the colonial administration (Mbembé 2001: 31).

<sup>66</sup> As is the case today, much of the rest of the produce originated from South West Uganda (Ankole), which was designated an ‘agricultural production zone’ by the Protectorate government.

<sup>67</sup> The negotiated agreement made the Kabaka a constitutional monarch.

(ibid.: 276). In 1962 the influential Uganda National Union of Clerical, Commercial and Technical Employees changed from a majority Luo to a majority Ganda executive, following an election in which Luo workers were persuaded to vote against Luo candidates, a shift that Parkin (1969) attributes to a broader transfer of power in the capital. This transfer was to accelerate as the incoming government rolled out policies of 'Ugandanization' (described as 'Bugandanization' in much of the rest of the country), which resulted in the expulsion of large numbers of Luo, and the entry of the Baganda into Nakasero in the early postcolonial period.<sup>68</sup>

### **Conclusions**

At the end of the nineteenth century, European missionaries in Buganda projected a vision of the market as a place 'for the people,' away from control of the government and monarchy. Markets subsequently proliferated in both the colonial and the Ganda capitals. However, these places bore little resemblance to the missionaries' vision. Instead, the authorities in Kampala and Mengo saw markets as places in need of careful regulation and management. For the British authorities, this regulation meant exploiting the role of the market as a centre of economic production and revenue generation, while controlling its role as a transmitter of disease and an incubator of subversive social and political forms, such as vagrancy and anti-government sentiment. Different disciplinary categories and devices emerged as part of this project. For example, the categories of the 'genuine' Indian trader and good African 'boy' conveyed the bodies and behaviours that were permissible in the market, while those of the 'petty' African trader and the 'town woman' identified those in need of correction and/or removal. Of these categories, that of the 'good boy' has emerged relatively unscathed in the contemporary market, while the genuine/petty trader dichotomy bears close resemblance to that of the high/low earner (see Chapter 3).

For the Buganda authorities, in contrast, markets presented possibilities for 'feeding' the people while reproducing the power of the monarchy. These possibilities were weighed up against the risks of moral contagion, represented, for example by the market's enabling of women to engage in domestic forms of labour outside of marriage. The categories of the *malaya*

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<sup>68</sup> These were employment laws, requiring employers to favour Ugandan candidates.

(prostitute) and *abekazi be tawuni* (town woman) emerged as dominant expressions of moral critique; categories that bear some resemblance to stereotypes of the 'aggressive' market woman and 'husband-snatcher' in the contemporary market.

The two models of marketing presided over by the British and Buganda authorities produced two types of market people: a group of predominantly male, Indian (and later Luo) vendors under the direct rule of the colonial township authority, and a group of male and female African migrant vendors under the indirect rule of Ganda monarchy. The legacies of these two groups remain visible in the socio-spatial organisation of Nakasero today, where 'high earners' pay monthly rents for demarcated shops and stalls, while 'low earners' pay daily fees in order to negotiate spaces in the open areas of the market. If there was a third model of marketing emerging in colonial Buganda, it was arguably in the smaller, predominantly female markets of the Kibuga. The size and transience of these places – many may never have been identified as markets – provided them with a greater level of extraterritoriality relative to their permanent neighbours. This extraterritoriality allowed space for experimentation with new social forms and expressions, including that of reciprocal obligation 'on a tiny scale' (Hanson 2003: 166), which were to enter Nakasero amid the disruptions of the early postcolonial period.

## **Chapter 5: “The Best Time Was in the Beginning”: Nakasero in Postcolonial Kampala**

Much of the scholarship on Kampala in the 1970s and 1980s draws heavily on narratives of crisis (Calas 1998; Jamal 1987; Kaberuka 1990; Mamdani 1983; Prunier 1983; Rubongoya 2007).<sup>1</sup> This crisis is thought to consist of three main elements: *i*) the disintegration of political institutions, *ii*) the deregulation of the economy, and *iii*) an increase in violence and criminality. Critically, it is thought to find reflection in the social and moral lives of people in the capital. For example, Calas (1998: 104, 122) asserts that the “crisis of the state” in the early postcolonial period brought about the “disintegration of the urban system” and produced a “collective memory of trauma”.<sup>2</sup> Mamdani (1983: 54) argues that a moral system emerged in which “any means of making money was acceptable”, while Rubongoya (2007: 50) claims that a generation of Ugandans were left “without the normative structure vital for a normal functioning society.” In this way, the disintegration of political economy was seen to facilitate the disintegration of social and moral life in Kampala.

This chapter traces the progress of Nakasero market in the early postcolonial period. It investigates the relationship between structural changes in Uganda and Kampala and the development of social and moral forms in Nakasero market.<sup>3</sup> In a slight departure from the scholarship outlined above, I argue that the disruptions of the early postcolonial period generated social and material opportunities for people Nakasero. The unsteadiness of political rule in the 1970s provided space for new forms of social expression and political negotiation that were read against a history of African exclusion in Kampala’s markets. Events such as the Asian expulsion were generally supported insofar as they were seen to challenge historical notions of the African-as-subject, encouraging the local population – including the Baganda – to live and work in the capital. As the military fragmented and violence escalated towards the end

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<sup>1</sup> This scholarship has largely been produced by male researchers in the fields of political science and urban geography: a point that has been picked up in feminist critiques, discussed in the section on “the rise of the female market vendor” below.

<sup>2</sup> The chapter dealing with the history of Kampala between 1962-1986 is simply entitled ‘*La Violence*’ (Calas 1998: 86).

<sup>3</sup> These forms are resurrected primarily through data gathered from life history interviews, which become more substantial as more of my participants enter the market in the 1970s.

of Amin's rule, people in Nakasero created and extended social ties or 'communicative channels' in order to ensure their survival (Elyachar 2010: 459). The period produced new patterns of obligation, for example towards displaced young men and women in Kampala, which persist in the contemporary market.

The chapter starts by describing Uganda at the time of independence, providing an outline of the 'Buganda crisis' and the slow advance of African trade in Kampala.<sup>4</sup> The following sections provide an account of the events that I argue shaped the development of Nakasero market during this period: the integration of the colonial and Ganda capitals, the expulsion of Kenyan and Asian traders, and the establishment of the *magendo* ('black economy') respectively. The changes experienced by female market vendors are then examined in detail. Finally, the chapter ends by charting the rise of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the holding of the first leadership elections in Nakasero in 1987.

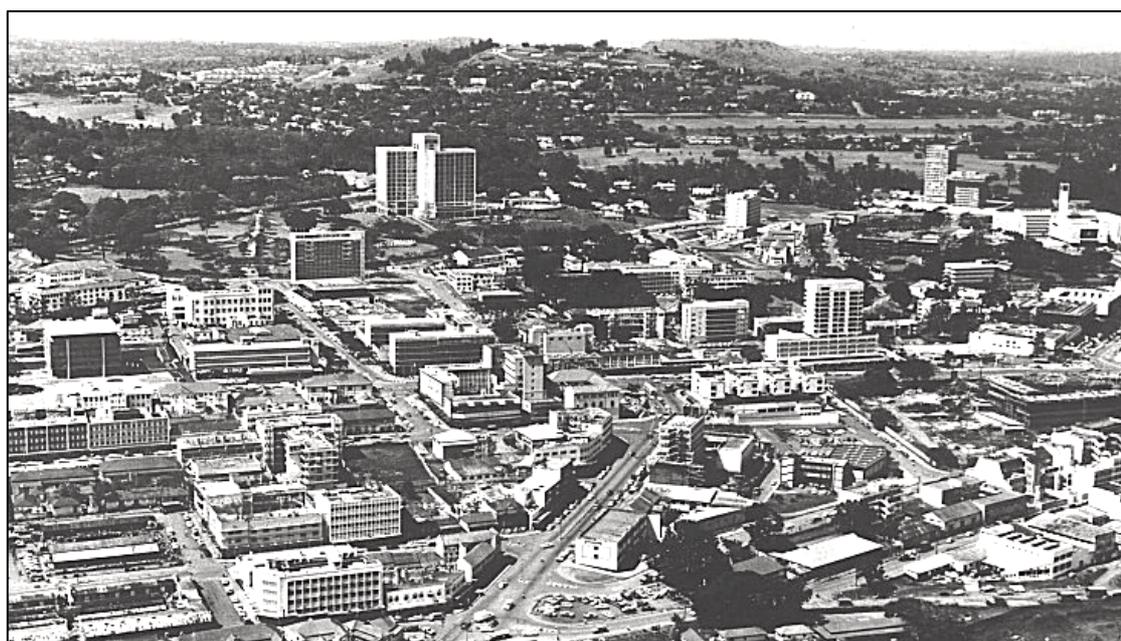
### **Independence and the 'Buganda crisis' in Nakasero**

The institutions of Uganda's independence were assembled in haste. The transfer of power was accelerated by British concerns about the possibility of radicalisation following the emergence of socialism in Julius Nyerere's Tanzania (Apter 1997). Uganda's entire legal code was rushed through the National Assembly in the six weeks leading up to independence in October 1962. British officials hoped that a conventional parliamentary system would ensure an equal balance of power between different regions. However, although the constitution was understood to be 'federal,' providing for the existence of four kingdoms within an independent state, it granted substantial powers only to Buganda. The *Lukiko* (Buganda council) continued to control public services and retained its own court system and powers of taxation, supported by grants drawn from the state.

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<sup>4</sup> Joan Vincent (1982: 29) writes of the influence of 'Gandaphilia' on the outlook of the British colonial administration, an influence that Ben Jones (2009: 40, note 20) argues has infused much of the historical literature on Uganda. I hope to taper this influence by placing emphasis on the accounts of the (polyethnic) inhabitants of Nakasero, while limiting my claims to the market itself.

Three major political parties contested the first Uganda National Assembly Election in 1962: the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) led by Milton Obote and supported by the north and east of the country, the Democratic Party (DP), formed by Baganda Catholics with the support of Catholics in other parts of the country, and the Kabaka Yekka (KY; 'Kabaka only') party, created by the palace in Mengo with the support of Baganda federalists. The outcome was a coalition between the UPC and the KY. Obote was declared Prime Minister and Kabaka Mutesa II the first President of Uganda. For Mamdani (1976: 228), this alliance represented an uneasy 'class coalition' between Ganda farmers and non-Ganda bureaucrats. Apter (1997) describes the historical inequalities between northern (Nilotic) and southern (Bantu) groups in Uganda as the 'big divide' of the early postcolonial period. Given the historical prominence of the Baganda, it was somewhat surprising that Uganda's political leaders in the early postcolonial period, Obote (Lango), Okello, (Acholi) and Amin (Kakwa), all hailed from the north of the country.



**Plate 5.1** Kampala after independence in 1962: Nakasero market is visible in the bottom left corner of the picture, and Nakasero hill in the middle distance, behind the Sheraton hotel<sup>5</sup>

The coalition lasted only four years. Suspicious of the Buganda authorities' ambitions for secession, Obote began reducing grants to the region. The Kabaka Yekka party responded by planning a parliamentary coup. However, their plan was leaked and five members of the cabinet were arrested. Obote

<sup>5</sup> Source: Oliver Keeble (<http://www.mccrow.org.uk/eastafrica/uganda/kampala/kampala.htm>, accessed 10/10/2015)

introduced a 'unitary' constitution that abrogated all of Buganda's federal powers. Ganda chiefs in the Lukiiko responded by demanding the removal of the Ugandan government from Buganda soil, making a unilateral declaration of independence. The stand-off ended in the overthrow of the Ganda administration by government troops, led by a young northern officer named Idi Amin. A revolutionary constitution was passed in 1967 that outlawed all kingdoms, declaring the state supreme. This sequence of events is often referred to as the 'Buganda crisis' (Green 2005; Karlström 1999; Mamdani 1976): the first purported crisis of the postcolonial era.

Jane Nalumu, who described her childhood in rural Buganda in the previous chapter, provided an account of life in Nakasero at this time. She arrived in Kampala with a maternal aunt in 1960, after her father had stopped paying her school fees. Jane was 15 years old at the time:

"When I reached here [Kampala], I found a man who married me and I had a child [George Mirembe's mother]. But life was very difficult; I started the market job in 1963 after my husband was imprisoned. He abused someone in Nakasero market where he was selling Irish potatoes, [so] they put him in prison for four months. I had nothing to do so I decided to go and work to feed my child. I was not yet 18 years old because I did not vote [in the elections of 1962]. There were no tomatoes in the market [so] men used to bring them from villages in old saucepans, boxes and baskets and they would sell them to us. Those days were difficult because getting money was difficult. But God is able because I managed to look after my child [...] Nothing much changed except there were wars that happened when they were trying to remove the Kabaka from power [...] I saw those things but I did not believe them to be important because I was still young. Most of the people I worked with that time are dead; I thank God that I am still alive."<sup>6</sup>

Jane's testimony emphasises the challenge of 'getting money' and feeding her daughter at the time. It provides a mixed account of life in Nakasero after independence; on the one hand she was able to enter the market and make some money but on the other hand it was 'very difficult', and the municipal authorities continued to exert control, for example through the enforcement of prison sentences. Whereas previous generations of her family were able to establish households in rural Buganda (Wakiso district), Jane went to Kampala

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<sup>6</sup> Interview on 26/02/2014, Luganda

in search of marriage and economic opportunity following the end of her schooling. The slow rate of change in the lives of urban African traders and labourers during this time created a growing sense of dissatisfaction, which the government sought to address through an extended programme of 'Africanisation.'

### **Africanisation and the slow advance of the African market trader**

Like many of its newly independent neighbours, Uganda pursued Africanisation programmes in the 1960s in an attempt to promote Africans into the privileged positions previously occupied by the colonial citizens. The civil service was expanded and many of the early graduates of Makerere University moved into professional and managerial posts. Housing and business premises in Kampala were offered to the African population at discounted prices. However many of these opportunities were monopolised by a new generation of Ganda civil servants. Furthermore, Sendi (1987: 116) notes that of the 2,325 dwelling units constructed in Kampala between 1962-1982, only four per cent were affordable to people on a low-income. While the politicians and civil servants of the newly independent Uganda were moving their families into properties on the hills of Nakasero and Kololo, Jane Nalumu and many of her neighbours in Nakasero market continued to leave Kampala at night, travelling back to shared houses in the Kibuga, which began to be thought of as a suburb of Kampala.

Obote's programme of Africanisation pledged new forms of support to African traders, providing assistance in the form of grants and premises through the Uganda National Traders' Association. In 1965, 16,000 of the 20,000 traders' licenses issued in Uganda were taken out by Africans, and African retail trade increased from 18 to 42 per cent of the country's total between 1958-1966 (Mamdani 1976: 236). On the advice of the World Bank the government also launched a series of initiatives to assist the expansion of larger African businesses. These initiatives offered credit guarantees and discounted purchases to African traders, encouraging them to bypass the Asian networks outlined in the previous chapter. However, Mamdani (ibid.: 246) dismisses this initiative as a form of 'token assistance' that concealed the enduring alliance between the (now African) government administration and the Indian commercial class, which continued to constitute the major barrier to the

growth of African business in the country. The majority of the African workforce in Kampala continued to face an uphill struggle for survival (Obbo 1980: 101-19).

Rather than enabled by changes in policy or a donor intervention, opportunities for African traders were fought for and gradually obtained by a process of incrementalism. One of the first signs of this was the emergence of the trade union movement, brought about both by declining working conditions and the presence of Kenyan factory workers, who brought experiences of union organisation with them in the 1950s.<sup>7</sup> The youth league of the ruling Uganda People's Congress (UPC) called for a general strike in 1963, during a period when similar strikes were taking place in Ghana (1961) and Nigeria (1964). The government responded by blaming the Kenyan population for "trying to sabotage the new nation" and imprisoning the organisers of the strike (ibid.: 240), losing support among the urban workforce.

Like the property market and the civil service, Kampala's markets were also 'Africanised' following independence but remained subject to a number of the political and economic restrictions of the colonial period. In Nakasero for example a number of shops and stalls were rented from Indian owners, while the market as a whole was subject to the controls of the Kampala City Council (KCC); the successor to the colonial Kampala Municipal Authority. Temple (1964: 166) provides a snapshot of the market after independence, following the construction of new stalls in the upper market:

"Activity in the market area begins shortly after dawn with large numbers of local *shamba*<sup>8</sup> owners arriving by bicycle to offer the produce of their own or others' gardens to both the market stall-holders of Nakasero market, others nearby, and urban greengrocers buying in bulk. The street above the new, upper part of the market fills with a mass of people, who soon spill over into the car park area. Not only are there buyers and sellers but also large numbers of unemployed people, beggars and scroungers, doing nothing except adding to the general confusion."

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<sup>7</sup> Kenyans represented 10 per cent of the Ugandan labour force at independence. Tom Mboya, a Luo, emerged as a founding father of trade unionism in East Africa (based in Kenya) prior to his assassination in 1969.

<sup>8</sup> *Shamba* is a Swahili term for a garden or plot of land.

His account of the density of the morning wholesale market finds echoes in my field diary entries, described in Chapter 2. However, in drawing upon categories of the 'beggar' and 'scrounger' he reproduces colonial discourses of the 'productive' marketplace, which conceal the diverse social and economic roles of people in Nakasero. Temple later observes that the market is "not a place for gossip, news and meetings" on account of the heterogeneity of the trading class and the "rigid structural control exercised by the municipal authority" (ibid.: 173). In this sense, social interactions in Nakasero continued to be subject to external regulation. However, the presence of 'large numbers of unemployed people' is suggestive of the beginnings of the Ghetto and of the work of the contemporary *kaveera* and *fasi-fasi* boys.

Nakasero continued to serve a critical commercial function in Kampala, accounting for 33 per cent of the meat and 64 per cent of the fruit and green vegetables sold in the capital (Temple 1964). Its central location and proximity to the road network enabled it to fulfil a dual role both as a wholesale and as a retail market. Rather than providing competition, other markets in the city staggered their opening times to allow for the purchase of stock from its wholesale market. Long lines of men with wheelbarrows and pushbikes could be seen transporting produce from Nakasero to other city markets in the early morning.

However, the market remained an institution largely in the service of non-African demand. Retaining a reputation as a 'rich' market and a *katale ka muzungu* ('market for whites'), it sold produce that was largely foreign to local diets; only onion and tomato were consumed as an accompaniment to the staple foods of *matooke* (a variety of cooking banana), *posho* (maize meal) and cassava. The smaller, residential markets in the former Kibuga were responsible for the sale of the vast majority of these staples in Kampala-Mengo, with Nakasero responsible for just three per cent (Temple 1969: 353). Temple (1964) observes that more than a quarter of the customers in the market were of Asian and European descent (a figure that excludes the Asian and European customers who sent African domestic staff on their behalf). Thus the division between the two models of marketing identified in the previous chapter persisted; the large, permanent, central markets which catered for the colonial 'citizens', and the smaller, flexible residential markets in the former Kibuga, which catered for the 'subjects'.



Differentiations between groups and products manifested themselves in the spatial organisation of the market in ways that are still observable today. Kenyans (predominantly Jalu) clustered around the imported fruit and vegetables in the upper market, while Ugandans (predominantly Baganda) presided over the sale of local produce in the lower market (see Map 5.1). The value of people's stock in the upper market was as much as eighteen times greater than in the lower market.<sup>10</sup> While people in the lower market often lived hand-to-mouth, those in the upper market sought access to supplier contracts that would enable them to challenge the "otherwise-ubiquitous Asian trading competition" in Uganda (ibid.: 177).

Divisions of gender cut across those of ethnicity and wealth. Women were in the majority in the upper market (54 per cent), as they are today (ibid.: 172). The majority of the Luo traders here were married women, whose income was used to supplement that of their husbands, who usually worked elsewhere. Mazrui (1979: 265) argues that the Luo have a historical "inclination towards urbanization" associated with their ambivalent relationship with land. Unlike the Baganda, this meant that husbands and wives often lived and worked in separate places; men in mines and cities, and women on small rural farms. Ganda men outnumbered women by a ratio of 5:3 in Nakasero and were in the majority in the lower market (ibid.). The majority of the Ganda women operating here either worked alongside their husbands or were single *banakyeombekedde*, reliant on the market for their total household income. However, the sale of cooked food, which had been a historical source of moral anxiety in Buganda, was yet to take off in Nakasero.

Female Luo traders exercised a threefold advantage over their Ganda counterparts through their connections to the imported fruit and vegetable trade, their access to goods and capital through marriage (at least in theory), and their advanced levels of socioeconomic coordination; established for example through supply chains and trade unions. David Abuya, Margaret Abuya's father,<sup>11</sup> was involved in the formation of the Luo Nakasero Market Organisation in the 1960s, which provided assistance for people's burial, school and medical fees. However, his position in the market was to be threatened by broader political developments in Uganda.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, 348 shillings in comparison to 19 shillings (Temple 1964: 176).

<sup>11</sup> Margaret is the produce vendor in the Upper Stalls introduced in Chapter 3.

## **The integration of market management and loosening of municipal authority**

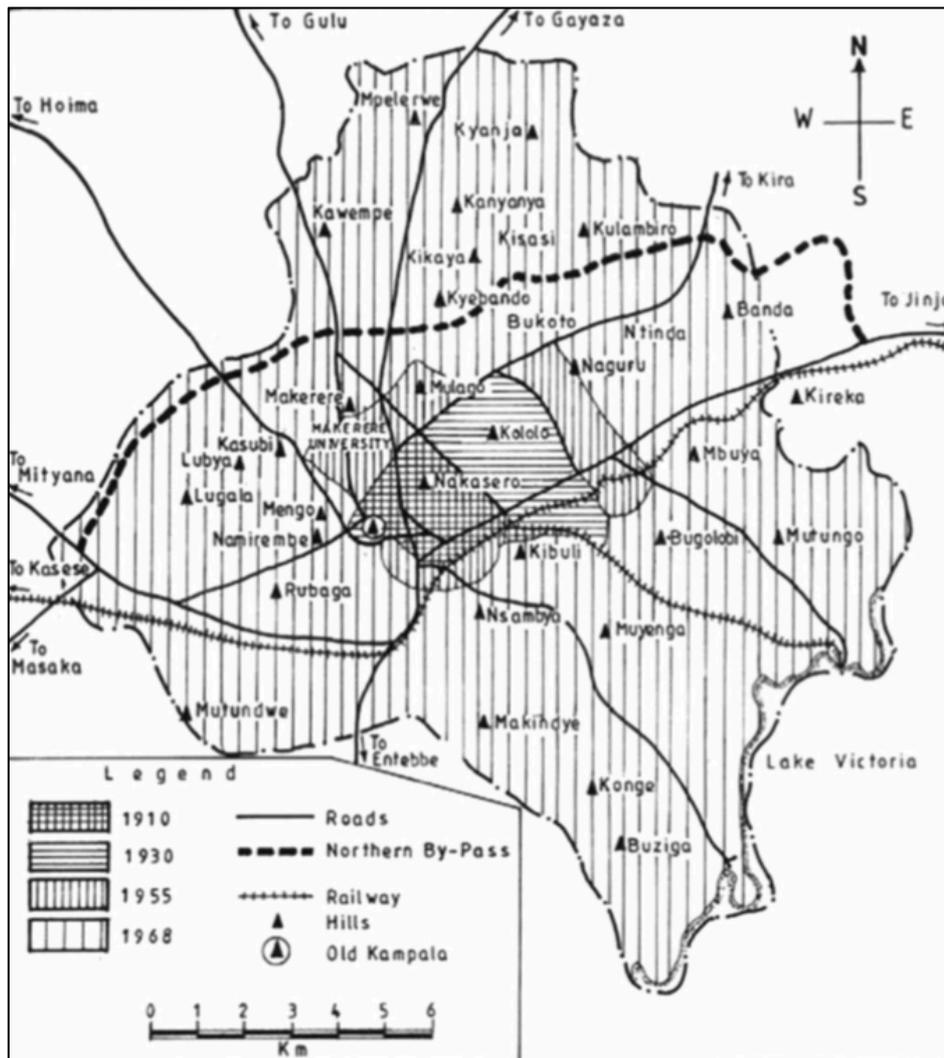
The dissolution of the Buganda administration in 1966 marked the end of the project to establish a 'modern' municipal administration in Mengo. Much of the former Kibuga was placed under the administration of the Kampala City Council (KCC), the successor to the colonial Kampala Municipal Authority. In 1968, the territory of Kampala was extended from 7.5 to 85.4 square miles, incorporating much of the private *mailo* land previously held by Ganda chiefs (see Map 5.2).<sup>12</sup> However, in spite of this expansion, the KCC's budget in 1969 was only £100,000; approximately one tenth of the amount needed to extend services into the new areas (Gombay 1997). Consequently, historical inequalities between the colonial and Ganda capitals in areas such as sanitation and health, became enduring features of modern Kampala (Brown 2014).

The Kibuga markets fell under KCC management, which after a brief grace period, began to enforce its authority. The markets at Kibuye, Namirembe, Bakuli and Mulago were rebuilt to give them a more 'ordered appearance,' with lines of sheltered permanent stalls similar to those of Nakasero (Temple 1969: 358). In a study of marketing mechanisms in the capital in 1969, Poleman & Olya (1976: 2) emphasise that the new structures at Kiswa and Kololo "rank probably among the top markets in the Tropical World". However, these new structures brought with them the inflexible monthly rents and entry covenants that excluded African traders in the colonial capital. As a consequence, many of the spaces in the redeveloped markets remained empty years after their construction (Temple 1969). This trend continues today in the redeveloped, 'modern' markets of the KCCA era, which remain virtually unoccupied years after their construction.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Mailo* land is land that was allocated to the Buganda authorities as part of the Uganda Protectorate Agreement of 1900. Organisations such as BANGAWA (Baganda *Ngabo* [shield] Workers Association) continue to fight for its return to the Kabaka. The role of BANGAWA in Nakasero is described in Chapter 7.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see WBS (2015) 'Wandegeya market, a business nightmare', 11 September, and Daily Monitor (2014) 'Usafi vendors want market relocated', 7 January.



**Map 5.2** Expansion of Kampala 1910-1968 (After Nyakaana et al. 2007: 8)

The KCC lacked the resources to regulate all the markets within its new jurisdiction. These continued to grow rapidly owing to improved transport links and the loosening of municipal control. Approximately 60 per cent of the income of the working African population at the time was spent on food, of which the vast majority was purchased in urban markets (Temple 1969). As these markets were redeveloped, vendors simply moved elsewhere, reproducing the flexible, residential model of marketing that originated in the colonial Kibuga. While Temple (1969) counts 36 markets in the capital in his 1964 survey, Poleman and Olya (1976) identify 49 markets only four years later.

The KCC looked for ways to lessen its administrative burden whilst taking advantage of new opportunities for revenue generation. It began to let municipal land to private tenants, including spaces in city markets, a shift also

observed by Clark (1994) in Ghana. Shops and stalls in Nakasero market were made available on 49-year leasehold agreements, requiring the payment of a premium and a monthly rent. Again, the first beneficiaries of this policy were members and associates of the political administration. Many stalls in Nakasero were given as gifts to civil servants and their families. The father of Ronald Male, a Ganda leader in the contemporary market, obtained four stalls in the upper market while working for the KCC in the 1960s. He eventually passed one of these stalls on to Ronald having sold the other three for a substantial profit.<sup>14</sup> The long-term leasing of stalls created an African rentier class in Nakasero who were often physically absent from the market.<sup>15</sup> The sell-off of market stalls was the first of a series of events that undermined the dominance of the Kenyan Luo, who lacked political support within the city council.

### **Before the coup: regulation, stagnation and the first expulsion**

Under pressure from an emerging class of African bureaucrats and businessmen, Obote's government began to erode the economic base of Indian trade in the late 1960s. Following the example of Nyerere in Tanzania, the government set up a series of marketing boards in an attempt to decentralise the economy and improve the position of the rural smallholders whose frustrations had led to the Asian boycotts of the late colonial period. In 1968, Obote established the Produce Marketing Board, which restricted the purchase of staple crops to licensed African businessmen within designated marketing areas (Mamdani 1976). Staffed by a new generation of African civil servants, marketing boards took control of produce distribution and created new alliances between government officials and a small number of wealthy African businessmen. Indian wholesalers fought back through a series of organised economic interventions. Instead of buying directly from farms and cooperatives, they used middlemen to buy in bulk from marketing boards. Following this, they took produce such as rice and sugar off the market, creating artificial shortages that guaranteed them substantial profits.

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Ronald on 14/12/2013

<sup>15</sup> Less than a third (31 per cent) of people operating from shops and stalls in the contemporary market are the lease holders (author's survey, 2014).

These events were sharply felt on the streets of the capital. The price of basic foodstuffs went up by as much as 70 per cent, sowing further discontent among African traders and labourers (ibid.). The conference of the Uganda People's Congress in 1969 ended with an assassination attempt on President Obote by a former party loyalist. His government subsequently outlawed all political parties as part of a purported 'move to the left', taking inspiration from Nyerere's model of *ujamaa* ('familyhood' or a variant of 'socialism') (Mazrui 1979). Obote issued a Common Man's Charter, dedicated to the protection of the 'common' African. However, the marketing boards were forced to begin selling to Indian traders again in an attempt to manage escalating prices. Having failed to dislodge the position of the Asian commercial class, the government set its sights on other groups of migrants in Uganda, shifting rhetoric from 'Africanisation' to 'Ugandanisation'.

In 1969, Obote's government oversaw the first census in independent Uganda. This exercise revealed that Kenyans constituted 5.1 per cent of the population and 27.1 per cent of the waged workforce in the country (Mazrui 1979: 262). The government subsequently announced plans to 'Ugandanize' unskilled labour in the country, creating a rift in political relations with Kenya and, to a lesser extent, Tanzania. Obote is said to have been suspicious of Kenya's flirtations with capitalism under Kenyatta, and its exportation of unemployed labourers to Uganda.<sup>16</sup> However, most of those affected by the policies of Ugandanisation had already been in Uganda for two decades or longer. The Kenyan Luo quickly emerged as a primary target on account of their visibility in urban centres. The Immigration Act passed in 1969 required all noncitizens working in the country to apply for entry permits. This regulation affected the African migrant population who lacked the capital and contacts necessary to survive the citizenship process (Mamdani 1976: 275).

The government set an official deadline of 1 September 1970 for the removal of all non-Ugandan citizens from the workforce. Approximately 30,000 Kenyans left Uganda, either retired, paid off or sacked by their employers (Kasozi et al. 1994: 120; Mamdani 1976: 284). The event constituted the first mass expulsion in Uganda's history, but it attracted little international

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<sup>16</sup> In this sense, there was tension in East Africa at this time between local socialism and regional integration; a tension evident in the fact that Obote's Common Man's Charter effectively justified the expulsion and degradation of migrant labour.

condemnation at the time (outside of Kenya), and has received very little academic attention since; a reaction contrasts sharply with that to the Asian expulsion that followed two years later.<sup>17</sup> The relative lack of coverage of the Kenyan expulsion was arguably attributable to the persistence of colonial categories. As fellow ‘natives’, Kenyans were not distinguished from the Baganda or Acholi in the same way that Indians were distinguished from Africans, and so could not conceivably be subjected to racial discrimination.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, as ‘temporary townsmen’, the Kenyan population could not be evicted from a place in which they were never considered permanent citizens (Southall & Gutkind 1957).

Margaret Abuya recalls her father David’s departure from Nakasero market having ‘lost everything’ during this period.<sup>19</sup> David had established a business as an egg vendor and supplier in the market, sending the profits back to his family in Kenya. He eventually returned to Nakasero in the late 1970s and was able to re-establish the business. Margaret joined her parents in Kampala in 2007, and took over the business in 2011. As such, the expulsion did not destroy the Luos’ social and economic ties to Nakasero. Rather, their repatriation represented another passage in the history of an exceptionally mobile group in East Africa (Mazrui 1979: 263).

Uganda’s first expulsion did little to improve working conditions for Ugandan market traders. Although ostensibly targeted at migrant workers, new laws also placed restrictions on Ugandan traders. For example, the 1969 Trade Licensing Act, an update on colonial legislation, required migrant traders to pay license fees of US\$ 80,000 (Mamdani 1976: 275). However it also introduced a compulsory payment of US\$ 500 for Ugandan traders; a not insignificant amount given that most market traders in Kampala made less than 12,000 US\$ per year (ibid.). Responding to the Act, one Member of Parliament declared: “You are trying to murder the small man” (ibid.: 275). The category of the urban ‘small man’; a relative of the colonial ‘petty trader,’ was becoming a category around which people in Kampala sought to mobilise.

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<sup>17</sup> Mazrui (1979) is the only scholar that has studied the event in detail. Mamdani (1976: 284) and Kasozi et al. (1994: 120) each dedicate a paragraph to the eviction in their respective monographs.

<sup>18</sup> The colonial administration allowed the movement of indigenous African populations between the territories of Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, under the single category of ‘native’.

<sup>19</sup> Taken from an interview on 23/04/2014.

Wary of Amin's increasing influence in the military, Obote sought to erode his support by promoting Acholi and Langi officers and excluding factions close to him. However, Amin retained considerable national support and had cultivated relationships with the Israeli state and Anyanya forces in Sudan. In January 1971, Obote made plans for his arrest on the grounds of the misappropriation of public funds. In response, Amin took decisive action, seizing power while Obote attended a summit in Singapore. Obote was exiled in Tanzania, where he began to plot a counter-coup with the support of Nyerere. Although debate continues on the various internal and external factors that contributed to the coup, it is clear that Amin could not have succeeded without the support of a large proportion of the Ugandan population. Soldiers justified the coup with reference to Obote's weakening of the Ugandan labour force and the East African Community, complaints that found support among African traders in Kampala. The atmosphere after the coup was said to be 'congenial', and the Luo began to return to Kampala (Mazrui 1979: 274).

#### **After the coup: the second expulsion and emergence of the *magendo***

To recap, the structural control of Nakasero by the municipal authorities continued into the early postcolonial period, restricting the emergence of alternative modes of social and moral organisation. However, this control began to wane following the integration of the Kibuga markets into Kampala in 1968. The failure (or inability) of the UPC government to translate the hopes brought by independence into gains for the majority of the urban population led to disillusionment among traders in Nakasero, for whom life continued to be 'very difficult' (Jane Nalumu). While this disillusionment occasionally expressed itself as anti-immigrant sentiment, fanned by the political administration, it also facilitated political organisation around the category of the 'small,' or 'common' man and woman. These two outcomes would be reproduced and intensified in the early years of Amin's rule. The following sections describe this period; a period that is widely thought to have provoked a sustained 'urban crisis' in Uganda and sub-Saharan Africa more broadly.

The legitimacy of Amin's coup was quickly established with Britain the first country to provide official recognition to his administration. The government

sought to deal with the factional split in the military by murdering thousands of Acholi and Langi officers (former Obote loyalists) and replacing them with recruits from Sudan and West Nile. Army officers were given positions in the government and civil service, forming a new military elite. Amin moved quickly to reassure African traders that he would do everything possible to place the economy in their hands. Although notoriously idiosyncratic in his actions, Amin was opposed to socialism and state manipulation of the economy and in favour of the Africanisation of private enterprise (Mazrui 1979). His pledge found favour among African traders in Nakasero, for whom the surrounding rows of *dukas* had become daily reminders of an economy in which they were unable to participate. Amin emphasised that he wanted to see African-owned businesses on Kampala road, 150 metres north of Nakasero market.

In October 1971, the government ordered a census of the Asian population.<sup>20</sup> At independence, they had been given a choice between becoming Ugandan citizens (23,000), British subjects (50,000) or re-establishing affiliation to the Indian subcontinent (7,000) (Mazrui 1979: 275). Amin subsequently cancelled the citizenship applications of over 12,000 Asians and accused the Asian community of “sabotaging government policies” and “failing to integrate into the community”; complaints that reproduced stereotypes of the ‘exploitative’ Asian trader, described in the previous chapter (*ibid.*). The historical position of the Asian community in Kampala, between citizen and subject, international market and local farmer, was under threat. On August 9 1972, Amin declared that all noncitizen Asians had to leave Uganda within three months. However, once it became clear that many prominent properties and businesses were owned by Asian citizens and could not be redistributed, he decided that only a total expulsion would do. Asian citizens were instructed to have their citizenship verified, only to find that their documents were torn up in front of them. Approximately 50,000 departed, and over 8,700 properties were nationalised and transferred to the Departed Asians Properties Custodial Board.

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<sup>20</sup> Given the history of the pre-expulsion census in Uganda (under Amin and Obote), it is unsurprising that people, and particularly minority groups, remain suspicious of research surveys in Kampala (author’s own experiences, 2012, 2014).



**Plate 5.2** An Asian *dukawallah* is arrested on Kampala Road during the three-month deadline in 1972. He was found to have concealed money inside a pipe (displayed on the vehicle)<sup>21</sup>

In October 1972, the streets of Kampala were lined with signs that read 'Property of Barclays' and 'Standard Bank.' Many of the vacated Asian properties and businesses had been indebted to British capital, another product of Uganda's colonial encounter.<sup>22</sup> Unclaimed shops and businesses were guarded by the military. Aware that most of the properties were being given to senior officers and politicians, soldiers began to establish their own patterns of looting and Asian properties soon became 'floating resources' in a system of 'institutionalised graft and corruption' (Gombay 1997: 95). Traders in Nakasero recalled that market shops were sold for around US\$ 2 million (now US\$ 800), affordable only by 'rich people.' This period is often identified as the point from which Amin's support base began to erode in Kampala as violence escalated and the benefits of the eviction remained distant (Gombay 1997; Mamdani 1976; Mittelman 1975), an argument that will be examined in light of the testimonies of market traders below.

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<sup>21</sup> Source: Uganda National Archives, Entebbe, courtesy of Vali Jamal / *History in Progress Uganda*

<sup>22</sup> This sparked a search for a new metropolitan power in the shape of France (via Libya) and the Soviet Union (Mamdani 1976).

The expulsion triggered a sharp downturn in Uganda's economy. To combat inflation and capital flight, the government introduced price controls and fixed the exchange rate. However, the combination of price regulation and an exchange rate pegged at an artificially high level incentivised the import of luxury items. Smuggling became widespread, particularly among coffee traders who would bring back sugar, soap and cigarettes from Kenya. At one point, coffee was thought to hold more value than Ugandan currency (Asiimwe 2013; Mazrui 1979). These activities became associated with the rise of the *magendo* or 'black economy' in Uganda (Green 1981; Mamdani 1983; Prunier 1983).

In his influential essay on the *magendo*, Green (1981) describes it as a 'brutally exploitative system' that spawned its own class system. At the top of the *magendo* were the *mafatumingi* (figuratively, 'those dripping with oil') whose dominance was established upon military connections and access to foreign exchange. Below them were the *magendoists*, who performed a function as shop-owning middlemen (the role filled by *dukawallahs* in the early colonial era). Finally, at the bottom were the *bayaye* (a sort of 'lumpen proletariat' composed of 'thieves' or 'thugs') who transported and retailed stock across the city.<sup>23</sup> While the well-connected were able to accumulate large profits, many smaller *magendoists* were "harassed into highly risky, unpredictable and costly operations" (Asiimwe 2013: 117). By 1980 the *magendo* constituted two thirds of Uganda's GDP, a remarkable increase from the estimated three per cent a decade earlier (ibid.).<sup>24</sup>

The rise of 'black marketing' has been observed in other urban African settings in the 1970s in relation to the imposition of restrictions on imports and currency exchange.<sup>25</sup> However it has rarely been associated with the types of moral transformation attributed to the *magendo* in Uganda.<sup>26</sup> Green

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<sup>23</sup> Obbo (1991) defines *bayaye* as unemployed, shabbily-dressed, foul-mouthed young men. The term originates from the marijuana (*njaye*)-smoking men of Kyaggwe who were active during the reign of Kabaka Mwanga II; a history that tends to be lost in the *magendo* scholarship (c.f. Davis 2010: 41, note 12).

<sup>24</sup> This is to say that two thirds of the country's economic activity was beyond the *official* purview of government taxation and regulation. One of the limitations of Green's (1981) essay is that he sees the *magendo* as being separate to rather than woven into the fabric of the Ugandan state.

<sup>25</sup> See for example Clark (1994: 372-401) in Ghana and Hansen (2004: 63) in Zambia

<sup>26</sup> Hansen (2004: 63) notes that in Zambia, "street vending was referred to as 'black marketing' in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when shortages of basic commodities

(1981: 44-5) for example argues that its activities represent a “gross contravention” of the “standards of public morality and acceptable conduct” in Uganda in 1970. Mamdani (1983: 53-4) holds it responsible for the ‘lumpenization’ of working people, the increased “disregard for productive work”, and the ‘idealization’ of “the ignorant, the rough and the tough”; assertions that bear some resemblance to colonial critiques of ‘petty’ African traders. Prunier (1983: 61) describes the *magendo* as a ‘cancer’ that has produced a “delinquent sub-culture”, while Rubongoya (2007: 50) argues that it “left generations of Ugandans without the normative structure vital for a normal functioning society.” Finally, Kaberuka (1990: 257) provides the following assessment of its legacy in Kampala:

“People from all walks of life, men and women alike, have sold their souls, have betrayed their relatives [...] in order to be rewarded with a part of the loot [...] Nothing has discredited the concept of private enterprise more than such a heartless quest for material possessions, totally devoid of any moral content or responsibility.”

Rather than the modification or corruption of existing moral frameworks, these accounts emphasise their disintegration, leaving behind an urban landscape devoid of *heart* and moral content. The symptoms of this ‘cancer’ were thought to be material greed and patterns of ‘incessant and conspicuous consumption’ (Mamdani 1983: 39). However, these patterns had been observed before, for example, in late colonial Kampala when the richest Africans “demonstrated their place near the top of the class hierarchy by building elaborate homes and the conspicuous consumption of imported goods” (Hanson 2010: 163). Furthermore, they would be observed again in relation to the crisis associated with the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (Wiegratz 2011).<sup>27</sup> In this sense, the literature on the *magendo* has tended to produce its own temporality, separate from that which came before and that which came after.

The image of Kampala as an epicentre of moral and economic crisis in the

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were a fact of everyday life.” For her, ‘black marketing’ denotes the changing legal status of the trading activities, rather than a shift in their social or moral content.

<sup>27</sup> Wiegratz (2011: 298) argues that “reform-induced shifts in [political economy] and [monitory economy] [...] have led to a considerable proliferation and normalisation of fraudulent, deceptive, dishonest and [...] and short-term-oriented practices - indeed a rich neoliberal harvest”.

1970s is somewhat contested by the testimonies of people in Nakasero at the time. As Mary Namuli and Jane Nalumu explained:

“From the 1970s, I would say that period was very good. I had four children, I could pay house rent and educate them and feed them [...] I would sell two tins of tomatoes in one day and the next day I could sell something else [in addition to tomatoes].”<sup>28</sup>

Mary Namuli, 76, produce vendor in the lower market

“The best time was in the beginning. When KCC was in charge [1964-1986] life was good. There were no problems like these days where people fight for things, there was no jealousy. In those days people were few, but these days there are too many people in the market. [Then] you would talk to people with one heart [*omutima*]. But these days can you talk to anyone on such a level?”<sup>29</sup>

Jane Nalumu, 69, tomato vendor in the Parkyard

Mary and Jane’s testimonies provide an account of life in Kampala that diverges from the focus on corruption and moral disintegration present in the literature. Mary asserts that the economy of the market, however composed, was working well for her at the time, while Jane’s reference to ‘one heart’ is indicative of a functioning normative structure in Nakasero, in contrast to the assertions of Kaberuka (1990) and Rubongoya (2007). Far from being a period of moral disintegration, Jane describes it as “the best time”.

When asked directly about Amin’s presidency, responses were generally positive from men and women, Christians and Muslims, Ganda and non-Ganda alike. He was described as ‘very good’;<sup>30</sup> a ‘real Ugandan’<sup>31</sup> and ‘people’s President’ who had “feeling for the common people”<sup>32</sup> (*alumilirwa abantu abawansi*). He was thought to have opened Ugandans’ eyes to work; giving them the ‘confidence’ to do business in the capital,<sup>33</sup> whereas before “people stayed outside the city”.<sup>34</sup> Anthony Ssegujja, a watermelon vendor in

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<sup>28</sup> Female produce vendor, lower market, 76 (11/10/2013, Luganda)

<sup>29</sup> Female produce vendor, Parkyard, 69 (26/02/2014, Luganda)

<sup>30</sup> Female ex-market food vendor, age 66 (04/05/2014, Luganda)

<sup>31</sup> Male paint vendor, 46 (07/11/2013)

<sup>32</sup> Male watermelon vendor, 53 (15/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>33</sup> Male customer, 80s (23/02/2014); Male butcher, 60 (22/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>34</sup> Female banana vendor, lower market, 76 (08/05/2015, Luganda)

Nakasero, noted that 'the Sheratons' (luxury hotels, visible in Plate 5.1) began to buy directly from the market during this period, rather than using networks of Asian middlemen.<sup>35</sup> Although described in a motivational language of 'confidence' and teaching, there was a sense that Amin had removed some of the historical barriers to African work in the capital, particularly for women. The voices of market women are largely missing from the scholarship outlined above. However, it forms the basis of a feminist literature, described in the following section, which claims that the 1970s were the first time when women were able to assert "a legitimate claim on the cash economy" in Uganda (Ahikire & Ampaire 2003: 28). Of the nine participants in Nakasero who recalled Amin's Presidency, only two had reservations, one related to the cruelty of the military, and the other due to the president's decision to execute people during Ramadan.<sup>36</sup>

Vendors described the most notorious aspects of Amin's presidency in positive or apathetic tones. George Mirembe provided an account of the Asian expulsion that had been passed down by his relatives in the market:

"During the regime of chasing away the Indians some people here from Buganda got the opportunity to obtain these kinds of good things, so people started coming here [to Nakasero]. They were not used to business so it was a bit hard [...] As you know [in] Uganda, most of the people are jobless and not so much educated, so the best way of earning something is in these markets [...] People started coming in so the people had to develop it a bit, they had to find space for other people to work; you see the market has little stalls but it contains a lot of people."<sup>37</sup>

His testimony provides a moral reading of postcolonial political economy: having previously occupied a position in society in which they were not able to access the 'good things', it was to be expected that the Baganda would seek to inherit them once the Asian population had been expelled. People present in Nakasero at the time said that the expulsion helped Ugandan 'brothers' to

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<sup>35</sup> Male watermelon vendor, 59 (16/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>36</sup> Male cart transporter, 66 (06/11/13, Luganda) and male butcher, 60 (22/04/2015, Luganda). The butcher's objection related to the timing of the execution, rather than to its existence. This was seen to show disrespect to Amin's fellow Muslims.

<sup>37</sup> Interview on 17/02/2014

'come up',<sup>38</sup> and to start 'enjoying life'.<sup>39</sup> However, some had reservations about its method. Mary Namuli said that she 'felt bad' during the expulsion itself, but "got used to it, and began to learn the business," while one of her neighbours in the lower market noted that although "people were happy", it was "bad that [the Asian population] had to leave their things like that".<sup>40</sup>

The *magendo*, meanwhile, was generally understood as a legal designation, demarcating "the things that are sold illegally," such as ivory and drugs.<sup>41</sup> Of the categories of the *mafatumingi*, the *magendoists* and the *bayaye*, only the latter remains in circulation in the contemporary market, used in opposition to the category of the 'good boy'. Vendors criticised the shortages of everyday goods, but noted that the *magendo* also produced new forms of cooperation in Nakasero. Mary Namuli recalled:

"If I wanted sugar I could leave my tin there and then I could leave it [for her neighbour to fill] or for meat, it could be sold secretly in baskets. [...] A friend could tell you 'I bought some', so you knew how much he or she could sell. There were people who used to arrest those dealing in *magendo* but we could somehow dodge them."

The disciplinary 'people' described by Mary included soldiers and plainclothes policemen. She and her neighbours in the market arguably constituted the class of the *magendoists* in Green's (1981) hierarchy. However, neither their activities nor those of people around them reflect a "gross contravention [...] of the standards of public morality" (ibid.: 44-5), nor of the rise of a "delinquent sub-culture" (Prunier 1983: 61). Instead, they were understood as ways of retaining access to goods that were previously abundant. In the process of retaining this access, market vendors forged new channels through which information and goods were exchanged. Glances and frowns took on new social meanings (for example to warn of the presence of an undercover policeman), while objects such as tins and baskets symbolised emerging relationships and needs.

Amin visited Nakasero in 1976 in what was widely understood to be an

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<sup>38</sup> Male fish vendor, 68 (09/10/2013, Luganda)

<sup>39</sup> Male watermelon vendor, 59 (16/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>40</sup> Female banana vendor, lower market, 76 (08/05/2015, Luganda)

<sup>41</sup> Female ex-market food vendor, 66 (04/05/2014, Luganda)

important event in the market's history.<sup>42</sup> Describing his visit, Anthony Ssegujja emphasised that he did not need a military escort (unlike the current president), and that he expressed an interest in people's work.<sup>43</sup> That Amin chose to visit the market underlines its importance at the time, both as a centre for food distribution and as a base of political support. It is perhaps not surprising that people in Nakasero reciprocated this support. Similarly, it is not extraordinary to note that people working in urban markets are not those that suffer during times of scarcity. What is significant however is that people in Nakasero saw the 1970s as a period of relative prosperity and solidarity rather than a period of social and moral disintegration. This representation may be partly the product of 'synthetic nostalgia' (Strathern 1995) and the selective remembering and forgetting of different aspects of life in Kampala. Nevertheless, the ties and interdependencies produced during this period were valued by people in Nakasero, and remained long after Amin's departure.

### **The production of social ties in 'authoritarian' Kampala**

If one strand of the scholarship on Uganda in the 1970s highlights the socioeconomic role of the *magendo*, another emphasises the fear and violence brought by Amin's brand of authoritarianism and 'fascism' (Kasfir 1983; Mittelman 1975; Mamdani 1976). A slightly different reading is provided by John Saul's (1976) work on the 'unsteady state' in Uganda. He argues that while the colonial state provided imperialism with a "quite direct and unmediated instrument" for the control of production, the postcolonial state was "too weak and too internally compromised to stabilize society and economy"; it was authoritarian but not authoritative (ibid.: 12). As a result, the defining characteristic of the Ugandan state under Amin was not its central control, but its unsteadiness or unpredictability. The notion of unpredictability is useful for understanding why certain groups, such as African market traders, saw opportunity and progress where others saw decline and disintegration.

In 1972, an English consultant led an enquiry into mismanagement in the

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<sup>42</sup> Male hardware shop manager, 26 (16/06/2014)

<sup>43</sup> Male watermelon vendor, 59 (16/04/2015, Luganda)

Kampala City Council. He found widespread abuses of office and concluded that the KCC “has been a very sick organisation for some time past” (Government of Uganda 1972). Responding to the report, Amin’s government created the Kampala Development Plan 1972, the first plan to directly address the legacies of the colonial segregation of the capital:

*“It is now quite unacceptable to produce another plan catering for the rich while ignoring the needs of the poor. Following present Government policy, it is necessary to have a plan which caters adequately for all sections of the population of Kampala, and it must be constantly borne in mind that 80% of the city's population belongs to the low-income group earning less than Shs. 500 per month.”* (KCC, 1972: 5)

However, the KCC lacked the capacity to implement these ambitions. If it had been a ‘sick organisation’ since the expansion of its boundaries in 1968, Gombay (1997: 117) argues that the KCC effectively ceased to function from 1972 up until the arrival of Museveni’s government in 1986, serving only as an employment agency for the relatives of government officials. Municipal garbage trucks fell into disrepair and, as spare parts were hard to come by, rubbish piled up on the streets (Decker 2010: 491). When the government sought to intervene in the capital, it sent officials from the military. Amin’s administration responded to price shocks by fixing the prices of basic foodstuffs in urban markets; a level of control not witnessed since the Kabaka’s management of the first market in Mengo. By the mid 1970s, there was a strong military presence in city markets and it was not unusual to see public beatings of vendors who were seen to have disobeyed the controls (Gombay 1997).

This moment provides another window through which it is possible to observe the relationship between institutional developments and lived experiences in Nakasero. People active in the market during this time remember prices being displayed on small labels next to their goods. However, they were quick to assert that these prices applied only to soldiers and government officials. The labels were swiftly removed in their absence and ordinary customers had to negotiate prices as they always had in order to

preserve the slim profit margins of the vendors.<sup>44</sup> Butchers shut up shop when alerted to the presence of soldiers, and hid parcels of meat in baskets such as those described by Mary Namuli.<sup>45</sup> In this way, people in Nakasero developed ways of navigating the regulations of Amin's regime, rather than submitting to them.

The relationship between Amin and Nakasero is further illustrated by the story of the founding of Owino market. In 1971 a large group of vendors operating in the open area of Nakasero, Jane Nalumu among them, were evicted by the KCC on the grounds of overcrowding. Conscious of the president's close relationship with market traders, 72 of the ejected vendors blocked his motorcade on Entebbe road, informing him of their plight and demanding a place to trade from. Apparently unaware of their eviction, Amin ordered the KCC to allocate them land for a new market. The KCC provided an area 1km south west of Nakasero, in the former green belt of the colonial capital.<sup>46</sup> This was to become Owino market, now the largest market in the country.

In summary, the early 1970s shaped the social and moral organisation of Nakasero in three ways. First, Amin's rhetorical focus on the common people (*abantu abawansi*) provided a social and political platform on which historically excluded groups were able to enter the city, to work and to organise. Second, the rise of the *magendo* and its associated shortages and restrictions led to the creation of new social ties and interdependencies in the market through which goods and information were exchanged. Third, these ties were extended out to influential political figures in order to provoke interventions through appeals to reciprocal obligation. As such, vendors began to bypass the municipal authority (KCC) that had regulated life in Nakasero since its inception, provoking a period of informalisation. These findings underline the importance of approaching Amin's rule in Kampala not simply as a state of blood, but a 'forum for agency' (Peterson & Taylor 2013: 59), and

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with male watermelon vendors, 53 and 59 (11/05/2014 and 15/04/2015), and male butcher, 60 (22/04/2015), all in Luganda.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with female produce vendor, lower market, 76 (11/05/2015)

<sup>46</sup> This account was provided by one of the affected traders, Simon Kalema, to Uganda Radio Network in 2009: (<http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=20378#ixzz3XQ6G743u>, accessed 30/09/2015) and was supported by Jane Nalumu's interview (26/02/2014, Luganda).

one that had a particularly profound impact on the lives of urban women (Bantebya-Kyomuhendo & McIntosh 2006).

### **The rise of the female market vendor**

Ugandan women became the focus of a number of academic studies in the 1970s and 80s as a result of their increased participation in the urban economy (see e.g. House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995; Musisi, 1995; Obbo, 1980, 1991; Wallman, 1996). These studies proceeded from a feminist critique of the literature on Uganda's development since independence, arguing that insufficient attention had been paid to the unequal outcomes of this period for men and women. Pulled into trading by a lack of alternative economic opportunities,<sup>47</sup> women often had to combine trading with domestic work, while coping with shortages of goods and health services (Ahikire & Ampaire 2003; Loxley 1989; Mitullah 2003; Musisi 1995; Obbo 1980).

In her study of female traders in Kampala, Nakanyike Musisi asserts that in the period of Amin's presidency, Baganda women were 'pulled into the informal sector of the economy more than at any other time in their history' (1995: 137). This claim is supported by broader patterns of demographic change in Kampala, which show a rapidly increasing ratio of women to men between 1969-1980 (see Table 5.1). Of the thousands of people that entered Kampala during this period, the majority were female.<sup>48</sup> Once in the capital, women generated an income by selling vegetables, milk and bread, brewing beer and preparing cooked food (Davis 2000).<sup>49</sup> In this way, they continued to contribute to the social reproduction of the workforce in Kampala. However, the composition of this workforce had changed dramatically since independence. Rather than a group of male migrant labourers working in production, processing and construction, it now consisted of small-scale traders, shop assistants and low-level bureaucrats, a large proportion of whom were female (ibid; Obbo 1980). Women began to trade from their households, on footpaths and roads, in the passageways between city buildings (*bikuubo*), and in open-air markets. They created new social and

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<sup>47</sup> Girls' enrolment at secondary school in Uganda has consistently lagged behind boys by around 20 per cent (Kasente 2003).

<sup>48</sup> By 1991, women outnumbered men for the first time in Kampala's history

<sup>49</sup> Ziegler's (1997: 96) thesis shows that trading was the most common economic activity pursued by women across four Kampala neighbourhoods.

material architectures in Kampala, including the female night market, or *toninyira mukange* (“don’t step in mine”) (Musisi 1995).

Table 5.1 Population and gender demographics in Kampala, 1969-2014<sup>50</sup>

Date	Population of Kampala	% Male	% Female
1969	329,497	55	45
1980	458,503	51	49
1991	774,241	49	51
2001	1,189,142	48	52
2014	1,516,210	48	52

The *toninyira mukange* was arguably a symbol of the subversion of British colonial planning in Kampala; an *open* marketplace run by *female* African ‘petty traders’ at *night*.<sup>51</sup> The *toninyira* model of marketing had been incubated in the small, residential markets in the Kibuga towards the end of the colonial period (see Chapter 4), but had not yet taken root in Kampala. Musisi describes it as a place where Ganda women pursue “aggressive mini-capitalist ventures”, selling food by the light of paraffin lanterns to meet a demand generated by shortages of food and cooking equipment (ibid.: 128). Women valued these markets for the income and friendships they provided, benefits that reduced their dependence on men. However, they were also characterised by envy, insecurity and accusations of witchcraft.

Although Nakasero has never been described as a *toninyira mukange*, the emergence of these alternate, female modes of marketing elsewhere in the city had an influence on the demographics and styles of the market. A comparison of Temple’s (1964) survey with my own shows that while the gender ratio of the market was virtually equal in 1964 (49% men, 51% women), women now constitute a significant majority (62% in 2014). Female traders also dominate the open areas of the market, such as the Parkyard (69%). In this sense, the two models of colonial marketing exist alongside each other in contemporary Nakasero; the centrally regulated, permanent markets of British Kampala,

<sup>50</sup> After Government of Uganda (2001, 2014) and Wallman (1996). The area under observation is that within the expanded, post-1968 borders (including both colonial Kampala and the Kibuga).

<sup>51</sup> Mbembé (1991; 2001: 2) has written of African opposition to colonialism taking the form of an ‘imaginary’ order that emphasises elements of the supernatural, such as witchcraft and night.

designed for and by men, and the decentralised, temporary markets of the Kibuga, often created for and by women. Although women's entry into the Parkyard was incremental and often contested (for example, in the case of Jane Nalumu's eviction in 1971), female vendors began to sell cooked food from the lower market for which Nakasero had created its own demand.

The entry of large numbers of women into urban markets in the 1970s posed a challenge to dominant gender roles, just as their entry into the Kibuga had done in the colonial period. Sarah Nalumansi, a Ganda banana vendor in the lower market explained:

“Amin's regime taught me to work. Before people were lazy, women would stay at home [...] they didn't have that greed [*mululu*] for money. Today, if a man tells you not to work, you just pack your bag and go, but before he could say no.”<sup>52</sup>

For Sarah's generation, which includes Jane Nalumu and Mary Namuli, the majority of female entrants into Nakasero were married; drawn into the market by circumstances such as the loss of a partner's income or the rising cost of living.<sup>53</sup> However, they were followed by a new group of younger, single women for whom the market offered an escape from 'joblessness'.<sup>54</sup> Many of these women faced a choice between marriage and self-reliance through trading, which may still have left them dependent on partners for additional resources. A spirit of self-reliance emerged, reflected in the rise of the popular proverb: “He who provides for you, controls you” (Kilbride & Kilbride 1990: 151).<sup>55</sup> New market styles came into being. Musisi's (1995: 136) research assistants noted that female traders “behave as if they were men, they are very aggressive [and] cannot be easily threatened like women in the old days”. Contemporary discourses of the 'strong' and 'aggressive' market women in Nakasero arguably date back to this period.

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<sup>52</sup> 08/05/2015 (Luganda). Sarah is 76.

<sup>53</sup> Women now contribute between 50 and 70 per cent of all household expenses in Kampala (Bantebya-Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, 2006; Kyomuhendo, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> Taken from Mary's follow-up interview, 05/05/2015.

<sup>55</sup> Similarly, a female university student in Lange's (2003: 10) study remarked “to us, marriage is the last resort”.



**Plate 5.3** A popular postcard displaying Ganda produce traders seated outside Uganda's new Parliament buildings in the 1960s<sup>56</sup>

However, despite their increased economic independence, women remained the subject of gender discrimination. As macro-economic conditions worsened in the late 1970s, Amin enacted a series of decrees prohibiting mini-skirts, 'hot pants' and long trousers.<sup>57</sup> The most damaging impact of these decrees was they encouraged public attacks and detainments. Alicia Decker (2010; 2014) writes that the highly gendered militarism of Amin's regime drew upon and accentuated hyper-masculinised identities. The categories of the weak (feminised) man and the immoral (town) woman justified and extended bodily policing associated with a project to 'Keep Uganda Clean'. Meanwhile, Amin reproduced notions of masculinised (tough) women who were understood to work in the security services, and hyper-feminised "mothers of the nation" who stayed at home (ibid.). The marketplace retained a liminal position between dominant domains and categories.

Discourses of 'town women' (*abekazi be tawuni*) began to be used to draw attention to the problems of youth, rather than lineage or sexual control, as in the colonial period. A generation of *bayaye* were said to have been produced by female-headed households who had neglected their families in favour of

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<sup>56</sup> Published by Sapra Studio (no. 179) in the 1960s. Information by *History in Progress Uganda*

<sup>57</sup> These prohibitions built upon public distaste for western cultural influences. A ban on miniskirts was reintroduced in 2014, and led to a series of publicised attacks on women.

their businesses (Davis 2000; Obbo 1989). Consequently, a distinction emerged between 'proper' *market women*, who tended to work in produce stalls and whose husbands were nearby and known, and 'town women,' who tended to be younger, single, and engaged in new and often mobile forms of labour such as cooking and waitressing. In 1975, Governor Nasur, who had recently been promoted to high office by Amin, proclaimed that unmarried women did not belong in Uganda's cities (Decker 2010: 505). In this way, male government administrations continued to seek power through the labelling and policing of women, and their rhetoric found some reflection in Nakasero. Older male members of the contemporary market often complained of the influx of 'undisciplined' 'young women' (*abakazi abato*) who are 'rude' to their customers, and 'lack respect' for their elders.<sup>58</sup>

Increased competition between city markets also accentuated divisions between women. For example, after visiting three Kampala markets in the 1970s, Obbo (1980: 138) notes that the Ganda vendors at Kisugu claimed that the Namuwongo market was "full of flies and Luo women who spat everywhere", and the Waigalo market run by Toro and Nyoro vendors with 'dirty hands' (*bigalo*). For their part, vendors at Kisugu and Waigalo complained that Ganda market women cheated their customers by overcharging them and selling them stale produce. Such examples illustrate the limitations of marketplaces as sites of uniform gender struggle. In Nakasero, the development of new forms of competition and collaboration was accelerated by the wars that preceded and followed the end of Amin's presidency.

### **The 'Fall of Kampala' and arrival of a displaced generation**

By the late 1970s, Amin had acquired the status of a pariah in the international press. After securing the allegiance of Libya and Saudi Arabia, he devoted himself to the domestic Muslim cause, prioritising Muslim Ugandans in the allocation of any economic opportunities that were left. Church leaders in Uganda claimed that Christians were under siege. In 1977, ministers from the Church of Uganda conducted a protest against military terrorism, led by Archbishop Luwum. Amin subsequently placed restrictions on church activities in Uganda, including the prohibition of Pentecostal assemblies.

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<sup>58</sup> Male butcher, 60 (22/04/2015)

Luwum was arrested and shot dead along with two cabinet ministers.<sup>59</sup> As acts of murder and intimidation became more widespread, military Generals came to fear the deterioration of their relationship with the President and regiments began to mutiny. The mutiny of the once loyal Malire Mechanized Regiment among others, led Amin to send for their capture in Tanzania. Nyerere responded by mobilising the Tanzanian civilian army, which marched into Kampala accompanied by a group of Ugandan exiles known as the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA).

The subsequent Uganda-Tanzania war, like the Ugandan Bush War that was to follow it, had a significant impact on the demographic development of Nakasero market. John Barigye, a produce vendor and leader of the Kabengo in the contemporary market described his arrival as an eight-year-old in 1980:

“I came when I was very young in 1980, during the war of the Tanzanians. I came with Tanzanian soldiers called *bakombozi* [...] When the *bakombozi* came to chase Amin away, all of us in the villages followed the soldiers because they used to give us biscuits and beef. We followed them because we wanted to eat biscuits and beef! [...] When I reached Kampala I walked and walked until I reached Nakasero; you know at the market there are always many people. At Nakasero there were whites [*bazungu*] holding baskets; something I had not seen before. I was sleeping on the [shop] verandas [...] and I would walk to different markets to get something to eat. I chose this market because rich people would look for someone to help, so that is when I got a chance [to work].”<sup>60</sup>

Joseph explained that he left home because his family in Ankole were ‘poor.’ The Luganda proverb *okufa obwavu nfe essasi* came into currency during this period: “I would rather die of a bullet than die of poverty” (Kiyimba 2013: 111). The market offered social and economic opportunities that were lacking in rural areas, while the presence of European customers provided a sense of exotic opportunity. Like Alex Sserwanda in the contemporary market, Joseph was able to access food and shelter while attempting to make a living as a customer shopper and *kaveera* (plastic bag) vendor; jobs that he combined for the next 16 years.

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<sup>59</sup> The road immediately north of Nakasero market was subsequently renamed from Visram Street (after the Indian businessman) to Luwum Street.

<sup>60</sup> Interview on 16/12/2013 (Luganda)

A great number of children have arrived in Kampala since the 1980s as a result of the insurgencies, economic instabilities and health epidemics that have swept the country.<sup>61</sup> A third of the women surveyed in Musisi's (1995) study were widows, orphans or people who had been displaced either by the Bush War or by HIV/AIDS. Similarly, the majority of the boys working as transporters and *kaveera* vendors in contemporary Nakasero originate from outside central Uganda. Over half of them (57%) have lost at least one parent, and over a quarter (26%) have lost both parents.<sup>62</sup> The histories of the Kabengo (founded by Joseph) and Jamaica corner (founded by Benjamin Ocwee, introduced below) are commonly traced back to the arrival of groups of displaced young men. By absorbing many of these young people and integrating them into the fabric of the market, Nakasero has served a historical function as a social institution in Uganda, combining the roles of a 'school,' a 'garden' and a 'pharmacy'. To return to George Mirembe's assessment of the period after the Asian eviction: "people started coming in so [vendors] had to develop it a bit, they had to find space for other people to work."<sup>63</sup>

The sustained absence of the Kampala City Council in the 1980s meant that new entrants had to conform to the moral codes of the market rather than the legal codes of the municipal authority. New arrivals were required to navigate the categories of the *muyaye* (thief or thug) and the *omukazi be tawuni* (town woman) rather than those of the 'idle' worker the 'beggar' or the 'scrounger'.<sup>64</sup> The contemporary distinction between the *muyaye* and the 'good boy' (*omwana mulamu*; present since the 1950s) gained prominence during this period as a way of categorising and managing the large numbers of displaced children and young men entering the market. While the 'good boy' was afforded shelter and given bits of food, the *muyaye* was chased away, often with the use of physical force. These categories enabled people in the market to show *heart* by acknowledging and supporting people arriving in Kampala with fractured or non-existent kinship ties. For large numbers of people arriving in Kampala during this time, the market represented a site of both

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<sup>61</sup> 200,000 external refugees were registered with UNHCR in Kampala in 2013 (Urban Refugees, 2015 <http://urban-refugees.org/kampala>, accessed 30/09/2015).

<sup>62</sup> Survey based on a sample of 20 *kaveera* vendors and 15 carriers (*fasi-fasi*) (response rate: 100%), May 2014.

<sup>63</sup> 17/02/2014

<sup>64</sup> Although these categories do bleed into each other; for example, in the contemporary market, the *muyaye* (pl. *bayaye*) is often understood to be 'idle.'

possibility and struggle, in which they sought to pursue new activities and relationships.

Benjamin Ocwee arrived in Nakasero as a five-year-old in 1981, a year after Joseph. Rather than travelling alongside the advancing forces from the southwest of Uganda, he migrated from Adjumani district in the far north of the country to escape the disturbances caused by the retreat of Amin's forces into Sudan, and the possibility of prolonged military action in the area. His father put him on a bus to Kampala where he thought Benjamin would be safer. Benjamin recalled his arrival in the city:

“I found myself on the Kampala road. I was like four or five years [old] so my mind wanted something to eat. There was an Indian man I found who asked me where I live. I didn't know any English and I was just looking at him like this [smiling]. I remember what he did; he removed some coins and gave them to me. Now I can remember that maybe the real place I was in is here [Nakasero] [...] When I found these people, like Livingstone, in the same place, I found my age mates [...] That is how we connected with each other; with Livingstone and then with [Phillip]. They had their families, Livingstone is a Muganda, but we made a family together [...] We said 'we can do something in the market; we can plant something for our future', and that is this thing which is here today [Jamaica corner].”<sup>65</sup>

Benjamin was taken in by Phillip Bakoki's mother, and enrolled in the primary school where she taught. Phillip's mother died ten years later, and Benjamin and Phillip moved into a home for street children in Kampala run by Kefa Sempigi, the founder of a local Presbyterian church. They began to work alongside John Barigye as *kaveera* vendors before establishing a base for middlemen on Jamaica corner.<sup>66</sup> The name of the corner is thought to be a reference to the Rastafarian styles adopted by the first young men working there and the ready availability of marijuana.

The Uganda-Tanzania war that brought Joseph and Benjamin to Nakasero culminated in the 'Fall of Kampala', during which Amin was forced into exile following fighting between his forces and the invading Tanzanian and

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<sup>65</sup> Interview on 30/10/2013

<sup>66</sup> The words 'Jamaica corner' are engraved in the concrete floor of the corner, which was last set in the 1980s.

Ugandan groups. The battle inflicted serious damage on the architecture of the city and was accompanied by waves of looting in the capital, first by Amin's military, and then by invading soldiers and citizens (Jørgensen, 1981). Obote regained the Ugandan Presidency via the ballot box in 1980. Yoweri Museveni, who had supported Obote's forces in the toppling of Amin, responded by returning to the bush to fight a five-year insurgency from Luwero in central Buganda. Once back in office, Obote faced the task of reconstructing the polity and economy of the country, whilst fighting a series of civil wars that claimed over 300,000 lives.

In his book *Kampala: La Vie et La Violence*, Bernard Calas (1998: 128) describes the period between 1979-1986 as one of widespread urban decline, in which Nakasero district was the 'epicentre' of violence and degradation. Although his analysis, like that of the *magendo* scholarship, prioritises structural developments in the military and government over the day-to-day lives of people in Kampala, it bears closer resemblance to the experiences of people in Nakasero than the previous period. Vendors described being harassed by both government forces and rebel groups, particularly during the war that eventually brought Museveni to power in 1986. Sarah Nalumansi explained:

"You would buy your things and then hear gunshots and run. Then you would find your things had been looted [...] We were scared whenever a stranger came. People would say 'the rebels are here,' and then you would run."<sup>67</sup>

Other vendors provided less dramatic accounts of the period; asserting, for example, "the war continued, but in the market we would go to work and get money",<sup>68</sup> and "there was tension" but it was usually "far from the market".<sup>69</sup> However, there was a general understanding that Nakasero had become a more dangerous and uncertain place than previously. The market was only open during daylight hours (07:00-18:00) and often closed early in the afternoons due to security concerns. Obote's soldiers were understood to be particularly 'tough' and undisciplined.<sup>70</sup> Looting became a major concern; for

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<sup>67</sup> Female produce vendor, lower market, 76 (11/10/2013, Luganda)

<sup>68</sup> Female ex-market food vendor, 66 (04/05/2014, Luganda)

<sup>69</sup> Male watermelon vendor, 59 (16/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>70</sup> Male cart transporter, 65 (06/11/2013, Luganda)

example, a watermelon vendor recalled having his watch taken by an army officer.<sup>71</sup>



**Plate 5.4** Lt. Gen. Bazilio Olara-Okello addresses traders in Nakasero market, 30/09/1980.<sup>72</sup> Women sit in front of the platform while men stand beside it

In September 1980, the Presidential Commission sent Lt. General Bazilio Olara-Okello (a future head of state) into the market in an attempt to appease tensions with vendors and enforce price controls (see Plate 5.4).<sup>73</sup> This consultation, like that which took place beside Amin's motorcade, was illustrative of the growing influence of market traders in their dealings with the political administration in Kampala. Furthermore, it continued a transition towards a more personalised relationship between traders and political figures that contrasted the impersonal forms of 'structural control' historically exercised by the municipal authorities (Temple 1964: 173).

Vendors responded to the challenges of the period by adapting and extending the ties they had developed in the 1970s. Mary Namuli spoke of how she kept hers and her neighbours' money safe from looters between 1981-84:

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<sup>71</sup> Male watermelon vendor 59 (16/04/2015, Luganda)

<sup>72</sup> Source: New Vision (2013) 'Bazilio Okello to be reburied in Uganda', 20 October.

<sup>73</sup> This account of Bazilio's visit was provided by a male watermelon vendor (16/04/2015, Luganda), and butcher (22/04/2015, Luganda).

“You know we had money cycles; I had a lot of people’s money so I wrapped it in black polythene bags, put it down in the water drum and poured three jerry cans of water over it. At home, I tore my cotton mattress and scattered the cotton and I also scattered my clothes so that when the looters came I could tell them that a group had come before them. That is how the money survived and also the household items [...] When the war was finished and I came back with people’s money, they asked ‘how did you keep it!’”<sup>74</sup>

Mary explained that she hid money inside beef offal while moving between the market and her home, and deployed registers of motherhood (“what will my children eat?”) on the few occasions when soldiers discovered it. Her testimony provides another example of people taking existing forms in the market – drums, offal, money – and putting them to new uses. Rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) were already in operation in the market at the time. Within these, a group of people would pay into a ‘money cycle’ each week, which would then pay out to one of the members on a rotating basis. These schemes were disrupted by the war, due to the difficulties of planning and saving. Consequently, whether deliberately or inadvertently, people like Mary began to save money on other people’s behalf. The association between money and risk that emerged during this period created a new demand for personalised methods of saving, such as that provided by George Mirembe’s *House of Faith* in the contemporary market. Similarly, water shortages in the city during this period encouraged the employment of ‘good boys’, who began to transport water from across town in jerry cans, while carrying messages and relaying information. This work combined the material need for water with the social and moral need to assist (and manage) the large numbers of displaced young men arriving in Nakasero.

In her thesis on social life in ‘informal settlements’ in Kampala, Rue Ziegler (1997: 204) argues that the historical proverb *munno mukabi ya munno dala* (“a friend in need is a friend in deed”) was often invoked as a justification to hide people during the regimes of Amin and Obote.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the challenges of the 1970s and early 1980s appeared to crystallise social and moral understandings in Nakasero market, as illustrated by Jane Nalumu’s assertion that “then you would talk to people with one heart”. In this way, the

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<sup>74</sup> Taken from a follow-up interview on 08/05/2015 (Luganda)

<sup>75</sup> The proverb bears close resemblance to the moral notion of having a ‘heart for helping others’ (*omutima omuyambi*), described by Scherz (2014: 142)

unsteadiness of political and economic developments in the period established the conditions for the production, as well as the erosion, of moral relationships in Nakasero. Obligations that developed around temporary conditions, such as that of saving money or transporting water, became semi-permanent features of life in the market, remaining long after the conditions had changed.<sup>76</sup>

Clark (1994: 217) observes the formation of 'egalitarian multilateral relations' among female vendors in Kumasi market in response to political and economic disruptions. Similarly, Elyachar (2010: 459) describes the establishment of 'communicative channels' among entrepreneurial women in Cairo that provide secluded forms of support. Although such (egalitarian) relationships were in evidence among discrete groups of people in Nakasero, the moral order (or 'heart') of the market as a whole appeared to rest upon notions of socioeconomic hierarchy: of 'rich people', established vendors and 'good boys'. Relationships between these groups arguably took the form of reciprocation 'on a tiny scale' (Hanson 2003: 166), through which new arrivals sought to attach themselves to established members of the market in return for their provision of forms of social and economic support.

### **Structural adjustment, Museveni's coup and the rule of the vendors**

In the early 1980s, markets continued to provide a key source of income to a government facing a recession and severe balance-of-payments crisis. Before long, Obote had little choice but to turn to international financial institutions to manage the national debt accumulated over the previous decade (Loxley, 1989). In 1981, Uganda embarked on a structural adjustment programme (SAP) under the tutelage of the IMF and World Bank. As part of the agreement, the Ugandan shilling was devalued from 8 to 78 to the dollar; a momentous shift, described by a vendor in the market at the time as the moment "when poverty started among us".<sup>77</sup> A number of scholars have noted the discriminatory effect of the devaluation on the urban working classes; reducing the purchasing power of people who were previously hovering precariously above the poverty line (Jamal 1991; Loxley 1989; Mamdani

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<sup>76</sup> For example, water carriers are still employed by vendors in Nakasero, despite the fact that the water supply is often only tens of metres away.

<sup>77</sup> Female ex-market food vendor, 66 (04/05/2014, Luganda)

1990). Distracted by an increasingly convoluted civil war, Obote was unable to sustain long-term political commitment to the SAP, and it was abandoned within three years. Gombay (1997: 99) presents some of the reports produced during this period. These include the Uganda Report on Urban Finance and Management, prepared by the World Bank in 1985. The study asserted that “better-managed” cities would require urban residents to “bear a much greater share of the financing” for urban services (World Bank 1985: 2). Furthermore, it singled out markets as key sites of revenue generation; a function that was well understood by the colonial administration of Kampala.

Obote’s second Presidency ended in a military coup led by his own commanders. On 27 July, 1985, Generals Bazilio Olaro-Okello (shown in Plate 5.4) and Tito Okello led a brigade of dissenting Acholi officers against the government, motivated in part by the favouritism Obote displayed towards his fellow Langu officers (Amaza 1998). A military council was established, with Tito Okello acting as *de facto* head of state. In the meantime, Museveni’s National Resistance Army (NRA) had established support through a ‘people’s struggle,’ that had succeeded in recruiting and integrating Baganda into its ranks (*ibid.*). Okello attempted to prevent Museveni coming to power through negotiations in Nairobi later in the year. However, the insurgency had gained the support of a number of other rebel groups, and set its sights on Kampala. On 26 January 1986, Museveni’s NRA removed Okello’s government by force.

Once in power, the National Resistance Movement sought to decentralise governance in Uganda through the creation of a series of hierarchical cells, a system that had proved successful in providing support to its guerrillas during the insurgency. These cells were gradually transformed into Resistance Councils (RCs), new centres of legislative and administrative power in which decisions were ostensibly based upon popular participation. Kampala was divided into five divisions (RC 3), 99 parishes (RC 2) and approximately nine hundred zones (RC 1).<sup>78</sup> All Ugandans were officially members of an RC 1, whose elected representatives then reported up to RC 2. A selection of these reported to RC 3, and so on, until they reached the Lord Mayor (RC 5). In November 1987, elections were held across the country and the first session of the Kampala Resistance Council was held. Leading the Council, Prime

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<sup>78</sup> RCs have since been rebranded somewhat more mundanely as LCs (Local Councils)

Minister Kisekka challenged 3,000 officials to take care of health matters in the capital and ensure that Council taxes were 'not swindled' (Gombay 1997: 121). 'Accountability' subsequently became a buzzword in Kampala as people questioned the ways in which RC funding was used.

Nakasero market held its first line-up elections in 1987, on the same day as the first RC1 elections. Five of the nine official Resistance Council positions were created in the market: those of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Finance Secretary and Defence Secretary.<sup>79</sup> Each position had its own committee. Candidates nominated themselves for each position, and vendors lined up behind their preferred candidate in the Parkyard. Three Baganda men put themselves forward for the position of Chairman; Peter Mukere, a shop owner in the upper market, Hajji Mbuga, an Irish potato vendor in the upper market, and Peter Masana, a stall-holder in the lower market. Voting generally followed the spatio-social division of the market; shop owners voted for Mukere, upper market vendors for Mbuga (including the remaining Jalu), and lower market vendors for Masana. Mukere was elected by a small margin in elections that vendors described as 'fair' and 'with no police' (in contrast to contemporary national elections).<sup>80</sup> Seventy-five years after the founding of Nakasero market, African traders were able to elect their own leaders, and – in theory – shape the future of the market in their own image.

## Conclusions

Rather than a ubiquitous instrument of violence and disintegration, the unpredictable nature of the Ugandan state under Amin provided spaces for the emergence of new groups and new modes of social and moral organisation. Significant among these groups were the female Ganda trader and the internally displaced child or youth. New categories emerged as part of attempts to manage, integrate and exclude new arrivals. The category of the *muyaye* began to be used in distinction to the colonial category of the 'good boy,' and the 'young woman' (*abakazi abato*) in distinction to that of the 'proper' market woman.

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<sup>79</sup> The omitted positions were Secretaries for Youth, Women, Information, and Mass Mobilisation. People in the market recalled that a number of women put themselves forward for the new positions, but could not provide any examples of elected female leaders in 1987.

<sup>80</sup> Male watermelon vendor (11/05/2014, Luganda), male butcher (22/04/2015, Luganda)

People responded to the challenges of food shortages, conflict and militarisation by creating and extending relationships and channels through which goods and information could be exchanged. These relationships connected and legitimised the work of different groups in the market, producing new livelihoods, such as water carrying, and new social institutions such as savings groups. Accordingly, the mid 1970s were recalled as a period in which people in Nakasero spoke with 'one heart', and were able to provoke personal interventions from influential political figures.

The early postcolonial period was also the period in which the Baganda became market people in Kampala. This development was a result both of the decline of alternative socioeconomic opportunities, such as agricultural production, and the emergence of new modes of access, such as the purchase of market stalls from the Kampala City Council. The following chapter traces the rise and fall of an influential group of market leaders amid the political reforms and privatisation initiatives of the 1990s and 2000s: a period in which the very future of the market was brought into question.

## Chapter 6: The Rise and Fall of a Market Leadership

“It is politics and money that leads us into trouble here. It is not religion, it is not culture.”

George Mirembe, proprietor of *House of Faith*<sup>1</sup>

“If U make gifts to the rich  
Or oppress the poor to get rich  
U will become poor yourself.”

A sign hanging in the former office of the market leadership

When asked about life in the market following its takeover by the by Kampala City Council Authority in 2012, people in Nakasero often invoked a distinction between ‘politics’ and ‘culture’. Social and moral decline was thought to have been caused by ‘politics’ and ‘money’; phenomena that I assumed had been part of the market for many years. As these discussions continued, it became clear that they were describing *particular types* of ‘politics’ and *particular uses* of ‘money’ that were thought to contravene valued principles and relationships in the market. Mikael Karlström (1999: 423) writes of the emergence of a similar set of distinctions in early postcolonial Buganda. He argues that a constitutive notion of ‘culture’ (*by'obuwangwa*)<sup>2</sup> began to be used in opposition to a straightforward notion of ‘politics’ (*by'obufuzi*)<sup>3</sup>. While the monarchy and kingship were seen as ‘cultural’ institutions that symbolised a collective morality, political parties were seen as divisive, ‘political’ institutions that sought to undermine it.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, ‘politics’ became associated with a form of ‘madness’ (*effujjo*), whose control was understood to require considerable strength of leadership (Kiyimba 2013: 98)

This chapter investigates the rise and fall of an influential vendors association between 2008-2012; a period that was widely understood to be the most destructive in the market’s history. I argue that the project of privatisation in

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<sup>1</sup> Interview on 17/02/2014

<sup>2</sup> A term that emerged as the dominant category of “Ganda cultural self-conception” in the postcolonial period, when it subsumed the concept of ‘custom’ (*mpisa*) (Karlström 1999: 331).

<sup>3</sup> This roughly translates to “associations pertaining to matters of rulership” (1999: 423).

<sup>4</sup> This dichotomy was thought to date back to the exile of the Kabaka by the Uganda People’s Congress in 1966.

Kampala, pursued by the government from the early 1990s, created a new idea of the market as a free-floating resource; a blank slate on which the political and economic ambitions of different groups could be written. Politicians and business tycoons began to infiltrate the social channels of the market in order to stake their claims over it. Facing the prospect of the sale and demolition of the market, vendors in Nakasero made a personalised appeal to an influential patron, just as they had done in the 1970s. President Museveni subsequently intervened on the vendors' behalf, awarding them the lease of the market. However, this intervention came at the double cost of a political debt to the president and an economic debt to the city council. Under the pressure of these debts, a group of leaders began to centralise authority in the market, elevating the idea of a redevelopment project over all other projects in the market. As their tenure drew towards its end, people described a sense of confusion and fear that was often attributed to the arrival of 'politics'; a disruptive force that diverted leaders from the concerns of their followers.<sup>5</sup>

I draw upon the work of three scholars (in addition to Karlström) in order to illustrate developments in the market during this period. First, Christian Lund (2006) writes of the emergence of new forms of public authority in Africa as 'traditional institutions' acquire government support and recognition (amalgamating Mamdani's 1996 'civic' and 'customary' spheres). He argues that to be effective "institutions must convey meaning, often by analogy, to the acts of authority", marshalling 'competing idioms' in an attempt to create legitimacy (ibid.: 700). Second, Achille Mbembé (2001: 142-172) has observed in such arrangements a process of 'doubling' through which symbols and practices begin to deviate from their purported objectives. For example, technologies such as ID cards, budgets and certificates often operate at a distance from everyday life, creating a sense of social anxiety (ibid.; Larkin 2013). Third, Janet Roitman (2006) asserts that rather than weakening the authority of the state (as narratives of 'informality' often imply), these institutions and technologies have served to extend and reconstitute it. In spite of hostile rhetoric, the relationship between state and non-state

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<sup>5</sup> An attenuated version of this chapter is published as Monteith (2016) A "Market for the People"? Changing structures of governance and participation in a Ugandan marketplace. *Development* 58(1): 58-64.

organisations is often one of 'intimacy' and 'conviviality' rather than outright opposition (Mbembé 2001: 128).

The chapter begins by providing an outline of the Structural Adjustment Programmes and privatisation initiatives that took root in Uganda in the 1980s and 90s. Following this, an attempt is made to position Nakasero within the political landscape of Kampala at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The protests and interventions that led to the awarding of the lease of the market to a group of vendors are then explored in detail before attention is given to the redevelopment project itself. The chapter ends with an analysis of the events that eventually led to the cancellation of the vendors' lease amid escalating violence in early 2012.

### **Urban development and the re-emergence of the city council**

In 1987, the Ugandan government agreed to a new series of Structural Adjustment Programmes with the IMF and World Bank. The loans attached to these programmes provided Yoweri Museveni with an opportunity to rebuild Uganda's economy and to legitimise his presidency. Rising growth rates soon led researchers and policy makers to hold up Uganda as a 'success story' of structural adjustment (Gombay 1997: 124). However, most of this growth was located in the agricultural sector. An ILO study in the 1990s found that over 80 per cent of urban employment was unregistered with the state; much of it taking place in and around city markets (Palmer 2004: 36).

Much as the colonial land and tax reforms had done eighty years earlier, the Structural Adjustment Programmes eroded the livelihoods of a significant section of the population in the name of developing more 'productive' sections of the economy, such as coffee, tea and cotton. Over half of the civil service (170,000) was retrenched, the trade unions slid into decline, and the cost of education and healthcare, particularly in rural areas, began to increase at an exponential rate (Mamdani 1990; Nyamugasira 1996). These changes had a particularly negative effect on women, who took on the additional responsibilities of caring for the sick, and for children whose fathers left after being unable to provide for their families. Large numbers of people continued to migrate to urban centres in search of work. Kampala's official population increased to over a million in the mid 1990s; one thousand times the

population of the British settlement established in 1892. Markets continued to proliferate in the city. The number of markets in Kampala increased from 95 in 1985 (52 gazetted and 43 non-gazetted) to over 200 in 2010 (55 gazetted and approximately 150 non-gazetted).<sup>6</sup> Many of the new, non-gazetted markets established during this period resembled the open, *toninyira mukange* model of night marketing, described in the previous chapter.

The World Bank soon turned its attentions to issues of urban development. In 1990, it created the First Urban Project, designed to improve urban management and service provision with a particular focus on market revenue and rehabilitation; priorities that reflected the dual colonial understanding of the marketplace as a provider of revenue and a danger to public health.<sup>7</sup> Plans were put in place to redevelop Owino market, then the largest market in the city, at a cost of USD 3.6 million (Gombay 1997). However, the World Bank would write off the whole project as an 'abject failure' six years later (*ibid.*: 274). This failure was partly attributed to growing anti-government sentiment in urban markets, and to the vendors' establishment of alternative modes of organisation.

In 1988, after fifteen years of dormancy, Kampala City Council (KCC) attempted to increase market rents in Nakasero from US\$ 500 to 1,170/month per unit in order to raise revenue for urban service provision (*ibid.*). In response, vendors organised a citywide strike and blockaded the council headquarters, as they had done with Amin's motorcade seventeen years earlier. This was the first time that market vendors had taken strike action; a move that took inspiration both from the spirit of trade unionism brought by Luo traders and labourers in the late colonial period. The council reduced the new rates and placated the vendors. However, only two years later, it attempted to impose a significantly higher increase of US\$ 5,000/month, based on the analysis of World Bank consultants. The vendors responded by striking, demonstrating and, in some cases, directing acts of violence against market administrators (*ibid.*: 244). Furthermore, they formed

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<sup>6</sup> Sources from World Bank (1985) and Goodfellow (2012). A 'gazetted' market is one subject to the regulations of the municipal authority (KCCA). Non-gazetted markets were officially illegal under the Markets Act 1942.

<sup>7</sup> Responsibility for market management was transferred between the Public Health and the Finance Departments of the KCC three times between 1984-1994, reflecting this oscillation (Gombay 1997: 130).

the Kampala District United Market Vendors Association (KDUMVA), which acted as a political lobby. Vendors in the KDUMVA wrote a letter of complaint to the Inspector General of Government (IGG), who subsequently agreed to launch a report on the management of markets around the city.<sup>8</sup> The IGG report concluded that the KCC had 'failed' to look after the markets and that it was 'not possible for the KCC to justify the increase in taxes' (ibid.: 246).

The First Urban Project was also undermined by the complexity of land ownership arrangements in Kampala. In 1993, the NRM agreed to the restoration of the Buganda kingdom, which was marked by the coronation of Sabataka Muwenda Mutebi II on 31 July. The kingdom promptly requested the return of the *mailo* land that was decreed to it as part of the Protectorate Agreement of 1900. The KCC transferred all of the markets located on *mailo* land back to the Buganda Land Commission, though Nakasero remained under its authority. However, Owino market was based on land owned by three different parties, and remained in legal limbo. By 1993, the council had debts of over USD \$1 million and was almost entirely propped up by the capital provided by the World Bank program (Gombay 1997: 125). Having lost faith in the ability of municipal authorities such as the KCC to deliver reform, the World Bank officials disbanded the program and began to advocate for the privatisation of urban service delivery.<sup>9</sup> The legacy of the project in Kampala was an increased distance between market vendors and municipal authorities, as illustrated by the proliferation of the phrase "*olina omutima mubi nga ogwa KCC*" ("you are bad-hearted like the KCC") (ibid.: 263).

Henry Bernstein (1990: 28) has argued that however undemocratic African governments may be, "they do have to confront the consequences of their actions [...] in ways that the World Bank or IMF do not". The First Urban Project in Kampala provides an example of how projects articulated a technical language are received in a moral one (Ferguson, 2006: 81). In some ways, the relationship that was to emerge between market vendors in

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<sup>8</sup> This letter is reminiscent of that written by Indian traders to the Town Clerk in 1948, which also requested government intervention (see chapter 4). Seen in historical context, the response of the IGG was indicative of the political gains of African market traders.

<sup>9</sup> A state attorney for the council subsequently disclosed in an affidavit: "Following the World Bank advice, on 18th May 1995, the finance sub-committee of KCC observed the need to expeditiously privatize the markets" (Observer, 2012, 'Ssebaana dragged into Basajja market mess,' 09 May).

Nakasero and the Ugandan government during this period reflected that which had developed between the Ugandan government and the World Bank and IMF. For example, George Mirembe remarked of Museveni's administration:

"Borrowing is the only thing we can do [...] that is what the government wants. [...] You see the government serving school fee loans, teachers' loans, everywhere loans. They want us to depend on them. [...] People are building houses on loans, educating their children on loans - that is how the government wants us to live" <sup>10</sup>

In this way, the debts of the Ugandan people mirrored those of the Ugandan state, facilitated through the expansion of the credit economy and the proliferation of businesses such as George's *House of Faith* (see Chapter 3).

### **Privatisation and the arrival of 'bad' people**

Unable to transfer the financing of services to the urban workforce, the KCC began to lease markets to private investors in the mid 1990s in order to maximise revenue while outsourcing administrative costs. This change reflected a broader shift from state- to market-led models to development within the global financial institutions (see World Bank 1995). In Kampala, it unsettled a basic idea of the marketplace that had been crystallised in the 1970s and 80s; namely, that despite the legal jurisdiction of the municipal authority, markets were in the moral sense 'with the people' (Bakhtin 1984). State officials were expected to meet and negotiate with market vendors, as in the case of General Olara-Okello's visit in 1980, or be met with public displays of defiance, as in the case of the strikes in 1990. Although rates and jurisdictions were contested, the future of city markets had never been in doubt. The prospect of privatisation threatened their future by reducing them to plots of land that could be bought and sold by actors external to the market.

The KCC had reputedly harboured plans to redevelop Nakasero market into a multi-storey shopping centre from as early as 1993 on the premise of easing congestion and bringing 'development' to the city centre.<sup>11</sup> However, these plans were disrupted by the election of a popular mayor, Al-Hajj Nasser

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<sup>10</sup> 17/02/2014

<sup>11</sup> Daily Monitor (1993) 'Giant shops centre to 'kill' Nakasero Market,' 17 September

Ssebagala, loosely aligned to the opposition Democratic Party.<sup>12</sup> Ssebagala was a Muslim Muganda who built his popular appeal on the fact that he was a son of a butcher in Nakasero market and therefore a son (*mutabani*) of market vendors across the city. His nickname, '*Seya*,' translates literally as someone who 'wanders' and 'makes visits,' and is understood figuratively as 'common man'; a label associated with populist politics in African cities more broadly (Haynes 1995).

Ssebagala was elected in 1998, after running a campaign that upheld the rights of vendors to manage their own markets against the KCC's privatisation agenda. However two months after his election, he was arrested on a trip to America for attempting to travel through customs with US\$ 100,000 in cash and US\$ 200,000 in fake travellers' cheques.<sup>13</sup> He was sentenced to 15 months in prison, but arrived home to a hero's welcome in Kampala, where crowds lined the streets to celebrate his return from battle with America.<sup>14</sup> For people in Nakasero, Ssebagala's apparent wealth and financial fraud did not constitute a violation of his social contract as a leader. Rather, it provided a demonstration of his resources and fame, which they could expect to benefit from in the future. This reaction was not well understood by international observers, who reported: "Kampala welcomes fraudster ex-mayor" (BBC 2000).

After briefly considering a bid for the Presidency, Ssebagala was re-elected Mayor of Kampala in 2006 under the banner of the Democratic Party, following the reestablishment of multiparty politics in Uganda. However, by this time city markets had witnessed considerable change. In 2002, the KCCA brought an end to a 15-year arrangement in which markets were managed by a combination of the KCC and the vendors themselves, instead offering to lease market land to private investors. This shift towards privatisation has been shown to marginalise and fragment vendors associations while legitimising the presence of powerful external interests in urban markets

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<sup>12</sup> Political parties were restricted between 1986-2006 so all candidates were technically independent.

<sup>13</sup> New Vision (2009) 'Ssebagala jailed in US over fake money,' 18 December

<sup>14</sup> He was met by government dignitaries and "thousands of supporters [...] waving banana leaves, beating drums, whistling and holding posters bearing the former mayor's picture" BBC (2000) 'Kampala welcomes back fraudster ex-mayor,' 3 February (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/629884.stm>, accessed 30/09/2015).

(Lince 2011; Lindell & Appelblad 2009). In 2002, Nakasero was leased on a 49-year agreement to Sheila Investments, owned by prominent city tycoon Hassan Basajjabalaba. After installing his own management team, Basajjabalaba increased rents in the market, which were now payable to his business. Vendors responded by complaining to the city council, which intervened to reduce the increase.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to the intermittent interventions of the military in the 1970s and 80s, Sheila Investments was permanently located in the market and so could not be easily evaded. It began to recruit vendors to work as rent collectors, instrumentalising their social ties in the market.

In 2004, Sheila completed construction of a two-storey block of shops in the upper market. A number of these shops were reportedly given to politicians, including Mayor Ssebagala, who rented them to restaurateurs and hardware traders.<sup>16</sup> The new owners constituted a second group of (largely absentee) landlords in Nakasero, following the group that acquired long-term leases of market stalls in the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Media reports later revealed that Sheila had subtracted the cost of the construction of the building from its rent to the KCC in a 'scam' that resulted in a loss of around USh 1.9billion (US\$ 760,000) to the council.<sup>18</sup> In early 2007, Sheila began to evacuate shops and offices in the new building and to remove part of the roof, apparently in preparation for the demolition of the market. Describing these events, George Mirembe quoted the Ganda proverb "*okuba e kinga mu ki saka*" ("to throw stones in the bush to see what happens").<sup>19</sup> The rapid construction and deconstruction of the building was the first of a number of incidences of 'doubling' in the market, through which the meaning of things began to diverge from their purported objectives.

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<sup>15</sup> New Vision (2003) 'City Council to revise rent charges,' October 29. The history of privatisation in Kampala, as in many other places in the world, is permeated with examples of government intervention after the fact; an irony that illustrates the gulf that often emerges between the idea and the reality of private ownership of public services.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with male former tomato vendor, Parkyard (14/05/2014)

<sup>17</sup> The latter group had amassed considerable profits as a result of the increased demand for space in city markets. In 2014, people with lease agreements with the city council were paying USh 13,500/month for stalls and 500,000 for shop facilities, while renting them out for as much as USh 300,000 and USh 1.5 million respectively.

<sup>18</sup> New Vision (2006) 'MP Byandaala implicated in Nakasero scam,' 10 July

<sup>19</sup> 14/05/2014



**Plate 6.1** Front page coverage of Nakasero market in national newspapers, 2007-12. The market featured on the front pages of the *New Vision*, *Monitor* and *Observer* 14 times during this period.

On 22 January 2007, the front page of the *New Vision* newspaper led with a picture of the market, accompanied by the headline “Basajja buys Nakasero Market.” Basajjabalaba had negotiated the purchase of the land on which the market stands for around US\$ 248 million (US\$ 99,200) in a ‘silent sale’ that represented a fraction of its estimated value.<sup>20</sup> The sale was initially blocked but then authorised by the returning ‘son’ of the market, Mayor Ssebagala, who inserted a condition that the vendors be given a 30 per cent stake in the redevelopment, in addition to a 10 per cent stake he reportedly negotiated for himself (Goodfellow 2012: 171). This deal had been arranged between Ssebagala, Basajjabalaba, and the new class of shop owners in the market, who were presented as representatives of the market.<sup>21</sup> Defending his role in the sale, Ssebagala appeared to use doublespeak: “I promised to protect the common person. That is why KCC gave them [the vendors] the 30 per cent share to develop the market.” He then claimed defiantly “The [Kampala] master plan will not allow markets in town, they should be at the outskirts [...] We want high technology merchandise in the city centre, not tomatoes and pawpaws.”<sup>22</sup> This notion of spatio-economic hierarchy (‘genuine’ goods in the centre, ‘petty’ goods outside) bears close resemblance to colonial urban planning, updated with a reference to ‘high technology’. By prioritising the ‘master plan’, Ssebagala began to speak *over* people in Nakasero rather than

<sup>20</sup> The market sits on Plots 4B and 7B on Market Street

<sup>21</sup> Vendors in the new shops also gave their support, wary of the threat of eviction.

<sup>22</sup> *New Vision* (2007) ‘Nakasero market to be razed – Ssebagala’, 12 February.

for them. His role in the sale was widely perceived as an act of betrayal for which he was banned from entering the market.<sup>23</sup>

This period saw Nakasero market become a stage on which different visions of Kampala's future were projected and critiqued (see Plate 6.1). The idea of the market as a place for the 'common people', defended by the vendors and the opposition, came into conflict with a new vision of the market as a space for the realisation of Kampala's 'modern' future, promoted by sections of the government and business elite. This division was a historical relative of that between the 'petty' African traders and the 'genuine' Asian businesses favoured by the colonial administration. However, distinctions between different groups and interests became blurred.

Thomas Muwenda, a *matooke* vendor in the lower market provided a description of life in the market at the time:

"You know with this situation [the planned sale], at times we are confused. Those we call 'bad' have people behind them. A person can be like you or me and say: 'Go away from the market because I bought it,' [...] and even show you the land titles, but behind that person there is another person. The public sees me but behind me there is another person. That is why the big men buying the market often come with a big squad of police and tear gas and armouries, because they have people behind them."<sup>24</sup>

Thomas' account describes an emerging tendency for people to hide their allegiances and to draw power from forms of documentation rather than the visible support of their followers. Although the historical relationship between vendors and the municipal authorities had been antagonistic, it was based on ties and agendas that were largely visible and therefore negotiable. In contrast, new expressions of rentier capitalism and multiparty politics had combined to create new, hidden spheres of influence, facilitated by the rise of absentee landlordism, front corporations<sup>25</sup> and cross-party deals.<sup>26</sup> The state, in

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<sup>23</sup> Ssebagala subsequently joined the ruling NRM party in 2011 and was appointed 'Senior Presidential Advisor for Special Duties'.

<sup>24</sup> Male *matooke* vendor, lower market (16/10/2013)

<sup>25</sup> Basajjabalaba sought to acquire markets and land in Kampala through five different companies. Owino market was leased to Victoria International Trading Company Ltd., which is registered to him.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Ssebagala's switch to the ruling National Resistance Movement.

Thomas' account, is dispersed and transitory, appearing in the form of the "tear gas and armouries" commanded by "big men".

Thomas also provides a reading of the importance of 'having people' that speaks to the work of Hanson (2003) and Scherz (2014). While Hanson emphasises the role of political plurality (multiple leaders) in providing historical accountability in Buganda, Scherz writes of the contemporary value of 'wealth in people' through the acquisition of multiple ties and obligations. However, Thomas provides a reminder that 'bad' people also have people. In place of plurality, he emphasises the importance of the *visibility* of one's ties and obligations. On this understanding, social stability and accountability are provided not by having people 'behind' you, hidden in your shadow, but by having people alongside you, in the light. The prospect of privatisation had arguably cast new shadows on the market which vendors sought to dispel through an appeal to an influential patron.

### **Protest, division and the leveraging of a presidential intervention**

In the wake of the proposed sale of Nakasero, two separate vendors' associations were established and registered as limited companies, mirroring the legal form taken by Sheila Investments and other businesses involved in the leasing of city markets. Nakasero Market Sitting Tenants Limited (NAMASITE) was formed by the shop owners who had negotiated the sale of the market, and Nakasero Sitting Traders, and Vendors Limited (NMSVT) by long-term stall vendors who were strongly opposed to the sale. The relative wealth of NAMASITE's members formed a basis of critique for other people in the market, who labelled them 'Basajja's regime', and emphasised the division between 'the owners' and 'us'.<sup>27</sup> A new form of class conflict was emerging in the market. Clashes between the two groups led to sporadic outbursts of violence; the first such incidents recalled by elder members of the market.<sup>28</sup> It was during one of these clashes that US\$ 3million (US\$ 1,200) was stolen from George's Mirembe's savings business, resulting in the exit of his friends and partners (described in Chapter 3).

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<sup>27</sup> Interviews with Frank Motovu and George Mirembe respectively, 16/06/2015; 21/05/2014.

<sup>28</sup> Including Jane Nalumu, Sarah Nalusimbi and Mary Namuli, who were introduced in Chapter 5 and are aged 69, 76 and 76 respectively.

Possessing a much larger group of members, the NMSVT group wrote to President Museveni to request assistance. A section of their letter was printed in the media:

“We call upon your good office to intervene and save traders to protect their rights as stipulated in the Land Act and other laws. [...] We cannot agree to the 30% because as sitting tenants we must be given priority.”<sup>29</sup>

A number of scholars have written of the centrality of personalised interventions and gift-giving to Museveni’s presidency (Goodfellow & Titeca 2012; Lambright 2014; Médard & Golaz 2013). These interventions are often seen as the latest symptoms of a dysfunctional system; as practices that undermine “already weak formal institutions for urban governance” (Goodfellow and Titeca 2012: 264). However, we have seen that personalised appeals to influential leaders have a history both in precolonial Buganda (Hanson 2003) and during Amin’s presidency, based on the understanding that those appealing could remove their support if their appeal went unheard. What is different about the above appeal then is not the relationship that it invokes, but the registers used to invoke it. Market vendors draw upon an *impersonal* language of legal ‘rights’ – a tool of their historical exclusion in Kampala – in order to prompt a *personal* intervention from a leader in need of new followers.<sup>30</sup> In this way, people in Nakasero were also beginning to participate in acts of doubling.

Museveni responded to the vendors’ appeal by inviting them to State House to discuss the matter. A group of fifty vendors, all NMSVT members and long-time residents of the market, attended, dressed in traditional Ganda attire (the women in *gomesi* dresses) (Plate 6.2). Sarah Nalumansi was one of a large number of female vendors in attendance. She recalled the event:

“They brought us in, they gave us seats as guests of Museveni, they gave us food, but we ate while quarrelling because we were so annoyed [about the proposed sale]. When the right time came, we were told to go to the hall and he found us seated there. We arose and welcomed him. He greeted us and said he had heard

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<sup>29</sup> New Vision (2007) ‘Nakasero vendors appeal to Museveni for help,’ 5 February

<sup>30</sup> Museveni’s lead in the Presidential elections dropped from 41 to 22 per cent between 2001-2006, with the opposition (Democratic Party) making particular gains in urban constituencies.

about our issues but wanted to ask what we had to say; 'Who is troubling you?' 'Who told you that the market has been sold?' We told him: 'Father [*taata wange*], we were told that it was you who had bought the market' [...] He said 'How can I buy you? What will I rear in the market?' ['What interest do I have there?'] So we discussed it with him and he told us that he understood and he would make a report [for the vendors]."<sup>31</sup>

Following the meeting, Museveni declared to the media: "markets should be for the vendors,"<sup>32</sup> asking rhetorically: "How can you privatise a market with 25,000 people, all of them adults? How do you give such a market to one person?"<sup>33</sup> In doing so, he carefully aligned himself with the market vendors, against the mayor and city council.<sup>34</sup> People in Nakasero responded by offering personal thanks to Museveni (rather than his office or political party) and wishing him '*abeewo*' (a long political life)<sup>35</sup>; a reaction that was arguably illustrative of a relationship of 'conviviality' (Mbembé 2001: 128). However, his intervention mobilised obligations whose implications were not yet fully known.



**Plate 6.2** 'Museveni addressing Nakasero vendors and traders at State House' (New Vision 2007, 14 July)

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<sup>31</sup> 08/05/2015

<sup>32</sup> New Vision (2007) 'Museveni gives Nakasero to vendors,' 13 July

<sup>33</sup> New Vision (2007) 'Museveni and Basajja differ over Nakasero,' 21 July

<sup>34</sup> Hansen (2004) describes a similar intervention by President Chiluba on behalf of Zambian street vendors in 1993, after which street vending became known as 'Office of the President'.

<sup>35</sup> New vision (2007) 'Nakasero: Basajja to meet M7,' 14 July

In light of the president's intervention, the council performed a U-turn by terminating its agreement with Basajjabalaba and formulating a new policy, which affirmed: "The sitting tenants who own stalls (*emidala*), kiosks etc. in the markets shall all register under their associations and [...] be given the first priority to redevelop and manage the markets."<sup>36</sup> Vendors' ownership rights were contingent on their being able to raise sufficient funds for the construction of a 'modern market' that meets 'universally acceptable standards'.<sup>37</sup> This was an important limitation. Rather than involving vendors in debates on the *question* of redevelopment, the KCC had outsourced the *implementation* of it. Driven by the lucrative prize of market ownership, competing groups of vendors in markets across the city rushed to register their associations in an attempt to establish a claim over their market as whole.<sup>38</sup> Different groups mobilised different divisions, for example between different classes, ethnic and commodity groups, in order to recruit members.

However, the implementation of the new policy was mired by a series of court cases. A council report leaked in February 2008 made it clear that the courts rather than the president, had jurisdiction over city markets. The report perpetuated fears that the KCC intended to sell the markets off to private investors. Vendors in Kisekka market responded by blocking roads with bonfires and demanding that the KCC provide paperwork confirming their ownership of the market.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, people in Nakasero organised a 24-hour sit-in protest, in which vendors brought their sons, daughters and spouses to the market. Frank Matovu recalled his participation as a 17-year-old together with his mother, sister and three brothers:<sup>40</sup>

"Our Mum had got information that the government was going to cover the market in *mabati* [iron sheets]. When you see *mabati* in Kampala it means something has been taken. We were just young and shouting, but when I grew

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<sup>36</sup> Set out in correspondence between the Minister of Local Government to the Mayor of Kampala on 11 September 2007, which details the new policy on markets as decided by Cabinet.

<sup>37</sup> Op. cit.

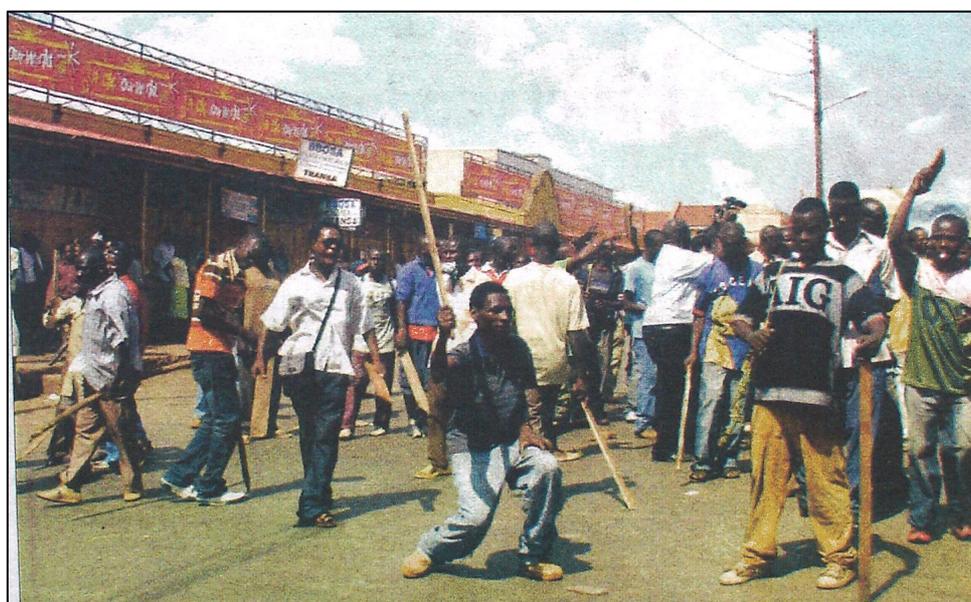
<sup>38</sup> See e.g. Daily Monitor (2009) 'Park yard vendors split over donated cash,' 13 April; New Vision (2010) 'Traders row over Owino market lease,' 11 September; New Vision (2011) 'Nakawa market contractors on the run,' 21 July.

<sup>39</sup> Daily monitor (2008) 'Vendors strike over leaked report,' 26 February.

<sup>40</sup> Frank is the shop (hardware) vendor introduced in Chapter 3.

up I understood why my Mum took us. When you see on TV kids joining in [protests] you are so touched.”<sup>41</sup>

Frank describes an uncertain political climate in Kampala, symbolised by the proliferation of *mabati*. The protest had been organised by a group of older stall vendors in the market including those that attended the State House meeting. Unlike vendors in Kisekka, this group were able to draw upon a historical knowledge of the power of a strike (in contrast to an activity that could be conceived as a riot).<sup>42</sup> Furthermore they understood the ability of Nakasero to symbolise the struggles of a large proportion of the urban population.



**Plate 6.3** Nakasero vendors protest in response to leaked KCC report (Daily Monitor, 2008, ‘Market vendors strike over leaked report’, February 26)

Frank was joined at the protest by George Mirembe, Stephen Kalule and Rose Abuya (Margaret Abuya’s mother).<sup>43</sup> Stephen and George recalled the ‘fear’ and ‘excitement’ of the event. Together, they spent the night in the market armed with sticks, stones and *piri-piri* spray made from vendors’ chillies. Others brought signs that read “*Mutowoza ensi si jaffe*” (“Is this not our world?”) and “*Temwagala tulye?*” (“Do you not want us to eat?”). Young male

<sup>41</sup> Interview on 16/06/2014

<sup>42</sup> The differentiation between a ‘protest’ and a ‘riot’ was often attributed to class. For example, I was told by the Deputy Police Commissioner (in charge of riot police): “The people who riot are not businessmen who own shops; it is the idlers and brokers who cause chaos” (28/04/14).

<sup>43</sup> George, Stephen and Margaret were introduced in Chapter 3.

carriers (*fasi-fasi*) took up positions around the edge of the market acting as lookouts and security (Plate 6.3). Meanwhile, Thomas Muwenda and other musicians played drums throughout the night. All sections of the market were brought together in a memorable assemblage of bodies, objects and emotions.

The night was widely reported to have been peaceful. It also succeeded in provoking a second intervention by the president, who asked vendors to call off the strike, reiterating that they had the first right to redevelop the market.<sup>44</sup> This was taken as a final judgement in favour of the vendors, sparking much celebration in the market. However, it was two more years before they acquired legal ownership, due to a long series of court cases brought by Basajjabalaba's companies.<sup>45</sup> Sheila Investments was eventually awarded over 70 billion shillings (US\$ 28 million) in compensation for its loss of revenue at Nakasero market; an incredible amount of money which meant that the city council had to request 'special drawing rights' from a grant with the International Development Association (IDA) to plug the gap in its budget (Uganda Parliament 2012).

The vendors association (NMSVT) eventually signed a 49-year sub-lease agreement with the council in 2010 agreeing to pay an annual ground rent of US\$45 million (US\$ 18,000) plus a one-off premium of US\$ 1.8billion (USD\$ 720,000) prior to redevelopment. The lease was subject to a five-year probationary period during which NMSVT was required to commence redevelopment of the site. A new era of vendor-led market management was ushered in, albeit one that required the payment of a large sum of money to the historical landlord.

### **The rise of a new market authority**

NMSVT was registered as a limited company, with 187 shareholders (99 men and 88 women), the majority of whom were Ganda stallholders. The group quickly sought to reorganise and recentralise power in the market after two years of division. Its objective, as set out in its Articles of Association, was to "bind the traders of Nakasero Market into a common entity," and in the

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<sup>44</sup> New Vision (2008) 'Nakasero vendors call off strike,' 27 February

<sup>45</sup> Museveni wrote to the Attorney General on 15 April 2009 requesting for the process to be expedited.

process create “one business community” comprising over 10,000 people.<sup>46</sup> A group of 100 of the most influential members gathered in the market office to elect a new leadership. Priority was given to people who had played an influential role in organising opposition to the planned sale. However, other considerations were also taken into account.

George Mirembe recalled that the Resident District Commissioner encouraged members to elect a chairman who was an NRM supporter in order to guarantee the continued sympathies of the president.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, the vendors themselves expressed a desire to use the chairmanship to address historical grievances within the market. George explained: “There had never been leaders from the lower market until this leadership started. It tried to unite all of the market.”<sup>48</sup> People expressed a desire for a chairman who was able to speak on behalf of the market and to represent its interests in negotiations with the government and city council.<sup>49</sup>

Following the meeting, Godfrey Kakooza was declared the new chairman of Nakasero market. A Muslim Muganda and butcher in the lower market, Kakooza was seen to be well educated and sympathetic towards the NRM; he had a legal qualification and had never campaigned for an opposition party. People in the market described him as a ‘patient,’ ‘hard working’ and ‘intelligent’ man,<sup>50</sup> but some claimed he was a ‘soft’ choice as chairman, selected for his background and education rather than for his leadership abilities.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the chairmanship, new committees were created that centralised historical features of market life such as discipline and sanitation which had previously been left at the discretion of individual areas and leaders. A total of 74 people volunteered to serve on these committees from the group that attended the meeting in the office.<sup>52</sup> Beneath them, the market was divided into 17 departments, which included historically marginal zones

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<sup>46</sup> Articles of Association, Nakasero Market Vendors and Traders Limited, incorporated on 27 February 2007

<sup>47</sup> 17/02/2014

<sup>48</sup> 11/11/2014

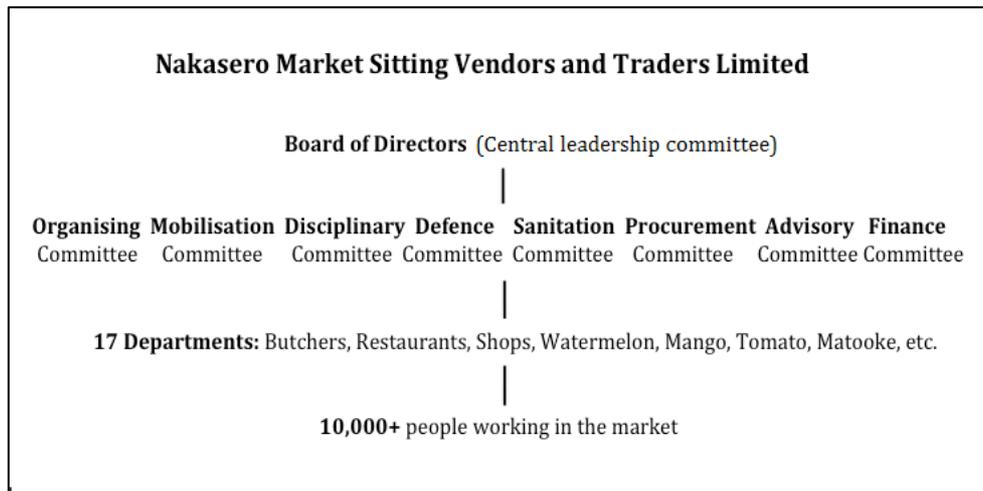
<sup>49</sup> Interviews with elder male watermelon vendor (11/05/2014); male hardware vendor (16/04/2014)

<sup>50</sup> Interviews with male produce vendor, upper stalls (14/12/2013) and male butcher, lower market (22/04/2015)

<sup>51</sup> Group discussion with hardware vendors, shops (two women and four men; 30/04/2014)

<sup>52</sup> George Mirembe 17/02/2014

such as the Kabengo and the *boda-boda* stages, in an attempt to bring all areas of the market together under the new central management (Figure 6.1).



**Figure 6.1** An institutional map of NMSVT (author’s own composition)

The institutional landscape that emerged from the re-organisation of the market bore close resemblance to the organisation of the Ugandan state under Museveni’s National Resistance Movement: a tiered system of elected committees feeding into a central committee (Hansen & Twaddle 1991). Institutions for market management had loosely resembled NRM Resistance Councils since the first elections in 1987, however their influence remained peripheral, partly due to the presence of the KCC, which retained control of revenue collection. No previous leadership had attempted to formalise a relationship between discrete areas and activities in the market. Divergent groups in the market, previously organised through supply chains, cultural associations and spatial designations, were now classified as ‘departments’. While on the surface this appeared to be part of a process of decentralisation, offering new powers to previously unrecognised groups, in practice people found their activities were increasingly subject to the regulations of the central market committees.

The first major event to take place following the reorganisation of the market was an inter-departmental football competition. All the new departments competed for the ‘Kakooza cup’, which was presented after the final at Nakivubo stadium (Uganda’s national football stadium, which boasts a capacity of 30,000). People in Nakasero recalled that the tournament increased ‘brotherhood’ in the market and allowed people to ‘relax,’ meet

'many people' and get to know 'the other side' of their neighbours.<sup>53</sup> Successful players were carried back into the market on vendors' shoulders, accompanied by singing and drumming.<sup>54</sup> Karlström (1999: 371-3) observes that a football tournament was the first public event organised by the Ganda monarchy following the return of Kabaka Ronald Mutebi from exile in 1986. Such competitions provided a public stage for clan competition and demonstration of the unity of the Baganda under the Kabaka. In a similar way, the Kakooza cup competition produced new relationships in the market while lending legitimacy to the new leadership.

Although positions on the new market committees were officially unpaid, they provided opportunities for revenue generation, for example through the extraction of fees from cases that came before the disciplinary committee.<sup>55</sup> New salaried jobs were also made available, for example in revenue collection, which paid US\$ 120,000/month.<sup>56</sup> A number of these positions were offered to members of the opposition NAMASITE group who had chosen to remain in the market.<sup>57</sup> Once collected, ground rent had to be paid to the KCC. However, the leadership had no legal obligation to disclose the remainder of its income. Under pressure to complete payment of the premium within five years, it kept market rents at the same levels charged by Sheila Investments; the rates that many of its members had previously campaigned against.<sup>58</sup> This decision provoked the first signs of discontent. Market leaders arguably began to form a new bureaucratic class in Nakasero, whose obligations were turned upwards towards the government and city council.

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with female produce vendor, upper stalls (23/04/2015); male chicken slaughterer (04/06/2014, Luganda); male video vendor (01/12/2013, Luganda) and group discussion with shop vendors (30/04/2014).

<sup>54</sup> As recalled in the discussion with shop vendors, Op. cit.

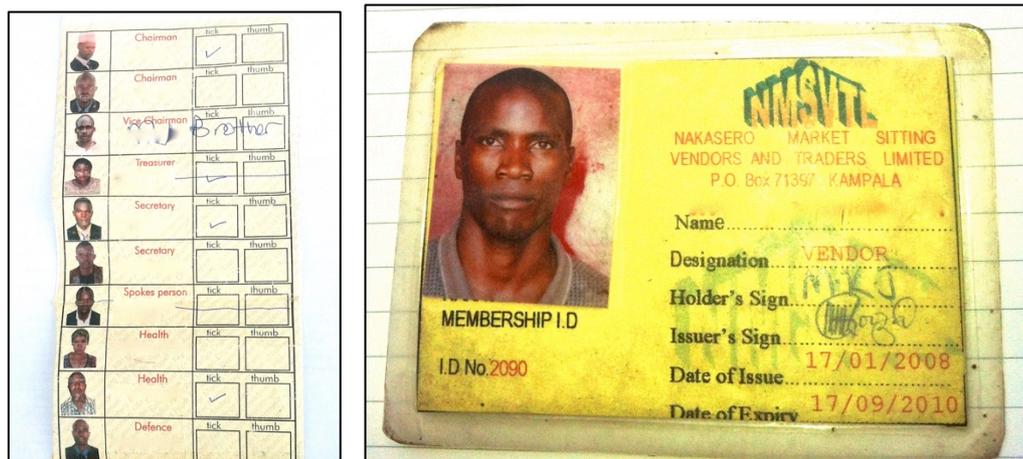
<sup>55</sup> A member of the disciplinary committee complained in an early meeting that members were only paid lunch expenses (Case 2, 01/09/2009). People who appeared before the committee noted that they were expected to support the work of its members through donations. Members of other committees were granted financial support from NMSVT as and when they requested it (interview with female *matooke* vendor and former leader, lower market, 16/05/2014).

<sup>56</sup> Discussion with former revenue collector (07/05/14).

<sup>57</sup> Mbembé (2001: 45) describes the historical function of the salary as a "resource the state could use to buy obedience and gratitude and to [encourage] habits of discipline".

<sup>58</sup> Interview with male produce vendor, Kabengo (29/11/2013), Group discussion with hardware vendors, shops (two women and four men; 30/04/2014).

Accompanying the new institutions in the market were a number of the technologies of a state bureaucracy. Committees developed their own standardised forms and letterheads (for example, for reporting disciplinary cases). Minutes of meetings were kept, and official ballot papers issued in departmental elections. A tannoy system was installed for making public announcements, funded by the HIV-AIDS project of a Scandinavian NGO.<sup>59</sup> More significantly perhaps, leaders began to issue identification cards and numbered vests for mobile vendors as part of an attempt to control entry and exit in the market (see Plate 6.4). The ID cards bore the name and logo of NMSVT (rather than the market more generally) and required a payment of USh 5,000 (US\$ 2) to the market office. Applicants were also required to supply a letter of recommendation from their local council chairman (LC1-LC3); a common requirement for government employment, but something that people without a permanent address find difficult to provide.



**Plate 6.4** Ballot papers and ID cards issued by the NMSVT leadership

In the early months of the NMSVT leadership, a number of the members of the rival NAMASITE group were forcibly evicted from the market on the grounds that they had effectively sold their shops by agreeing the sale of the market to Basajjabalaba.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, ID checks began to be performed on people in

<sup>59</sup> In a reverberation of events further afield, the PA system was used to provide warnings about security and terrorism, among other things. For example: “The management of Nakasero market wishes to caution all traders about security [...] take caution and pay attention to everyone and everything around you because there is terrorism in East Africa” (28/12/2013).

<sup>60</sup> Interview with George, 14/05/2014 and NAMASITE chairwoman (07/05/2014). Many of the evicted vendors are still pursuing court cases against NMSVT and the KCC (see e.g. Uganda High Court 2009, ‘Misc cause 94. of 2009; 11 applicants vs. Kampala City Council and Nakasero Vendors Association’).

the open areas of the market, such as the Parkyard, Kabengo, and what is now the Ghetto. James Ssentongo described his experience of arriving in the market as 13-year-old during this period:

“We the luggage carriers [*fasi-fasi*] could not pay tax [*empooza*] but they wanted 5,000 shillings so that they could issue us with a receipt [...] like an identity card. I was new and didn’t have the money. They asked me ‘who brought you here?’ and I replied that I had come alone from the village. They told me that they don’t want to see me in the market and let me go. The second time, they caught me and reminded me that they told me not to be in the market. At that time the office was down there [in the lower market], I spent the whole day there without working or eating. My uncles would have intervened but since I had told the leaders [*abakulu*] that I had come alone, they feared that they would be charged for having brought a boy to work in the market illegally [...] I slowly came back to the market and started working secretly and they caught me the third time [...] I was whipped with canes and [after that] I went to the village to dig.”<sup>61</sup>

Physical violence had been a historical means of controlling the entry of young men into the market. However, what was different about James’ experience, compared for example to that of Alex Sserwanda in the contemporary market,<sup>62</sup> was the method and procedure of this violence. Rather than the personal interventions of potential competitors (which can often be negotiated through gifts and alternate approaches), James experienced a series of methodical interventions by an impersonal authority (described in the plural; ‘they’, ‘the leaders’): the verbal warning, the forceful imprisonment and finally, the controlled physical beating. Rather than disclosing his family connections in the market, James concealed them for fear that they too would be punished. In this way, the negotiated rituals of market entry that had been developed since the 1970s, through which new arrivals acquired the support of individual vendors through offers of labour and demonstrations of character and need, were replaced by the rigid requirements of a letter of introduction, a passport photograph and a payment of 5,000 shillings to the market office.

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<sup>61</sup> Interview on 05/11/2013. James returned to the market following the KCCA takeover in 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Alex is the rubbish collector described in Chapter 3.

A number of established vendors in the market expressed sympathy with these interventions on the basis that they served to install 'discipline' in the market and to reduce the number of *bayaye*.<sup>63</sup> However, people working in the open areas of the market described them as 'hard' and 'harsh', on account of their frequent imposition of punishments and suspensions.<sup>64</sup> A leader who served on the central leadership committee acknowledged: "There was no more soft management; we had to collect rent and revenue so relations between leaders and vendors became difficult".<sup>65</sup> In this sense, the market was experiencing a shift from a 'soft' to a 'hard' style of management which had not been witnessed since the 1960s. The material imperative of revenue generation (to meet the terms of the lease) came into conflict with the moral imperative to show *heart* by supporting the livelihoods of low earners in the market.

The leadership also sought to regulate activities in the market by enacting a series of market laws. In the early meetings of the disciplinary committee, members expressed a concern that vendors did not properly understand some of the rules they were attempting to enforce. This resulted in the creation of the Nakasero Market Bylaws (Figure 6.2). These laws focused primarily on issues of cleanliness and dress, reflecting a concern with hygiene that dates back to the colonial market. Some of the laws, such as the prohibition of 'drunkenness' are exact replicas of the regulations of the colonial authorities. Others regulate the postcolonial categories of the *bayaye* and the *abekazi be tawuni* ('town woman'); the former through prohibitions on language, pickpocketing, drinking and smoking, and the latter through restrictions on babies, cooking and dress code ("especially those selling drinks and eats [food] should dress decently").<sup>66</sup> Such laws were generally welcomed for their upholding of 'cleanliness' and 'discipline'.<sup>67</sup> However, the establishment of a

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<sup>63</sup> Interviews with female produce vendor, lower market (09/10/2013, Luganda); female produce vendor, Upper Stalls (07/10/2014); male produce vendor, Upper Stalls (14/12/2013).

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with male produce vendors, Parkyard (21/03/2014; 19/02/2014)

<sup>65</sup> Group discussion with former market leaders, 08/05/2015

<sup>66</sup> Of all the cases brought before the committee, 56 of the accused persons were male and 92 female. Women were more than twice as likely as men to be accused of quarrelling, the use of bad language, disrespecting leaders and rumour-mongering (of which all 17 accused persons were female). Although ages were not recorded, accused persons were frequently reminded to respect leaders and 'elders' in the market (Monteith 2014b).

<sup>67</sup> Interviews with produce vendor in the upper stalls (07/05/2014) and female drinks hawker (05/11/2013)

*single* set of rules sat somewhat uneasily in relation to the diversity of the peoples and practices in Nakasero. For example, styles of marketing in the open areas of the market rely heavily on flexibility, and on expressions of ‘noise’ and ‘play’, such as those restricted by law 6.

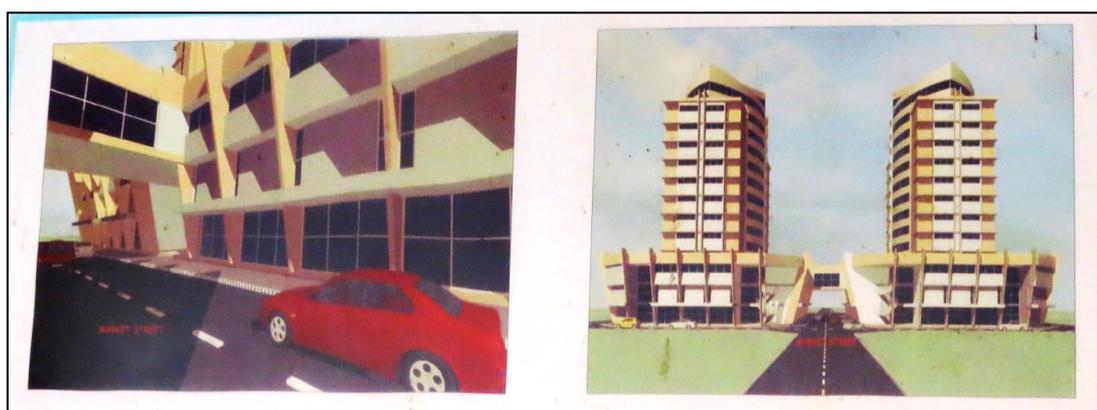
<p><u>Nakasero Market Byelaws</u></p> <p><b>PART I: CLEANLINESS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dumping and disposing of garbage into the trenches is prohibited. Every vendor/shopkeeper should keep his/her place of work clean [...] breach of this law may result into closure of your workplace, until management proves that the standard of cleanliness has been obtained.</li><li>2. A market vendor shall not be allowed to come with a baby in the market</li><li>3. A person shall not spit on the market grounds.</li><li>4. Plaiting and combing of hair is not allowed within the stalls, cutting of nails is also prohibited within the market stalls.</li><li>5. Cooking within your work place is prohibited apart from designated places like restaurants</li></ol> <p>[5.1] Everybody is supposed to bathe and wash in order to keep clean.</p> <p><b>PART II: CODE OF CONDUCT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Committing a nuisance, fighting, use of abusive language, playing and making unnecessary noise in the market is prohibited</li><li>7. Drunkenness is prohibited in the market</li><li>8. Theft and pickpocketing is prohibited in the market.</li><li>9. Smoking is prohibited in the market</li><li>10. RESPECT: Everybody should respect the market chairman. All departmental and market leaders should be respected as well. Whoever contravenes this law will be punished by the disciplinary committee.</li></ol> <p><b>PART III: DRESS CODE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. All market vendors should put on over-coats, aprons or uniforms<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Those working in the market stalls should put on green overcoats</li><li>b) Those in the butchers should put on white overcoats and hats</li><li>c) Those in the restaurants or food vendors should put on uniforms, cover their heads and put on shoes or canvas.</li></ol></li><li>12. All market vendors especially those selling drinks and eats should dress decently.</li></ol>
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**Figure 6.2** Nakasero Market Byelaws (verbatim copy of the original document)

### **The redevelopment project: “an icon of beauty and elegance”**

The redevelopment project, both as an idea and a practical undertaking, formed the foundation on which the legitimacy of the new leadership was based. The award of the lease was based on the premise that the vendors themselves had the capacity to redevelop the market. Failure to commence reconstruction within five years would result in the violation of the lease and the end of the NMSVT project. As a result, market leaders spent a considerable amount of time imagining and planning the redevelopment. Architectural sketches of a twin-towered building with twelve floors were displayed in

prominent places in the market offices (Plate 6.5) beside portraits of President Museveni and Kabaka Mutebi II. The two towers were understood to represent the upper and lower sections of the market, bifurcated by Market Street. The presence of cars and absence of people in the sketches arguably symbolises a shift from a public space (a space of the ‘common people’) to one of an imagined middle class.<sup>68</sup> Market leaders contracted an international firm of accountants to conduct a feasibility study for the project at a cost of US\$ 60,000; a sum that provides an indication of the income they were generating from market rents and fees.



**Plate 6.5** Images of the market redevelopment project displayed on the walls of the market offices

In May 2011, a 136-page document arrived in the market office, laying out plans to convert Nakasero market into ‘an international standard modern commercial complex’ (or ‘Mall’) at an estimated cost of US\$ 93million. At the start of the document is an 8-page section entitled ‘Background’, of which three pages describe the market at the time of writing. Two of these pages are taken up by bullet points outlining the condition of the current market, under the headings ‘current market state’ and ‘other underlying reasons for the redevelopment’. These reasons include the following:

- To keep in step with the current trend [...] in which traditional markets are transformed into modern shopping mall structures that are able to serve the country’s nationals and foreign visitors from the world over

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<sup>68</sup> The Deputy Director of Gender and Marketing at the KCCA told me that underground parking is an important feature of redeveloped markets “so you can tell someone they can park their BMWs and not be scared of losing their handbag” (interview on 05/05/2014).

- To re-enforce the brand of Nakasero Market as a regional basket of fresh foods
- To increase the welfare of the vendors
- To add to the Kampala CBD an icon of beauty and elegance that will make the skyline of the city more beautiful and optically satisfying.

The references to modernity here are reminiscent of Mayor Ssebagala's rationalisation of the sale of the market ("we want high technology merchandise in the city centre"), now espoused by the market leaders. They tend to elevate external concerns and constituencies, such as the 'skyline' of Kampala and 'foreign visitors from the world over', over the everyday role of the market in the lives of its current inhabitants. Rather than a government project in need of careful management (as in the colonial market), or a 'garden' or 'village' managed by the 'people' (as in the early postcolonial market), the idea of the market communicated in the report is one of a 'brand'; a sanitised image on which the fantasies of planners and investors could be projected. Significantly, the proposed project is not a redevelopment of the market but a transformation into a 'modern shopping mall'.

The rest of the document is organised into sections entitled 'Market analysis,' 'Legal and regulatory framework' and 'Financial viability'. It contains multiple tables, flow-charts and images of shopping malls in Kenya and South Africa. The only images of the current market are of 42 NMSVT directors dressed in suits in an appendix at the end of the document. Much of the report is a formulaic presentation of the legal and managerial forms required by the project, and the forms adopted by other projects elsewhere. A member of the planning committee articulated the fears that fed into the production of the document: "Politicians [and] even those rich men, they are not happy seeing a peasant taking a space like that [...] it is a big challenge in our leadership whereby they want you to fail so they [can] take over."<sup>69</sup> It was deployed predominantly as a symbol of confidence, to convince potential investors of the legitimacy of the project, and to prevent the council from pursuing their own plans. Mbembé and Roitman (1995: 337) note that the formulaic report or budget "must act as if it were a realist representation, and those issuing and receiving it act as if it were a consequential document."

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Ronald Male, a leader and produce vendor in the upper stalls (15/06/2014).

The report was kept under lock and key in the market offices and remained largely inaccessible to people in the market. This act of concealment was illustrative of a culture of secrecy in the market leadership, driven in part by a concern that the disclosure of information (e.g. on market revenue) could be used against NSMTV by NAMASITE or the city council.<sup>70</sup> In an early meeting of the disciplinary committee, a young leader who was thought to have disclosed information to his colleagues in the Parkyard was instructed by an elder vendor to 'keep secrets' (*okubeera n'emizzi*) and to first 'sieve' his words (*okusengejja*), particularly when they related to things discussed 'during meetings'.<sup>71</sup> Such acts of concealment began to create a distance between the leadership and the rest of the market. People accused the leadership of working 'under cover;' of spending more time in closed meetings and less time with people in the market.<sup>72</sup> An onion vendor in the Parkyard emphasised that a good leader is "someone who is with people in the market [...] *not* someone who spends all their time away in the office".<sup>73</sup> The chairman was criticised in some quarters for failing to report back on his meetings with government officials.<sup>74</sup>

The viability of the redevelopment project depended partly on the financial support of people in the market. While external 'sponsors', including individual investors, multinational corporations and NGOs, were earmarked to provide 60 per cent of the cost of the project, 40 per cent was to be met by NMSVT shareholders (the market vendors). A savings scheme was set up in which people in the market could purchase shares in NMSVT, and therefore in the redeveloped market. Vendors were issued with deposit books and encouraged to make payments by regular announcements over the tannoy, which continued during my fieldwork in 2013-15. For example, of the 51 announcements made in April 2014, over one in four (14) were on the subject of the redevelopment.<sup>75</sup> These announcements all followed a similar format:

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<sup>70</sup> This concern appeared to be well founded in light of the events described in the next section.

<sup>71</sup> Disciplinary Committee Case 1 (25/08/2009)

<sup>72</sup> Group discussion with mango vendors (14/06/2014)

<sup>73</sup> Male produce vendor, Parkyard (15/04/2015)

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Frank Motovu (16/06/2014), discussion with hardware vendors (30/04/2014)

<sup>75</sup> Compared with fourteen on burials, six on weddings, nine general management announcements and eight advertisements for private organisations.

“Management is informing all its traders that building and developing our market is our work, it is like a hair from the nose [*lwoya lwa mu nnyindo olwejjamu weka*; something you have to do it yourself]. We have to hold together to develop our market and continue saving for a standard Nakasero [a Nakasero that is up to standard].”

“Management is encouraging all traders and people living in Nakasero village [*ekyaalo kye Nakasero*] to hold together so we can succeed, because if we don’t build [the new project], we shall be losing and giving our enemies [*mulabe*] a chance to invade us, so friends [*mikwano*] let us continue.”

In contrast to the feasibility study, these announcements projected an idea of the market as a social community (rather than a sanitised investment opportunity) drawing upon notions of the ‘village’ (*ekyaalo*) and the threat of ‘enemies’ (*mulabe*). As such, market leaders were deploying different registers for different audiences, as any successful vendor is required to do. The all-or-nothing tone of their rhetoric reflected the all-or-nothing terms of the lease agreement provided by the KCC (five years to commence redevelopment). Nevertheless, they projected an ambiguous, and therefore inclusive, notion of the project, which deviated from that set out in the planning documents. A double idea of the market’s future had been created: a ‘standard Nakasero’, which appeared to resemble a market, and a ‘modern commercial complex’ or shopping mall. In my interviews, a number stall vendors and high earners in the market emphasised the importance of the project by drawing upon notions of ‘development’ and (reducing) ‘dirtiness’.<sup>76</sup> However those working in the Parkyard, Kabengo and Ghetto were more suspicious. For example Benjamin Ocwee responded to a question about the redevelopment by pointing towards the open areas of the market and emphasising, “this place allows people to survive”.<sup>77</sup> For people like Benjamin, it was unclear how the redevelopment project responded to the struggles of low earners in the market.

The tannoy system itself was a technology that was of consequence to social relations in the market. The social ties established during the 1970s and 80s

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<sup>76</sup> Male produce vendor, 40, Upper Stalls (14/12/2014); female vendor, 40, Upper Stalls (07/05/2014)

<sup>77</sup> 07/10/2013. Benjamin is one of the founders of Jamaica corner, introduced in Chapter 5.

took the form of dispersed networks of people, which could be adapted and extended in relation to the situation at hand (for example, shortages of meat or fears of physical insecurity). Conflicting information could be resolved by using alternative channels, and confidence and stability were provided by the large numbers of participants in these channels (suppliers, vendors, hawkers, water carriers). In contrast, the market tannoy represented a unidirectional channel broadcast loudly and indiscriminately across the market from behind closed doors. People continued to acquire information from alternate sources, and occasionally used this to critique the leadership.<sup>78</sup> However, detailed information on market taxes, court cases and the redevelopment project was kept sealed within the market offices, and those with access were required to 'sieve' their words carefully. Rather than a decentralised network of leaders, the 'central leadership committee' of NMSVT Limited (see Figure 6.1) became something of a black box in which it was difficult to see who was behind whom.

Tannoy announcements reduced the complexities of market life to the single imperative of saving with the project; of being a 'friend' rather than an 'enemy' of Nakasero. Market records suggest that this imperative began to seep into the work of committees with very different responsibilities. For example, the disciplinary committee heard the case of a group of vendors from the peas and beans department who reported their leaders for demanding money from new entrants. At the hearing, one member of the committee requested to see how much the complainants were saving with NSMTV. When they appeared before the committee for the verdict, the group were advised to "start thinking about saving money instead of changing leadership".<sup>79</sup> Describing the work of the leadership, Jane Nalumu asserted: "Bobi Wine sang about 'money, money', all the time 'money, money'. Also the leaders here they think about money all the time."<sup>80</sup>

Out of a total population of 10,000, approximately 4,000 people in the market registered as shareholders of NMSVT. However, not all of these people were

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<sup>78</sup> For example, Frank Motovu learnt from his neighbours in the shops that NMSVT was collecting over US\$ 5 million/day from taxes on supplier vehicles (16/06/2014)

<sup>79</sup> Disciplinary Committee Case 16 (13/04/2010). It should be noted that the leaders were also made to apologise for their actions and to return the money taken from new arrivals.

<sup>80</sup> 09/05/2014. Jane is referring to Bobi Wine's 2010 song 'Mr Money', which critiques the increased prominence of money as a marker of social identity in Uganda.

willing or able to invest large sums of money. Those who saved US\$ 1million (US\$ 400) were rewarded with a share certificate (Plate 6.6) and the promise of a place in the new facility. Certificates had previously been introduced by the Ganda monarchy in the 1990s to fund various projects in the kingdom (Englebert 2002). In Nakasero, these certificates juxtaposed historical symbols of state authority (seals, stamps and signatures) with photographs of people living and working in the market, reproducing the authority of the market association. However, this authority was subjected to increased scrutiny as the implications of the leaders' obligation to the Ugandan president came into clearer focus.



Plate 6.6 NMSVT share certificates issued to vendors in Nakasero

**“We didn’t choose politics, we chose a chairman”: the fall of a market leadership**

If, as many have observed, Museveni’s interventions in urban markets in the late 2000s indebted market vendors to the president, the elections in 2011 provided the first opportunity for repayment (Goodfellow & Titeca 2012; Lambright 2014; Médard & Golaz 2013). This obligation was acutely felt in Nakasero market, which functions as a polling booth on election days. The market had been a historical target of electioneering in Kampala, due both to its provision of a large number of voters and its role as a symbol of the ‘common people’. For people working in Nakasero, elections bring both opportunities and dangers; in the words of Frank Motovu, they are times for

'making money and losing friends'.<sup>81</sup> The market is historically aligned with the opposition Democratic Party, responsible for electing a long line of opposition Mayors in the capital.

Uganda's presidential elections were planned to take place in February 2011, a week before the Kampala mayoral elections. As these events drew nearer, new architectures of division were visible in the market. Posters supporting President Museveni were plastered on the market offices, accompanied by the slogan "Long live NRM, long live His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni *Pakalast* [until the end]". Museveni's image was displayed alongside the NMSVT logo and an image of the twin-towered redevelopment plans, fusing the material future of the market with the political future of the president. In contrast, the entrance to the lower market was draped in the banner of Kizza Besigye, the leader of the opposition Democratic Party, accompanied by images of the opposition Mayoral candidate, Erias Lukwago (Plate 6.7). All around the market, vendors were surrounded by the suggestive smiles of Ugandan politicians.

George Mirembe was campaigning on behalf of Museveni at the time. He had been approached by party officials via members of the market leadership and asked to mobilise youth in the market on their behalf. Like any foray into electioneering, this involved the distribution of promises and favours, of which some were kept after the election. George expressed the view that the market leadership was compelled to campaign for the president, on the basis that they owed their position to his intervention. Like many others in the market, this was the first time that George voted for the NRM:

"I voted for him [...] to give us this market because this market is now my life, this market is everything to me. My Mum and Grandma have been here so I thanked him for that, for allowing us to be here I gave him [Museveni] a vote [...] That is the only election the NRM got votes here, because of that issue."

George's testimony invokes a personal and convivial relationship between the president and people in the market. He saw his vote not as the endorsement of a political project, but an act of reciprocation towards a leader to whom an obligation was owed. Museveni subsequently won the Presidential elections

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<sup>81</sup> 15/06/14

with an increased majority of 44 per cent, a proportion of which was attributable to increased levels of support in city markets. However, the mayoral elections were much more tightly contested. Returning to form, most people in the market supported the opposition candidate, Erias Lukwago, who had held a rally in the market earlier in the month.



**Plate 6.7.** Party political posters around the entrance to lower Nakasero market, January 2011<sup>82</sup>

On February 23, the day of the mayoral elections, a group of *kanyama* (hired security) entered the market and attacked vendors adjacent to the polling station in the upper market. As a result of the attack, 28 people were admitted to Mulago hospital with serious injuries, and 14 men held at Kampala Central Police Station.<sup>83</sup> The mayoral elections were postponed as a result of the violence, with similar incidents taking place in other parts of the city. Many in the market perceived the attack as intimidation by the ruling party; a view that put pressure on the market leadership, which still had NRM posters above its doors. The following morning, hundreds of vendors gathered in the Parkyard and began chanting “*Agende!*” (“Go!”) at the doors of the market offices in scenes that were symbolic of the distance that had emerged between the vendors and the leadership.<sup>84</sup> In radio footage of the event, a female

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<sup>82</sup> Photo after: òyó (2011) for *Panoramio* (<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/47090795>, accessed 20/03/2016)

<sup>83</sup> New Vision (2011) ‘100 held, 29 injured in election violence,’ 24 February

<sup>84</sup> NTV (2011) ‘Nakasero market farce,’ 25 February (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITXMi61b8gA>, accessed 30/09/2015)

vendor can be heard shouting: “We didn’t choose politics, we chose a chairman!” [“*tetulonda byabufuzi tulonda chairman!*”].<sup>85</sup>

By opposing ‘politics’ with the work of the chairman, people in the market projected an idea of the chairmanship as a ‘cultural’ and a non-‘political’ institution, similar to the Ganda monarchy (Karlström 1999: 423). Politics represented a form of disruption or ‘madness’ from which people looked to the market leadership for protection (Kiyimba 2013: 98). However, the leadership’s open support for a political party compromised its legitimacy as a ‘cultural’ institution in the market. Leaders’ ties to groups outside the market had undermined their ties to those within it. A watermelon vendor who had worked in the market since the 1970s said of the NMSVT leadership: “When people get elected they grow wings; they are pulled around by different interests.”<sup>86</sup> In this sense, the leadership, like the future of the market, had become more free-floating.

Following the mayoral elections, George Mirembe received a call warning him to stay away from Nakasero on account of his association with the market leadership. People’s anger was such that many of his customers at *House of Faith* instructed him to keep their money and ‘go’.<sup>87</sup> He provided an alternative theory of the violence, suggesting that it may have been planned by members of the opposition Democratic Party in order to turn voters against the NRM. Both these theories have a basis in history and therefore carry plausibility. ‘Politics’ was seen to operate precisely in this environment of confusion, in which it is very difficult to establish who is behind whom.

Reflecting on these events, George vowed never to campaign for a political party again:

“This is a community where you find every type of behaviour; people are illiterate, people are not God-fearing, and then you have people bringing politics in! The problem is that they [politicians] divide you to support their elections, but they do not unite you again after.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Uganda Radio Network (2011) ‘Nakasero Market Vendors Bay for Chairman’s Blood,’ 24 February (<http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=31866>, accessed 11/10/2015)

<sup>86</sup> 14/04/2015

<sup>87</sup> Follow-up interview with George (21/05/2015)

<sup>88</sup> 21/05/2015

His account reinforces the view of politics as a discrete force that enters the market at particular times, posing a particular threat to vulnerable ('illiterate', non 'God-fearing') groups, who require the protection of their leaders. George was able to do some of the work of reuniting of the market after the elections, first by returning the money of all his customers (with a Police escort), then by consulting with people individually. After a few months, people began saving small amounts of money with him again. In the meantime, Lukwago was elected Mayor of Kampala following rescheduled elections in which an NRM official was pelted with tomatoes in the market.<sup>89</sup>

Outside of Nakasero, the Ugandan parliament passed the Kampala City Council Act 2010, abolishing Kampala City Council and replacing it with the Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA), a body with new executive powers over the management of the city. This move represented an attempt to recentralise government in the city in response both to KCC mismanagement and the continued influence of the opposition in the capital. Headed by an executive director appointed directly by the president, the new authority reduced the powers of the elected mayor. Jennifer Musisi was appointed director, having established a reputation as an uncompromising reformer at the Uganda Revenue Authority. One of the objectives of the new authority was to break the hold of transport and trading associations in the city and to increase revenue for public services.<sup>90</sup> The KCCA outlined plans to redevelop markets in the city into accessible, 'modern' hygienic structures better able to compete with supermarkets; notions that were broadly reflected in the NMSVT redevelopment proposal.<sup>91</sup>

On the 28th March 2012, members of the exiled NAMASITE group of vendors wrote to the new executive director to complain about NMSVT's management of Nakasero market, requesting that KCCA intervene. Their letter likened the market leaders to 'mafias' who show no 'accountability' for the fees they collect.<sup>92</sup> It also provided an estimate of the revenue that NMSVT were earning in the market (US\$170 million per month) and contrasted this with

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<sup>89</sup> Independent (2011) 'Kampala's Mayor Lukwago,' 18 March

<sup>90</sup> KCCA (2013). "Statement on the issues of Kampala City Council Authority." KCCA Portal, (<http://www.kcca.go.ug>, accessed 30/11/2014)

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Director of Gender and Marketing, KCCA, 05/05/2014

<sup>92</sup> 'Re: Conflicts in Nakasero Market,' Nakasero Market Vendors to Executive Director KCCA, 28/03/2012

the amount paid to the council in ground rent (USh24 million). The letter represented another personal appeal by a group of people in the market to a significant political figure in Kampala. However, on this occasion the intention was to bring about the end, rather than the start of the vendors' rule.

Five days after receiving the letter, the KCCA suspended the tenders of all markets in the city on the grounds of vendor mismanagement and non-payment of rent. Large groups of revenue collectors wearing bright green and yellow KCCA uniforms arrived in Nakasero accompanied by riot police. Work stopped in the market and a public meeting was held in the Parkyard, during which a number of influential figures in the recent history of the market delivered speeches from the back of a pickup truck.<sup>93</sup> The NMSVT secretary spoke of President Museveni's original promise to the traders, and of his continued jurisdiction in the market. Mayor Lukwago asserted that the KCCA had no legal right to cancel the tenders, while the (government) District Commissioner called for calm and further discussions. Finally, the market chairman climbed onto the back of the pickup truck and proclaimed: "We were ready to redevelop this market, but the KCCA has stolen it. [We will fight] until we are dead [*nga tumaze okufa*]."

The assertion that the KCCA had 'stolen' Nakasero was based on the premise that the market could be 'owned'; an idea that can be traced back to the privatisation initiatives of the 1990s. The chairman's rhetoric was indicative of the intensification of social division that had taken place since this time. A moral language that spoke of people's 'hearts' had been replaced by martial references to fighting to the death.<sup>94</sup>

Vendors in the market opposed to the NMSVT leadership, whose numbers had increased since the violence of the elections, stopped paying rent and dues to NMSVT and began mobilising support for a KCCA takeover. On 14 April a group of *kanyama* (hired security) with links to the market leadership sought out one of the men calling for the takeover, John Sserwanda, who was working

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<sup>93</sup> Detail and quotes in this paragraph provided from video footage of the event. NTV (2012) 'KCCA take over city markets,' 12 April (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmTL5aLNopI>, accessed 30/09/2105)

<sup>94</sup> It is perhaps worth reiterating that the chairman was originally selected for his 'patience' and 'intelligence' and had presided over the peaceful market protest in 2008 (see above).

a mango vendor in the market. The group beat him with sticks in broad daylight, and he subsequently died of his injuries. Following the attack, police officers arrested several leaders in Nakasero, including the market chairman.<sup>95</sup> In their absence, the KCCA moved in and began revenue collection exercises. The authority collected a total of US\$ 606 million in its first year of operation; more than twice as much as it generated from the lease agreement with NMSTV (US\$ 288 million).<sup>96</sup>

Although the KCCA takeover effectively reset the legal position of the market, placing it back under municipal jurisdiction, it was unable to erase the social divisions that had emerged over the past decade. News reports of the time paint a picture of social division.<sup>97</sup> A number of vendors vented their anger against the KCCA, using the English words 'rape' and 'defilement' and the Luganda expression *okubalyamu olukwe* (an act of betrayal) to describe the takeover. However, others welcomed the change and dismissed the rule of the NMSVT leaders as *kiyaaye* ('fake' or 'fraudulent'). There were no protests. The prevailing atmosphere appeared to be one of confusion: "We don't understand what is going on"; "They have not told us the reason [for the change]".

## Conclusions

The privatisation initiatives of the 1990s brought with them a new idea of Nakasero market as a space that could be bought and sold, demolished and reconstructed. This idea disrupted a basic premise of the postcolonial market: that despite the legal jurisdiction of the municipal authorities, Nakasero was essentially for the people. In the absence of this premise, the market became a blank space on which the political and economic ambitions of different groups could be inscribed. New organisations began to infiltrate social ties in the market, making different claims and producing different forms of documentation. Vendors responded through an organised appeal to the president, who agreed to intervene on their behalf. However, this intervention came at the cost of two obligations that ultimately proved fatal to the project

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<sup>95</sup> New Vision (2012) 'City market bosses held over murder,' 19 April. Of the seven, three were eventually convicted for manslaughter in 2015.

<sup>96</sup> Figures for financial year 2011-12. Interview with revenue supervisor, KCCA, 05/05/2014.

<sup>97</sup> Quotes in this paragraph are taken from an extended report on Bukkede TV (2012) 'KCCA ebase abasuubuzi,' 17 April (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssJjQ346n6c>, accessed 20/07/2015).

of vendor management. First, it required the new leadership to raise USh 1.8 billion as part of their own redevelopment project, and second, it required them to provide electoral support to the president in an opposition stronghold.

The liminal position of the market leadership was illustrated by the redevelopment project, which produced a double idea of the market's future as a 'standard Nakasero' that symbolised the solidarity of the vendors, and a 'modern commercial complex' that stirred the fantasies of potential investors. The proliferation of such processes of 'doubling' produced confusion among people in the market insofar as they concealed and distorted the ties of their leaders. Rather than extending down to people in the market, these ties shifted upwards, towards an obscured network of politicians, investors and consultants. By attaching itself to a political party, the leadership was seen to compromise its status as a 'cultural' institution in the market capable of protecting people from the divisive force of 'politics'.

The following chapter returns to the ethnographic present in order to explore the ways in which people in the market responded to the disruptions of this period through a series of collective practices grounded in religion and culture.

## Chapter 7. Collecting, Meeting and Singing: Associational Life in Contemporary Nakasero

Richard Nsereko stands with his hands on his hips between neat piles of tomatoes and watermelons in the narrow passage between the Ghetto and Dastur Street. Behind him are two *matatu* taxis; one empty and one part-occupied by a group of people gazing out onto the market. Two men pass by holding an exercise book and a creased photograph of Rashida Kiggundu, a young waitress in the market who died as the result of an abortion procedure a few days earlier.<sup>1</sup> A small group of vendors, *kaveera* boys and *boda-boda* drivers gather around. One of the men recites a short eulogy to Rashida while the other displays her portrait. People gesture to see the photograph before reaching into their pockets for donations (*mabugo*; condolences). A few decline by emphasising the slowness of the morning's business, instructing the men to come back later in the day. A note of all the donations is made in the book. Those intending to attend the funeral (recorded as 'VIPs') are required pay an additional transport fee. A total of US\$ 350,000 (US\$ 140) is raised from seventy different people in the market.

Richard is one of the two *matatu* drivers tasked with transporting people to Rashida's burial in Mukono (approximately 50 kilometres from Kampala). He has been driving people to market funerals for seven years and recalls times when seven or eight taxis were needed for the job. In contrast, today's turnout is a disappointment:

"When you are working together and you see many taxis coming [to take people to burial] it makes you feel good and strong. Condolences are important to show solidarity [*obumu*], love [*okwagalana*] and care [*okufaayo*]. People nowadays they are reluctant to go to funeral. They are disorganised and lack solidarity, but before they were well organised by their leaders."<sup>2</sup>

Richard attributes declining funeral attendances in the market to the takeover of the market by the Kampala City Council Authority in 2012, and an

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<sup>1</sup> Abortion is illegal in Uganda unless performed to save the life of the pregnant woman. Of the two million pregnancies in Uganda each year, approximately 400,000 are aborted, of which around 148,000 suffer medical complications due to unsafe procedures (Moore et al. 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Interview on 21/03/2014, initiated by Richard himself, following the events described above

associated loss of leadership. He emphasises that the council gave him a parking ticket earlier in the day while he was waiting for the mourners; something that could never have happened under the vendors' leadership. His testimony demonstrates a concern for social and moral life in Nakasero, despite his peripheral status in the market.

Following the takeover, the committees of the former market leadership were replaced by rotating teams of council administrators and revenue collectors.<sup>3</sup> Having collected US\$ 606 million in its first year in the market, the council set a target of US\$ 960 million for its second year; an increase of 60 per cent.<sup>4</sup> To achieve this, revenue collectors allowed people to fill the open areas of the market, including the Kabengo and Parkyard.<sup>5</sup> This resulted in an influx of 'newcomers' (*bapya*) who arrived into Nakasero without completing historical rituals of market entry, such as stall apprenticeships or periods spent carrying luggage or selling *kaveera*.

Like Richard Nsereko, many people in Nakasero described a creeping sense of disorganisation in the aftermath of the takeover. While the vendor's (NMSTV) leadership had been criticised for its lack of heart (*omutima*), particularly in its dealings with people in the open areas of the market, it was generally seen to have done a good job of managing entry into the market. Vendors complained of the proliferation of *bayaye* and of increases in theft in the absence of the security committee, of an inability to resolve disputes without the disciplinary committee,<sup>6</sup> and of the loss of communal events such as the market football competition. The KCCA was seen to have made Nakasero 'liberal' and 'public'; criticisms that drew upon historical understandings of

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<sup>3</sup> The KCCA did not employ a Market Master; the historical figure of municipal authority in city markets. Staff rotation policies were introduced as part of a bid to reduce corruption and increase revenue. As a result people in the market complained of their unfamiliarity with revenue collectors, and their inability to negotiate (interviews with male produce vendors in the Kabengo, 04/11/2013, and upper stalls, 03/05/2014).

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Revenue Supervisor, KCCA (05/05/2014)

<sup>5</sup> This move was duplicitous insofar as the original justification for the KCCA takeover was to ensure the 'orderly' operation of the market. Furthermore, council officials often cited 'congestion' as a justification for the redevelopment or removal of markets in the city (Interview with Director of Gender and Marketing, KCCA, 05/05/2015; Daily Monitor (2012) 'KCCA suspends market tenders', 03 April).

<sup>6</sup> After attempting to report a vendor for their failure to pay for a box of tomatoes, Jane Nalumu (26/02/2014) described being passed back-and-forth between the police and the city council, stating "you end up giving up".

the market as a place in need of careful management and control.<sup>7</sup> It was seen to be interested only in ‘money’ and in doing its ‘own business’.<sup>8</sup> Jane Nalumu, who extolled the virtues of market life in the 1970s, emphasised: “These days the people are many and their hearts [*batima*] are not good.”<sup>9</sup>

These responses resonate with scholarly discussions of the role of neoliberal reforms in African societies (Ferguson 2006; Harrison 2005; Meagher 2007; Wiegratz 2010, 2011). For example, Kate Meagher (2007: 494-7) argues the processes of ‘liberalization and political decentralization’ have served to disrupt ‘local relations of solidarity’ in the shoe and garment trades in urban Nigeria, facilitating ‘involution, clandestinization and social fragmentation’. Jörg Wiegratz (2010: 124) analyses the *moral* implications of these processes in Uganda:

“Neoliberal reforms in Uganda have targeted the reshaping not only of the economy but also of the society and culture. [...] This includes [the consolidation of] a set of moral norms of behaving and relating to each other, [...] including cost-benefit calculus, self-interest and individualism, disposition and behaviour to maximise utility, instrumental rationality, egoism, low other-regard and empathy, opportunism and cunning, priority given to money, an emphasis on transaction-based relations, and disregard for the common good.”

Wiegratz presents narrative accounts of ‘moral degeneration’, ‘moral decay’, and the proliferation of ‘fake’ (or *kiwaani*) practices and products as evidence of the ‘spread of destructive [neoliberal] norms and practices’ (ibid.: 123; 134). Similar narratives were in evidence in Nakasero market in the wake of the KCCA takeover. Consequently, it could be argued that social and moral life in the market reflected broader political and economic developments more closely during this period than in the 1970s and 80s (see Chapter 5).

However, widespread critique of the municipal authorities’ interest in ‘money’ and ‘business’ provided evidence of a separate set of moral norms in operation in the market. Similarly, the continuation of rituals of *mabugo* (condolences), in

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<sup>7</sup> Male hardware shop vendor (17/06/2014); Discussion with NMSVT leaders (08/05/2015)

<sup>8</sup> Male coriander vendor, Kabengo (04/11/2013); Female tomato seller, PY (26/02/2014); Male onion vendor, PY (05/05/2015); Male butcher, lower stalls (22/04/2015)

<sup>9</sup> Interview on 26/02/2014

spite of declining participation, indicated the endurance of social institutions at a distance from both the government and the (liberalised) economy. However, in the absence of ethnographic and historical analysis, these norms and institutions tend to be lost. As with the scholarship on the *magendo* in the 1970s and 80s, the state and economy often become metaphors for broader developments in society. For example, although Wiegratz (2010: 126) acknowledges that ‘non-neoliberal’ norms and values ‘are unlikely to be wiped out entirely’ by structural adjustment, he provides no account of what these might look like, how they developed, and how they might interact with their neoliberal counterparts.<sup>10</sup> Pre-existing moral frameworks remain ‘non’-norms,<sup>11</sup> just as historical social institutions are lost amid narratives of ‘informality’, ‘ungovernance’ and ‘disorder’ (Meagher 2007).<sup>12</sup> What emerges is a landscape of absence, similar to that invoked by the discourses of urban ‘crisis’ described in Chapter 1.

This chapter returns to the present-day market to explore associational life in Nakasero in the wake of the KCCA takeover. It focuses on the role of particular institutions and practices in producing social and moral prosperity in the market. I show that when faced with challenges – from imprisonment to marriage to social malaise and tedium – people in Nakasero create, join and participate in collective institutions. Some of these institutions, such as *ettoffaali* (collections for the Buganda monarchy) and *okwanjula* (collections for marriage) have relatively long histories in the market, while others such as *obuyambi* (assistance for police bail) adapt historical practices to new challenges. Returning to the distinction between ‘culture’ and ‘politics’ outlined in the previous chapter, I argue that people in Nakasero have responded to the disruptions of recent years through associational practices grounded in culture

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<sup>10</sup> Just as the establishment of the first market in Buganda did not signify a shift to a market-society, structural adjustment programs did not necessarily signify a shift to a ‘neoliberal’ one.

<sup>11</sup> Wiegratz (2010: 123) restricts his analysis to ‘neoliberal moral restructuring in Uganda since 1986’. However, we have seen that SAPs began under Obote II in 1981, and that scholars have attributed similar norms to the emergence of the *magendo* in the 1970s (see Chapter 5).

<sup>12</sup> As an example of ‘ungovernance’, Meagher (2007: 495) emphasises that manufacturing associations were unable to access support ‘*except* through cliential ties with traditional rulers, and local government or state officials’ (emphasis added). Yet it is unclear whether these groups had ever accessed, or desired to access, support any other way. For example, we have seen that cliential ties have been a historical method of claim making in Nakasero, providing productive outcomes in some periods (e.g. the 1970s) and destructive ones in others (e.g. the 2000s).

and religion. Rather than enacting a 'burden of self-help' (Pieterse 2011: 6), they have cultivated new expressions of social and moral prosperity in the market by marshalling old ideas and practices.

The following sections present four empirical cases of associational practice in Nakasero: *obuyambi* ('assistance') on Jamaica corner, *okwanjula* (marital introduction) in the market office, gospel singing in the upper stalls and *ettoffaali* (a collection for the Buganda monarchy) across the market. These cases have been selected for their ability to shed light on different forms of social practice in the market.<sup>13</sup>

### **Organising *obuyambi* on Jamaica Corner**

A meeting is being hastily arranged on Jamaica corner. Phillip Bakoki (known as 'Uncle Phillip') is steadying himself on a large tin of paint marked with his initials; one of the many he sells on commission for the adjacent hardware store. He instructs Livingstone, a neighbour on the corner, to gather the rest of the group, including David Senyonga, who is soliciting work on his *boda boda*, Edward Walusimbi, selling airtime on the corner, and Benjamin Ocwee, negotiating with a customer on the street. Phillip has just received news that Pascal Kibalama, a colleague on the corner who has not been seen for a month, is on remand in Luzira prison on the outskirts of Kampala.<sup>14</sup> A group of ten people slowly assemble to receive the news. Livingstone agrees to make some calls to establish the time of the next remand hearing, while Benjamin and Edward volunteer to organise the collection. Edward, the only confident writer in the group, pulls out a sheet of lined paper and writes 'OBUYAMBI BWA PASCAL' ('assistance/help for Pascal') at the top.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> They are also subject to the methodological limitations outlined in Chapter 2, namely my privileged access to (young) men in the market.

<sup>14</sup> Luzira was constructed by the British colonial authorities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with separate sections for Africans, Asians and Europeans. Like Nakasero, it provides an example of the transformation of a colonial institution through the proliferation of bodies and social forms. For example, the life of men in Luzira is organised around a series of football teams, loosely affiliated with ethnicity (Goldblatt, 2015, 'The prison where murderers play for Manchester United' *The Guardian*, 28 May, <http://gu.com/p/499b7/sbl>, accessed 20/03/2016).

<sup>15</sup> The details described here are taken from field diary entries between 02-03/04/2014, an interview with Pascal on 30/04/2014 and with Uncle Phillip on 01/05/2015.

Pascal was arrested at about 21:00 while walking the short distance between the market and the taxi park, on his way back to the room he shares with a group of other men in Mengo. He recalls being picked up with around thirty other people – all young men – as part of an organised police operation. They were taken together to the Central Police Station and charged with being ‘idle and disorderly’, the contemporary expression of the colonial Vagrancy Act (see Chapter 4), which continues to remove a class of people from the streets of Kampala at night. Pascal did not have a phone with him or enough money to make a phone call from the station that might have enabled him to negotiate his release. Consequently, he entered the Ugandan remand system in which people charged with petty offences remain for an average period of three months before hearing (IWPR 2010; Rukare 2012). Pascal was made to dig on a prison farm in Luzira for six days a week, unable to contact any of his friends and family. After four weeks, he managed to pass a message out via another inmate. The first person he decided to contact was Phillip.

Benjamin arrived in Kampala from Adjumani as a child in 1980 and was taken in by Phillip’s mother.<sup>16</sup> After her death, Benjamin, Phillip and Livingstone moved into a home for street children in the capital run by a Presbyterian church, where they met Pascal. They received food, accommodation and classes at the home, and made use of its historical connection with Nakasero, which employed a number of the older children at the weekend. The oldest of the four, Phillip began working in the market as a twelve-year-old *kaveera* boy in the 1980s (his seniority is now reflected in his title, ‘Uncle’). By the time he was joined by Benjamin, Livingstone and Pascal, Phillip had established a base on Jamaica corner, a spot that provides a good view of the Eastern section of Market Street, along which a large proportion of customers approach the market. The men on the corner, many of whom adopted Rastafarian names, prided themselves on knowing how to speak to ‘white’ customers, generating work as shopping assistants and middlemen in the process. Pascal, Benjamin, Livingstone and Phillip still take turns to approach foreign visitors in order to boost the income provided from paint sales and the rent they charge other businesses on the corner.<sup>17</sup> The four of them remain the core of the group; a

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<sup>16</sup> These events are described in Chapter 5.

<sup>17</sup> People operating in the open or ungazetted areas of the market often pay both a social rent to the leaders of that particular area, and a daily fee to the municipal authorities (KCCA). It is not uncommon for people to pay a fee to one council administrator in the morning and be evicted by another in the afternoon.

position that is often explained with reference to the fact that they have been there the longest.

After conducting the collection for Pascal's *obuyambi*, Edward and Benjamin return to the corner with a list of sixty-five names and USh 165,000 (US\$ 66) in donations. Many of the names on the list are those of young men working in the Kabengo, while others, with prefixes like 'Uncle,' 'Chairman' and 'Mzee' ('elder') are the proprietors of nearby hardware shops. Virtually everyone in the Kabengo volunteered the socially accepted minimum of USh 1,000, while 'high earners' in the shops gave between USh 2,000-10,000. Livingstone reports that Pascal will appear before a remand hearing at Matugga Town Magistrates Court the following morning and that a payment of USh 250,000 (US\$ 100) should be sufficient to secure his release, based on previous experiences. I make my contribution (USh 50,000), and Phillip pledges to make up the shortfall.

At the courthouse, Pascal sits among a group of sixty prisoners in bright orange jumpsuits, handcuffed to each other on the floor. The public gallery is crowded with friends and relatives awaiting the start of proceedings, which is delayed by two hours. Livingstone is here with David Senyonga and another man from Jamaica corner. Eventually, the magistrate arrives and calls each prisoner forward to identify their address and the person posting their bail. Pascal is called up to the front. After giving his address, he gestures for Livingstone to identify himself to the magistrate. This interaction is barely audible in the gallery, such that it is quite possible for a prisoner and a surety to fail to identify one another at the critical moment. The final condition for bail is the delivery of a cash bond or security, paid by the surety on arrival at court. Livingstone hands over USh 250,000 to a court administrator but receives no receipt for the payment. David tells me that the court exists simply for 'making money'. Pascal is released along with a small group of other prisoners, some of whom begin dancing as they leave the court. Unable to fulfil the conditions for bail, the rest of the group are re-shackled and shuttled back to Luzira.

On his arrival back at Jamaica corner Pascal is greeted with hugs and handshakes. Edward provides him with a list of all the people that contributed

to his collection. However, no money is left to treat a hand infection Pascal contracted in Luzira. Uncle Phillip reflects on the response of the corner:

“We just see how we can help, but it’s not done for everyone, we first look at your behaviour, how long you have been here and what you have done for others. [...] It’s like the Prime Minister of Buganda [*Katikiro*]; he gets money from people willingly, not forcefully.”

Phillip invokes a social hierarchy in which a central group decides whether to extend assistance to other members. The legitimacy of this group rests on its longevity and the seniority of its members (at 44, Uncle Phillip was the oldest). The rest of the contributors were predominantly young men from Jamaica corner and the Kabengo, many of whom had fractured family networks and were the frequent targets of law enforcement exercises in the city. The primary bases of affiliation appeared to be gender and class; the majority of members started out as *kaveera* boys rather than as stall or shop vendors. While Pascal, David and Edward are Baganda, Uncle Phillip is a Mugisu and Benjamin Ocwee a Madi.

The group is complemented by the proprietors of nearby hardware shops, whose obligations are secured by virtue of their interactions with the men on Jamaica corner, rather than a notion of class solidarity.<sup>18</sup> As ‘high earners’, they are expected to contribute more than others, but rarely mobilise *obuyambi* on their own behalf. One shop vendor explained: “Some people don’t want to do it [ask for assistance] publicly; to show the whole market they have a problem. [...] They are a bit well off, like me”.<sup>19</sup> As such, it is both less likely that high earners would require the forms of assistance offered by *obuyambi*, and less acceptable for them to request it. Their social position in the market is dependent on their demonstration of having a “heart for helping” (*omutima omuyambi*) others in the market (Scherz 2014: 71).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Over 50% of shop vendors have a qualification from tertiary education (author’s survey, June 2014), and none had previously worked as *kaveera* boys as far as I was aware. My own obligations to the collection were a product both of my relative wealth, and my having entered into the social domain of the corner for my own project (see ‘Ethical entanglements’, Chapter 2).

<sup>19</sup> 16/06/2014

<sup>20</sup> As reflected, for example, in Frank Matovu’s testimony in Chapter 3.

Holly Hanson (2003) writes about the role of ties of reciprocal obligation in producing social stability and political accountability in precolonial Buganda. These ties were often mobilised through collections of food and gifts, for example on the occasion of a person's marital introduction ceremony (*okwanjula*) or burial (*kwabya lumbe*) (Karlström 1999: 343-4). More recently, Ben Jones (2009: 133) observes the role of collections in the proliferation of burial societies in eastern Uganda since the 1980s, a trend that has also been observed in other parts of Africa (Durham & Klaitz 2002; Whyte 2005). By comparing the organisation of *obuyambi* to the collections of the Buganda monarchy, Phillip Bokaki arguably invoked an idea of the activity as an expression of 'culture' (rather than 'politics'). Unlike the city council, it collected money "willingly, not forcefully".

The organisation of *obuyambi* on Jamaica corner can be traced back to the early 1980s when Phillip, Livingstone, Benjamin arrived along with large numbers of other young men. Its purpose was initially generated by the large numbers of people displaced by the conflicts in the central and northern regions of Uganda and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, its number of contributors has since expanded, and similar groups have been started by other men in the open areas of the market, such as John Barigye in the Kabengo.<sup>21</sup> Young men on the corner and in the Kabengo often contribute to the collections of different groups, hedging their ties and obligations in the process. These groups offer forms of support and solidarity, on the condition that the men conform to certain modes of behaviour.

The criteria for receiving *obuyambi* from Philip's group include *i*) how long a person had worked in the market and *ii*) their 'behaviour', including what they have done for others. The first of these conditions protects the system from *bapya* ('newcomers'), requiring new arrivals to build social support from their colleagues and neighbours before requesting assistance. The second projects a set of social and moral behaviours that combines colonial notions of the 'good boy', such as abstinence from theft and public displays of drinking and smoking, with Ganda notions of *heart*, such as contributions to the collections of others. Members seen to breach these criteria were refused support. For

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<sup>21</sup> John arrived in Kampala with the Tanzanian army in 1980 (described in Chapter 5).

example, one young man was recently refused assistance after being arrested for hitting someone with a stone.

Group members benefit from *obuyambi* in line with their general contributions to the group. These contributions include but are not limited to their individual financial contributions. As such, they operate through an ethic that contrasts that present in individualistic microinsurance schemes such as those currently promoted by international financial institutions.<sup>22</sup> Rather than receiving support in line with his individual savings, Pascal was able to draw upon the support and care (*okufaayo*) of high earners in the market (shop vendors) by virtue of his integration into vertical systems of reciprocal obligation.<sup>23</sup>

### **Planning *okwanjula* in the market office**

If the practice of *obuyambi* on Jamaica corner provides forms of social and economic support for people working in the open areas of the market, meetings for traditional marriage ceremonies (*okwanjula*; ‘introduction’) fulfilled a similar role for vendors in the shops and stalls. These meetings were often announced over the market tannoy:

“We are informing all traders and people in Nakasero village that Ruwenza Samuel from the watermelon department will hold meetings for his introduction [*okwanjula*] every Friday. We are calling all traders to attend in big numbers for a colourful function.”

(Market announcement, 15/06/2014)

After several such announcements, a dozen people gather in the market office for the first meeting in aid of Samuel Ruwenza’s *okwanjula*.<sup>24</sup> Maintenance of the office has slipped since the KCCA takeover; disused furniture is piled in the corners and the noticeboards display dusty images of the redevelopment project. A fading portrait of President Museveni hangs in one corner. Many of the people in attendance are young men from the watermelon section of the

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<sup>22</sup> See Ruuskanen (2008) for an overview of these programmes in Uganda.

<sup>23</sup> Margaret Abuya’s interventions in the arrest of Alex Sserwanda (described in Chapter 3) provide a further example of the mobilisation of these obligations.

<sup>24</sup> Details gathered from field diary entries from the meeting on 20/06/2014 and an interview with Samuel on 29/04/2015.

upper market, where Samuel works. However, there are also older men and women from other parts of the market, including his mother, Josephine, who sells produce in the upper stalls. While Samuel is Rwandese by birth, his partner, Jennifer, is a Muganda and the marriage is due to take place in Mpigi district, forty kilometres from Kampala. The audience is a mix of Baganda and Luo, Muslims and Christians. All the discussion takes place in Luganda.

Prior to the start of the meeting, everyone is given two detailed budgets, neatly printed on A4 paper. The first budget is for the *okwanjula* ceremony, and has been put together by the bride and her family, while the second (in English) is for the church wedding, put together by Samuel. The budgets include itemised costs for fruit, vegetables, handkerchiefs, dresses, rings and certificates. The *okwanjula* requires the purchase of forty-one different costumes (*okwambala*) for the bride's family. Both budgets add up to around US\$ 10million, making a total of US\$ 20million (US\$ 8,000). This figure is considerably more than Samuel could fund from his daily income (US\$ 20,000; US\$ 8).

A historical Ganda ceremony, *okwanjula* serves as a 'ritualised negotiation and transfer of bridewealth' designed to produce new social and moral relationships between two families (Karlström 2004: 603).<sup>25</sup> It involves a drawn-out process of gift-giving designed to demonstrate the groom's commitment to the family of the bride followed by a feast to celebrate the engagement.

Scholars writing on urban Africa argue that while marriage continues to flourish as a central cultural and socio-economic institution (Jean-Baptiste 2014; Rudwick & Posel 2014), rising costs relative to income have put it out of the reach of a large number of city-dwellers (Luke & Munshi 2006). In Uganda, the marriage rate of men aged 15 to 49 declined from 50 to 41 per cent between 2006-2011 (Tumwine & Ntozi 2009; New Vision 2013).<sup>26</sup> George Mirembe, who describes himself as 'well off' in the market, had been unable to

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<sup>25</sup> The *ookwanjula* ceremony constitutes a 'civil marriage' when registered with the state.

<sup>26</sup> A civil marriage ceremony is considerably cheaper than either a traditional introduction or a church wedding, costing around US\$ 300,000 (US\$ 120) according to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (New Vision, 2013, 'Marriage, Divorce Bill: Where are the children?', 10 March).

raise enough money for either *okwanjula* or a church wedding. Like many others in Nakasero, he is in a long-term relationship of cohabitation; an arrangement that proliferated along with *mukwano* (temporary friendship) unions in the late colonial period. Such unions are favoured by many young men and women in the open areas of the market. In my interviews, young men often complained of the costs of marriage and the demands of Ugandan women, while young women despaired of the ability of Ugandan men to act as reliable providers.

A man at the front of the room signals the start of Samuel's meeting by emphasising that everything listed on the budgets is a 'must.' This is the chairman of the meeting. After leading a short prayer, he introduces the group's disciplinary secretary and 'mobiliser' (responsible for maintaining order and maximising attendance respectively) and requests volunteers for the open positions of treasurer and general secretary. These five positions make up the introduction committee, all of whom are required to attend every meeting. The positions allow people to manage resources and to display leadership in the market away from the market association (NMSTV).

Following the election of the committee, people begin to offer advice based on their experience of other ceremonies. One man asserts that they are asking for 'a lot of money', and suggests a break between the *okwanjula* and the church ceremonies so that the group can raise money for each event in turn. Another asks how much has been raised so far (US\$ 600,000) and notes that the bride's family usually contribute 10 to 20%. Samuel reassures them that he is running a parallel group in his residential district of Gayaza, and that the bride's family has agreed to provide some of the items on the church list. A woman then stands up at the back of the room and suggests that as Samuel is a young man (24) who is not a 'known person' (*amanyikiddwa*; also 'popular person') in the market, he should go and introduce himself to people and give them copies of the budgets. The chairman agrees and suggests that they start in the Parkyard the following morning, where vendors should be able to pledge fruit and vegetables. An elderly man suggests that the committee request *ekiyonjo* (special baskets for transporting and presenting chickens, typically given to each brother-in-law) from his neighbours in the chicken department. Following a number of other suggestions, Samuel agrees

that future meetings should be held in the watermelon section where they will be more visible, at a time that does not clash with Muslim prayers.

Over the course of the meetings, participants are encouraged to sponsor individual items required for each ceremony. Sponsorship of items such as the map of the Buganda region, which is on the *okwanjula* ceremony list, allows for people to be represented at the events, even if they are unable to attend in person. Their gifts are reproduced through photographs and stories of the event, and discussed by people in the market after the meetings. In keeping with prevailing systems of credit and debt, people can pledge sums of money which they then pay off in instalments (see Plate 7.1). Pledging was one of several forms of fundraising used at Samuel's meetings.<sup>27</sup>

**PLEDGE NOTE**  
Name. KAMOGA DENNY  
Contribution/Pledge 20,000  
Date to be collected: 20/07/14  
Phone No. 0774 296781  
Please tear this and send it back

**Plate 7.1** A pledge note made during Samuel's introduction meetings

Different members of the meeting committee have different fundraising responsibilities. The job of the disciplinary secretary is to uphold 'discipline' during meetings through the imposition of an elaborate system of fines and sanctions. Normal modes of behaviour in the market are adapted and exaggerated, so that for example anyone arriving late or appearing to eat, sleep or use foul language during meetings can expect to receive a fine of between US\$ 500-2,000. People attending the meeting often accuse others of committing these transgressions, sparking debate and laughter. This practice extends to the *okwanjula* ceremony itself where it is officiated by the family of the bride.

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<sup>27</sup> The details provided in the following paragraphs are derived from my observations of a meeting for Salongo Wasswa in the chicken department (24/02/2014), and Samuel's descriptions of his own meetings from which I was absent (29/04/2015).

The chairman is responsible for holding a number of auctions. 'Packers' are appointed to purchase mystery goods and wrap them in newspaper before each meeting. These packages are then auctioned to the group via an extraordinary process through which every bidder must make good on their bid (usually through a pledge note) whether it is the winning bid or not. This method raises more money than a conventional auction, and spreads the cost across a larger group of people. Its success depends on the skills of the auctioneer and the generosity of the group. The chairman initiates a series of call-recall routines, for example:

Chairman: "That's it! Sold for 20,000! [Pause] But is that enough?"

Group: "No!"

Chairman: "So who has 21,000?"

The package is passed around the group again, allowing people to feel its weight and speculate on its contents. Finally, the highest bidder tears off the paper, revealing a bag of sugar, a bundle of blankets, a set of knives, etc..<sup>28</sup>

What quickly becomes clear is that these meetings are about much more than raising of funds for a particular person. Samuel reflected: "A function is not done by one person, it is general; it is a form of gathering [in which] it is important to help people." His meetings were valued insofar as they generated a series of social rituals through which people were able to demonstrate *heart*. Pre-meeting announcements encouraged people to bring their 'ideas' (*ekilwooza*) rather than their money, just as the men on Jamaica corner encouraged people to manage their 'behaviour' rather than their financial contributions. The questions and suggestions raised by people at Samuel's first meeting demonstrated their concern for the processes of the meeting, planning and fundraising, over and above their obligations to the groom. One attendee asserted: "Some people feel proud to be involved in the ceremony, [but] the enjoyment starts straight away in the meetings."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Behrend (2011: 107) observes the use of auctions as fundraising tools within the Catholic church in Uganda, however, I was unable to find any record of this in relation to marriage ceremonies.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with male chicken vendor (35), 14/05/2014

Fourteen separate sets of introduction meetings were announced during the period of my fieldwork, and several others held but not announced.<sup>30</sup> Three were for women who were raising money for church ceremonies (the bride's family traditionally receive rather than give gifts as part of *okwanjula*). When I spoke with Samuel on my return to Nakasero, he had successfully navigated both the introduction and the wedding. Attendance at his meetings increased to around thirty people, and the process helped Samuel become an *amanyikiddwa* (known person) in the market. He raised a total of US\$ 2million (US\$ 800) to complement the amount generated by his group at home. He reflected on the process: "I felt so glad because I wasn't expecting it; I could not believe we raised that amount."

Approximately thirty people from the market attended Samuel's introduction at his future parents-in-law's house in Mpigi on 22 August 2014 and his wedding at Katwe Anglican church the following day. On both occasions, Samuel's entourage was dominated by his friends and neighbours from Nakasero market.

Samuel's meetings in Nakasero enabled him to hold a ceremony that had become out of reach for a large proportion of Uganda's urban population. Like the collections for *obuyambi* on Jamaica corner, they mobilised historical principles associated with Ganda cultural practice, such as *omutima omuyambi* (a heart for helping) in order to create and extend relationships based upon business association, neighbourliness and friendship. They combined technologies derived from state bureaucracies and financial institutions, such as committees, fines, and elaborate credit and debt arrangements, with historical methods of Ganda cultural expression, including public speaking, discipline and competition.<sup>31</sup> The result was a memorable series of events in which people were able to contribute in line with their resources and abilities.

### **Singing gospel in the upper stalls**

The activities of *obuyambi* and (particularly) *okwanjula* were generally associated with 'culture' and cultural institutions in the market, in distinction from the 'politics' and political institutions described in the previous chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> Captured by market announcements between October 2013-June 2014

<sup>31</sup> For example through the practice of the auction.

However, 'religion' was also understood as an institution that stands in opposition to the forces of 'politics and money'.<sup>32</sup> This section provides an insight into different types of religious practice in Nakasero, and the social and moral functions they are seen to fulfil. I focus in particular on the emergence of a singing group in the market, which I first encountered in early 2014.

It is late afternoon when the first sounds gospel singing drift in and out of the upper market stalls.<sup>33</sup> At the end of the northernmost aisle, a group of five women stand with their backs to a pile of watermelons, projecting their voices down into the passageway. A young woman leads the singing wearing a bright green *gomesi* (traditional Ganda dress) covered by an apron adorned with the logo of a market restaurant. She intones lines from gospel songs and Pentecostal hymns, encouraging others to sing the recall:

*Omwana yesu iwuzliukira abalabe abalisasana*

[On] the day when the child Jesus will be resurrected, enemies will be scattered

*Singa singa simukama singa sikabika nange nandikali de'awo!*

If not, if not for God, if not my for my King, I would have died!

A small crowd is assembling. Many of the women in this section of the market join in with the singing, while others sit and clap in time with the song. As they pass down the aisle, *kaveera* and *fasi-fasi* boys dance while balancing baskets and jerry cans on their heads, inviting the laughter of those gathered around. The singing grows louder and the lead singer's voice begins to waver, tears rolling down her cheeks. This is the first time that people can recall communal singing in this area of the market.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> To return to George Mirembe's assertion in the previous chapter: "It is politics and money that leads us into trouble here. It is not religion, it is not culture" (interview on 17/02/2014).

<sup>33</sup> The events described here first appeared in my field diary on 13/02/2014

<sup>34</sup> Musicians occasionally perform in the open areas of the market for donations. One of the most popular performers was a transgender dancer known as Jackie. People generally laughed and applauded during her performances (a distinctive shuffle-dance with a boombox accompaniment), but I never heard anyone remark on her gender or sexuality. Her popularity is arguably illustrative of the market's role in extending social license (Kapchan 1996: 29) in a context in which openly homosexual or transgender persons are seen to deviate from Ganda notions of *ekitiibwa* (respect/honour) (Boyd 2014). However, as an entertainer, her role was that of an outsider rather than an integrated member of the market.

Nakasero is home to a number of associational practices loosely organised around religion. Small groups of people, usually from the same section of the market, meet to attend prayers at nearby mosques and churches. For example, a group of chicken vendors and halal butchers<sup>35</sup> gather twice a day to attend *Salat al-zuhr* (midday) and *Salat al-‘asr* (late afternoon prayer) at Nakasero mosque. One of the implications of urban migration and the historical segregation of the capital is that people often belong to two congregations, one in their residential district, attended predominantly by families, and one in the city centre, attended by neighbours and business people. City services often provide entrepreneurial as well as spiritual possibilities.

The market is also home to followers of the Faith of Unity and Oneness, a sect established by Dosteo Bisaka, a former Catholic Priest and acclaimed hymn composer who was reported to have healed a member of his congregation on February 22, 1980. Bisaka subsequently rejected the Bible and established his own, de-anglicised religion in which followers offer prayers to him, *Omuhereza* (a servant of God), on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> days of the month. Vendors display calendars highlighting these days in their stalls and share transport to the nearest *itambiro* (house of worship) in Nansana. The Faith of Unity teaches that monogamy serves to ‘encourage prostitution’ on the basis that “women who remain without husbands have to roam about looking for support”.<sup>36</sup> This understanding is reminiscent of the colonial category of the *abekazi be tawuni* (‘town woman’), which was a source of moral anxiety in Kampala and the Kibuga in the colonial and early postcolonial periods.<sup>37</sup> The faith also proclaims that alcohol has ‘no dignity’, echoing the colonial prohibition of public drinking and its contemporary association with *bayaye*. The growing influence of the Faith of Unity in Uganda was demonstrated by President Museveni’s attendance at Bisaka’s 85<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2014.

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<sup>35</sup> All butchers in Kampala are expected to be Muslim (with the exception of those involved in the processing of pork) an arrangement that can be traced back to Somali and Sudanese dominance of the meat trade in the colonial township. A number of the men working as chicken slaughterers in the market had converted their families to Islam in order to obtain their jobs, changing their names in the process. For example, Hassan Kijjambu (24) converted from Catholicism after noting that slaughterers made more money than chapatti vendors (his previous job). He still attends church under his former name, but leaves the market during Muslim prayers and eats in privacy during Ramadan (interview on 06/11/2013).

<sup>36</sup> Taken from an interview and investigation conducted by the Daily Monitor (2008), ‘Uganda Now Hit by an Influx of Cults’, 7 September

<sup>37</sup> To refer back to the testimony of a market vendor in Southall and Gutkind’s study (1957: 167): “If men loved us and looked after us there would be less trouble here.”

James Ferguson (2006: 85) writes that African populations have responded to the political and economic disruptions of the past thirty years by seeking out expressions of morality and sociality in 'religiously inspired social movements' and millenarian cults, often in combination with local, kin-based social systems. Pentecostal Christianity is thought to be the fastest-growing religion on the continent (Freston 2007: 208; Martin 2003: 52). Generally seen as a form of Protestantism, its teachings focus on a personal relationship to God, a divine being who bestows upon believers 'The Gifts of the Holy Spirit' (Bremner 2013: 12). Although these teachings originated in North America, Allan Anderson (2002) argues that Pentecostal churches should now be viewed as African institutions. The Prosperity Gospel is particularly dominant on the continent; a doctrine that combines an emphasis on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit with individual wellbeing and material prosperity (Bremner 2013: 14; Coleman 2004).

Precursors to contemporary Pentecostalism have been present in Uganda since the the Anglican *balokole* ('saved ones') revival, which originated in Rwanda in the 1930s (Gifford, 1998: 152). The Pastor of a Canadian Pentecostal church wrote to the British Governor in Uganda in 1957 requesting permission to commence missionary work in Uganda. The Governor initially refused on the objection of the Anglican Archdeacon, but reversed his decision in the run-up to independence.<sup>38</sup> The first Pentecostal church, Naguru-Katale Full Gospel Church, was established in Kampala in 1960. Its name (*katale*; 'market') is suggestive of a location near to a market on Naguru hill, which would have potentially provided access to a large congregation. Believers continue to preach in Nakasero market; for example, George Mirembe changed Pentecostal churches after an encounter with a preacher in the market in 2015.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Details in this paragraph are provided from Brien Mutebi's extended article: Daily Monitor (2012) 'The story of the first Pentecostal church in Uganda', 23 September.

<sup>39</sup> The task of preaching the gospel in the open areas of the market is a particularly challenging one, where preachers must compete with other social performances. For example, after a young man began to talk of Jesus' salvation in the Kabengo, a nearby vendor shouted: "You will grow into a big Pastor and cheat people like Pastor Kiwudde!" (A pastor recently convicted of impersonation and extortion) (05/05/2014).

In 1961, a small group of African Pentecostals held an event known as the 'Daudi Crusade' at the Kabaka's lake, which drew large crowds. Following the event, hundreds of people were baptised in the lake in a ritual that combined the blessing of Jesus with that of the Kabaka, providing Pentecostalism with a distinctly Ganda character. Pentecostal churches continued to proliferate in the capital until the end of Amin's regime (1977), when the Pentecostal Assemblies of God were banned. As a consequence the Pentecostal movement went underground and depended on covert channels and ties, such as those cultivated in the market at the time (see Chapter 5). They re-emerged as 'open air' churches after Amin's departure, marking the start of the 'mushrooming' of Pentecostalism in Uganda (Gifford 1998: 153).

On my revisit to Nakasero in 2015, gospel singing in the upper market had grown louder and more confident. The chorus contained over thirty people from different sections of the market, assembling every weekday at 17:00 under the name *Kyoto* ('altar') group. The group organised fortnightly trips to Mulago hospital to sing and pray for the patients. A basket was passed around to raise money for sick members and for the Christian Life Church in Bwaise, attended by Juliet Nalukwago. Juliet's fruit stall was located at the end of the aisle and was impossible to reach once the choir was in full voice. A founder of the group, she explained that she started singing with two of her neighbours in order to share the 'love of God' with others in the market at a time in the day when 'people get sorrow' and need 'hope' and 'spiritual food' (*mere yo mwoyo*).<sup>40</sup> Late afternoon is the period when vendors in the upper stalls, most of whom are female,<sup>41</sup> begin to calculate the profits and losses of the day, and to prioritise debt repayments to neighbours, suppliers, schools and landlords. It is also the period when they begin to contemplate the long journey home and the waiting demands of domestic life.

Barbara Nakachwa, the tearful singer described above, met Juliet through her work as a waitress in a market restaurant.<sup>42</sup> She volunteered to lead the singing, having learnt a broad range of gospel songs as a member of her local church choir in Katwe. As a mobile single young women involved in preparation and sale of cooked food, Barbara resembled a category of person

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<sup>40</sup> Interviews on 19/05/2014 and 05/05/2015.

<sup>41</sup> 87% (author's survey, June 2014)

<sup>42</sup> Details here taken from a discussion with Barbara on 05/05/2015.

(the 'town woman') who would have been subjected to considerable moral critique and bodily policing in the colonial township and Kibuga. Echoes of this critique were still evident in the complaints of older men and women about the recent influx of 'undisciplined' 'young women' (*abakazi abato*) in Nakasero.<sup>43</sup> In Kyoto group, Barbara created and extended forms of social solidarity through collective worship. She used terms of kinship ('sister' and 'mother') when describing Juliet and other members of the group, and emphasised that they had collected money for her when she was sick and unable to work earlier in the year.

For non-Pentecostal members of the upper stalls, *Kyoto* still provided an expression of solidarity and a temporary escape from material pressures at the end of the long market day. For example, Janet Bukirwa explained:

"I cannot join because I am Catholic but I like to listen, I listen to the words and I feel good. [...] If you have religion in the market, it helps you and your neighbours."<sup>44</sup>

Janet's testimony echoes Richard Nsereko's discussion of the historical role of burial groups in furthering solidarity [*obumu*] at the start of the chapter. As such, it demonstrates how people in the market have been able to cultivate forms of social support and prosperity through a broad range of rituals and activities that may not be immediately apparent to outsiders. Other people experienced more explicit forms of transformation as a result of their participation in the group. For instance, two of the young *kaveera* vendors who I had observed dancing the year before had become 'born again' under the guidance of their 'spiritual Mama', Juliet.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, George Mirembe introduced many people to his church through his work with *House of Faith*.

The development of Pentecostalism in Kampala arguably bears some resemblance to the development of Ganda cultural institutions in Nakasero: present but largely dormant in the colonial era, emergent in the 1960s and early 70s, forced to develop new channels during the late 1970s, and dominant from the 1980s onwards. Its institutional and theological flexibility

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<sup>43</sup> Male butcher, 60 (22/04/2015)

<sup>44</sup> A female produce vendor in the Upper Stalls (05/05/2015)

<sup>45</sup> The two men were baptised at the Christian Life Centre (described on 05/05/2015)

enabled its reproduction in a variety of different settings, such as houses, churches, open-air venues and markets, in a variety of different guises, such as personal prayers, street sermons and singing groups. Although Pentecostalism's emphasis on personal transformation and a break with the past (including social and familial relationships) could be seen to foster a sense of 'individualism' (Wiegratz 2010: 124), David Maxwell (2013: 108) argues that it 'rejects neoliberalism's cultural agenda of atomization', creating new forms of 'stability, security' and 'divinely ordained moral order' within diverse assemblies. As with Muslim prayer groups and Faith of Unity excursions, gospel singing provided social channels for navigating market life, and spiritual channels for transcending it.

### **Collecting *ettoffaali* for the Buganda monarchy**

"The collection of *ettoffaali* is still going on here in the market office and across all shopping arcades in Kampala. We are encouraging all people of the king [*basajja wa Kabaka*] to bring *ettoffaali* to rebuild the royal tombs and to take Buganda back to its glory days."

Market announcement, 05/03/2014

The annual collection of *ettoffaali* ('bricks') is enthusiastically embraced in the market.<sup>46</sup> Originally planned as a fundraising drive for the restoration of the royal tombs at Kasubi, it has since developed into an ongoing fundraising programme in Buganda and beyond.<sup>47</sup> This final section explores the role of the Buganda monarchy in the production of social and moral life in Nakasero. As with the religious groups outlined above, I argue that the monarchy continues to play an important role in the market.

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<sup>46</sup> The monarchy has made use of architectural metaphors of progress – foundation, construction, bricks – since the 1920s. Karlström (1999: 288) argues that the popular phrase *kugenda mu maaso* ('to go straight ahead') was replaced with by notions of organic growth, expressed through the verb *kukula* (to grow, to mature) during this period. This shift emerged amid growing dissatisfaction with linear notions of 'progress' embraced by early Christian converts, which conceived of a distinct past 'behind' and a future 'ahead'.

<sup>47</sup> For example, the Katikkiro raised US\$ 120m on a trip to the UK organised by *Friends of Buganda* in 2014 (Observer 2014, 'Kitikkiro raises Shs 120m in UK,' 27 August). Pierre Englebert (2002) writes of the Buganda monarchy's shift towards a 'corporate' mode of organisation since the 1990s, on account of its inability to raise money through direct forms of taxation.

Following a series of appeals, people in Nakasero market raised a total of USH 11m (US\$ 4,400), for the *ettoffaali* collections in 2014. Some people took their donations to the market offices, while others contributed to baskets carried by members of the Baganda *Ngabo* (shield) Workers Association, described below. The grand total was presented to the Katikkiro (Prime Minister of Buganda) on behalf of the market at Nakivubu stadium in front of a large crowd. The donations of individual markets, offices and shopping arcades across the city were subsequently announced over local radio channels, with large donors granted public speeches, seats in VIP tents and personal audiences with the Katikkiro. In this way, *ettoffaali* elicited historical forms of competition among the Baganda in the service of fundraising and demonstrating popular support for the monarchy (Karlström 1999: 370-82). However, rather than clans, the salient categories in this competition were Kampala's markets, offices and shopping arcades. Critically, these categories included non-Baganda who participated in large numbers, motivated both by the social and political power of the monarchy, and the spectacle of the event itself. Vendors in Nakasero market competed with Nakawa and Owino markets to share a stage with the Katikkiro.

The Baganda *Ngabo* Workers Association (BANGAWA) was started by six vendors in Kisekka market in 2010 in the wake of the 2009 Buganda riots, during which a number of royalists were beaten and arrested in Kampala.<sup>48</sup> The association works to 'unite' working Ganda people and to 'fight for the kingdom' and "our properties which are not looked after by central government".<sup>49</sup> It has a strong focus on labour and young people, placing emphasis on "educating and motivating Baganda youth" in the face of rising unemployment.<sup>50</sup> The organisation draws upon a history of pro-royalist, anti-government sentiment in urban markets that can be traced back to the formation of the Bataka Party in Katwe market in 1949 (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>48</sup> The Buganda riots were sparked by the refusal of the government to allow the Kabaka to visit Kayunga to mark the Kingdom's annual 'youth day.' The Banyala population in Kayunga are thought to have opposed the visit (seeing it as an affront to their own secession from the kingdom), and the government sought to check the power of the monarchy in light of a mounting campaign for secession. Four radio stations were subsequently closed down and between 27-50 people killed in clashes with security services.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with male founder member (54), Kabaka's lake, 23/05/2014

<sup>50</sup> Baganda Watch (2014) 'Getting to know Baganda Youth Organisations', February 21 ([https://www.bugandawatch.com/2015/02/21/letter-from-kampala-getting-to-know-baganda-youth\(the-organizations\)](https://www.bugandawatch.com/2015/02/21/letter-from-kampala-getting-to-know-baganda-youth(the-organizations)), accessed 20/03/2016)

Hajjat Aidah Nuru (62), a long-time *gonja* (sweet plantain banana) vendor in Nakasero market, decided to create a second branch of BANGAWA in Nakasero in 2011, after hearing of it through a cousin in Kisekka. The group attracted over 270 members, including ten people who Aidah describes as non-Baganda. It meets with its sister branch at the Kabaka's lake in Mengo each month. After discussing news and developments relating to *mailo* land,<sup>51</sup> group members engage in communal forms of labour including grass cutting, rubbish collecting, and demolishing temporary structures in the area; activities associated with 'low earners' in the market (see Chapter 3), but which here become symbolic of unity before the monarchy.<sup>52</sup>

Mikael Karlström (1999: 303) observes that Baganda royalists organised a clean-up of Kabaka's lake in 1992, mobilising "a degree of enthusiasm and popular participation" not witnessed since the clan football tournament held in 1987. He argues that the restoration of the monarchy the following year was fundamental to the reproduction of moral community in the region amid the acceleration of the "instrumentalizing economic engine of capitalism" (2004: 616). The Kabaka was seen to hold together a "bottom-up structure of nested allegiances" and to symbolise social solidarity and unity in diversity, reproduced through rituals such as the cleaning of the lake (1999: 301). Karlström's (1999; 2004) vision of moral *continuity* brought about by the restoration of the kingship contests Wiegratz's (2010) thesis of moral *rupture* associated with neoliberal structural reforms.

The announcement that Kabaka Mwenda Mutebi II was to visit Nakasero as part of the eighteenth anniversary of his coronation in 2011 aroused great excitement in the market. BANGAWA meetings swelled with new members seeking involvement in the visit. Aidah was put in charge of the *makula* (royal gifts) committee. After numerous collections in the market, she purchased twelve cows, fifty bunches of bananas and several baskets of fruit and vegetables, carefully assembled from vendors' donations (see Plate 7.3). The

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<sup>51</sup> Land allocated to the Buganda authorities under the 1900 Uganda Agreement.

<sup>52</sup> I participated in one such meeting on 23/05/2014. The creation of the lake itself was an act designed to generate loyalty to the monarchy through the enforcement of collective acts of labour. Between 1886-1887 Kabaka Mwanga II ordered the banging of a drum from the palace, often in the middle of the night, calling all royal subjects, irrelevant of position, to dig at the site of the lake (Holly Hanson, personal correspondence, 23/05/2014).

date of the Kabaka's visit was set for Thursday 28 July.<sup>53</sup> President Museveni had planned to visit nearby Kisekka market on the same day but postponed his trip, reportedly because the majority of people there were planning to be in Nakasero for the Kabaka's visit.<sup>54</sup> Abasi Kiyimba (2013) observed speeches by both the president and the Kabaka at Owino market in 2009. After Museveni had finished speaking, people said: "The tenant has gone; let us now welcome the landlord" (*omupangisa agenze, katwanirize nnyinimu*) (ibid.: 92).

On the day of the Kabaka's visit, the entire surface area of the market was washed, scrubbed, cleared of rubbish and covered with woven mats and elephant grass.<sup>55</sup> Aidah spent the previous night in the market along with Phillip Bakoki and the men on Jamaica corner, Samuel Ruwenza and his colleagues in the watermelon department and Juliet Nalukwago and her neighbours in the upper stalls.<sup>56</sup> Hundreds of people stayed in the market in order to clean, while men from the Ghetto collected and removed all the rubbish. Very little sleep was had during the night. Once the cleaning was finished, Joseph Muwenda and other musicians from the market began to play *embuutu* and *namunjoloba* drums as men and women danced and shared food and banana beer (*tonto omwenge*) on the mats. As morning arrived, people changed into newly stitched *gomesi* (dresses) and *kanzu* (suits) behind vacated market stalls. The Kabaka's visit was the first time in the postcolonial history of Nakasero that people could recall the market being closed for an entire day. Nevertheless, people in the Kabengo generated an income by selling hats inscribed with the names and symbols of Buganda clans (visible in Plate 7.5).

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<sup>53</sup> I describe these events based on her testimony (23/05/2014) together with those gathered from various news reports at the time (New Vision 2011, 'Kabaka tour excites city dwellers,' 29 July; Monitor 2011a, 'Kabaka Mwuenda Mutebi tells off Buganda traitors,' 28 July; 2011b 'Museveni cancels Kisekka Market tour as Kabaka visits Nakasero Market,' 28 July)

<sup>54</sup> Observer (2011) 'Buganda counts its scores under Mutebi' 1 August (<http://observer.ug/news-headlines/14485-buganda-counts-its-scores-under-mutebi>, accessed 15/03/2016)

<sup>55</sup> The media reported that "the usually filthy and smelly Nakasero market was this time clean and spotless." New Vision (2011) 'Kabaka calls for harmony with govt.' 29 July.

<sup>56</sup> Recounted in discussions with Phillip, Samuel and Juliet on 01/11/2013, 29/04/2015 and 05/05/2015 respectively.



Plate 7.2 The Kabaka (centre) arrives in the market<sup>57</sup>



Plate 7.3 Royal gifts prepared by the vendors, presided over by Aidah in her *gomesi* (left)<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> After: New Vision (2011) 'Kabaka tours Nakasero,' 28 July ([https://www.flickr.com/photos/new\\_vision\\_pix/5984451924/in/album-72157627175835549](https://www.flickr.com/photos/new_vision_pix/5984451924/in/album-72157627175835549), accessed 01/10/2015)

<sup>58</sup> After: New Vision (2011) Op. cit.



**Plate 7.4** Vendors gather to see the Kabaka (background: on the roof of the lower market)<sup>59</sup>



**Plate 7.5** Female vendors dance after the speeches<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> After: New Vision (Op. cit.)

<sup>60</sup> After: London Evening Post (2011) 'Thousands on streets as Kabaka visits Kampala,' 29 July (<http://www.thelondoneveningpost.com/thousands-on-streets-as-kabaka-visits-kampala/>, accessed 02/03/2016).

As the Parkyard became crowded, people climbed up on to the roof of the lower market (see Plate 7.4). Dastur Street was lined with a wall of banana stems behind which more crowds gathered. A female vendor was heard shouting: 'our market is holy today!'<sup>61</sup> After making his way towards the market on foot, the Kabaka was met by the Lord Mayor of Kampala, and a number of other divisional mayors. Market leaders and organising committee members then took up prominent positions in marquees. Aidah presented the *makula* to the Kabaka on behalf of the market: a moment that left her 'very happy and proud' (Plate 7.3). The Kabaka then addressed the crowd in Luganda. After emphasising the poor conditions faced by vendors and traders in Kampala, he made an appeal for unity:

"We have plans to develop [*kakula*, also 'grow'] Buganda and Uganda, but this can only be achieved when there is unity [*obumu*] [...] We need to work in unity irrespective of our ethnic or political differences. We cannot develop the country when we are divided."<sup>62</sup>

The Kabaka's focus on 'unity' and working together across differences contrasted with the divisive rhetoric of the NMSTV leadership towards its end. It also situated politics ('political differences') in relation to the broader cultural imperative to 'develop' or 'grow' (*kakula*). Following the speech, people in the market lined up to make private donations. George Mirembe emphasised that those who had managed to shake hands with the Kabaka 'couldn't wash their hands for a week'. Fred Ssebbaale, a popular singer from outside the market then performed *Katonda kuuma Kabaka* ('God protect the Kabaka'). Music and dancing continued long after the Kabaka's departure (Plate 7.5).

Phillip Bakoki and Samuel Rwenza formed part of a large non-Baganda contingent at the event, which included Joluo, Banyankole, Basoga, Bagisu, Banyoro, Acholi and Banyarwanda. Samuel emphasised that he learned to 'love the Kabaka' in childhood, qualifying him as a *musajja wa Kabaka* (person of the king), the inclusive category invoked in market announcements. George Mirembe emphasised: 'if you call yourself a Muganda', even if your name,

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<sup>61</sup> New Vision (2011) 'Kabaka calls for unity with govt,' July 29

<sup>62</sup> New Vision (2011) Op. cit.

appearance and accent differs, 'you are at peace [...] you are loved'.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, Simon Kayonga a Munyankole poultry vendor used an analogy of chickens to describe his relationship with the region:

"When people come for chickens they ask for '*nganda*' even though the chickens come from Teso and Lira; they say '*nganda*' because they [the chickens] are on Ganda land. It is the same for people; we are here on Ganda land so we have to acknowledge it."<sup>64</sup>

Acknowledgement in this context was understood as a form of reciprocation that required the respectful observation of Ganda ceremonies and rituals. Simon's testimony invokes a more settled understanding of the relationship between the market and land than that present during the private leasing of the market in the 2000s. Rather than the jurisdiction of the Ugandan government or Kampala City Council Authority, he emphasises the enduring authority of the Buganda monarchy, in spite of the legal jurisdiction of the KCCA.

Non-Baganda also participated in institutions organised around their own cultural and ethnic affiliations. For example, Margaret Abuya continued to attend meetings of Jaluo Welfare, the descendent of the Luo Nakasero Market Organisation co-founded by her father David (see Chapter 5).<sup>65</sup> I also observed a number of collections and celebrations relating to Gisu circumcision ceremonies (*imbalu*). During one of these ceremonies, Scovia Mafabi, a young (28) produce vendor and 'newcomer' (*mupya*) in the Parkyard was given gifts of soda by her Ganda neighbours in return for her demonstration of *mwaga* (a Gisu traditional dance).<sup>66</sup> In this way, the market remained a pluralistic cultural and religious environment. This principle of plurality was demonstrated, for example, when vendors refused the request of

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<sup>63</sup> Interview on 17/02/2014

<sup>64</sup> 14/05/2014

<sup>65</sup> Between 20-30 vendors from Nakasero travelled to a Pentecostal church in the city every month (or more frequently in case of a death) in order to meet with Luo vendors working in other markets in the city, to share news and plan repatriations and burials.

<sup>66</sup> Information gathered from an interview on 17/02/2014 following my observation of the event four days earlier.

BANGAWA to fly the flag of the Buganda kingdom in the centre of the market in the weeks that followed the Kabaka's visit.<sup>67</sup>

As with the activities of the *obuyambi*, *okwanjula* and *Kyoto* groups, the practice of *ettoffaali* drew upon the individual contributions of people in the market in order to produce a series of collective events. The visit of the Kabaka drew together the largest number of people possible in the market as part of a temporary but memorable series of events that combined symbols of the monarchy with the emotional appeal of the Kabaka. In contrast to the overnight protests in 2008 (see Chapter 6), people joined together to welcome the arrival of a popular cultural institution (the Ganda monarchy) into the market rather than to resist the entry of an unpopular one (the city council). While the rents and fees demanded by the KCCA were a source of complaint and contestation, people in Nakasero continue to give to *ettoffaali* with alacrity.<sup>68</sup>

In order to understand the continued influence of the Buganda monarchy in the market, it is important to situate it in the context of the historical development of Nakasero and Kampala. The precolonial history of Buganda was organised around decentralised ties of reciprocal organisation (Hanson 2003). However, the bifurcation of the colonial state installed an impersonal authority in Kampala that was generally uninterested in cultivating social ties with market vendors. It is against this backdrop that the monarchy may be understood as the returning 'landlord' in Nakasero, and an institution capable of mobilising social support and crystallising collective aspirations (Karlström 2004: 616). Both the Kampala City Council Authority and the Buganda monarchy appeared to demonstrate an increased 'priority given to money' from the 1990s onwards, arguably associated with broader shifts in political economy (Wiegratz 2010: 124). However, the actions of both institutions were situated against a longer history of engagement in the market. While money collected through *ettoffaali* was generally celebrated insofar as it symbolised a person's personal relationship with the monarchy and the market (in place of

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<sup>67</sup> The flag was initially raised but then removed at the request of a number of senior members of the market on account of its potential to sow division in light of the conflicts that followed the use of political posters during the 2011 elections (see Chapter 6).

<sup>68</sup> For example, the market raised US\$ 22million (US\$ 8,800) in 2015, after the announcement that the Katikkiro (Prime Minister) would visit.

the historical clan), money collected by the KCCA was problematic insofar as it symbolised nothing; given to a rotating 'revenue officer' on behalf of an institution that demonstrated little interest in people's lives in the market.

## Conclusions

In spite of the disruptions and divisions created during the private leasing of the market and the KCCA takeover in 2012, people in Nakasero continued to create, join and participate in collective groups and activities. While some of these activities, such as *obuyambi*, *okwanjula* and gospel singing, developed around the needs of particular groups, others, such as *ettoffaali*, succeeded in bringing together people from different areas and backgrounds. They drew together a range of practices from cultural and religious institutions, including collections, meetings and speeches, in order to create social outcomes and events that are of meaning to people in the market. In this sense, they produced expressions of solidarity (*obumu*), love (*okwagalana*) and care (*okufaayo*), such as those described by Richard Nsereko at the start of the chapter.

Richard also described the disorganisation of the market in the absence of the former market leadership; a concern that reflected anxieties in the market about the decline of order and discipline. However, we have seen that expressions of leadership and social control operate in other spheres in Nakasero, away from both the KCCA and the former market committees. For example, rather than issuing ID cards, Phillip Bakoki exercises leadership on Jamaica corner by withholding assistance (*obuyambi*) from people who are seen to violate local codes of moral behaviour. Similarly, disciplinary secretaries in *okwanjula* meetings project an image of acceptable social conduct, and sanction those who are seen to transcend it. Finally, influential external leaders deliver speeches on moral behaviour and *obumu* ('solidarity', 'unity') to large audiences in the market.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2013, there remained a sense that the social and moral life of the market had been better in the past, and that the future of the market was uncertain; sentiments that I will return to in the final chapter. However, in the face of these challenges, people in Nakasero created and participated in collective practices associated with 'religion' and 'culture';

labels that implied a sense of historical legitimacy and attachment that was largely absent in the institutions of the Ugandan government.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions

“It is not undesirable for an African to make money, but the danger lies in the second fascination of marketeering, for added to the financial reward is the attraction of a leisurely way of life [...] chatting and gossiping in between sales is a way of life that has compensations even in cases where the cash receipts are not as big as from labor. In a great many cases this desire for the leisurely life has developed into loafing, paid loafing for there are a few shillings profit to be made [...] such profits are not deserved, and they are earned by a lazy man or unemployed worker at the expense of the consumer.”

Brelsford's (1947: 34-35) report for the British colonial administration

“Before I make a loan, first I consider your behaviour. Everyone who saves with me, at least I take the time to talk with him or her. For me, I know you can't deceive me year after year, hiding cruelty in your heart. [...] Through the words that come out of your mouth and the different conversations that we have I discover you; at least I know you are not bad. So I try to talk with people; I try to monitor their business; I try to monitor the way they save and the way they behave. If I get scared, I don't give you [the loan], even if your savings are good.”

George Mirembe, 30, proprietor of *House of Faith*<sup>1</sup>

When people speak about life in Nakasero market, they speak in social and moral terms. The challenge of making money is inextricably linked to the challenges of building relationships and demonstrating moral conduct. Before extending forms of employment, assistance or credit to others, people first look to their 'behaviour'; to the words that they use and the people they spend time with. Success in Nakasero is understood to require a certain investment in the projects of others, and an engagement in the social, or 'leisurely' domains of life denigrated in the accounts of British colonial administrators. While 'low earners' are expected to provide forms of labour that reproduce socio-spatial order in the market, for example by cleaning and transporting goods, 'high earners' are expected to extend forms of moral guidance and material assistance, for example by contributing to bail payments and *okwanjula* meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> 17/02/2014

In a reversal of British colonial understandings of market economy, money in Nakasero is understood in relation to people's investment in the social and moral life of the market. In the absence of this investment, accumulation becomes problematic. For example, Frank Motovu's rapid ascent in Nakasero aroused the suspicion of older shopkeepers, and he expressed a concern that his income might appear 'vulgar' to people in other areas of the market. The money collected by the NMSVT leadership also became a source of anxiety as leaders were seen to conceal their ties and neglect their obligations to others. Furthermore, popular critiques of the management of Sheila Investments and the KCCA focused on the fact that these organisations appeared to be *only* interested in money, without sufficient regard for collective projects, such as those of discipline and cleanliness. Money is understood to entail obligations.

Colonial political economy in Kampala subordinated the social and moral concerns of the local African population to the overriding imperative of economic production (itself a moral project of the colonisers). Early African entrants into Nakasero market were subjected to a range of disciplinary techniques designed to reduce their labour to a form that was legible to the colonial economy, restricting social expressions that were seen to be superfluous or hostile. However, African populations did not arrive in colonial townships empty handed; as 'tribespeople' instrumentalised by the systems of the town (*kizungu*) (Epstein 1967: 279). Rather, they brought their own understandings of social and economic relations, and of institutions and practices that were seen to reproduce them. This thesis has argued that rather than being circumscribed by conditions of political economy, people in Nakasero market have engaged in collective subjective practices to reinterpret and remake these conditions, producing alternative visions of social and moral prosperity. In pursuing these practices, people in the market have borrowed from cultural and religious institutions that have long histories in the region.

In this chapter, I revisit the value of the approach taken in this thesis in relation to the literatures and frameworks outlined in Chapter 1. The following two sections seek to respond to two of the questions raised over the past seven chapters: What are the historical conditions that have been conducive to social and moral prosperity in the market? And what are the subjective practices through which these conditions have been interpreted

and remade? In addressing these questions, I respond to the sociological (*crisis*) and anthropological (*dualist and realist*) genres of literature outlined in Chapter 1. The final section then offers some reflections on the role of the market in the city.

### **Social and moral prosperity in Nakasero: a short history**

“Markets are important for building society [...] People come from all over the country and learn to lose their bad habits and to be in one line; to have a good heart and to help others.”

Edward Walusimbi, 35, airtime vendor

“These days people in the market are many, and their hearts are not good.”

Jane Nalumu, 69, tomato vendor

The thesis began by outlining some of the challenges described by people in Nakasero associated with the decline of the vendors’ association (NMSVT) and the takeover by the city council (KCCA) in 2012. Returning to the quotations provided at the start of Chapter 1, we can see that Edward articulates an understanding of the historical role of the market in facilitating the social and moral integration of different groups of people in Kampala, while Jane questions the ability of the contemporary market to continue to perform this role. In both accounts, the proper functioning of the market is understood with reference to moral notions of heart (*omutima*), which provide a measure of social and material ‘orderliness’ in a setting that is felt to be vulnerable to disorder (Rosen 1984: 8).

The testimony of Jane Nalumu, along with the accounts of many of her neighbours in the market in the 1970s and 80s, invites an analysis of the conditions that were seen to produce social and moral prosperity in the market (and those that were seen to erode it). These testimonies should be taken with a pinch of salt, due both to the potential influence of ‘synthetic nostalgia’ (Strathern 1995), and the self-selection of people that survived one of the most violent periods in Uganda’s history.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the consistency of people’s reflections invites a number of questions. Why was

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth emphasising that history is usually told by (biological and economic) survivors

market life in the 1970s and early 1980s – a period often characterised as the most destructive in Uganda’s history – seen to be more favourable than between 2013-15? The thesis has provided a way of thinking about this question that emphasises the roles of history and culture.

The advent of Amin’s rule in Uganda coincided with the decline of the Kampala municipal authority which had exercised ‘rigid structural control’ over the social life of the market since its inception (Temple 1964: 173). In this sense, the early 1970s provided the first significant opportunity for the emergence of alternative social and moral forms in Nakasero at a time when the Baganda exercised a numerical majority. Accordingly, the forms that proliferated in the market appeared to draw influence from precolonial expressions of Ganda cultural practice that had been incubated in the residential markets of the Kibuga during the colonial period. Rather than paying an entry covenant or signing a rental contract with the municipal authority, people could now enter the market by cultivating ties of reciprocal obligation with existing members. Vendors had a moral obligation to take on clients regulated by a Ganda ethic of *omutima omuyambi* (having a heart for helping others) (Scherz 2014: 142), and an emergent urban ethic of *ensiitano* (struggle), associated with the large numbers of displaced young men and women arriving in the capital. Newcomers (*bapya*) were integrated into the social and moral fabric of the market through rituals of luggage carrying (men) and stall minding (women), and controlled through the categories of the *muyaye* (thief/thug) and *abekazi be tawuni* (town woman). The challenges of the period, such as food shortages and insecurity, were overcome through appeals to personal ties rather than government institutions. Popular experiences of these challenges strengthened ideas of the market as a social and moral community (a ‘school’ or ‘village’) in need of protection from external threats.

The challenges of the early 2000s initially elicited a similar set of responses from people in the market, including personal appeals to influential patrons and coordinated displays of unity, drawing upon notions of communal struggle.<sup>3</sup> However, motivated by the lucrative prize of market ownership, politicians and businessmen began to cultivate ties to discreet groups in

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<sup>3</sup> For example, signs at the overnight protest in 2008 read: “*Temwagala tulye?*” (“Don’t you want us to eat?”).

Nakasero through the distribution of resources and pledges. A process of extraversion ensued through which social ties in the market were turned outwards and upwards, towards groups whose interests and affiliations were partially obscured. As market leaders came to depend more on the support of external groups, they were seen to neglect their obligations to people in Nakasero,<sup>4</sup> and were accused of failing to protect the market from the divisive force of 'politics'. The rebranded Kampala City Council Authority established control of the market and permitted the entry of a large number of newcomers (*bapya*), undermining the entry rituals that had provided valued processes of social and moral integration since the 1970s.

By prioritising the categories and interpretations of the people that have spent time in Nakasero, this reading of change in the market challenges some of the premises that accompany studies of urban Africa conducted under the metanarratives of 'informality' and 'crisis'. Firstly, rather than the stability of government institutions or macroeconomic processes, people in Nakasero placed emphasis on particular social relationships and moral values; whether people were 'in one line' and speaking 'with one heart'. Secondly, rather than being contingent on the proper functioning of government institutions and macroeconomic processes, these relationships and values were thought to have flourished in their absence, particularly in the 1970s. To put it another way, people valued the Amin period precisely because it *informalised* the market. Thirdly and consequently, these relationships and values were not seen to constitute a temporary 'burden of self-help' (Pieterse 2011: 6) or an improvised politics of 'survival' (Gombay 1994), but rather an enduring expression of social and moral organisation in Nakasero.

While scholars deploy notions of 'ungovernance' and 'informality' in order to emphasise deviances from state-led frameworks of urban development, market vendors in Kampala invoke notions being 'bad-hearted' (*omutima mubi*) in order to emphasise deviances from local frameworks of moral behaviour. Seen this way, the failure of programmes such as the World Bank's Urban First Project (described in Chapter 6) may have less to do with power and politics (Gombay 1994) and more to do with morality. However, while

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<sup>4</sup> The capacity to exit formed an important basis of accountability in precolonial Buganda, provided for by the large number of leaders relative to followers (Hanson 2003: 17).

market vendors have become adept at navigating between these different frameworks; for example by talking publically of their formal 'rights' over the market (in relation to the Land Act) while making personalised appeals to influential patrons, scholars have arguably remained content to reproduce the former framework, emphasising the 'profound crisis' of the urban African environment (Pieterse 2011: 6), as evidenced by 'obstructionist legal norms, corrupt civil servants and pervasive informality' (Tostensen et al. 2001: 10-11).

By suspending meta-narratives of 'crisis' and 'informality', one of the contributions of the thesis has been to demonstrate the contingent nature of the legitimacy of urban institutions. The value of 'legal norms' and 'civil servants' is not assumed but instead dependant on their historical interaction with the valued relationships and institutions in a particular setting. In the case of the market, legal norms and civil servants remained symbols of the exclusion of African traders in the early postcolonial period, and so their decline in the 1970s was not met with any great sense of sadness. In contrast, the figure of the Kabaka and practice of *ettoffaali* has consistently mobilised large numbers of vendors since the reinstallation of the monarchy in 1993.

### **Producing relationships through practices**

"The general apathy and very low degree of participation by the great majority of residents in parish affairs [...] proceeds from the high mobility and ethnic heterogeneity of the population [and] the lack of any widely agreed scale of values for the systematic ordering of relationships between persons of different ethnic origin, of different skin colour, different wealth or different occupation. There are only incomplete and conflicting views and attitudes [...] without any authoritative organ of reconciliation."

Southall & Gutkind 1957: 210

"We have the same systems [for assistance] at home and in the village, but this is more binding. People are closer here, they spend more time here than with their families."

Emmanuel Lubega, 58, produce vendor and former market secretary<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 21/06/2014

Dualist accounts of urban development in Africa conceived of towns and cities as sites of the breakdown of 'traditional' social systems regulated by rather static systems of culture and ethnicity. Writing of Kampala in the 1950s, Southall and Gutkind (1957: 210) attribute the apparent absence of social cohesion in the city to the 'high mobility and ethnic heterogeneity of the population'. Such conditions have been historically present in Nakasero market. However, we have seen that social and moral relationships in the market nevertheless conform to certain ideas of order. First, these relationships are organised around a framework of socio-spatial hierarchy; of 'high' and 'low earners,' 'first' and 'third class' produce, and 'open' and 'closed' areas of the market. Second, they are regulated through moral notions of heart (*omutima*), which hold meaning for Baganda, Jalu and Bagisu alike.<sup>6</sup>

The thesis has explored the negotiation and reproduction of relationships in the market at three levels: *i)* individual interactions, *ii)* groups and meetings, and *iii)* communal events. First, individual interactions across different areas of the market often take the form of patron-client relationships, as 'high earners' mobilise the labour of rubbish collectors and *fasi-fasi* boys through offers of moral guidance and material support. However, these relationships are carefully negotiated. Alex Sserwanda was required spend time building relationships with his peers in the market, for example through gifts of tobacco, before he was able to make appeals to potential patrons. Similarly, Stephen Kalule was required to spend time establishing a reputation as a 'good boy' (as opposed to a *muyaye*) through careful demonstrations of language and behaviour, before he won the endorsement of stall vendors in Nakasero.

However, different areas of the market require the mastery of different registers and techniques. For example, while young vendors engage in conspicuous displays of aggression and flirtation in the Kabengo in order to protect and extend their territory, they adopt deferential and subservient tones in the shops and Upper Stalls in order to appeal to potential patrons. These rituals and practices are also acutely gendered. While the relative

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<sup>6</sup> As demonstrated for example by the testimonies of Jane Nalumu, Margaret Abuya Phillip Bakoki respectively.

mobility of men enables them to cultivate flexible relationships across multiple areas of the market, women are generally rooted in particular areas of the market and dependant on relationships with their immediate neighbours. The struggle of market entry exposes male newcomers (*bapya*) to forms of physical confrontation and violence, while it subjects their female counterparts to accusations and rumours that pre-empt their social isolation.

People in Nakasero also seek out expressions of social and moral support through groups and associations. These groups often develop around the needs of particular sections of the market, for example, the need to raise police bail on Jamaica corner, or to generate expressions of solidarity during the late afternoon in the Upper Stalls. However, they also draw upon the vertical relationships produced through day-to-day interactions. For example, shop vendors around Jamaica corner assisted Pascal Kibalama's release from prison, while established stall vendors contributed to *Kyoto* group alongside young waitresses, such as Barbara Nakachwa. Market groups provide forums for debating issues of social and moral importance in Nakasero. For instance, Philip Bakoki and his neighbours on Jamaica corner exchanged views on who should receive assistance (*obuyambi*) and under what conditions, while participants in Samuel Ruwenzu's *okwanjula* meetings debated the proper contributions of the bride and groom to marital ceremonies.

Finally, vendors look to communal events for expressions of social and moral community in the market. While some of these events have generated solidarity through the opposition to a common adversary, such as the overnight protest against the KCC's proposed sale of the market in 2008, others have invoked it through the celebration of a shared institution, such as the visit of the Buganda monarchy in 2011. Such events transmit particular ideas of the market between different generations of vendors, as was the case when Frank Motovu's mother brought her five children to the protest in 2008.

Rather than established by predefined systems of kinship or ethnicity, ties and obligations in the market develop over time, as people observe the behaviours and needs of those around them.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Ganda cultural

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<sup>7</sup> Only 13 per cent of people in the Ghetto and 20 per cent in the Kabengo had arrived in Nakasero through family ties, compared to 55 per cent in the Upper Stalls (author's survey, June 2014).

idioms predominate. For example, the notion of *omutima* has a long history in Buganda in relation to the production and regulation of ties of reciprocal obligation (Hanson 2003; Scherz 2014). Furthermore, Ganda institutions and ceremonies consistently mobilise the largest number of people. For example, many non-Baganda contribute to the *ettoffaali* collections of the monarchy and self-identify as '*basajja wa Kabaka*' ('people of the King'). A Munyankole chicken vendor emphasised the importance of respecting these institutions and ceremonies by noting the position of the market on the (historical) land of the kingdom. However, both the Ganda monarchy and members of the market promote an ethnically inclusive understanding of 'culture' (*by'obuwangwa*), reproduced through competitions that mobilise urban markets and shopping arcades, as well as traditional clans. This broad conception of culture is strengthened through an implied opposition to 'politics' and the 'political institutions' of the Ugandan government.

In sum, Nakasero market does not provide any single 'scale of values' for the 'systematic ordering of relationships', nor any single 'organ of reconciliation' for resolving conflicts and disputes (Southall & Gutkind 1957: 210). Indeed, we have seen that historical attempts to impose a single idea of authority in the market, such as that represented by the NMSTV leadership, have generally been unpopular. Rather, the market might be better understood as a 'mosaic' of social systems (Clark 1994: 6); a series of interactions, meetings and events which produce certain ideas about what the market is and who it is for. In order to succeed in the market, large projects, such as that of *ettoffaali*, are required to appeal to notions of diversity and plurality,<sup>8</sup> but also to historical narratives of common adversaries (such as the city council) and processes of struggle.

This fluid understanding of life in the market veers close to that described in the *realist genre* of scholarship on African cities which depicts urban life as 'a register of improvisations lived by people' (Mbembe & Roitman 1995: 235). However, the thesis has shown that while relationships are actively negotiated in Nakasero, these negotiations take place within a cultural space that places limits on what can be negotiated with whom. To put it another way, people's ability to improvise access to valued resources in the market is

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<sup>8</sup> As recognised for example by the Kabaka in his speech in 2011: "We need to work in unity irrespective of our ethnic or political differences".

circumscribed by notions (such as *omutima*) and categories (such as the *muyaye*) that have long histories in Buganda. As such, in our pursuit of phenomena that 'burst out of conventional forms' of analysis (Guyer 2011: 475) in African cities, we should not lose sight of the historical cultural idioms that continue to provide meaning to the activities and relations of urban African inhabitants. There remains a need to take seriously the subjective accounts and histories of the people that spend time there; to see the city through the market, rather than the market through the city.<sup>9</sup>

### **The market in the city, the city in the market**

"The *bayaye* are those that make people think 'ah, how is he working and making money?' They can't see."

Pascal Kibalama, middleman on Jamaica corner

Describing different groups of people in the market, Pascal explains that the category of the '*bayaye*' is as much the product of the gaze of the observer as the behaviour of the observed. Understood this way, the *bayaye* are people whose ways of working are not seen by the observer and therefore not valued. Similarly, narratives of informality and crisis often tell us more about the categories valued by researchers than those prioritised by the inhabitants of African cities. This final section reflects on how we might see the city differently, through the ideas and priorities invoked by people in Nakasero market.

When British colonial administrators gazed upon the market, they saw the possibilities of revenue and the dangers of disease. Nakasero was positioned within a model of a functional township (within 'Asian commercial space') and threatened with removal 'to a position of safety' when it was thought to undermine this model (Mirams 1930: 4). After independence, the colonial township authority became the Kampala City Council. However, this dualistic vision of the market remained. For example, responsibility for market management was transferred between the Public Health and the Finance Departments of the KCC three times between 1984-1994 (Gombay 1997: 130).

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<sup>9</sup> In addition, for example, to unearthing the 'invisible' (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008) and 'elusive' (De Boeck & Plissart 2004) realms of urban African life.

In the early 2000s, a combination of multiparty politics and privatisation initiatives engendered new visions of the market. First, politicians began to see Nakasero as a vote bank and a place in which they could secure their political futures. Second, business tycoons, investors and developers saw it as a valuable piece of real estate that could be bought, sold, demolished and reconstructed. All four of these ideas of the market – as a site of revenue generation, contamination, political mobilisation and redevelopment – have been refracted within it. For example, the NMSTV leadership kept the same revenues as the previous management and expressed considerable concern for hygiene. Furthermore, many vendors voted in the 2011 election in exchange for President Museveni’s intervention in the market, and invested in the idea of the redevelopment project.

However, there remains another way of *seeing* the market, practiced by the people who spend time in it. Vendors, traders, rubbish collectors, *kaveera* and *fasi-fasi* boys, customers and taxi drivers invoked an idea of Nakasero as a social institution. They used metaphors of the ‘village’, ‘garden’, ‘school’ and ‘pharmacy’ to describe the functions it fulfils in the city. When I asked Benjamin Ocwee about the redevelopment plans, he gestured towards the Kabengo and Parkyard and said simply: ‘this place allows people to survive’.<sup>10</sup> He, like thousands of other people in Kampala, looks out at the city through the lens of struggle. Seen this way, Nakasero market continues to provide social and material opportunities unrivalled by the gleaming commercial complexes that are being erected across the city.

From the dual perspective of sanitation and revenue, the urban marketplace is unable to compete with the multi-storey shopping mall. However, from the perspective of employment, education and socioeconomic integration, the reverse is true. Critically, the marketplace continues to provide a space for the displaced young men and women who have been arriving in African cities with increasing regularity over the past 30 years;<sup>11</sup> a space that can no longer

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<sup>10</sup> 07/10/2013. Benjamin is introduced in Chapter 5. He arrived in Nakasero as a child in 1980 and one of the founders of Jamaica corner.

<sup>11</sup> 78% of the Ugandan population is under the age of 30, and rural-urban migration continues to be driven by insecurity, lack of economic opportunity, and concerns about safety (Women’s Refugee Commission 2011).

be taken for granted in districts presided over by corporate models of urban governance. Faced with the resurgence of reductive visions of the 'productive' and 'modern' city in Africa (Watson 2014), ethnography continues to provide researchers with a tool with which to disturb established ways of seeing, and to generate alternative visions of social and moral prosperity.

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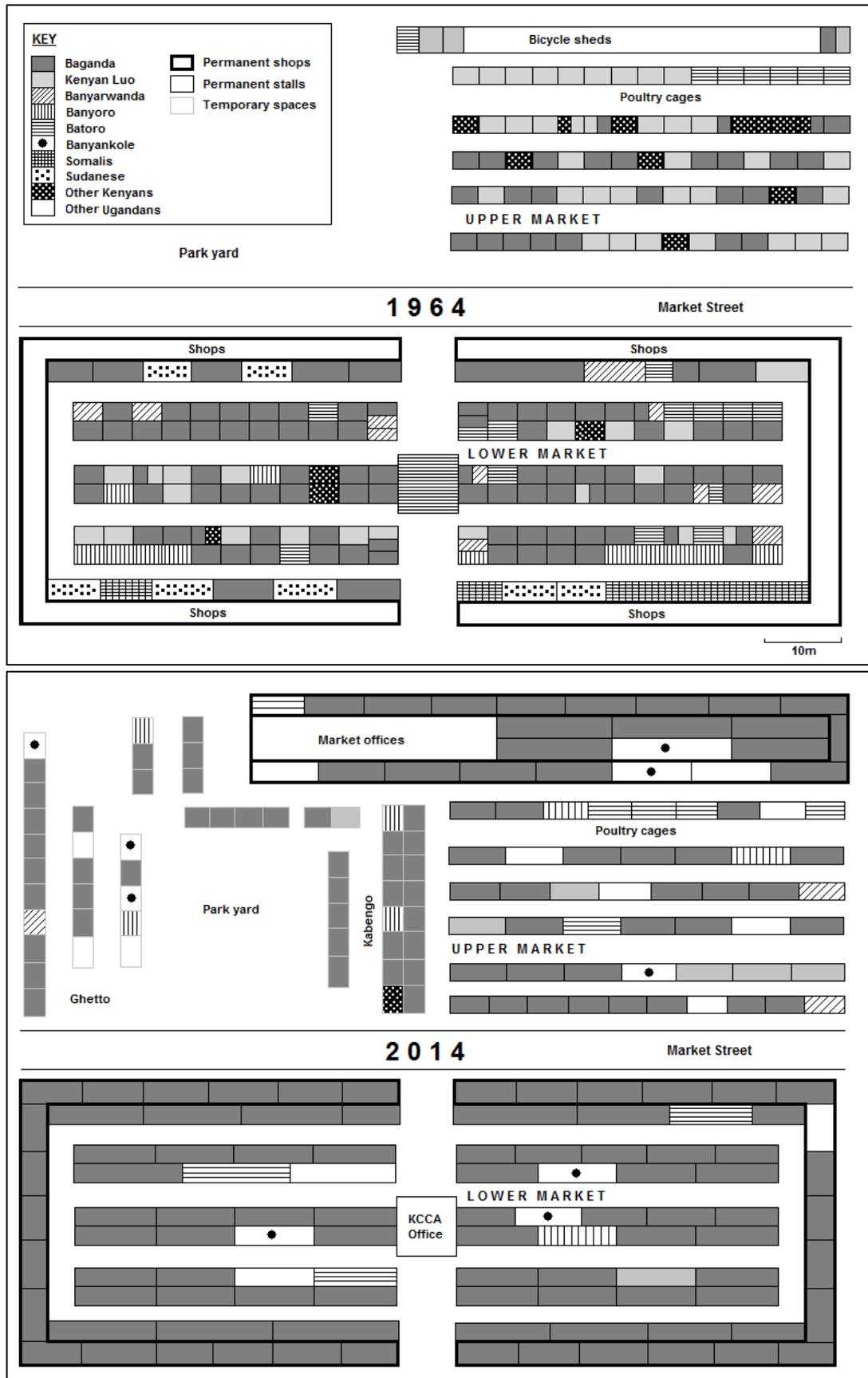
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# Appendix A: Map of the Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Nakasero, 1964-2014



## Appendix B: Interview Demographics

### B1: Market interviews

No.	Age	Gender	Place of birth <sup>i</sup>	Area of market	Profession	Date	Language	Format <sup>ii</sup>
1	33	Male	Mukono, UG	Jamaica corner	<i>Boda boda</i> driver	06/10/13	English	SSI
2	65	Male	Mpigi, UG	Lower market shop	Fish vendor	09/10/13	English	SSI
3	48	Female	Mpigi, UG	Lower market stall	Onion vendor	09/10/13	Luganda	SSI
4	29	Female	Masaka, UG	Lower market stall	Peas and beans vendor	10/10/13	Luganda	SSI
5	48	Male	Wakiso, UG	Lower market shop	Fish vendor	10/10/13	Luganda	SSI
6	76	Female	Wakiso, UG	Lower market stall	Banana vendor	11/10/13	Luganda	SSI
7	29	Male	Kisoro, UG	Lower market stand	Spice vendor	11/10/13	Luganda	SSI
8	48	Male	Mpigi, UG	Upper market stall	Watermelon vendor	16/10/13	Luganda	SSI
9	32	Male	Mukono, UG	Lower market stall	Sweet banana vendor	16/10/13	Luganda	SSI
10	36	Male	Adjumani, UG	Jamaica corner	Paint vendor	30/10/13	English	SSI
11	37	Female	Wakiso, UG	Upper market stall	Mixed fruit vendor	31/10/13	Luganda	SSI
12	22	Male	Luwero, UG	Jamaica corner	Bag carrier	31/10/13	Luganda	SSI
13	44	Male	Kampala, UG	Jamaica corner	Paint vendor	01/11/13	English	SSI
14	23	Male	Luwero, UG	Kabengo	Herb vendor	04/11/13	Luganda	SSI
15	17	Male	Masaka, UG	Ghetto / mobile	Luggage carrier	05/11/13	Luganda	SSI
16	33	Female	Kabarole, UG	Parkyard / mobile	Hawker	05/11/13	Luganda	SSI
17	64	Male	Mubende, UG	Parkyard / mobile	Carrier (wooden cart)	06/11/13	Luganda	LHI
18	25	Male	Mbale, UG	Upper market (chickens)	Chicken slaughterer	06/11/13	Luganda	SSI
19	24	Female	Kaliro, UG	Upper market stand	Mobile money	07/11/13	Luganda	SSI
20	17	Male	Mukono, UG	Upper market / mobile	Bag carrier	07/11/13	Luganda	SSI
21	42	Male	Mpigi, UG	Mobile	Parking attendant	08/11/13	English	SSI
22	35	Male	Kayunga, UG*	Upper market / mobile	Bag carrier	10/11/13	Luganda	SSI
23	43	Female	Kampala, UG	Lower market stall	Spice vendor	10/11/13	Luganda	LHI
24	38	Male	Kampala, UG*	Parkyard	Mixed veg. vendor	29/11/13	English	LHI

25	29	Male	Mubende, UG	Lower market shop	Butcher	30/11/13	Luganda	SSI
26	22	Male	Ntungamo, UG	Kabengo	Bag carrier	01/12/13	Luganda	SSI
27	34	Male	Buikwe, UG	Upper market shop	Film vendor	01/12/13	Luganda	SSI
28	33	Female	Kampala, UG*	Upper market stall	Mixed veg. vendor	06/12/13	English	LHI
29	23	Male	Sembambule, UG	Kabengo	Mixed veg. vendor	13/12/13	Luganda	SSI
30	38	Male	Kayunga, UG	Upper market stall	Mixed veg. vendor	14/12/13	English	SSI
31	44	Male	Kagera, TZ	Kabengo	Mixed veg. vendor	16/12/13	Luganda	LHI
32	20	Male	Kampala, UG	Upper market (chickens)	Chicken slaughterer	17/12/13	Luganda	SSI
33	22	Male	Ntungamo, UG	Kabengo	Bag carrier	20/01/14	Luganda	Follow-up
34	30	Male	Kampala, UG	Market office / mobile	Money saver/lender	17/02/14	English	SSI
35	29	Female	Sironko, UG	Parkyard	Mixed veg. vendor	21/02/14	English	SSI
36	84	Male	Luwero, UG	N/A	Customer	23/02/14	English	LHI
37	69	Female	Wakiso, UG	Parkyard	Tomato vendor	26/02/14	Luganda	LHI
38	22	Male	Luwero, UG	Jamaica corner	Bag carrier	09/03/14	Luganda	Follow-up
39	28	Female	Kampala, UG*	Upper market stall	Mixed veg. vendor	23/04/14	English	SSI
40	57	Male	Mpigi, UG	N/A	Knife sharpener	30/04/14	Luganda	LHI
41	32	Male	Kampala, UG	Jamaica corner	Spice vendor	30/04/14	Mixed	SSI
42	23	Male	Kigali, RW	Upper market stall	Mixed fruit vendor	02/05/14	English	SSI
43	38	Male	Wakiso, UG	Upper market stall	Chicken vendor (live)	03/05/14	Luganda	SSI
44	69	Female	Mukono, UG	N/A	Ex-vegetable vendor	04/05/14	Luganda	LHI
45	40	Female	Rukungiri, UG	Upper market stall	Mixed veg. vendor	07/05/14	English	LHI
46	27	Female	Mubende, UG	Lower market stall	Chicken vendor	07/05/14	English	SSI
47	24	Female	Mubende, UG	Upper market stall	Egg vendor	08/05/14	Luganda	SSI
48	53	Male	Masaka, UG	Upper market stall	Watermelon vendor	11/05/14	Luganda	LHI
49	29	Male	Mubende, UG	N/A	Ex-vegetable vendor	14/05/14	English	SSI
50	28	Female	Masaka, UG	Parkyard	Passion fruit vendor	21/05/14	Luganda	SSI
51	22	Male	Rukungiri, UG	Ghetto	Rubbish collector	15/06/14	Luganda	SSI
52	25	Male	Kampala, UG	Lower market shop	Hardware vendor	16/06/14	English	SSI
53	45	Male	Kampala, UG	Lower market stand	Tupperware vendor	20/06/14	Luganda	LHI
54	22	Male	Rukungiri, UG	Ghetto	Rubbish collector	18/04/15	Luganda	Follow-up
55	32	Male	Mukono, UG	Lower market stall	Sweet banana vendor	18/04/15	Luganda	Follow-up

56	25	Male	Kampala, UG	Lower market shop	Hardware vendor	18/04/15	English	Follow-up
57	28	Female	Kampala, UG*	Upper market stall	Mixed veg. vendor	23/04/15	English	Follow-up
58	30	Male	Kampala, UG	Market office / mobile	Money saver/lender	23/04/15	English	Follow-up
59	66	Female	Luwero, UG	Lower market stall	Dried food vendor	05/05/15	Luganda	LHI
60	23	Male	Luwero, UG	Kabengo	Herb vendor	05/05/15	English	Follow-up
61	76	Female	Wakiso, UG	Lower market stall	Banana vendor	08/05/15	Luganda	Follow-up

\*Second-generation Kenyan migrants who were sent to school in Kenya before returning to Kampala

<sup>i</sup>UG: Uganda, RW: Rwanda, TZ: Tanzania

<sup>ii</sup>SSI: Semi-structured interview; LHI: Life history interview; Follow-up interview

## B2: Group discussions

No.	Group	Number/gender	Location	Date
1	Upper market shop vendors	4 men, 2 women. All work in one shop.	Upper market shops	30/04/2014
2	Mango department vendors	5 men, all members of mango dept.	Parkyard	14/06/2014
3	NMSTV Market leaders	8 men, all Nakasero Market Sitting Traders and Vendors (NMSTV) committee members	Market offices	08/05/2015

## B3: External interviews

No.	Position	Institution	Location	Date
1	Director, Gender Division	Kampala City Council Authority	KCCA HQ, Kampala	05/05/2014
2	Public Relations Officer	Kampala City Council Authority	KCCA HQ, Kampala	22/05/2014
3	Director	Nakasero Market Sitting Tenants Limited (NAMASITE)	Andeli Complex, Dastur Street	07/05/2014