Creating a Profitable Market for Mozambican Family Farmers
- A case study of how an intermediating actor works to strengthen farmers’ position in Mozambique

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Abstract

This study investigates how an intermediating actor interoperates with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the government, and farmers in the rural areas of Mozambique in order to strengthen the farmers’ position and connect them to a profitable market. By investigating two different triadic business relationships involving these actors, this study aims to answer how the intermediary operates in order to overcome present market obstacles for the farmers. The study was carried out as a case study where four different locations in the south of Mozambique were being visited. The primary data is based on 25 interviews with farmers, representatives from the intermediating actor, and from an NGO. The study shows that the intermediary forms its operations with a long-term perspective starting from the farmers’ needs. Educating the farmers is the most important operation according to the results. The intermediary successfully manages to mediate between the farmers and NGOs thanks to mutual trust in the relation. In the relation between farmers and the government, the intermediating does not work in the same adequate way due to one-sided communication controlled by the government.

Keywords
Mozambique, family farmer, market, agriculture, business network, business relationship, triad, intermediary, intermediating actor, emerging market
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDAC</td>
<td>União Distrito de Camponeses (District Union of Farmers)</td>
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<td>UNAC</td>
<td>União Nacional de Camponeses (National Union of Farmers)</td>
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1. Introduction to the Research Problem

1.1 Mozambique and the Agricultural Situation

Mozambique is a country situated in the south east of Africa with more than 27.98 million inhabitants (The World Bank, 2016). As one of the 9 poorest countries in the world (UNDP, 2015), where more than half of the population lives below the poverty line of 2 USD per day (UNDP, 2014; World Vision, 2016; IFAD, 2016), Mozambique is defined as a low income developing country. At the same time, Mozambique is a country with a beautiful coastline, abundant natural resources, and a magnet for all kinds of investors and speculators (FAO, 2014). Just like in Mozambique’s neighbouring countries of Mozambique, the agricultural sector is the major branch of business. About 80 percent of the population nourishes from their individual farms (USAID, 2016), but the incomes are in general only enough to meet the households’ basic food requirements. This results in a population where the majority survives at subsistence level (IFAD, 2016).

In 2014 the agricultural sector was estimated by the World Bank to contribute with 28.6 percent of the GDP (The World Bank, 2015). In addition, Mozambique is rich in fertile soils and thus it has a great developing potential (Muchanga, 2016a). Only about 16 percent of land suitable for farming is being cultivated (USAID, 2016), but with good technical and marketing support, more of the land could be used for this purpose (FAO, 2014; IFAD, 2016).

The National Agriculture Investment Plan 2014-2018 describes that the market access for farmers, both of inputs and of products, is constrained or completely absent. This is explained by poor quality and absence of rural financial services; rural roads connecting consumer markets to production centres; and agricultural information systems (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014). Also, markets are in general distant, unreliable, and uncompetitive for family farmers, and alternative sources of income outside the agricultural sector are absent or very few (IFA, 2016).

Concurrently, there are several on-going projects in Mozambique, which are run by organisations, companies, and different authorities, with the aim to help Mozambican farmers to overcome obstacles with the market access (Muchanga, 2016; FAO, 2014). The National Union of Farmers in Mozambique (UNAC) is a movement that works to strengthen the farmers position and the agricultural sector throughout Mozambique. The
general mission of UNAC is to build a fairer and more prosperous society based on solidarity, which can guarantee food sovereignty in Mozambique (UNAC, 2012a; Muchanga, 2016a). In order to do so, they work both to connect the farmers with funders for agricultural development projects and to keep a dialogue with the government. Thus, UNAC can be said to function as a mediator that represents the farmers in their relationships with funders such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government (Muchanga, 2016a). Hence, UNAC plays an important role for Mozambican family farmers and thereby, to a large extent, also for the whole development of the agricultural sector in Mozambique.

1.2 Problem Formulation
The fact that Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, and that the majority of the population depend on agriculture as a source of survival, enlighten the importance of the agricultural sector in Mozambique (Sida, 2009; Koivuporras, 2011; IFAD, 2016). Even though 80 percent of the population lives from farming (USAID, 2016), only 25 percent of the farmers are able to sell their products (Club of Mozambique, 2016). This results in low or no incomes for the larger part of the farmers (IFAD, 2016). The limited access to markets, together with an agriculture that is characterised by low productivity and production, is the cause of this rural poverty (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010). Agricultural development thus plays a fundamental role for the economic growth in Mozambique and connecting the farmers to a profitable market is an important step in this direction (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010). Despite that many, in this topic, supporting projects have been going on for several years, the development is slow and the projects are still in an early stage (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014). In order to achieve market access and agricultural development in Mozambique, coordination of public and private sector, farmer organisations, and individual farmer participation is required (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014). There has to be an effective on-going link between extension providers, farmers, and other actors (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010). However, involving family farmers in developing projects and decision making processes has not been easy. This is due to farmers being a mixed group with diverse interests that are spread over a large area (Ministry of Agriculture, 2007). Havila (1996) means that geographical, cultural, or technical distance may be reduced by involving an intermediating actor with the role to mediate between two other actors in a relationship. This third actor can also
affect the structure of the relationship and provide it with new types of resources and goals (Latifi, 2004). The national farmers’ union UNAC claims to be functioning in this way, as a mediating party between the farmers, NGOs, and the government of Mozambique. Despite this, the evaluation of The National Agriculture Development Programme 1999-2005 explains that there were no organisation representing family farmers nationally in Mozambique, but presented UNAC as an actor attempting to build something similar to that (Ministry of Agriculture, 2007). A later evaluation could not be found and a clear overview of how UNAC works in the mediating role between actors in the agricultural sector today seems to be lacking. Neither could much information be found about how UNAC works practically in order to support Mozambican family farmers. Hence, this study will be based on UNAC’s operations in the agricultural sector in Mozambique in order to learn more about its role as an intermediating actor.

1.3 Aim of Study and Research Questions

Due to lack of network research on market access for family farmers in Mozambique, it is of interest to study the topic further in order to understand how network actors impact the problem with access to the market. For this reason, the focus will lay on the collaboration between UNAC and actors operating in the network that surrounds Mozambican family farmers. The aim is to investigate the role that UNAC plays as an intermediating actor in the rural areas of Mozambique. By studying how UNAC interoperates with funders, organisations, the government, and the farmers, the purpose is to understand how they all work together in order to overcome present obstacles and achieve market access for the farmers.

This study will be based on a case study including five field visits made in four different rural areas in the Maputo and Gaza provinces in the south of Mozambique. These districts are named Mahotas; Manhica; Marracuene; and Chokwe. The question of how UNAC works as an intermediary in order to support Mozambican family farmers can be substantialised into following sub-questions:
How does UNAC form its operations in order to support Mozambican family farmers in order to overcome present obstacles and help them access a profitable market?

How does UNAC interoperate with, and mediate between, other actors in order to support Mozambican family farmers and help them out of poverty?

2. Empirical Background

2.1 The Situation for Mozambican Family Farmers

The market situation for Mozambican family farmers is very complex and filled with challenges. One challenge is that there is a lot of space for farming, but there is not enough resources or knowledge about how to use the land in order to scale up the production and explore more land. At the same time, the neighbouring country South Africa exports as much as 40 percent of its fresh vegetables to Mozambique, which constitutes a great competition for Mozambican farmers (Nhampossa, 2016; PMA, 2014). South Africa has become the most developed agricultural country in Africa, partly thanks to 50 years of subsidies, something that Mozambique has never had. The export from South Africa to Mozambique is hence causing a severe problem for the family farmers in Mozambique. Although the South African products may not hold the same quality as in Mozambique, the presentation of South African products is better. This means, for instance, that the products are shinier and often wrapped in plastic, something that usually appeals customers more than the local products (Nhampossa, 2016).

Another issue that concerns both the competition with South Africa, and the family farming in general, is the infrastructure. The roads in Mozambique are bad and, consequently, transportation take a lot of time. The roads from South Africa into Mozambique are large, making it easy for South African resellers to focus on the main cities for their selling. In the rest of the country, the main roads are functional, but transportation from districts in the north to the south is complicated since the conditions during the transport have to be good for perishable products. Another important condition is the fact that the roads going north from Maputo create a long corridor. People selling their products will do so close to the roads, if not at market places, which to a great extent are situated next to the road. People living and cultivating their land further inland will thus end up in a place far away from places where it is possible to sell. This could be
important to keep in mind when analysing the data since all of the villages visited are situated alongside one of these so called corridors (Nhampossa, 2016; Muchanga, 2016b).

2.2 The Organisational Structure of UNAC

2.2.1 Historical Background

UNAC (União Nacional de Camponeses) is the National Union of Farmers in Mozambique. The union was founded as a movement in 1987 as a result of a changing political and economic system in the country. The year before, the government started a shifting from communism and socialism, based on an occident system, to capitalism. This shifting affected the farmers in Mozambique. Before the change of the system the government was giving support to the farmers in terms of financial needs. This support became limited after the change of the system. Besides this, Mozambique was at civil war since 1977, making the situation in Mozambique instable. UNAC originated to unite Mozambican farmers in order to make them stronger in the new system and, in that way, support farmers throughout the country (Muchanga, 2016b).

The communication within UNAC at that time was done to a high cost. The civil war, together with bad roads, made it hard to travel by car and flying was not an option for the farmers due to the high expenses. Not until the peace agreement in 1992 the communication within the union eased and it became easier to transport themselves to meet other members (Muchanga, 2016b). In 1994 UNAC was registered as an NGO and since then UNAC has been representing farmers to ensure their social, economic, and cultural rights by participating in shaping public policies and development strategies. These policies and strategies regard guarantees of food sovereignty in Mozambique (UNAC, 2012a). To achieve that, UNAC sees it as important to help individual family farmers to become self-sufficient, and therefore they work with actions to increase productivity and production. Another important step to achieve self-sufficiency is that the farmers are able to sell what they produce, which is why UNAC wants to connect them to a profitable market (UNAC, 2012a; Muchanga, 2016).

2.2.2 UNAC and Its Members

The structure of UNAC as an organisation is represented in Figure 1 below. UNAC is surrounded by partner organisations who are funding their work. A large part of the
funding originally comes from embassies and foreign governmental-owned organisations and then reaches UNAC through NGOs situated in Mozambique (Nhampossa, 2016). UNAC itself is made up by its members, individual farmers. These members are grouped together in so called associations in accordance to the area in the district where they live and have their land. There are certain requirements which has to be fulfilled to become a member. These may vary between different associations, although the basic statutes are the same for all associations. The statutes say that all farmers have to have their own land and pay a certain amount of tax before becoming a member.

In every province there are several districts and even more associations. In 2010 UNAC had about 86 000 individual members divided among 2 200 associations (UNAC, 2012b). Today, in 2016, these numbers reach up to 100 000 individual members in 2 500 official associations (Muchanga, 2016). Member associations represent the unity and the vision of individual family farmers and work within the framework of the country’s development policy (UNAC, 2012b). This is why UNAC wants to increase the active participation of farmers in the development process (UNAC, 2016a; Luis, 2016). Each association has a President responsible for internal and external communication, and the administration of the association. All associations in a district make up a union with a board of direction including a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary. All unions together constitute UDAC, which is an administrative district level of UNAC.
3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Business Networks

Since we are interested in how UNAC functions as an intermediary between the government, NGOs, and individual farmers the projects that supports the last mentioned, it is important to understand the environment they work in. Thus, it is of interest to investigate the network that UNAC operates in. The network theory is widely used for
describing the environment and context in which a business actor act (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). By studying the business network of an actor it may become easier to identify what factors that play a crucial role for that particular actor and also what impact that actor has on its environment.

There are many definitions of business networks in the literature. Håkansson and Snehota (2005) describe a network as a web of relationships that are being connected when the environmental conditions of a business organisation are gravitating towards a set of other active organisations.

Figuratively speaking, a network can be described as a structure where a number of nodes are related to each other by specific threads. In such an image, the nodes represent business units and the threads form the relations between them (Håkansson & Ford, 2002). In addition to this description, it is important to understand that no business exists in isolation, but instead in relation to a number of other actors of which it is also dependent on (Ford et al., 1998). Besides the direct connections of an actor there may be several indirect connections and the generalised connectedness of all relationships forms the aggregated structure of the network (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995). This means that a change in a network always involves changes in the connected business nodes and its relationships (Dubois, 1998). The same view is given by Welch and Wilkinson (2004), who describe networks as systems of interconnected exchange relationships among business actors. Håkansson and Snehota (1995) adds to this view by saying that a network does not have a centre or clear boundaries, but every single relationship is embedded within a system of interlinked activity patterns, actor webs, and resource constellations.

Actors within the network could be defined as those who perform activities and/or control resources with counterparts having identities, which means that actors can be both individuals, firms, and organisations (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005). As actors are embedded in a system of activities (such as: technical; commercial; and administrative ones) (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995), the activity of one actor is always more or less dependent on a number of other actors’ activities (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005). This means that it is not easy to isolate a business organisation from its network, since the organisation thus loses its identity without an interactive environment (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989).

A business relationship between two actors might be extended to also include a third party with the task to mediate between the two actors and their respective activities.
This third party actor is called an intermediary (Havila, 2004) whose role will be further discussed in section 3.2. Intermediating Actors.

3.1.1 Business Relationships

The development of a business relationship between two actors will depend on several factors: the history of the relationship; what is currently happening between the actors in the relationship; both actors’ experiences from previous relationships; and also what happens in indirect relationships in the wider network (Håkansson & Ford, 2002). Each relationship is embedded or connected to some other relationships, and the development and function cannot be properly understood if these connections are disregarded (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005). Ritter (1999) shares this view and describe that this is given by the interconnectedness between actors, which is something that evolves from different dependencies. It should be added that, as Easton and Axelsson (1992) claim, dependence can entail problems of power and control. Further, they mean that parties that are mutually dependent should be able to manage the focal relationship, but may have difficulty dealing with other relationships. If, on the other hand, the power is asymmetrically distributed, the relationship will be difficult to handle and the benefits for the minor partner less easy to realise (Easton & Axelsson, 1992). The strength of a relationship can be said to be an outcome of how extensive the exchange relationships are. A long-term cooperation and adaptation imply a more developed relationship, while a weak relationship is characterised by parties that aim for short-term benefit and abandon cooperation and adaption (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005).

The relationships of an organisation constitute in many cases the most valuable resources that the organisation possesses (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). Relationships can provide continuity and stability and therefore increase the ability to plan, increase effectiveness, and reduce costs (Easton & Axelsson, 1992). Through relationships within the network, activities and resources of other organisations are made available for the use of an increased performance by the focal organisation (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). These resources flows between actors in a relationship and may consist of products, services, technology, finance, and knowledge (Hadjikhani and Thilenius, 2005). The relations are thus an important asset for an actor (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989).
3.1.2 Non-Business Actors in Business Networks

Non-business actors can be described as actors to whom political ideology or general values and norms are important. In contrast, for business actors the economic goals dominate the interactions (Latifi, 2004). Previous research on business network theory rarely include interactions with non-business actors (Ljung, 2014), nor civil society actors such as NGOs (Ritvala & Salmi, 2011). There are many, though, that emphasise that non-business actors should be included in the business network view (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005; Ritvala & Salmi, 2011; Welch & Wilkinson, 2004; Latifi, 2004; Leite & Latifi, 2016).

Hadjikhani and Thilenius (2005) extend the boundaries of the traditional network view by including non-business actors on the motive that they have a dominant position in the network, and that they both affect and are being affected by the business relationship. The extension made by Hadjikhani and Thilenius (2005) and also by Welch and Wilkinson (2004) concerns particularly political actors, which they mean have a significant influence in forming the network to which they are connected. Latifi (2004) extend the boundaries further by adding two additional categories of non-business actors: intermediary actors who stand between political actors and business actors; and local actors whose involvement is necessary for a successful activity. In his study he treats the local community, or its people, as actors who sometimes evolve gradually from non-business actors to business actors as the relationships within the network proceed. Leite and Latifi (2016) adds to this by saying that NGOs may provide firms with important intangible resources such as legitimacy and reputation in the society, and thus that they should be seen as a part of the extended network view.

3.2 Intermediating Actors

In order to understand the role of UNAC in a relationship setting with family farmers and other actors, such as NGOs and the government, we have to understand the concept of intermediating actors. The so called intermediary is explained by Havila et al. (2004) to be an actor who is mediating in a business relationship between two other actors. The most common business relationship with a present intermediary is that between a supplier and a customer, where the intermediary has contact with both the selling and the buying party (Havila et al., 2004).
When studying intermediaries, it is important never to focus on the intermediary itself, but instead to always view it as a complement to some other actor (Havila, 1996). The intermediary has a neutral position in the social system, which makes it possible to differentiate it from the other actors between whom they are mediating. This neutrality comes from not being so dependent on political or business actors. This is because the intermediary’s goal in the interaction is not economic gains. Neither are there any political gains for the intermediary, which means that its legitimacy, which is created from the people, will not be affected (Latifi, 2004). Further, he means that an intermediating organisation may have access to local knowledge and are trusted by local actors, something that is made possible through the organisation’s neutral position.

It is also claimed by Latifi (2004) that the intermediary can formulate the rules of business and in some cases even intervene in implementation of these rules. Furthermore, it is said that the intermediating actor in a business network can affect not only the structure of the relationships in the network, but also its nature as the intermediary actor enriches the network with other resource types and goals. This is made possible through a high central position in the network, and hence an intermediary organisation can become very powerful in the network where it operates (Latifi, 2004).

### 3.2.1 From a Dyadic Relationship to a Triadic One

In traditional network studies, a trivial business relationship is usually seen to consist of two actors: a selling party and a buying party. This relationship formation can be called a *dyad* (Håkansson & Ford, 2002; Havila, 1996). However, this kind of business relationship is usually influenced by other actors connected to the two nodes in the dyad. Havila (1996) explains that a supplier may have a supplier of its own, or that a customer may have another customer who depends on the goods sold by the first supplier. Thus, all connected actors in this network might have an impact on the focal relationship.

If we stretch the business relation from being dyadic to also include a third party, we are said to be studying a triadic relation. In this study, the third party will consist of the so called intermediary or intermediating actor. The intermediary has contact with both the selling and the buying party, at the same time as the selling and the buying party are in contact with each other (Havila et al., 2004; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959).

Since each party in the business triad has direct contact with the other two parties, social interaction is essential for the triad to survive (Havila et al., 2004). All parties need to communicate often and meet occasionally to maintain the formation. This is done by,
for instance, converting or exchanging products with each other (Havila et al., 2004; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959).

![Diagram of a business-relationship dyad extended to include a third party in common.](image)

*Figure 3: A business-relationship dyad extended to include a third party in common.*

*Source: Adapted from Havila, 1996, p. 25.*

The importance of intermediaries is stressed in cases of international business relationships where the intermediary and the supplier usually have strong roles (Havila et al., 2004). Havila (1996, p.5) explains that: “[…] the role of the intermediating actors in international settings is that of bridging over the gap existing between the supplier and the customer simply because of them being located in different countries at a distance from each other. This distance, be it geographical and/or cultural, psychical, or technical, may be reduced by the involved intermediating actor”.

The roles of the actors in a triad may not only depend on an international context. The roles may also depend on the type of triad. Havila (1996) investigates the roles of intermediaries in 11 different cases where the triads are considered to be either serial or unitary. In a serial triad the main role of the intermediary is to mediate between the two other actors (Havila, 1996). This mediating intermediary was first mentioned by Simmel ([1902] 1950) who expressed different types of social groups including an intermediary. In the other type of triad, the unitary one, the interaction between every other party is more or less equal and none of the actors are “in the middle” of the other two.

In this study only the serial triad will be considered since this model best answers to the triadic relationship between the actors that have been studied. In Figure 4 a serial triad where the intermediary is a mediating party between the actors A and B is shown. The thick line illustrates that the communication between A and B mainly flows through the intermediary. The following chapter will discuss how the triadic relations can be studied in regards to this particular study.
Figure 4: A serial triad with an intermediary as a mediator between actor A and B. The main part of the contact between A and B goes through the intermediary.

Source: Adapted from Havila, 1996, p. 27.

3.3 How to Study Triadic Relationships

Four concepts have been identified (see section 5.9. Data Analysis for an explanation of how the concepts were identified) as central for understanding and investigating UNAC’s the role of UNAC as an intermediary. The concepts are, to begin with, trust and commitment. Furthermore, we have distinguished knowledge and communication as interesting tools for an analyse of the triads, considering the structure of UNAC as an organisation and a union. We believe that an understanding of the formation of these four elements will help to better understand UNAC’s relationships in the specific context. A further presentation of the analysing tools will be given below.

3.3.1 Trust

One of the cornerstones of what binds actors together in a relationship, and also determine the strength of the bond, is trust (Hadjikhani & Häkansson, 1996). Some (Rousseau et al., 1998) define trust as “the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another”. Others define it as a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence (Moorman et al., 1992; Dasgupta, 2000). Zucker (1986) means that trust is a commodity that is manufactured by individuals, firms, or industries, and that social mechanisms are constructed to either produce or increase the probability of trustworthy behaviour. The degree of trust among actors in an existing relation change over time due to actions and interactions, driven by factors as feelings and beliefs, between involved parties and also as a result of their interactions with the environment and other events (Huang & Wilkinson, 2012). Further
they mean that the degree of trust also determines how actors act and interact with each other.

Trust indicates an openess between actors in a relationship (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) and can also function as a regulator of the amount and type of social exchange (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005). Trust is based on mutuality while uncertainty, opportunistic behaviour or exercise of power can lead to mistrust (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005) which, in turn, can result in decreased commitment in the relationship and therefore lead to more short-time exchange processes (McDonald, 1981). Morgan and Hunt (1994) mean that trust is strongly interrelated with commitment and that the presence of these two elements combined in a relationship leads to directly cooperative behaviour. Commitment as a concept in relationships will be presented below.

3.3.2 Commitment

Commitment in relationships can be defined as an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This occur when the exchange partners have achieved a level of satisfaction from the exchange process that virtually precludes other partners that could provide similar benefits (Dwyer et al., 1987). Commitment can only be seen in relationships that are being considered important and where the committed partner is willing to work at maintaining the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The desire of maintaining the relationship leads to a continued bond between actors, which hence will have an impact on the resource ties and the activities in the relation (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Havila, 2004). Furthermore, a party that maintains and continues a business relationship has the benefit of increasing the level of trust from the other party since it shows commitment to the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This makes trust and commitment interrelated. Business partners will increase their commitment to the relationship when they see opportunities to coordinate their relationship activities with activities performed in other relationships that seem relevant within the network (Blackenburg et al., 1999).

As mentioned, trust and commitment combined leads directly to cooperative behaviour which in turn generates outcomes that promote efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). However, the level of commitment may be influenced directly by changes in factors such as relationship termination costs, relationship benefits, and shared values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When a an actor’s effort
in the relationship fluctuates, the other actor will have difficulties predicting the outcomes of the exchange and this might reflect low commitment and lead to reduced reliance (Dwyer et al., 1987)

### 3.3.3 Knowledge

Many different definitions of knowledge exist in the literature. Two levels within these are explicit and tacit knowledge (Saint-Onge, 1996). Explicit knowledge is articulated knowledge like books, reports, manuals, and data, while tacit knowledge, first stated as a concept by Polanyi (1966), includes intuition, beliefs, and experiences (Saint-Onge, 1996). Tacit knowledge can be said to be the greater level of knowledge in an organisation (Saint-Onge, 1996) but also the type of knowledge that is the hardest to transfer to others (Kogut & Zander, 1992). Kogut and Zander (1992) explain it as: “it is different being taught functional skills of how to do something than being taught how to create it.”

In organisations, knowledge often become embedded in forms like documents, or in organisational routines, processes, practises and norms (Davenport & Prusak, 2005). Knowledge may therefore be created between business actors by combining the existing knowledge and skills they both possess (Easton & Axelsson, 1992). Experience-based knowledge can be transferred through mobility of individuals (Berg Jensen et al., 2007).

In this study we follow a definition made by Davenport and Prusak (2005) who say that knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. To be able to analyse UNAC’s interaction with both non-business actors and farmers, we choose a broad definition since it may be different types of knowledge that are essential in the different settings studied in this study.

### 3.3.4 Communication

Communication is a process where written, verbal, or non-verbal messages are being sent from one person, or a group of persons, to another. The messages are encoded on one side and decoded on the other with certain expectations and reactions (Blahova, 2015). This means that communication can simplify the interaction between organisations if they both share the same expectations and develop a common terminology (Uzzi, 1997). Storper and Venables (2004) promote face-to-face communication as an efficient way of transaction, which allows actors to align commitments and thus reduce incentive problems and promote the development of trust between them. Further, they mean that
face-to-face contact makes it easier to observe and interpret a partner’s behaviour, and thus it permits a depth and a speed of feedback that is impossible with other forms of communication (Storper & Venables, 2004). This is due to the fact that communication is not only about speaking, it is a process of listening, watching, and analysing the reactions of the other side (Blahova, 2015).

Active communication is also an essential variable for transferring knowledge between different actors (Szulanski, 1996; Liyanage et al., 2009; Mu et al., 2008), and for the transfer to be successful the receiving party should accumulate or assimilate new knowledge (Liyanage et al., 2009). Trust between actors foster a successful transfer since it reduces transaction costs and enhance the willingness of partners to share their knowledge (Mu et al., 2008). If parties are unwilling to share knowledge, the transfer will not be successful (Liyanage et al., 2009). Not to forget, in business environments knowledge transfer is not only a result of oral communication between actors; it can occur through means like technological interventions and intermediaries as well (Liyanage et al., 2009).

3.4 Theoretical Operationalisation

A business network theory will be the base of this study since it helps to understand the environment in which UNAC as an intermediating organisation operates between family farmers and non-business actors. The relations between the actors will be investigated in the two different business triads where UNAC as an intermediary is a common denominator; the one between family farmers and a NGO; and the one between family farmers and the government.

The study involves actors from several different settings and it is therefore important to understand the role of non-business actors in a business relationship. Actors such as NGOs, the government, and UNAC will be regarded as non-business actors. The local community in this study is constituted by the people living in the rural areas of the Gaza and Maputo districts, but will be generalised to include only members of UNAC who live in these areas. Since this study deals with the underlying question of how to connect family farmers to the market, the farmers will be seen as entrepreneurs trying to enter the market. Hence, they will be treated as business actors.

In this study a serial triadic approach will be used since the communication between studied actors may not always go through UNAC. The context in which UNAC
operates can be viewed as if being in an international business-relationship setting. This, since funding actors, such as for example embassies and NGOs are international by the meaning that they operate in an international context albeit located in the same country as both the intermediary and the farmers.

![Figure 5: The two serial business relationship triads that will be studied. One concerning the NGOs and one concerning the government. All relationships, despite the lines’ thickness, will be studied in regards to four dimensions: trust, commitment, knowledge and communication.](image)

Source: Structure adapted from Havila, 1996, p.27

The relations between the actors in the triads are being considered as the most valuable asset to the actors. These two business triads will be analysed in regard to four dimensions of analysing tools; trust, commitment, knowledge, and communication, where each and one of them is taking place in the relation threads that are shown in Figure 5 above. We believe that commitment and trust are concepts that will help us analyse the farmers’ relationships with other parties, and that they can help us to get a clear view of the role that UNAC plays in the serial business triads. Also, we find knowledge to be an interesting concept to analyse since it may be an important asset when trying to strengthen the farmers’ position in Mozambique. Furthermore, intermediaries are actors that mediate between two other actors (Havila et al., 2004), and we believe that this fact motivates the choice of using communication as an analysing tool.

4. Design of Study

4.1 Choice of Research

Based upon both author’s interest in emerging markets and agricultural development, the area of research was chosen to market access issues in a network structure in the south of
Africa. At the first stage of our research, we were looking into the development issues of the agriculture in the southern countries of Africa and we found that there are several ongoing projects with the aim to connect farmers to a market. Mozambique seemed to be an interesting country to study from a market perspective since we found it stated that nearly 80 percent of the population are farmers and that the majority, despite fertile soil, live below the poverty line with an income under 2 USD per day (USAID, 2016; Prahalad et al., 2005). During a telephone meeting with an employee at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) stationed at the Swedish Embassy in Mozambique, this was verified. We found out that Mozambique is at the earliest stage of creating a profitable market for family farmers, compared to its neighbouring countries who have come further with their development programmes (Nhampossa, 2015). This information made us even more interested in Mozambique and its agricultural sector.

4.2 Case Study Research

Given the problem formulation of this study, a method that investigated the work and situations for several different actors in the agricultural sector in Mozambique was required. A case study was chosen since it gives a deeper understanding for a certain problem in a specific area. Since this research was seeking to achieve a rich understanding of the context in which the farmers and the market figure, the choice of a case study had the advantage of generating a more exhaustive comprehension to the research problem through observations and comparisons between the multiple sites (Saunders et al., 2009) that were visited.

The case study methodology has been questioned about the issue of generalisation (Johansson, 2003). Several sites conform to a generalisation in a more prosperous way. The rationale for using multiple sites focuses on the need to establish whether the findings at the first location occur also at the second location and, as a consequence, the need to generalise from these findings (cf. Saunders et al., 2009). Four different rural districts were part of this case study. A comparison of data from four different locations simplifies the analysis of factors that might not only have an impact on the problem in one location, but also to a larger extent. This was done since the research questions seek answers that are applicable for the whole country of Mozambique.

This study has been based on an abductive approach. Dubois and Gadde (2002) point out that an abductive approach is advantageous if the researcher’s objective is to
discover new things, such as other variables and other relationships, during the study. Without adapting an abductive approach, no new inputs would have been considered during the research. Furthermore, this study is based on observations and research that take social climates, relationships, and organisations into account. This goes in line with Ong (2012) who points out that the aim of an abductive approach is to describe and understand social life in terms of social actors’ motives and accounts.

4.3 Research Approach

The methodology of our study have been of a qualitative character (Saunders et al., 2009). Interviews have been held with concerned actors in order to get an insight in the current situation and also to identify which parameters that are important to consider in the analysis. In order to get a clear overview of how actors impact the possibilities of family farmers’ abilities, it is important to listen to more than one side of the relation. By interviewing several involved actors, the collaboration between them can be analysed and a deeper understanding of the local presumptions can be achieved. This is of value since the study discusses a complex issue, in which case Yin (2003) points out that a qualitative research is of advantage when describing a social phenomenon.

Apart from the interviews held, the sources that have been used for finding data are observations, photographs, and empirical material. Marshall and Rossman (2011) states that observations are central in qualitative research in order to note events and get an insight in behaviours and artefacts in social settings, while interviews act as a vital data source for this kind of study. Hence, interviews and observations have been our main sources of information while other empirical material has been used complementary to the research.

4.4 Sample Selection of Case Study

The field study was undertaken in Mozambique from March 21st to May 29th 2016. One multi-site case study was made including four different locations. In this section we will go through how the selection of the locations were made for this study.

4.4.1 Mozambique

In section 5.1. Choice of Research we described the reason why we chose Mozambique for this particular study. We also conceived that studying a market issue of this nature, at
its very beginning, would help gaining understanding of emerging markets and following difficulties also in other countries and in future aid projects. By studying Mozambique, we believed that it could be easier to understand the sociological perspective of projects where actors from different settings collaborate to help the population out of poverty. Therefore, we found it of great interest to investigate one of the main problems that is contributing to the poverty among the population. In addition, it was told by Norrstad (2015) that this research topic is up to date with several ongoing aid projects in Mozambique.

4.4.2 The Rural Areas of the Maputo and Gaza Provinces

Several factors had to be considered when the areas to be visited for collection of data were about to be selected. Due to the conflict that exists between the government and the rebel party in the country (Buchanan, 2016), the number of reachable provinces for this study decreased. Besides this, the road conditions made it difficult to travel far away from the capital where we lived during our stay. Furthermore, our stay in the country was limited to 10 weeks making it hard to travel to distant locations in the country.

Before and during our stay, we were in contact with We Effect, an NGO with Swedish origin that is funded by the Swedish Embassy and has projects throughout Mozambique (Nhampossa, 2015). Before our arrival, the Country Representative and Programme Coordinator at We Effect in Mozambique, Diamantino Nhampossa, introduced us to the district of Manhica in the Maputo province, and the district of Chokwe in the Gaza province. Since this study focuses on UNAC’s role as an intermediary between actors within the development of the agricultural sector in Mozambique, the aim was to go to districts within these provinces where UNAC had ongoing projects. An initial meeting was held with Luís Muchanga, Executive Coordinator Director at UNAC, who verified that the areas suggested by Nhampossa made up a good selection. Manhica is an interesting location since it is situated close to the capital and by that to agglomerations. Chokwe, on the other hand, is located north of the Maputo province and thereby issues regarding transportation increase. By including two provinces with different basic conditions it may become easier to make generalisations of the farmers’ situation in Mozambique. Through discussion with Muchanga we decided to add the rural areas of Mahotas and Marracuene, also districts within the Maputo province, to this selection since we thought it would be easier to make generalisations.
4.5 Data Sources

The primary data collection methods used for this study were interviews and direct observations. The secondary data is based on a pre-study, focusing on the agricultural and organisational situations in Mozambique, which was made as a preparation before our arrival in the country. The pre-study included reports, investment plans, and articles. In the following sub-chapters, the primary methods for collecting data will be presented.

4.5.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main source of data collection in this study. Saunders et al. (2009) describe that semi-structured interviews give the interviewer the ability to customise the interview to each person and also to adjust the discussion during the interview. It might also encourage the respondents to define and describe a situation or event in a free way, and that gives an opportunity of providing the interviewer with an extensive and detailed answer. They are also advantageous when the order and logic of the questioning may need to be varied (Saunders et al., 2009).

Although all interviews were of a semi-structured character, templates were kept in order to give a framework to the interviews. This is beneficial according to Saunders et al. (2009) since it provides the interviewer with a way of keeping interviews with different respondents more related to each other. Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe that keeping the interviews scheduled after a template, helps the interviewer to come prepared to the interview and it may also provide more extensive data. For this reason, this way of conducting an interview is well suited to a multi-site case study or general studies with larger sample sizes.

All interviews were conducted with a Dictaphone as well as noted by hand, as further described in section 4.9. Data Analysis.

4.5.2 Interpretation

Portuguese is the official language in Mozambique, although English is spoken to some extent in larger cities. On the countryside, local languages are the most frequently used languages, but in many areas people speak or know some Portuguese (Lopes, 2010). Since none of us speak Portuguese, all the interviews with farmers were carried through with the help of an interpreter.
When arriving in Mozambique a student in his last year of studying to become an interpreter between English and Portuguese was contacted through We Effect’s network. He agreed on working with us during our 10 weeks long field study. To some extent he was also familiar with the local language Xichangana, which is one of the most commonly used local languages in the Maputo and Gaza provinces (Lopes, 2010).

In some cases, Portuguese was not spoken by the interviewees, whereby a second person translating was needed in some of the interviews. During interviews held strictly in Xichangana, the answers were first translated to Portuguese before being interpreted to English.

4.5.3 Respondents

Farmers and Associations

This study is based on 25 interviews held in Mozambique. Of these interviews, 22 have been held with farmers where the total number of participants have been 69. In the 22 interviews with farmers a translator was needed. Among these interviews two have been in larger groups with 18 respectively 25 participants and two have been smaller group interviews, one with three respondents and the other one with five. The remaining 18 interviews with farmers were individual ones. A representative from UNAC was present during the interviews held in the Maputo province. During the interviews with farmers we made it clear that we were not representatives from UNAC nor any of their partner organisations, but instead students from Sweden doing research about UNAC’s work and the market situation for family farmers in Mozambique.

As mentioned above, all farmers were members of UNAC. As a member you belong to an association consisting of members in your area (see section 2.2.2. UNAC and its members for a thoroughgoing narration of the structure of UNAC). In order to thoroughly understand the issues of the farmers and also to get a clear view of the relationships, we were interviewing the Presidents of all concerned associations. We also had the opportunity to interview a member of the board of all the associations in the districts. These individuals are being seen as “elites” in this report since they have a great insight in their association and its position in the network. Marshall and Rossman (2011) define an “elite person” as an individual in position of power and influence. They mean that the advantages of interviewing elites are that they are well informed in their organisation or community and thus can provide the interviewer with an overall view of
the organisation and its relationships, although from their own experiences and standpoints.

**NGO’s and UNAC**

Besides interviewing farmers, we conducted a pilot interview with the Country Representative and Programme Coordinator Diamantino Nhampossa at We Effect and another interview with the Executive Coordinator Director at UNAC, Luís Muchanga. Nhampossa and Muchanga were asked to participate in interviews since they, through their “elite positions”, both have a good insight in their own organisations and relationships. Since all farmers that we met were members of UNAC, an interview with the Executive Coordinator Director was a great advantage for our understanding. We had a meeting before going out in field in order to get an insight in the organisation and its structure. When all interviews with farmers were conducted an in-depth interview was held with Muchanga to follow up on UNAC’s role in projects regarding family farmer’s market access in Mozambique.

We Effect is one of UNAC’s funders, whereby this NGO has a great insight in the organisational work, the activities they perform, and the results they achieve. Since We Effect helped us during our preparations and our stay we also got to use We Effect’s Office office space to do our paperwork from time to time. We worked independently, but through the contact at the office we got the chance to occasionally ask questions informally regarding their and UNAC’s work. Although We Effect was not one of the NGOs that was mentioned by the farmers during the interviews, they still had required knowledge to answer all of our questions through their position as a funder. This was of great value for our study since we wanted to hear from all settings in the network.

**4.6 Field Visits**

Five field visits to four different districts in two provinces of Mozambique have been carried through. Altogether six days have been spent interviewing farmers in the field and the data collected during these five field visits have been compiled and used as the base for this case study. In this section we will present how the field visits were carried out.
4.6.1 Mahotas

The field visit in Mahotas took place during a quarterly meeting where farmers from the whole district were gathered together to discuss their collective work and individual aims. In total, more than 50 individual farmers were present among which 12 had the role as President of an association. Besides these individual farmers, representatives from UNAC and the President and vice President of the district’s union were present. Four individual interviews were conducted as well as a group interview with three Presidents of different associations, which all consisted of up to 1000 members.

The first 30 minutes of our visit we acted just as auditors of the meeting while our interpreter translated what was being said. This gave us an opportunity to observe and create a clear view of the schedule of the meeting and the main problems that were to be discussed. All interviews took place in the meeting area, under a huge tree among the fields in the village. We also visited one of the farmer’s individual farm so that she could show us the procedure of her work.

4.6.2 Marracuene

The district of Marracuene was visited twice. At the first visit, we conducted three individual in-depth interviews with the President of the whole district, the vice President and lastly the Secretary. The interviews took place at the house of the district’s union. Due to rain it was not possible to reach the farmers this day and we had to find another date for a return visit.

During the second visit we met farmers from one association with 100 members. Due to a very high temperature, lack of shelter from the sun, and the farms being spread out in a large area, it was not possible to carry out individual interviews. Therefore, a group interview with 25 farmers was conducted. During the interview the farmers were discussing the questions within the group before the answers were given by one of the members. The field visit included looking at their collective land and also the individual land of one of the farmers.

4.6.3 Manhica

In the Manhica district we met farmers from one association founded in 1987, the same year as UNAC was funded. This association consisted of 45 members. Six individual interviews were carried out in their association premises close to the collective farm. Also,
an in-depth interview with the President of the association were carried through. Bad weather limited us from making any further observations and it was impossible to pay any visits to individual farms.

4.6.4 Chokwe

The district of Chokwe is located in the Gaza province four hours from Maputo by car. Because of the distance we decided to stay overnight to be able to carry out as many interviews as possible. During the first day we met the President of an association with 76 members. We conducted two individual interviews with farmers of this association. Also, we met with the President of another association with 97 members in this area. We conducted an in-depth interview with the vice President and the counsellor of Chokwe district’s union at the house of the union’s head office.

During the second day we visited a smaller association of 16 members that were located further away. The visit started with a conversation and a tour around the village with the President. He showed us the fields and the collective farm before we went to his house to start interviewing the members. This was done as a group interview with 18 farmers present, that is, some participants were in the same household as the members but were no members themselves. When we asked the questions they all got the chance to answer and give their opinion, after which the President compiled the answers when it was needed.

4.6.5 Summary of Interviews

Information about all interviews that have been conducted are presented in Table 1 below.
Table 1: Summary of all respondents and interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Double interpreted</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Luís Muchanga, initial meeting/interview</td>
<td>Maputo</td>
<td>01:17</td>
<td>Held in English</td>
<td>2016-03-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diamantino Nhampossa, pilot interview</td>
<td>Maputo</td>
<td>00:56</td>
<td>Held in English</td>
<td>2016-03-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Presidents of 3 associations</td>
<td>Mahotas</td>
<td>01:12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Farmer 1</td>
<td>Mahotas</td>
<td>00:48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Farmer 2</td>
<td>Mahotas</td>
<td>00:28</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Farmer 3</td>
<td>Mahotas</td>
<td>00:24</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Farmer 4</td>
<td>Mahotas</td>
<td>00:17</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Secretary of the union</td>
<td>Marracuene</td>
<td>00:56</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>President of the union</td>
<td>Marracuene</td>
<td>01:16</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vice President of the union</td>
<td>Marracuene</td>
<td>00:29</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Farmer 5</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:42</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Farmer 6</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:23</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Farmer 7</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:37</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Farmer 8</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Farmer 9</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:24</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Farmer 10</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>00:30</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>President of the association</td>
<td>Manhica</td>
<td>01:01</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Group of 25 farmers</td>
<td>Marracuene</td>
<td>01:02</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>President of association 1</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>00:51</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Farmer 11</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>00:31</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Farmer 12</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>00:20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>President of association 2</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>00:32</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Vice President of the union and counsellor</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>01:11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-04-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Group of 18 farmers</td>
<td>Chokwe</td>
<td>00:58</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2016-04-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Luís Muchanga</td>
<td>Maputo</td>
<td>01:41</td>
<td>Held in English</td>
<td>2016-05-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Observations

A highly important method in all qualitative studies are observations. By using observations, a researcher can discover complex interactions in social settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). During the interviews we wrote down what we observed and took photographs for our memories. The observations added nuances to the interviews and Marshall and Rossman (2011) explains that this makes the observations play an important role when using in-depth interviews. The body language, tone of voice, and other paralinguistic messages can be perceived in addition to the words spoken by the interviewees. To us, this was of value since we only got a translation of the words from the interpreter. Thus, our observations made us more aware if anything was missed out or if we had to go deeper in a certain question.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

When doing this kind of research, it is important to consider ethical issues. These may emerge in any interview and, in general, the research design should not subject those who are being researched to embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantage. It is of importance to ensure that the answers given during the interviews remain anonymous throughout the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). These issues were being considered during the collection of data from each field visit. By considering the ethical aspect and what we had learnt about the culture in Mozambique, we could create trust and thus get more out of the interviews.

This included following the local guidelines regarding clothing and to greeting people we met in a proper manner. We also made sure to ask for permission before recording or taking any photos.

4.9 Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research consisted of a number of iterative steps due to the amount of data that we gathered. After each field visit, the recorded interviews were transcribed to a document together with all observations. We wrote down short narratives and tried to identify key events in each interview. This made up our first phase of the data analysis.
As a second step, the data was coded into a table system by using different topic frames and a colour system in the document in order to map all the different topics and to find patterns in the data.

The main objective of coding data is to move from raw text to research concerns in small steps where each step build on the previous one. The advantage of coding in small steps is that the researcher does not have to see the connection between the raw text and the research concerns, instead the researcher only has to look as far as to the next step (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). After many discussions and iterations of the data, we found four key elements of the research result (see Table 2 on the following page). In order to increase the methodological trustworthiness of the study (Healy & Perry, 2000; Ritvala & Salmi, 2011) we tried to illustrate our method of data analysis by inserting quotations from interviews in the table below. By following this iterative model, we got an early overview of our data and it gave us a finger-post of our results. Also, we decided to keep the data as quotes in order to keep the data source intact.
**Table 2: The key elements of the research results and a selection of translated quotes indicating them.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Interview Quotes</th>
<th>Analytical level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Trust**        | P4: “We have a good relation [with UNAC]. UNAC is like our library, they consult us many things. When we have a situation or something that we can’t handle, they help us.”  

P6: “UNAC is great, they are the ones to protect us. They give us training sessions and they protect us from land grabbing.”  

UNAC, Farmer                                                                 |                                  |
| **Commitment**   | P7: “We want to strengthen this area of Malavela [in Manhica] in terms of organisation, we want to keep it as alive as possible. We want the farmers […] to create a company which can benefit all people. But so far people are not accepting, they can’t believe. Because in their heads things can only happen if help is coming from the outside. We act to develop this area and to strengthen the farmers in self organisation. Instead of spreading the information around, we, the 45 members, want to build something visible, a big thing. In 5 years we are thinking of being a society and not an association. This is our dream in the association.”  

S1: “We […] train the associations to go over the obstacles. We are now facing problems with climate change and poverty. We are trying to find a solution for people to overcome these obstacles, trying to help them with information […].”  

F5: “Yes, I am happy. I would like to have more knowledge; the knowledge is never enough. I would like the organisations keeping coming.”  

UDAC, Farmer                                                                 |                                  |
| **Communication**| F2: “If someone is facing a problem we have a meeting [in the association] so that the person can expose that problem and the rest of us try to help.”  

F4: “I collaborate only with my family. Even my youngest brothers have their own space, so we collaborate within the family. It is like a big farm, but we all have got our own space. I have not been in contact with any NGOs.”  

VP1: “We are always in contact with UNAC, they visit more regularly. If something is going to happen within UNAC, we are always acquainted. […] When UNAC has a project, they come and visit. Otherwise not.”  

UNAC, UDAC, Farmer                                                                 |                                  |
| **Knowledge**    | F7: “We exchange knowledge mainly on the collective farm. Because we are all there and I acquire knowledge from the collective farm and I put it in practice on my own farm. So this is the way I am learning.”  

F1: “We have had training sessions at UNAC. So all of us are acquainted with how to plant, and if there is a training session all farmers in this area are called to that meeting.”  

F5: “I would like to have more knowledge; the knowledge is never enough. I would like organisations to keep coming.”  

VP2: “Well the union helps us, because they give us training sessions of how to conserve our cultures. They [authors’ note: the training sessions] are valuable. It really helps us conserving the culture. I can stay up to three days without watering the cultures.”  

UNAC, Farmer                                                                 |                                  |
5. Empirical Results

In the empirical results, we will start off by presenting the identified obstacles that constrain the family farmers’ market access in Mozambique. As a second step, identified actions by UNAC, as an NGO and union, to overcome these obstacles are given. Secondly, the focal relationship between the family farmers and UNAC will be given attention before going into the two different triadic relationships. In these triadic relationships UNAC acts as an intermediary where the other parties, apart from the family farmers, are NGOs and the government.

5.1 Obstacles Regarding the Market Access for Farmers

There are several reasons why Mozambican family farmers have problem selling their products and thus have a very low or a completely lack of income. One of the main challenges is that the farmers often lack means of transportation and the fact that the market places often are located far from their home villages. This means that farmers are forced to walk by foot, sometimes for hours, carrying heavy products to be able to reach a physical marketplace, an activity that is impossible for a large part of the population. Of course, this only accounts for farmers that are able to produce enough to sell their products, not the ones growing to feed just the household.

“The second problem is about transportation. There are people starving that do not have access to these kind of products, but we cannot transport. We have big quantities, but we cannot sell them. There is a demand, but we cannot transport our products.”

- Farmer 3, Mahotas

The selling opportunity is impeded even more by the fact that people from other districts come to sell at the same marketplace, which makes the place overcrowded with people selling the same products. In order for these farmers to sell what they produce they have to rely on street sellers who come to their farms, buy their products, and then resell them on the street or at a market to a higher price. The street sellers are often hard to negotiate with since they want to decide the price, and the farmers sometimes lack knowledge of the current price level at the market. If a farmer refuses to sell at a certain price, the street sellers could just move on to the next farmer who might be more desperate for an income and therefore sell to a lower price. Some of the farmers, but far from all, had the possibility to use public transportation or lift to the market. This way they could gain knowledge about the price levels.
No farmers that have been spoken to set the prices of the products together within the association. Due to farmers using different fertilisers with a various purchase cost, equal prices are not possible. The field visits gave the impression that the different price levels sometimes lead to rivalry among the farmers. The impression was stronger in Mahotas than in the other districts. Only in this district all respondents sensed some kind of competition within the association.

According to some farmers there is a shortage of products on the market. In spite of this, most farmers have problem to produce more than they do due to the drought or the fact that they lack methodologies or techniques, such as watering systems and tractors, to do so. An additional problem regarding the market is a lack of storage. Farmers that, for instance, grow perishables have trouble keeping the products fresh for a longer time. This makes it hard for them to make a good profit out of each batch of products.

“We do not have machines, we only have hacks and axes to cut trees down. We would really like to have a major watering system and tractors.”

- Group 1, Marracuene

Transportation and knowledge about the market are not the only resources that affect the farmers’ ability to connect to a market and sell their products. Lack of water due to a severe drought are another major factor that affects the whole agricultural chain since the farmers without water cannot produce the same amount as they would if the circumstances were different. In line with this aspect, UNAC sees more knowledge about how to cultivate the land in a more prosperous way as an important step for moving forward.

Another problem that was raised during the interviews is land grabbing by the government. Several farmers explained that they are constantly afraid of losing their farm because of land grabbing. The reason why the government so easily can grab the land is because it has not been possible for the farmers to buy, sell, or mortgage it due to it belonging to the state. However, the farmers have still been using the land to cultivate for years, sometimes through several generations. The land grabbing issue is a problem since it entails that farmers lose their farms which in short term leads to a loss of harvest. Sometimes it also means that farmers no longer are able to cultivate since they cannot get another space.
5.2 UNAC’s Operations to Overcome Obstacles

In order to achieve food sovereignty and a more developed economy in Mozambique, UNAC works to increase agricultural productivity and production throughout the country. Seen to the fact that around 80 percent of the population nourish from farming (USAID, 2016), an important step in developing the economy is to connect farmers to the market. In order to do so, the obstacles presented in the previous section have to be overcome. UNAC has different ways of forming their operations in order for this to be done. The urgent need for means of transportation in all associations is not something that UNAC, nor other actors, are able to overcome in short-term due to lack of financial means. The operations that UNAC forms lie within the framework of this study and will be presented below.

5.2.1 Creating Access to Resources

One crucial factor to increase productivity and production for the farmers is the asset of resources. Since the majority of the farmers lack access to several essential resources, one important part of UNAC’s work is to provide them with these resources so that their farms will be strengthened and in the future have the opportunity to become self-sufficient. There are several ways of how to provide the farmers with resources that are required in their daily work. UNAC means that this is not an easy task since farmers in different areas do not have the same needs, and also it has to be done by implementing a project which usually requires financial support from partner organisations and NGOs.

One arrangement that is being made through UNAC is the building of watering systems to secure the access to water. The lack of water is a severe problem in large parts of the country and the pre-conditions vary between different areas, making this an expensive project, both economically and time-wise.

In order to cover the demand for resources such as fertilisers, water pumps and machines for harvesting, UNAC depends on funders including the government and collaborating NGOs. One example of how collaborative funders get together is by building factories which can collect products from the farmers and take responsibility for the selling. By the time that the products get sold, the farmers will get their money. In Chokwe there is a rice factory to which many farmers are selling their rice harvest. However, the waiting time to receive money can be up to three months. Several farmers also explained that due to the taxes they have to pay when selling the harvest to the
factory, and also the delayed reception of payment from the factory, the profit is not enough to make a living.

Another example of how the access to resources is created in Chokwe is that the government has provided an NGO operating in the area with harvesting machines, which the local associations may hire to a certain price. In the agreement it is said that the farmers using the machine can pay with rice in cases where they do not have money to spend, which makes it a profitable deal for both sides.

In Marracuene the government provides UDAC with fertilisers which later are spread among the associations in the district. Another way of dealing with the lack of fertilisers is to organise training sessions in order to teach the farmers how to prepare organic fertilisers, something that was mentioned by farmers in several districts. They explained that they had learnt how to prepare organic fertilisers and that it had helped them to save money and to get better crops.

5.2.2 Educating the Farmers

Education is an important feature in UNAC’s work. In order for the farmers to develop their farming and increase their production, UNAC sees more knowledge as an important criterion. One way of supporting the farmers so that they can get more knowledge is by arranging regular training sessions. At these training sessions the farmers have the opportunity to learn about, for instance, how to conserve cultures, how to prepare organic fertilisers, and the meaning of 1997 year’s Law of Land. Knowledge about the two laws is considered important for farmers since it teaches them about their rights as inhabitants in Mozambique. The training sessions are not always held by UNAC, but sometimes by other NGOs.

The sessions are arranged on regular basis, but the time span between two training sessions may differ from time to time and between different districts. There are no fixed dates, but an association in Chokwe approximated them to be held every three months. At each training session, a couple of representatives from each association are chosen to participate. After the training session, the representatives go back to their associations to teach the other members what they have learnt. The location where the training sessions are held vary all the time, which gives farmers the opportunity to travel to other districts, provinces, and in some cases, even to other countries. Since only a limited number of farmers can participate at each training session, the opportunity to participate is rotating among the farmers in the associations so that all farmers will be given the chance to
exchange experiences and knowledge with farmers from other parts of the country. All farmers that have been spoken to about the training sessions have been positive and tell that they have learnt new things. A farmer in Chokwe explains:

“UNAC is great for me, fantastic. We have the chance of exchanging experience. Like we can go to Niassa [authors note: province in the north of Mozambique] and we can receive people from other districts.”

- Farmer 12, Chokwe

Several of them also emphasise that they want to attend more training sessions and learn more from other participants since they find the sessions valuable for their farming.

“I would like to learn more, because getting more knowledge doesn’t occupy any space.”

- President 6, Chokwe

In Mahotas the respondents had a positive attitude to the training sessions but, on the contrary from the other locations, they did not see any reason to share more knowledge within the association.

“We have had training sessions at UNAC. So all of us are acquainted with how to plant, and if there is a training session all farmers in this area are called to that meeting. But we all have the same experience in this area. Normally we do not exchange that many experiences and knowledge since we have the same capacity and knowledge.”

- Farmer 2, Mahotas

According to Muchanga (2016b), the topic for the training sessions are chosen after demand by the farmers. UNAC tries to work in accordance with the farmers and during the year UNAC collects all the demands and take them to the general assembly in order for the assembly to approve the suggestions. The farmers’ demands vary throughout the country. In Nampula the demand often regards how to handle land grabbing issues while in Marracuene the farmers demand more knowledge about agricology in order to increase their production.

In all districts but Mahotas the farmers in the associations that were spoken to inclined that the best place for them to gain knowledge and to share experiences is at the association's collective farm. The collective farm is land belonging to the community where the members gather once a week to work together on the farm. Most farmers mean that this farm has become important for their associations since participants of the training sessions can spread what they have learnt to the rest of the group in a generous and non-competitive way. They can also share experiences that they have had at their own
individual farms. Only the farmers in Mahotas did not mention collective farming when answering questions regarding how they exchange experience and gain knowledge. They seemed to be more focused on their individual farms and did mainly cooperate with their own family or, when a common problem occurred, with the closest neighbours.

Another dimension of the training sessions are the trainings in literacy. Many of the farmers that we have met lacked or had limited knowledge of how to read and write. The ability to write their names was raised, both by UNAC and the farmers themselves, as an important part of the farmers’ everyday lives. They meant that literacy is an important part of legalising the land since the relation with the government often requires the contact to be in written form.

5.2.3 Legalising the Land of the Farmers

We have mentioned that many farmers stated that they fear to be land grabbed by the government. The reason why the government easily can grab land is, as we noted earlier, that the land originally belongs to the state. The fact that the farmers still use the land is made possible through the “land use and benefit rights”, or direito de uso e aproveitamento de terra (DUAT) in Portuguese, which means that land is allocated by the government to all farmers that want to use it (FAO, 2014). This is an innovative feature in the 1997 Law of Land, which makes the DUAT a legally private right not easily revoked and it can also be inherited (Tanner, 2008; FAO, 2014), explaining why some land have belonged to the respondent's families in generations.

The 1997 Law of Land is considered by some (FAO, 2014) to be the best and most progressive in Africa and is the result of a new policy and legislative process in the mid-1990s. It was designed to prevent land grabbing and raise awareness of local rights. From the year of 1999, communities around Mozambique have begun to delimit and register their rights of land. By the year of 2013, a number of 550 communities had been registered and a total land area of just under 7.8 million hectares was covered legally by farmers in these communities (FAO, 2014). Although these numbers incline a positive outcome of the 1997 Law of Land, FAO (2014) points out that success must be tempered with caution. Nearly all delimitations have been supported by NGOs with bilateral funding while state land administration services respond mainly to the needs of private investors looking for land (FAO, 2014). The process of legalising the land is long. The President of the association in Manhica spent 10 years, starting in 2001, to officially document the land for everyone in the association which by the year of 2016 has 45 members. The
association was founded in September 1987, the same year as the mother organisation UNAC.

Many farmers expressed that UNAC plays a crucial role for the associations throughout the country in terms of the relation to the government. They explain that UNAC has been a good support and that they have made the farmers’ voices heard in cases where farmers have been threatened by land grabbing from foreign companies or the government.

"The relationship with UNAC is fantastic. UNAC is the ones that protects us from the government if the government wants to grab the land. UNAC are the ones to protect us. So the relationship is fantastic. I definitely like it."
- President 5, Chokwe

UNAC gives support by training people to become paralegals and teaches them about the 1997 Law of Land. The paralegals can then inform communities and provide them with basic legal support. The role of a paralegal in Mozambique is by FAO (2014, p. 33) defined as “lay people with basic training in law and formal government who assist poor and otherwise disempowered communities to remedy breaches of fundamental rights and freedoms”.

Besides helping the local communities, the paralegals can help local government officers to navigate their way between the conflicting demand of investors and higher level of political masters (FAO, 2014). Thanks to the work of the paralegals in the district of Marracuene, several farmers who have lost their land have gotten help with police and court issues and also some of them have had their land back.

5.3 The Relation Between Farmers and UNAC

Before looking at the two different business triads involving the farmers, UNAC and a third party, we will look at the relationship between the farmers and UNAC. In order to understand what happens in the different levels of UNAC, we refer to Figure 1 in section 2.2.2. UNAC and Its Members, which shows the structure of the organisation.

The number of members in each association vary within the districts.¹ There are

¹ The associations that have been part of this study vary between having 16 to over 1 200 members. The overall number of members per association was 75-100. In general, the district of Mahotas had larger associations than the other three districts, while the association in Manhica had 45 members. In Manhica the number had decreased, partly due to high annual taxes. The smallest association was situated in Chokwe, and it consisted of 16 members.
statutes made by UNAC that regulate the basic demands that the association must make on potential new members, but every association may have their own criteria as well. In smaller associations, that is with members less than 100 members, it was observed that the associations were more united. Especially in Manhica and in Chokwe, with 45 and 16 members respectively, the unity seemed strong. In Mahotas, where the members were above 1 000 in each association, the respondents were more pessimistic to collective learning since they all got the same training from UNAC or NGOs. Also, the respondents seemed to work in a more solitude way in Mahotas.

Any problems, thoughts, or ideas that arise for individual farmers are first brought up within the association in order to find someone with the right experience or solution before taking the issue to a higher level of UNAC. This is done by monthly meetings within the associations. In large associations, where all members cannot attend the meetings, some farmers are chosen to participate as representatives. If the question cannot be solved within the association, the president takes it to the next level, UDAC. At this level, the issue can be shared and discussed with presidents and farmers from other associations in the same district in order to come up with a solution. If this is not possible, the board of UDAC should raise the question to UNAC on national level.

“If someone is facing a problem, we have meetings [within the association] so that person can expose the problem and the rest of us try to help. In the association we have some sort of department with a chief. This is the place where we try to sort out and tackle the problem.”

- Farmer 2, Mahotas

This is how the farmers’ issues reach UNAC, and also how UNAC knows what has to be improved in the agricultural sector. If UNAC believes that these issues are general for all farmers in an area, or large enough for a certain association, they may internally raise the question of starting a project and deal with the problem locally. These projects are started in order to strengthen the farmers’ position, and thus the agricultural sector and development in Mozambique. Since every district face different challenges the character of these projects varies throughout the country. The orientation may, for example, be to build a watering system using nearby rivers or to coordinate the farmers in training sessions for educational purpose.

The idea is that the farmers define the purpose of UNAC, and UNAC deals with the coordination, implementation, and administrative parts of the projects. For a project to be started, it is not enough that the farmers demand it, UNAC has to make the decision
of implementing it. Some farmers emphasized that they may be heard by UNAC, but that it does not mean that they actually will receive any help. Despite this, almost all farmers we met are satisfied with the relationship, and they keep hoping and believing that new projects will be assigned to their area or association as long as they keep raising the problems they face.

“The farmers, they come to us with problems, but we do not have funds for the associations. We have to wait for the projects so that they can come in handy and try to solve the problems of the associations. We have to wait for UNAC to hand us a project”

- Vice President of the union, Marracuene

5.4 Business Triad 1: Farmer - UNAC - NGO

In this section we will go through the first of the two business triads. In this business triad UNAC is the intermediary in the business relationship between the associations of farmers, and the NGOs.

In the relation between NGOs and UNAC, the NGOs provide UNAC with financial support and physical means in order to keep up the work they do in Mozambique. Also, many of the developing projects for farmers are implemented with help from NGOs. In the implementation of these projects, the union works as the coordinating link, connecting different NGOs to areas and districts whose problems match the aim, values, and beliefs of that particular NGO. Thus, the communication between the farmers’ associations and the NGOs go firstly through UNAC and secondly through UDAC before reaching the associations. An NGO which prefer this way of communication is We Effect. They mean that they are not known in the local communities, which may lead to a moment of inertia or imply a fluctuating level of trust. By help from UNAC, which is integrated in the communities, We Effect believes the process work smoother.

The larger part of farmers that did know about the relationships with NGOs were very positive about how it was handled. Only in Manhica it was found that the preferred communication route was circumvented by an NGO that went straight to individual farmers without contacting their association or the board of UDAC before starting to hear the farmers about their problem and explaining what they wanted to do. The President of the association saw this as a problem since the NGO was not familiar with the local context and of how things should be handled and, thus, he meant that they managed things in a disorganised way and created confusion and mistrust among the farmers. This
situation was solved by talking to the specific NGO and explaining how the communication should go between them and the different levels of UNAC, and since then this kind of problem has not occurred.

Not all regular contact goes through a channel from NGOs, through UNAC and UDAC before reaching the farmers’ associations. NGOs that finance the development through UNAC do follow ups to ensure that their support is used for the right purpose. If there is an ongoing UNAC-based project that they support, they usually pay the specific area or association regular visits in order to understand the reality of the farmers and to see how the projects are implemented. This often includes talking to the board of UDAC and possible other partners, but also to individual farmers to make sure that everyone concerned by the projects are given the chance to evaluate them. Another example of contact between the NGO and the farmers’ associations is that the training sessions may sometimes be held by NGOs even though UNAC is the one consulting the session.

5.5 Business Triad 2: Farmer - UNAC - Government

The triad with the government is not a directly financial one since the government does not finance UNAC. Instead, UNAC gets some support to extension services through governmental programs which UNAC can provide for its members. For instance, this is the case when the government finances the distribution of fertilisers to farmers in certain areas, while UNAC is the one responsible for the physical distribution. The communication in the business relationship between the farmers and the government is solely flowing through the mediator of either UDAC or UNAC. The relationship between the different business instances is different and sometimes very personal. At national level, UNAC regards the government as a worthy partner but the communication is not always flowing both ways. The two parties have been in many discussions and meetings regarding strategic plans for the development of the agricultural sector in Mozambique, public policies, and so on. It is of UNAC’s opinion that the government is only interested in talking about their own issues and never listen to the issues that are brought to them by UNAC. Muchanga at UNAC explains:

“When they [authors’ note: the government] call us it is to discuss about their issues, but when it is us calling them they never want to talk about our issues no matter who called whom.”

- Luís Muchanga, 2016b
If we step down to the regional level and the level of associations and look at the relation with the government through UDAC, we get a slightly different picture which is somewhat differentiated between the different districts that have been visited for the case study. Starting with the case of Manhica, the President of the association that was visited explained to us that the relationship with the government is good, they do not feel blocked by them in any way. Instead they feel that they get help from the government if they have a project. The President had been in contact with a secretary/administrator from the government, from whom they have gotten help. The President explained that the reason why they are not in conflict with the government is because they fight for their goals. He explained:

"We fight for our goals. We are organised and that is why the government, when we have an idea or a project, help us and they administrate. Because we are organised. [...] If you have a project, you can loan money from there. [...] People used to say that 'No, this is fake information, you can’t be given the money.' But the last time we had an idea of a project, we submitted and received money from the government. But we have had struggles, like we spent 10 years to legalise the land. We couldn't desist, but we kept going, we kept going. Because of this strength to wanting to fulfil our goals, that is what makes us become respected.

- President 7, Manhica

In Mahotas several farmers expressed that they find the government to be problematic. This is because of a blocking that the government has made which makes it impossible for the association to loan any money from the bank anymore. The farmers said that the government has blocked all associations in the area of Mahotas and that the bank no longer accepts farmers from this area. The reason is that only associations with a space of a certain size, which can guarantee a revenue, are permitted a loan. Also, the bank has a deadline for repayments which is not manageable for associations with smaller spaces that makes less money than the ones with a larger space.

Much of the land that is legally occupied and managed by local communities, like associations, appears to be unused and the government is increasingly concerned about making this land available to national and international entrepreneurs or investors. It is proved that the law of land sometimes is abused or set aside by both investors and the government in the pursuit of growth and “the national interest” (FAO, 2014).

Many farmers expressed a fear of being land grabbed by the government. Since they do not have any official documents of their land, they explained that they cannot protect themselves against land grabbing by their government. In the case of land
grabbing, they did not believe that UNAC could help them because of potential expenses. In contrast, a President of an association in Chokwe told about a case of land grabbing that she had experienced where an international company came in the name of the government of Mozambique and told the association that they needed the land for planting. With support from UNAC the association managed to keep their land, which they would have lost without receiving the help.

6. Analysis

In order to understand the role that UNAC plays as an intermediary, and how it forms its operations as a union, the triadic relationships will be analysed respectively. The focal relationship between the farmers and UNAC is a common denominator for both triads, meaning that this relation will be given attention in the both following sections.

6.1 Triad 1: Farmer - UNAC - NGO

It has been shown that UNAC forms its operations from the needs that Mozambican family farmers experience in their everyday life. The results show that the main obstacles regarding market access for family farmers in Mozambique are means of transportation and long distances to marketplaces. However, all actors in this study lack financial means to solve these short-term problems. The operations that UNAC forms for the family farmers could thus be seen as more long-term since underlying problems are identified in order to help the family farmers out of poverty.

At the same time, UNAC advocates that problems and ideas are first raised within the farmers’ associations locally before taken to a higher level of UNAC. This means that the problems that UNAC deals with are usually common for several farmers or a certain area. This way of operating requires a good communication, both within the associations and between the different levels of UNAC, to generate successful results.

The majority of the farmers we have met meant that the communication with UNAC, through UDAC, works well and that they are happy about how UNAC put them in contact with NGOs that act as funders. At the same time, the NGO We Effect meant that UNAC is of value for their contact with the field since they do not believe they are as trusted as UNAC is in this context. UNAC shared this view and adds that the best results are obtained if they are the ones coordinating NGOs and the farmers. This shows
that UNAC enables an effective communication route between farmers and NGOs and thus that UNAC, in this regard, successfully functions as an intermediary in this business triad.

The farmers we have met do not seek for other partners or better alternatives. They do not see another way than waiting for UNAC to provide them new projects to overcome their obstacles. The farmers keep raising their problems internally and bring them to UNAC in an open way, believing this will be enough for something to happen. This indicates trust and commitment to the relationship with UNAC according to Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) definition of the terms. The fact that the farmers do not seek for other partners, points even more on the commitment they feel for the focal relationship, and is in accordance with the description made by Dwyer et al. (1987). However, it can also be that there simply are no other alternatives to seek for the farmers. In turn, NGOs do not usually contact any farmers without being introduced by UNAC.

It should be emphasised that all levels of UNAC is made up by its members, which of course has a positive impact on the relationship between UNAC and the farmers. UNAC’s role as an intermediary could be affected by this bias relationship. Nevertheless, the level of trust between farmers and UNAC has a positive effect on the triadic relation with the NGO. The farmers believe that UNAC does what is best for them and thus feel trust for the NGOs that UNAC chooses to cooperate with. Since UNAC is the one coordinating projects, the farmers become more willing to initiate projects with NGOs even though they may not have had contact with a certain NGO before. This also goes the other way around; NGOs are familiar with UNAC and its work and therefore trust UNAC to introduce them to areas and associations that correspond to their aims.

Good communication between the three parties entails knowledge and new resources in this case, which is in line with what UNAC wants to accomplish through their operations. This is done, for instance, through the training sessions that UNAC organises for the farmers’ associations. Since the training sessions are sometimes held in cooperation with NGOs, an additional source of knowledge is created for the farmers. The training sessions can be said to act like a medium for transferring knowledge from the NGOs down to the farmers and UNAC thus plays a crucial role in the knowledge transfer both within associations and between NGOs and farmers. When NGOs participate in training sessions or support different projects in a certain area, they usually pay the area visits to do follow-ups.
UNAC also encourages collective farming within the associations. The collective farms work like a meeting point where representatives from NGOs and UNAC can go in order to reach out to many farmers at the same time. For the farmers, the collective farm enables face-to-face communication which, according to Storper and Venables (2004), is an efficient way of learning that also could align the commitment and help to develop trust within the association. In the educational channel from UNAC down to the farmers, the collective farms thus are of great importance for the knowledge transfer between the members. In addition, the group work at the collective farms unites the group and increase their ability to cooperate, which is something that UNAC values. This can also be seen in the training sessions that NGOs organises where farmers are trained in leadership, group dynamics, and how to work in groups. The trainings in literacy also play a significant role since they help to increase the number of possible sources for gaining knowledge. Furthermore, the training sessions create a direct communicative link between NGOs and the farmers, albeit not as strong as the one between UNAC and the farmers since that link happen on a more regular basis.

The reasoning above shows that increased knowledge through training sessions and collective farming both creates trust, improves the communication and encourages the farmers to commit to the relationship with UNAC and NGOs.

6.2 Triad 2: Farmer - UNAC - Government

By studying the triadic relationship with the government, it can be remarked that there is no, or rarely any, direct communication flow between the farmers and the government. All communication goes through UNAC or UDAC. The statements from farmers about that their communities fear land grabbing prove a lack of trust. This puts the land grabbing issue in the centre of attention when looking at this triad. The lack of communication could be part of the explanation to why there were many worried feelings regarding the government. Communication can, as explained by Uzzi (1997), simplify the interaction between two actors if they both share the same expectations. This could be enabled by face-to-face communication since it, according to Storper and Venables (2004), is an efficient way of transaction and develop trust between the two parties. In Manhica and Chokwe it was explained that representatives from the government seldom come to meet the communities, and when doing so it is only to inform them, not to listen. This indicates an inadequate communication which reinforces the argument that there is a lack of trust.
A more present government might thus help to bridge the gap in the relation between the two actors.

In this triad, in contrast to the first one, the presence of UNAC as an intermediary between farmers and the government does not seem to result in gained trust between the parties. A possible reason might be that UNAC lacks trust for the government. Both Muchanga, at the top of UNAC, and the unions of Marracuene and Chokwe, representing UDAC, explained that the relation always depends on the government’s conditions. The one-sided communication flow might thus impact the level of trust that UDAC and UNAC have for the government. A lack of trust could have, possibly unintentionally, spread down to the associations. According to Latifi (2004), this implies that UNAC is less neutral in this triad which makes its role as an intermediary weaker. In turn, lack of trust also leads to a reduced commitment in the relationship.

However, the unions of all districts that have been spoken to, as well as Muchanga representing UNAC, feel a higher level of trust towards the government than the individual farmers feel towards the government. This might be rooted in a deeper knowledge of the land grabbing issue and the support that the government hands the agricultural sector, for example through funding and distribution of organic fertilisers. This gives an indication that the knowledge transfer should be improved in the channel down to the individual farmers. This is of importance since land grabbing sometimes results in farmers losing their land, which creates a gap between affected farmers and the market. Through more training sessions that are arranged on UNAC’s initiative, the farmers’ position against the government can be strengthened and the knowledge transfer can be improved.

An interesting thought is that the size of the association might have an impact on the level of trust and the degree of commitment as well as the ability of knowledge transfer. A first impression might be that associations with a higher number of members would be better at standing up against the government than smaller associations, but our results indicate the opposite. In associations with less than 50 members (Chokwe and Manhica) the farmers seemed more content with the relation to the government. The farmers expressed that they feel united and can stand up against land grabbing easier thanks to them being more organised than larger associations. Also they were more well informed of the work that the government does, making them more committed to the relation.
6.3 Summary of Analysis

The triads and the four analysing dimensions are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of analysis considering the four analysing tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triad 1: farmer-UNAC-NGO</strong></td>
<td>Communication between farmer and NGO flows mainly through UNAC/UDAC.</td>
<td>Collective farms: place for transferring knowledge and meeting point with NGO.</td>
<td>Level of trust between farmer and UNAC has positive affect on level of trust between farmer and NGO.</td>
<td>Both farmers and NGO indirectly committed to relation through the trust to UNAC from both parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High level of communication between farmer and UNAC.</td>
<td>Training sessions held by NGO or by help of UNAC. Source to new knowledge.</td>
<td>Increases by mediating projects through UNAC since UNAC has better contact with communities.</td>
<td>Farmers eager to gain new knowledge through training sessions shows commitment to relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High level of communication between NGO and UNAC.</td>
<td>Face-to-face contact through training sessions and collective farms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face contact through training sessions and collective farms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triad 2: Farmer-UNAC-government</strong></td>
<td>High level of communication between farmer and UNAC.</td>
<td>UNAC transfers knowledge to farmers, sometimes through paralegals.</td>
<td>UNAC has lack of trust for government which is reflected in the level of trust between farmer and government.</td>
<td>Government funding organisations helping farmers indicating commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication between government and UNAC flows mainly in one way, from government to UNAC.</td>
<td>Training sessions and education of paralegals sources for knowledge.</td>
<td>Government’s trust for farmer and UNAC: no representative from government interviewed, nothing can be said about trust from their perspective.</td>
<td>No representative from government interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication between farmer and government flows mainly through UNAC/UDAC.</td>
<td>Government has technicians holding training sessions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers committed to learn more about legal rights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the role that UNAC plays as an intermediating actor working to strengthen the position of Mozambican family farmers, and how UNAC form its operations in order to do so. The findings tell that even though there is an urgent need for means of transportation in all visited associations, UNAC is not able to provide this due to lack of financial means. Among the operations that UNAC forms, the most important one is education. More knowledge in a number of fields supports the farmers to increase their productivity and protects them from being land grabbed. Also, knowledge of how to conserve their products more efficiently helps farmers to keep the products for a longer time, which improves the ability for farmers to sell perishables before they rot. From this it can be concluded that UNAC forms its operations from a
long-term perspective. The operations do not instantly connect the farmers to the market, but they help to strengthen the farmers’ position Mozambique.

Secondly, the results tell us that UNAC’s role as an intermediary works well in the relation to the NGOs. A constant communication flow between UNAC and the farmers, enables UNAC to identify critical market obstacles and what has to be done in order to overcome them. By localising which operations that are most needed and where, and by constantly discussing this with NGOs, UNAC is able to coordinate the farmers and NGOs. This enables NGOs with a suitable project to be linked to a certain association or area. Thus, it can be concluded that UNAC mediates between these actors in an efficient way.

On the contrary, the communication between UNAC and the government does not work in the same adequate way. This relation is characterised by a one-sided communication where the government is the one controlling the direction of the communication. This makes it difficult for UNAC to mediate between the farmers and the government. At the same time, UNAC does not succeed to maintain an entirely neutral position in their role as an intermediary which further aggravates the mediating. The contact with the farmers is influenced by UNAC’s perception of the relation with the government, which makes the relation between farmers and the government tenser.

7.1 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

There are several factors that might affect the validity of the study. First of all, we have the language issue. When using an interpreter, it is hard to know if any important information is being lost during the interviews, and this is even more crucial when using double interpretation. In cases of double interpretation, the first translation was made by a person without any education in translation and interpretation, which might have had an effect on the quality of the data. The double interpretations also meant an inconsistency in the data collection.

Secondly, the interviews have been held with a limited number of farmers considering the large number of farmers in Mozambique. The data is therefore based upon a limited number of interviews with personal opinions and thoughts which could have had an impact on the results of this study.

Thirdly, a representative from UNAC was present during four out of six days in field. This might have had an effect on the participants. Although this might be the case,
the presence of the representative seemed to have a positive impact on the participants. Since all of the interviewees are members of UNAC, and by that constitute the backbone of the organisation, the presence seemed to create a connection between us and the farmers. We got the feeling that this helped us gain trust and that the farmers were talking more freely with us.

This study has covered how UNAC forms its operations in order to overcome the obstacles that hinder Mozambican family farmers from connecting to a profitable market. The study has focused on the problem in regards to the farmers’ relation to NGOs and the government with UNAC as an intermediary between the actors. All farmers we have been spoken to are members of UNAC. Since we have not met any non-members, the problem of an absent market access has only been looked upon for those farmers that have the privilege to be part of a farmers’ union. A comparing study to this one that takes farmers without UNAC’s “safety net” in consideration could thus contribute to future research.

Larger associations seem to be less united, have a lower level of trust for the government and are more pessimistic to collective learning. This indicates that smaller associations may be advantageous in order to build more united groups and stronger relationships with both UNAC, NGOs, and the government. However, this does not lie within the boundary of this study. A research of how the associations’ sizes impact the farmers’ business relationships can thus be interesting to investigate in the future.

Furthermore, only a handful of the respondents in this study were men, and according to Muchanga (2016) 63 percent of UNAC’s members are women. In Mozambique the women are the ones taking care of the household, and for the feeding of their in general large families. By that it could be said that the women are the face of the agriculture in Mozambique (Muchanga, 2016), making the gender aspect an interesting variable for future research in terms of women’s legal rights and their social position in the society.
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Appendix

A. Map of Mozambique and Visited Locations

Map showing Mozambique and all its provinces and neighbouring countries. White dots show locations for field visits. Red star indicates the capital Maputo City.
B. Example of Question Template for Interview with Farmer

1) Tell us a little bit about yourself and your farm
   • How big is your family? Married? Children?
   • How long have you been a farmer? How long have you had your own land?
   • Who (if any) help you with the work on your land?
   • What do you grow on your land? Diversity of things all of the year?

2) Do you grow your products for your household or for selling? Both?
   • How big amount of the crops goes for sell?
   • If selling, how do you sell your products?
     o Personally? Street-seller?
   • Where is the market?
     o How do you get there?
     o How far is it from your home and/or farm?
   • Are you happy about the price that you sell for?
   • If not selling personally at the market: Are you aware of the price at the market?
   • Would you like to sell more?
   • Is there a competition among the farmers in this area?

3) Are there any obstacles or difficulties with the market? Tell us about them.

4) What difficulties do you have in regards to your work on the farm?

5) What could help you improve your farming/harvesting?
   • Do you lack any resources that could help you improve your farming?
     o Education? Technology? Seeds? Watering system?

6) Have you been in contact with any organisations that work to improve the agriculture? Which ones?
   • If no, have you been in contact with any before?
   • How have you been in touch with it/them?
   • Can you tell us about what they do?
   • What did/does the cooperation look/-s like?
   • How is the relation between your association and the organisation? Are you happy about the work/the cooperation?

7) What funding does your association get?

8) Who do you cooperate with, personally? How do you cooperate?

9) How do you cooperate within the association?

10) What do you think about the relation with UNAC?
11) Have you experienced any differences to the worse or the better from before you became a member?

12) What do you think about the relation to the government?

13) Is there anything you would like to learn in order to improve your farming?

14) What do you think about the future?
C. Example of Question Template for Interview with President of Association

1) Can you tell a little bit about the association and your work here in this district?
   - When was the association funded?
   - How many members?
   - What is your aim?
     o Short term
     o Long term

2) What are the requirements to be a member of UNAC and a member of your association?

3) What are the profits of being a member?

4) How do you work here in this association to increase the profitability for the farmers?

5) What projects do you work with at the moment?

6) What agricultural products are mainly produced in this area?

7) Is there a demand for more products from the market?

8) What are the main challenges with the market?

9) How is the relation with UNAC?
   - How do you communicate?
   - What does the relation look like?
   - How can you affect UNAC?
   - How do you feel about the relation?

10) Do you cooperate with any NGOs?
    - How many?
    - Which ones?
    - What does the relation look like?
    - How do you communicate with them?
    - How do you feel about the relation?

11) What does the relation with the government look like?
    - How do you communicate?
    - How do you feel about the relation?

12) Does this association cooperate with any other associations in this area?
D. Picture Material

*Picture 1*: Introduction of ourselves at a quarterly meeting in Mahotas.

*Picture 2*: Visiting an individual farm in Mahotas.
Picture 3: The two of us together with translator and some of the women that were interviewed at their collective farm in Marracuene.

Picture 4: Farmers in Marracuene receiving organic fertilisers from the government, distributed to them by the union of Marracuene.
**Picture 5:** Visiting the union’s house in Marracuene.

**Picture 6:** Farmers in Manhica.
**Picture 7:** Two women in Chokwe harvest rice by hand.

**Picture 8:** Bad roads in Chokwe.