

**FORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL AND OBSTACLES TO THE FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD  
IN THE MARKETING OF CASHEWS IN THE PRODUCTION ZONES OF  
BONDOUKOU AND BOUNA (RCI)**

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05-05 61 84 57/07-49 76 42 97

<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2024.0849>

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine the obstacles to the fight against fraud in the marketing of cashew nuts in the production zones of Bondoukou and Bouna through formal social control. It is based on a field survey carried out with 50 individuals chosen using the purposive sampling method. The data collected was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The theory of imprecision of Stéphane Bernatchez and the theory of moral sentiments of Adam Smith made it possible to understand the object of study. The hypotheses tested are verified because in terms of results, it appears that the imprecision of certain main texts regulating the internal and external marketing of raw cashew nuts; the weak collaboration between the form of formal Social Control and that of informal Social Control implemented expressed by the fact that populations denounce situations of fraud less, protect certain fraudsters; and the actors who maintain silence on cases of fraud; the complicity between the actors, then the fear of reprisals hinders the fight against fraud. Ivorian leaders would therefore benefit from proposing a clear text relating to non-compliance with the purchase price of raw cashew nuts set for marketing campaigns and raising awareness among the population about reporting fraud to formal social control authorities.

**Keywords:** Formal Social Control-obstacles-fight-fraud – Marketing.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

More broadly, social control covers all the means (material and symbolic) implemented by a society to ensure the compliance of its members with the standards in place, according to Pruvost (2022). He goes on to say that this control can be exercised through restrictive institutions, which produce laws and regulations (school, police, judicial, religious, medical, social work institutions), but also through forms of internalized constraints during family, school, urban and professional socialization. To hold on in the long term, social norms cannot only be imposed from the outside, they must lead to the adherence of individuals who make it their obligation to obey the rules, according to Durkheim (2012).

Boudon and Bourricaud (2011) approach in the same sense as Pruvost when he states that social control "is the set of material and symbolic resources available to a society to ensure the conformity of the behavior of its members with a set of prescribed and sanctioned rules and principles." For them, social control is a broad concept and can be achieved in several ways, but always with the aim of enforcing the rules prescribed by written laws or simply norms defined by society. It is set up for the safety of citizens. Social control tries to resist crime by various means, including by respecting social norms (Ibid., 2011).

For Riutort (2013), social control is exercised at different levels in society (from the mother who watches her child to identity checks carried out by the police), in a diffuse way (the disapproving look of a stranger) or by a specialized body (the judgment pronounced by a court). These extremely varied types of social control thus refer to the existence of various norms. We can thus distinguish social norms from legal norms. The former provoke the reaction of the entire social body (such as a tribe expelling one of its members) or more generally of a social group towards those who have not respected a norm, while the latter involve the intervention of specialized institutions responsible for enunciating the rule of law and enforcing it.

Chekroun (2008), for his part, is interested in forms of social control. Thus, he shows that there are two forms of social control that co-exist and that formal social control is distinguished from informal social control. Formal social control corresponds to the sanctions that will be addressed to the perpetrators of deviant behavior by individuals whose role in society is to regulate and counter transgressions.

At the same time, informal social control is implemented by peers, i.e. by individuals who have no particular function leading them to act in this direction. This type of social control can thus be carried out by a relative, a friend, a peer of the deviant, or someone who is unknown to him. However, social control as a whole, i.e. formal and informal control, in turn depends on socialisation and internalisation, i.e. the primary learning processes in which an individual adopts the norms and values of a given culture and appropriates them (Van Den Broeck, 2013). To sum up, formal social control depends in part on informal control, and informal control depends in part on socialization, with the internalization of norms and values being required first (Cachet, 1990). The dependence between formal social control and informal social control seems to highlight a form of collaboration whose "purpose is to create a shared vision and articulated strategies to bring out common interests that go beyond the limits of each particular project" (Chrislip, 2002, pp. 41-42). In the context of an organization, "most human activities are not individual and solitary activities: they are the product of the concerted and coordinated actions of several people" (Romelaer, 2002)

Brodeur (1995), for his part, was interested in the agent of social control to indicate that the term agents of social control could be reserved for persons or organizations which, like the police, deliberately pursue objectives of normalization. On the other hand, the term "social regulatory bodies" would be used to designate certain institutions such as the family, the church, the school or the workplace, which undeniably produce control effects but which do not exist as such to fulfil this function.

Moreover, Lenoir (2005), wishing to examine the mode of social control, had recourse to Michel Foucault's analysis. Quoting him, he says that "the modes of social control based on a function that has continued to develop in modern societies, that of surveillance-correction: 'To monitor individuals and correct them, in both senses of the word, that is to say, to punish or to educate them'". According to Michel Foucault, this is undoubtedly still the case, but this function is now part of much more sophisticated devices and mechanisms whose purpose can be explicit (remote video surveillance, radars, electronic passes, badges) or implicit (magnetic cards, monitoring, multiplication of computer files), or even masked (public hygiene and health), in short less visible; because automatic and mechanical. It is as if the rationalization of modes of production, circulation and management of populations was inevitably accompanied by a rationalization of forms of control, in particular thanks to more efficient and more individualized techniques. This

depersonalization of control deprives the controlled of any means of action on the system, in particular the means of circumventing it. In other words, in this context, people are a vital source of power: mastery of the rules of the game or, to render Crozier & Friedberg's (1977) analysis, mastery of organizational rules.

In view of the different points of view on the social control that helps to protect society, it seems that transgressions continue to such an extent that, Cusson (1993), asks himself the essential question, which is to what extent do human attempts to control crime achieve their goal? For him, it appears that this question is at the heart of criminology. This is also the opinion of Gassin (1990) according to whom the object of our discipline is not only criminal action, but also the "scientific value of the means of combating delinquency" (p. 46). And yet, at the end of a curious evolution, positivists as well as interactionists have practically evacuated it.

Criminologists in the tradition of the Italian positivists believe that it is not worth dwelling on this question for long, because the answer is no. According to them, social control has only an insignificant effect on crime, an effect largely overshadowed by biological, economic, social factors, etc. who impose their determinism on crime.

To support the above, Merton (1953) shows how the desire to succeed, to be integrated into society, can encourage individuals to opt for deviant, more efficient, adapted or rapid paths. This often means choosing innovative ways that promote social change. The great importance that civilization attaches to success invites individuals to use forbidden but often effective means to achieve even a pretence of success: wealth and power. This reaction takes place when the individual has accepted the prescribed goal but has not adopted social norms and customary procedures. The goal-oriented individual is willing to take risks, regardless of his or her position in society; But one may wonder in what cases the social structure, by its very nature, predisposes individuals to adopt deviant behavior. Among individuals with a high economic level, it is not uncommon for the pressure to innovate to make the distinction between regular and irregular practices imprecise. [...]

We take a positivist approach based on Bernatchez's (2011) theory of imprecision and Smith's (1999) theory of moral sentiments.

The vagueness theory "is based on the rule of law, in particular the principles that citizens should be reasonably warned and that law enforcement discretion should be limited"

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, on the other hand, refers to the attitude or principle of fair play, i.e. the idea that, in the context of cooperation, everyone must do their part and contribute to the maintenance of the system.

These theories shed light on the obstacles that could constitute an obstacle to the fight against cashew marketing fraud.

What explains the difficulties of social control in the fight against fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts?

Two hypotheses underlie this study: H1: the vagueness of certain main texts regulating the marketing of raw cashew nuts makes it difficult to apply them through formal social control.

H2: The weak collaboration between the form of formal social control and that of informal social control used amplifies the difficulty in the fight against fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts. Before verifying these hypotheses, we propose the methodological approach adopted.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

**2.1 Study site and participants**

The study took place over two (2) months (March-April 2022) in the departments of Bondoukou and Blow. Several elements justified the choice of these localities, namely: the existence of a court in the departments of Bondoukou and Bouna; the existence of formal social control structures and authorities such as customs, police, gendarmerie and water and forests; then the existence of prefectural, administrative and traditional authorities. On the other hand, informal social control is applied by each and everyone, which is why we used the population to understand their level of involvement in maintaining the conformity of individuals to the norms of their social group.

Through the courts, it can be understood that formal social control authorities can arrest offenders and hand over to justice.

The formal social control authorities will make it possible to know the level of compliance with the rules and standards governing the marketing of cashew nuts, and then to know the reaction of the population to the transgression of these rules.

There are 50 participants in the study. They were chosen using the non-probabilistic method and by reasoned choice among court officials, customs officers, gendarmes, agents of the Cotton and Cashew Council, cashew producers, buyers, trackers (considered as intermediaries between producers and buyers), exporters and operators who carry out the purchasing activity without approval or who have been imprisoned for a case of fraud. The table below shows the sample selected in each social category.

**Table 1: Sample distribution**

POPULATION	ACTUAL
Formal social control authorities	12
Agents of the cashew nut sector regulatory structure	03
Resident population	06
Traditional or local authorities	02
Perpetrators of fraud	03
Producers	08
Buyers	07
Exporters	04

Trackers	05
TOTAL	50

Source: our surveys (March-April 2022)

**2.2 Data collection techniques**

Three data collection techniques were used in this study; These include the desk review, the interview guide and observation

**2.3. Documentary study**

The Study on Formal Social Control and Obstacles to the Fight against Cashew Marketing Fraud in the Production Areas of Bondoukou and Bouna (RCI) required us to address some scientific writings, to better orient ourselves in this work. It has made it possible to review some writings, in particular on social control (Pruvost (2022), Boudon and Bourricaud (2011), Riutort (2013)); formal and informal social control (Chekroun (2008), Chrislip (2002), then theories related to the object of study.

**2.4 Investigation-Interrogation**

It was possible with the help of interviews conducted with customs officers, gendarmes, judicial agents and police officers. It provided information on the conditions for the arrest of perpetrators of fraud at the border by gendarmes, police officers, the types of vehicles and products seized by customs officers and the types of information transmitted to the judicial authorities. We used semi-structured interviews with buyers, producers and ski patrollers to provide us with information on prices and general conditions for cashew marketing. The interview guide focused on the obstacles to the fight against fraud. The interviews focused on a series of issues relating to marketing on Ivorian territory, the perpetrators and the frauds practiced and the difficulties in this fight.

**2.5 Observation**

The observation focused mainly on cashew sacks, trucks and tricycles in violation seized by the social control authorities, some of whom are on the run. It has made it possible to take a closer look at the fact that perpetrators of fraud are sometimes informed of the operations of the Social Control authorities. Also, there are times when the populations do not collaborate with the authorities of Social Control in the context of the struggle.

**2.6 Data analysis**

In this study, we used both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis allowed us to understand the reasons and motivations for the protection of fraudsters by actors and populations. As far as quantitative analysis is concerned, it was chosen to evaluate statistics on this phenomenon for data processing. It made it possible to compare the reactions of border populations and those far from the borders.

**3. RESULTS**

The results of this study focus on the vagueness of some of the main texts regulating the marketing of raw nuts, which makes it difficult to enforce them through formal social control, and the low

level of denunciation by the population and stakeholders makes it difficult to fight fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts.

**3.1 The vagueness of certain main texts regulating the marketing of raw walnuts**

**3.1.2 Domestic marketing of raw cashew nuts**

According to Article 1 of Decree No. 2013-809 of 13 September 2013 laying down the terms and conditions for the domestic marketing of raw cashew nuts:

"Domestic marketing of raw cashew nuts is the process by which the product is marketed, from the producer's plantation to ports for export or to factories for processing."

In the context of domestic marketing, Article 5 of Law No. 2013-656 of 13 September 2013 laying down the rules relating to the marketing of cotton and cashew nuts and the regulation of the activities of the cotton and cashew nut sectors "cotton and cashew nut products are purchased from producers, according to a minimum price determined on the basis of a mechanism resulting from an inter-professional agreement within the sector concerned. This minimum price is validated and guaranteed by the body responsible for regulating the activities of the cotton and cashew sectors. » With regard to this provision relating to the purchase price, no specific sanction is provided for in the texts in the event of non-compliance with it. Certainly, if this provision had been provided, it would have allowed the social control authority to rely on it to punish the perpetrators. It is in this sense that the Authority in charge of the regulation of the cotton and cashew nut sectors has provided internally for sanctions that are administrative in nature, starting gradually from the payment of the additional price, to the suspension of the approval until the payment of the additional price and the penalty and to the withdrawal of approval in the event of a repeat offence or in the event of refusal to pay the additional price.

According to data from the field, since the reform undertaken in the cashew sector which required the adoption of these various texts, despite the measures that are taken for the setting of prices, the actors do not respect them and propose their own price. Of all those surveyed, (37 or 74%) showed that prices are not respected by some players.

A producer interviewed in Bouna revealed that "Some buyers of products pay at prices lower than those set by the Government."

**Table 2: Field prices set in Côte d'Ivoire since the reform**

YEARS	Field price (FCFA) set in Côte d'Ivoire
2013	200
2014	225
2015	275
2016	350
2017	440
2018	500
2019	375
2020	400
2021	500
2022	305

Source: our surveys (March-April 2022)

The data in the table show the prices set by the State from 2013 to 2022.

Notwithstanding, the measures taken by the State to ensure that they are accepted by the actors, some do not respect them.

Mr. H O, a respondent, supports this argument when he says: "*Buyers behave as if they are the only ones in the search for profit. So they blackmail the producers. You are forced to sell, for fear of not having your product on hand. Thus, they can buy at a lower price, with a difference of at least 110 FCFA. It's not easy.*»

## 2.2 External marketing of raw cashew nuts

According to Article 1 of Decree No. 2013-810 of 13 September 2013 laying down the terms and conditions for the external marketing of cashew nut products:

"External marketing of cashew nut products is the process by which these products are marketed to importing countries."

As part of the crackdown on the illegal marketing of raw cashew nuts, Ordinance No. 2018-437 of May 3, 2018 on the suppression of the illegal marketing and export of agricultural products subject to approval, Article 1 provides:

"Anyone who, directly or through an intermediary, without holding an approval or holding an approval issued for that purpose by the competent authority under the conditions laid down by decree, buys for resale, after processing or not, shall be punished by imprisonment for two to ten years and a fine of 1,000,000 to 50,000,000 CFA francs. agricultural products whose marketing is subject to approval.

The penalties provided for in the preceding paragraph shall be punishable by the penalties provided for in the preceding paragraph, provided that the fine may not be less than twice the value of the products, whoever, directly or through an intermediary, sells, stores, exports or distributes outside national borders, in defiance of the regulations in force, the products whose export is subject to approval under the conditions laid down by decree. »

In view of this repressive text, "anyone who, directly or through an intermediary, sells, sells, stores, exports, distributes outside national borders in defiance of the regulations in force, the products whose export is subject to approval" is in violation.

The difficulty in understanding this text is the position of the alleged perpetrator during the alleged offence. If the alleged perpetrator is caught with his stock at the border, it is difficult to prove that he must go outside the Ivorian border. Also, if he finds himself "outside national borders", he no longer depends on national jurisdiction. Thus, a real problem of understanding arises. So, a large number of buyers use this inaccuracy as an opportunity to leave Ivorian territory with their stock of raw cashew nuts for sale to foreign operators. We have seen from the data in the field that often when the social control authorities intercept buyers in the direction of the border or at the border, they claim that they are going to their shop located in the border area, for packaging. This lack of precision complicates the action of the social control authorities. Of all those interviewed, (17 or 34%) attested to this fact. According to a formal social control authority interviewed in Bondoukou, "*operators are very clever, especially buyers. For those who manage to get their hands on the way to Ghana, they tell you that their shop is at the border and that they go there*

*to process their product for sale. When it's like that, it's not easy at all for us, they are still on Ivorian territory and there is no proof that he goes to Ghana, especially since there are many villages on the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, for us who are here in Bondoukou. »*

However, despite these difficulties mentioned above, the authorities of formal social control guaranteeing the property and people of the territory despite these difficulties manage to repress the perpetrators of fraud. A buyer supports this information in these terms: *"I had a good contract with a Ghanaian exporter, who had planned to buy 20 tons of cashew nuts with me at a very remunerative price. On the day of delivery, I was stopped at the border and my product was seized. I went to prison for that. »*

**Table 3: Prices set at port stores in Côte d'Ivoire**

YEARS	Prices set in port shops
2013	274
2014	295
2015	352
2016	402
2017	597
2018	584
2019	459
2020	399
2021	389
2022	389

Source: our surveys (March-April 2022)

The data in the table shows the prices set in port shops by the State from 2013 to 2022.

Despite the measures taken by the State to set prices that can allow exporters to make a profit in their various warehouses at the port, buyers report that there are some who do not respect them and find tricks to buy at prices in decay.

Mr. K T, a respondent will not say the opposite when he states the following: *"I, as a buyer, transport my product to Abidjan to sell it to an exporter. When you arrive in the store, he will tell you that your product is not of good quality and that he cannot pay the price set by the State. So, since we can't yet bear the cost of transport to return, we are forced to sell like this. »*

With regard to the provisions relating to foreign marketing, no specific sanction is provided for in the texts in the event of non-compliance with them. Certainly, if this provision had been provided, it would have allowed the social control authority to rely on it to punish the perpetrators. It is in this sense that the Authority in charge of the regulation of the cotton and cashew nut sectors has also provided for internal sanctions based on the non-compliance with the commitments made by the Exporter during the campaign. Consequently, this non-compliance with the commitments made may lead to a sanction, first of all a warning and/or formal notice, then the suspension of the approval until compliance and finally the withdrawal of the approval in the event of refusal to comply or a repeat offence.

**2.3.The weak collaboration between the form of formal social control and that of informal social control implemented.**



The weak collaboration between the two forms of social control is perceived through the reactions of populations and actors in situations of fraud. The reactions are of several kinds, which the data from the field have enabled us to collect in the table below.

**Table 4: Determination of the reactions of the population and actors reinforcing the difficulty of the fight against fraud**

Reactions reinforcing the difficulty of the fight against fraud	Answers Expressed	Proportions (%)
People protect some fraudsters	10	20
People are less likely to report fraud	13	26
The existence of family ties between certain fraudsters and populations	8	16
Fear of reprisals	4	8
Actors maintain silence on cases of fraud	9	18
The complicity between the actors	6	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: our surveys (March-April 2022)

The analysis of the table shows that many reactions reinforce the obstacles in the fight against fraud. According to the data recorded there, the population denounces less situations of fraud (26%), representing the first difficulty. Then comes the populations protect certain fraudsters (20%), the actors maintain silence on cases of fraud (18%) and the complicity between the actors (12%) occupying the third and fourth place respectively, then the fear of reprisals (8%) which occupies the fifth place. reactions reinforcing the difficulties of the struggle. All these reactions reinforce the difficulty of the fight against fraud in the cashew sector.

A gendarme interviewed in Bondoukou said: *"Often the population is informed of the attitudes and fraudulent behaviour of operators but does not denounce them. And it's during certain patrols that we manage to catch them in their crime. Even among the operators, those who do not practice fraud refuse to denounce the practitioners. Yet they know them."*

The reaction of this social control authority reflects in a way the lack of cooperation of the population who, if it had been done, they could have anticipated certain frauds.

#### 4. DISCUSSION ET CONCLUSION

The main objective of this work was to examine the obstacles that hinder the fight against fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts through formal social control in the production areas of Bondoukou and Bouna (RCI). To achieve this, we posed the following problem: What explains the difficulties of social control in the fight against fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts?

To answer this question, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

The vagueness of some of the main texts regulating the marketing of raw cashew nuts makes it difficult to apply them through formal social control, and the weak collaboration between the form of formal social control and that of informal social control amplifies this difficulty in the context of the fight against fraud in the marketing of raw cashew nuts.

The investigations allowed us to rub shoulders with individuals, with a view to collecting data, capable of explaining the phenomenon. The study involved a relatively small sample of fifty (50) people. The analysis of the data reveals that there are inaccuracies in the main texts on the application of the prices set during the marketing years and the penalties that included them, so that some operators exploit these shortcomings by not respecting the said fixed prices. Thirty-seven (37) of the fifty (50) people interviewed say that vagueness promotes fraud and thirteen (13) claim that the low level of fraud reporting is the cause. This confirms our hypotheses.

The desk review, the interview guide and observation are techniques that helped us collect the data from our field of study. Bernatchez's theory of vagueness and Smith's theory of moral sentiments have been used in the explanation of the phenomenon. These approaches have enabled us to make the link between the vagueness of the main texts and fraud, and then its amplification by the low denunciation of fraud situations.

The main results are based on the vagueness of some of the main texts regulating the domestic and external marketing of raw cashew nuts; the weak collaboration between the form of formal social control and that of informal social control implemented, expressed by the fact that people denounce situations of fraud less and protect certain fraudsters; The actors maintain silence about cases of fraud and complicity between the actors, and the fear of reprisals.

The approach of vagueness and the theory of moral sentiments have been used in the explanation of the phenomenon.

The vagueness theory "is based on the rule of law, in particular the principles that citizens should be reasonably warned and that law enforcement discretion should be limited." It is based on the presupposition that it would be sufficient for litigants to read the legislative text to know what the law prescribes.

It retains the perspective of the litigant to assess the intelligibility of the legislative norm.

The essential element of the concern to limit law enforcement discretion is that a law must not be so vague as to automatically result in a conviction once the decision to prosecute has been made. However, it is important to note that the precision of a law does not necessarily put an end to the fraudulent act as long as the purpose sought by the offender is not achieved. Not all operators have the same objectives. Consequently, in the context of compliance with the prices set during the marketing years, despite this imprecision of the main texts, not all operators engage in fraud.

The approach to moral feelings is a theory of moral judgment that allows us to understand the problem that the same individual can, in certain situations, manifest selfish behaviors where self-interest takes precedence, while, in other situations, he or she appears to be acting "under the gaze of an impartial spectator." This means that a distinction must be made between the economic and the moral. Selfishness dominates the economic sphere while social life is driven by "moral sentiments". Thus, in the name of social life or the general interest, the principles must be respected for the well-being of society as a whole. Collaboration between social actors is an important factor in achieving social or community objectives. During the marketing campaigns of raw cashew nuts, the lack of collaboration, given the fact that the individual is a changeable being, his reaction may

also be due to fear or presuppose that the fight against fraud is the prerogative of the formal social control authorities.

The questionnaire and the interview allowed us to understand the phenomenon, because they gave each actor interviewed the opportunity to express themselves without constraint. But at this level we have been confronted with difficulties on both sides. As part of the questionnaire, it did not save us time because sometimes we submitted them so that they could be filled in by the respondents, but often they did not give us the maximum amount of information or for the understanding of certain data, the questionnaire was transformed into an interview. As far as maintenance is concerned, some actors raised concerns that were outside the scope of the study and that extended the time planned. The same is true for the sampling technique based on reasoned choice, which is exposed to the prejudices we have about the phenomenon. Therefore, we are convinced that there may have been biases in this study.

the vagueness of certain main texts regulating the domestic and external marketing of raw cashew nuts; the weak collaboration between the form of formal social control and that of informal social control implemented, expressed by the fact that people denounce situations of fraud less and protect certain fraudsters; and actors who maintain silence on cases of fraud; The complicity between the actors, then the fear of reprisals, hinders the fight against fraud. So, to reduce these obstacles, the Ivorian governments would therefore benefit from proposing a clear text on the non-compliance with the purchase price of raw cashew nuts set for marketing campaigns and raising awareness among the population about denouncing fraud to the formal social control authorities.

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