

*Review*

# Discontents in Japan's aid discourse in Africa: Land grabbing activism in Tokyo International Conference for Africa Development (TICAD) process

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Political resistance towards international development is a prevalent theme in global civil society and Non-Governmental organizations. The poor are often assumed to indubitably participate in resistance. However, the poor's participation is both diverse and complex. To understand this complexity, this paper attempts to explain the poor's acquiescence in incorporation into land grabbing deals. By examining Japan's discourse of development targeted to Africa, ambivalence of Tokyo International Conference for Africa Development (TICAD) rhetoric of ownership and partnership is described as disappropriately engaging the local populations in transfer of land from local populations to state, interstate apparatus, and transnational corporations for the purpose of large-scale investment in food crops. This has degraded the local environment and uprooted rural livelihoods. The mechanisms to facilitate and legitimise large-scale investment on food production have given shape to social relations, which are more conducive to the vision of a market society and threatened extinction of indigenous communities and impoverishment of rural communities. This expropriation of peasants land has encountered minimum opposition from the local population. This essay identifies "mutuality" as utilised within Japan's development discourse as depriving rural-landed-poor's of democratic space for land based contestation. Through an analysis of land grabbing activism in TICAD process, we highlight the limit of global civil society in articulating the context of poor communities.

**Key words:** Mutuality, resistance and contestation, land grabbing, and activism.

## INTRODUCTION

### Conceptual framework of mutuality and its discontents

Japan's development aid policy as outlined in Tokyo International Conference for Africa Development (TICAD) is perceived as distinctive and innovative. One of its key distinctive content is its intention to depart from the

conventional<sup>1</sup> model of official development aid. Through TICAD, Japan maintains that its own development experiences may offer better and effective solutions to Africa's development challenges (Jiro, 2013; Lehman, 2005).

Japan's development policy distinguishes itself by utilising dual principles of ownership and partnership. It is

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this appeal to mutual benefits discourse in TICAD that provides a benchmark for assessing Japan's cooperation with Africa. Through its over twenty years history, TICAD<sup>2</sup> has become crucial in designing Japan's development agenda in Africa. Discourses within TICAD have therefore emerged as important elements in endeavours to understand the impact as well as the nature of Japan's development agenda in Africa. TICAD discourse has been cited as harboring essential characteristics such as, Asian economic model, human resource development, and peace and security (Ampiah and Rose, 2012).

Through aspect of "mutuality" as engrained in TICAD process, Japan has specifically underscored necessity for self-help and national ownership (Ampiah, 2012). It is this urge that thrusts Japan into pursuance of principles of local ownership. Ownership as a concept implied to development is however overtly elusive. It is not only hard to define but also complicated by the sense that, "donors, lenders, and governments tend to adopt whatever definition that suits their agenda at any particular time, and in relation to particular issues at hand" (Ampiah and Rose, 2012). As (Ampiah, 2012) attests, the concept of ownership is further complicated by the fact that even with the perceived application of the concept, donating agents or governments still seek to control the design and the implementation of the donated funds or projects.

In development and international aid, discourses that emphasise partnership and ownership emerged towards the end of cold war. Moreover, most of its adherents are non-conventional development partners (TICAD, Forum on China-Africa Development (FOCAC), and India-Africa Forum Summit (IFAS). Japan has specifically implied mutuality widely since 1990s. Japan's interest in Africa has taken new trajectories from the cold war policies that largely sought to align with the Washington consensus (Ampiah and Rose, 2012). Through TICAD process, Japan has capitalized on discourses around partnership and ownership. These notions have set a foundation for emergence of "mutuality"<sup>3</sup> as emphasised during TICAD V (MOFA, 2013). The drafting of aid policy hinged on mutuality has over the history of TICAD informed the process and engenders a major departure from particulars and pressures of "western aid" forced upon Africans. Paradigms of development project driven by Japan in TICAD discourse that capitalises on "mutuality" is seen as dynamic, integrating, and accounting of Africa's most pressing challenges.

Ampiah and Rose (2012) assessment of ownership highlights problems in Japanese policy-makers tendency to conflate it with the aspects of self-help<sup>4</sup>. TICAD's "mutuality" is often depicted to be practised through engagement with private sector led growth, inclusion of African Union (AU) commission as TICAD co-organiser, and promotion of South-South and Triangular co-operation that enhances transfer of Asian experience

(Yokohama declaration, MOFA, 2013).

On the other hand, interpretation of ownership within TICAD process has been seen to mean Africans taking closer steps towards responding to or assimilating policies as outlined by TICAD process. Hence ownership is seen as efforts such as those within formation of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). NEPAD, as a proposal by South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal does of course resonate with voices calling for inclusion of African views in policy making within TICAD. Ownership in this case is attained if decisions regarding policies that are prioritized for funding are proposed and forwarded by the African governments and policy makers.

In this respect, "mutuality" as emerging within TICAD precedes from concepts of self-help (Ampiah, 2012) and ownership (Ampiah and Lehman, 2005). Both of these concepts, especially self-help are founded on the preferences given to state-led development. "Mutuality" in this sense has meant engaging in the state led formulation for development policies and strategies. "Mutuality" as it emerges right from the conception of TICAD process reflects within it ideas that seem to solely encourage ownership as led by the state. It therefore seems appropriate to assert that TICAD "mutuality" emphasises the role of the state. Lehman (2005) notes that:

"the Japanese government believes that the state administrative functions have crucial role in development process. In protocolar, the state can facilitate necessary economic production, as has been the case of Japan and other Asian countries".

An emphasis on "mutuality" has increased economic investments as more efforts have been put to promote dialogue between Official Development Assistance (ODA) and private sector. Some have however viewed this relationship as reinforcing asymmetric relations citing resource-focused strategies that have only led to new forms of exploitation in Africa. Despite good intentions of mutual concepts that emphasise ownership, it has failed to conceptualise key revolutionary pillars of development. It has rather remained simplified and lacking of mechanisms that analyse the context of the poor who are the target of development schemes. TICAD's ownership as defined based on dialogue between governments, private sector, and civil society (Lehman, 2005) has failed to identify if state-led ownership has represented the interests of the poor by entrusting their aspirations to governments and elites policy makers.

## IS MUTUALITY REBALANCING THE EQUATION?

Foreign capital flowing to targets of development in the

South is often exercised on foundations of discourses of neocolonialism that emphasises power imbalances where domestic political and economic conditions are externally controlled (Tiger and Nkrumah, 1966). This way of understanding foreign capital categorises it not as used for development but for exploitation of less developed areas. Mutuality in development discourse has arisen as a means to curb perceptions against notions of exploitation. While mutuality purports inclusion, its tripartite (state, private sector, and civil society) engagement puts into question if the concept accurately articulates the context of the poor. By implying “mutuality” interests of sponsoring governments are given dignified recognition. In this respect, Japan, through TICAD process has been associated with engrossment of resources through a development that is resource focused (Ampiah and Rose, 2012) whose implementation is through economic based investment. Economic investment as driven by Japan’s ODA via strange engagement with private sector in TICAD has focused in analysing and countering Japan-China-Africa resource based perspectives.

The theoretical appeal of development model capitalising on “mutuality” harbours important potential insights in understanding aid regime. Those who have attempted investigation on Japan’s utilisation of “mutuality” have leaned towards analysing binary between Japan as aid provider and African policy makers as receivers on the one hand (Ampiah 2012). There has also been an increased acceptance of civil society as proprietors of authentic voices of the poor. In this light, it has become necessary to reimagine the nature of civil society particularly in Africa as bearers of interests of the poor. The civil society has been criticised as lacking legitimacy to represent a constituency (Srinivas, 2012)<sup>5</sup>. Lack of legitimacy to stand for constituency notwithstanding, civil society in Africa has been preoccupied with proselytising specific elite agenda. Hence, it must be viewed in Chatterjee’s (2004)<sup>6</sup> terms “as an elite construct.”

If aspirations of civil society do not necessarily reflect those ascertained by the poor, then it is necessary to account for what we can term as authentic voices of the poor in response to international donor policies. It seems plausible that civil society represents authentic voices of the poor. However, Africa’s own percipience and engagement with TICAD particularly as a field for activism has received minimal attention both in academia and media. The silences against Japan’s development discourse has been seen as reifying the prominence of Japan development policy and acceptability of notions that Africa is leaning in favour of East led development. Analysis of protest against Japan led aid are further complicated by the poor’s acquiescence. Acquiescence is often taken to implore that the poor benefit from “mutuality”. The poor’s action in response to “mutuality” bears important indicators towards understanding the

role of “mutuality” in cajoling local populations into acceptance of Japan’s funded development deals.

Acceptance of “mutuality” based policies although not leading to inclusion into global capital flows as conjured by the poor has created new spaces to claim inclusion. While “mutuality” seems to take advantage of good will from the developing countries, it has at the same time obliterated the attitudes and responses of the poor since it falls short in articulating the context of the poor and account of their acquiescence. This has not only eased the vision of poor as frontiers of exercise of power, but also exacerbated development projects targeted to the poor. Such projects have burgeoned on the premise of what Tania Murray Li identifies as a necessity to improve (Li, 2007), which the poor ardently partake in. A necessity to improve characterises of the local farmers as low yielding, with poor skills, and ignorant on the one hand while on the other allowing practices that enable experts to diagnose the problems and devise interventions. This is done through wittingly or unwittingly producing social relations that accommodate capital market usually at the expense of local livelihoods. Ramifications of shattered livelihoods are often extinction of indigenous, impoverished communities, displacement (forced), intensified agricultural production, and social upheaval (Li, 2007).

## CONFRONTING MUTUALITY IN TICAD PROCESS

Development projects assume diverse dispositions at their target locations. It is plausible to be concerned with how the poor have interpreted Japan’s “mutuality” ascertaining it as a bridge to global capital flows. Discontent, opposition, and revolt are one key area that underscores the nature of Japan’s mutuality with the poor. Since contestation is articulated in activism, activism is construed as representing the most authentic voices of the poor.

Activism within TICAD process has in most cases hinged on land grabbing. Triangular Cooperation for Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah in Mozambique (ProSAVANNA-JBM), a tripartite initiative of the Japanese, Brazilian, and Mozambique governments has attracted pressure towards Japanese development policy in Africa. Increased pressure has been mounting from both local activists in Mozambique and Japan. The peak for civil society led opposition resulted to National Peasants Union (UNAC) from Mozambique significant protest during TICAD V in 2013 at Yokohama. Exploration of ProSavanna Project as a model of contradicting theatrics in TICAD’s own claim of stipulating “Mutual” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013 a, b)<sup>7</sup> benefits with Africa underscores the argument against TICAD’s own claim but also puts to question representation of local contexts by the civil society.

To understand voices of discontent that have been founded on land grabbing, most of which revolve around cases from Mozambique, there is need to grasp major issues on land grabbing. Literature addressing land grabbing has capitalized on dispossession and displacement. Often, criticism is leveled against investors for dispossessing subsistent farmers. Those in economic development thought believe this surge of interest in African land is an opportunity for Africa. The state in Africa has shown strong delineation toward this view. Other non-state actors such as World Bank have also given preference to systems that support good conditions for investments. Japan's activities through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) strongly show similar preference. The state in Africa has acted to create conducive environment for investments. Mozambican government, which owns the land in Mozambique, has been encouraging foreign investment on land.

Civil society and many developments focused non governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as advocacy organisations have sounded an alarm to land related activities in Africa. Such critical reports can be found in GRAIN<sup>8</sup>, Oxfam, and the Oakland Institute. Advocacy based on non-kept promises of compensation have attained a very high profile stature in international development discourse. However, despite awareness of uprooted livelihoods, the poor are absurdly engaged in global capital flows. This process has occurred through their own pursuit of inclusion and participation in global markets. On the one hand through engagement with development discourses that promise "mutuality". This particular nature of responses by the poor does call for further investigations and research, but it also allows the claim that pursuit of inclusion by the poor is crucial to contestation against large-scale land investment.

Peasant studies that aim to analyse resistance to land deals have emphasised peasant agency, reactions to dispossession, and incorporation into global capital. Such studies rightly indict that land deals resistance from a local level are both disparate and diverse (Borras, Hall, Scoones, White, & Wolford, 2011).

This study introduces peasantry's (hereby referred to as rural-landed-poor<sup>9</sup>) reactions towards development discourse, which we claim appears to them as bearing unwavering promise of inclusion in global capital flows. The tripartite coalition (Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique) steering Pro-Savanna project besides lacking mechanisms of accountability, has lured indigenous communities in Mozambique into project fetishisation through engaging in "mutual" rhetoric as spearheaded by Japan's aid discourse. The shaping of social relations that reflects the glory of markets harbors the sole responsibility of disenfranchising the local populations. The locals are however myopic to the acts of their own expropriation. This is bed-locked in the rationale within "mutuality" and its promise thereof.

An investigation of the meaning of "mutuality" as pursued, applied, and practised by the local communities, and discrepancies with its intended meaning by the development partners, opens us to the possibilities of the quest and yield (by the poor) to the self-destructing machine. It is the poor's understanding of "mutuality" that encourages them to strip themselves off their protection (possession, in this case land) as a form of taking entrepreneurial risks. Entrepreneurial risks bear the promise of reward, and therefore render it difficult for the rural-landed-poor to divorce from it. This understanding also limits rational engagement with the potential negative consequences such as dispossession, decreased or diminishing of local means of food production, and environmental degradation as occurring as a result of change in land relations.

## **GLOBAL LAND GRABBING DEALS IN LOCAL CONTEXT**

The land grabbing phenomena of 2007 and 2008 is documented in various reports as involving government to government and private sector acquisition of large portions of land for agri-business purposes. These deals are usually on large-scale bases ranging from 10,000 hectares and beyond. The land is used for rice, wheat, corn, and soybeans production for export purposes. The period that recorded highest cases of land grabbing took place at the backdrop of high food prices around the globe and a global financial crisis. The riots that followed high prices on food were witnessed in many countries confirming the loss in capacity for many developed countries to feed their populations.

The inability of the countries to feed their people precipitated a search for new strategies from non-conventional producers of food. The key synthesis was acquisition of agricultural land in areas perceived to be underutilized for the purpose of mitigating the shortage of food. Such large-scale acquisition of land targeting both cultivated and uncultivated land in developing countries has been on the rise since 2008 (Deininger and Byerlee, 2011; Grain.org, 2016; Borras et al., 2011).

GRAIN estimates that 3,000 million hectares was acquired by around only five hundred deals in the period that lasted for only eight years. These land deals were highly concentrated in the South in which Africa was the focal target. Ethiopia sold around 4,000,000 hectares (Baumgartner et al., 2015). Mozambique has also featured prominently in the media reports and academic research. It is among countries with abundant land, hence vulnerable to land based frontiers. Land availability is also attributed to comparatively cheaper market land rates, a factor that has attracted varied interests from both developed and developing states (Mousseau and Mittal, 2011). On the other hand, the undervalued land and land lease policy that allows long-

term agreement has had Mozambique become a favourable destination of those interested in land deals (Mousseau and Mittal, 2011).

The approaches taken by various governments in the North are diverse. The government of Japan sought to support its own private sector that deals with food production. The increased demand of vegetable oil and other food items led to state investment in food industries in corporations such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sojitz, Toyota Tsusho, Sumitomo, and Marubeni. Marubeni only handles 10 million tonnes of annual soybean import. The state supported these corporations through infrastructure development to facilitate export. The ProSavanna project in Mozambique promoted a focus known as “made with Japan”. Therefore, Japan’s participation in Mozambique was built on the foundation of successes in similar Brazilian land investment as noted by Batista (Clements and Fernandes, 2013) while its role remained rather derivative. Japan supported Brazil in efforts to replicate a model of agrarian investment in Mozambique (Clements and Fernandes, 2013) through aiding and implementation of ProSavanna Project. This project is hinged upon an appeal to “mutual” benefits as offered by development partners.

Mozambique’s vulnerability to non-conventional development partners thrives on both colonial aspect and failed neoliberal policies. The new development partners seem not to be involved in “under-developing Africa” (Rodney et al., 1981). However, this has not obliterated the possibilities of exploitation and exclusionary practices since, “they find resonance with colonial-like aspects inherent in the present wave of foreign land acquisitions taking place across the globe, and with particular emphasis in Africa” (Clements and Fernandes, 2013). Non-Western development partners’ language of “mutuality” must be interpreted as re-fashioning North-South binary, mostly aimed at gaining competitive niche, but not entirely presenting a new model for African development as Borras and Franco note, “the phenomenon of global land grabbing is underpinned by an explicitly expansionist capitalist logic and driven by neoliberal doctrine” (Borras and Franco, 2011).

Within Japan’s development discourse that underscores “mutuality”, Japan proclaims herself as disparate and preferably distinct when compared to North-South development model. Japan-Brazil alliance in ProSavanna Project however reveals inconsistencies in this rhetoric. “Mutuality” may allude to job creation, poverty alleviation, steady food supply, and realisation of “modernisation” for the recipient societies. For development partners, however, it implies expansion of its capitalistic empire. The concept of “Mutuality” deprives recipient communities of the power to seek redress from development partners. This happens while the local communities are left to deal with appalling consequences of development projects. Although Africa has in the recent past exhibited fatigue

with the Western development model, uncoordinated absorption of non-Western models of development subjects societies to the very risk and pitfalls of the past. Perceived benefits of “mutuality” although gaining popularity in development discourse seems to fail to account for their shortcomings. As Global Voices (2011) has asserted, in the case of Mozambique’s ProSavanna Project it is a replication of Brazil’s Cerrado biome whose negative consequences have conspicuously not been addressed. The practice of development implemented through the appeals to mutuality has come face to face with land grabbing deals. Borras et al (2011) has observed that,

“The image of global land grabbing is being appropriated by those who are bent on re-casting the phenomena itself as a golden opportunity to further extend capitalist agro-industry in the name of pro-poor and ecologically sustainable economic development. This extremely dubious agenda is now being consolidated around the dangerously seductive call for code of conduct to discipline big land deals and transform them into supposedly more ethical win-win outcomes.”

The argument penned on the reason for land grabbing is “agri-business.” Agri-business in Africa has gained traction with the governments who are occupied with inviting the youth to go back to rural areas and farm (Bafana, 2014; Lyocks et al., 2014). There is a mismatch between the state conception of agri-business and local rural people conception of agriculture. The logic for agricultural investment is that there is a saturated market in the North and the growing middle class in the vast growing urban centers in Africa. The saturated markets in the North have driven entrepreneurs to solicit for new markets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These entrepreneurs often have to bear the consequences of confronting the local rural populations who either have been committed to cultivate their land or are frustrated by traditional farming methods whose yield is insufficient to sustain their livelihood.

Another view of land grabbing deals as driven by foreign investment in Africa has focused on production of biofuels, hence analysing the negative impact to communities living in the affected areas (Andrew and Van Vlaenderen, 2015). Such analysis of land acquisition, sale, or long term leasing by foreign investors have laid emphasis on the gap between transnational corporations Trans-National Corporations (TNC) eagerness to land acquisition and small holders farmers resistance (Cotula and Vermeulen, 2009; Colin and Woodhouse, 2010). This gap has been expounded in terms of its impact on local residents livelihoods, the local’s accessibility to land (theory of access (Ribot and Peluso, 2003), and food security (Hall, 2013)).

Other discussions connect political dynamics of land policy and its perception at grassroots level as found

intertwined in transnational large scale deals in agrarian capitalism (Franco and Borras, 2012), global land grabbing deals as seen by activists, movements for environment change (Fairhead et al., 2012), and agrarian justice as basically opposed to transnational land transactions as they view them as primarily dispossessing and disappropriating peasant societies (Franco and Borras, 2012; Grain.org, 2016).

The confrontation with the rural population is emphasized by a thesis that focuses on dislocation as a result of commercialization. The argument in this perspective is that entrepreneurs from developed countries undermine local food production systems. This thesis cites the increase in sale of food in supermarkets and convenient stores, which makes local rural populations to be enticed in commercialized food systems (GRAIN, 2016).

The argument further sees a global encroachment of industrial crops such as palm oil, soybeans, and sunflower oil. This encroachment replaces local mechanisms of food production and markets. Thesis on dislocation makes it significant to emphasize on nature of responses by small-scale farmers in Africa and their encounter with the global land grabbing.

Over 80% of land in Africa is small scale owned. The small-scale farmers account for the highest production of food in the world. In Africa, there have been courageous confrontations by communities that are opposed to land grabbing. Alliances have been formed within local communities international civil society, and NGOs to attempt an articulation of the challenges resulting from trans-national investment on land. Those opposed to large-scale food production have an important case. The main opposition to large-scale production in Africa is that it replaces local means of food production with non-sustainable agri-business, which is a threat to livelihoods of local populations.

Besides the argument against usurping local methods of food production and dislocation, the alliance between local populations and global civil society fails to highlight the salient support for investors by the local populations. I argue that whereas trans-national investment on land does not seem to be carried out as a result of a thorough understanding of rural livelihoods, attempts to articulate rural livelihoods by the global civil society is myopic and one sided. The latter relies on generalizations of concepts of local ownership of land and local means of food production.

Therefore, this study looks into the nature of events surrounding land-grabbing deals in the South that discusses responses of both organized and everyday forms of resistance to demand inclusion and encounter threats of dispossession. We draw attention to complexity of political reactions from below to emphasize on the necessity to critically evaluate the trans-national alliances with the elite local representatives in order to show that the context of local populations is usually

eclipsed in those who possess knowledge of methods in global civil society.

To protect local farmers from the self-destructing machine dispossession resulting from TNCs land deals, rights to land (property), and mechanisms of exchange have been emphasised. It is often claimed that with proper legislation and policy in place, risks can be curbed. Hence, International Food Policy Research Institute report (IFPRI, 2009) and the World Bank have given focus to policy, rights to property, and mechanisms of exchange. Such thesis claims that proper legislation and policy has the ability to shield local farmers from the negative impacts of global land deals. Local realities however contradict this claim.

In the instances where efforts have been made to safeguard the rights of locals through legislation, the challenges of low yields and low profitability from land have prompted them to seek for alternatives. Such alternatives are sought out through making use of state's guaranteed property rights. Protection through titling therefore becomes means of providing accessibility to capital using land property rights. The promise of "mutuality" in land deals brings into reality the fact that deriving benefits from the land is within reach by the local farmers. The local farmers have therefore tended to dissent from viewing land in terms of property rights. On the contrary, they have emphasised on ability to derive benefits from land. This view is close to theory of access, (Ribot and Peluso, 2003) which differentiates access from property. Access is discussed as an ability to derive benefits from things dissenting from view of property as right to benefit from things.

Furthermore, vulnerability of local farmers to the promise of "mutuality" confirms insufficiency of safeguarding property rights as a way of protecting the poor. In this line of thought, clear and secure land property rights although necessary are insufficient to guarantee protection of the rural poor (Cotula et al., 2011).

Similarly, Franco and Borras (2011) points out that secure rights should not be a priori, only or always, means to private property rights.

#### **CHALLENGES TO PURSUANCE OF MUTUALITY: THE CHANGING TRAJECTORIES IN LAND USE**

States in alliance with transnational actors predisposes communities into projects and plans that ostensibly promise advancement of target communities. On their part, peasantry is confronted with stringent challenges on land use. Land owned by the peasants has depreciated in value over time, undergone poor market prices, and recorded low food production.

This scenario has made it easy for those who depict the peasant's land as unproductive and under-utilised. In this case, it is not wholesomely falsification for the

transnational actors and states to depict land as low yielding to pave way for the investments.

It is under the premise that the harsh farming conditions have undeniably yielded lesser over the years that conjure the peasants into the quest to “catch up” and not be left behind in global inclusion. Peasantry amenability to better means of farming aided by new technologies, which is the main component promised by the transnational actors, has largely facilitated their acceptance as “saviours.” Such an inclination does not by any means justify land grabbing. It does however explicate rationality behind ingression of “saviours.”

### **Dwindling value of land**

“Saviours” ingression has burgeoned on the account of rural-landed-poor’s vulnerability mainly as crystallising within changes in land use. While the TNCs respond to global food crisis through a search for land for agrarian investment (Borras and Franco, 2011, Plaas.org.za, 2015), peasantries give up their land as a response to social conditions shaped by incursion by global investors.

Reinterpretation of land use at a local level has also been necessitated by an experience of food shortage in Mozambique occurring due to routine draughts, poor food production as a result of over cultivation, and farmers’ lack of markets for the little surplus they managed out of the land (IRINnews, 2015; Almeida et al., 2015).

Whereas, the pro-poor activists emphasize on the poor’s attachment to land, hence their inclination towards antagonism to land deals, their thesis falls sort to articulate the poor’s context in key areas: one, that the rural farmers increasingly encounter frustrations in maintaining traditional methods of food production, and two, that the dwindling value of land in terms of agricultural utility and economic value. According to Africa Development Bank (ADB), average annual economic growth dropped to 6.3% in 2015 from the previous 7% rate (Andre et al, 2016). The high levels of poverty often results to government dependency on development aid to mitigate effects of poverty. According to a 2012 development report, Mozambique ranked 185th out of 189 countries (“UNDP Annual Report 2011-2112”, 2012). Poverty levels are estimated to be highest in rural Mozambique, which is about 70% of the population. A common character of rural population is their dependency on subsistence agriculture.

The rural agriculture is characterized by low productivity and high vulnerability to climatic shocks. A high percentage of farmers in rural Mozambique rely on rain-fed agriculture. The over-reliance on natural climate makes rural population vulnerable to both draughts and flooding phenomena. Although draught periods form a highly predictable pattern (for instance East African

region experienced draughts in range of four years from 1982 to 1992 (Mwangi et al., 2013; "Drought in East Africa: Natural Hazards", 2017) the State still projects high levels of unpreparedness in putting ways of mitigating effects of draughts. Recorded famine and draughts in Mozambique are 1982 to 1984 and 1991 to 1992, which affected 3 million people, and 2001 to 2002.

In 2014, the minister for agriculture in Mozambique released a warning of effects of famine, which would affect more than 300,000 people ("Mozambique: Drought And Floods", 2010) The vicious effects that cause flooding and draught are not unique to Mozambique. They are caused by the effects of warming waters of the Pacific Ocean often referred to as El-Nino effects. Recently, food shortage due to climate related causes have continued to be reported.

In 2014, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported that 300,000 people were at a risk of facing severe famine. Overall, FAO estimates that 48% of Mozambique population is prone to flooding and famine risks (FAO 2007). The Deutsche Welle, citing government sources, reported in 2016 that 115,700 people were affected by hunger. In a written question in the UK parliament ("Mozambique: Droughts and Famine: Written question - 55360", 2017), the question to secretary of state for international development was asked if she would make additional assistance to Mozambique for famine relief. The response was that the UK government would fulfill the pledge to lead global humanitarian response to leverage the situation by providing 170 million Pounds to Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Mozambique.

The inability of the state to handle effects of draught has been a challenge to Mozambicans both for climatic and historical reasons. The aggression of rebels was among many of the factors that worsened 1982 to 1984 draught, which had affected around 4 million people (Henry, 1984). The anti-government war that persisted then forced rural villagers to vacate their land, which highly disrupted rural agriculture. The estimated number of villagers displaced by rebels was around 1 to 2 million according to a New York Times report of 1986. This population failed to produce food for both national economy and themselves. This indicates complicated loci to Mozambique’s dependency on aid since crop production has been diminishing over the years.

According to National Statistics Institute (INE), the mainstay of Mozambican economy is rain-fed agriculture. The main rain-fed agricultural activities which stands at 95% account for subsistence farming (USAID, 2017). Subsistence farming is overwhelmingly characterized by traditional methods of cultivation in production of crops such as cassava, groundnuts, maize, beans, and sweet potatoes. The recent few years have witnessed a shift on focus from such rain-fed agriculture that produces food crops to a more technologically dependent cash crop farming. This shift has witnessed an increase in

both private and state ventures into production of export crops. This has in part been through efforts to make use of under-utilized portions of land. Farmers who have encountered frustrations in crop production due to famines and draughts as well as flooding have also come face to face with poor productivity of subsistence crops. Adapting to cash crops production through openness to export ventures has been one of the appropriate avenues that they have implied to redeem themselves out of poverty.

Furthermore, preference of cash crops has occurred because of effects on food prices on the poor. The end effects have been a limit to production of traditional crop varieties. This has also affected the prices of land, making the offers from investors attractive. According to census of Agriculture in 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture estimated production of cassava as ranging between 4,000 to 7,000 metric tonnes in the years 2005 to 2007. Cynthia and Emilio (2010) cite the issues surrounding marketability of cassava. In the year 2009 and 2010, they observed that production of cassava was 7,437 compared to 1,932 of maize. From this production, maize exported 12% while cassava export was less than 1% showing that the over produced and cassava lacks market both domestically and abroad. Besides the threat of famine and flooding, the farmers also are constrained by diseases such as streak and mosaic diseases. The farmers also face market security related issues as discussed by Cynthia and Emilio (2010).

### Land laws and rights discourse

During the interview, Clemente Nyimpine, in response to the question about how valuable titling is to him stated that,

“we have heard some people tell us that titles are important to protect our rights to land. I am not denying that this paper (title deed) is important, but I think it is useless if this land does not help me feed and educate my children.”

Subsequent conditions surrounding land use, the manner in which interpretation and implementation of land laws takes shape as driven by peasants' aspirations, is also pivotal in disentangling their embrace for TNCs land deals.

Franco (2008) has shown that land laws and policies are not self-interpreting; conflicts arise in the process of interacting with diversified actors in the state and the society. The peasantry own understanding of land related policies opens various ways of understanding underlying social relations as expressed through or related to land. Such attitudes holds potential to shape social, economic, political and cultural discourses. Interpretation of land policy by the peasants opens possibility to explain their

“reticent” or “receptivity” to global interventions. The process of interpreting and understanding of land policy by peasantry also opens us to social relations that point beyond states simplification (Scott, 1998).

Particularly important is that discourses of the peasants do not only show opposition towards state simplification, but they prove a desirous for inclusion in state-driven initiatives. The farmers in Mozambique have not shown opposition to the process of titling. Instead, titling strengthened the promise of possibility of integration into global flows of capital perceived to have ability to trickle down. Peasants are not disinterested in titling, on the contrary, they believe in the magical power that the title holds; for collateral that assures them of economic stability.

At the local level those conditions attached to land devaluation have catalyzed villagers allegiance to large-scale agrarian projects. The process of facilitating investments is done through search for legal protection or concession to rights of land. The level of interest in delimitation and registration of land rights is not only because the locals sought legal protection. Primacy is given to delimitation and search to register land rights so as to strategically position themselves as beneficiaries of foreign direct investments emerging from both a perceived availability and unproductivity of land.

According to Millennium Challenge Corporation, that mapped 45,018 urban land parcels since 2011 in Mozambique, titling recorded up to 19,356 land parcels. In municipalities of Cuamba, Lichiga, Mocimboa da Praia, Mocuba, Monapo, Nampula, Pemba, and Quelimane had issued 12,634 title deeds.<sup>10</sup> This is almost the same year that interests in investments were popularized among the local population. This was at the backdrop of the awareness championed by the NGOs and donor organizations. Land based activism did not necessarily lead to securing protection rights for the sole purposes of protection from land grabbing as most activists seem to purport. On the contrary, it led to exposure of availability of opportunity to access better living conditions.

The perceived leniency by the peasantry towards titling casts doubts to discourses of dispossession spearheaded by civil society. Based on the civil society advocacy agenda, ProSavana triggers potential dispossession and displacement (Clements and Fernandes, 2013; Mapote, 2015; Globalpolicy.org, 2015; Baxter, 2015, despite its promise to lift the living standards of the poor in rural Mozambique. An engagement in the discourses as produced by the Mozambican peasantry articulate their own perception of disappropriation, dispossession, and displacement not as a primary concern. Scrutinised through the eyes of local populations, titling is accorded a general acceptance as it was seen as securing means for peasants to engage with the market, hence acquire income to self-sustain.



Furthermore, “displacement” so long as it provided new land or some amount of compensation was widely accepted. Although these claims were used by the civil society in speaking out against the state and transnational actors on behalf of the peasants, their views diverged from the vision of the rural-landed-poor. This calls for need to investigate the changing nature of the civil society in Africa as it has tended to represent a particular elite construct to gain acceptance with global civil society. Although from within the writings of global land grabbing there is a general concession that dispossession is among the key issue for peasantry, who are always analysed as being acted upon in dispossession, the peasants have largely viewed an alliance with the “land grabbers” as an opportunity to access a portion of global capital and gain means to escaping radical poverty.

The limits of titling to shield to peasants from land investments complicates the discourse on land grabbing. This as well shows limits to debates on rights to land. Borras (2012) has called upon what he refers to as “realignment of political forces at the international, national, and local levels, mobilised within human rights framework” noting that, Code of Conduct (CoC)’s “response to the global land grab veers away from questioning the fundamental roots of land-grabbing, that is, the existing industrial pattern of food and energy production and consumption controlled by TNCs, while engaging in the problematic notion of win-win scenario.”

However, Borras (2012) proposal of land sovereignty based on human rights is at times downplayed by the poor whose pursuit is not just rights, but inclusion into global flows through coveting for mutual benefit. The human rights based approach largely perceived as a possible solution to poverty, has pushed and attracted legislation agenda. Large-scale investors as long as they act within the confines of such legislations are not seen as necessarily hurting the poor. Within category of legislation, calls for “Code of Conduct” to ensure “win-win” outcomes (Von et al, 2009) have been proposed. Further, there has also arisen notions like “principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) which is an initiative of the World Bank (Deininger, 2011). Beyond such calls that are basically formulated under the inspiration of TNCs impact in rural communities, the language of win-win (“mutuality”) has appeared as a strategy aimed towards securing a niche for development partners.

As discussed earlier, Borras (2012) has shown there are complex and dynamic changes in land use. This change is not in one direction, that is, in favour of food and biofuels production for export. In Borras (2012) classification, change in land use has three categories; A1, A2, and A3. A1 consists actors whose pursuit of land is defined in terms of commoditization and food production. A2 is the category that encompasses transformation of means of production, moving from

production for domestic purposes to production of food for export markets. A3 can be said to be the category reversing A2 through transforming land that used to be for export to domestic production. Those countries that belong to A2 have a distinctive character. They are considered “non-traditional” on issues not only of land grabbing but history of colonization of the South. In this categorisation, Borras has indicated Japan, alongside Korea, India, and China as belonging to category A2 (Borras and Franco, 2011)<sup>11</sup>.

The “non-traditional” character has given such countries like Japan a leeway to engage the South without meaningful opposition. The political and economic powers available and accessible to the rural-landed-poor to enable them engage with such global capital flows is the fact that they own portions of land (customarily or otherwise at least through a loose definition of ownership as evidenced via titling). The poor make up majority of those who owns portions of land. Mozambique’s majority poor living in the rural areas are 70% according to national household survey (Rural Poverty Portal, 2015).

Levels of poverty notwithstanding they legally hold possession to land as property despite limited access to it. The inaccessibility of land has therefore resulted into an upsurge in the aspiration to be indulged into global agrarian capital flows. In this respect, the poor’s perception of participation and struggles with TNCs should be accounted for in changes in land use (Borras, 2012).

Furthermore, the dwindling status of land activities has increased peasants’ vulnerability as discussed earlier. Despite civil activism emphasis around the disappropriation of rural-landed-poor traditional means of crop farming (Monjane, 2015; Unac.org.mz, 2015), peasantry agriculture has been plummeting. Dependence on traditional crops has subsequently led to inability to support the population need for food. As stated earlier, traditionally produced crops have had minimal chances of actively competing in the global market. The disease outbreak, famine (IFAD, 2009), and lack of state investment in means that can sustain traditional methods of crop and livestock production has left the land owners with no alternative but to seek means of joining the already saturated global market.<sup>12</sup>

Land ownership is therefore an important bridge of the poor to profits and economic inclusion. Having property (land) that produces below expectations has denied rural-landed-poor the much-needed access to their rightfully owned property. The poor have often turned to utilisation of bundles of right (IFAD, 2009) that enables them to reach out to transnational actors often depicted as bringing in mutual benefits. Having despised traditional means of production, the rural-landed-poor look up to legal documents as bridges into glory of global capital. The titling process underscores state’s priority in transformation of land policy in Mozambique. Since

inauguration of land policies in Mozambique (1997) the government has initiated practices that have allowed Mozambicans to exercise rights over land and natural resources. This possession with titling and rights however shields the main concern of the rural-landed-poor, which has turned from land occupancy to land utility and profitability. The key concern has therefore not been possessing land but vehemently being unable to draw livelihood thereof. Forces that render land unproductive have co-relations with factors that encourage the urge for inclusivity among rural-landed-poor.

What then could be said of the reasons why the rural-landed-poor portrayed ambivalence towards Japan/Brazil led project, ProSavanna? And how should silences, or semi structured oppositions be interpreted? Although dominant discourses within Mozambique's ProSavanna based activism focus on dispossession (Unac.org.mz, 2015) empirical evidence does not support the dispossession thesis.

In this project, the most common consequences have been displacement and dislocation rather than dispossession. The process of displacement and dislocation, viewed from the rural-landed-poor's perspective, however, is not overtly destructive but an opportunity to make better their livelihood through easing access to capital. Rural-landed-poor have viewed re-routing, re-drawing and re-fixing of boundaries and changes in agrarian structure as a positive attempt. This does not by any mean imply that the rural-poor do not struggle with dispossession.

Contrary to assertions of conventional activism, acquiescence (Scott, 1998) towards displacement and dislocation is rural-landed-poor's means of fulfilling a search for inclusivity. Whereas rural-landed-poor have voiced concerns with TNCs, they have not entirely shown formidable opposition against development incursion. The notions of mutuality implied by policy makers have deprived the rural-landed-poor of their democratic space to challenge and organise opposition towards investors. Mutuality, as outlined within TICAD process disfigures, undemarcates friend/enemy border and in its place presumes homogeneity of locus and investments intentions.

The other reason for openness to TNCs and development initiatives is ambiguity of "mutuality" as seen within analysis of sustainability of ProSavanna project. The outcome of initial project in Brazil when taken to account has shown that sufficient measures to address the challenges raised by locals in Brazil were not examined before the proposal and implementation of the sister project in Mozambique (Ajf.gr.jp, 2015).

The acceptance of the project in Mozambique was therefore void of historical analysis of its effects and results in Brazil. The blinded wholesale acceptance of the project was anchored upon the focus on success story and its reference to "mutuality" as a concept in the

implementation. Although local communities are often presented as knowledgeable with ability to negotiate access to and control over resources and capable of its own protection (Nooteboom and Edwin, 2010) the assumptions that the locals are able to rightly articulate their needs does not always mean that they oppose incursion.

Nooteboom and Edwin continues to argue that the success of local communities tends to be over-valued. In local resource management, the rural-landed-poor can be perceived in two ways; ignorant, polluting, destructive, and explosive or secondly, as knowledgeable, and able to access and control resources. While giving credit to rural knowledge about their own communities, it is also crucial to emphasise on what allures the rural-landed-poor into acceptance of the projects through appeals of "mutuality."

### CONTESTATION OF TICAD'S MUTUALITY IN RURAL MOZAMBIQUE<sup>13</sup>

Dissenting voices against ProSavanna in both Mozambique and Japan are organized within leading voices in civil society. The grievances raised by these groups carry an authentic message that requires a response and action from JICA and Mozambican government officials. TICAD V forum in 2013, attracted the most diversified participation from civil society and advocacy groups. These groups consists of a merger between both Africans and Japanese rights based organisations. TICAD V student project is one of such groups that championed for youth agenda in the TICAD process (TICAD V 学生プロジェクト, 2015). Another group was Africa Japan Forum (AJF) (Ajf.gr.jp, 2015).

AJF represented a more inclusive and authoritative program that coordinated both Japan and African civil society. AJF used Mozambican case specifically to highlight discontents arising from local level on Japanese aid regime intervention. Open letters by Mozambique, Japan, and Brazil civil society (Africafocus.org, 2015) challenged ProSavanna program in Nicala corridor citing that:

- (1) There was lack of consultation,
- (2) There was insufficient environmental impact assessment,
- (3) There was possible damage to farmers, and
- (4) The major beneficiary were noted to be likely be multinational corporations and the private sector with absence of public participation.

The civil society rights movement made strong assertions that the process overlooked constitutional requirement that demands public participation and conduct of environmental impact assessment. They asserted that, "ProSavanna programme is already being implemented through its quick projects component,

without the environmental impact assessment study ever having been carried out, publicly discussed and approved...” (Africafocus.org, 2015).

They also claimed that the model from which the programme is drawn from (Brazilian Cerrado) bears inbuilt contradictions. This assertion was founded on the faith that challenges faced by the implementation of the Brazilian project were not addressed before propositions were made for a similar project in Nicala corridor. Therefore, ProSavanna bears the risk of inheriting the impacts as experienced in Brazil but also other locally specific consequences.

The proposal forwarded by the civil society strongly purports to speak for realities of the rural-landed-poor<sup>14</sup>. The civil society noted that some of the risks possible from this programme were integration of rural populations in global market and rise of landlessness through dislocation. However, a closer examination of solicited solutions as addressed to the three head of states (Brazil’s President Rousef, Japan’s Prime Minister Abe, and Mozambique’s Guebuza) reveals divergences within civil society and the rural-landed-poor. The opposing discourse in civil society discourse was an appeal to rural farmers quest to being sovereign and having a right to own land. This however systematically ignored the very farmers aspirations to integrate with the global economy, a promise whose viability comes alive within Pro-Savanna promise of “mutuality.”

Professionalization and formalization of civic engagement is perhaps one of the reasons that caused detach between activists and local populations. The presentation of activists was a highly formalised contestation whose accessibility was only available to few elite. The mismatch between civil society and local poor’s discourses notwithstanding, the former’s contestation underscores three concerns. One, that ProSavanna is a top-down driven policy that subsumes disproportionately the aspirations of the rural-landed-poor via utilisation of “mutuality.” Secondly, ProSavanna, wittingly or unwittingly, exacerbates the rural-landed-poor’s vulnerability by expropriation of their land. Thirdly that they condemn agrarian investment whose end product is transformation of Mozambican farmers into employees and rural labourers. These concerns have in many times been perceived to be a wholesale indicators of poor farmers detest for foreign investments in land. Often, an appeal is made for restoration of peasantry farming and agro ecological model of food production for food sovereignty<sup>15</sup>.

In 2013, the civil society deployed a “No to ProSavanna” open letters to governments of Mozambique, Japan, and Brazil urging an immediate halt to the project. The response of Paulo Zucula, the minister for Transport and Communications, was provocative and seemed to demean the anti-campaign for ProSavanna. Zucula dismissed the letter as “not written by the peasants” stating “if they had, he would know that illiteracy ended in Mozambique”.

This debate recasts the necessity to articulate the context and voices from below more appropriately. An appreciation of “the will to improve” by the peasants cannot be adequately found in the civil society rhetoric or their unquestionable commitment to ProSavanna project. Their actions needs to be interpreted through an understanding of historical processes that have had consequences on the peasantry such as a confrontation with the harsh reality of famine and dwindling value of land and food production as discussed earlier.

Furthermore, an argument based on some of the rural farmers testimonies has shown deficiencies that exist in the discourses of representation championed by activists. It is insufficient to assert that the rural-landed-poor are unwaveringly committed to peasantry farming and agro ecological model of food production. Organized protest and activism obscures the logic in acquiescence of expropriation by the rural-landed-poor that often elucidate believability and trust in the promise of “mutuality.” While organised activism in form of unions such as UNAC have implied that the quest for rural-landed-poor is to generate traditional means of food production for their sustainability they have ignored the urgency in which the landed poor wants to utilise land related policies offered by the state, however flawed, to engage “equally” as “mutual” partners in global capital flows by the help of land investments.

From the testimonials of the peasants, we derive a narrative that supports a preference of investors as a result of poor market value. During the World Church Conference in December 2016, Maria Paulo lamented that, “a group of white people came and explained something, but it was not clear. In the beginning, we had hope in ProSavanna. We have natural resources, but no infrastructure and support. We do not produce even enough for subsistence. But now we are lost.”

Similarly, the guardian piece on January 2014 (the Guardian, 2014) and InterPress Service of May 2013 (Ipsnews.net, 2015) referred to the stories of Radolfo Razao and Brigida Mohamad, both small holders who were disenfranchised through national agrarian investment. They both lament that their land is not up for sale. These voices resonate with activism based on ProSavanna project which point out to likelihood of land related conflicts intensification, dispossession, and displacement. The rural-landed-poor’s interest in agrarian interests in this perspective is seen as in favour of customary farming methods, at least in response to the aforesaid threats to land. Although the activists uses such voices as attempts to show their solidarity of local populations in antagonism, Maria also expresses a state of shattered hopes.

Testimonials of farmers in support of dislocation thesis, mainly articulated by activists, is in stark contrast with local farmers who attempted to historicise collapse of traditional food crops (maize, cassava, pumkins, and sweet potatoes) due to unpredictable severe climatic

Table 1. Samples of interview.

Name	Chrisitna Armando	Antonio Tambwe	Simbarashe Mapie
Comment	<p>“The good thing about this project is that I hear we can make more crops to sell [cash crops]. That is a good thing because all of us produce same thing, which rich people do not want to buy [cassava]. You see, if these white people [investors] help us to produce soybeans, we can sell it to other countries and get good money. Those who have land can be given money [compensated]. Those who do not have land can be employed. Our community will be rich. Now we suffer because we cannot sell our cassava.”</p>	<p>“It is better to let the government allow these development people (investors) to help us. Before they came, we did not have roads. Now we have started to see some projects coming up. I think it is a good thing.”</p>	<p>“When we are lucky we produce a lot of maize and cassava. But if draught comes, we have no help. This year the cassava produced was too much. I had to travel to the market everyday to sell. There was not much money. Because a lot of people had plenty of cassava so they did not need to buy.”</p>

conditions. These observations from the local farmers have important insights on dissenting voices that is always not present in the discourse of activism. When we talked to these farmers through the phone, they emphasized that they spoke for majority of their colleagues. Here are some of the few interviews we sampled (Table 1).

These farmers underscored the need to consider the harsh living conditions as facilitating their desire to integrate with the global agrarian capital flows. Economic stagnancy as arising from low productivity, high cost of living, and marketisation of all aspects of Mozambicans is a key leading factor that explores the ambitious nature of the rural-landed-poor to assimilate the vision of transnational investment. Data on droughts, crop failures and disasters (WFP, 2010) appears to support the assertions of the farmers. Such an experience has not made the landed poor to yearn towards the need to stabilise traditional means of farming. Rather, it has lead to the need to integrate.

Consequently, the poor productivity has only acted as a catalyst to search alternatives (FAO, 2010). Poor crop production is also because of poor infrastructure, lack of appropriate technology, and lack of markets. This has only exacerbated the rural-landed-poor's vulnerability. In the cases where the promise of “mutuality” encountered farmers faced with low productive pieces of land, the choices have been focused on interested investors. This in itself proves that the rural-landed-poor desire to fully utilise land asset. The claim of underutilisation as a justification to land acquisition by transnational cooperations therefore fails to capture the very essence of desirability by the rural-landed-poor to utilise land by giving it up to for investment.

## CONCLUSION

Having analysed the use of “mutuality” by Japan, this study was interested in investigating the “goodwill” of mutuality as perceived by receiving partners. This kind of investigation was possible through an articulation of

perceptions of the world created by such discourses and its adaptability to the local livelihoods. This paper attempted to show the manner in which the poor interpreted the discourse of “mutuality” as used by development partners.

Often, the policies spearheaded by the state provide means of expropriation of peasant land. In popular scholarship on land grabbing cases from Africa, peasant's response is usually presented in forms of resistance and revolt. This work has problematised notions of resistance and revolts highlighting the role of silences or disquiets in economic thrust of poor rural landowners. I have argued that peasantry has diligently supported the state's pursuit of investment.

As an exercise to promote investment, the states in Africa have overseen diverse land reforms. Such reforms are carried within the neoliberal banner, and have encouraged deregulations and capital restrictions that support influx of TNCs. Interventions of governments in Africa have therefore liberalised land access to encourage investments.

Through the forums of activism during TICAD V in 2013 based on ProSavanna project we pointed out that means of representation for the rural-landed-poor within civil society while characteristically insufficient, and misappropriating rural-landed-poor's aspirations has gained hegemony in global land grabbing debate. However, study of indigenous communities in areas of development targeted by “mutuality” as a concept that has only sought to cooperate, and negotiate with the state elites, proved insufficiency in representation of rural-landed-poor's authentic interests.

The documents and speeches in TICAD, JICA, and MOFA which underscores and utilises “mutuality” in ministering aid targeted to Africa when contrasted with voices of dissonance as rising from rural-landed-poor in Mozambique, lead to a conclusion that both NGOs and Civil Societies tended to misrepresent authentic aspirations of the rural-landed-poor. The campaigns orchestrated by NGOs and Civil Society nevertheless facilitate a critical partial understanding of contexts of the rural-landed-poor. MOFA (2009) interpretation of

“mutuality” sees it as “their own issue”. This has become problematic since the perception of the rural-landed-poor about “mutuality” is often in profit equilibrium. They expect inclusion that would make them gain from their own assets assisted by foreign investors.

To assert that the local voices are not as articulated by the civil society is not to suggest that there is no single element of their concern within contestation of global civil society. We have considered evidence from within Mozambican land contestation as organised by civil society as in parts displaying the wish and aspirations of the rural-landed-poor. This study included a brief investigation of the nature of this involvement by inquiring on why the rural-landed-poor seem to be in favour of foreign led interventionism. Although most civil society centralises on contestation based on dispossession, this study found that most rural-landed-poor welcomed foreign investments despite being aware of their own misappropriation.

This research re-affirms the need to address issues of land grabbing. In essence, we have noted that Nacala Corridor is an open example of land grabbing by cooperation among states, international corporations, and private investors. To address the issues pertaining land facing the rural-landed-poor we note that perspectives emerging from organised activism fail to capture the quest of rural-landed-poor to integrate in global capital flows. This quest is facilitated by the promise of “mutuality” outlined in foreign investment policies.

The rural-landed-poor’s apprehension of “mutuality” is an act of complimentary. In this way, rural-landed-poor fail to read what the investors think of their land; as under-utilised. Perhaps because, that they do not fathom it as such in the first place. On the other hand, the investment partners do not see “mutuality” as possessing elements of incorporating the poor into global market flows. On the contrary, “mutuality” is a discourse only familiar to state elites and their colleagues in the private, cooperate sector. “Mutuality” is a false concept that that seems to emphasise market based approaches to poverty reduction and food security.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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<sup>1</sup> Conventional model of development here refers to Western aid regime, which has been criticized due to its colonizing character.

<sup>2</sup> The first conference (TICAD I) took place in 1993. During the event, the organizers vowed to reverse the decline in development assistance for Africa, which had followed the end of the Cold War. Participants adopted the Tokyo Declaration on African Development, committing to the pursuit of various goals among them political and economic reforms in Africa, increased private sector development, regional cooperation and integration, and the harnessing of Asian experience for the benefit of African development.

The second conference (TICAD II) followed five years after in 1998. It renewed the commitment to Africa's development challenges with another set of ambitious goals such as poverty reduction and integration of Africa into the global economy as primary themes. One of the key outcomes of TICAD II was culmination to adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action (TAA). The TAA outlined a framework of cooperation in the TICAD process identifying shared goals, objectives and guidelines for actions to be taken by Africa and its partners.

In 2003, the third conference (TICAD III) took place once again in Tokyo. Some of the keys emerging outcomes from Tokyo conference were an explicit commitment for the TICAD Initiative to support the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Incorporation of African Union was a major achievement towards legitimising the role of TICAD process in Africa. The number of head of states from the African continent was significantly important element to TICAD process. In total, 23 head of states participated and 10 heads of international organizations. TICAD III was heralded as one of the largest international conferences on African development. It was utterly clear that by this time the networking around TICAD process was growing wider. On the other hand, the major achievement of the meeting was the adoption of a blueprint for Africa's peace and socio-economic growth and development plan.

After more than a decade of previous conferences held in Tokyo, TICAD IV shifted to Yokohama as a host City. Yokohama's theme was to foster a vibrant Africa; it addressed the following three priority areas: Boosting economic growth; Ensuring "human security", including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the consolidation of peace and democratisation; and Addressing environmental issues and climate change.

June 2103 the fifth TICAD was held in Yokohama. This time, the basic theme was heralded as "hand in hand with a dynamic Africa". TICAD V recorded the highest number of participants, becoming one of the highest levels of international conferences hosted by Japan. It culminated to Yokohama Declaration 2013, which stimulates the future direction of Africa development and road map so specific measures to be undertaken between 2013 and 2017. For further details see <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/>

<sup>3</sup> The 2013 Yokohama declaration reaffirmed that TICAD role is to facilitate Africa inclusiveness in international affairs. It renewed the twin principles of African ownership and partnership in which TICAD process is rooted. The strategic approach was highlighted as working "hand in hand with a more dynamic Africa". This work has conceptualised this notion as "Mutuality".

<sup>4</sup> Self-help (Jijō) has been used to mean that countries where development is targeted should formulate their own programs. Japan would only respond to such models drawn up by recipient countries. This model entrusts receiving governments as possessing capability to rightfully judge and project the context of the poor. The policy formulated is also perceived to be a representation of aspirations of the poor.

<sup>5</sup> Srinivas argues that historical perceptions of NGOs has changed, and that there lacks any single way to understand NGOs. In international development, NGOs have enormously been perceived as independent bodies with unquestionable commitment to development focused on understanding the needs and context of the poor communities. His work calls us to question what he terms as over-conceptualisation on NGOs as representative of the people. Importantly, he also asserts that we should analyse concepts of power in mobilisation of knowledge.

<sup>6</sup> Chatterjee defines Civil Society: "the closed association of modern elite groups, sequestered from the wider popular life of communities, walled up within enclaves of civic freedom and rational law" He calls for new locus of determining the negotiation and contestation of poor as a political society. Political society is a site of negotiation and contestation opened up by the activities of governmental agencies aimed at population groups (Chatterjee 2004:74). To effectively make its claim in political society, a population group produced by governmentality must be invested with the moral content

of community. Community here means the "conferred legitimacy within the domain of the modern state only in the form of the nation" (Chatterjee 2004:75). This is central to what is meant by governmentality: there are numerous possibilities for transforming an empirically assembled population group into the morally constituted form of a community. (Chatterjee, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Throughout its 20 year history, TICAD has emphasised its role to popularise Africa's potentials and risks at the global stage as seen in declarations issued during the quinquennial conferences. This was reiterated during TICAD V's Yokohama declaration. The concept identified as "mutuality" in this paper is expressed in TICAD process through range of words such as twin principles of Africa ownership and partnership, hand in hand with Africa, partnership, among others. Available at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page3e\\_000053.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page3e_000053.html)

<sup>8</sup> Grain is an NGO that supports small farmers and their struggles for subsistence farming. See more details at <https://www.grain.org/>

<sup>9</sup> Rural-landed-poor have been implied here to refer to mainly farming populations living in rural areas. They are characteristically poor using World Bank poverty index. They however possess land, basically through inheritance, but have limited control over it for credit, technology, and skills that help harness profits attached to land.

<sup>10</sup> Millennium Challenge funds a project in Mozambique on land tenure. For further details see <https://assets.mcc.gov/press/2012-002-1073-01-success-mozambique-land.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> For detailed information on Borras categorization of change in land use into A1, A2, and A3 see; [http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/borras\\_franco\\_joac\\_2012.pdf](http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/borras_franco_joac_2012.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> This discussion should not be conflated with the claims of peasantry land as under-utilized. It is aimed at highlighting the challenges implicit to peasantry farming. Unlike the assertions made to encourage foreign related investments and large-scale crop farming, this description aims sole at showing that peasantry has been driven into a state of despair due to poor farm produce. This should not be under any circumstances used to justify incursions that destroy social fabric and renders obsolete the local livelihoods.

Sources of Land use based on FAO that ascertain these claim states in part; The total land area of Mozambique, excluding rivers and inland waters, is about 784,000 sq. km. The FAO estimates that about 360,000 sq. km (36 million ha) is cultivable, but the area cultivated for arable and permanent crops was estimated to be only 4.9 million ha in 2003. The amount of irrigated land is recorded as 0.11 million ha but nearly two-thirds of this is not currently irrigated. A detailed assessment of land cover carried out in 1995 by the FAO, reported that only 1 million ha was under permanent cultivation while a further 10 million ha was used for short fallow shifting cultivation and 9.1 million ha for long fallow shifting cultivation. Areas of open and wooded grassland and shrub account for 21.5 million ha, much of which is suitable for livestock if not for conversion to permanent cropping.

<sup>13</sup> Japan has played a significant role in post-cold war Mozambique's transition from war to peace and economic advancement (Owoeye, 1992, Sato 1994, Morikawa, 1997, and JICA, 2000). Mozambique economic cooperation with Japan accounted for loans amounting to 17.149, grants amounting to 93.145, and technical assistance totaling to 15.338 billion yen in fiscal year 2012. Exports to Mozambique amounted to 26.02 while imports were 6.22 billion yen in fiscal year 2013 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2015). This assistance took place at the backdrop of structural and political changes spurred by international donor agencies pressure (SAPs).

A specific character of Japan aid regime in post cold war Mozambique is not overtly within the structural adjustment discourse. On the contrary, "mutuality" as emerging within TICAD process after the cold war assumes the overtones of humanitarian focus in development. Humanitarian aspect is politically unconditional. Thus, in the case of Mozambique, notions of humanitarian nature of aid have tended to arouse sympathy but most important necessitating interventions (Duffield & Donini, 2014). Development interventions such as ProSavana project resonate with TICAD's main pillars; human centred development, poverty reduction through economic growth, and consolidation of peace (MOFA, 2013). These two areas have translated into a focus on agriculture, social sector, and human resource development.

Investment in agriculture often time translates to frontier portions of land in the rural areas. Rural populations, who account for more than 50% of the country's population, makes up the majority of poor. Agriculture is the single most important source of livelihood for such populations. At the same time

rural population agricultural activities contribute the highest percentage of the national GDP and provides almost 80% employment opportunities. The deplorable levels of poverty in Mozambique have necessitated counter poverty measures and strategies. MOFA has notably argued that it prioritises rural development in Mozambique (De Medeiros Carvalho, 2011). The frontier land in the rural Mozambique has therefore become a zone for conflicting theatrics between the poor and the state. Although both have viewed resources as core to the fight against poverty, the rural-landed-poor in have also sought to engage in global capital through utilising land. The state's means to resources accessibility by development partners has thrived on the notions of "mutuality. Following a restoration of peace in Mozambique, initiation of new land policy by the government (Tanner & Durang, 2002) assured rights of the locals to land ownership but also facilitated access of land for the purposes of investment.

The basic characteristic of land reforms (1997) was; a) affirmation of state centrality in land ownership, b) facilitation of land accessibility (mainly to foreign investors) and c) engendering of land issues specific reference to women ownership of land. These particular aspects bring into question the role of locals in land management. A strong state centred land policy puts into question the functionality of customary land management. Tanner & Durang (2002) noted that the customary laws had to be incorporated into national land policy. This study however note that land relations between the locals radically changed when incorporated into the state led policy. The role of customary laws was not compatible with the agribusiness oriented land policy. It only therefore helped to bolster the ambiguity embedded in the market centred land policy. An investigation into the role-played by customary law points us to imbalances evident in "mutual benefit" rhetoric. Whereas the law approved in 1997 (World Bank, 2008) recognises the place of family accessibility and management of land, and also confers some form of authority in overseeing transfers and inheritance rights and conflicts resolution, it fails to candidly appropriate means through which customary laws would engage foreign investors. To the eyes of foreign investors, customary laws are not only inexistent, but also lack capacitation to validate strong negotiation. The imbalances in "mutual benefits" are evident in lack of mechanisms and means within which the rural-landed-poor can negotiate with the foreign investors. This has in most cases left the locals at the mercies of the state to negotiate on their behalf. It must be noted that it is not lack of inclusion of the locals that is the main issue. For example DUAT (World Bank, 2009) shows that local people have been given rights of participation in legislating land issues. Also, investors have been said to engage with locals to secure investments. The issue is however the imbalances as a result of local's inability to fully access land in terms of harnessing reward of resources. Access therefore needs an expanded view. IncurSION of foreign investment exacerbates the quest to improve. Since the prevailing means of land use have had low yield, incorporation into "better" methods of land use becomes the best viable way out. When this need meets the discourse that not only promises incorporation but also mutual benefits, the rural-landed-poor are subjected to inescapable state of need to cooperate.

The nature of dialogues on land has had its toll on local's attitude towards investors. In ProSavana case in Manica Province, Tanner & Durang (2002) has shown that local consultations between investors and local communities rarely exceeded half a day (in Durang, 1999). That these consultations take such a short time proves the farcicality embedded in "mutuality." This attitude can reveal either locals eagerness to assimilate foreign investors or the investors desire to exploit perceived ignorance among the locals. This quick fix remedy can also be interpreted within the state's requirements to quicken the process allowing investors to access the land in not more than 90 days. The outcome of this has been that the locals are often ill prepared to receive foreign investors in terms of awareness and knowledge of investment. This must however also be seen from the perspective that the locals are also eager to facilitate investment especially so as to attain the stature of the promise in "mutuality" which befits enthroned communities. Community representation is often through use of selected few, "the informed." It is highly improbable to claim that they aspire for global civil society voices, which rightly appropriates local practices.

Rural-landed-poor as analyzed in this paper support as urgent the essence of combating poverty as well as promoting sustainable development. Their voices appear as represented in civil society and religious organizations in Mozambique. They have been given audience by both the local and global media. Through discussions at local level, Mozambican civil society points out discrepancies and contradictions that they asserted shows defects in design of Prosavanna programme (Africafocus.org, 2015). These discrepancies were pointed out as irregularities in consultation and participation, threats of usurpation of rural populations, and removal of communities from the land they have traditionally inherited and currently occupy. Critiques within the conduct of international agrarian development in Africa reflects wider consensus that they intend to make "life easier" by means that overall benefits the corporate interests. This will be carried out while damaging rural livelihoods and interests of rural-landed-poor. This consensus does not however contend that they should be excluded from agricultural development; at least not in terms of "genuine voices" of the rural-landed-poor. The dissenting voices within the civil society activism resonate with rural-landed-poor's voices but calls for further engagement with their acquiescence.

<sup>14</sup> From the open letter of Mozambican peasant farmers that was presented to Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo there is outline of key issues that the rural-landed-poor are not interested in is outlined. The images that validate usurpation of land are depiction of images of unproductivity, need for large scale cultivation for export purposes, and the problem of co-operates forms of land investment. The minister of transport, Paulo Zikula, in response to this letter alluded that most Mozambican farmers are indeed "illiterate." (Japantoday.com, 2013) This point reveals what was pointed earlier, that alliance between states elite who implies "mutuality" limits the ability for articulating rural-landed-poor's aspirations. Reference to rural-landed-poor as "illiterates" serve to validate need for representation. Representation itself comes in form of unions, civil society, and state officials all of which belong to a class of elite. This assimilation of forms of meanings and representation as used in development related activism is not adequately analyzed. Locating rural-landed-poor's quest and desire to be integrated into global market flows finds home in the promise of "mutuality," unveiled the fact that it does not aspire what proponents of mutuality intends. Whereas those in donor regime see establishment of large scale industrial firms that lead to mass production of food for export purposes, the rural-landed-poor understands campaigns for mutual benefit as empowerment and efficient strategies that enable suffice local production of food but also facilitate markets for the surplus.

<sup>15</sup> Food sovereignty is a global alliance for farmers and other stakeholders that claim for communities control over the way food is produced, traded and consumed. It could create a food system that is designed to help people and the environment rather than make profits for multinational corporations.