

ASC-TUFS Working Papers 2019

# Challenges of Development and Natural Resource Governance in Africa

Edited by  
Yasuo Matsunami and Shinichi Takeuchi



African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies



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ASC — TUFS Working Papers 2019

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Edited by Yasuo Matsunami and Shinichi Takeuchi

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Address) 3-11-1 Asahicho, Fuchu-shi, Tokyo 183-8534 Japan.

Tel/Fax) +81 42 330 5540

e-mail) africanstudies-center@tufs.ac.jp

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## Foreword

We are delighted to publish here the ASC–TUFS Working Papers 2019. This volume includes 15 papers written by researchers engaged in activities of the African Studies Center (ASC) at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS).

The most important activity—the basis of this volume—is the joint seminar organised by the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) and TUFS. It will be held on 18–19 February 2020 on the Huye Campus, PIASS, in Rwanda. Seven out of 15 papers in this volume, namely those of K. Demachi, H. Chitonge, P. Narh, M. Tunzine, M. Kabinga, G. Umuziranenge and E. Ntiranyibagira, and D. J. Sonwa et al., were originally submitted to the PIASS-TUFS Joint Seminar on Resource Management and Development.

The joint seminar, which is the main pillar for this volume, receives financial support from the following two Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research provided by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS): 1) ‘Resource management and political power in rural Africa’ (Project Number: 18H03439; Principal Investigator: Shinichi Takeuchi) and 2) ‘Rural resource management and the state in Africa: A comparative analysis of Ghana and Rwanda’ (Project number: 19KK003; Principal Investigator: Shinichi Takeuchi). Both of the JSPS research projects have as objectives illuminating the realities and challenges associated with rural resource management in African countries and searching for appropriate policies. Many papers in this volume share the same goals.

In addition to this main pillar, this volume includes other types of contributors. Dr Denis J. Sonwa, formerly a visiting professor at ASC–TUFS and a contributor and participant of the PIASS-TUFS Joint Seminar, invited members of his research team to submit papers for publication in this volume. The five papers on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon are contributions from members of his research team.

The last group of contributors is composed of young African researchers studying in Japan. The group includes three PhD candidates at TUFS and Dr K. L. Kithinji, a post-doctoral researcher at Hosei University. These individuals have been actively engaged in various events held by the ASC (especially academic seminars). We organised the ASC Seminars with the anticipation that they would be forums for young scholars engaged in African studies. It is a great pleasure for us to see that the results of their engagement are included in this volume.

The 15 papers in this volume are classified into three groups. Four papers in part I examine development and governance in general. All four papers in part II focus on land issues, which are critical for rural resource management in Africa. Seven papers in part III deal with a wide range of rural resource management issues. All papers in this volume are works in progress; therefore, any comments or suggestions are most welcome.

January 2020

Yasuo Matsunami and Shinichi Takeuchi

African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies







## Part I

### Challenges of Development and Governance







# **Finance-led growth in Africa: Booms and missing links**

Kazue Demachi

African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

## **Abstract**

The economic growth of African countries turned from resource-led to service-led since the 2010s. However, in some countries, the majority of the service sector growth is driven by bloated financial activities. Despite the rapid increase in numbers of financial institutions and the share of value-added by the service sector in African economies, the domestic savings are not intermediated into the domestic investment, especially due to the absence of long-term credit. De-industrialization, coupled with financialization in African countries, is an unprecedented situation if this style of economic growth continues. This paper discusses the relationship between land ownership, financial system, and industrialization, and suggest the possibilities and challenges faced by the African service-led economies.

**Keywords:** Financialization, Service-led growth, De-industrialization, Long-term credit, Land property rights



## 1. Introduction

Economies in Sub-Saharan Africa had experienced relatively stable growth in the 2000s when the international commodity prices were buoyant. However, as the world economy slows down, some countries started to face the deterioration of international balance, budget deficit, and accumulation of debt. In the meantime, the economic structure of the African countries started to change. UNCTAD (2013), for example, reports that the intra-investment among the African countries are increasingly in the service sector, especially in finance and transport (UNCTAD 2013:41). This is indeed a remarkable change given the fact that the economies have for long depended on the primary commodity exports.

On the other hand, Rodrik (2016) argues that the developing countries, especially the Sub-Saharan African economies<sup>1</sup>, are experiencing a ‘premature de-industrialization.’ The notion of de-industrialization is not new. However, the existing discourses of ‘post-industrial society’ and ‘de-industrialization’ need to be clearly distinguished from the de-industrialization of African countries. At the same time, the de-industrialization in African countries is coupled with financialization. Again, this ‘financialization’ needs to be distinguished from the existing ‘financialization’ arguments among the industrial countries.

There are two main purposes of this essay. The first purpose is to review the structural shift of African economies by juxtaposing it to the transformation of global economies, especially by focusing on the linkage between land property rights and industrialization. The second purpose is to discuss the possibility and challenges of continuous and stable growth of service-led growth of African economies. The next section briefly summarizes the existing discourses of de-industrialization and financialization and reviews the transition of African economies. Section 3 discusses the linkage between the de-industrialization and financialization in Africa, whereby a focus is set on the ambiguity of land property rights and the availability of long-term credit. The final section discusses the possibility and the limit of finance-led growth for African countries.

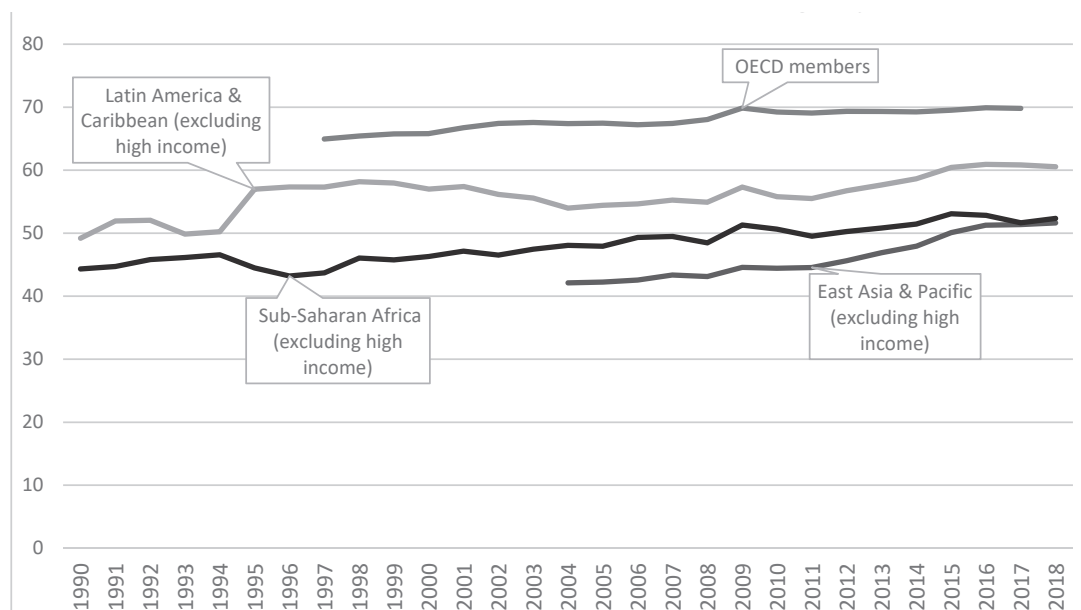
## 2. De-industrialization and financialization

### 2.1. Conventional discussion

The international financial crisis symbolized by the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in 2008, has strengthened the impression of the predominance and overdominance of financial activities in the economies. As Petty-Clark’s rule suggests, human economic activities in the developed economies have gradually shifted from the primary industries such as ag-

<sup>1</sup>In this paper, ‘Africa’ implies Sub-Saharan Africa and will be used interchangeably.





**Figure 1.** Value-added by the Service sector (% of GDP), selected groups

Source: *World Development Indicators 2019*.

riculture to manufacturing and then to service. As Figure 1 shows, however, the recent increase of the share of value-added by the service sector in GDP is a universal phenomenon, not only in the developed economies.

Since the Industrial Revolution started in Britain, until the high economic growth period in the post-WWII, the manufacturing or ‘industry’ has been the main engine of the growth in the developed economies. ‘Industrialization’ was also a synonym to ‘economic development’ for the developing economies in the post-war period. In 1973, Daniel Bell discussed the coming of post-industrial society by focusing on the transformation of society in developed countries (Bell 1973). Rodrik (2016) points out that in the 1950s the employment in the manufacturing sector already started to decline in the United States, and the decline in manufacturing employment and also its output share were more rapid in the United Kingdom. Related to this point, Rowthorn and Ramaswamy (1999) also discuss the decline in employment in the manufacturing sector in the developed economies. While the increasing international linkage and globalization of the value chain seem to contribute to the de-industrialization of employment in advanced economies, they argue that the shift of production site explains only a part of the decline in manufacturing employment. On the other hand, Palma (2005) draws on Rowthorn and Ramswamy (1999) and discusses the rapid decreases in employment in the manufacturing sector in the various economies in the world. He summarizes the existing hypothesis for the reasons for de-industrialization, including the one which attributes the productivity growth in the manufacturing sector, which is supported by labor-saving technologies, and also added one based on the Dutch



disease explanation as another trigger of de-industrialization.

While most of the de-industrialization argument is based on the advanced countries, Rodrik (2016) argues that developing economies are facing de-industrialization, and the peak of the manufacturing growth is even lower than the level in which the developed economies experienced. He especially points to the fact that most of the African countries started to de-industrialize before they achieve any form of development in the manufacturing industry, thus ‘premature de-industrialization.’

The African premature de-industrialization argument by Rodrik (2016) is consistent with the macroeconomic transition of the African countries to a ‘service-led growth.’ The service sector includes various sub-industries, but for the African economies, the breakdown of the service sector is especially transportation, low-skilled services, and financial services. The rise of transportation service can be seen as a reflection of infrastructure development and increasing transactions of goods and people across the continent. However, the growth of the service sector cannot be simply celebrated as the ‘reap-flogging’ development patterns of the African countries. For example, a case study of Ghana below will show that the increase in financial institutions contributed to the current growth, but the financial service is not linked to long-term investment. In this regard, the recent transition can be put as a specific form of African financialization, which needs to be clearly distinguished from the conventional arguments of the financialization of the economy in the developed economies.

Braudel (1979) and Arrighi (1994) described and discussed how the global economy became dominated by capitalism and industrialization. That process and the cycle of capital accumulation and industrialization paralleled to globalization. However, as Epstein (2005) summarizes, the recent financialization discourse includes a diverse argument, aside from the discussions in terms of neoliberalism, neoclassical economics, and capitalism. For example, Dore (2000) discuss the financialization based on the study of Japanese corporations, by focusing on stock ownership and corporate governance. He points out the difference between the Anglo-Saxon type capitalism in which finance and capital (and stockholders as their owners) have more importance and the Japanese and German type of capitalism, which put more value on the welfare of employers. On the other hand, Krippner (2005) discusses the financialization of the U.S. Economy in terms of employment by sectors, the sector’s contribution to GDP, and the profit produced by the industry. She argues that even the manufacturing enterprises became to depend on financial income source, and



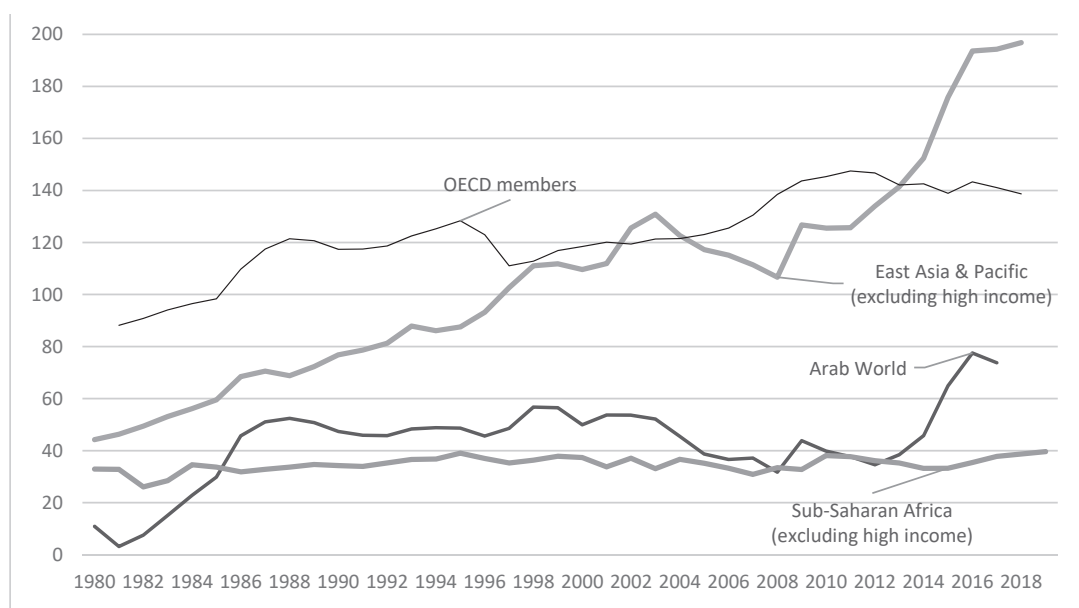
also suggests the influences of the spatial restructuring of manufacturing production and relocation of manufacturing activities. Related to these studies, Weller and O'Neill (2014) discuss the shift of the Australian economy to the one which no longer 'make things.' As Australia has a relatively large share of mining exports, the process of de-industrialization has been understood as a sort of Dutch disease, but the authors suggest a greater structural change into financialization. The dominance of the service sector in the Australian economy today gives an interesting reference for the African economies, which are dependent on natural resource export.

The financialization in the developed economies is closely related to the industrialization and de-industrialization process, and few countries have leaped from a primary economy to a financialized economy except for small countries that specialize in being financial hubs. However, as discussed below, the current African economies seem to be transforming in an unprecedented way.

## **2.2. Service-led growth in Sub-Saharan Africa**

The *World Investment Report 2014* points out the increase in the greenfield investment in the service sector to African countries (UNCTAD 2014a:10). Investment in the service sector as a value share of announced greenfield projects was 63% in 2013. This was a remarkable change, given the fact that 54% of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Africa was in the primary sector in 2004. On the other hand, the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2014* points out that service sector share in GDP and the sector's growth rate surpasses other sectors in Africa, and suggests that this service-led African growth should be problematic given the fact that service industry should not be important in the elementary phase of economic development. Thus the growth may not be stable (UNCTAD 2014b: 15). The report also suggests that the majority of the activities in the service sector are the traditional, low-skilled ones. As Figure 1 shows, the service sector share in the economy surpasses 50% in African countries in 2018. East Asian and Pacific countries have almost the same share of the service sector as Sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, though the share has been even lower than the African countries. While the detailed breakdown of the service sector should widely differ across the groups, the financial sector shares the majority. However, it is worth noting that the scale of the service sector in an economy does not necessarily reflect the degree of financial deepening. For example, Figure 2 shows the size of domestic finance. It suggests that domestic financial service is not much linked to the other activities within the African countries, and the situation has not improved. On





*Figure 2. Domestic credit provided by the financial sector (% of GDP), selected groups*

Source: *World Development Indicators 2019* (The World Bank 2019).

the other hand, domestic investments in the East Asian countries seem to be fully financed by domestic finance. This figure also suggests that the relatively high share of service sector value added in African countries reflects the weakness of other sectors, especially manufacturing but also agriculture.

If the service sector is not related to domestic investment in African countries, it deserves to ask what kind of financial service is provided. While the economic structures are diverse depending on the country, the following subsection reviews the recent restructuring in the financial sector in Ghana as a case study.

### 2.3. The financial sector and its recent restructuring in Ghana

Ghanaian financial sector is relatively stable and developed compared to other countries in the region. Since the discovery of crude oil in 2008 and the start of oil production at the end of 2011, the Ghanaian economy mainly depends on three commodities, gold, cacao, and crude oil. As shown in Figure 3, the discovery and the start of the oil production have significantly pushed up the GDP, but in general, Ghana has experienced not very high but still stable and moderate growth rates since the 1990s. However, the Ghanaian economy experienced a slump from 2013 to 2015. This was explained as a result of too high expectation for oil revenue and lower than expected revenue on the one hand and increases in official wage bills, which led to a deterioration of fiscal balance on the other. Ghanaian government asked for an International Monetary Fund stand-by facility in April 2015,



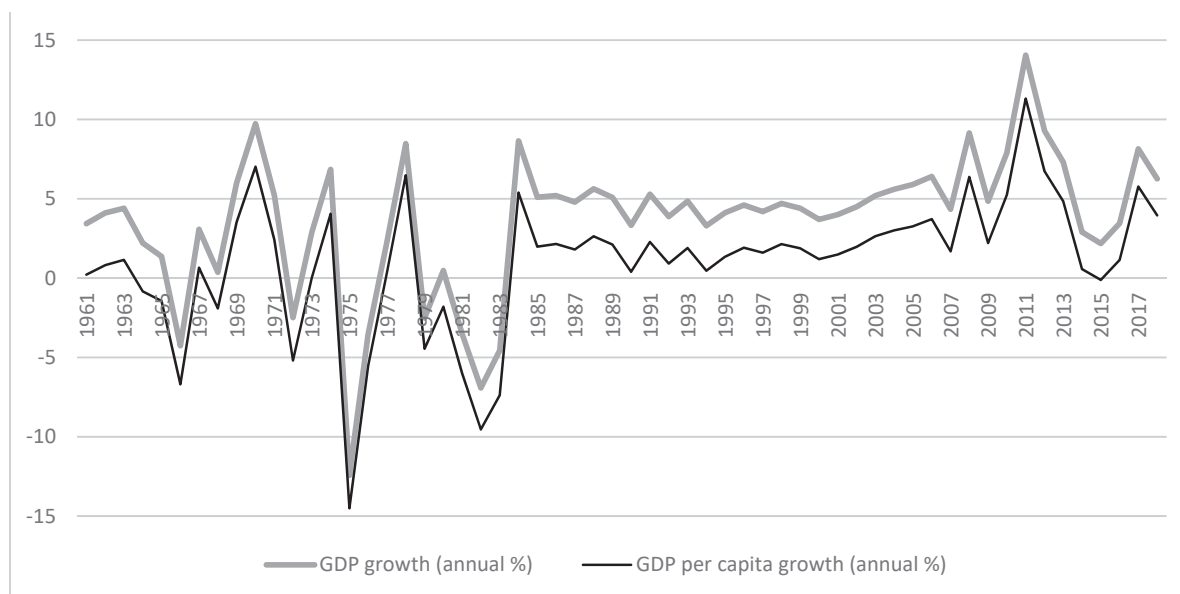


Figure 3. Ghana: GDP and GDP per capita growth

Source: *World Development Indicators 2019* (The World Bank 2019).

which amounted to about US\$925.9 million (IMF 2015). The special facility was initially termed for three years, but it was extended for additional years in 2017 and ended in April 2019 (IMF 2019).

Despite such turbulence, domestic prices have been relatively stable, though the inflation rate hovered relatively high level around 15 to 20 % annually on average in the 2000s. The relatively high inflation rate can be explained partly as the result of the old monetization rule, which allowed the government to finance up to 5% of the amount of expected tax revenue in each fiscal year. This rule is now abolished, and the inflation rate is calming down recently to 10% in 2018 and is supposed to achieve a single-digit level in 2019.

Ghanaian government succeeded in a series of issuance of the sovereign bonds in the overseas market. While this helped to relax the fiscal constraint, the accumulation of domestic and external debt is becoming a serious burden. The report on the debt sustainability analysis by the International Monetary Fund in March 2019 evaluates Ghana's risk of both the external and overall debt distress as 'high' (International Monetary Fund 2019). The International Monetary Fund reports points out that the 'substantial banking sector reforms (with nine banks resolved in 18 months) has enhanced financial stability' (*ibid.*: 8), but the cost of clearance was also a burden on the government budget.

This 'banking sector reform' can be understood as a result of the recent acceleration of financial activities. The numbers of financial institutions seem to have mushroomed since 2011. The increase in licenses is partly explained that the authority needed to include the

<sup>2</sup>The author's interview at the Bank of Ghana in August 2019.



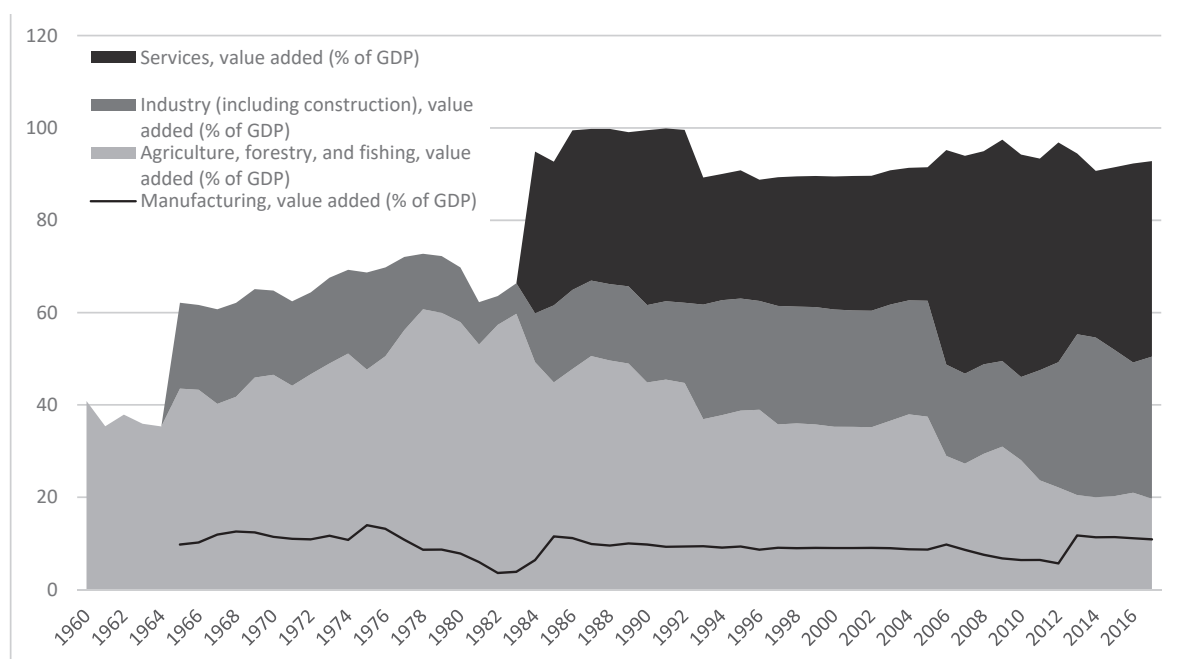


Figure 4. Ghana: Value-added share in GDP by sectors

Source: *World Development Indicators 2019* (The World Bank 2019).

Note: Agriculture includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Industry includes mining, manufacturing (also reported as a separate subgroup), construction, electricity, water, and gas. Service includes the value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care, and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges and import duties. For more details, see the metadata of the *World Development Indicators*.

existing financial institutions under the supervision of the authority<sup>2</sup>. The proliferated financial institutions soon started to show problems such as increases in fraud, a ponzi scheme, and misappropriation of deposit money in some financial institutions (The World Bank 2016). The problems in the financial sector seem to have emerged already in 2015. However, the systematic clearance and reform had to wait until 2017, after the presidential election in 2016. The financial sector clean-up was completed in 2019 August. As Table 1 shows, in total, more than 400 financial-related licenses were revoked. The numbers of financial institutions almost halved through the clearing process, but it is still too many for an economy with 29 million people with per capita GDP just around 1800 USD. Through the author's interviews in Ghana, number of finance-related people suggested that other financial sectors such as rural and community banks, as well as the credit unions which are so far not supervised by the Central Bank but under the Ministry of Employment and Labour relations (Department of Cooperatives), also have problems in deterioration of balance sheets. Their problems are yet to be addressed. What Table 1 suggests is the proliferation of financial institutions. However, financial institutions usually do not offer long-term credit. The Bank of Ghana does not provide any report on non-banks, but the



operational structure seems to be diverse across the banks and non-banks even within the same category. However, the average loan size seems to be small, and long-term loans are not easily obtainable, and the interest rate is quite high, usually more than 20 to 30% annually<sup>3</sup>. One of the reasons for the absence of relatively long-term lending is a lack of collateral and high risk for default, as one of the main problems in the financial sector in Ghana is the high non-performing loan ratio. It is worth noting that several credit unions that are formed based on the work-places offer relatively long-term credits, usually up to one year but sometimes three years. The close ties and relationship between the credit union members enable the relatively low cost of information and low default rate.

Despite the banking reforms and revocations of licenses from 2017 to 2019, the Ghanaian economy did not show any major economic panic or related collapse of businesses. This may be because the affected depositors are small in numbers and size. The influence by the collapse of the other smaller financial institutions may be minimal, as more than 80% of the assets in the financial sector in Ghana is occupied by the major universal banks. Moreover, regarding the banking reforms, the government's remedies were well trusted. Depositors did not fear of the loss of money, and thus there were no bank runs. However, a more crucial point should be that most of the financial institutions in trouble were not much engaged in extending credit to real business<sup>4</sup>. This suggests the very weak linkage between the financial sector and the real economy in Ghana.

The issuance of licenses to the microfinance companies, the majority of which operated traditionally as *Susu* collectors (traditional money lenders), can be understood just as a superficial formalization of the traditional finance but not a process of the financial deepening. The mass revocation of the licenses of those microfinance institutions should be thus regarded not as a crisis in a formal economy but rather as a failure in formalization of traditional money lending. Another crucial point is that the proliferation of financial service, that is, the financialization in Ghana, does not contribute to better access to credit for investment, as the majority of loans are short term. This is a reflection of the socio-economic aspect of recent financial sector reform in Ghana, as the economy is de-industrializing and turning to be service-led, where the service is financial services. The booming in financial activities and stagnation of industry and agriculture in Ghana is evident from Figure 4. While the share of value-added by industry increases recently, this is led by mining investment and the construction of infrastructure. As the solid line at the bottom shows, the

<sup>3</sup>Based on author's interviews in the rural banks, community banks, microfinance institutions, and credit unions in August-September 2018 and 2019.

<sup>4</sup>Based on the author's interview at Ghana Microfinance Institution Network (GHAMFIN) in August 2019.



*Table 1.* The number of financial institutions in Ghana

Category	Licenses <i>revoked</i> : 2017-2019	Currently licensed
Universal banks	9	24
Microfinance companies	347	137
Microcredit companies	39	31
Savings and Loans	23	25
Others		175
total	418	392

Source: The Bank of Ghana HP, *Supervision and Regulation*.

Note: The list of licensed institutions is as of the end of November 2019. There are currently 14 categories for the financial institutions in Ghana, and all but 419 Forex bureaus are included as Others.

manufacturing share in the economy on average stays the same for more than 50 years.

In contradiction to the increase in the service sector share in the economy, the capital market in Ghana is dormant, and the interbank market is limited to that of foreign exchange. Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) was established in 1989, and there are several listed companies. However, as Figure 5 shows, the stock movement is shallow, as most of the stocks are that of the mining companies and transnationals, which has their historical roots since the colonial era. The stockholders are fixed, and those are not traded. GSE started the second-tier market (Ghana Alternative Market) for the start-ups, trying to foster the entrepreneurship in Ghana. It also runs start-up programs. However, not many enterprises have completed the fostering process, and there are only five companies listed in the second-tier market<sup>5</sup>. The weak functioning of the capital market as an intermediary of a financial resource implies that credit availability is almost limited to bank loans or loans from non-banks such as the credit unions, which are so far officially not “financial institutions.”

The financialization of the Ghanaian economy is not led by the financial activities typical in the developed economies such as securities trading or active interbank tradings. The financialization in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa is a reflection of the formalization of traditional financial activities, which is typically in the form of a small amount, relationship-based, and short-term credit.

### 3. The missing link

The Ghanaian example suggests that the recent rise of the service sector in African countries is led by the proliferation or formalization of financial activities. This African type fin-

<sup>5</sup> Author’s interview at the Ghana Stock Exchange in August and September 2018.



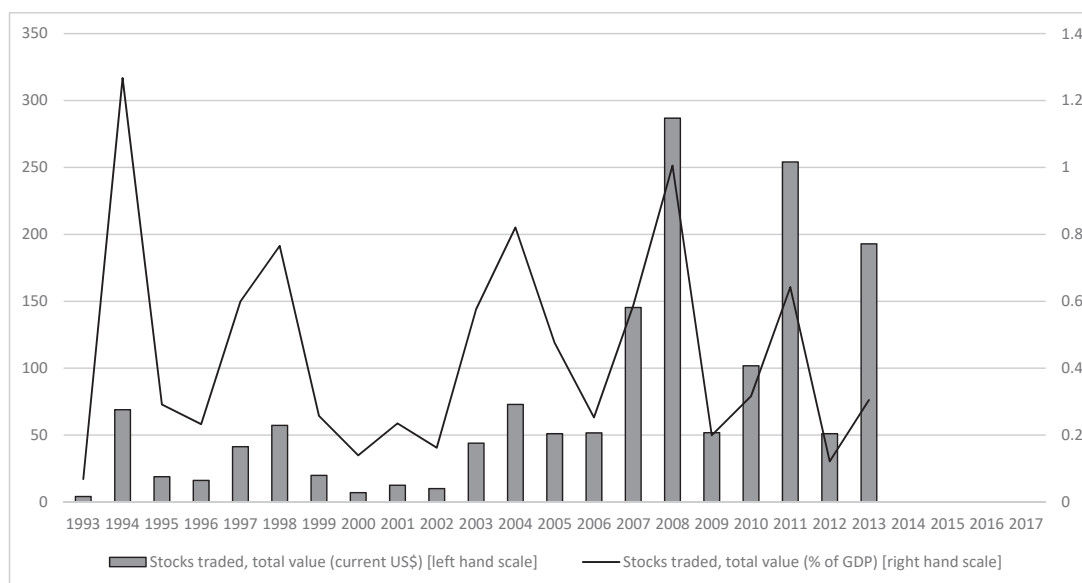


Figure 5. Ghana: Stock traded

Source: *World Development Indicators 2019* (The World Bank 2019).

The total values are in millions of US\$ (bars, left-hand scale), and shares are in percentage (line, right-hand scale). The statistics since 2014 are not reported.

ancialization is also deeply linked to the de-industrialization of African economies. Here, the focus is on the short-term credit or the absence of long-term credit, and the linkage between the industry, namely the manufacturing, and the financial intermediation service.

### 3.1. Industrialization and the financial sector

The saving mobilization is a necessary process in the industrialization of a country, and the financial system which intermediates the savings into investment is also crucial in industrialization. Teranishi (1991) discusses the industrialization and the role of the financial system, suggesting the importance of long-term capital in the stage of industrialization through technology transfer from the industrialized countries. Teranishi argues that in most developing countries, credits provided in the private financial sector are limited to short term. As manufacturing technology is transferred, the demand for long-term financing rapidly increases, but the supply of long term credit is very limited. Moreover, the accumulation of information and the information market is also absent. Teranishi terms this dual absence as ‘market failure’ and thus argues the importance of policy finance. The absence of the information market here should also include the underdevelopment and low adoption of accounting and auditing.

While Teranishi does not explicitly suggest, one related issue here is the lack of institutions that enable access to collateral. Feder *et al.* (1988), Besley (1995) and Feder and



Nishio (1999) discuss the importance of land property rights as collateral to obtain credit for investment. Their focus is more on the linkages between agricultural land property rights, which functions as collateral and availability of credit for agricultural investment to enhance the productivity and the protection for the landless poor. However, the land property rights of non-agricultural land and investment in non-agricultural production are also critical because, in the industrialization process, capitals are required in relatively large size and for the long term, which usually needs to be collateralized when obtained as debt. As discussed in the next subsection, land property rights seem to be vital in promoting long-term contracts, especially in terms of credit transfer.

### **3.2. Land reform and long-term capital market**

Land reform, especially the agrarian land reform, has been one of the main topics in economic and social development. For example, a now-industrialized country, Japan, had a drastic agrarian reform between the 1940s and 50s. Japanese land reform was implemented in the aftermath of the WWII when the whole nation was still staggered in a shock. The principle of the Japanese agrarian reform was to allocate a land title to each tenant farmer to improve the productivity of land and also to alleviate poverty in the rural area (Dore 1959, Hayami and Ruttan 1971). It is well known that Japanese agrarian reform was strongly influenced by the GHQ/SCAP, which represented the U.S. view (Kawagoe 1995). The idea behind the reform was that the individual land property right would correctly incentivize the farmers to invest in the land and improve the agricultural productivity, which in turn leads to the alleviation of poverty in the rural area.

This view is also represented by the international organization which supports the economic and social development of the developing nations in the post-war period. The logic that individual property rights are the fundamental parts of the institution which promotes an effective resource allocation and growth is rooted in the neoliberalist, neo-classical, and institutional views (North 1990, Feder and Nishio 1999, De Soto 2000). Feder and Nishio (1999) are based on field surveys in villages around the world and argue that land title contributes to the improved access to cheaper credit. The linkage between land property rights and access to credit is also stressed by Deininger (2003). On this point, Chimhowu and Woodhouse (2006) provide a valuable review regarding the confronting views between the one which promotes private land property rights and the one which supports the communal land system.



More relevant to the discussion here is that land as collateral enables to lengthen the lending term. As Biswanger and Rosenzweig (1986) discuss, the characteristics of land as collateral is suitable for long term contract; land as collateral last for a long time; is immobile; and needs no maintenance (Byamugisha 1999, Feder and Nishio 1999). If land property rights support and foster the provision of long-term credit, this is also closely linked to industrial investment. Indeed, the agricultural finance cycle heavily depends on the seasonal cycle of planting and harvesting, and a creditor needs to grant relatively a long-period until the borrower can harvest and sell the products in the market so that the debtor can pay back the debt. However, industrial investment, especially manufacturing, often requires an even longer period until the initial investment starts to make a profit.

The mere existence of land as collateral does not automatically provide long term capital. For example, Iijima (1952) discusses the role of financial service at the agrarian reform and modernization of agriculture in Japan during the post-war period. He points out that the agrarian land reform and allocation of land titles enabled access to credit with the land as collateral. However, the credit was short-term, and thus it was not invested but instead functioned as consumer's credit. Moreover, Agricultural Land Law in Japan restricted land transactions beyond the regulated land scale, which practically limited the usage of agricultural land as collateral (Kudo 1974). In the Japanese case, the government established a policy finance institution, the Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries Finance Corporation, in 1953, which operated until dissolution and integration to another policy finance institution, the Japan Finance Corporation, in 2008. The Corporation extended credit based on policy finance, which enabled the long term credit to the agricultural sector. Kudo (1974) suggests that the establishment of the specialized policy finance institution also shifted agricultural promotion from the dependence on agricultural subsidy to policy lending, which helped to ease the fiscal burden.

This example suggests that the establishment of land property rights does not simply guarantee the availability of long-term credit to agriculture. The same logic applies to the provision of long term capital for investment in the manufacturing industry. Again, Japanese experience suggests the importance of the role played by the policy finance institutions which enabled especially long-term finance for the industrial sectors of national priority (Teranishi 1995; Hoshi and Kashyap 2001).



### 3.3. The African dual system

While some view that African land reform is incomplete, the situation can also be viewed as a dual system. That is, current land ownership in most of the African countries still retains ‘customary relations’ (Amanor 2018), and this can be interpreted that the situation reflects the integration of traditional society into ‘statutory land administration.’ The dual administration system with traditional chieftainship can also be a symbol of the harmonization of the modern and western system and African tradition. However, the conservation of traditional political power and culture means the conservation of traditional and communal land ownership, which maintains the ambiguity in land ownership. This strictly limits the function of land as an asset, which severely harms the development of the capital market. The consequence of the absence of long-term capital market is the current low investment, especially in the sector that requires investment for the long-term, represented by private corporations and firms in the manufacturing sector.

Related to this point, Chimhowu and Woodhouse (2006) discuss whether a government should consolidate the customary land system or establish the private land property rights for the promotion of land transfer and alleviation of rural poverty. They alert that communal property rights and the traditional mechanism of land transfer need to be readdressed, and suggest a possibility to maintain communal land ownership. However, It is worth distinguishing the difference between the physical utility of agricultural land and the utility to provide an intangible asset. A Tenure, namely physical usage of a part of the land, can be exclusive to the current tenant even under an ambiguity of communal land ownership once the land is already occupied. On the other hand, usage of land as collateral cannot be physically exclusive to one user, and there is a risk that under an ambiguous land ownership, more than one person or group uses a piece of land as collateral. This point parallels the argument by De Soto (2000). Land, forest, and other resources that are abundant in developing countries are not used as assets. As he puts it, a resource’s material life can be separated from the resource’s life as asset. In relation to the financial system, registration of land ownership enables the land to become an asset while the physical usage parallels the functioning as an asset, but the land property rights need to be established as an individual’s right.

### 4. Tentative remarks: The limit of a service-led growth

As discussed above, the de-industrialization in Sub-Saharan Africa and the financialization seem to have the same root. The ambiguity of land property rights determines the current



situation where the long-term credit market is absent, and this means a very limited long-term investment in industries, especially manufacturing. Low domestic investment is one of the causes of premature de-industrialization in Africa. On the other hand, the recent service-led growth in Africa is a result of financialization. Again, this financialization is not based on long-term investment but rather short-term credit, and the proliferation of small scale financial institutions. In the absence of long-term credit, economic activity needs to be short-term, and financial activity in the style of money-creates-money is an easy way for the ones who have access to a certain amount of capital.

When the retention of customary land system in Africa is viewed as the result of refusal of western-style capitalism, then, the current ‘premature financialization’ in African countries is the ironic ‘reap-frogging’ to ‘post-industrial’ style of capitalist society where increasing number of people depend on short-term debt, and where financial activities dominate the economy.

An alternative way to understand the recent financialization of Africa is to see the growth as superficial. That is, recent financial-led growth in Africa is, in fact, as a result of formalization of the already existed informal financial activities and not a practical increase in value-added. This is a crucial point in the recent financialization in Ghana: Among the communal system of the society, only the service for short term credit was formalized while other related factors such as land ownership, private property rights, and other information still remain informal. It is worth noting that aside from financial services, the traditional informal service sector in developing countries is still significant, especially in the urban areas where many people work in the service sector, such as vendors on the streets or at kiosks, taxi drivers, and hairdressers. Here, the argument on the credibility of the African statistics by Jerven (2009, 2013) has a significant relevance, as such informal economic activities are usually not reflected in the statistics of GDP.

A looming question which needs to be asked is whether current service-led growth is a real growth, and whether this is sustainable. The case of Australia, which also experiences contraction in the manufacturing sector and a shift to a service and mining-led economy, is a reference for the African countries. The service sector’s contribution to the Australian was accounted to be 79% in 2017 (Office of the Chief Economist 2018). The service industry is supported by high-quality Australian institutions, especially the internationally competitive educational system which is supplying the highly skilled and specialized workers into the domestic service sector. While the Australian type of service-led growth can be a model for the African countries, there are many challenges to overcome.



As Weller and O’neill (2014) cite, the question for Australia is whether they wish to be an economy that ‘still make things.’ On the other hand, the question African countries need to ask is whether they wish to be an economy that *never and ever* makes things. As Rodrik (2016) points out, premature de-industrialization is problematic for the developing economies, as the manufacturing sector usually induces higher labor productivity, absorbs mass unskilled workers, and enables the production of tradable which can be sold in the external market. Dismissing the development of manufacturing is stepping out of the ‘quintessential escalator’ (*ibid.*, 3).

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# **Patterns of strategic interactive politics in transitioning states: The case of post-conflict Sierra Leone and the challenge of the management of development aid**

Emmanuel Vincent Nelson Kallon

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

## **Abstract**

This essay situates causal explanation on how the use of strategic interactions in the mainstream politics of aid dependent states that have weak institutional structures, and mostly in transition from post-conflict to relative stability, challenge the management of development aid in those societies. Building on the case study of Sierra Leone, this study argues that, strategic interactions within the politics of the post-conflict governments resulted into a pattern of instrumentalized policy manipulation between political parties, policies that eventually metamorphosed into the government development tool but not fundamentally founded on national development framework. This strategic political interaction posed a systematic threat and challenged the management of development aid in Sierra Leone, where in the post-conflict period, the country experienced massive aid but development remained stagnated.

**Keywords:** strategic interactions, development aid, Sierra Leone, policies, political parties



## 1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyze how the pattern of strategic interactions between two post-conflict political party policy frameworks in Sierra Leone that were metamorphosed into the formation of postwar governments from 2002 to 2018, on which development assistance was concentrated conceived could enhance national development and the consolidation of liberal peacebuilding for the enhancement of social change in the country, became the principal challenge of the management of development aid in the country.

Several decades since its emergence, development assistance has been widely debated across diverse development-oriented disciplines, particularly with reference to developing countries where its engagement during both the post-independence and post-cold era has been expansively remarkable. With contemporary context of development assistance discourse in the aftermath of post-cold war, countries transitioning from the devastation of intra-state post-conflict wars or societies confronted with excruciating endogenous development dilemma, the notion of development assistance has been conceived as an integral pillar which can largely effects a social change in the social structural challenges of these societies, especially challenges hovering on underdevelopment, economic stagnation, poverty, and the overall management of a functional state for the sustenance of global stability etc.

Firmly established within the global development discourse, development assistance has become an embodiment of the United Nations system, and its reflection among others was made perceptible in the outcome of the United Nations World Summit in 2005, where it became exposed that ‘peace and security and development and human rights, in particular are cogitated as interconnected elements and therefore reciprocally reinforcing’ (Gisselquist 2018, United Nations 2018, Wennmann 2009: 83). Recognition of development assistance for liberal post-conflict peacebuilding, the United Nations established Peacebuilding Commission in 2005 through which countries in transition from war to stability are financially assisted as a pillar to prevent post-conflict degeneration into fresh warfare (Scott 2012). This has also been part of the international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and also through bilateral and regional means. Thus, development assistance has remained to be conceived as one of the most post-cold war development methodologies situated both in the post-conflict and in an underdeveloped context characterize with harsh socio-economic difficulties, and are countries found in what Paul Collier pigeon-holed as ‘Bottom Billion,’ where unstable democratization, underdevelopment and instabilities have remained rife (see Collier 2007). Moreover, beyond this conceived normative construct of development assistance for the less developed countries, the outcome itself has yielded insignificant consequent particularly spanning the several decades of its existence in the aid dependent countries, where many Sub-Saharan Africa countries being a typical archetype.



Thus, this chapter asserts that a profound appreciation of development assistance management challenge in aid driven societies particularly of the Sub-Saharan Africa region cannot be fully conceptualized without due consideration of the political environment and the behavioral patterns of existing political party system that form the political environment and of which, political parties are institutions of human creation that often metamorphosed into the formation of government at state level. Political parties and the pattern of strategic politics underlined in their practices in the less democratized environment, provides unique conceptual argument on the challenge of the management of development aid. This endogenous propositional assertion does not imply however that, exogenous variables are not causally significant in the analysis of the challenge of aid in the recipient states. Yet, the argument infers that the appreciation of the complex endogenous variables from the viewpoint of domestic politics, is an essential foundation to better acknowledge the patterns of the existential challenge sometimes pose by externalities.

Institutions, noted Karol Soltan (2008:60), are an outcome of politics, and as outcome of such complex interactions it can be destabilizing, in the senses that, it has the proclivity to scuttled 'social order.' Political parties as institutions of the state are an outgrowth of human interactions, a pattern reflected is the policies professed within them. Institutional policies or political party campaigned policies as an embodiment are what metamorphosed into the formation of state government policies within which development assistance largely operates in the transformation of societies. This means that aid provided to recipient states falls within the current political agenda or policies of the political regime and in many countries, incumbent government demands development aid donors to aligned aid projects or assistance within their current government policies, and this has become largely a kind of modus operandi taken for granted in many societies, including Sierra Leone. But the foundational policies inherent within state political parties that metamorphosed into full time government policies of countries in the less democratized and heterogeneous environment, have largely not been founded on a national development framework.

In a widely polarized environment challenge by problem of societal cohesion, and increased penchant for particularities that appears to be deeply rooted, instrumentalization of political party policies within the political structure by the political actors through strategic interactive means are what informed the pattern of governance of those societies not necessary to effect change but as conduit through which they could have access to the state economic opportunities over other adherents. The context of post-conflict Sierra Leone provides this typical example, where political parties between the period 2002 to 2018 projected policies that have been utilized as government tools that attracted huge development assistance superficially conceived might lead to fundamental social change as a post-conflict country, nonetheless, its post-conflict development remains stagnated and one of the poorest countries in the Sub-Saharan Region. Thus, the central question of this essay is: To what extent were the policies or campaigned manifestoes of the successive political parties that



metamorphosed into the formation of post-conflict governments from 2002 to 2018 in Sierra Leone on which development aid was largely concentrated, built on a national development framework or a national buy-in?

Causal explanation of social phenomenon is fundamental and foundational for a scholarly inquiry. Particularly at societal level, causal explanation of social phenomenon has been viewed from wide-ranging perspectives. Two excerpts from such context is typical in the analytical viewpoint by Emile Durkheim on one hand, and Georg Simmel and Max Weber on the other etc. For Emile Durkheim, he has long postulated that ‘institutions, roles, rules and structures’ of societal settings are the integral pillars that should set the agenda for the understanding of society and not individual concentration in analytical inquiry (Barney and Felin 2013:139). For Georg Simmel and Max Weber, individual actors are the fundamental pillars for social inquiries. This context implies that, the creed, inclinations, and interest of actors in society are the useful insight from within which concepts of social structures have emerged and evolved (Barney and Felin 2013:139). These two phenomena explain the complexity of society, and largely so for causality analysis. The current chapter complementarily builds on both patterns to interchangeably present the study on Sierra Leone, as its combination provides an instructive insight in the appreciation of complex societal phenomenon.

Social structures often associated with societies are merely an outcome of social interactions, and not as fundamentally a natural given condition. This pattern is beyond the naturalistic or positivist perspectives where social phenomenon can be taken for granted as a natural given pattern. Such perspective underestimates essential interactions within societies, and the outcome of those interactions that invariably result into structures. This essay conceives that conceptualizing the dilemma of development assistance particularly for countries in transition, either from a post-conflict or underdeveloped into a stable or developed country, can be profoundly instructive and compelling when extensive analysis focused on the strategic interactive behavioral pattern between domestic political parties of aid dependent states. These are generally not a naturally given adhesion, but a socially constructed pattern and structure as outcome of societal interactions of actors.

Conceptually, the concept of strategic interaction is a widely used analytical framework explaining foundational social phenomenon of societies, particularly regarding actor’s calculation that culminate to social structures in society. Sociologist Erving Goffman provided the theoretical inference of strategic interaction as:

‘... a situation of two or more parties find themselves in a well-structured condition of mutual impingement where each party must take a move and where every possible move carries fateful implications for all the parties. In this situation, each player must influence his own decision by his knowing that the other players are likely to try to dope out his decision in advance, and may even appreciate that he knows this is likely.



Courses of action or moves will then be made in light of one's thoughts about the other's thoughts about oneself. An exchange of moves made on the basis of this kind of orientation to self and others can be called strategic interaction... Strategic interaction also involves decision making- decision made by directly orienting oneself to the other parties and giving weight to their situation as they would seem to see it, including their giving weight to one's own. The special possibilities that result from this mutually assessed mutual assessment, as these effect the fate of the parties, provide reason and grounds for employing the special perspectives of strategic interaction' (Goffman 1969: 100-101).

Building on this concept, the case study on Sierra Leone is aptly situated. Following the aftermath of the civil war in Sierra Leone in 2002, the political climate in which post-conflict political parties emerged and operated was characterized by an extreme competitive political practice and this was largely informed by the unbridled anticipation of political parties to secure control of the political space at any cost, particularly given the context that in the post-conflict era, politics was conceived as the means to the only state political economy and its access would imply excessive power and control of state finance and regulation of the political and economic behavior of others. A country such as Sierra Leone, unlike other societies characterized by diversified economic generation, it is politics that became the main political economy and it came to be considered as the mainstay for political actors to exercise their power and control. However, the political environment in the post-conflict period dictated changed in the pattern of political practice. Political parties were confronted with the challenge of fundamental social structural change at party and at national level. The challenge of social change was confronted with their adherence to the liberal post-conflict political democratization, and development normative policies at the level of political party policies or in campaign manifestoes that became as significant for political parties in order for their continued relevance in the political configuration for peacebuilding.

On the basis of this trend, strategically instrumentalized policy approaches were variedly adopted by the two main political parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party and the All People's Congress Party on which policies of governments were constituted between 2002 and 2018. As this chapter argues, none of these policies adopted within these periods at the political party level which eventually metamorphosed into government policies were fundamentally founded on a cohesive national development framework by the successive political regimes. Rather, their used were merely a pattern of strategic interactions instrumentally employed in the immediate post-war political governance system as a calculative conduit merely to have accessed to state power in which development aid was hugely deployed for post-conflict development, as aid became mainly the central post-conflict political economy of the country extremely relied upon within the state politics.



Additionally, on account of the strategic interactive pattern employed within the type political system, resulted to an uncoordinated development policy linkage between the political parties, as gaining political power became much paramount than on collaborative agenda for post-conflict peacebuilding within the political circle. For instance, development policies pursued by one political party in one political regime often immediately become irrelevant or repudiated by another political party that succeeds the regime. Such pattern, because of the cohesive absence of national development approach it became a recurrent practice that has defined the pattern of the political culture. Tracing the challenge of the management of development aid in the immediate post-conflict Sierra Leone cannot be unconnected to the policy environment within successive governments. Generally, collaborative agenda within the political space across parties was seen could undermine political party support base and by extension reduce membership representation in party strongholds. The choice of building on a disjointed policy approach to maintain status quo has been taken for granted within the nature of the political practice and have remained largely informed by ethnic and regional identity manipulation as a means of party policy advocacy to elections as oppose cross-cutting policy ideas for national development. Consequently, the challenge of the management of development aid in Sierra Leone, is characterized by a deeply-rooted policy failure, as existed policies at governmental level are informed by political party policies instrumentally designed as an outgrowth of the strategic interactive pattern used as channel for the sole purpose of capturing the political space.

In their work, ‘Aid, Policies and Growth,’ Craig Burnside and David Dollar (2000) established firm causal association between aid and policies, and showcase how such correlation bolster development in aid recipient states. Burnside and Dollars examined fifty recipient countries in the period between 1970s and 1993, and they specifically focused on the pattern of the existing regulatory framework in those societies with the impacts of development assistance. The scholars statistically concluded that, provision of development assistance in a state where effective and systematic regulatory framework does not exist, aid could therefore not create impact. The implication of their conclusion is that, transformation and effectiveness of development assistance is largely dependent on effective policy environment, and usually policy environment is defines by the nature of the political system that exist, and the structured pattern on which the government is constituted. Particularly with the party system in Africa, Carrie Manning (2016:101-112) described it as entirely different from those of the advanced democracies. Manning referred to the pattern of Africa political system as ‘politically polarized immutably structured along cleavage lines.’ This pattern of fixated Africa political system could be considered as challenging to the trend of social change in the politics and governance of many of her societies.

Sierra Leone in its post-conflict political system structurally patterned along strategic interaction where ethnoregional-neopatrimonial (Kallon 2020) phenomenon is deeply established in the governance system as a political culture, such feature undermines effective policy guidance on



national development framework in which development aid management is perceived could enhance growth and consolidate peace. Also, the flourish of strategic interaction by political actors informed mainly by extreme penchant for economic gains than on collaborative policy for strategic development could also largely undermine the management of development assistance. The challenge of the management of development aid has been reflected in the range of so-called development policies adopted and progressed since 2002 to 2018, by the pattern of the political parties.

The essay used a qualitative methodological approach in data gathering, and in analysis. Random and purposeful instruments were used in this process for data gathering from the field research conducted through an unstructured interview as data collection method that was meant purely not to fundamentally guide this work but to merely gauge the different perspectives. However, large desk review and relevant archival literature, participant observation, scholarly books and modicum internet sources formed the bedrock for the data sources that informed the analysis of this study. The subsequent sections of this chapter have two sections. In section one, it discussed briefly the historical antecedent of development assistance ontology, and some of the main conceptual scholarly debates. In section two, it outlines Sierra Leone within the current debates on aid, and the mechanism through which the challenge of the management of development aid in the country have been patterned and conceptualized. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

## **2. Summarized overview of development assistance in historical context**

From historic account, development assistance became extremely notable following the end of World War II, where massive devastation was bequeathed on Western Europe, and through which the agenda of ‘Marshall Plan’ emerged to accelerate reconstruction through massive economic assistance as means of recovery process. The Marshall Plan was conceived as a bold economic policy of development assistance for reconstruction, of which the sum of ‘US\$ 13 billion’ was committed in rebuilding Western Europe from 1948 to 1951 that was administered through the Economic Cooperation Administration (DeLong and Eichengreen 1991, Picard and Karasia 2015: 11-24).

Moreover, the United States in the form of development assistance also economically assisted Japan, its former war enemy for reconstruction which laid the model for what development assistance would be conceptualized. Nonetheless, beyond this minimal viewport, the broader agenda of the extensive economic assistance to Japan and Western Europe reconstruction was also not without political ideological interest, as was also geared towards conflating alliances against the Soviet Union Communist ideological penetration from establishing global impact during the emergence of postwar squabbles, dubbed as the Cold War confrontation (Picard and Karasia 2015:11-24). Followed to the Marshall Plan, was the Point Four Program as a Foreign Policy orientation, that was also intellectualized within development assistance of President, Harry S. Truman, of the United States, built upon technical international development assistance but strategically deeply rooted in interest-



based conceptualization (Picard and Karasia 2015, Zeiler 2015).

Development assistance of the Point Four Program mainly in the form of technical assistance which began in earnest 1949-1950, coincided with wave of independence of which the newly independent states were considered within the spate of political correctness, but strategically as those in dire need of development, especially in Africa, Latin America and some locations in Asia, which beneath it was also a strategy to curb communist amplification among these newly independent states especially in the wake of colonial disintegration. As noted by Jacob J. Kaplan (1950):

‘We are living through a period of international crisis during which our economic strength is one of the most effective tools we have for promoting peace. United States Foreign Aid has been a powerful instrument for strengthening orderly social processes in an era during which the exploitation of poverty, of bleak economic horizons, and of frustration of even modest national aspirations threatens both our national security and the peace of the world.’

Whilst development assistance in many respects was perceived as having undisguised ideological undertone on its onset, yet, was also phenomenal in responding to the less developed societies as stark underdevelopment was conceived as threat to global stability and peace. This led to the need for development assistance expansion in orientation particularly towards structural transformation in the economic and political context of these less developed states in which, concept of modernization became the catchy phrase (Picard and Karasia 2015). But in the Africa continent and in the wave of the postwar II climate, such pattern and advocacy began in earnest after the end of the Cold war tension in the 1989.

Tracing development assistance in Africa is dated as far back to many centuries ago. Yet, at bilateral level prominent and outstanding process tracing of its tracking have come to be distinctly centered particularly around the era of Cold War, when the East and West Bloc propped different political regimes during the wave of political ideological contestations for alliance formation (Schraeder *et.al* 1998, Boschini and Olofsgard 2007, Ball and Johnson 1996). Equally important within such era, was also the economic leitmotif considered as strong underpinned factor that attracted earliest foreign aid operationalization in Africa. This is noted in the work by Peter J. Schraeder, Steven W. Hook and Bruce Taylor (1998), which noted Japan’s foreign aid intensification to Africa as largely driven by economic interest especially in 1980s, that were predicated on the need for ‘raw materials like copper, uranium and chromium from Zambia, Niger and Madagascar etc., and market,’ whilst at the same time, foreign assistance from France, as noted by the authors, was concentrated towards its former colonized states and other French speaking countries as underlined strategy in consolidating ‘French cultural nationalism’ (1998:312-319). From the perspective of rational choice



argument, it is explicit that the authors emphasized among others the underlined conceptualization of assistance development especially from historical context and its evolution inherent within an interdependent relationship.

At the multinational level, development assistance in Africa beginning 1980s was largely linked with structural adjustment program, instituted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in which structural conditionalities became the main linchpin for the devolution of development assistance in Africa, some part in Asia and Latin America. In the post-cold war, its largely appeared that development assistance within such epistemological advancement have not been compelling, but seems to be linked towards some assumed strands of development undertone, nonetheless, it was still very critical and widely ambivalent whether development assistance have any correctional link to development, particularly in the states it is meant to be impactful.

Perhaps, taking from the context of cold war experiences in the context of path dependent perspective, this critical juncture period could underline why numerous scholarly accounts remain sustained in arguments about development assistance as purely along principles of interest (Mckinlay and Little 1978, Griffin and Enos 1970, Boschini and Olofsgard 2007, Maizels and Nissanke 1984). At the same time, extended arguments around its utilization and interaction is believed to be conceptualized along reciprocal approach mainly between givers and receivers (Alesina and Dollar 2000). These deeply rooted phenomenal viewpoints have remained firmly established in dominant literatures on development theories between the interaction of both the global north and the global south states, and for the most part, have also progressed within the analysis of the behavioral pattern of the newly emerging countries from the global south which set forth to becoming major players within the donors' club circle. Also, the relationship between development assistance and national growth of recipient countries has not been feasible in realistic term, if any, it widely undermines it (Griffin and Enos 1970).

In the apparent post-conflict countries, particularly in intra-state postwar climate type of the developing countries characterized by complex emergencies of war devastation, underdevelopment, and poverty etc., development assistance has been conceived as an essential pillar in their recovery processes, in particular, underscored by the motive of preventing their relapse. This notion is advanced by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2007:731-736), who noted that such intervention engendered poverty reduction and the acceleration of growth. Additionally, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler further reiterated that the sustainability of countries at war end, depends largely on effective policy development and development assistance which together combines to diminish danger of post-conflict countries from relapsing into fresh warfare (Collier and Hoeffler 2002. Also see Collier *et al.* 2003).

While such model has the tendency to yield result, nonetheless, the scholars' shortcomings lie in the challenge of concentrating more on the normative existence of policy and development aid in context, but with insignificant concentration on the effective implementation of those mechanisms.



Many post conflict countries, including Sierra Leone have had both aid and varied policies following the end of the country's civil war, however, the component of effective implementation is considered to be largely displaced. Such factor could be a demonstration of poor institutional reform where the absorptive ability from within domestic states not harnessed for a long-term liberal post-conflict peacebuilding process.

## **2.1. Contextual debates on the efficacy of development assistance**

Official Development Assistance (ODA) also known as aid or foreign assistance is characterized by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2016: 194) as 'government aid to developing countries aimed to promote economic development and welfare of recipient countries...' 'It further states that, aid may be provided bilaterally from donor to recipient or channeled through multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank or the United Nations etc...' Additionally, it also asserts that 'aid comprises grants, soft loan and provision of technical assistance,' (Also see Lancaster 1999). On account of this characterization, ODA is conceived to be apparently engrossed in a binary fusion along two continua in an asymmetric power relation, binds together on negotiated institutional power conditionalities. In development assistance discourse the strategic power relations between donors and recipient countries is made visualized through conditionalities. Conditionality in this context is illustrated by Phillip Dann (2013:360) as 'any regulations that a donor attaches unilaterally to an official development assistance payment or any sanction that it attaches to non-fulfillment.'

Therefore, development assistance and conditionalities are underscored as compatible and inseparable framework oriented towards advancing development in the developing countries of the global south. Thus, there have emerged unabated scholarly debates on what epistemological relationship underlined the ontology or reality of development assistance and its conditionality, as well as the effectiveness in the so-called recipient countries. In what appears as the critical school perspective, Gordon Crawford (1997) in his examination of development assistance with its associated conditionalities which is patterned along the political construct, opined that the associated notion of conditionality has been blatantly 'inconsistent' and 'ineffective' in the attempt towards reform agenda in the donor dependent states. On consistency, Gordon Crawford survey examined few countries on how aid conditionalities were dispensed. The conclusion of Crawford's work revealed that, the application of drastic conditionality was more pronounced in countries of less economic interest to the donors, and less or nonexistent in countries where donors have maximum economic interest, even though, as noted by Crawford, human rights and governance challenges were at an alarmed rate in such societies. For instance, he indicated that, especially in the early 1990s the case of Nigeria, Turkey, and China, suffered aid sanctions on conditionalities, whilst countries such as Indonesia, Algeria, Colombia, and Egypt amidst their reputational challenges of human rights and governance related



issues the implementation of conditionalities on aid were inconsistent in these states. On effectiveness, Gordon Crawford further specified that many conditionalities that are applied in certain countries are weak in nature, wherein certain recipient countries with influential internal mechanism such weak imposed conditionalities could not yield dividend. Finally, Gordon Crawford work attempts to point out that legitimacy is compromised on development assistance framework.

Furthermore, Tobias Hagmann and Filip Reyntjens (2016) attempted to explain how development assistance that is meant to promote reforms and development within liberal architecture, have resulted into producing strong correlation and maintenance of authoritarian regimes in Sub Saharan Africa countries. These authors accounted that, what donors have wrongly assumed as development projects in certain Sub Saharan Africa states are completely a mistaken notion to the broader objective of liberal democratic promotion. In that, the author continued, such development assistance has underpinned the consolidation of authoritarian regimes as oppose to fostering democratic consolidation, and cited the case of Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique and Ethiopia in 2013 in particular. The authors specified that, these four countries were the top highest recipients of development aid in 2013, and yet were under a single party-political system where political pluralism and dissension, considered as fundamental pillars for democratic consolidation were completely proscribed within these states. Additionally, the authors noted that from 1990s to 2013, development assistance in Sub Saharan Africa States have been realized more in countries with low adherence to political rights as oppose to those with improved adherence to these fundamental rights, hence, emphasized that in the endeavor of development promotion, development assistance has systematically consolidated authoritarian regimes than democracy. Thus, they argued that certain Sub Saharan Africa countries on aid are in the context of ‘development but without democracy.

Equally important on the continued ambivalent position on aid, is the work by Stephen Knack (2004). Stephen Knack draws to attention the question around the correlation between aid and democratization. The author argued that, development assistance has no fundamental fact that it leads to democratization in recipient states, rather, the author continued, aid merely build upon the preexisting efforts on democracy that have been in existence in those recipient states which aid relatively contributes to its promotion, and not necessarily as the source of its emergence. He advanced this argument by utilizing a multivariate test, which examined the political and civil liberty of Freedom House data set from Large-N cross country approach in the period from 1975 to 2000. Stephen Knack specified that from 1975 to 1989, aid did not establish democratization as well as in the period from 1990 to 1999, therefore, in places where much development assistance appeared to be situated with evidence of relative success, are dependent on those prior democratic advances made and not necessarily that it can be appreciated to have been occasioned by aid. The work of Stephen Knack in summary refutes arguments that have been tailored on the correlation between aid democratization as conceptually ineffective.



Also, the work by Deborah A. Brautigam and Stephen Knack (2004), profoundly underscored development assistance and its fundamental impact on the general governance pattern in Sub Saharan Africa states. They characterized aid dependency as a ‘condition in which the state is far more powerless to undertake and administer major responsibilities of governance within their states devoid of external financial assistance or assistance from external know-how.’ This phenomenon according to the authors is exactly what the state of Africa has been in- hugely pervaded with aid and yet, poor governance and institutional dilemma remains, implying that aid has much damaging impacts on governance superstructure of the recipient states. The scholars added that, aid engenders ‘institutional feebleness and tenacious inducements’ within state. In this case they stated that, development assistance generates a space within recipient state where the limited qualified staff in government structure are poached; it produces accountability dilemma and makes the dependent government reticent to sincerely focus on sustainable internal income generation approach such as through taxation from inhabitants, which might warrant the citizens to hold their respective governments accountable from within as a key component of democratic norm. Also, Brautigam and Knack indicated that the incentive and availability of large scale of aid, accelerates profound indebtedness on the state, as well as undermines what they referred to as the ‘collective actions problems,’ together, these illustrate instructive case in points among others, for the inimical association of aid governance capacity on recipient societies.

Sustained Development assistance and its impact on local industries within the broader context of development in the recipient states has also become notable in the ongoing aid debate. Typical of such idea is reflected in the work by Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi, Sheng Zhibin, Gao Jun, Sidi Yaya Sidi and Ye Pianran (2016). These authors pointed out that, particularly food aid often provided as development assistance undermines the local food production industries in recipient countries, as the proclivity of rendering their local productions undervalued and hence, stimulates the chances of an employability dilemma. (In this case aid might be synonymous to one of the drivers of conflict in certain context beyond the conventional paradigm propounded by conflict analyst scholars). The authors specifically cited the case of Zambia in particular, where the textile industry that used to be the leading producer of cotton cloths and creating employment for large sections of the population, however, have almost become defunct, in the senses that, it is rare to now see cotton cloths being produced by the local cotton as were previously, and as well for the industries. The authors affirmed this as a result of the extreme concentration of development aid along different approaches.

Dambisa Moyo (2009) in her examination of the general development assistance network in Africa, argued that aid has been an ‘unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster.’ She asserted that in the last sixty years, Africa has accrued about One trillion United States Dollars in aid assistance, nonetheless, the real per capital income in recent time is much lower than it was in the 1970s, and this is combined with nearly fifty percent of the population barely survive under less than a



dollar per day, and Africa has remained extremely indebted which annual repayment of debt has resulted to about twenty billion United States Dollars. Dambisa Moyo in her article, situated the complexity of development assistance generally as both a variable caused by the convoluted context within which aid operates, as well as, the inherent reputed complexities in African countries.

Amidst the above noted conceptualization of development assistance, Ngaire Woods (2005) on his part heralded that the apparent trend in the global society has even convoluted the primary initial motive of development assistance, especially after the September, 2011 episode, and the new mode that awakened on the war on terror. Woods highlighted that these phenomena have clouded the operationalization of development assistance globally on three thematic viewpoints, which included: (a) that development assistance actors as a result of the recent change in global security trend, have commandeered aid ambience in pursuit of their own security interest abandoning the fight against the collective action problems like global poverty reduction; (b) that the emerge war on terror appears to be extremely capital intensive and this implies the shrinking expenditures that now directly go to development assistance projects and finally; (c) that emerging interest of donors not synchronizing their resources through multilateral organs is becoming situated, where donors instead have resolved to seek new space and approach through which they propelled their individual interests. In sum, with the critical arguments, these scholars doubt the general fundamental impacts development assistance can have on macroeconomic, microeconomic and the overall democratization and governance pattern and process in the less developed recipient states that have remained deeply oriented under the canopy of aid dependency.

Contrary to the aforementioned critical school conceptualization of development assistance, sympathized scholars of development assistance have disseminated different perspectives on the effectiveness of aid in the recipient countries. Arthur A. Goldsmith (2001) advanced argument that development assistance has been more significant to the recipient states in aspect of the development of democratization and economic liberation contrarily to what he referred to as 'Perversity Thesis' had inundated. Goldsmith further situated that on account of the little correlative progress aid had produced on the level of governance and that of reformation in the economic sector, any attempt of either withholding or reducing development assistance in these societies might concomitantly have deleterious effect on the evidential progressed already made which would degenerate into complete failed state that could become an intense threat to the environment.

Followed along this perspective, Alberto Alesina and David Dollar (2000) also argued that, why it is true that development assistance has been patterned along some colonial ties, nevertheless, aid has been concentrated disproportionately more in countries that have appeared to be in democratization process, while at the same token, aid donors are demotivated in providing substantial development assistance to countries that have acted or produced insignificant democratization fundamentals. Equally important in their argument is that, aid increment in recipient countries has been relied on how



liberalized these countries have operated their trades and economic space which incentivizes the inflow of aid in such settings. However, given that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has now almost become conceived as an assistance to the poorly underdeveloped, which helps opens their market economic system for potential viability, these scholars argued that, FDI flows to recipient countries are not conditional to the level of democratization but on effective state rules and economic policy climate of the states.

In their Work, Paul Collier and David Dollar (2002), draws on the nexus between development assistance availability to poor recipient countries, and the impact such produced in poverty reduction. Collier and Dollar furthered their viewpoint that, in recipient countries where policy regulations are effective, it does not matter the magnitude of poverty, but the inflow of development assistance could fundamentally impact on poverty reduction, especially when donors build on ‘poverty-efficient allocation’ approach (Ibid 1482-1495). Nonetheless, these scholars reject the notion that aid has impact on policy reforms other than the inseparable associations between the two, which serve as platform through which development assistance could mitigate the poverty demands of low-income recipient states. Also, Sam Jones and Finn Tarp (2015) in their argument underscoring the notion that development assistance has been punctuated by varied underlined motives, however, situated that with an extensive twenty-five years examination from 1983 to 2010 of Large-N data set on aid inflows and pattern of its behavior, concluded strong association between development assistance and institutional improvement. They particularly emphasized that, in recipient states where ‘government aid’ has been directed towards institutional reform such interactions have produced strong and positive relational effect especially on political institutional reforms, and in instances where such aid has been and remained consistent.

In line with this above stated argument, Zohid Askarov and Hristos Doucouliagos (2015) examined thirty-two countries for twenty-three years to understand the nexus between aid and its impacts on transforming institutions. They observed that, development assistance can underwrite democratization in a transition economy, but however noted that, such does not assure the efficacy of good institutional behavioral performance or output which is often referred to as good governance. Whilst addressing the fluidity in their argument on the aspect aid leading to democratization but low impact on good governance, the authors stated that, development assistance especially in states that are in transition and also immature, are accompanied by erratic result on both the ‘democracy and good governance’ regarding their transformation, and that immature nature of the state in transition might results in affecting the quality of governance, which does not necessarily implies that, there is no relations between aid and democracy based on their statistical analysis.

In conclusion, as outlined in the reviewed it fundamentally shows wide range of perspectives on the conceptual appreciation of development assistance. Yet, why scholars in their attempt explained about the how and why questions of development assistance generally, still, conceptual and instructive



perspectives on particularly the challenge of the management of development aid in certain recipient states needed further contribution to the existing scholarship. Particularly important is the aspect of policies that underlined domestic political parties, policies which eventually transformed into government in these states. Policy development or adoption at political party level is the outcome of political actors' behavioral patterns. The behavioral pattern of political actors within mainstream political environment is guided by strategic actions, and in the less democratized states, such behavioral actions are always informed by instrumentalized motive manipulatively designed in pursuit of certain interests as long as there are no strong institutions that check their excesses.

The overall agenda of this pattern can be informed by what Erving Goffman referred to as 'strategic interactions.' In Sierra Leone, in the aftermath of the new political dispensation where antiquated political practices were to give way to the liberal democratic paradigm, political actors resulted into the practice of strategic political interactions using their political parties in adopting policies that were fundamentally instrumentalized, policies that could make them appeared as transformed yet, remains with practices of old political tricks, and it was within this pattern development aid inflows accelerated conceived post-conflict development could be attained. Such policies of the parties were in dearth of a nationally planned approach, and were more of a calculated strategy by one party or other competing to maintain their hold and access to the state economic resource and power to control inflows of external support, whilst at the same operated politics of exclusion which thereby undermined the prospect for national development agenda to flourish. In the post-conflict development assistance challenge context of Sierra Leone, it is this strategic role of the political actors within which aid has become a monumental failure in the fifteen years of the liberal peacebuilding process.

Political party policies or manifestos which are the foundation on which many governments have been constituted particularly governments in some of the less democratized, underdeveloped and multi-ethnic states, are largely not founded on fundamental transformative conception. Rather, these party policies when examined substantively, they largely appear pseudo in nature, and designed merely as an ideational strategy to secure political control of the state political opportunities. Particularly in multi-ethnic societies, competition for elections for instance, by the so-called political parties are not absolutely contested or founded on ideas, but are elections that are characterized by ethnic censusing, where identity becomes the Machiavellian instrument.

### **3. Sierra Leone post-conflict development assistance in context**

As noted by Hollis B. Chenery and Alan M. Strout (1966), in the contemporary thinking of conceptual thoughts on development, concurrence have appeared among scholars that deteriorated 'economic progress, poverty and underdevelopment of states can be enhanced through explorations and investments in areas such as human capital development, acceleration of state investment and savings,



technological investment, institutional reforms and employment output.’ These factors as outlined are conceived as some of the essential features characterizing many developed states, attained during years of evolutionary patterns, on which many in the developing South with recurrent decades of the state status quo, have been encouraged was the means towards social change and transformation, whether a country is transitioning from intra-state war to peace, or from a severely poor underdeveloped state yearning for growth and development.

Emerging from one of the most devastated civil wars in Africa, foreign aid was conceptualized within the liberal post-conflict peacebuilding framework as characteristically paramount in the restoration of development across Sierra Leone. This was largely as a result of complex emergency context within which the country was transitioning. Besides, the Sub-Saharan Africa economic based have had history of negative sequential fiscal performance output, and as developing countries are further characterized by punctuated poverty scale that almost made the possibility for large scale economic savings a farfetched reality. This is noted in the work of Chenery and Strout (1966), who drew the nexus that within the chain of economic performance, it is through savings that investments in society become materialized and through investments, the economic based become viable which end result is growth in the economy of the state, a pattern they added, is absent in the developing countries on which therefore, development assistance could be viewed as integral for such societies to revamp their economic status (Chenery and Strout 1966) as response to the social problems.

Periled by a failed state phenomenon and at the threshold of total collapse, bilateral development assistance, multilateral aid through international financial institutions, and assistance under the tutelage of the United Nations were Sierra Leone’s greatest post-conflict anticipated hope in thriving over the complex development challenge, such as poverty mitigation and socio-economic enhancement among the already despondent and despaired post-conflict growing population. International actors specifically the United Nations as a global effort, created an institutional framework titled: ‘Peacebuilding Commission’ in 2005 to assemble and superintend as one of its key roles, resources in the form of aid assistance for the acceleration of development in all post-conflict transitioning countries for the enhancement of a relative stability (Scott 2005). Particularly, Sierra Leone became one of the two maiden countries in which such framework was introduced in 2006, as a post-conflict peacebuilding development agenda for societal social change.

Historically, theoretical analysis of social change in societies especially traditional states transitioning to modernity were supposed to follow a specific unidirectional pattern, a pattern which is particularly captured in evolutionary theory of social change, widely professed by scholars such as George Hegel, Auguste Comte, (Bardis 1959) and Talcott Persons etc., an approach which became the core for modernization theorists. Evidence of this among others for instance, was on economic perspective taken by W.W. Rostow in his monograph titled: ‘Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto’ (1960). In similar context, reification of such unidirectional ideology was very



much evident in the Post-Cold War Era, where post-conflict intervention in the effort to established social change and to attain development, external aid became a pattern in similar unidirectional approach to enhance social development and stability in the post-conflict societies.

Particularly in Sierra Leone, post-conflict development assistance did not only appear as exceptionally designed and in substantial amount, but was considered within the development cycle as the appropriate means for the attainment of stable development beyond the notion of mere state stability, as development was conceived could engender peace. Development assistance in this regard, targeted multisectoral factors ranging from direct support within the running of the governments through budget supports, and other financial supports within government for macro development programmes. For instance, with external budget supports from 2002 to 2014, the government received directly the sum of US\$ 886 Million, wherein each year it approximately accounted for US\$ 68 million respectively (2016). Table one below indicates a summary tracking data from a few key development actors with direct development assistance to the budget support as mentioned:

*Table 1: Budget Supports Disbursement by Agency 2002-2014. (Million of USD 1)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>UK-DFID</i>	16.7	16.5	18.3	26.9	34.6	26.7	18.2	18.4	19.7	23.9	18.9	20.8	24.7
<i>European Union</i>	-	-	21.9	26.0	19.0	15.6	7.5	57.9	27.8	13.9	15.4	15.5	27.1
<i>AfDB</i>	31.4	0.2	14.1	9.7	23.3	-	-	8.7	7.2	9.1	7.0	-	30.2
<i>World Bank</i>	13.6	16.2	16.9	18.2	-	-	13.0	-	-	2.4	23.6	6.4	50.5
<i>Others</i>	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.0	0.4	5.0	3.0	36.7
<i>Total</i>	61.7	33.1	71.1	80.8	76.9	42.3	38.7	85.0	61.6	49.7	70.0	45.6	169.2

Sources: Sierra Leone 2002-2015 Budget Support Evaluation Report.

Moreover, beyond budget supports, development assistance consigned to Sierra Leone from bilateral and multilateral institutions also ranged from school feeding programmes to food security, energy, roads, water sector, poverty reduction, employment, governance, institutional supports both public and privates, as well as in the financial sector. Sierra Leone emerging from the civil war was not only dearth of functional and result oriented institutions and domestic income generation platform, but even access to common basic social amenities were incredibly not in existent. These dilemma informed reasons as to why aid was conceived as remarkably important in the peacebuilding processes towards the enhancement of fundamental social change, a framework that was ambiguously meant to uplift the country from existed permeated threats of underdevelopment and poverty to a relatively modern state structure.

Excerpt of data collected during field research in Sierra Leone from the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning, under the section of Official Development Department in March 2019, is outline below from the following organizations that committed development assistance during the peacebuilding process in the country.



### **3.1. World Bank development aid**

World Bank was and has been one of the main multilateral institutions through which much of the development assistance to Sierra Leone generated. The institution undertook varied support interventions. From excerpt of the data collected, between 2009 and 2017, on four thematic areas substantial resources were consigned as development assistance by World Bank for the post-conflict development of the country. For instance, on institutional reform and capacity building from 2009 to 2012, it committed in aid US\$ 17,479,623. Also, on youth employment support, the institution committed from 2010 to 2015 the sum of US\$ 20,832,032, and similarly for energy sector on access alone from 2015 to 2017, it committed US\$ 12,292,949. On agribusiness development support for 2016 and 2017, the institution also devoted US\$ 8,676,891 respectively, etc.

### **3.2. United Nations Development Programme**

As one of the main institutions for post-conflict development in the developing countries, the United Nations development programmes in the post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone supported governance on multifaceted areas and a few of these are outline as follows: On public sector reform and capacity building from 2009 to 2014, it dedicated US\$ 3,909,780, whilst on support to access and justice from 2009 to 2016, the sum of US\$ 5,063,329 was committed. The United Nations Development Programme also provided development assistance for youth employment and empowerment for seven years from 2011 to 2017 that totaled US\$ 7,098,333, whilst on local government and economic empowerment within the six years period from 2012 to 2017, US\$ 3,080,275, and in 2015 it supported the national constitutional review process with US\$ 252,114 and security sector reform US\$ 1,622,885 etc.

### **3.3. Department for International Development (DFID)**

DFID is the United Kingdom overseas development assistance institution, and in Sierra Leone, is the leading bilateral development assistance organ towards the post-conflict peacebuilding process since 1999. Among a range of thematic support areas, DFID provided aid for Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction for 2009 that totaled US\$ 19,221,642 and in 2010 US\$ 15,810,277 was committed. On civil service reform programme in the same year it provided US\$ 852,288 and US\$ 245,193 were committed whilst on the same context for public sector reform programme, DFID provided in 2009, US\$ 142,205 and in 2010, US\$ 594,717 respectively. In rural electrification project, it is stated that for both 2016 to 2017, the total amount of US\$ 19,135,910 were committed by DFID as aid.

### **3.4. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and International Fund for Agricultural development (FAO and IFAD)**

On agriculture, through Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on a project



termed ‘Smallholders commercialization-global agricultural on Food and security’ for five years period from 2011 to 2016, a committed sum of US\$ 13,853,233 was provided as development assistance, at the same time International Fund for Agricultural Development from 2009 to 2017, committed to the rehabilitation and community-based poverty reduction project as aid the amount of US\$ 41,355,391.

### **3.5. United Nations Peacebuilding Fund**

Peacebuilding fund provided wide range of aid to key thematic areas. One of such was to the energy sector which in 2009, provided US\$ 5,040,813, and Japan with aid towards the same sector in 2010 provided US\$ 469,134. Also, European Union on support of decentralization committed US\$ 8,557,659 etc.

### **3.6. International Monetary Fund**

International Monetary Fund also contributed to the post-conflict development support through financing, for instance the sum of US\$ 164 million was approved as development assistance project in 2001 for Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Facility for a three-year period from 2001 to 2004, by 2002, a total of US\$ 59 million was committed (IMF Press Release 2002. para.2). Also, in 2013, through IMF extended credit facility for Sierra Leone, approved US\$ 95.9 million on a three-year period on which US\$ 13.7 million was disbursed for the start-up phase (IMF Press Release 2013.para.1) etc.

Furthermore, beyond these summarized excerpts on some aid donors to Sierra Leone, other extensive bilateral aid supports were provided by the United States of America, China, Germany etc., and other institutions such as the African Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank etc. These were key development assistance actors to Sierra Leone post-conflict peacebuilding, which were conceived such assistance could lead towards fundamental socio-economic and political social change and development in the country. But, as aforementioned, the political pattern within which key of their policies focused were more centered on a politically strategic interactions and policy instrumentalization than on national development, completely resulted in creating an ambience of a deep-rooted challenge of the management of the aid that were provided for meaningful impacts.

## **4. Instrumentalization of post-conflict political party governance’s policy framework**

On ending the war in 2002, it was practically obvious that the sustainability of political parties in the emerging post-war governance system was dependent on what policy framework operated by respective political parties. This emergence political direction viewed as a somewhat deviation from the previously deep rooted pattern of political behavioral practices, resulted into political parties identifying strategic pattern through which their parties can remain relevant and be factored within the



mainstream political superstructure, particularly with the advent of the international actors who were considered as not only moral guarantors for the peace process, but as robust financiers to the state for peace consolidation process as the only viable means of economic generation by the state.

Of the two political parties that administered the state during the period considered of its post-conflict peacebuilding from 2002 to 2018, were the SLPP and APC, that became confronted with this phenomenon in which within the process resulted into instrumentalization of policy adoption at political party level, policies which eventually metamorphosed into governance framework that became conceived as an agenda in pursuing socio-economic political post-conflict development for social change, but policies which merely lacked cohesive national development context. This pattern challenges the management of the development aid impact at a broad national transformative level of Sierra Leone since 2002. The two subsections below present desk review on two of the political parties especially the patterns of their superficial policy codifications to suits the apparent political climate, policies which largely assumed were predicated on national development strategies between 2000 and 2018.

#### **4.1. Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), 2007-2007**

The first post-conflict political party to govern Sierra Leone was the SLPP. Taken over the realm of governance in 1996, during the epoch of the war and under its political administration international supports and devoted cooperation from the rebels, resulted into creating an environment of stability and peace in 2002. In the post-war elections of 2002, the SLPP party was given the second term mandate of five years to govern the country and its political party manifestos metamorphosed into the first national working document of government for peacebuilding and development. The party policy or manifestos professed wide-range of policy outlines that served as the working tool for the governance between 2002 and 2007 in its second term of office. Excerpt of these policies as heralded by the SLPP party was to particularly addressed issues such as: '(a) democracy and good governance considered the bedrock for the attainment of economic and political development; (b) massive agricultural investment that could ensure food security; (c) economic prudence and fiscal management to improve on the quality of lives; (d) poverty reduction; (e) youth empowerment through trainings and employments; (f) reformation within the judiciary to rendered it credible, effective and efficient; (g) pursue zero corruption and; (h) economic and institutional decentralization (Presidential Inaugural Speech at Parliament, 2002)<sup>1</sup> etc. This party policies were what became the government directives and as seen from the faced valued, international actor's advocacy are always largely concentrated on some of these terminologies particularly in the quest for stability recuperation in post-conflict societies, and in Sierra Leone on account of this, it attracted massive concentration of aid support.

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<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, 2002, Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown, Sierra Leone. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/Speeches/kabbah-071202.html> / Accessed on 15 November 2019>.



These policies were under the canopy of what the regime called the ‘New Coalition for National Development’, yet were more of an ideationally crafted political democratic jargons which substance appeared much less attainable as the political parties were starkly bifurcated on differentiated policy orientation as a country which therefore undermined the development of a nationally developed framework from that initial post-conflict context. Yet politics of divisiveness became triumphed, and common ground for consensus building waned. Additionally, the SLPP while the internal political party policy that became governance tool were not informed by inclusivity, it embarked on poverty reduction approach through the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, a document that outlined the approaches needed for transitioning the country from war to post-war development, and on which development assistance were hugely committed. The adopted PRSP sectoral policy reflected in three thematic focused areas, which included ‘(1) Promoting good governance, security and peace; (2) Promotion of pro-poor sustainable growth for food security and job creation; and (3) Promoting human development’ (Shinoda 2012). These policies as outline though fundamental for state development and particularly for conflict country in transition to peace. However, in the context of Sierra Leone, the pattern of politics that came to be infused by elite captured, these policies ended up as a mere political tool typical of manipulation whilst issues of poverty, underdevelopment and youth employment as macroeconomic pillars for transformation remained profoundly unaddressed for majority of the citizens, especially at the time the Sierra Leone received tremendous financial assistance as aid support. At the end of the five-year regime in 2007, food security was a failure, state institution became politicized, and Sierra Leone was still least on the United Nations Human Development Index.

#### **4.2. All People’s Congress (APC), 2007-2018**

Completing ten years of governance under one political party, where five years were during the reign of the warfare, and the other five years during the aftermath of the war, political governance was taken over by the All People’s Congress following the defeat of the SLPP in the second post-conflict general elections held in 2007. The 2007 general election was particularly crucial in light of the extent of the eminent political fragility and the weak state institutions that were still eminent. Perhaps the positive outcome of this pattern of electoral democracy is the recurrent change of political actors within the same political cycle and yet profound development outcome for social change remained unfounded.

In the political manifestos of the APC regime that came to be known as ‘An Agenda for Change,’ varied policy guidelines were also advocated which eventually became the policy framework on which the state was governed in its first term from 2007 to 2012. Excerpt on three of the thematic policy areas professed were as follows: (a) Economy, that the party shall signifies judicious economic management, design large scale economic opportunities, eliminate barriers to trade, emboldened strong micro economic policies, and ensures that the normal living standard of the population is



improved; on (b) Agriculture, that the party shall rejuvenates the agricultural sector to become the anchor for financial growth and decrease poverty, transform Sierra Leone into food self-security, and to ensure the sector becomes the fulcrum for job creation and; on (c) Decentralization, that the party will embark on the devolution of ‘political, legislature, administrative and economic’ pillars with capacitation of local governments as means to moderate the exponential rural poverty<sup>2</sup> etc.

Additionally, whilst in the first term of APC the political manifestos that was professed ‘An Agenda for Change’ viewed simplistically as the PRSP II did not culminate into substantive social change across communities in the country amidst the external support as stated in the table, the party invented another political manifesto and named it ‘An Agenda for Prosperity,’ on which it was re-elected for another second term of five years where such policies were immediately metamorphosed into government policy framework. In sierra Leone electoral victory are not determined by smart political ideas that could be appropriately seen would lead to modicum social changes in society because of the overt cleavage structure, therefore, the pattern of instrumentalization of policies by political parties has become a well-established and founded pattern. The APC political party ‘2012 to 2018 agenda for prosperity’ governance manifesto was metaphorically an assumption that conceived that changed had been established in Sierra Leone during the era of the agenda for change period initially professed as policy. However, the actual reality was, it was merely a political framing strategically designed to manipulate the voting electorates especially given the taken for granted pattern of ethnic and regional attachment, and the level of poverty the electorates were exposed, which presuppose that the combination of these factors emboldened the permeation of elites’ manipulative strategies within the political space.

The Agenda for Prosperity policies of the APC outlined many pillars, an excerpt on a few of them includes: (a) Economy, which the party stressed on broadening the economic sector at both micro and macro level for economic stabilization, management of reduced expenditure over revenue, and transforming the sector to serve as a source for job creation; (b) On energy and power, the party professed that all cities and major communities would access functional electrification to enhance local economic promotion; (c) On jobs for youths, that the party would dedicate the entire five-year term on improving the status of youths and enhancing their employments opportunities and; (d) On agricultural sector, the party manifesto emphatically proclaimed reducing the pattern of subsistence farming system with an immense scale of mechanize agriculture to increase national food production that ensures food security (Presidential Inaugural Speech at Parliament 2012)<sup>3</sup> etc.

It is interesting to note that, within these proclaimed political policies on which it constituted mainly the roadmap through which post-conflict peacebuilding and development were supposed to be

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<sup>2</sup> Sierra Herald publication 2009. ‘All People’s Congress Manifesto 2007 Elections’ .<<http://www.sierraherald.com/apc-manifesto-2007.htm>, 9 (1). /Accessed on 16 November 2019>.

<sup>3</sup> *Inaugural Address by President Ernest Bai Koroma, 2012. Parliament Building, Freetown.* <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/Speeches/koroma-121412.html> / Accessed on 15 November 2019>



attained, were largely over ridden by severe elite capture by both political parties, that made use of inherent peacebuilding opportunities to further personal agenda, whilst fundamental national development agenda that were not built on cohesiveness for sustained growth and development in the fifteen years of governance, a pattern characteristic of a broader ethnoregional-neopatrimonial political salience. In essence these policies were merely to serve as conduit to access power and the related opportunities by the political class as oppose to fundamentally any realistic agenda for post-conflict peacebuilding and development.

### **5. Pattern of strategic interactions in the post-conflict politics and challenge of aid management in Sierra Leone**

Even before the end of the civil war in Sierra Leone, a clear pathway on the pattern of how politics was going to be shaped had already been established. From historical accounts, the political class that captured the post-independence mainstream political system since 1961, did not pursue transformative approach in the agricultural and mining sector- the two most viable productive sectors of the country through which a sustainable national economic power of the state could have been established and stabilize. What resulted instead was elite manipulation of the sector along with an established patronage structure that produced less dividend to the state. The sector became unattractive to government for capital investment that could enhance national development as huge capital intensive was required for such engagement for which within the political cycle, beyond personal interest, were not prepared and willing to undertake long term development strategy for these two sectors, which led to the abandonment of the mining and agricultural sector completely.

Thus, with the overt abandonment of these sectors, politics become envisioned as the only major means through which post-independence transformation of the state could be realized. Nevertheless, even along this path the availability of the political space was constricted and was considered only for a few privilege class, and with limited openings through patronage or socio-political and cultural lineage from village and at national level. Throughout the 1960s and onto early 1990s, it was this pattern that shrouded and characterized the political space to the extent that it became deeply rooted and highly traditionalized.

During the post-conflict period, political transformation was absolutely imperative and such transformation was inherent within the liberal post-conflict peacebuilding process that led to fundamental openness within the political space. With the advent of exogenous pressure and the endogenous advocacies posed by domestic civil society groups for transformation within the political cycle, the environment of politics was rendered a battlefield where struggle for survival within the political system became the means to an end as democratic practice emerged as the conduit in transitioning the country from its deep-rooted traditionalize pattern of politics to one that emphasized tolerance, competition, transparency and accountability in political space, and the subjugation of



parties and actors to public decision making. Thus, in its transition to democracy, existed fragile institutions resulted into creating a political opportunity patterns in which structured political agenda did not cohesively emerge, yet politics of cleavage structural contestation became triumphed and its practice evolved over time into becoming the political culture that defines the overall political superstructure of Sierra Leone.

Informed by this pattern of strategic interaction of political parties, resulted into policy formulation where post-conflict cohesive national development framework was not only compromised but undermined, as political party resulted in pursuing social cleavage interest than on building solid post-conflict national development agenda. It was within this pattern that the evidence of a deeply-rooted threat to the general societal development and social change became complex. Consequently, informed by this pattern of political interactions, one typical phenomenon that became glaring was the instrumentalization of governance policies that can appeal to international actors within which resources can be committed, a pattern that became a taken for granted disposition adopted by the political parties in their policy formulation and profession.

This reflected in the strategic interactive pattern of political parties resulting into policy framing merely in the interest of meeting entrance requirement into the political space, whilst at the same time viewed opponents as uncharacteristic of modern political practice in their political calculation and this was merely to control wider political environment. For instance, in one of the speeches in 2002, from one of the political parties, the SLPP, the leadership opined that:

‘We must not allow the electorates to be hoodwink by those who erroneously believe that they can walk and talk their way to parliament or state house through a patchwork of recycled ideas...The principle of democracy recognizes the rights of anyone or any group of persons who meet the appropriate constitutional requirements to contest elections for public office. However, we should let the electorates be forewarned that there are many out there who see the electoral process as an open and free-for- all picnic.... National elections are a serious business based on public trust and public responsibility. They should not be taken for granted, especially by those who are sincerely committed to be servants of the people...’ (Speech by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah 2002)<sup>4</sup>.

The idealistic policies adopted by these political parties were what became metamorphosed into mainstream governance system on which post-conflict development and peacebuilding was

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, *‘Speech on his re-election as leader of the SLPP and his nomination as the SLPP Candidate for the 2002 Presidential Election.’*  
<<http://www.sierra-leone.org/Speeches/kabbah-031602.html> / Accessed on 17 November 2019>



concentrated, and conceived, such policies would lead to fundamental transformation of social change at the societal level. As a multiethnic country and as society where constructed identities appear to have become the main determinant of political system evident in the nature of ethnoregional-neopatrimonial pattern, whatever policies become adopted by parties are largely supported by cleavage identities sometimes without deeper conceptualization, a pattern that also prevented these two political parties from seeking national policy agenda as there were already established constituencies where support based could always be invariably harnessed. For instance, given the nature of the political manipulative pattern that became a structurally taken for granted style in the mainstream political system, in 2012, the political manifesto on ‘An Agenda for Change’ under the realm of one of the political parties, the APC, was re-elected in 2012 under a new political policy/manifesto of ‘Agenda for Prosperity,’ even though the agenda for change political policies were merely a sham as any formidable transformative development were not realized within the period comparative to the huge aid poured and the local income generated within the time frame concurrently.

This characterization provided profound space on which political party manifestos or policies that were translated into mainstream politics lacks national development framework. These policies were symbolism of what the state of nature was, and can be conceptualized as manipulation of post-conflict development opportunities by the political class through the nature and pattern of the strategic interactive politics infused in the mainstream governance. Also, one fundamental means through which the dearth of national development framework of these party policies was recognized was through the recurrent discontinuity of succeeding political party policies of previous regime by another. It became recurrent that immediately one political party term of office ends, all the established policies of that regime automatically come to a halt whilst the new regime completely begin with a new policy agenda relatively unconnected to the previous regime. And what has accounted for this largely is because of the absence of a synergized national development framework adopted by the state

Additionally, such trend implies that within each regime development has to be started from afresh instead of followed in similar trend of previous development agenda of succeeding regime. Political parties consciously embarked on this pattern as strategic interaction because it was a common thought within the political cycle that by merely following previous regime’s policy agenda it is believed could make their political parties lost firm grip within the political space, and especially in Sierra Leone where political parties do not have established and identifiable political party ideology, but merely an instrumentalized kind of political agenda mainly for gaining votes. In such pattern national development becomes a secondary concern for state actors. While political party policy discontinuity between one political regime and another could be an obvious pattern of developed democracies and workable in developed societies, yet in developing countries that are largely dependent on development aid for their political transition, such as Sierra Leone, such pattern of disjointed policy approach can produce development stagnation and can posed strong challenge to



social change in such societies. This pattern in the post-conflict trend is fundamentally the causal factor through which the challenge of the management of development aid in Sierra Leone can be conceptualized.

## **6. Sierra Leone and the current state of post-conflict challenge**

Sierra Leone from 2002 to 2018, a period described as the prime time of its post-conflict peacebuilding process, experienced a heyday of a huge influx of development assistance both through bilateral and multilateral means. It was categorical that the survival of Sierra Leone as a nation-state was almost nonexistent, its domestic sovereignty was battered, and was only resuscitated by the intervention of the international community. As indicated in the above stated patterns, whilst approaches were designed to accelerate Sierra Leone beyond a state failure status, political practices by internal actors evident through the display of elite captured within the same period further rendered the country into total stagnation. Such practice scuttled the development assistance impact, and Sierra Leone currently presents a typical archetype of a development aid failure. This phenomenon has been captured in several published reports describing the major variables of change in the country as extremely at a poor performing status

For instance, in the published report by Statistics Sierra Leone titled: ‘Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey Report for 2018,’ extensively elaborated on the profound trend of the country’s poverty level as been on a severely systematic increase (Statistic Sierra Report 2019). The report stated that the current poverty status of Sierra Leone is 56.8 percent for the year 2018, and further recognized that in the rural area alone, poverty level has remained so widespread with a current trend at 73.9% (Ibid). Whilst poverty has systematically remained on the increase, food insecurity in the country has also been widespread. According to World Food Programme Sierra Leone, food insecurity in 2015 was at the level of 49.8 percent, in 2018 it was 43.7 percent, whilst in 2019 it increased to 53.4 percent respectively.<sup>5</sup> Beyond the food insecurity and poverty conditions across the country, problem of unemployment has also been on a fundamental increase. Unemployment in this context implies people who are keenly seeking job as part of the working force to improve their livelihood but simply could not identify with any. According to the research work done by Molla Mekonnen Alemu (2016), it stated that the country has about ‘60 percent of its population structurally unemployed.’ This level of high unemployment rate is also recognized in the United Nations Development Programme data on Sierra Leone. In fact, even for those working, it is stated that, four out of five are working under poor condition below US\$ 3.1 per day.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Presentation made in Sierra Leone by World Food Programme Sierra Leone Country Office on the activities of the organization’s role, food poverty profile and planned strategies towards its reduction / 25 November 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Danish Trade Union Council for International Development Report 2017. Labour Market Profile of Sierra Leone. <[http://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/sites/default/files/uploads/public/PDF/LMP/lmp\\_sierra\\_leone\\_2017\\_final.pdf](http://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/sites/default/files/uploads/public/PDF/LMP/lmp_sierra_leone_2017_final.pdf)> Accessed on 26 November 2019>



Additionally, Sierra Leone is still considered as one of those countries with limited scale of electricity energy consumption by its population. Electricity consumption is relatively and erratically visible in a few urban centers, but these are merely intermittent, whilst vast majority of the rural communities have never experienced any form of electrification. Naturally, energy generated through electricity and its consumption rate is considered as significantly important to accelerate both small and big industrial growth within societies which empowers the internal economic growth, this reality in the context of post-conflict Sierra Leone has been a farfetched reality. Moreover, for consecutive years Sierra Leone has been ranked at the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index reports. For instance, for the period of 2017, the country was ranked 184 out of 189 and has been of a similar pattern for all the years that preceded it. Sierra Leone within the same period has been characterized as one of the lowest income countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. This is evident in the United Nations Development Programme on Statistical update for 2015, 2016 and 2017, using the GNI per capital which stagnated at US\$ 1,297; 1,216; and 1,240 respectively<sup>7</sup>. As mentioned in previous sections, all of these trends occur at the same time when huge development assistance were seen expended in the country expected could have resulted into tremendous transformation of the country and ultimately result into fundamental social change.

As reported on the tremendous inflow of development aid in Sierra Leone, the country has remained one of the poorest in the world, and some of the created structural reality of this outcome as highlighted in this section are fundamentally not unconnected to the nature and pattern of the domestic politics and governance type that has been patterned to become a culture and practice.

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter has vividly argued on a mechanism through which the challenge of development aid in most recipient countries can be conceptualized, using Sierra Leone as a typical archetype. Development assistance challenge in ongoing scholarly literature have maximally concentrated on the complexity of the aid structural pattern and interest, as viewpoints through which the failure of aid must be traced. In this essay, the central argument is that, in carefully appreciating domestic political party policies or manifestos of the aid recipient countries, policies which eventually metamorphosed into the formation of what appear as government policies of the country where development assistance has been largely concentrated conceived transformation could be archived, provides instructive and compelling conceptual viewpoint to the context of why aid management remains a challenge in some societies.

An internally engendered political parties that championed the post-conflict development

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Development Programme 2018. Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update. Briefing Note for Countries on the 2018 Statistical Update.  
<[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018\\_human\\_development\\_statistical\\_update.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf) / Accessed on 27 November 2019>



approach in Sierra Leone did not fundamentally create national development agenda. Instead, cleavage and incohesive development policies that fundamentally have no correlation to transformation was what informed Sierra Leone post-conflict development pattern from 2002 to 2018, hence, the challenge of the management of development aid. These are socially created structural barriers that have become a taken for granted pattern of Sierra Leone, and it is an outcome imbedded in the current ethnoregional-neopatrimonial style of governance system in the country. This entire context implied that, the liberal post-conflict peacebuilding occasioned in Sierra Leone its consolidation is in a deep dilemma, threatened by emerge endogenous factors which has made its success untenable. Future research along this pattern must therefore, systematically examine how strategic interactive political practices in the less democratized societies fundamentally undermine state institutions.

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# **Revitalising the promise of Harambee: Analysis of contemporary resource mobilising schemes in rural Kenya**

Kinyua Laban Kithinji

Department of Global Politics – Hosei University

## **Abstract**

The Harambee movement has been widely studied as a tool that the ruling elite implied to mobilise resources for development in post-independent Kenya. As the state sought to include grassroots populations into development through Harambee, the rural populations took it upon themselves to participate in the provision of public goods. However, Harambee was transformed into a tool for vigorous political mobilisation of votes by the political class at the dawn of multiparty democracy from early 1990s. One of the end results of this was that Harambee activity became riddled with radical corruption. The state sought to restrict the nature of Harambee in the sense of prohibiting the politician in order to safeguard citizens. What happened to the character of Harambee that had helped the local *mwanaanchi* to engage with the state in participation in development projects and securing support from their elected representative? This paper addresses this question by showing the impact that *chama* are having in rural Embu by tracing their historical origins and connectedness to Harambee movement in the Kenya's discourse of development. I show that women in rural Embu have a particular inclination as agents of economic expansion through participation in *chama* activities and that these activities have emerged as mimicry of Harambee activity to mobilise resources for economic and political inclusion at the grassroots.

**Keywords:** Harambee, *chama*, development, rural population, state, resource mobilisation



## 1. Introduction

One of the peculiarities in development discourse by the founding father of Kenya at the advent of independence in 1963 was a call to '*mwananchi*' (subaltern) to be at the centre of development initiatives. The participation in Harambee projects engaged the local citizens in the projects that were primarily a responsibility of the state such as building schools, hospitals, and water projects, among others. Various scholars have articulated the concept of Harambee and its role in development over years (Haugerud 1995, Gertzel 1974). Similarly, others have highlighted the radicle changes that have engulfed Harambee since the call by President Jomo Kenyatta, through the reign of the second president of the republic of Kenya, President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, and also President Mwai Kibaki who reigned in democratised and liberalised Kenyan state between 2003 and 2012 (TI Kenya 2001).

The Kibaki reign specifically sought to confront the scourge of corruption in Kenya despite minimal success. In doing so, the Harambee process was deemed key to fight against corruption thus propositions to review the Harambee philosophy. The efforts towards fight against corruption culminated to a prohibition of participation of the political elite in the Harambee contributions.

The prohibition of Harambee occurred almost simultaneously with the proliferation of *vyama*, plural of *chama* that can be loosely translated as 'group' or 'social welfare societies' that emulate the Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) movement whose purpose is consolidating resources to help its members to mitigate the absence of the state interventions through such activities as social savings, alternatives to banking, providing safety nets for its members, and entrepreneurial activities. The grassroots rural population responded to ganging of Harambee by the state through adopting alternatives in SACCO. However, SACCO required more stringent measures that were limiting the poor. As a response, the rural populations have been redefining the meaning of Harambee through mimicry of the SACCO movement in small informal scales to garner resources for their members but most importantly tapping into the state projects that target the poor in rural Kenya.

Scholars have analysed mobilisation of social capital and its effects in the informal sector in diverse ways. Although participation of *wananchi* in informal business promises an interesting trajectory towards understanding development in Kenya, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, this paper explores the contemporary means of participation in Harambee projects by *wananchi* and the results that have emerged out of that interaction in post-independent Kenya, multi-party democratic Kenya, and in the early stages of Kenya under the new constitutional dispensation from 2010.

## 2. Harambee and the development discourse in Kenya

### 2.1. Studies and approaches of Harambee

As disillusionment with the ability of the state and massive aid programs to navigate the sub-Saharan



Africa states to economic and social prosperity increased in the 1970s and 1980s, the interest in voluntary organisation and associations took a centre stage. Most commentators of ‘rolling back’ of the state saw it as fostering a movement from below (Gibbon *et al.* 1992) to promote a voluntary organisation that in-turn contributed to development. This line of argument understood growth as allocating development responsibilities to the voluntary organisations that were usually seen as having the capability to enhance competition between them and the state. The emphasis tended to link the rise of voluntary organisations to ‘rolling back’ of the state. In this regard, there arose interests in voluntary associations such as Harambee movement and later on the cooperative movements in Kenya that gained traction from late 1990s to 2000s and beyond. Both the Harambee and cooperative movements were a grassroots and local level initiatives that appealed to indigenous livelihoods as their legitimising principle. The state making process in Kenya appealed to such indigenous livelihoods to catalyse enthusiasms and participation to development process and at times to fund the public goods. Thus these movements became extremely crucial as a link between the rural grassroots and national social economic objectives.

Scholarship on Harambee emphasised structures and the nature of organisation of its operations (Holmquist 1984, David *et al.* 1978, Thomas 1987). Other important dimensions that were given attention in studying Harambee pointed out to its rural based peasantry participatory mechanism in development, otherwise viewed as providing means for inclusion of the peripheries in mitigating inequalities (Keller 1983). Several other studies of Harambee focused on its progressiveness from the concepts of resource mobilisation to a grassroots tool for political mobilisation (David *et al.* 1978, Godfrey and Mutiso 1974). In general scholars of Harambee focused on thematic areas around fostering social cohesion and solidarity, fostering traditional (indigenous) forms of communal activities, and the manner in which Harambee utilised indigenous means to mobilise and organise rural populations. Due to the alleged facilitation of exploitation by the rich, Harambee was also viewed as encouraging rather than aiding the mitigation of rural poverty (Waiguru 2002, TI Kenya 2003). There were also those whose views conferred on methods through which Harambee generated enthusiasm and capabilities to gather local resources to provide social services to either compliment or fill in the absence of the state (Godfrey and Mutiso 1974, Ngethe 1979, Thomas 1987). Studies of Harambee that focused on explaining its historical connectivity to indigenous character of African societies reflected on issues such as resource ownership and social organisation (Ngau 1987). Harambee was also interpreted as playing a role as a mean of social exchange of labour and critical form of mutual assistance (David *et al.* 1978). Moreover, scholars also focused on how Harambee worked (see Ngau 1987 on stages of Harambee) and analysis on types of activities mobilised through Harambee (Ngau 1987). Godfrey and Mutiso (1974) interpreted Harambee as a defensive strategy for the periphery against exploitive and opulent centre exploring it as a movement based on Kenya’s changing social structure. In sum, one of the overarching themes among many scholars was that Harambee had



overtone of being an indigenous movement that bore intrinsic patterns of cushioning an interaction between the periphery and the centre. Godfrey and Mutiso (1974) were right to see this polarisation as a cleavage, which distinguished the indigenous in the periphery and the elite at the centre, hence reaffirming concepts of economic and political alienation.

There is a deafening silence in contemporary scholarship that expounds on history of Harambee and development. When available, scholars rarely focus on the continuity of Harambee as visible in the activities mobilised by groups in the contemporary Kenyan society. This is partially because of a perception that Harambee is and has been on the decline. Despite its plummeting, the few available contemporary work focuses on long term impacts of Harambee in specific sectors, for instance education (see Keller 1983). Other contemporary scholars have specifically analysed the manner in which Harambee has facilitated corruption by the state officials (Waiguru 2002, TI Kenya 2003). Furthermore, there is scarcity of analysis that historicises the Harambee projects over different periods in Kenya since 1963. Neither are there any focus on the nature of Harambee in post Moi's Kenya. While the purpose of a historicity could be to address this gap in academic work on Harambee, a historical attempt that highlights distinct nature of Harambee under the three different regimes in Kenya; Kenyatta (1963-1978), Moi (1978-2002), and Kibaki (2003-2013) also situates an account of Harambee necessary for a 'geneology' of Harambee. This approach, I argue, opens up many possibilities for discerning political actions at the grassroots levels. Harambee, as historically practised throughout the efforts to implement participatory grassroots approaches to development, has various important key areas of studying the nature of the state and its relationship to its subjects in Africa. Furthermore, it provides important pillars towards evaluating schemes of governments that are directed to grassroots populations in the efforts of implementing development agenda. Harambee expounds plausibly the nature of the state that is visibly entangled in promoting both a strong centralised administration and incorporation of devolved efforts. The stifling of the original mission and nature of Harambee engendered divergent mechanisms through which the grassroots sought to engage with the state. These methods range from legal to paralegal, but were strongly engrained in the formative aspects of Harambee. To make sense of how the populations in the peripheries have sought to interact with the state, it is apparent that a study of Harambee and its evolution be seen as necessary in the studies of political economy and devolved governance in Africa. To counter the decline thesis of Harambee, I argue that Harambee still evolves today and remains a pertinent mean of grassroots political contestation. Not only does this kind of Harambee analysis provide an understanding on grassroots politics but also sets a foundation for analysing the nature of their engagement with the state programs being rolled out in various forms targeting the rural populations.

## **2.2. Harambee in development discourse in Kenya**

Traditional and contemporary features of social and political culture are as Berge-Schlosser (1982)



observes, an important feature capable of becoming a base for democratic participation. This view of forms of grassroots participation in democratic and development process are in contradiction with such scholars as Lipset (1959) whose view of modernisation is hinged upon a surge in literacy rates, industrialisation, and urbanisation, which are claimed to predicate a democratic process. The initial stages of Harambee depicted a movement of the peasantry encouraged by the state to provide for themselves the basic social services. The peasantry acted swiftly and gracefully, resulting to unprecedented number of projects. The state was required to provide resources once the peasantry had set up their own projects all over the country. By the end of Kenyatta reign, the state was overwhelmed by the proliferation of projects. The solution only seemed to demobilise the peasantry, and this was attained through various attempts to plan by the central government. Some scholars have refuted the thesis supporting attempts to plan and coordinate. Waiguru (2002) says that ‘Harambee movement developed in an haphazard manner ...[it] was left out of the main stream of government development plan and its growth had been achieved with little or no coordination or regulation by the government.’ This particular view led to scholars call for regulation of Harambee affairs in the name of protecting the interests of Harambee projects calling for greater measures to regulate, and administrate Harambee activities. Such calls to regulate were heeded after studies on Harambee around 2002 - 2003 (Waiguru 2002, TI Kenya 2003).

Several years after the inception of Harambee, its founding principles were either forgotten or compromised. Most commentators emphasize usurp of Harambee philosophy by political clout leading to manipulation for the vote mobilisation. In this respect, Harambee became a channel for the state to deliver aid to constituents (Keller 1983). Keller also demonises the manner in which Harambee resulted to mapping and exacerbation of both ethnic and class inequalities, therefore, becoming a potential to trigger political conflict. Keller’s findings focused on the idea that Harambee propagated disparity between both individuals and communities. The usurping of self-help projects by the state for the purposes of regulation and institutionalisation altered the nature of indigenous self-help initiatives. The bureaucratic red tape by the state officials seeking to execute planning and regulation of self-help activity encouraged rigidity as opposed to flexibility towards self-help schemes. Rather than the thriving of development as a result of better management and coordination (Keller 1983), new forms of attitudes to counter state’s bureaucracy emerged at the grassroots level.

The necessitation of a planning gaze for Harambee projects was also premised on reasons ranging from increased number of projects requiring state intervention and unintended use of Harambee to aid vices such as corruption. In the words of Orora and Spiegel (1979), the Harambee ‘projects sprung up all over the country like mushrooms during a rainy season.’ It is no wonder then that this phenomenon led to a vigorous duplication of projects and abandonment of some in other cases. It was also common



to witness cases of corruption, political interferences, and mismanagement as reported in newspapers.<sup>1</sup> It is such notions hinged upon wastefulness and misappropriation that led to Harambee projects being viewed as stumbling blocks to development priority of the central state and further leading to intensification of state interference with the grassroots led initiative.<sup>2</sup> Ngau (1987) states that efforts to coordinate Harambee through regulatory and planning controls resulted to contradictions and disarticulations of Harambee projects. State interventions ensued a network between the local grassroots leaders and the state bureaucrats. It is these networks and other factors (see Ngau 1987) that thwarted and stifled what had promised to be authentic model of grassroots participation in economic social political development.

As the Harambee projects proliferated, voices of discontent also grew. Such voices were articulated in the press and *barazas* (local meetings). These complain ensued abandonment and duplication of projects. The mitigation of the problems was almost always another justification for more planning and control (see Ngau 1987:531). Furthermore, since Harambee was largely a rural areas phenomenon, the insurgency of the state bureaucrat meant that corruption of the state was also beginning to trickle down to the most remote peripheries.

Although local factors were detrimental to what ensued the Harambee activity, the doctrine of planning that ensued in the international development agencies had also a critical role in contributing to its change. As early as 1951, the United Nations prepared reports in which development experts underscored various measures for boosting economic growth and development in the underdeveloped countries. The core of the 1951 UN report was adjustment of old institutions and philosophies to realign with more modern institutions and technologies (see United Nations 1951). Both internally and externally infused focus on planning notwithstanding, a decade immediate to independence witnessed a sharp growth in income inequality despite an environment of political stability and economic growth in Kenya. The GDP grew at an average of 4% (ILO 1972). Despite this growth, there was a high polarisation between the urban and rural populations (Oginga 1967, Kitching 1980).

Despite the thwart and distortion of initial original vision of Harambee beginning late 1970s, it continued to be a pertinent channel towards provision of basic social amenities. The distortion however bore new characteristics in Harambee projects. One of such characteristic was gradual prioritisation of elective politics. As Harambee projects proliferated in the country from 1963 to 1978, the state initiated strategic plans to contain spontaneous informal peasant driven Harambee projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Reports featured in local newspapers are available at Daily Nation, Feb. 23rd, 1977; Sunday Nation, Oct. 17th, 1976 pg6; Weekly Review, Jan. 9th, 1978 pg16 in Smith and Elkin (1981). Volunteers, Voluntary Associations, and Development: an Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> The sessional paper number 10 of 1963/65 introduced stringent measures to regulate and coordinate and guide the Harambee projects. The Community Development Committees (CDCs), which were introduced in 1964, enhanced the role and participation of state backed bureaucrats in Harambee. The CDCs operated in at least six levels guided by the six administrative units; sub-locations CDCs, Locations CDCs, Divisional CDCs, District CDCs, Provincial CDCs, and National CDCs (see Government of Kenya, Development Plan, 1964-1970, pp. 112-13).



At the beginning of 1980, Harambee projects had simultaneously become a burden and were heavily under-utilised. Ngau (1987:532) argues that ‘the institutes of technology remained idle, hospitals were without doctors, and secondary schools without teachers.’ The gains of Harambee were moving away from re-distributive to enhancing regional income disparities. Consequently, a new phenomenon that shifted Harambee from spontaneous grassroots mobilisation to large-scale district-wide and nation-wide phenomena was taking shape.

In the year 2001, the Kenyan chapter of Transparency International (TI) published a report that claimed that there were elements of vast cases of abuse of Harambee. This report noted a radical change in the nature of Harambee in the periods between 1980s and 1990s stating that ‘its importance as a political as opposed to a development tool arose’ (TI Kenya 2001). This politicisation of what was once altruistic movement was complicated further by the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992. The multi-party democracy broadened citizenship engagement in governance. Significantly, it increased the cost of securing a political office since reliance on the ‘anointing’ from above by the statesmen began to dwindle. With the absence of political reliance on president’s endorsement to secure a political office, the politicians had to gather more resources to mobilize the populations for votes. These strains in the political class had a specific influence on Harambee. Harambee donations were turned into sceneries where the political class secured the highest participation in terms of contributions. Hence, while the role of *wananchi* was becoming inconsequential, the politician was taking a prominent role in determining the direction of Harambee.

### **3. The *wananchi* and the Harambee project**

#### **3.1. Scheming grassroots mobilisation for nation building**

The term *mwananchi* (*wananchi* in plural) can be loosely translated as ‘daughters and sons of a nation’ or ‘owners of a nation’. Thus, Kenyatta’s call to *wananchi* to embrace Harambee for the nation building implied that the subalterns had a vital responsibility to engage in development not based on their social and economic strength or social status but on the premise that they belonged and owned the nation. The sense of belonging rallied people to yield to Harambee so as to put up schools, hospitals, cattle dips and other community focused projects, which meant they undeviatingly assumed the responsibility of the state to initiate and spearhead development. The involvement of the commoners in the national development agenda, not just rhetorically but physically, defied the perception of them as mere beneficiaries of the state’s benevolent development (Kinyanjui 2014 and as a people without power to influence state affairs, a role that is usually perceived to be a preserve of the middle class and the capital elites (Scott 1985). In this regard, the *wananchi* involvement in Harambee projects created early avenues for interactions with the elite and the educated few that were poised to take over the nation’s leadership. Furthermore, *wananchi* also schemed grassroots mobilisation of capital that in part mimicked the structures of Harambee. Examples of such projects



included the successful efforts by the Nyakinyua and Mboikamiti groups of Kiambu district and the Mukamukuu of Ukambani.<sup>3</sup> In their immediate post independent days, these groups mobilised in order to purchase parcels of land from the white settlers and acquire business premises in the urban centres. Thus, scholars who have focused on social capital provided by the grassroots networks in the formative years of post-colonial Kenya see their critical role in market coordination and societal organisation (Kinyanjui 2014, Kinyanjui and Khayesi 2005).

### 3.2. Navigating the tides

Not only was Harambee according opportunity to *wananchi* to build the nation, it was also becoming an avenue towards inclusion into capital ties and provision of the same. This momentum was stifled since early 1980s as both local and global challenges ensued. Kenya became amongst the first countries in Africa to bear the effects of Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAPs) and the neoliberal policies as early as 1980s. While the programmes spearheaded by the World Bank encountered opposition from some quarters, they were widely adopted by the state so as to create the so-called ‘right institutions for development.’ Part of this pursuit was a salient dismantling on non-Western modes of social capital mobilisation. The state gradually focused on the ‘formal’ by vehemently discouraging diverse forms of informality. The voluntary participation in nation building through such schemes as Harambee projects was part of informality that was replaced with schemes such as cost sharing in hospitals and in schools.

One of the other results of neoliberal policies were the rise of new class of impoverished. In early 1990s, Kenyans began encountering new vocabularies in their everyday lives such as ‘retrenchment’<sup>4</sup>. One of the informants for this study recalls how this word caused disquietude as he recounted the number of people that were coerced into early retirement. At the same time, the food prices skyrocketed as yet another informant recalled. In 1992, producers used the famine that ensued as a reason for price escalation.<sup>5</sup> In the villages of Embu, people began referring to the 1992 draught in monetary terms. Thus ‘*yura ria 30*’ translated as ‘30 shilling famine’ depicted a key character where prices of key commodities rose to 30 Kenya shillings. The local people, although bearing the scorn of liberalisation policies could not articulate clearly the impediments that they were in. But such expressions were also not entirely absent. They appeared in various forms, central to which religious expressions were key to console with the poor. Joseph Mwaura provided such a solace through his song ‘*muthini wa Ngai*.’<sup>6</sup> The lyrics of his song asked the poor to be patient, and seek the unseen

<sup>3</sup> Activities of these types of groups have been recently appearing in local newspapers. See such as story by Wainaina (2012). Mbo-i-Kamiti deaths revisited. *Daily Nation*. 27th May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> See parliamentary motion in parliament titled ‘Introduction of sessional paper on retrenchment programme’ at Kenya National Hansard (KNA), 18th October 2000 available online.

<sup>5</sup> The New York Times reported the effects of the famine that had ravaged Eastern and Southern Africa on 7th March 1992 available online at <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/07/world/southern-africa-hit-by-its-worst-drought-of-the-20th-century.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See Joseph Mwaura’s song in Gikuyu language (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KoJSMw9A3Y>).



comfort in useable creator who had solace for the hard times in the present and in the days to come.

Mwaura is a representation of spaces of escape that people sought as the reality of poverty began to be seen in 1990s. There were other spaces similar to those provided for by Mwaura that developed and became much more structured than songs. Religious revival and awakening had happened in Embu in the early days of 1970s just as it was the case in other parts of East Africa.<sup>7</sup> This movement had resulted to spirituality that called people to repentance and holiness. This movement had taken place within the structures of conventional churches.<sup>8</sup> In the mid 1990s, the awakening movement emerged in new forms in Embu district whose main characteristic was a stern opposition to modes of worship in the conventional churches. The revival did not happen within, since it emphasised unplugging its members from the contaminated movements. This new wave of churches emphasised not only spiritual awakening but also material and physical abundance. Their message of prosperity resonated with the impoverished population that found solace in the message to cast off religiosity that accommodated understanding of poverty as an essence of Christian life. One of the leading voices of this movement in Embu was Pastor Samuel Nginyi who had emerged from the National Independent Church of Africa (NICA) Mbuinjeru church. Using his connections in Nairobi, he established the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC) which unlike the conventional churches<sup>9</sup> emphasised on what they called ‘equipping’ the whole person. The key to this equipment was the prosperity message that gave tools to the local people on how to be materially successful in a harsh economic time. It is no wonder that these churches soon became the emblem of the ‘modern’ man whose symbols were young men dressed in formal suits that mimicked white-collar office employees.

As a portion of the rural population sought refuge in newly constructed spiritual spaces that confronted the material man directly so as to guard against the effects of neoliberal policies, the changing nature of state affairs with its citizens was also experiencing radical changes. The structures of Harambee were confronting criticism that emanated from its connection to a corrupt political elite. In the wake of multiparty politics in Kenya in 1992 and 1997 general elections, Harambee had been turned into a key tool for vote’s competition thus emerging as a primary political tool of contestation in multiparty democracy (TI Kenya 2003). One of the key issues that became synonymous with Harambee was in this regard, corruption. The political elite vigorously used Harambee to gain the much-needed connection with the grassroots voters. The state response to this was a policy that sought to prohibit the Harambee activities during the newly established National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government in 2003. The policy’s main component was to limit the involvement of the politician in

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<sup>7</sup> The religious revival in East Africa has been documented by association of global Anglicans and is available at [https://www.gafcon.org/sites/gafcon.org/files/news/pdfs/East\\_African\\_Revival\\_Talk\\_Senyonyi.pdf](https://www.gafcon.org/sites/gafcon.org/files/news/pdfs/East_African_Revival_Talk_Senyonyi.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Examples of churches that are referred to as conventional in this category were the Anglican Church (ACK), The Full Gospel Church (FGCK), East African Pentecostal Church (EAPC), and National Independent Church of Africa (NICA) among others.

<sup>9</sup> Other churches that thrived in this region included such groups as Deliverance Church and Ephatha Mission Church.



Harambee. This policy envisioned protecting *mwanaanchi* from the corrupt politician by the state. As the state sought to control Harambee in an effort to shield *mwanaanchi* from the corrupt politician, it also constrained an extent to which Harambee could remain active at the local level. Thus, there was a significant shift in the manner in which local communities pursued Harambee. However, the decline of Harambee due to state based restrictions had limited impact as the grassroots populations curved new mechanisms to engage with the state. Some of such mechanisms involved schemes that the grassroots populations were learning to contend with that were as a result of neoliberal market strategies. Similarly, a vast population that engaged in the religious awakening was constantly seeking ways to improve their economic situations. In this regard, churches had become a breeding ground for economic empowerment by primarily helping the congregations to mobilise in *chama* and be enjoined in SACCOs.

#### 4. From SACCOs to *chama*

Thus, the surge of SACCO in Embu was as a result of support by the grassroots communities, partly as their attempt to create alternatives for better livelihoods. SACCOs that were established all over the country were as a result of the SACCO society act enacted by the parliament in 2008. The first successful SACCO in Kianjokoma - Embu relied on tea and coffee farmers<sup>10</sup>. Although majority of tea farmers had built a culture of waiting for payments at the end of every November, it became common to navigate this through opening SACCO accounts that allowed them to access their money at different times of the year. The disruption of the annual bonuses as they are called was beneficial to some, but also caused misery to others. One of our informant from the field complained of the stripping off the prestige of the ‘bonus season’ that usually began from end of November to the Christmas and new year season saying, ‘December used to be the month that everyone waited for with excitement, because people had money (tea bonus), now it is no more.’ These sentiments resonated with many others who attributed the coming of SACCO with the end of ‘bonus’ period, as they knew it. Nevertheless, the same people seemed to give the wide-ranging credit to the SACCO movement saying that it provides farmers with loans, advance earnings for such usage as school fees and health care.

The prospect of a better life as provided for by the mushrooming of SACCOs has seemed promising and innovative. Promising because it helped reinvigorate the economic activities of the grassroots populations. This is evident in provision of loans and advances that became the backbone of maintaining these SACCOs in tea and coffee farming populations. The grassroots engaged in SACCOs programmes to aid their ability to access school for their children, and healthcare access as the highest priority. The farmers who were previously seen as ‘not-credit-worthy’ by the banking institutions

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<sup>10</sup> Among the most popular SACCOs in Embu were Nawiri, Daima, and County SACCO.



could now use the number of tea bushes they owned as securities to access loans. This expanded the number of people that were able to access small-scale loans from the tea and coffee based SACCOs. Alternatively, farmers who did not have enough land for tea to provide securities were allowed to use colleagues as collaterals, and this meant that villagers depended on each other to secure better economic chances. Such schemes were possible because the SACCOs needed a big number of farmers to survive. Thus the vigorous recruitment drive and relaxed requirements to join the SACCOs worked for the advantage of the farmers. The SACCOs also became the most accessible option for the farmers since they had reduced the linkage of networks between the farmers and the financial institutions. In this regard, although farmers had to travel for long distance in the past to access their finances, the establishment of SACCOs that operated closer to where the farmers resided reduced such travel risks. It was also innovative because it coincided with the introduction of mobile banking technologies that began emerging in Kenya since 2007. Technology further opened up spaces to engage the rural populations by helping them enter into financial networks with a large pool of choice. Similarly, it has also been increasing the capacity of the grassroots to expand their financial capabilities by diversifying their income and resource pools. This kind of engagement with the emerging mobile money based technology is proving more viable, and requires more research to map its usability, adoption, and benefits to the grassroots.

Nevertheless, since at least 2010, the SACCO movement in Embu has passed its thriving stage. Several of these SACCOs are now at difficulties in member recruitment process. This is evident in among other ways the recruitment process that seems to have forced SACCO officers to reach out to the customers as opposed to waiting for the customers to go the banking hall.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, the question that arises is if the grassroots have abandoned the SACCO movements? Or if the difficulties being experienced by SACCOs are as a result of the fact that the loans they provided to the members worked so that the members do not need them anymore? While these two issues might be hard to capture in data, it does seem plausible to argue that the grassroots has been learning from the SACCO. Although a sizeable number of people benefited from the SACCOs, another sizeable number also sunk into debt. Those who sank into debt did so because the SACCOs as well as other banks in Kenya took advantage of lack of regulation by the state to exploit their customers with high interests rates.<sup>12</sup> Although the state has had moments of intervention, it has widely failed in the attempts to shield the grassroots from the exploitation by the banks. The state interventions notwithstanding, the grassroots have had their own schemes meant to self-guard and self-improve.

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<sup>11</sup> During the field study for data collection in preparation for this study, we regularly came across the agents (usually interns) of various SACCOs in different towns in Embu. The agents have agreements with various traders regarding when they should pick up cash deposits at their work places each day of the week.

<sup>12</sup> To see description of the famine that affected Southern and Eastern Africa see article on interest rates in Kenya available at <https://www.theafricareport.com/19842/kenya-lifts-interest-rate-cap-equity-bank-to-benefit-the-most/>.



## 5. Finding refuge in a *chama*

To understand the connection between Harambee, the SACCO movement, and emergence of *chama* as a mechanism for navigating harsh economic times in rural Embu, we need to understand the twin phases of Harambee as a tool to pursue development as well as political contestation by the grassroots. Ferguson (2015) has argued that a disdain for the markets and state programmes will not help in scheming ways from which the scourge of poverty can be confronted. Rather, he suggests that scholars need to bridge ‘poverty’ of analytical vocabularies that describe the livelihoods of people by conceiving new forms of politics. This kind of an approach is critical as an aid to understand how the rural populations responded to Harambee as it turned to be engulfed with a huge state bureaucracy, riddled with wastage of public funds, entwined with radical corruption, engrained with a character of rapid mismanagement, and as a tool for political (de) mobilisation. Thus, the approach that analyses the presence of *chama* in rural Embu through a historical analysis that focuses on its emergence from Harambee mobilisation is seen as important link to explain that 41% of the Kenyan population is engaged in *chama* as contrasted with the 32% who rely on banks for similar services (Central Bank of Kenya *et al.* 2016). This approach also differs from scholarly emphasis that suggests that these kind of social mobilisation usually emerges from regimes with a crisis, either economic or security. It also gives new aspects to those who argue that they emerge from failed state policies in social welfare schemes.

The scholars that have dedicated themselves to analysing the social organisations similar to *chama* in Africa and elsewhere such as *susu* in Ghana (Gugerty 2007, Osei-Assibey 2015) emphasis on their entrepreneurial tendencies, its proclivity as a gendered institution that seems to be preferred by women, and a saving grace for the most vulnerable families in rural and urban poor populations (Mwatha 1996). These groupings have been penetrating the rural regions of Kenya as seen from newspapers report. The sample data of *chama* in Kenya suggests that there are 400,000 registered and 900,000 non-registered groups in Kenya. Furthermore, 6 out of 10 Kenyan adults are said to belong to such groups. In fiscal terms, these *chama* had between \$4 billion and \$8 billion in 2018.<sup>13</sup>

The *chama* described and used for this study had several overarching characteristics. One of them is that they hold regular meetings either weekly, after every fortnight, or every month. In a very rare scenario, some *chama* preferred to meet and transact annually. These *chama* acts as pool for revenues and resources. The reason for regular meeting is to submit their financial contributions although these meeting also feature patterns of socialisation. Those who miss the meetings are fiscally penalised, perhaps as a way to help the *chama* enlarge their financial pools. The activities of the groups varies extensively, and therefore individuals can join various *chama* based on their tastes and preference.

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<sup>13</sup> For reports regarding participation in *chama* in Kenya, see local newspaper articles such as Daily Nation 6th April 2018; the Standard 30th July 2016; and Daily Nation 8th March 2016.



## 6. The women agency in *chama*

The most dominant group of population that has had a long history of participating in *chama* activities in the rural Embu is the women, as the households visited for this research proved.<sup>14</sup> The women group movement in Kenya is synonymous with '*Maendeleo ya Wanawake*' (Women Progress) organisation (MYWO) which is the largest and oldest voluntary association of women in Kenya. MYWO is salient with colonial history that sought to promote 'advancement of African women' (Wipper 1975). The MYWO coopted a leadership with a mandate to promotion of women activity in economic realms; improve livelihoods and further women rights. Although MYWO strongly supported empowerment programs for the rural populations as well as a firm participation in defending the rights of less fortunate, over the years, its political character metamorphosed to a political tool for the elite and the furtherance of status quo (Wipper 1975, Aubrey 1997). The highly politicisation of MYWO was witnessed in the early 1990s during the revival of multi-party politics in Kenya. It seemed that MYWO was predestined to the same fate with the Harambee movement. MYWO became inseparable with Kenya African National Union Party (KANU), and those that defied it were treated with ruthless animosity. The 2004 Nobel peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai, was instrumental in MYWO management. She is a symbol of women who fell out with KANU as a result of not towing the line. Although there were efforts to restore MYWO to its non-governmental status in the early 1990s (Aubrey 1997), its role in economic inclusion particularly of rural women in the peripheries was largely jeopardised by the intrusion of elective politics that relied on patronage.

Thus, women did not enjoy an apolitical umbrella that could articulate their efforts to self-help groups. Women, particularly those in the rural Kenya, mimicked the MYWO model to organise at the local level. However, these small grouping as outlined here differed from the conventional groups in some significant ways. One of this ways is the manner in which they deviated from 'rights' narratives which resonates with their wish to disengage with only those who seek to empower them to fight for their rights although men usually seem to perceive women groups as having empowered them.<sup>15</sup> The feeling of women and their reasons for joining these groups can be seen in the expression captured in one of the informants' comment;

'...those powerful women who are our leaders sometimes speak like politicians. I don't understand what they mean by telling me that I have to stand strong and defend my rights. What is a right if my son cannot go to school? And by the way, why should I fight my *mzee* (husband) for no good reason? All we want is to have their money, and [mix] it with our monthly contributions. That way, we can have something to

<sup>14</sup> 9 out of 10 women interviewed confessed that they belonged to a *chama* compared to 3 out of 10 men.

<sup>15</sup> These views are from a field study informant Nyaga Njagi (not his real name) who asserted, '*avai aka nimagire vinya muno mani niundu wa tunguruvu tutu twao* - My man, women have really become powerful, thanks to these small groupings they have.'



boast about. We can build homes, and educate our children. *Wewe si inaona vijana wenye wamesoma vile wamenjengea wazazi wao? Pia mimi nataka haka kangu kaende Japani kaniletee machine...wananie mbikarage ta aka aria engi mwana* (Don't you see how blessed those children who were educated have become to their parents? I also want my son to go to Japan, so he can study and bring me a Toyota, so I can feel like other parents do).'

Despite what the women participating in the *chama* stands for, what defines them is their participation in these groups. These women groups usually have organised themselves in an overtly similar methods. They almost all have specific regular contributions and days of meeting weekly, fortnight, or monthly. The organisation, regular activities, and social economic engagement of the women groups bears patterns that fit in conceptualisation of how they fill in economic gaps created by scarcity of wage labour and dismal returns of coffee and tea through a practise of distribution. These regular meetings improve the web of networks that increase women support in betterment of their society.

The rationale for supporting women are rightly based in notions that women support their families, thus their support is seen as essential to the wellbeing of the whole family. Similarly, global narratives on women empowerment have had a wide receptivity within Kenya (UN Women 2010). Furthermore, narratives that support gender based development impededness see confronting gender constrains as paramount in poverty eradication efforts. Scholars sees the challenge for women, and the need for them to be prioritised as targets of state programs as inspired by the notions that majority of them are in the informal sector, thus attempts must be made to legitimise and strengthen their activities. This gender-based emphasis is done at the backbone of statistics that show that women are at the core of micro and small-scale enterprises in Kenya (48% according to KNBS). These categories are important, however, they can potentially obscure the need for distributive ethic, which is not gender based nor limited by age.

Besides women, young men in various villages of Embu have been joining *chama* guided by the principle of belonging and need to improve their economic chances. Since 2008 the changing nature of public transport has enabled hundreds of young men graduating from secondary schools and vocational training institutions to take up the job of riding motorcycles popularly called *bodaboda*. These riders have been organising in *chama* besides their regular jobs. Part of the factors that have encouraged such organisation is the state policies that targets to get a hurdle of the riders since there has been various cases of crime and petty accidents committed by the motorbike riders who are usually exempted from the licensing regimes. Besides the usual savings and circulation of funds common to many *chama*, the *bodaboda* riders have derived a habit of owning assets for their groups. In this regard, it has become common to have assets such as motorbikes, *matatu* (minibuses), health



clinics, and other smallholder businesses that are owned by the various *chama* therefore providing more scopes for study of uses of *chama* in rural populations.

## 7. Analysis of benefits from *chama*

Social mobilisation in groups has been viewed as bearing potential demerits of operating within the ‘groups’ that allude to strains in management (Nyangau 2014) that gives the state the apparatus for interventions. However, the views of the group leaders are in stark parallels with the crusaders of ‘the need to manage’ the groups in a formalised organisation. Scholars’ tendencies to recommend necessity to manage the groups entities echoes views of the commentators of informal segments of economies in Africa which allude populations as entrepreneurial subjects (Kinyajui 2007). Exhorting an entrepreneur allows a depiction of the subjects of the study as deficient in economic habits and carries overtones to criminalise their activities (Mutongi 2006). Prescriptions sprouting out of these views engage the necessity to offer credit, training, and an advancement of skills (Mulei and Bokea 1999, Orwa 2007). This approach stigmatises the informality of groups (and individuals) character creating a necessity of measure to regulations. Mkandawire (2009) sees this attitude as denying the target characters an opportunity to present free modes of social organisations that can extricate African countries from the crisis they confront, by opening a floodgate of interventions and thus limiting enthusiasm of the locals to appropriate their means to development. Although the scope of the informal, whilst important, is beyond the confines of the current study the narrative ascribed here calls for an apprehension of social organisation taking place in rural Africa to comprehend how mobilisation of resources is taking place some of which have been highlighted in this study.

From the observation and analysis made from the interaction with several informants for this study, the most evident benefit of *chama* movement is the networks created by the people in rural areas that enlarge their resource pools through circulation of money and savings. Such schemes are providing an access to capital through the in-group based loaning, enabling members to access loans from formal banking institutions, and tapping into the state programmes that are providing funds for development. Similarly, *chama* have been accelerating money utility in the rural areas through enabling ‘small money’ to work. This is made possible when members pool their money on regular bases to give to one another. Thus, these become a platform to empowering one individual at a time. This plays the role of extending security emerging from such activities thus making *chama* provide safety nets for its members. Getting assistance is negotiated since what covers the needs to be addressed is highly fluid. In this case, members understand each other and handle each case as it appears. *Chama* also defies formality and challenges the entrepreneurial notions of ‘discipline’ in the market place to access resources. Finally, *chama* also produces a platform for members to build their social capital that is a sense of identity and belonging that catapults members to participation in social political issues in the society.



## 8. Conclusion

The efforts of the state to streamline Harambee were made by building a larger pool of bureaucracy who oversaw various policy and increased regulatory measures. The failure of the state measures also reveals critical limits of the state's attempts to enter into the social realm in Africa. Despite the challenges and changes that ensued the Harambee project, the grassroots populations have not abandoned it. The activities that persisted after the state's withdrawal from Harambee are at best expressed as informal, populist, and anti-bureaucratic. The state bureaucracy's tight hands on the communities notwithstanding, grassroots movements have emerged with strategies to engage both the state and the capital market. Turning attention to these new forms of Harambee opens up new possibilities for new spaces of mobilisation of grassroots and peripheries to engage with the state and the global interventionism. It as well opens up possibilities to analyse various paralegal actives in the grassroots and responses of the poor to the state backed funds supporting women and youth.

Whereas some scholars of self-help organisations see them as pursuing traditional communal efforts (Hyden 1973) others see cooperatives as a later extension of self-help movement (Hamer 1981). The primary distinction between self-help and cooperative movement is that the former capitalises on the realm of social services through communal efforts covering such areas as building schools, health centres, and water systems. The latter is concerned with economic realm but mobilised also within confines of a tightly tied communal aspects concerning matters such as production and distribution, assets and credits facilities. Furthermore, the *chama* movement underscores the state's bureaucratisation of grassroots political mobilisation through aiding patron-client relations in pursuit of re-distributional claims. The Harambee itself is a clear case of conflicting theatrics that demonstrates a state failure to address the provision of social services hence triggering a response out of frustration from the grassroots politics (Ngau 1987). State's interventions in these grassroots initiative marred the movement with corruption, political patronisation, and stifling of the spirit of the self-help projects (Waiguru 2002).

A historical purview of Harambee self-help projects in Kenya shows assorted engagement with Harambee, some of which include a platform for provision of public goods, a platform for political mobilisation, a mean through which furtherance of development agenda was practiced and a practice of engagement in economic activity especially by the poor. *Chama* as contemporary expression of Harambee has deep historical roots in construction of the Kenyan society and its political sojourn. Thus, it is sociologically a messy process but one that nevertheless is important in enabling us to capture key tensions in political economy in Kenyan context. Activities mobilised within Harambee exemplify Harambee as embedded with mechanisms of manipulating the peripheries but at the same time spearheading the interests of peripheries. This potentially contradicting sphere of Harambee activity has overtime produced variegated outcomes and bears potential to confronting the scourge of poverty.



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## Uganda's revolutionary memory, victimhood and regime survival

*The road that the community expects to take in each generation is inspired and shaped by its memories of former heroic ages* —Smith, D.A. (2009)

Ian Karusigarira

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

### Abstract

In revolutionary political systems—such as Uganda's—lies a strong collective memory that organizes and enforces national identity as a cultural property. National identity nurtured by the nexus between lived representations and narratives on collective memory of war, therefore, presents itself as a kind of politics with repetitive series of nation-state narratives, metaphorically suggesting how the putative qualities of the nation's past reinforce the qualities of the present. This has two implications; it on one hand allows for changes in a narrative's cognitive claims which form core of its constitutive assumptions about the nation's past. This past is collectively viewed as a fight against profanity and restoration of political sanctity; On the other hand, it subjects memory to new scientific heuristics involving its interpretations, transformation and distribution. I seek to interrogate the intricate memory entanglement in gaining and consolidating political power in Uganda. Of great importance are politics of remembering, forgetting and utter repudiation of memory of war while asserting control and restraint over who governs. The purpose of this paper is to understand and internalize the dynamics of how knowledge of the past relates with the present. This gives a precise definition of power in revolutionary-dominated regimes.

**Keywords:** Memory of War, national narratives, victimhood, regime survival, Uganda



## 1. Introduction

The predicament of memory of war is not as such very unprecedented in post-armed conflict nations of which Uganda is part. Most importantly, there is limited uniqueness of Uganda's context of nationalized memory. I explain here how memory of war accounts, in part, for the nested explanatory mechanism associated with regime consolidation in country politics all over the world. I seek to theorize and problematize memory beyond just the individual representations of historic events to include the politics of and narratives surrounding remembering, forgetting and repudiating part or all of the episodes of such historical representations and myths. While Renan (1947:16) in his French article '*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*' illustrated that remembering implies the real meaning of memory and experiential in nature transferred by agency or collectively through socialization, forgetting can be an 'ineluctable counterpart of memory'. Forgetting can be either by deliberate erasure of some history (Passerini 2003) especially the aspects that credit the makers of the immediate past history or giving limited attention and promoting political repudiation of the wrongs of the dominant paradigm at present. I shall illustrate the revolutionary regime's responsibility in the enforcement of remembering of the collective suffering in which the revolutionaries were victims and at the same time the liberators while promoting the forgetting of the perceived *divisive politics* (politics opposed to the revolutionary discourse). Although, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2017) descriptively illustrated with lived experiences of war in Britain, Ireland and Northern Ireland, that excluded groups which feel completely alienated from official memory can seek to mobilize their counter-memory into an oppositional narrative in order to mount a full-scale challenge for political power, the excluded others in a revolutionary war memory may not be potentially cohesive and strong enough within a well-entrenched revolutionary patriarchy.

The paper also emphasizes that the duality and inter-subjectivity of memory is a gate pass to complex valuations of the processes of learning to speak, live and survive that are foundational not only for human existence but also dominance. This implies the likely interviewee-interviewer relationship quandary associated with the production and reproduction of memory as well as generating and constructing experiential historical anecdotes. To be able to contribute substantially to the making of meaningful historical claims, we have to put such claims in a larger context. The context according to Passerini is one in which the 'memory of the dead and in the end the unity of humanity through different times and spaces are at stake' (2011:248).

In this regard the paper emphasizes that when ideas about *who matters* change, so does the national memory. In his pioneering work on memory in social sciences mainstream, Halbwachs (1994 [1925]) concluded that social frameworks shape what people remember by filtering narratives to fit their collective significance. Only those things transferred are considered relevant to the collective within which people are positioned (see also Rigney 2018). Memory is always *on the move* (Rigney 2012). As this paper argues, along this memory lane, there are deformations tagged and eventually synced to cement the *true meaning of history*.



However, the academicians interested in analysis of national memory are more often than not entangled in the subjectivities of history and social science in general. How possible and tenable is it to tear open the mind of a person or a set of individuals to gain access to their *true memory*? How do people generate representations and symbolic interactions? The relationship between *orality* (recollections) and written claims is always conflicting and sometimes overlapping. On the one hand, the recollection of what happened and where it happened or who said what, is seemingly ephemeral (Joubert 2013:27-28). Written claims sometimes may be generated from the *orality* but the researcher has the onus to sieve the unwanted contents to suit the readership. This secondary representation can produce divergent representations and misinterpretations thereby nurturing distortions in the memory claims. Similar contradictions exist between history and memory (Passerini 2003, Passerini 2014). Between what we hear and read and what exactly happened is a gray zone in which every narrative could satisfactorily be admissible depending on the giver and the receiver of such narratives. It is therefore important to note that every historical event of political nature has a driver and passengers (just like the usual commuter vehicle). In this analogy, even though, the passengers witnessed the accident on the fateful day and some actually died), the dynamics surrounding the accident go beyond just the intentions of the driver in which case the passengers have no access to other factors that perhaps culminated into the accident (other than the obvious possibilities; the driver, the vehicle and perhaps the road).

In such studies as memory, we are asked to clearly indicate who and what the subject or object of history is. How did we come to conclude that the subject of history was really a subject? By what sufficient data (others call it representative sample space) can we substantiate claims of individual or collective memory in a multifaceted political culture? This dilemma on collection and later on analysis of data not only exists in memory studies but also elsewhere in social sciences. I labored to illuminate memory ramifications in the politics of other means. Also, in this spirit I explained that sizeable radical strands of knowledge prefer to sit on opposite sides; one claiming the influence of individual's memory as to the historic event, while the other emphasizing collective memory. Yet, novelty emerges in the studies that deeply analyze the consciousness and unconsciousness in the dealings of remembering, forgetting, ignoring and denying. I have viewed memory with three complementary and interdisciplinary lenses; one emphasizing representations (which anthropologists refer to as lived experiences). Two, narrations of shared history associated with generational transfer of memory within the subgroups, and three, the narratives (constructive) associated with shared memory considered national (official) collective memory. The collectivity of memory involves what Durkheim terms collective representation whereby he illustrated that societies require connection with the past in order to preserve cohesion and unity and that norms, rituals, traditional beliefs and values all relate to a shared memory of the past (1912); collective memory (Halbwachs 1994 [1925], Passerini 2014); and, accumulated subjectivities (Passerini 2003:2). In trying to blend individual and collective memory we identify the social



construction of meanings around political symbols, myths and practices as cultural components.

## 2. Data collection

The works of other memory scholars provided the foundation of my arguments. Although this is a comparatively-oriented-single-country-case, the intersubjective nature of memory requires an academic dialogue with scholars in different spaces and time. The emphasis on the academic interaction is so because, in the search for the meanings associated with political ordering of memory, we must deeply understand the intellectual claims along the spectrum and the convergences as well as divergences with anecdotes of individual and familial representations of symbolic claims that come with memory studies. This is to purely help me exercise diligent scholarly prerogative in the making of informed claims around the relationship between power configurations and politics of memory involving remembering, forgetting, ignoring as well as denial of historical events.

I sought to explore the historical and anthropological data related to collective patriotic sacrifice (heroism and collective victimhood related to memory of war). Efforts at establishing the individual representative symbolization of war and its impact on political actions of the actors were made. The strategic use of memory of war by the revolutionary warlords through education, ideological indoctrination and coercive use of force in enforcing remembering, forgetting and utter repudiation informed the focus of this paper. There is a common belief in this research that the glorification of the guerilla warlords (National Resistance Army) otherwise seen as heroes and the extensive liberation commemorations strengthens the trend and the belief in the shared cognition and agreement about the inevitability of patriotic sacrifice and its value. What is at stake if the revolutionary political power is usurped by the *insignificant others* (who perhaps lack revolutionary vision and ideology)? This is a question to be answered in this research piece while exploring the role of history and ideology in the dealings with regime survival.

In Uganda's ethnographic engagement, I established the generational discrepancies in relation to representative memory portrayals and the doing of present-day political business. The fascinating findings were that, while the young people in urban areas are most likely to engage in unconventional politics aimed at regime change, there is no distinction between the young and the old folks in rural Uganda. There existed no significant differences in generational internalization of politics and its socialization. This indicates that as Inglehart and Klingemann (1979) established, there are basic orientations, that apply uniformly to the people from childhood, which tend to persist even through the adult life. In seemingly similar results as those of Uganda's revolutionary society, Shi in the study on generational differences in political attitudes in China, established that in their formative years, older generations experienced several national political narratives that naturally caused them to accept traditional social norms established by the party in power and its rules of the game (1999:29). Given a vast exposure to the past amassed with turmoil, older generations in Uganda are more likely to give up



their interests instead of engaging in state-challenging politics. The reason however for the rural younger folks' lack of interest in unconventional political activities was the result of media-based socialization trap.

Also, the young people find themselves in a society which encourages them to obey leaders, and castigate dangerous unconventional activities. Nearly, at every center of socialization is a medium of communication portraying mainstream political ordering whether through media, school, church or village political forums intended to indoctrinate young people into accepting status quo. For example, I attended a friend's graduation party in Rwemiyaga county where the communication to celebrants was very structured. Every speaker that came to the podium had a responsibility to acknowledge the following before he/she spoke; God for giving them life, Museveni for bringing peace and security and National Resistance Movement (the revolutionary party) for the sacrifices made for Uganda. This acknowledgement starts from the district leader, member of Parliament and trickles down to the lowest leaders at the local councils. A similar message flow appeared in burial ceremonies I attended such as a friend's relative in Iganga district. I attended marriage ceremonies in Kiruhura, Mbarara and Kampala districts and still the political communication was status quo inclined. Village-based students' forums presented the same revolutionary characteristic such as one I attended at Biharwe. Such an ideological control of political communication does not allow for differentiations in ages while dealing with generational interpretation of political life. On one hand, there is a serious shift in political orientations among young and old in urban areas because of access to alternative media, they have become more aware of the needed strength over regime retaliations to dissidence and more determined to engage unconventional politics (with limited chances of success though). Collective memory on the other hand, is an instrumental [constructive] nature of memory configuration in political symbolization and definition of power.

### 3. Conceptualizing and contextualizing Memory of War (MOW)

Memory is used in linguistics as a verb and a noun. As a verb, it connotes an action, occurrence or a process; and as a noun, it stands out as a figurative object. As a concept, memory has been used in interdisciplinary studies cutting across natural and social sciences as well as liberal arts and in everyday individual use among humans. For long, memory had been a confine of the cognitive and medical/neurological psychology interested in trauma related to the works of Pierre especially in *dissociation et La Médecine psychologique* published in 1920s<sup>1</sup>; in history, memory is commonly associated with a Medieval France's historiographer Bloch<sup>2</sup>. In African traditions, memory guided orality in the generational transfer of knowledge that stood as a repository up until written history became predominant in the recent centuries (Karusigarira 2016). In anthropology memory was/is

<sup>1</sup> J, Pierre's 1923 *La Médecine Psychologique*.

<sup>2</sup> M, Bloch's *Memoirs of War*, 1914



considered a tool for authentic and unbiased portrayals of the past incidences. Elsewhere in criminology, memory has been the basic foundation for evidence search on past offences and in archeological studies, it is interested in the world's early occupancy. In performing arts and aesthetic fields, the past speaks imagination. Memory however, started gaining active currents in political sociology in 1920s with pioneering works of Halbwachs with his work on the Social Frameworks of Memory<sup>3</sup> and later the collective memory (1980 [1950]).

Social science conceptualization and understanding of memory of war takes three shapes. One is the individual, two is familial/generational interactive cognition and three is, the instrumental construction of fear and a collective relationship with memory of the past guided by the political power. I seek to intentionally avoid treating the three categories in isolation because they best explain power and politics, if seen holistically. Given the calculated exposure to national war discourses and symbolism of revolutionary politics, the citizens bask in the uncompromising military regimes than scatter around uncertainty of what may come with transfer of power. Instead, maintaining the devil they consider the guarantor of security they perceive to exist is better than the angel they do not know. Characterizing collective memory requires an understanding of the intentional interpretation of historical events and socialization projects. In his 1996 working paper, Aguilar defines collective memory as the common elements in the memory of a society composed of different sub-identities and age groups. This is because, there are multiple sources of memory such as family, schools, churches, occupations and the state (1997).

In their article, Aguilar and Payne elucidated the effect of the contentious nature of collective memory when new truths begin to get unburied (2016). Of these collectives according to Hirsch's study on the transfer of traumatic *post-war memory* to later generations, the most resilient and important framework in the memory transmission is family (2012). The children of a holocaust victim family, Hite adds, inherit a horrible and unknown past that deprived them of belonging and survival system. Later on, upon becoming artists, educators, historians, such children produce works that reflect their intense search for the meanings of their familial losses and individual pains. However, understanding the interest in nationalism as a social framework has become conspicuous (*Ibid* 2012:76). Most post-colonial states rebuilt on the foundation of collective national memory related to disgraceful colonialism and powerful foreign occupations. In their Primary School teaching book on social studies (including national history), Nsubuga *et al.* echoed metaphorically, the rise of nationalism and Pan-Africanism as the identity that resulted from shared memory of the white man's dominance (2014:103-104). The question that remains to be answered however is, what were the nations that Nationalists and Pan-Africanists were struggling to preserve? Hobsbawm and Terence's *invention of tradition* (1983) highlighted the constructed character of nations as well as the importance of memory in their creation (see also, Anderson 1983).

The cultural analysis of memory in this study, is not necessarily a derivative of the *primordial*

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<sup>3</sup> M, Halbwachs in *the social frameworks of memory* gave an illustration of the collective elements of individual memory thereby putting memory into contexts.



*ethnos* but rather the carefully framed and constructed belief system that runs wild through the state institutions and sets a pace in the shaping of the political agenda. It starts with the instrumentalist strategic alignment and through the power of coercion and forcible enforcement, the state institutions start to reconstruct, revive and regenerate such agendas into lasting political folklores and rituals that sink deep into the wider membership of the nation-states. In short, culture is a discursive property carefully constructed and rather not essential. Such a process is reinvigorated by the existence of opposing forces which in one way or another presents a historical rhetoric that appears to be a threat to a defined wellbeing. In Africa, the colonial resistance campaigns ushered the popular support that for centuries now remains the rhetoric for political regime agenda. The renewed political contestations in the post-colonial Uganda has interwoven histories with emotions of war that continue to dictate actions of agency in the revitalization of a revolutionary regime. We ought to seek the understanding of the dynamics around memory intricacies during, just after and later years of the revolutionary regime. During the war between 1981-1986, the NRA rebels had the responsibility to convince the nation that they were the needed sacrifice.

Skepticism of the *we* however could remain eminent. Later, especially between 1986 and 1995 when the forth Uganda constitution—the first being the 1962, followed by the 1966 and without debate followed by the 1967—was put in operation, the revolutionary regime had the monopoly in the enforcement of *who the heroes were without question*. The period that followed 1996 presidential elections up until 2016 election (and even currently), the meaning of *we*, has been narrowing to the nucleus of the bush war's High Command whose chairmanship (Museveni) has never changed since the early days of the initial war mobilization. This implies that the younger and older generations across localities and of special interest (the former and surviving revolutionaries and their kinships) have different levels of representations of war memory. Museveni's revolutionary populism at first enjoyed acceptance emanating from the bad rule that had wrecked the nation politically and socio-economically. The disposition towards his presidency has been dramatically shifting since but with no serious change implications.

Since the National Resistance Movement (NRM) captured power, they celebrate 9th June as Heroes' Day and the only authentic rhetoric is that of the bravery of the first 27 men—including Museveni—who endured tough terrains in order to liberate Uganda from autocracy and all forms of injustice. It is on this day that the people who in different capacities have sacrificed to sustain the vision of the liberators are remembered. The purpose of such victim-based commemoration is to strengthen the ideology of the holders of power. The rhetorical apocalypse of leaders corrupted by power such as Idi Amin and Milton Obote gave the revolutionaries such as Yoweri Museveni a right that does not derive from formal mandate but exclusively from the *consentization* of their revolutionary ethos, a consciousness that coincides as Pellicani puts it, 'with Hegel's manner with the science of the ultimate purpose' (2003:199). The common good of man that the revolutionaries fought for, therefore, must have



ideological protection against adulterations likely from spontaneous reformists trying to disable the *revolutionary consciousness* such as the Reform Agenda that later transformed into Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) political party, and recently the People Power movement led by Robert Kyagulanyi. Such forces as the FDC and People Power (considered by the state as the anarchists) threaten to redefine history and de-sanctify the revolutionary claims of the past. The *new conscentization project* by the likes of Robert Kyagulanyi and Dr Kizza Besigye bring to question the authenticity of political sacrifice. Political Commentator Charles Rwomushana argues—just like Hungarian activist Lukács' theory (1968)—that classification of victimhood is displaced. The consciousness built around victimhood is in fact in Lukács' words absolute consciousness which is the philosophy of history to which the masses contributed nothing (1968). Such a philosophy is particularly a product and a work ethic of the elite class.

The Luweero 1981-1986 war is talked about in the National Resistance Army (NRA)'s institutional spheres, as a source of group identity. The nurtured ontological securitization presents itself as an end and the means of nation-building. Because of the perceived bad politics involving the colonial rule and the post-independence dictatorships, the claims made by the revolutionary regime subtly reifies the notion of security in a sense of military. Even when crime rates are high including spates of mysterious—and open—murders and human rights violations as well as thefts, deep-rooted corruption and robberies among others are scattered around the country, the *perceived security* against war, enforced discourses of revolutionary providence and widespread state-inspired violence continue to have a positive resonance in the public space. Meanwhile, the memory of Lord's Resistance Army that rocked the north of Uganda from 1986 to 2000s remains only a story of the Northerners and of no interest to the revolutionary regime although its victimhood could have doubled the Luweero numbers of deaths and casualties. This implies that the memorization of the Northerners losses to the LRA is of no symbolic importance to the revolutionary regime's consolidation project. To use the Rwanda's illustration; Paul Kagame's Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) commemorates genocide with a victimhood narrative and the notion of the *new-all-inclusive-nationalization*. The Rwanda genocide commemoration which is 7<sup>th</sup> April of every year since 1994 (in fact the entire month of April) is a reflection on the horrible ethnic cleansing so that the history portrays the authenticity of the RPF warriors' heroism. The commemoration of the genocide and the imposed *de-ethnicization* was—and still is—generally intended to create a political space in which the minorities (victors of the 1994 war) could sustain uncontested occupation of a country that comprised the majority ethnic others (the Hutu). Any history from the perceived aggressor (Hutu narrative) cannot be tolerated. The narrative of the ethnic other considered the orchestrators of ethnic cleansing of the minority Tutsi is treated with contempt, ridicule and in fact as a subversive action deserving persecution. On the one hand, revolutionary regimes such as those in Uganda and Rwanda upon capturing power, emphasized grand nationalization of the nations. On the other hand, nationalization was contrasted by the need to build a trusted network capable of executing



serious and sensitive operations including an army that is capable of silencing dissidence and cover every trace which naturally points to employing people from close ethnicities with high-rated loyalties.

#### **4. Politics of remembering and not remembering**

In Uganda just—like other post-war societies—remembering and not remembering are political regime theaters. Political acknowledgement is not just a socio-cultural activity but involves deep nationalistic tensions that require political containment. Acknowledgement in itself has the potential to spur or facilitate a recourse to violence because it involves victims and perpetrators whose borderline is vengeance. In some cases, such as the Ugandan one, Quinn revealed that the truth commission conducted their inquiries after the 1986 war and established that Yoweri Museveni's regime had significantly been playing the politics of accommodation thereby keeping formal memorization on the low-key (2010:115). However, the concomitant conscious denial of formal acknowledgement of physical (experiential) memory of communities that suffered the greater deal of the 1981- 1986 by the revolutionary regime is contradicted by the presence of symbolizations scattered everywhere in the political parameters such as the presidential monuments and political image of a revolutionary nature. Obviously as Ranjan descriptively elaborates, one of the purposes of commemorative politics is to control its public reception (2010).

The typical example of the nation's socio-political acknowledgement or remembering is the commemoration of heroes and liberators which is a well-funded annual political fest involving parades, display of firepower and state dinning. In Museveni's regime, there are three important days in which heroes are celebrated; one is Heroes' Day, first introduced in 1980s after the return of Milton Obote of Uganda people's Congress (UPC) to presidency (Quinn 2010). The selection of June 9<sup>th</sup> is however very controversial because other than administrative politics of the Military Commission of the National Liberation Army, there is no remarkable historical episode deserving of remembering. If Heroes' Day was indeed representing the fall of Amin's rule, then the best day should have been April 13<sup>th</sup> 1979 that saw Yusuf Kironde Lule replace Idi Amin's rule. Again, if the Heroes' Day was to resonate with or symbolize Obote's return as president of Uganda, then the day he won the election (11<sup>th</sup> December 1980) would have been a suitable candidate, not June 9<sup>th</sup>. Heroes' day was later co-opted by Museveni's regime and fully used to not only commemorate the personalities who have made a significant contribution to the development of Uganda but also and most importantly, those that made the revolutionary regime possible and later played a role in the consolidation of power since. For example, Heroes' Day cerebrations in 2001 commemorated people of all kinds who died and those who contributed significantly to the revolutionary struggle. However, critics have maintained that the day has been chosen to remember those people who helped Museveni to ascend to power. Among the beneficiaries of the heroes' medals in 2001 were Mr. John Nagenda and Joan Kakwenzire (both the presidential advisors then).



The second commemorated heroism is *Tarehe Sita* (NRA/M liberation day). The commemoration of NRA/M liberation day is the agenda to consolidate and solidify the revolutionaries' political system. *Tarehe Sita* is the day to show case the military achievements of the revolutionary politics during and after the bush war. The day is also to cement the notion that the holders of the revolutionary ideology are the source of power considered of national interest (not necessarily for the people that died in the Luweero struggle). It is on this day that the president outlines his struggles, providence in terms of which roads have or are to be constructed, how the electricity and water will reach the most remote village or how his regime is approaching the development, health and education issues. A Museveni monument standing in Mubende district not only symbolizes the offensive on Kabamba barracks but also reinforces the guardianship of Museveni in the bush war struggle and the years that followed the war. The questions however that arise demand clarity of the inclusivity of the meaning of Museveni's statue in a military barracks considered national army.

What are the chances that national army will sanctify the person of the current president and gain energies to crash any other dissenting voices whose attempts manifest de-sanctification of their guardian? In this case when commemoration involves a monument of a sitting president, then the political image of absolutism cannot be ruled out. A memorial is usually supposed to be a connector of a community—disintegrated by history—around a shared memory. However, a memorial that favors one group over the other can spur further violence and duel. In such partial representation of groups, the revolutionary few become *the dad can provide* icons just beyond the historical memories of the 1986 bush war to current providence. Here history and present are interchangeably used.

Perhaps, the last one and most controversial is the October 9<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. This has been a special day in the politics of Uganda since independence in 1962. Although ceremonially the independence from colonial rule was attained on 1962, the transfer of power from the colonial administration was not until the late months of 1963. Independence commemoration received interesting interpretation and political constructions in the different post-independence regimes. For Kabaka Edward Mutesa II (between October 9<sup>th</sup> 1963- 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966) and later, Milton Obote's regime (between February 24<sup>th</sup> 1966- January 25<sup>th</sup> 1971), the euphoria over nationalism and self-government among Ugandans was a shared cognition. At that time, European colonial rule was the common enemy to the national identity and therefore the take-over of political power meant the new era in which Uganda would make its own political decisions and relations. For Idi Amin's regime, independence meant the expulsion of imperialism and its ruminants such as Milton Obote's regime and Asians.

Indeed, the Independence Day even gained more power with the Uganda National Liberation Army's regimes (UNLA). For example, UNLA's Godfrey Binaisa's reign was preoccupied with proving his contested presidency. Most of his short-lived rule was spent in enforcing his own legitimacy and international recognition. There are claims that the fall of Binaisa was precipitated in part by the National Consultative Council (NCC)'s schemes to sneak *Obotism* (Obote Two's regime) back which was in fact



successful in a flawed infamous electoral process in 1980. For Milton Obote ii, his return to power not only meant the continuation of his nationalistic agenda but also to assert his sovereignty. During the Military commission of 1985, the nation was under a state of emergency as the government was under the successful coup plotted by Bazillio Olara Okello and Tito Okello Lutwa whose rule was between July 27<sup>th</sup> 1985- July 29<sup>th</sup> 1985 and July 29<sup>th</sup> 1985- January 26<sup>th</sup> 1986 respectively. Obote two's Independence Day commemoration carried much the same meaning in the period between 1980- 1984 as that during 1986- to-date (commonly known as *Musevenism* in the elite circles).

Before the 1986 revolutionary political turn, Uganda was not devoid of acknowledgement. Heroes' Day was established in Obote's regime to remember the personalities who occasioned his return. From the independence monument erected just near the Uganda's parliament signifying the era of nationalism and anti-colonial regime (apparently having been supposedly erected with European colonial government's guidance); to the naming of roads in Kampala after the political figures that made contributions to different regimes, the symbols of historic memorization are present. Some include, Luwum Street named after Archbishop Janani Luwum who was allegedly killed by Idi Amin's regime in 1977 and honored by Obote two regime for putting up a fight against Idi Amin's anarchy. In fact, Luwum day has since 2015 been declared a national holiday to commemorate his martyrdom acknowledged by Museveni's regime. His murder occurred in the same manners and time as that of ministers Lt Col. Erinayo Oryema and Charles Oboth Ofumbi. Both ministers met their deaths with Luwum but little is known of them since they met their death. Yusuf Lule road in remembrance of Professor Yusuf Lule for his contribution to national development.

Just a brief focus on the political tribes that played at the time leading to the revolutionary triumph could help us further understand national memory intricacies. Little is emphasized of the mutinous UNLA's composition. The tribal duel that caused the 1985 coup was also in part orchestrated by the replacement of David Oyite-Ojok (after a helicopter crash in 1983) by a junior Langi officer yet Bazillio Olara-Okello was a perceived appropriate candidate but an Acholi (Daily Monitor 2013). Muhoozi Kainerugaba (son of the revolutionary war Chairman of the High Command) gives a narrative history of 1981- 1986 (perhaps from his father's diaries) revolutionary war in his *Battles of the Ugandan resistance*—regardless of this contested title—on how the UNLA had been nursing a latent tribal conflict between the majority Acholi people and the Obote kinsmen (the Langi) who were the favored few (2010:134-135). Just during the same period in which the revolutionary bush war was at its peak, there was a tribal warfare within the UNLA, between Acholi and the Langi soldiers. This tribal coup in 1985 was also sparked in part by the *tribalization* of scarce commodities whose supplies were a reserve of the military shops. One remarkable feud is the official Chief of Defense Forces (CDF) letter directing a tribal Langi, Ogenga Otunnu to buy assorted items from the army shop, the directive that was turned down. Ogenga Otunnu was a younger brother to Olara Otunnu then the guild president of Makerere University with a big following from Democratic Party and whose support Dr. Milton Obote wanted so



badly to rally Baganda Democratic Party strong-holds for the 1986 anticipated presidential election.

Precipitated in part by this tribal sectarian animosity accumulation, the Acholi and Langi tribes went on a shoot-out spree at Mbuya army barracks in Kampala in 1985. This military mutiny and infighting among the tribal Acholi and Langi culminated into the toppling of Dr. Milton Obote by Lt. General Tito Okello Lutwa and Brig. Bazillio Olara Okello. Total repudiation of such a stage in the period of the revolutionary struggle could have been in part intended to showcase the mighty nature of the bush war organization. Counterfactually, if the internal tribal-based conflict was absent within the UNLA, perhaps the NRA rebels would not have triumphed to the capital in the manner they did. The environment was simply ripe for change. This is the most significant episode in the bush war struggle timeframe but the most unacknowledged. The fact is that, the divisiveness within the UNLA demobilized the army and the sources of command became vague and porous leading to the ease of entry for a more organized military organization such as the NRA. Most of the time, acknowledgment has been inwardly inclined and has disregarded outward perturbations.

The assertion of memory of war distortion and portrayal of the NRA as the most omnipotent in this period can be screened from the verbatim statement. Museveni in Kainerugaba's (2010:135) piece narrates:

We defeated 16 major offensives of Obote's Army, destroyed or disorganized 250 [companies] of the same army and destroyed or disorganized 300 vehicles of all types. In terms of deaths, we killed more than 4,000 soldiers of Obote's army. Therefore, it is incredible that Special Brigade could underestimate such a formidable force.

The highlight of Museveni's narration gives the notion that, the post-bush war period was a period in which the dominant paradigm (the revolutionary might) was supposed to be the only admissible knowledge in the public space.

### **5. Luweero Triangle death zone**

Luweero triangle is not just about Luweero district but a tactical zone which was a battle ground between the Milton Obote's government forces (the Uganda National Liberation Army-(UNLA)) and the National Resistance Army rebel forces. The *triangle* is a composition of many districts in Buganda including Luweero, Kiboga, Nakaseke, Kyankwazi, Mityana, Mubende, Nakasongola, Wakiso and Mpigi. Given the importance of Luweero in the revolutionary war and its devastating memory, the parliament passed the resolution to erect a statue or a memorial tower—of a sort—to remember country men and women who perished in the bush war struggle (although implementation has not been done).

There are many war-affected areas in Uganda but current Luweero district and Nakaseke district (formerly part of Luweero district) stand out exceptionally in respect to *revolutionalism*. Luweero



between 1981 and 1986 became the real synonym for war, fear and death. On the highway that runs through Luweero, lays abandoned dysfunctional military tanks. Luweero up until now is faced with the horror of the revolutionary war (see also Quinn 2010:206). The Uganda Radio Network which published in August 2012 an article *Luweero War Mass Graves Rotting Away*, illustrated the extent of destruction that remains present in the minds of the people in Luweero and Nakaseke. These memorial mass graves are situated at Sub-counties of Katikamu, Makulubita, Kikamulo, Bamunanika, Ziobwe, Kalagala, Nyimbwa, Wabusana-Kikyusa, Kapeeka, Wakyato, Kikandwa and other areas in Luweero and Nakaseke. The graves were built to offer a decent burial for the fallen countrymen and women who died in the bush war struggle in the period between 1981-1986 that brought President Museveni to power<sup>4</sup>. But according to the community leaders such as Sulaiman Mugerwa—a war veteran—and Sam Sserunjoji—in an interview with Uganda Radio Network’s Brain Luwaga—the neglect to preserve the mass graves in these sub-counties means that the government is not taking the sacrifice of their fallen relatives seriously.

Perhaps, the revolutionary regime’s reluctance to fully acknowledge the masses that perished in Luweero triangle is two-fold. One of such *denialism* is from President Museveni’s own verbatim during the *Tarehe Sita* commemoration that:

Among bush warriors that were trained by the Mozambique and Tanzanian governments of Samura Mashel and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere respectively, apart from myself (Museveni), there are surviving comrades such as Gen. Ivan Koreta, Gen Salim Saleh. Others who died did not actually die in war involving battle-field shooting but died in other wars<sup>5</sup>.

This revelation in the interpretation of *denialism* is intended to portray and protect the legacy of the revolutionary formations. The departed in that period were therefore government soldiers that met the uncompromising fire from the bush warriors or the innocent people that soldiers charged after suffering severe offensives. For the people in Luweero, the horror of 1986 war is still fresh.

Other than the dysfunctional military tanks that were left in the area for memory and the mass graves scattered in Luweero and Nakaseke, there are still active war materials that explode from time to time with human contact and tampering. Savannah Regional Police spokesperson while in Nakaseke district 2015 (Lameck Kigozi) reported that there are still military ordnances detonating since the end of 1986 Luweero bush war. Kigozi reports:

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<sup>4</sup> Brain Luwaga, featured a journalistic article titled ‘Luweero war mass graves rotting away’ on Uganda Radio Network on 21 August 2012. <<https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/luweero-war-mass-graves-rotting-away/>> Accessed on 12 April, 2019.>

<sup>5</sup> NBS TV Uganda published a video coverage of Museveni addressing Tarehe Sita celebrants in 2018 in Butaleja. on Youtube channel. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tklHW7PB70/>> Accessed on 12 April 2019.>



We had one in 2012. When children were playing with a rusty object. To them it was a bicycle ring. When these children attempted to dismantle the object using an axe, it went off. It killed one instantly and injured the other. In 2013, we had about 7 men who were burning charcoal. These ones picked an object. They were covering their logs, then lit the logs and the explosive detonated<sup>6</sup>.

As the war anxiety dust attempts to settle in the region formerly torn by war (Luweero Triangle), the fears of old are in continuous return with new cases of such active ordnances. The periodic and untimely detonation of such latent ordnances instigate the fresh representations of the war experiences in regions worst hit by war. Obviously, such a victimhood does not necessarily imply that, this eminent public fear of war alone is influencing the political participation in favor of the revolutionary regime in the region today. On the contrary, the discourse of fear and collective recollections of the memories of war in the public spheres in these regions and beyond capacitated total legitimation from the aftermath of 1986 bush war victory up until now (2019).

Charles Rwomushana reminds us that revolutionary regimes are a justification of peace and social transformation and they in general build caveats. Verbatim Rwomushana argues that:

Museveni's, *we brought peace, unity, modernization and transformation*, does not mean that Mr. Museveni is the inventor of peace, he is part and parcel of the mayhem in Luweero. So, Museveni had to have another group responsible for killings whether or not they participated in the killings. It is Milton Obote who killed during the guerilla war... it is ADF killing in recent murders in Kampala... so we must be reminded that peace is not natural, it is artificial and a culmination of insecurity<sup>7</sup>.

Rwomushana illustrated his claims with an example of AIGP Felix Kaweesi's Murder. At his burial where Mr. Museveni made a very fundamental statement that, the killing of Kaweesi is from Congo (DRC). He adds however that Mr. Museveni has not been asked of whether among those that were arrested some really relate to Congo in principle.

Within the surviving revolutionary soldiers' circles (including child soldiers commonly known as the *Kadogos*), the memory of war casualties needs limited reconstruction. As quoted from Kainerugaba (2010:148), Maj. Gen. Pecos Kutesa in his work *Uganda's Revolution 1979- 1988: How I saw It*, narrates of an incident in which a bush war soldier who was foraging for food in the nearby (in the

<sup>6</sup> Richard Orweny and George Katagwa published a special NBS TV report titled 'Fear as Bombs start to explode in Luweero'. Uploaded on NBS TV Youtube channel on May 25th 2015.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhxoeOvlpBY/> Accessed on 9 April 2019.>

<sup>7</sup> Charles Rwomushana a political analyst on NBS talk show made a presentation published on NBS TV Youtube Channel < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppyng4Tb3a4/> Accessed on 20 January 2019>



barracks' vicinity) banana plantation and while trying to return back to their camp, got hit by a landmine. His cries after loss of the legs to the landmine attracted his friend who equally got hit by another mine and lost his legs too while on a rescue mission. Neither the enemy (UNLA soldiers) nor the bush warriors could venture into these two mine victims charging or rescuing respectively. Subsequently, the cries of the wounded soldiers tormented them for three consecutive days until they finally became silent. The recollections of this and similar events promote comradeship necessary to sustain an emotionally connected army. Similarly, Ross (2009) argues that a revolutionary cadre-ship of intellectuals can actually lead subordinate groups to indoctrination into dominant values and raise the level of their consciousness by reaffirming their group's expectations against the overthrown paradigm.

Along the way, some of such comrades gain opposing views but may not have immediate impact on the entire army solidarity because of such shared representation and its reproduction in the younger generations that follow (especially the *Kadogos*). In fact, the fall-out of some revolutionary comrades is seen by the in-group as the revolutionary betrayal and such comrades deserve total neutralization and disciplining. In this spirit, the loss of the comrades in the struggle strengthened the bush warriors. Pecos Kutesa in an NBS interview in 2017 elaborated that the fatalities of the comrades increased anger and determination to win the battle and consolidate their victory. This resilience was re-enforced and expressed in the songs such as *tusonge tusonge paka Kampala* (literally meaning let us keep advancing till Kampala). The Luweero war evoked both sad and very hilarious memories and indeed, the determination and deep anger against the government and their loss of comrades led to victory in 1986. Kutesa urges that the questions asked to people who were joining the struggle were; 'Are you angry? Is that anger sustainable? If you are angry today because the price of sugar is up, what if it goes down?'<sup>8</sup>. Such questions provoked notion of a *noble cause* implying that even if one died, their struggle was not in vain. This sanctioned remembering has since persisted in the military ranks and files.

## 6. Individual representation: Empirical anecdotes

The direct experience of war and its representations are not just about the time period in which the war was active. In fact, the war effects become more intense with the survivors whose unconditional responsibility is to internalize and cope with the war memory and related losses. This is majorly a psychological condition involving the post-war traumatic situations. The individual recollections of the *real things* created two worlds in the minds of the victims and survivors of NRA bush war. Such recollections may include the injustices they faced in the war, the exposure to direct violence and the immediate injustice the victims faced in the aftermath of war. The individuals have a full construction in their personal imagery representations of the fact that, there were the perpetrators of violence and the victims. The revolutionary regime's emergence and victory becomes a sanctuary as the victims try to

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<sup>8</sup> NBS TV's Youtube channel published Pecos Kutesa in an interview on NRA Memoir with NTV Uganda on 25 January 2017. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oc8I4Jccs/> Accessed on 10 April 2019.>



grapple with the disastrous past.

The relationship between the symbolization of war memory and the individual anecdotes is the refreshing of the remembrances of the past to suit real time politics. Perhaps, this is the most emphasized aspect in the reconciliation and truth commission in post-war period. This is because truth of what happened must be told if emotional wounds are to heal completely and proper containment of retribution is to be realized. The individual and his/her direct relationship with violent warfare, politicization and media discourses must be carefully scrutinized. The Luweero victimhood for example as narrated by Kaddu John Kavuma (a brother to late Luttamaguzi killed on the same day with other 10 people in one village in 1981 by Uganda People's Congress' adherents)<sup>9</sup>, state murders represented the total disgust of the previous regimes in favor of the revolutionaries. This is a sentiment generally shared by people who had a direct interface with war. To such people, representations of the war are mirrored in the graves, widowhood, orphan-hood and poverty that became their everyday reality after the war. As long as there is no direct armed violence/war, the definition of security requires no extensions. In fact, the vast majority of the citizens in the regions that were directly affected by war such as Luweero triangle, are still victims of structural violence (poor roads, poor health services and poverty generally) but ironically speaking, it is in such places that the revolutionary regime is scoring highest in elections.

On Uganda's media for example, analysis must separate media in the capital (Kampala metropolitan area) from the peripheral coverage. As much as political activities of opposition have considerable space, the media in general is a restricted area for contestations. Outside Kampala according to Barbara—a Journalist in Uganda—almost 80% of media is owned by National Resistance Movement-inclined politicians and that in fact before you get into the radio station, you know the owner of the radio station. Outside the newsroom, there are governmental agents such as Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) who are the representatives, the voices of the president and have such powers. The character of media in the periphery is very well defined. The rural media houses serve particular tribes, speak the tribal languages, know the political boundaries, are aware of the sensitivities and taboos concerning the political rules on coverage and therefore effectively communicate to the local people who happen to be the voters. In extreme cases, such localized media can be used to instigate intolerance and violence against opposition to the establishment. For example, just like in other cleansings such as the Germany's infamous holocaust that aimed to exterminate lives of the European Jews and Non-Germans, the Rwanda genocide that aimed to exterminate the ethnic Tutsi people, the Luweero bush war has been perceived as a just war through the regime-inclined media.

The parties to the revolutionary ideology shape the narrative of how they played a great role in the writing of the new history, and therefore, that history should not be unwritten because the price they paid was the blood, resources and prospects for a stable life. Memory (by the living) of those who died

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<sup>9</sup> The narration of the war witness <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BD9bwq8agA/> Accessed on 21 May 2019>



against those who killed (with or without instrumental projects) is an individual reminiscence that represents a collective in the broadcasting and strengthening the power grip. Through the local media houses, the *perceived survivors* have drawn a clear line between acceptable politics and the forbidden politics. It is because of this restrictive claim that Wakiso district in this analysis is not considered too connected to the center point of Luweero 1981-1986 war. The media influence in the capital plays a great deal of influence on Wakiso district. As shown in table one below, Wakiso's political party distribution shows political competition and the war of discourses (a condition for balanced political participation and representation). This trend of political participation is very particular to Wakiso and explains why there is high state repression and military involvement in containing dissent.

Table 1. Parliamentary representation in Wakiso district 2016

S/no.	Constituency	Member of Parliament	Party affiliation
1.	Entebbe Municipality	Rosemary Tumusiime Bikaako	NRM
2	Busiro County East	Medard Lubega Sseggona	DP
3	Busiro County North	Dennis Ssozi Galabuzi	NRM
4	Kyadondo County East	Appollo Kantinti (later Robert Kyagulanyi in a By-election)	FDC/ (later no-party)
5	Busiro County South	Peter Simon Sematimba	NRM
6	Nansana Municipality	Musoke Wakayima Nsereko	DP
7	Makindye-Ssabagabo Municipality	Emmanuel Kigozi Ssempala	DP
8	Kiira Municipality	Ibrahim Ssemujju	FDC

Source: Extracted from the Gazette List of Members of Parliament 2016.

The regime actively consolidating power, therefore, —aware of the damaging effect of narrations and influence of media on war and related retribution—embarks on a censorship of the remembrance of events that the government perceives dangerous. There is less or no politicization in the center point in which the war was real and the devastation sunk deep into everyday lives of the people. The people know only one dominant narrative; one given by the revolutionaries with whom they must associate. This presents the sensitivities of the memorization of the sites of traumatic nature. People easily relate with every attempt at remembrances of what happened and what may happen with change. The immediate decades that followed the tragic war, kept the people in the same direct interpretation of actions only in relation to what happened and what may happen in the future. This is the worst form of muting to parochialism that I found disturbingly an obstruction for the sideline politics/counter-revolutionary paradigms. Therefore, the point that we quite often miss, is the role of individual representations of the *real experiences* in the public space. Sometimes, it is difficult to distinguish between the individual representation and social representation. When the individual thoughts of what happened are transformed into sound or other signs such as writing and expression of sadness, they cease to be just individual thoughts but rather get shared in the political interaction process. Table two



illustrates what muting to parochial state means in the epicenter of the revolutionary war. In areas like those in table two, opposition parties can hardly gain political triumph.

Table 2. Members of Parliament for Luweero Triangle's 2016 Parliamentary Elections

S/no	District	County	Name	Political Party
1	Luweero	Katikamu County North	Abraham James Byandala	NRM
2	Luweero	Katikamu County South	Edward Ndawula Ssembatya	NRM
3	Luweero	Bamunanika County	John Chrysostom Musingo	NRM
4	Luweero	Luweero	Lillian Segujja Nakate	NRM
5	Mpigi	Mawokota County South	Seguya Lubyayi John Bosco	NRM
6	Mpigi	Mawokota County North	Amelia Ann Kyambadde	NRM
7	Mpigi	Mpigi	Sarah Nakawunde	NRM
8	Mubende	Mubende	Benny Bugembe Namugwanya	NRM
9	Mubende	Buwekula County	Joseph Kakooza	NRM
10	Mubende	Kasambya County South	Simeo Nsubuga	NRM
11	Mubende	Kassanda County North	Patrick Oshabe Nsamba	NRM
12	Mubende	Kasamya County	Gaffa Mbwaterkamwa	NRM
13	Mubende	Bukuya County	Micheal Iga Bukenya	NRM
14	Mubende	Mubende Municipality	Anthony Semuli	NRM
15	Nakasongola	Nakasongola County	Noah Wanzala Mutebi	NRM
16	Nakasongola	Budyebo County	Wilson Muruli Mukasa	NRM
17	Nakasongola	Nakasongola	Margaret Komuhangi	NRM
18	Nakaseke	Nakaseke South County	Paulson Ssemakula Luttaguzi	DP
19	Nakaseke	Nakaseke	Sarah Najjuma	NRM
20	Nakaseke	Nakaseke North County	Syda Namirembe Bbumba	NRM
21	Mityana	Mityana	Judith Nabakooba	NRM
22	Mityana	Mityana County North	Godfrey Kiwanda	NRM
23	Mityana	Mityana Municipality	Francis Zaake	No party

Source: Extracted from the Gazette List of Members of Parliament 2016.

Out of the districts considered the center point of the 1981- 1986 bush war such as Luweero, Nakaseke, Mubende, Mpigi, Nakasongola, Mityana (other than Wakiso), there are only two members of Parliament from the Opposition (out of whom, one is an independent MP). Lutamaguzi Semakula Paulson Kasana of Democratic Party (DP) and Francis Zaake are the only opposition members of Parliament in this region. He fronts protection of land rights and fighting social injustices which speak to emotions and strategies of the people at an individual level. In this part of the country, memory of war is in itself a regime consolidation project as long as the views held of the war remain constant. Opposition strategist in this region must try to avoid politics that question the *Musevenism* and the revolutionary discourse lest they risk their political games.

In the northern part of Uganda, the memory of post-Luweero war involved the denial of National Resistance Army as a new national army in favor of Acholi-Langi that had dominated the national military. The tribal tensions that culminated into the overthrow of *Obotism* escalated even after the fall



of the regime but this time not in the capital city but to the far north. One of such manifestations was the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that exterminated millions of people and wrecked the region in a period of around 20 years. Sadly, the victimhood in this war does not attract any remembrance today. However, the pursuit of Joseph Kony and his LRA rebels off the north of Uganda allegedly to Democratic Republic of Congo's forests, implied the capacity of the revolutionary regime to guarantee freedom from armed violence in this region. Again, just like in Luweero, people in the north with direct memory of suffering, do not need enhanced internalization of the predicament of change. They are willing to support the revolutionaries because in part they perceive regime's struggle in their own imagery of suffering.

The collective thought processes (discussed in detail later in this paper) surrounding history of war coincide with manufactured public opinion and cement the noble cause of the revolutionary warfare. However as observed, the memory of war propaganda cannot be a stand-alone. Where the ideological claims have met the uncompromising terrains of increased political awareness, the memory of war has been watered down leading to opposition political triumph. Wakiso district stands out as an exceptional district manifesting the spillovers of Kampala Metropolitan's complex dynamics of political tribes (this includes political parties) as well as high political consciousness and competition capacitated in part by media. Only Kampala in central region presents total opposition regardless of memory of war.

In the western part of the country, memory of war has been given meaning and transformed into the politics as a bargain. In essence, most people in western Uganda did not really feel the direct effect of 1981- 1985 war (since they are in a distant periphery of this particular warfare). However, the individual representations that they held/hold of the post-colonial anarchy—with remarkable northerner aggressive politics—and the victory of *their own soldiers* (ethnic westerners), have presented the new rule—the revolutionaries—with the legitimacy needed to consolidate power. Among the westerners, ethnic consolidation of the electorate is at its best. In this region, nationalism is ethnically defined based on the oppression of ethnic others- the Northerners. The region that had for long (throughout the colonial and post-colonial political history up until 1986) been perceived to be the victims of exclusionary power and the absorbers of all the Northerners' tyranny, soon captured power and were the definers of new history, a history in which they collectively bask(ed).

This is so even when many people in rural western and southern regions are actually still trapped in a *cycle of disadvantages* such as illiteracy, poverty, poor health, unemployment, name it. Given the long history of political tyranny, anyone that offered a different form of politics devoid of open (armed) violence was/is ultimately the most legitimate leader even when the state-sponsored violence in the recent years has seemingly become pervasive. Save for Kasese where all members of Parliament in 2016 were from opposition parties in western region, the rest of the region continues to bask in the public opinion guided by memory of war such as that in Luweero and bad politics such as colonial rule, Idi Amin's dictatorship, Milton Obote and other military regimes that existed before 1986 when President



Museveni took power. Therefore, in such circumstances, memory is attached to identity orchestrating exclusionary politics. The northern regimes in such a national narrative are considered the *normative bad* that ought to remain under containment.

Because of the complex relationship between memory of war and power, we ought to characterize the memory in relation to its sites. Memory site is a multidimensional property and covers the material and non-material representations. The material involves the victims, instrumentalist heroes, war trophies, and utter perpetrators. For the direct victims and the heroes, emphasis is on those people that occupied the area and the so-called liberators considered the epicenter of the war (such as Luweero Triangle). Again, in this category, the victims who happened to be the residents of the battlefield do not have a shared representation as the liberators because, the liberators were already politically and ideologically charged to partake in the risk of lives. Yet the natives in this battlefield were partly suffering the brutal consequences of all-out-war between the government forces and revolutionary warlords. The choice between being a perpetrator of the revolutionary warriors (liberators) was as risky as choosing to be on the government forces' side. Sometimes either way, life of a relative or a friend got lost.

However, the post-war narrative in this center point of war—Luweero Triangle—is that the national forces were responsible for the killings of innocent civilians. The missing knowledge is establishing, who was taking stock of all those that were killed, and had the proof that the bullets or other tools used were only the reserve of the government forces. Politically constructed or not, the victims and the liberators seem to share a similar story line, one which implicates the past regimes as murderous and the current regime as the sacred liberators. In their parochial mode, it was not possible for the residents of the epicenter of the war to distinguish the official government military and the revolutionaries since they both were able to use military camouflage and military weapons. Because of this, the revolutionary narrative was well conceived and no alternative narrative is tolerated.

The other site is one of the people that live(d) in the periphery of war but equally share the same war narrative as those whose everyday was characterized by sounds of gunshots, the detonating ordinances and buzzing tankers (mentioned earlier). This category of people is from elsewhere in the western and southern regions and part of central Uganda. These people depended on the history anecdotes of revolutionary liberators whose ideological message soon after victory traversed the entire country like wild fire. The anecdotes resonated well with the historical contexts in which the country was since colonial rule. This is a purely non-material site filled with framing by politicians and the education-like approaches to ideological orientations.

Lastly, unlike the perpetrators of real damage during the war, those that were either caught fighting for the government forces but willing to switch allegiance, as well as those that freely crossed from the government forces to liberators, were aware of their position in the new system as war trophies. They had to play the obedient servant part lest be crashed completely. Although this group of soldiers out of whom are now veterans, had no choice but to support the new military political system.



## 7. Collective Memory of a Nation

To begin with, the 1995 Uganda Constitution's preamble presents aspects of the effect of national memory on politics and power. One is instrumental nature and the other is the collectiveness of constitutional claims. The preamble to this Constitution quotes:

Recalling our history which has been characterized by political and constitutional instability; Recognizing our struggles against the forces of tyranny, oppression and exploitation;

Committed to building a better future by establishing a socio-economic and political order through a popular and durable national Constitution based on the principles of unity, peace, equality, democracy, freedom, social justice and progress; Exercising our sovereign and inalienable right to determine the form of governance for our country, and having fully participated in the Constitution-making process...(1995)<sup>10</sup>

The emphasis in the preamble on the remembrance and recalling of the violent past and the strong struggle by the revolutionaries was directly implying the victors' formulation of definition of violence in the past and how the past should be seen as a lesson. It equally metaphorically intimates the constructive usage of historical wars to cement the revolutionary regime that was setting a pace for transformation from the military transitional period to pseudo-civilian politics that would later ensue in the year that followed its promulgation in 1995. Emphasizing *our* in the constitutional preamble, was basically to insinuate that—as military strategist Jay Winter would put it—memory has power when people come together in political life and transformation of the representations of the past into matters of urgent importance in the present politics (2012).

Particular to this part of analysis, the political aspects of remembering have over time constructed socio-cultural systems. The time following the end of 1986 guerilla war in Uganda, involved reorganizing, training and orienting the former bush war guerilla soldiers including the child soldiers (*Kadogos*) who were formally integrated in the national army formations, later educated, experienced and now active loyal soldiers. This was—and has been—the foundation on which the military professionalization has been built. The old and the younger generations that served in the bush war became the channels through which the working or acceptable memory is mediated and shared in the large public sphere. Generational mediation however, is not enough but with constant remediation and emphatic recollections and reiterations (Erll and Rigney 2009) through networks such as state-media, academia, museums, public rituals (Erll 2011) and patriotic training, the representative memory culturally gets synced. At this point, nobody is able to question why and how NRA changed its name to

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<sup>10</sup> Uganda Constitution, 1995.



Uganda People's Defense Forces. Were these name changes intended to professionalize the army or to extend NRA patronage countrywide? Such a revolutionary memory narrative was supposed to traverse through not only the army but also other institutions of government in order to enforce complete national allegiance. An officer in government who preferred anonymity intimated that, during their intermediary course, some of the regime sympathetic officers on course advanced a proposal to have a statue/monument of honor to symbolize the head of state as a political hero. Much as the monument—according to the interviewee—did not succeed, she was baffled by the assumption that everyone had a similar political orientation yet supposed to be apolitical officers on a governmental service course.

Uganda's revolutionary politics and politics of memory have an umbilical relationship. The memory of a revolutionary war relates to heroism, victimhood of the comrades in the struggle, victory against and liberation from the forces of political tyranny. It is at this point that memory starts to knit consolidation that increases national acceptance of the revolutionary warlords as new owners and controllers of power. In such regimes even if the war was between two parties, at the end of the war, the memory of the losing party is intentionally muted through suppression and threats as well as ideological deformation. Although the individual memory of the war is/was so tragic, the holders of the opposing experiential history may intentionally have such memories suppressed by victors. Quinn in her work titled *The Politics of Acknowledgement* argued that, the conscious spottiness in political remembering requires that the outward signs of memory remain muted at least in the public spheres (2010:5-10). It does not mean that suppressed memory is not memory; it is only unrecognized and therefore securitization of memory includes the censorship and de-sanctification of such opposing paradigms. Such censored memory, however, remains latent like a dormant volcano awaiting activation. The revolutionaries for example claim that, they were fighting for the common good—an idea widely considered utopian—and therefore the memory must represent that cause. The opposing representations to that main national narrative must be demobilized and suppressed.

The revolutionary politicians—who at first—in most cases represented the desire for social transformation, enact and remember days such as Independence Day, Heroes' Day and genocide. On such days, revolutionaries enforce the symbolization of selves as surviving distractors of the bad past and the key chain with keys to re-claim and sustain their society's existence. Uganda has experienced scores of socio-political events resulting into political unrest and serious threats to life and property. Some of such incidents are but not limited to; precolonial monarchical absolutism, colonial repressive rule, post-colonial authoritarian and restricted democracies. Interestingly, each of these political events (has) thrived on the rigor to create and interpret the historical narratives for which their existence was/is but a noble cause. On national symbolic days, the citizens are reminded that, the peace and security in the nation is as a result of the sacrifices and that such is not a negotiable item in the democratic auction. For example, during the colonial period as the retired Justice Professor of Uganda's Supreme Court George Kanyeihamba explains in his work titled *Constitutionalism and Political History of Uganda*,



pseudo-political parties, movements and associations that existed during colonial times were considered dangerous agitators because only the colonial powers had arrogated to themselves the prerogative to determine what was or was not of national interest (2002:39). In the same way, for such revolutionary politics, a nation cannot be a nation without its past. It was hard-earned and therefore not easily given to whoever holds claims to state power. The interactive rhetoric attached to such historical events constructs a pattern in which people socialize while aligning themselves to the intentions of the holders of state authority.

The ethnic notion demonstrated by the social media platforms has continued to exhibit the obvious tribal use of political space. The Facebook platforms administered by non-westerners show *anti-musevenism* yet the platforms from western Uganda especially Mbarara are *pro-musevenism*. The comment section on these Facebook platforms indicates the omnipresence of tribal politics nurtured by the war of information, war on information and information on war. The names inclined to Ankole for example rarely make a comment suggesting an alternative to Museveni's regime especially when a replacement is a non-westerner. Equally, most names inclined to non-western tribes find convenience supporting *anti-musevenism*. From the table below, only Kasese presents itself to be in the margins of 2016 presidential and Parliamentary elections. Kasese which supported Museveni and NRM successively from 1996 elections when he scored 97% and 87% in 2001, was lost terribly in 2016 amid voter intimidation and harassment by security forces (Basiime and Mumbere 2016). Neither the memory of war, nor the constructed public opinion have worked in favor of the revolutionary regime politics in Kasese. In fact, Kasese remained opposed to the NRM/A establishment both ideologically and militarily since 2016. This could, in part, be explained by the resilience of Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Rwenzori region and the spate of violent clashes between the Kasese people and the regime's army that escalated on November 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. See the comparative table below involving Mbarara and Kasese districts' political support for the revolutionary party and the opposition. Mbarara district represents the ethnic attachment to memory of war.

Table 3. NRM's Mbarara and Kasese districts representation in Parliament in 2016

S/no	District	Constituency	Name	Party
1	Mbarara	Mbarara Municipality	Michael Tusiime	NRM
2	Mbarara	Kashari South County	Nathan Itungu Twesigye	NRM
3	Mbarara	Kashari North County	Wilberforce Yaguma	NRM
4	Mbarara	Rwampara County	Charles Ngabirano	NRM
5	Mbarara	Mbarara	Rosette Christine Kajungu Mutambi	NRM
6	Kasese	Bukonzo County East	Harold Anthony Muhindo	FDC
7	Kasese	Busongora County South	Jackson Mbaju	FDC
8	Kasese	Kasese Municipality	Franco Robert Centenary	FDC
9	Kasese	Bukonjo County West	Godfrey Katusabe	FDC
10	Kasese	Busongora County North	William Musabe Nzoghu	FDC
11	Kasese	Kasese	Winfred Kizza	FDC

Source: Extracted from the Gazette List of Members of Parliament 2016.



Still, there is immense evidence illustrating the impact of anecdotal heroes' accounts for the regime consolidation. In the tales of war (Daily monitor 2004), Major Jacob Asimwe demonstrates the misery endured in the fight against established despotic regimes. Tasked to record atrocities of the war, to Asiimwe, all battles in the liberation struggle until 1986 were dangerous, but the Bukalabi incident in February 1983 was particularly shocking. In that incident, a force led by Salim Saleh (the brother to Yoweri Museveni and a member of the High Command) fell into an ambush. They lost 10 people and had so many casualties including commander Saleh himself who was shot in both arms. By this time, Asimwe had just come from civilian life and had not been to a frontline. He was therefore very shocked seeing all these dead colleagues. The narrations of this nature traversed the whole nation by the revolutionaries. Such horrible tales have maintained a rhetoric of fear of war among the populace facilitating regime consolidation.

Asiimwe's representations are shared by many revolutionary-inclined politicians (such as Salim Saleh, Kasirye Gwanga, Col Phinehas Katirima, Kiiza Besigye, Sam Kalega Njuba, Shem Bageine, Israel Mayengo, Mathew Rukikiire among other historicals that participated in Uganda's liberation struggle. For example, Mathew Rukikiire narrates that the consolation throughout the war times was that rather than be killed by Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) without hope, at least they embarked on killing them and reducing their stronghold in Uganda. He recalls that most people joined the bush war to liberate the country from fear of tyranny, oppression and most importantly, fear for loss of their families. In these special reports, it is evident that most liberators shared these values of their sacrifice to their followers, family and friends before, during and years after the war. Since the initial idea was a revolutionary one therefore, its translation into and internalization of its symbolic role has resonated with the peace-hungry generations that followed.

The interesting aspect of this memory of war usage is that most of the freedom/revolutionary fighters upon victory assumed the political and administrative positions such as judiciary, legislature, local government, police, schools among others making a system of patronage through which they spread their ideology of war and power. As some of the liberation fighters attempt to consciously undo the war memory indoctrination within the opposing paradigm, they have found the routinized meaning of revolutionaries that has conversely retarded the opposing efforts from within. For example, Sam Njuba illustrates how Museveni (the president of Uganda) has changed a lot from their perceived struggle until 1986. 'He has come to rely on people who are opportunistic. Young people with no experience of war' Njuba laments. In his interview with Uganda Monitor Newspaper in 2004, Njuba narrates that:

Museveni is increasingly relying on people who do not know the background to our struggle, and they will not give him the right advice. When he edited me out of that book of his about our Libya trip, he mentioned Abel Rukikaire (one of the revolutionary



fighters). But Rukikaire is now anti-third term. I fear that in the next edition Rukikaire may not appear in that book (Kavuma 2004).

Therefore, the multiplier effect of the revolutionary indoctrination deserves more attention than it has received. This should cover both the manipulators—in favor of regime consolidation—and the receiving end of the manipulative claims. Undoing the revolutionary memory means undoing the symbolism associated with nation-hood, nationalism and perceived freedoms that have become pillars of the regime's establishment. Opposing President Museveni—one of the symbols of liberation—could mean opposing the revolutionary ideology.

## 8. Conclusion

The politics of individual and collective memory viewed in a regime's consolidation mechanism could in part explain why successive regime transfer of power has been problematic in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa where revolutionary regimes are still strong. There are epistemological distortions regarding whether memory studies provide true knowledge or is instead awash with mere subjective opinions. Whereas the national memory involving open suspicion against the European colonial rule—the foundation on which *revolutionarism* and nationalism are grounded—has remained in the shadow, same colonial legacy (involving the military-politics relations—is systemically rooted in all functions of national magnitude including justice system, education system, public service bureaucracies and nationalism portrayals. Yet, the national trauma associated with colonialism is not commemorated (other than the independence rhetoric that seemingly gains more relevance to the holders of power and the future of their hold on such power).

Interestingly, in the axis of revolutionary regime's manipulative formations as well as the individual representation of meanings associated with memory of war, lies the inter-generational conscious and unconscious narrative transfer. This presents a clear blending of the national narrative and community transmission of generational knowledge and individual representations that strengthen the revolutionary political order with fear of unknown. However, in the era when the states have the prerogative to control and direct the media, the public opinion is well transferred without distortions as opposed to the upsurge of multiple centers of information catapulted by the social media coverage. Still, although social media in the recent decades has revolutionized modern protests, there are ethnic distortions that adulterate its political significance. Nevertheless, memory of war ideologies that were earlier dominant have recently lost some properties of potency, while repressive state approaches have taken the frontline in the making and maintenance of legitimacy especially in urban areas. Revolutionary messages shift swiftly from *we are the heroes* to *we are the fighters*. Not only does revolutionary narratives teach of the tragic past but also what is at stake if a contrary narrative surpasses the dominant revolutionary one. To achieve this end, the revolutionary regime not only transmits narratives of



remembrance of the suffering the *heroes* endured but also the powerfulness they exhibited in a war they won. Revolutionary antecedents are not just a memory but power in itself that demands reinforcing.

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## Part II

### Dramatic Changes in Land Management







# **‘Land markets’ on customary land in Africa: Implications for land governance**

Horman Chitonge

Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa

## **Abstract**

Buying and selling of customary land is a phenomenon which has been reported in Africa for over a century now. Although many analysts observe that monetary transactions on customary land is not something new in Africa, they also agree that this phenomenon has now become widespread and almost a normalised form of transaction. However, reports of rampant sale of customary land contradict views expressed by many Africans in rural areas that customary land cannot be sold. In this context, there seems to be a disconnect between what people say and what they actually do. This paper examines this apparent disconnect, seeking to understand the meaning and impact of the reported sale of customary land. Drawing from a case study conducted in two rural districts in Zambia, the paper shows that the growing monetary land transactions in customary areas have serious implications not only on land governance but the broader governance and social order in rural communities. One of the obvious impacts is that the local systems of governance are weakened by the fact that monetary transactions involving customary land are discrete (mostly informal) and less amenable to regulation by local institutions tasked with land administration. The paper argues that in order to understand the apparent disconnect between what people in rural communities in Africa say and what they are doing when it comes to the sale of customary land, one has to locate this in the broader context of the convergence of two different land traditions (the European and African) which are pulling in different directions.

**Keywords:** customary land, land sale, traditional leaders, land markets, land transactions, Africa



## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of 'selling' and 'buying' customary land in Africa has been reported by many researchers for a long time. Although many analysts agree that monetary transactions involving customary land is not something new in Africa (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2006, 2005, Chauveau *et al.* 2006, Colin and Woodhouse 2010, Otsuka and Place 2009, Chitonge *et al.* 2017, Colin 2018), it has been observed that this phenomenon has now become widespread and almost 'normalised' (Holden and Otsuka 2014). In other words, 'buying' and 'selling' land under customary tenure has become a commonplace transaction, just like any other. While some of the studies on this topic have touched on urban land, majority have focused on transactions on rural customary land (both sale and rental transactions). The practice of selling customary land has generated interesting but controversial debates, raising critical questions such as, what exactly is being transacted when one buys customary land? Does buying customary land have the same meaning as a standard commercial transaction? These questions arise amidst claims by many Africans in rural areas that customary land can neither be sold nor bought; it belongs to the community. Given widespread reports by researchers that the selling of customary land in many African communities has become a common phenomenon, there seems to be a disconnect between what people say and what they practice. It is thus important to explore this seeming disconnect between what people say they believe in and what they do. In this paper I explore this disconnect and try to understand what is happening and how we should interpret this seeming contradiction.

I argue that to understand the apparent inconsistency between what people in rural communities in Africa say and what they are doing when it comes to 'selling' customary land, it is important to take into account the collision of two different traditions which seem to be pulling in different directions: the widespread belief among most Africans that customary land should not be sold like any other property or commodity, and the belief that land is a commodity (commodification) just like any other, and should therefore be an object of monetary transaction. In this paper, I focus particularly on the reportedly growing phenomenon of monetary transactions on customary land (see Chimhowu 2019). I draw from an ongoing regional research on Land Use and Rural Livelihoods in Africa Project (LURLAP) to examine the nature of these transactions and their implications on land governance in Africa, particularly customary land. The paper focuses on questions around what is being sold in transactions involving customary land? What types of rights are exchanged? What are the effects of subjecting customary land to monetary transactions? What are some of the factors which account for the alleged rise in monetisation of land transactions on customary land? Is the belief that customary land should not be sold mere rhetoric? What is the impact on the social fabric in rural communities?



## 2. The customary land sale debate

### 2.1. Customary land is not for sale?

Several analysts who have examined the phenomenon of transactions involving customary land have for a long time been intrigued by the fact that while there is strong belief among many Africans residing on customary land that the land should not be sold, they often do the opposite. They deviate from this strongly held view and engage in the ‘selling’ of customary land. Meek (1946) for example observed that ‘Chiefs and elders will often assure you that it is against tribal customs to sell land; yet a glance at the court records may show that the buying and selling of land has been going on for many years.’ In Malawi, a similar situation is reported around the sale of customary land, with some analysts arguing that, ‘In principle [customary] land cannot be sold, but if proper procedures are followed it is done’ (Berge *et al.* 2014: 65). As Meek (1946) observed, even though most African traditional leaders and clan members maintain that customary land cannot be ‘sold’ or ‘bought,’ evidence on the ground shows that monetary land transactions on customary land have been a common practice among many African communities for some time. Anthropologists who have done work in rural communities have long argued that monetary land transactions in customary areas have been reported in different parts of Africa including among the Sukumas in Tanzania, the Sokoto in Nigeria, the Nubia in Sudan, the cocoa growing areas in Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana, way before colonial regimes were established in Africa (see Moyo 2008).

Analysts have argued that although the nature of transactions on customary land differ from community to community, the transfer of customary land involving some form of payment (in cash or kind) has been observed in many parts of Africa even before the beginning of colonialism. For example, Kenyatta (1962 [1938]) in his study of the Gikuyu in Kenya reports that as population among the Gikuyu grew, they started to ‘buy’ land from the neighbouring tribes of the Ndorobo who were willing to ‘sell’. ‘After land was bought from the Ndorobo, any man who held such land, through purchase or inheritance, had full rights to sell it outrightly or give it to any one as he liked without consulting any one, except the elders who acted as ceremonial witnesses in all land transactions’ (ibid, 32). Although this practice of selling and buying customary land among the Gikuyu and their neighbours refers to the period before colonial land institutions and frameworks were established, transactions involving customary land became widespread with the introduction of money and individual titles.

As I show in this paper, even today, there are many people in rural Africa who still believe that customary land should not be sold although they, in practice, sell the same land they say should not be sold. Even in communities where the chiefs and village heads have issued strong instructions prohibiting the sale of customary land, we get reports of people selling the land. Sometimes even the chiefs themselves are alleged to be involved in the selling of the land which they tell people should not be sold. If the selling of customary land is more common than we have been made to believe, it is important to explore what is behind this seeming oxymoron. In the context of reports that this phenomenon is now



prevalent in many communities across Africa, it is important to explore what the implications of this practice are on the future of customary land and the governance of rural communities. In the debates on land markets, the focus has been overwhelmingly directed to the impact of these transactions on productivity (see Holden *et al.* 2009), growth and poverty (Deininger 2003) and security of tenure (Migot-Adholla and Bruce 1994). Little attention has been given to the impact of the emerging 'land markets' on customary land on land governance and the broader social dynamics in the rural communities.

## **2.2. 'You cannot sell customary land, but...'**

When researchers ask people residing on customary land in many parts of Africa about whether one can purchase or sell the land, the common answer one gets is 'it is against tradition to sell customary land.' In the study conducted in Zambia in two rural districts, most residents stated clearly that selling customary land is forbidden. In one of the focus group discussions, we asked participants about whether people in the communities sell part or all of their customary land, and the common response was that customary land cannot be sold; the land belongs to the community. Other participants argued that customary land cannot be sold because it belongs to the chief and the village head. However, some respondents qualified this by saying that, 'Tradition does not allow to sell land, but if one has financial problems, he can sell a portion' (LURLAP Interviews 2016). Analysts who have done research in different parts of Africa have observed similar situations where local people believe that customary land cannot be sold and yet many of them are transacting on customary land in ways which resemble selling (Biebuyck 1963, Feder and Noronha 1987, Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2005, Chauveau and Colin 2010, Colin 2018). As illustrated below, it is important to understand what selling in this context means. Perhaps the term selling is misleading here, in that it signals a different set of relationships from what most Africans mean when they argue that customary land cannot be sold.

It seems that members of the community who argue that customary land cannot be sold are basing their argument on a different understanding of what customary land is as elaborated on later in the paper. The fundamental principle that these residents are invoking when they say that customary land cannot be sold or bought is that of the inalienability of customary land because of its embeddedness in intergenerational relations (Okoth-Ogendo 1989).

## **2.3. Land markets and the 'No Intrinsic Value' principle**

There have been suggestions that the idea that customary land is inalienable can be attributed to the *mystical* conceptualisation of land in Africa, linked to ancestors and the supernatural world (see Colin 2018: 4). The inalienability of customary land is also closely linked to the widely held view in African rural communities that land in itself *has no value* apart from the developments made on it. This is one of the reasons often given for not selling the land. In other words, in the African traditional system of thought the belief that land has *no intrinsic value* implies that it is not treated as a commodity which can



be a subject of commercial exchange or exchange for gain. When one is operating in this world view, it makes sense to argue that land cannot be sold in the conventional sense since selling entails an exchange of value or rights in property.

In the traditional African thought, land is given to someone who requests for it, and the giver of the land is not expected to ask for payment because the person requesting for land is not understood as buying the land, since there is no value to sell. The no-value principle is intricately linked to the belief in the inalienability of customary land in the sense that because land is embedded in social relations, it is not a property that can be isolated for personal exchange. This view is also evident in the idea that land is too valuable (invaluable) to attach a value or price to it. It is like life which is priceless, precisely because it is too valuable to be dispensed through a commodity exchange process.

#### **2.4. Is customary land a colonial creation?**

The debate about the belief that customary land cannot be sold or bought is sometimes attributed to the influence of the colonial policy of denying individual property rights in land to natives. According to this view, customary land and the current norms adopted in many rural African communities is largely a construction of the colonialists in their bid to sustain *indirect rule* (Meek 1946, Colson 1971, Mamdani 1996). What is meant by this is that there is nothing traditional about what we refer to today as customary land norms or tenure; what we have today is largely a distorted version of the original traditional land norms and practices. Those who subscribe to this view argue that the colonial regimes in different parts of Africa gave more power over land to traditional authorities as a mechanism to maintain control over the rural population, adding that the prohibition of sale of customary land had nothing to do with customary norms or traditions around land (see Bassett 1993). Here the argument has been that the colonialists, in order to implement their policy of *indirect rule*, had to concentrate power over land in the traditional leaders (mainly the chief and villageheads) knowing that if traditional leaders have control over land, it would be easy to control the rural population. It has been argued that it is specifically because of this that the colonial governments across Africa, particularly in the British colonies, strictly prohibited the granting of freehold rights to natives, but only to settlers (see Meek 1946). In a sense, the British colonial advisers were aware of the power that comes with the control over land and warned against alienating customary land through individual freehold titles, a practice which they saw as a threat to the policy of indirect rule:

The authority of chiefs, sub-chiefs and heads of clans and families is bound up with the land. The grant, therefore, to individuals of absolute rights of ownership would tend to disrupt the native policy, and so, too, would the indiscriminate sale of tribal land by chiefs. The control of alienation of land has in consequence been one of the planks of the British system of Indirect Rule (Meek 1946:10).



Critics argue that, in effect, the colonialists 'created' customary land and gave it the mystical idea of collective or communal rights such that it precluded the assertion of individual rights, including the right to sell the land. Mamdani (1996) and Agbosu (2000), for instance, have both argued that the deposition of ownership rights in the traditional leaders is one of the major distortions introduced by the colonial land tenure system in Africa, a distortion that post-colonial African governments have conveniently inherited and endorsed.

## **2.5. Customary land tenure a barrier to land markets**

Analysts who support this view argue that had it not been for the colonialists' 'manufacture of land norms' in Africa, land rights would have evolved differently such that transfer of land rights would not be shrouded in the mysticism of communal land rights (Feder and Nisho 1999). Most analysts who want to see the emergence of land markets in rural Africa argue that it is the mystical nature of customary rights which accounts for the disconnect we are seeing in many African communities where people say customary land cannot be sold and yet they engage in selling customary land. According to this view, the lack of clarity that this has generated has, in a sense, blocked the emergence of formal land rights and markets in most parts of rural Africa. Some analysts have even gone further to suggest that the failure to create conditions for the development of land markets in rural areas has acted as a barrier not only to the efficient use of the land but also to the development of infrastructure in rural areas leading to low investment and the perpetuation of poverty (Deininger 2003, Feder and Noronha 1987). Analysts who support this view contend that perpetuation of customary tenure has blocked the realisation of the massive potential of land in Africa (see de Soto 2000). For these analysts, the seeming disconnect between what residents in customary areas say and what they do is a direct outcome of restricting the development of markets.

## **3. Land in African thought system**

While some analysts point to communal land rights as the main reason for the disconnect reported in many African communities, there are analysts who explain the apparent disconnect by drawing from the African concept of land. They point out that understanding land from an African perspective helps to appreciate the complex nature of land rights in Africa (see Akufo 2009). These analysts argue that the mysticism attributed to land relations in Africa is a result of the failure to understand how land in Africa is conceptualised. Land in African thought is defined by a clear distinction between the *soil (solum)* and the *things that grow* on or attached to it. It has, for instance, been argued that there is (maybe was) 'a clear separation in African thought and law between the *solum* and any *manifestation*, such as crops, trees and buildings which symbolises human interaction with it' (Okoth-Ogendo 1989: 8). In the African worldview, the *solum* is regarded as the mother from which everything arises and returns. This is linked to the principle of the inalienability of land mentioned earlier. While things attached to the *solum* can



be alienated and owned by individuals, the *solum* itself is an integral part and a key definer of the community, broadly understood to include the past, present and future generations. It is in this sense that the *solum* is inalienable and priceless or without value (Agbosu 2000). Seen from this angle, it becomes clear what people mean when they say that customary land cannot be sold.

There are two key fundamental implications of this conceptualisation of land in terms of the land market debates. First, the soil as the mother cannot be owned by anyone; people can have the right to use it but not to own it in the sense of a property that can be owned by an individual. Secondly, following from the first, since the soil is so central in the African world view, it is so valuable that no price can be fixed on it to capture its value—it is invaluable just like one cannot put a price on motherhood. As noted above, some analysts argue that this approach leads to the mystification of land in Africa which has acted as a barrier to a clear delineation of rights and relations around land, and in turn has prevented the emergence of formal land markets and the benefits that come with that. Others argue that this conception of land is not typically African, it is a common feature of traditional societies in other parts of the world which have not transformed the traditional value system (Colin 2018). Some have argued that the fact that this is still prevalent in Africa is a sign that the continent has not yet transitioned from traditional to modern social organisation (Feder and Noronha 1987).

### **3.1. The collision of two world views: The African and European conception of land**

Analysts who draw from what they regard as the African cosmology disagree with the view that the African land system has not transitioned to modern systems of land relations. Okoth-Ogendo (1989) for instance argues that such a view fails to grasp the African conception of land because it focuses on *man-to-land* relation when in actual fact the real relations around land are between people. He argues that to understand the conception of land in Africa one must understand the African world view in which land and land relations are embedded. As Akufo (2009) explains, the conception of land in most African societies is deeply embedded in the complex social relations which define access to land and the exercise of power over land. This is fundamentally different from the European conception of land where it is seen as a property (commodity) like any other. In the European system, all land, like any other property, has to have an ‘owner’, in whom absolute ownership (property) rights are deposited. Consequently, in the European system of rights, the most important right is the right to dispose of any property, including land, at will. As such, land tenure in the European system, is conceived as a set of clearly delineated rights and claims that one holds in land with the ultimate right being the disposal right. On the basis of this, the rights in land that one has can be sold on the market like any other property rights. Given this approach to land, it is difficult for a European to come to terms with the African idea where land is not about the property one has, but about how one relates to other people. The African understanding of land is more complex and goes beyond the reductionism of seeing everything as commodity.



### 3.2. The land ownership trap

Scholars who adopt the African conception of land argue that while the colonial governments across Africa distorted the traditional land relations by installing traditional leaders as the owners of the land, the reality of land relations in Africa is complex due to the communitarian nature of the African world view (see Agbosu 2000). This is why before the colonisation of Africa it was only the collective (family or community in the broader sense) that could own land in the sense of absolute ownership; not even the chief had ownership rights to the *solum* (Agbosu 2000, Mamdani 1996, Okoth-Ogendo 1989). When the colonialist arrived in Africa, they transported the European concept of ownership to Africa and totally overlooked other forms of ownership (Chanock 1991, Bassett 1993). This led to collision of two different land systems which has created not only confusion around ownership, but tension and conflict between them:

the transposition of Western (Roman-Dutch/civil law and Anglo-American) property concepts and terminology in the analyses of African processes is a veritable source of confusion. The characterisation of property concepts and legal relationships using Western analogies and paradigms is perhaps understandable but has nevertheless, led to an unnecessary degree of confusion with wholly negative practical consequences such as destructive litigation over land titles and land alienation (Akufo 2009: 62).

One of the tangible outcomes of this collision is what Okoth-Ogendo (1989) refers to as the 'ownership trap'. In a fundamental way, the tension arising from the collision of the two land systems accounts for the apparent disconnect between the strong belief common among many Africans in rural communities even today that customary land cannot be sold, on the one hand, and the now prevalent practice of selling customary land, on the other. This disconnect is a result of confusing two different systems. The idea that customary land cannot be sold makes perfect sense when one is operating in the African system of thought, while at the same time, the selling of customary land makes perfect sense when one is operating in the European system that sees land as property just like any other. As a result, residents in most rural communities who sometime try to combine these two systems are struggling to reconcile the tension between the two systems—leading to the observed disconnect.

One of the main reasons why outright sale of customary land in Africa has been restricted by both traditional authorities and post-colonial African state is that it leads to the well-off members of the community buying most of the land, a situation that creates highly unequal distribution of land (Holden *et al.* 2009). From this point of view, there are fears that if land markets on customary land are allowed to develop without being regulated in some way, it could lead to loss of land especially among the poorest members of community who might engage in *distress* selling of the land (Holden and Ostuka 2014). Arguably, the restriction or complete ban on the sale of customary land, which many post-



colonial African governments adopted, has been justified as a means to prevent inequality in the distribution of land (Chanock 1991) and landlessness (see Holden and Otsuka 2014).

#### **4. Land market dynamics: The case of Chibombo and Chongwe district in central Zambia**

This paper draws from an ongoing regional study of land and livelihoods in Africa. The paper is based on the case study conducted in two districts in central Zambia: Chibombo and Chongwe Districts, both bordering the city of Lusaka, on north and east respectively. The three chiefdoms where fieldwork was conducted are Chieftainess Mungule in Chibombo District, and Chieftainess Nkomesha and chief Bundabunda in Chongwe District. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants including members of the royal advisory councils, villageheads, zone chairpersons, and local residents including those who work in Lusaka and other towns who have managed to ‘buy’ land in these communities. We also conducted 8 Focus group discussions (FGDs) in total. A short survey was used to collect complementary data on landholding, the prevalence of land sales, and land conversion from customary to statutory tenure. In total, 129 residents in the three chiefdoms covering 13 villages, participated in FGDs, in-depth interviews and in the survey.

##### **4.1. Study sites**

Both districts (Chongwe and Chibombo) are predominantly rural districts, despite their proximity to Lusaka. In both districts residents depend on small-scale farming, relying on customary land, except for a few scattered urban settlements. In this context, customary land is crucial because it is the major livelihood resource for majority of the people in these districts. Chibombo and Chongwe districts were selected for this study because of their closeness to the City of Lusaka. The two districts have experienced significant increase in demand for land in the last decade, and this presents a good opportunity to learn about the dynamics of land markets and their impact on governance in customary areas. Further, while selling of customary land is openly conducted in Chieftainess Mungule’s chiefdom, it is reported to be an underground activity in Chieftainess Nkomesha. The main reason for these differences is that there is no formal prohibition on the sale of customary land to ‘outsiders’ in Chieftainess Mungule, while in Chieftainess Nkomesha, selling of customary land is prohibited. In this context, it is interesting to examine if these different approaches engender different dynamics in the communities.

##### **4.2. Selling of customary land**

When we asked residents in our study area if they sell customary land, we got different answers. Some respondents made it clear that customary land cannot be sold or bought. One respondent told us that ‘Tradition does not allow the sale of land because the land belongs to the chief and the village head’ (LURLAP Interviews 2016). Other respondents reported that ‘we do not sell land because the land is



not enough to share or sell' (ibid). These views were quite common in Chieftainess Nkomesha where the sale of customary land is outrightly prohibited. In the other two chiefdoms in our case study area, residents reported that selling customary land is common especially for families with large pieces of land who sell part of the land to people from the city—Lusaka. One woman in a Focus Group Discussion confirmed this, saying that 'we have been approached by people who want to buy land, but we refused because we have children' (ibid).

When we asked residents why some of them are selling the land when they know that customary land should not be sold or bought, they reported that although they know that customary land is not supposed to be sold or bought, there are many people who sell land even in Chieftainess Nkomesha where this is strictly forbidden. 'All I can say is that it is true this activity of selling land is common. But the law is broken because customary land is not supposed to be sold' (Ibid). Some residents openly acknowledged that they had sold land, and saw nothing wrong with selling part of their land:

I sold a portion of my land to raise money and I have built a better modern house where I live. I retired in 1990, so I needed some money to improve my status and living conditions. People from Lusaka come to look for land to buy. So, we subdivide, sell and remain with plots for houses only. You can sell customary land then the owner converts the land to get a title. Some sell customary land to build houses, bring electricity to their homes and improve their living conditions (ibid).

From the responses cited above, it is apparent that the selling of customary land is a common phenomenon even though many respondents acknowledged that it is wrong to sell customary land. In all chiefdoms where we conducted fieldwork, the village heads confirmed that they do not allow residents to sell customary land because the practice of selling customary land endangers the existence of traditional authorities. One of the village heads noted that 'selling customary land threatens us because by converting the customary land into private land we are giving away our powers. Losing land will be bad for the chief because without customary land it means that we have no control, no power' (LURLP Interview 2016). Traditional leaders are well aware that their power lies in their ability to control the land and this is why they are opposed to the idea of converting land from customary to statutory tenure (Chitonge 2019). This is the main reason why some of the chiefs have openly banned residents from selling or converting land under customary tenure into leasehold tenure. However, this ban is being undermined by many residents who secretly sell land to outsiders. Some respondents pointed out that many people who are selling the land are doing it illegally without the permission of chiefs: 'The manner in which the selling of land is done is illegal because it is done without the knowledge of the chief' (LURLAP Interviews 2016). There are numerous reports in many African countries that some traditional



leaders (not all of them) are in the forefront of selling customary land (Chitonge *et al.* 2017, Ubnik and Quan 2008, Chimhowu 2019).

#### 4.3. The nature of land sales in customary areas

Given that people believe and know that selling customary land is against tradition, it would seem that markets on customary land are clandestine markets by nature (Sitko 2010). This is especially so in areas where there is a formal ban on the sale of customary land. But in areas where there is no restriction on the sale of customary land, the transactions are done openly, sometimes with placards by the roadside advertising land for sale (see Chitonge *et al.* 2017). In such cases, the sale of customary land does not seem to be illegal or clandestine. However, it is important here to discuss the meaning of the term ‘selling’ which can be misleading if it is used indiscriminately.

In the African land system, land is expected to be given to anyone (local resident or outsider) who is a member of the community (see Mafeje 2003, Akufo 2009). Often the person who is given land is expected to give *a token of appreciation* to the benefactor, who could be a chief, village head or an ordinary resident. Even if in recent days this token of appreciation has taken mainly monetary form, the fundamental principle is that the person giving land is not supposed to ask for anything in return. In this sense, the transaction is not an act of sale which entails that one person (seller) sets the price that the buyer, after negotiation, agrees to pay in exchange for the item on sale. For many non-Africans, the giving of something as a sign of appreciation for being given land is widely interpreted as an act of sale; with some arguing that as long as this involves money, it is disguised sale (see Holden and Otsuka 2014). Here again we see that a concept of sale transported into African land relation system can lead to misunderstanding and create disconnect between what people say and what they do. The dangers of the indiscriminate use of borrowed terms was noted by some of the early anthropologists who argued that,

English terms such as ‘rent,’ or ‘lease’ have been employed to denote practices which bear only a superficial resemblance to those denoted by these terms. The gift given to chiefs as administrators of land have been assumed to be ‘rent’, and the chiefs to be ‘landlords’ (Meek 1946: 11).

It is therefore important to understand the context to these transactions to avoid drawing wrong conclusions about land sale. The risk of confusion grows when one is mixing concepts from different contexts.

Given that most of the transactions noted above take place on customary land, it is important to understand the nature of these transactions and the broader context in which they are situated. In the case of customary land transactions in Zambia, what is widely believed to be the sale of customary land is actually not the sale of land in the sense of transfer of property. What the person pays for in the



transaction is the right to have access to the land in the community; it is the right to become a member of the community in the traditional sense. Even in cases where the sale of customary land is permitted, what the supposed buyer is paying for is not the property in land in terms of the *solum*, but the right to be allocated customary land (Chitonge 2018). For outsiders who want land, the importance of paying for land is that it is only when a person has the right to access customary land that they can then use this right to seek permission from traditional authorities to convert the land (see *ibid* for details). Thus, the reported growth of monetary transactions involving customary land in Zambia can largely be attributed to the policy which allows customary land tenure rights to be converted into leasehold tenure. For instance, M'membe (2005) and Tembo (2014), have argued that the practice of converting customary land into leasehold tenure is responsible for the growing phenomenon of selling customary land.

#### **4.4. Paying for the right to access customary land**

The Zambian government, since the enactment of the *Lands Act of 1995*, allows customary land tenure rights to be converted to leasehold tenure. The effect of the permission to convert customary land is that the converted land is then administered through the Commissioner of Lands, which essentially means that the converted land is effectively removed from customary land administration. Most of the people who are 'buying' land in customary areas do so with the intention of converting the piece of customary land they are allocated into leasehold by obtaining a leasehold title (Chitonge *et al.* 2017). In this case, the transactions involving customary land which residents refer to as selling, are technically transactions in which the person seeking land is given the right to access customary land, not to purchase the land in the conventional sense. Most of the people 'buying' the land are paying so that they can have access to customary land and by virtue of this access convert the rights of access which they have into leasehold tenure. As Chitonge (2018: 35) argues,

It is important to note that customary land 'bought' or acquired by an outsider remains under customary tenure until the 'buyer' converts it to leasehold tenure. In this sense, what the outsider 'buys' is not strictly land, but the right to be declared a right holder (or a resident) with existing rights in customary land. This can be done even for people who are not resident in the community as long the person who is 'selling' customary land confirms that he or she has granted ('sold') part of his or her land to the outsider, and this process is officially endorsed by the village head.

Therefore, the market that is emerging in customary areas is not the same as the formal land markets where ownership rights are exchanged in a transaction. Outsiders who are buying customary land do not get a title or any formal document on the land; they are only 'paying' for the land with the intention to convert to a leasehold tenure. If they do not convert, the land remains customary land, administered by



customary authorities. If they convert, the land effectively becomes state land and can be formally transacted in the formal market. Thus, the nature of the market involving customary land is largely informal, which some analysts have referred to as *vernacular* (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2006) or *clandestine* (Sitko 2010).

#### **4.5. From a ‘Token of Appreciation’ to a ‘Price’**

The informality of these transactions lies in the fact that the land relations which are a subject of the transactions are still embedded in the social relations under the traditional tenure system (see Colin 2018). The informal land markets in customary areas have made it possible for anyone who has money to negotiate and pay a local resident or chief to gain access to customary land. In the past, and in many other instances today, access to customary land was largely tied to membership to a clan, family or community (see Mafeje 2003). Access to land for outsiders was restricted to those who became part (members) of the community. It was not impossible for an outsider to access customary land, but access was restricted depending on whether the new comer is willing to be part of the community (Chanock 1991). Under such circumstances, the land was given for free; no payment was expected from the new comer or outsider because the person was not seen as buying land in the ordinary sense of the term with powers to abuse or dispose of the land as he or she wished. Because the person who was allocated land was understood to have the rights to use the land as long as he or she remained a member of the community, whatever the person gave in appreciation for being given the land was seen as ‘a token of appreciation’. It did not matter whether this was in cash or in kind.

But the emergence of a quasi-land market has changed this practice to a full-blown monetarised transaction such that the person who is giving with the land can stipulate not only the form of payment, but the amount as well. It is in this sense that the transactions resemble a market transaction (Chitonge *et al.* 2017). But this is a distortion of the traditional African land relation norms. What this has meant is that access to customary land is now open to everyone who has the means to pay for the land regardless of whether the person wants to be part of the community and participate in the social and cultural activities of the community or not. In fact, most of the people buying land in customary areas, do not actually stay in the community; they end up hiring a caretaker to look after the land (LURLAP Interviews 2016). It is in this sense that the dominant approach to land has shifted from the African to a European system of commoditisation. The disconnect that researchers in different parts of Africa pick when it comes to selling customary land is a direct product of the conflation of the African and European conception of land.

### **5. Reasons why people sell customary land**

#### **5.1. To improve living conditions**

As evident above, residents in customary areas give different reasons why they sell customary land.



Most residents mentioned the fact that they sell part of the land and use the money they get to improve their living conditions and livelihoods. They argued that since there are many people from Lusaka and other urban areas who are willing to pay for the land, they see this as an opportunity to improve their living conditions. Focus group discussion participants acknowledged that those with large plots sell part of their land to build new houses, renovate old and crumbling houses or connect electricity to their homes. A number of residents argued that there is no reason why they should keep a lot of land when they can derive some benefit from the land by selling it to those who want.

## **5.2. Distress selling**

The other common reason mentioned by local residents why they sell land is when people have financial problems. One respondent noted that 'our tradition here does not allow us to sell land, but if one has financial problems, he can sell a portion' (LURLAP Interviews 2016). Another respondent reported that 'We have different problems. Sometimes you may encounter problems and selling of the land becomes one thing to do. That happens too' (ibid). This may suggest that some of the land is sold under financial distress which is common in low-income households with limited access to credit or other sources of income (see Holden *et al.* 2009).

Distress sales is one of the reasons why government policy in most African countries in the past restricted land markets to prevent poor household on customary land from being deprived of the only means of livelihood. But it seems that traditional leaders who ban the sale of customary land do it as a *social reproduction* mechanism to ensure the continuation of their power and control. As noted above, some of the traditional leaders are aware that selling customary land may in future undermine not just their source of power and control, but their existence as well. As one village head noted, 'if the induna (village head) does not have land then there is no use of being the induna in my opinion. Because removing land from the induna and the chief means getting authority and power from them and in the end culture will be disturbed' (LURLAP Interviews 2016). While traditional authorities are concerned about the negative impact that a full-blown land market may have on their power, the main concerns for policy makers is the real risk of landlessness as a result of distress selling (Deininger 2003, Holden *et al.* 2009).

## **5.3. Threat of urbanisation**

The other main reason which many respondents in the case study areas mentioned why they sell customary land is the threat of urbanisation. This concern was particularly strong in Mungule area where the expanding Lusaka City has previously swallowed parts of customary land. The fear among the local residents on customary land is that since they are occupying land without title or any document to show that they have rights to the land, it is very easy to be displaced from their land when the city expands. So, they sell part of their land to build houses as a form of security since it is not easy to displace



someone who has developed the land. One of the village-heads we interviewed argued that people from Lusaka ‘are rich and they have money to buy all the land from us. This is why we encourage our people to get titles because of the fear of being kicked out of the land’ (LURLAP Interviews 2016). However, although local residents have been encouraged to get titles as a form of security, only a few have managed to get title deed for the land they currently occupy and use. This is mainly attributed to the high costs of obtaining a title (see Chitonge *et al.* 2017).

## **6. Customary land sales and the evolutionary theory of land rights**

In trying to explain the phenomenon of land markets, analysts often draw from the evolutionary theory of land rights. According to this theory, land markets are bound to emerge over time as population rises and the demand for land grows (Demtsez 1967). Proponents of the evolutionary theory of land rights such as Harold Demtsez (1967), Johnson (1972), Boserup (1965), see the shift towards individualisation of customary tenure as a *natural* process driven by various factors including population growth, commercialisation of agriculture, land scarcity, economic growth and technological change. This theory asserts that the change from communal to individual private tenure is a positive development since private tenure is seen as a more efficient and more productive form of landholding (see Johnson 1972, Demtsez 1967). For example, Harold Demtsez’s (1967) paper argues that property rights are an instrument for society to increase the internalisation of externalities or simply the reduction of transaction costs. According to this view, the ‘primary function of property rights is that of guiding incentives to achieve a greater internalisation of externalities’ (Demtsez 1967: 348). Externalities in this sense are understood as those costs and benefits (monetary or non-monetary) which are external to a land transaction between two or more parties. It is argued that defining and clarification of property rights is the most effective way of internalising these external costs.

In cases where such rights are not clearly demarcated, it is difficult to internalise externalities to land transactions, giving rise to higher transaction costs (see Deininger 2003). In order to establish mechanisms through which transactions costs can be internalised effectively, ‘the cost of transaction in rights between the parties ... must exceed the gains from internalisation’, otherwise there will be no incentive for the parties involved to embark on this arrangement (Demtsez 1967). In the case of land, the broader argument is that clearly defined individual rights in land lead to increased efficiency in the allocation and use of land since the costs and the benefits are clearly accounted for. For instance, it has been argued that, ‘Where private property rights exist and at the same time these rights are clearly defined and have legal and tenure certainty, there is complete internalization of costs and rewards, and the private and social profitability of investments in and attached to land coincide’ (Johnson 1972: 273). But these clearly defined rights emerge over time due to social and economic pressure, evolving from the unclear rights in traditional society.



### 6.1. From customary to individualised landholding

The key idea in the evolutionary theory of land tenure and property rights in general is that as the pressure from commercialisation, population growth, technological advancements and economic transformation increases, customary norms that regulate access to land and other resources become inadequate to cope with the new socioeconomic conditions. Advocates of the evolutionary theory of land rights would, for instance, argue that the emergence of informal land markets in customary areas is a natural process induced by factors including rising population and economic growth. The land market is thus seen as an inevitable consequence of the changing social and economic conditions in society as a result of the growing economy and commercialisation of agricultural, all of which give rise to rising demand for land (Demtsez 1967: 350).

As Chitonge *et al.* (2017) observe, in the evolutionary theory of land rights, customary land tenure is seen as a transient phase of landholding, which is expected to give way to individualised landholding arrangements. With specific reference to customary land in Africa, it has been predicted that the spread of market relations on the continent 'will eventually produce a land tenure system that, while not identical, will bear a strong resemblance to the western concept of ownership' (Bruce *et al.* 1994: 262). Often the evolution of customary land tenure into more individualised forms of tenure is seen as a linear process leading to greater integration of customary land relations into market transactions (see Yngstrom 2002). Proponents of this theory would argue that the informal land markets we are seeing in Africa will eventually evolve into more formal markets with clearly defined rights in land.

But evidence to support this view has been weak. In Africa, particularly, a linear progression from either communal to individual ownership or to full blown land markets is not borne out by the evidence on the ground. For example, although the existence of land markets in customary areas has been reported over a century ago, customary land tenure has remained quite resilient, constituting close to 75 percent of total arable land on the continent, on average (Wily 2011). Critics of the evolutionary theory of land rights warn that experience from cases where individualisation through titling or other forms of land formalisation have been implemented show that this process often negatively impacts on the poorer members of rural communities (Cotula *et al.* 2009, Platteau 1996, Bassett 1993, Okoth-Ogendo 1993, Shipton and Goheen 1992, Yngstrom 2002).

In terms of the steady progression towards more private individual land rights, it has been observed that,

...in many parts of Africa, this does not appear to be occurring. Although increased commercialisation and land scarcity may have provoked private claims on land, evidence show[s] that ...even in areas of commercial agriculture where there is evidence of land markets, the landholding systems remain tightly bound up with kinship institutions (Yngstrom 2002: 24).



Chanock (1991), for instance, argues that the evolution of customary tenure relations in Africa is not a straight forward linear process. It often involves a gradual shift to a situation where informal land markets exist side by side with the formal ones. The combination of contractual arrangements and traditional practices is still evident today in land dealings in many parts of Africa. While there are some indications that new forms of tenure, amenable to market relations are on the rise in many parts of Africa (Chimhowu 2019), the emergence of these relations is far from being a linear process where everyone willingly accepts the spread of markets to customary land. There have been communities and governments which have opposed and reversed the drive towards land markets on customary land.

## **7. Implications on land governance**

In the context of the increasing monetary transactions on customary land discussed above, it is important to assess the implications regarding the governance of land in customary areas. Here I only highlight a few issues arising from the study areas.

### **7.1. Traditional leaders' loss of control over land**

One of the common implications of land markets on customary areas is that traditional authorities lose control over land. This happens at two levels. Firstly, as noted above, when customary land is converted to leasehold tenure, even if it remains in areas surrounded by customary land, it is effectively removed from the purview of customary authorities. In other words, even if the land physically remains in customary areas, surrounded by customary land, it is not under the control of the traditional authorities. This was raised by many respondents who pointed out that the people with title deeds in the areas are not controlled by the village head or the chief. As one respondent observed, 'if you have a title, the land is yours, the headman or chief cannot touch you. No one can evict you from titled land. You have control over the land you own' (LURLAP Interviews 2016).

However, other respondents disagreed with this view and argued that even if you have a title, the land still belongs to the village head and the chief, although they did admit that the village head often does not interfere with those who have titles. For instance, those with titled land usually fence their plots, a practice which those on customary land are not permitted. Respondents confirmed that when those with title deeds fence their land, the village head cannot do anything. This is the second way in which the loss of control by traditional authorities occurs. For residents under customary land the traditional authorities have total control such that those who are not following the rules of the community can be evicted from their land. This is not the case for people with title deeds to their land; it is difficult to bring them under the control of traditional leaders.

But, some members of the communities where the research was conducted argued that the village head can report a person with title, who is not cooperating, to the chief and have his or her title revoked: 'A difficult person who has a title can be reported to the chief, and if he is failing to cooperate with the



community his title can be revoked' (LURLAP Interviews 2016). We asked residents if any of the people with title deeds have had their titles revoked by the chief, and they reported that this had not happened, although they insisted that the chief has the power to revoke a title on land within his or her area. In principle, even if the chief were to revoke a land title in his or her area, it would have to involve the Commissioner of Lands who issued the title; the chief can not revoke the title issued by a statutory institution. In this way, traditional leader lose control over the governance of customary land which is titled.

## **7.2. Weakening social cohesion**

The other implication of the growing monetary transactions involving customary land is that it affects social cohesion. Many of the respondents in this study area reported that those who have managed to get titles have become cheeky and arrogant because they do not want to participate in community activities (LURLAP Interviews 2016). The administration of customary land and the maintenance of social order in many rural communities has heavily relied on local residents' acceptance of cultural norms and practices (see Mafeje 2003). In cases where the people buying land in these communities are not willing to accept the local cultural norms, this can lead to tension and disorder in the communities. A number of respondents in our study area noted that some of the people who have bought customary land and obtained title deeds disregard the local cultural practices. Residents in Chieftainess Mungule observed that many of the people who have title deeds do not contribute to the local cultural ceremony of *Kulamba Kubwalo* which is celebrated annually (LURLAP Interviews 2016). This situation is compounded by the fact that not all the people who are buying land in customary areas accept the local cultural norms. This might lead to the problem of not just land governance, but the maintaining of harmony and social cohesion in the communities. For example, a Chinese guy who buys land in these areas is not interested in the local cultural ceremonies or practices; he or she is there to make money and his or her main concern is to ensure that the business succeeds.

## **7.3. Uncertainty in land governance**

The way customary land is being parcelled out and converted into leasehold tenure creates challenges in terms of land governance. This is so because customary land is not converted to leasehold tenure in an organised manner. What is happening is that small and isolated pieces of customary land are converted into leasehold tenure. As such the land which is eventually titled is surrounded by customary land such that what you have are pockets of titled land in the sea of customary land. If the titled land is administered by the formal state structures, this creates a problem in terms of the enclaves of leasehold land within customary areas. Given the capacity constraints of the state departments responsible for land administration and management in many African countries (see AU/AfDB/ECA 2010, Platteau 1996), coordinating land governance in this context becomes a challenge. In Zambia, the state has tried to evade



this complication by arguing that converted customary land does not change its *status*; it still remains customary land, only the *tenure* changes. But this is surely an academic argument which has little practical implications on the ground as some analysts have observed (see Chitonge and Umar 2018). Under the current system where customary land is separately administered from state land, the situation of having pockets of titled land in customary areas creates a huge land governance challenge. One of the best ways to address this challenge is to come up with a single land administrative structure that covers both state and customary land. But this has been a big hurdle for most African governments; they have found it easier to maintain the dualism introduced by the colonial regimes.

#### **7.4. Weak land governance**

As land markets spread to customary land, it is becoming evident that land governance mechanisms and instruments in customary areas are weakening. Land governance, if understood as a systematic approach to regulating relations around land (Chauveau *et al.* 2006), is strengthened when there are mechanisms to administer and manage land in a coordinated manner. This often entails the synchronisation of the different structures and mechanism to create coherent and strong leadership. But in a situation where formal markets are operating a long side informal markets, the situation leads to the weakening of land governance because the two systems are not in sync. This weakness manifests itself on the ground where the land rights of the poor people are undermined and difficult to protect precisely because it is difficult to coordinate and regulate the informal market. As it has been argued,

Weak governance leads to weak tenure systems, often depriving individuals and communities of essential rights and access to land and other natural assets and contributing to poor land and resource management practices, which further degrades the limited resource base (USAID 2015).

While most African states' reason for promoting land reforms, particularly land governance, should be to protect the rights of poor rural residents and ensure that there is equitable access and sustainable use of the land (AU/AfDB/ECA 2010), the growing monetary transactions on customary land is weakening the land rights of individuals and groups in these communities. This is why there is need for strong governance of land in customary areas to protect and strengthen the rights of the poor.

#### **8. Conclusion**

This paper has examined the phenomenon of land markets involving customary land, drawing from a case study conducted in two rural districts in central Zambia. The paper has shown that the spreading of monetarised transactions into customary land has serious implications not only on land governance but the broader governance and social cohesion in rural communities. Local systems of land governance are



weakened by the fact that transactions involving customary land are informal and less amenable to regulation by state institutions tasked with land administration. If effective mechanisms are not found to address this challenge, the situation may threaten the existence of traditional systems and social cohesion in rural communities.

The paper has also discussed the seeming disconnect between what people residing in customary areas believe and what they do when it comes to the issues of sale of customary land. The paper has illustrated that this disconnect is a direct outcome of the collision of African customary and European concept of land. While most people residing in customary areas report that traditional norms do not allow the sale of customary land, the sale of the land under customary tenure is reportedly a growing phenomenon, not just in the study area but in many parts of Africa. This can be attributed to the emergence of land markets in customary areas which is certainly a domination of the European conception of land over the African land thought system. Although the growth of land markets in customary areas is seen widely as an inevitable consequence of the modernising African societies, it brings with it several negative developments including the concentration of land ownership and displacement of poor residents. It was for this reason that most newly independent African countries prohibited the outright sale of customary land, except under regulated conditions. In order to prevent the growing land markets from disrupting social order and land governance in these communities, these developments have to be addressed systematically through policy. Even then, regulating informal land markets in customary areas will be challenging given that most of the dealings are concealed.

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# **Contending control over land: Farmer-firm relations in Mumias sugarcane belt, Kenya**

Peter Narh

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Ghana

## **Abstract**

Agricultural infrastructure and inputs are vital for productivity and resource conservation. Yet, negative outcomes of the supply and application of infrastructure and inputs for productivity and resource conservation exist. Control over agricultural infrastructure and inputs plays a determining role in whether farmers benefit from their lands or not. A qualitative study of the sugarcane industry in Mumias, Western Kenya show that farmers are highly dependent on various forms of infrastructure and inputs controlled by Mumias Sugar Company. Consequently, farmers have lost much control over their own lands and returns from their cane farms, to Mumias Sugar Company, resulting in frustrations over poor income and livelihoods. To this end, the paper suggests that besides land tenure, the control over infrastructure and inputs is even more potent to determine who benefits from land. In this respect, government, corporates, and farmers can collectively work to integrate infrastructure and inputs with farming, which is drawn from farmers' participation and lived experiences. It is expected that this integration will maintain the hold of farmers on these investments and guarantee their control over their lands and livelihoods.

**Keywords:** agricultural infrastructure, inputs, control, land, Mumias



## 1. Introduction

Land and related resources such as water, forests, soils, and minerals constitute the main resource for livelihoods in Africa. Capital and processes for controlling and harnessing land and its resources include land tenure, infrastructure, and agricultural inputs. These capital and processes are sometimes characterised by different and sometimes conflictive interests and power relationships that affect differently what the actors associated with a particular natural resource can derive from the resource. In this paper, an examination is done of sugarcane production in Mumias and the relationship of resource control and benefits that it entails, between farmers and Mumias Sugar Company (Mumias Sugar). The paper explores how control over infrastructure and agricultural capital inputs between farmers and Mumias Sugar manifests and shapes benefits that these actors derive from sugarcane farmland. Thus, the paper focuses on agricultural infrastructure and capital inputs together as a main medium through which contending control over land and its benefits between actors manifest. The paper contends that beyond the primary place accorded land tenure in determining the possessive power over natural resources and to benefit from them, control over land and its resources as much also is created and maintained through the ownership and control over infrastructure and agricultural inputs for harnessing resources. Ownership and control over agricultural infrastructure and inputs may even diminish the relevance of land tenure in determining who controls land and its benefits.

With primary data collected between April 2018 and June 2019, this paper demonstrates that incentives for sustainable harnessing of land and effective control over benefits derived from land are out of reach for local farmers, who are the landowners, due to their high dependence on infrastructure and inputs owned and controlled by Mumias Sugar. Though the sugarcane farmlands are owned by the farmers, their lack of control over infrastructure and inputs associated with sugarcane cultivation and processing means that indirectly the land is rather externally controlled by the firm. In this circumstance the sugarcane industry is extractive from farmers, while its benefits do not satisfy their needs nor conserve their lands. The control of Mumias Sugar over the major infrastructure and inputs in the sugarcane industry maintain frustrations of farmers directed at Mumias Sugar.

The control over land and its productivity is a major resource-based concern in academia, government, and in policy circles. Otherwise termed land tenure,<sup>1</sup> ownership and control over land are considered the most crucial domains to secure sustainable wellbeing for African farmers and landowners. Land policies across the continent reflect this concern. Yet, the integral linkage between agricultural infrastructure and inputs on one hand, and control over land on another, for farmers has escaped land-based discussions. Indeed, land and agricultural infrastructure have not ever been considered integral to each other. Rather, they are separated from each other in any analysis, and in this way societies lose the benefits of a more optimal benefit from lands they own. In this paper therefore, infrastructure and capital

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<sup>1</sup> Land tenure refers to the conditions and institutional arrangements under which land is held, used and transferred (Cromwell 2002).



inputs in sugarcane production and processing is focused, to show how it mediates control over land and its returns for sugarcane farmers. The goal is to contribute towards agricultural policies for farmer-centred capital and infrastructural investments in agriculture.

## 2. Methods

In April 2018, while on a visit to a family in Esiakah near Mumias in Western Kenya, this researcher observed that sugarcane farmers talked openly about a number of challenges they faced in their relationship with the Mumias Sugar Company. Through informal interactions with some of these farmers, a main frustration that characterised farmers' daily lives was the low benefits they derived from the cultivation of sugarcane. From these initial interactions, the source of the farmer frustrations pointed to workings of agricultural inputs like fertiliser and associated processes of application, soil testing, ploughing, cane harvesting and transportation, and cane by-product recycling, all of which tended to compound debts and deprive them of sustainable benefits from their lands. Subsequently, more focused in-depth interviews were conducted among sugarcane farmers in Mumias from November to December 2018. These interviews sought to understand the infrastructure and inputs in sugarcane production and processing, who controls these capital inputs, how and why, and outcomes of this control for the livelihoods of farmers.

Mumias is located in the western part of Kenya (Figure 1). It is about 450 kilometres northwest of the capital Nairobi. Its economy is mainly rural with sugarcane production, maize, and vegetables constituting the main agricultural activities. Land is owned by families, and most farmers hold title deeds over their lands. The only sugarcane processing plant is the Mumias Sugar Company, a state-owned plant that buys sugarcane from farmers in the Mumias catchment and processes them into sugar for local consumption and export to neighbouring countries.

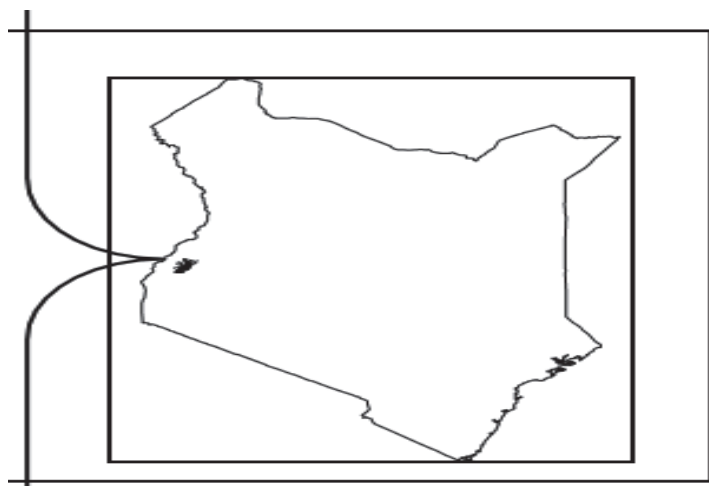


Figure 1. Map of Mumias sugar region, Kenya

Source: Adapted from Netondo *et al.* (2010)



In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with mainly cane farmers and officials of Mumias Sugar. These interview partners were identified purposively, zeroing in on twenty-six farmers and three Mumias Sugar officials. Interviews were analysed with the aid of Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. The analysis was conducted as a form of coding various segments of data and hyperlinking related codes to form complex quotations or network views. Particularly, the network views enabled drawing out of themes from the individual and linked quotations.

It is acknowledged that the methodology followed could not generate results that can be applied to all temporal scales. Yet, it is precisely the reason that the results of this study constitute the frame and guide for a larger subsequent research on the same theme, in Ghana, Eswatini, and further in Kenya that takes into consideration the historical developments of agriculture in these countries. Nonetheless, this paper presents the results for Mumias as it exists between 2017 and 2019 and thus should be interpreted within this geo-temporal and cultural space.

### **3. Eminence of agriculture in African economies**

Agriculture serves the backbone of most economies in Africa for transformation and poverty reduction. The confirmation of the place of agriculture in Africa invites various approaches to harnessing agricultural land and raising land productivity, including agricultural intensification and capital intensive investments (Waswa *et al.* 2012), alongside agribusiness-based industrialization especially with the high value cash crop sector (Yumkella *et al.* 2011). Associated with this capitalisation paradigm is the adoption of various forms of infrastructure and agricultural inputs to aid production and productivity of land. Agricultural capitalisation proceeds in Africa as though the interests of farmers and capital investors coincide to support the intensive harnessing of resources for yield maximization and profits. For instance, Waswa *et al.* (2012) writes that yield maximization is a most important pathway to profitable farming in Africa, where farmers are in control of input supply.

The contribution of Agriculture to growth and poverty reduction in Africa is essential. Yet, its outcomes for the conservation of natural resources and sustainability of farmers' wellbeing remain a challenge, especially where regulatory and legislative mechanisms are weak to control capital investments in natural resources. Degradation of natural resources through agriculture stem from activities of all actors but it is claimed that farmers are more to blame, especially where their income levels are low and unsustainable farming practice prevail (Olanipekun *et al.* 2019). According to this line of thought, improving opportunities for farmers to increase their incomes and reduce poverty and the degradation of their resources is a crucial policy consideration. But, the efficacy of agricultural and environmental policies in this respect have been limited, failing to establish a clear and holistic relationship between agriculture and the sustainability of natural resources and livelihoods (Mather 1996). The solution, it is argued, is to return to small-scale farming that employ traditional methods, with tested qualities to conserve natural resources while harnessing them. Using South Africa as his



focus, Mather (1996) notes that sustainability of natural resources in agriculture suffers from the hegemony of imported technology and infrastructure and divisive policies of the state that favour intensive capitalisation in Agriculture.

#### **4. Agricultural infrastructure and sustainability of livelihoods**

Pivotal to agricultural intensification and transformation is infrastructure. In agriculture, infrastructure is defined as the physical structures, equipment and tools, processes, services, human capital and social networks which enable systems and enterprises to function effectively (Brenton *et al.*, 2018). In Fulmer (2009) and Yu (2012), cited in da Silva and Wheeler (2017), infrastructure refers to all elements of interrelated systems that provide goods and services essential to enabling, sustaining or enhancing societal living conditions. For much of human history, infrastructure has mediated between humans and their natural environment (Chester *et al.* 2019). It is obvious in the conception of infrastructure that human prosperity requires infrastructure. This places control of the outcomes of agriculture in the hands of those who own, operate, and manage infrastructure and agricultural inputs to manipulate processes to their interests.

Agricultural infrastructure and inputs are redefined in this paper as physical, social, and political tools and services that not only provide benefits from natural resources to humans, but also equally are media through which humans protect and conserve these natural resources. Within the sugarcane producing industry, agricultural infrastructure and inputs include physical materials and processes such as recycling products and systems, communication channels, soil and water testing, ploughing, fertilizers and fertilizer application, and cane harvesting. Infrastructure and inputs in agriculture must be integrated with conservation of natural resources for sustainability of livelihoods. The integration will work by farmers participating in the formulation, supply, and application of the infrastructure and inputs, based on their long-evolved experiences, to benefit equitably from harnessing resources. I contend that these infrastructure and inputs can be integrated into traditional modes of agriculture where farmers work the land mainly from their wealth of experiences. The integration of capital inputs with traditional modes of agriculture does not replace farmers' experiences and knowledge about their farming. I envision that integration will add on to them. For instance, inorganic fertilizers, rather than replacing traditional mulching and incorporation of cow dung and rotten matter into soil, can rather be applied in supplement with organic fertilization. Also, rather than entire harvesting of cane and recycling cane husks into molasses and bagasse, harvesting and processing can return pulp onto the land where farmers can plough back into the soil. Trees can be planted in-between sugarcane in one field, rather than the monoculture (Lindell *et al.* 2010), which is foreign to home practice. Farm extension and information services can be provided to farmers through their peers and not external agents. Labour-intensive farming can also be adopted where labour is abundant, in place of the hegemonic infrastructure and technologies of powerful actors (Waswa *et al.* 2012). These measures, will provide farmers control



over their lands and to determine how infrastructure and inputs are applied to their land to conserve them. Farmers gain control over infrastructure and inputs, even if they do not own it.

Chester *et al.* (2019) argue for a concerted integration of infrastructure with nature to save the planet earth. They note that the Anthropocene is here and evolving into complex systems of relationship between man and the natural environment mediated centrally by various forms of infrastructure. Thus, disciplines and knowledge on infrastructure must adapt and evolve as well to take care of the growing complexity of changes affecting the natural environment from the actions of humans. To this end, infrastructural design and application needs to adapt and change with or ahead of changing social and environmental systems so as to ensure conservation of resources (Chester *et al.* 2019). Reid and de Sousa (2005) also alludes to the negative outcomes of separation of infrastructure from sociocultural conditions of natural resources when they note that the current process of environmental impact assessment, which indicates a conflictive relationship, is superficial and does not at all address any integration of infrastructure with the environment. Both of these literature and a host more others follow the general narrative of a conflictive relationship between infrastructure and environmental conservation. The authors question environmental assessment as a way of ensuring compatibility of infrastructure with conservation goals. They agree that there is need for deeper integrating between conservation and infrastructure planning.

The necessity of integrating infrastructure with nature as a way of enhancing farmers control over their lands and livelihoods is based on the notion that infrastructure is in a conflictive relationship with the natural environment, which must be resolved. In Reid and de Sousa (2005) the conflict relationship is alluded to. Infrastructure consumes resources through harnessing for human needs and thus destroys natural resources in the process rather than provide services to conserve it. Environmental licensing, environmental compensation, and, to a lesser degree, fines are important regulatory instruments that supposedly mitigate the negative outcomes of infrastructure on the environment (Reid and de Sousa 2005). Yet, it can be argued that these legal instruments often remain weak or unenforced due to state inaction, to provide for all actors to equitably benefit from them. The model of infrastructure in agriculture being advocated for in this work, is to link the operation of infrastructure to clear conservation of natural resources and through which farmers gain control these infrastructure.

Departing from the conflictive model of the relationship between infrastructure and the natural environment, is the perspective that infrastructure and the environment are actually one and the same thing. For instance, da Silva and Wheeler (2017) write about ecosystem as infrastructure and note that what constitutes infrastructure should transcend only all human-made assets, to include ecosystems as a type of infrastructure. For da Silva and Wheeler (2017) considering the ecosystems as infrastructure is a powerful way of integrating different agendas including climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable production and consumption. Infrastructure is no longer, or cannot afford to be, separated from nature - in many ways, the dichotomy between infrastructure and the natural



environment no longer exists; they are one and the same (Chester *et al.* 2019: 1009). Mistakes must be avoided, such as avoiding excessive capital intensification in agricultural production that produces high dependence of farmers on infrastructure and inputs over which they have little knowledge and control. Traditional forms of agriculture with capital inputs must be developed by all actors, including through state research and development. Traditional forms of agriculture do not preclude infrastructural development but rather grounds it to provide continuous flow of services for man but also to nourish the natural environment (Mather 1996).

## 5. Farmer – firm relations in Mumias

Control over infrastructure and inputs significantly determine access to and control over land in the sugarcane industry in Mumias. Fieldwork in Mumias among sugarcane farmers shows that most farmers inadvertently cede control over their lands to Mumias Sugar. This occurs in two sets of processes. First, Mumias Sugar contracts the lands on which sugarcane is grown for a period of time. Within this period of time, which is usually about 50 months at least, most major agronomic activities, including the supply of inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, ploughing, harvesting, transportation among other, are controlled by Mumias Sugar aimed at attaining high productivity of the farm. An excerpt of this is presented below:

**53:1 D: #00:01:42-0# No, you see first of all the company contracts the far... (1090:1369) - D 53: Male farmer1\_feb2018<sup>2</sup>**

D: #00:01:42-0# No, you see first of all the company contracts the farmers. So that means it owns the plots for the contracted time, that is, three cuttings. And each cutting is approximately 18 months, so 18 months times three is when the contract expires, usually. #00:02:20-3#

**136:1 KD: You start by ploughing the farms. In the beginning the company wou..... (1339:2186) - D 136: Third round interviewer3**

KD: You start by ploughing the farms. In the beginning the company would send tractors to come and plough the land. Afterwards the company would also do the harrowing. Afterwards they would supply one with seeds depending on the size of the

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<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of each quotation used in this report is an Atlas.ti quotation ID for any particular quotation used. The ID consists of the document number and a number indicating the chronological order when the quotation was created. For example **53:1 D: #00:01:42-0# No, you see first of all the company contracts the far... (1090:1369) - D 53: Male farmer1\_feb2018**, can be interpreted as follows:

'53:1' means the quotation used is the first quotation from Document 53 uploaded to the Atlas.ti software for this paper; 'D: #00:01:42-0#' is a time stamp generated from the transcription software that indicates position of the sentence in the audio tape; 'No, you see first of all the company contracts the far...' is the beginning few words of the quotation; '(1090:1369)' means the quotation starting from the 1090<sup>th</sup> character of the page and ending with the 1369<sup>th</sup> character of the same page; **D 53: Male farmer1\_feb2018** is the name the author gave to the code, and the date the interview from which the quote was taken, was conducted.



farm. They would later supply the farmer with fertiliser called DAD. When the cane is grown up to the height of one's knee the company supplies another fertiliser called Urea as well as DAD. The sugarcane would then be harvested after 14 months. The company would equally send labourers for the cutting/harvesting. Afterwards they would transport the cane to the company and later the farmer would be told to go and sign a statement. This statement indicates that sugarcane has been delivered. It is also done to ascertain that the tonnage at the company is the same as the one done on the farm at harvest.

Second, the system of contract farming and input supply has produced sugarcane farmers who are highly dependent on Mumias Sugar and thus have lost control of the outputs from their lands. Farmers find themselves in a relationship with Mumias Sugar that is characterised by frustrations and debt. Quotations pulled from interview transcripts are networked to demonstrate this dependence, exploitative, and frustrating relationship:

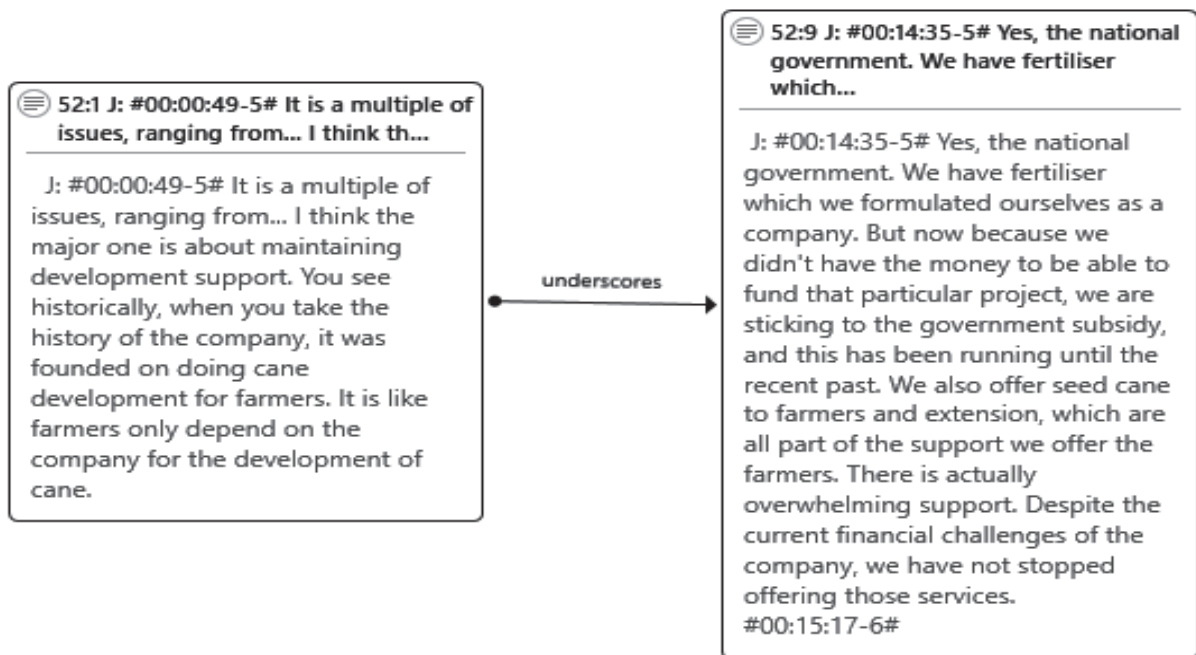


Figure 2. Farmer dependence on Mumias Sugar

These quotations in Figure 2 show that Mumias Sugar confirms its supports for farmers with various forms of infrastructure as inputs for which farmers pay. Farmers have become highly dependent on these infrastructure and inputs though their control over them is indeed minimal, resulting in their frustrations over the impacts of these infrastructure and inputs on yields, as evidenced below (Figure 3):



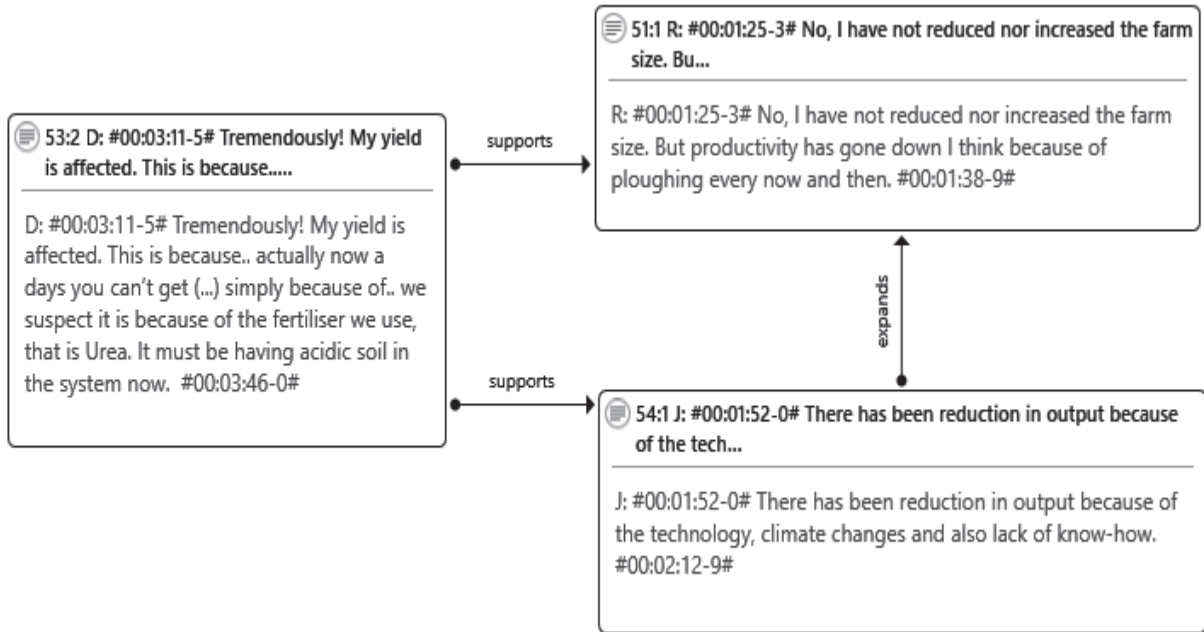


Figure 3. Farmer frustrations over farm yield

In Figure 4, farmers are most often in debt because major agronomic activities including soil testing, ploughing, harvesting, transporting, and major inputs such as cane seedling development, fertiliser, are supplied by Mumias Sugar and their applications directed, but costs of these are unilaterally set by the company and deducted from farmer incomes. Moreover, as respondent ‘R’ said in Figure 4 (right hand quote), sometimes farmers’ canes do not even reach the factory but Mumias Sugar does not take responsibility for this even though it does the transportation of cane from farm to factory. The situation is one of exploitation and extraction of the land and human resources of the farmers. But why do farmers still keep producing sugarcane? It is because of their high dependence on Mumias Sugar that has led to lose of farmer confidence to diversify and adopt alternative farming approaches to that of Mumias Sugar.



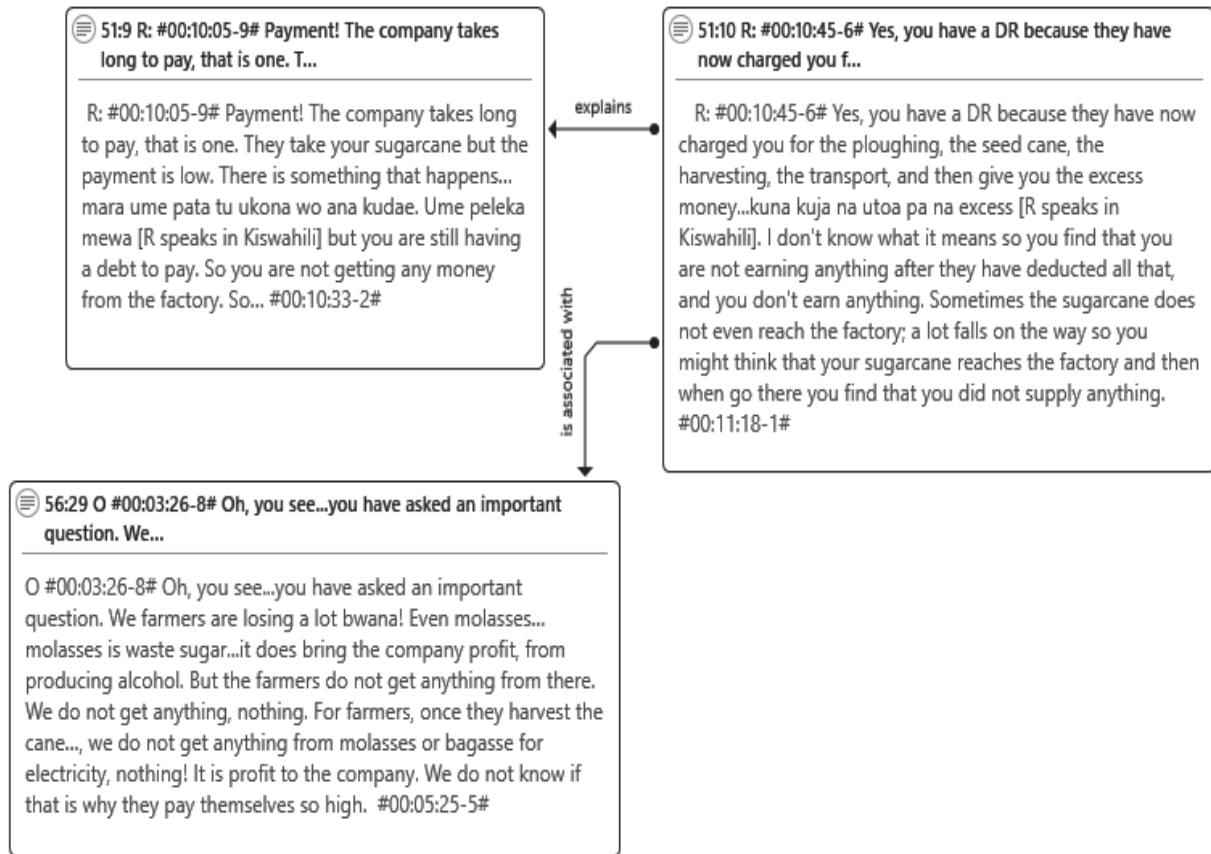


Figure 4. Farmer persistent indebtedness

Farmer persistent indebtedness in Mumias is no different from findings of Waswa *et al.* (2012) elsewhere in sugarcane plantations in Kenya, this indicating that difficult economic condition of farmers is widespread:

**42:3 only the companies benefit from other by-products of sugar processing.....**

**(2:1992 [2:2404]) - D 42: Lit\_Contract cane farming in Kenya**

...only the companies benefit from other by-products of sugar processing such as co-generation, sale of molasses, and energy savings through the use of bagasse in boilers. This disparity in income distribution appears to be one of the key contributors of poverty among sugarcane farmers, who incidentally find it psychologically difficult to diversify to other potentially viable crops (Waswa *et al.* 2012).

Ironically, farmers have not established any functional cooperative organising to mobilise their numbers into resistance to the farming approach controlled by Mumias Sugar. Rather, the dependence on Mumias Sugar for infrastructure and inputs creates unhealthy rivalry and petty theft between farmers (cane poaching). Some farmers complain of theft on their farms. Moreover, each farmer takes individual



actions as they deem fit, to confront Mumias Sugar, such as refusal to sell cane to the company even though they may have been supplied with farm inputs (Figure 5):

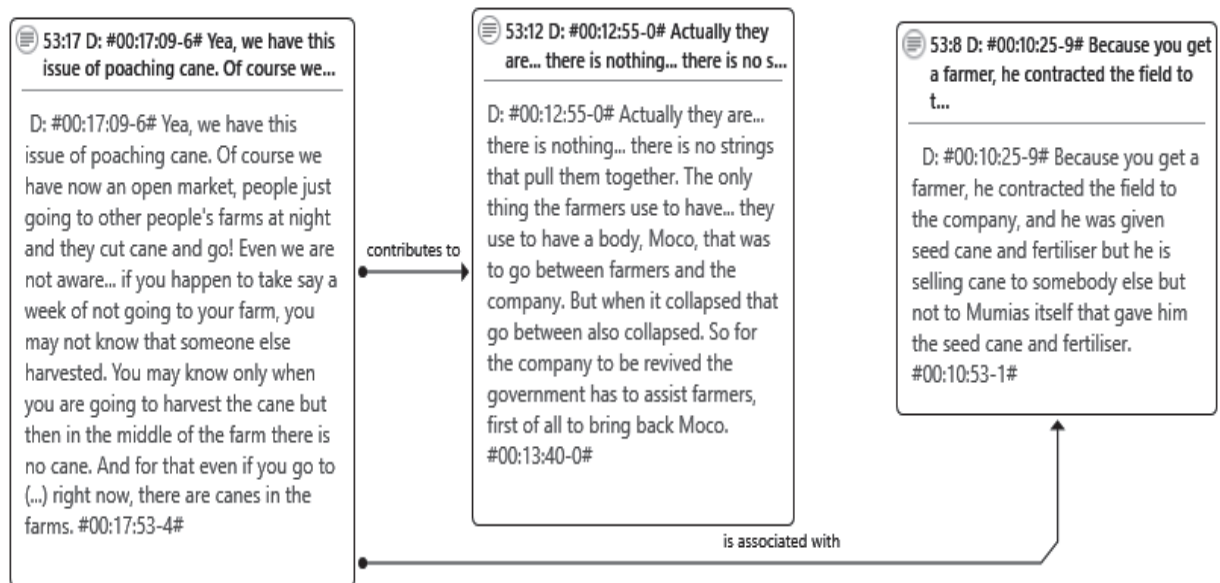


Figure 5. Farmers' bold confrontation with MScO.

The high farmer dependence on Mumias Sugar for inputs as demonstrated in the quotations above, paves way for their loss of control over their lands at least during the period they cultivate sugarcane and supply to Mumias Sugar. All the transcript quotations analysed together demonstrate that farmers and Mumias Sugar hold grievances against each other, and this is largely the result of the mediating role of infrastructure and inputs in developing what farmers lament is unfair access against them, to the benefits from cane production.

## 6. Discussion

From the analysis of the field data, it is contended that agricultural infrastructure and inputs are a powerful mechanism that can strongly mediate control over and benefits from natural resources. The revelation is that land tenure alone is not the solution guaranteeing control over resources for farmers who own land. Rather, infrastructural and input tenure (ownership of, interest in, and power over infrastructure and inputs) count significantly. The solution to farmers' challenges in their relationships with Mumias Sugar is integration of agricultural infrastructure and inputs with traditional modes of agriculture that is, in such a way that the design and operation of infrastructure and inputs is based on participation and experiences of farmers built over years of owning land and farming. Farmers' concerns over land transcends food security to life-long values such as preservation of land for the family cohesion. Thus, the integration of infrastructure and inputs with farming is farmer-centred agriculture. It can be even more sustainable than the profit-oriented approach of capital intensification since farming aligns



more with the values of farmers. To this extent, this paper disagrees with studies on the sugarcane industry in Kenya that suggest that farmers can improve their economic and social situations mainly through the empathy of the sugarcane firm; that to change the situation of farmers the solutions should be firm-centred (Owino *et al.* 2018, Waswa *et al.* 2012, Olanipekun *et al.* 2019).

Finding solutions to the challenges of farmers in the sugarcane industry can be advised from a sociocultural, political, and conservation approach, rather than economic. In agreement with Mather's (1996) analysis, the adoption of traditional modes of farming that hold prospects for conservation and at the same time reducing dependence of farmers on high capital intensive infrastructure will provide hold of farmers on their livelihoods and resources. In the pursuit of agricultural intensification in countries like Ghana and Kenya, local expertise in harnessing resources that conserve these resources are being replaced by capital intensive production such as intensification of fertilisers, herbicides, and modern machinery (Tamru *et al.* 2017). But the negative conservation and welfare implications of farmers have tended to erode any gains made from agricultural intensification and capitalisation to improve wellbeing of farmers.

While cash crops like tea and sugarcane have contributed to deforestation in Kenya and farmers are staggering along under the effects of degradation of their resources, simple agroforestry practices in sugarcane farming, in place of exclusive dependence on inorganic fertiliser (controlled by agro-processing firms) can lead to significant changes in the farmer-firm relations and equity for farmers in outcomes of their livelihoods (Lindell and Kroon 2010, Jaynea *et al.* 2019). Unlike other studies that focused exclusively on economic factors, Lindell and Kroon focused on traditional, local and inexpensive modes of agriculture that ensure environmental sustainability as the surest way to solve challenges of farmers in the sugarcane industry. Agro-forestry is no stranger to traditional ways of farming before introduction of capital intensification. I align with this alternative paradigm and a return to sustainability for the sugarcane production industry. It is contended that though some loopholes still exist which can erode any benefits, the collective and statutory recognition and promotion of traditional, alternative forms of agriculture, can help address the degradation and conflictive outcomes of agricultural infrastructure and inputs. This is so because for infrastructure and inputs to conserve resources, they must become the natural environment itself; one and the same (Chester *et al.* 2019). Such effective integration of infrastructure and inputs with the natural environment is feasible through concerted policy. In this regard, national policy action is needed to bring this integration about and make infrastructure work especially for poor people (Cromwell 2002).

Inasmuch as the studies on the Kenyan sugarcane industry share informative insights on the difficult conditions of farmers (Owino *et al.* 2018, Waswa *et al.* 2012, Olanipekun *et al.* 2019), they fail to recognise that infrastructure and input provision if controlled by dominant economic interests beyond farmers' control, can be detrimental to yield, natural resources, and farmers' wellbeing, through intensive extraction. Indeed, unfortunately these studies construct farmers as passive people, and that



due to their low incomes, farmers have little resources to afford efficient conservative techniques and practices of their own; in other words, these studies fail to identify the forces of control beyond income, but rather identify that farmers by their generally low incomes lack environmental consciousness.

Refreshingly, the case of Malawi is quite contrary to the construction of farmers as passive clients and lacking environmental experiences (Spencera *et al.* 2018). In their work, Spencera and colleagues contend that contrary to the dominant quantitative research findings that farmers are highly willing to pay for extension services, the context of Malawi, through a qualitative longitudinal study found that smallholder farmers though want to pay for extension services, see themselves, and should be related to as such by extension providers, as possessing capability to decide on and utilise extension service in ways that fit their peculiar conditions to enhance productivity and conserve their resources. Thus, farmers are not just willing to pay for and depend on extension service providers. Governments are crucial to provide access of all farmers to extension service supply on how and when they want to utilise such services. Malawian farmers are resisting the user-pay approach to agricultural extension due to insensitive, expensive services that do not lead to their wellbeing, this bringing the question of legitimacy, salience and credibility to bear on user-pay approaches, without government intervention, in agricultural extension and input provision.

Considering the environmental degradation in Mumias in Kenya found in this study and also in Lindell and Kroon (2010) and Jaynea *et al.* (2019), it is rather corporates and rich and profit-oriented businesses and farmers who employ exotic agricultural technology, infrastructure, and inputs that pose the real destruction to African environmental resources. Of course local farmers do not lack skills to effect conservation changes to the environment. It is rather their loss of control over high infrastructure and inputs, translating into loss of control over their lands as demonstrated with the quotations above that is the real issue. Constructing farmers as poorly skilled is oblivion to the wealth of experiential skills that farmers acquire over the years and which if recognized and incorporated into capital intensive agriculture can release them from the unproductive, extractive control of modern modes of agriculture.

## 7. Conclusion

Infrastructure and inputs are useful tools for harnessing and conserving natural resources. However, they can also act as a disempowering or inhibitive forces that deprive conservation of natural resources and derivation of desired values from land. It is therefore critical that capital intensive approaches to agriculture promote, rather than inhibit, the development of sustainable agriculture that meets the social, economic, and political needs of farmers and not only firms. To help identify socioeconomic and political contexts of local farmers to inform infrastructure and input design and integration with agriculture, citizen's involvement in generating, analysing, and developing knowledge (citizen science), in complementary to state and private businesses researches, is clearly the way to go. Farmers, the state, corporates, and community-based groupings should constantly accumulate data on the outcomes of



agricultural infrastructure and inputs for local people so that any undesired outcomes can be corrected for sustainability of livelihoods and environmental resources.

It is clear from the analysis presented in this work that modes of agriculture that push costs of farming to farmers without developing their capacities to be independent of exploitative interests destroy livelihoods and agriculture. In this context, government policy is a powerful tool to determine the direction and character of agriculture and the place of infrastructure and inputs. The issues confronting the relationship between farmers and firms means that control of local farmers over their lands and for the sustainability of their livelihoods cannot be left in the hands of firms alone. Involving farmers in the design and application of agricultural infrastructure and input will have high ecological, social, and political positive impacts for all actors.

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# **Large-scale land investments diversification and conflict trends in Mozambique**

Amélia Maisha Silas Tunzine

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

## **Abstract**

Mozambique is a naturally endowed country and for this fact it has, like many other developing countries, seen in the last decade a renewed interest in its natural resources by foreign investors. Additionally, Mozambique has also undergone on a path of land reforms after its independence producing what has been considered one of the most progressive and participative Land Laws in Africa. Nevertheless, there have been registered cases of conflicts between Large-Scale Land Investors and the communities affected by this investments. This paper will provide an overview of the characteristics of these conflicts related to different types of land investments. It is centered in the role of the State as the land manager due to its high discretionary power for land allocation and expropriation and as such it argues that these conflicts are deeply rooted in the fragilities of the government's implementation and monitoring of the existing laws. It also calls for a more thorough comparative analysis of the impact of each type of investment to understand how the diversification in large-scale land use can be harmonized to work towards a better land governance and a more positive socio-economic contribution of these investments to the country's development.

**Keywords:** land conflicts, large-scale investments, investment diversification, land governance



## 1. Introduction

Mozambique is a developing country with great potential for economic growth. It is naturally endowed with 80 million hectares of land of which 36 million are arable land. Sources diverge on the state of occupancy of this land, while some argue that less than 10% is being used for rainfed agricultural activities, governmental sources argue that 16million hectares are already occupied. The country also has vast forests which in fact is one of the targets of the largest types of investments in terms of area occupied.

Some of the factors that make Mozambique an attractive destination for such type of investments are as follow: a plateau area that covers 55% of the country, located mainly in the west and north region which has the best agricultural land including open forests, dense subtropical and tropical rainforests and savannah. This land is very fertile and proper for rainfed agriculture. In terms of Land availability, there's 80 million ha in total of which 27 million are dense forest; 16 million are open forest, 1million are forest plantations and tree crops, 10million ha are mixed forest and cultivation and 14 million are bush, savannah and pasture and 6 million are for cultivation. The occupied land includes: 17million ha for parks and other protected zones, 10million ha delimited to communities, 3 million ha already allocated to investors and in terms of agricultural potential: 36 million ha is potentially arable, 12 million to 19 million ha is potentially available for agriculture, forestry and cattle and 6 million ha is being cultivated and 7 million ha is available for investment (Hanlon and Mittal 2011). Besides the well known agricultural potential, in the last two decades, there has been discovered a great potential for mining. Mozambique's soil is rich in mineral resources being the most notably reported aluminium, oil, natural gas, coal, gemstones, gold and heavy sands. These resources can be exported through its development corridors in the north, central and south regions with access to six neighboring countries or through the vast coastal access to the Indian Ocean using its three main ports in Nacala, Beira and Maputo, located in the three main regions of the country. Like other African countries, Mozambique also has a demographic potential, a population of 29,495,960 habitants according to the World Bank (2018), mainly young and fast growing but yet in proportion to its total area Mozambique still has a relatively lower population density of 37.51/Km<sup>2</sup> (LANDex 2019). The southern African region has enjoyed a comparatively peaceful environment which has promoted the increase of economic activities. There are many factors that have been favorable for economic growth and human development. However, despite all of its potential, the social indicators are still in an unsatisfactory level.

Facing these challenges, the Mozambican government, encouraged by international financial institutions and donors, has been promoting a policy to attract foreign investment in Land and Natural Resources. Particularly in the areas of forestry, agriculture and mining. This policy is not new, it has been promoted since the implementation of neo-liberal reforms of decentralization, privatization and promotion of a market economy but it was the global phenomenon of food and fuels crisis as well as environmental concerns that has been mobilizing countries, specially the developed large economies to



secure the access to these resources in the global south. As a result of this global rush, developing economies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have been receiving since 2007/8 an increasing amount of foreign land investments. Mozambique has been one of the major receiving countries but it faced challenges in terms of its level of preparation to negotiate these deals and ensure that they would properly meet the State's expectations of development. Considering that the majority of the population resides in the rural areas and has low levels of formal education it was important to promote policies that would not create a system of exploitation and drainage of resources without creating local benefits which would further impoverish the people and potentially lead to civil unrest. It was with this in mind that the land law was reformulated in a participatory process that involved all of the major stakeholders. The current land law and land policies aim to promote a sustainable and participative use of natural resources that ensures the protection of the people, specially those who do not possess a formal land right from being dispossessed and meet the development agenda. Nevertheless, the existing legislation has not yet been able to prevent cases of conflicts between investors and communities, being the most prominent the ones related to the largest concessions in terms of hectares that affect multiple communities, some of which have to be resettled. The main question of this paper is **what are the causes of land conflicts between the different types of land investors and communities in Mozambique and what can be done to reduce them?**

## 2. Objective

This paper aims to bring a combined data from multiple sources of the large scale land investments in Mozambique, its characteristics and an analysis of the impact of these investments in the affected communities by assessing the causes of conflicts. It also aims to reinforce the importance of an integration strategy for the maximization of dividends from these diversified investments.

## 3. Methodology

To answer the main research question of this paper, the author conducted desk work, consulting existing legislations, policy papers, books, scientific articles, and news articles as well as structured in depth interviews with key informants such as government officials, scholars, representatives of civil society organizations.

Initially, a general overview of the evolution of land governance and its main drivers in Mozambique will be presented, secondly, this paper will bring an overview of the large-scale land investments with information collected from different databases such as landmatrix, Grain, Oxfam and The Oakland Institute as well as research and policy papers. Subsequently it will be presented some of the cases of land conflicts related to different types of land investments and its causes followed by a discussion of the findings.

Some of the main concepts that will be used are Land, Large Scale Land Investments, Local



Communities and Land Conflicts. The UN defines land as:

‘a delineable area of the earth’s terrestrial surface, encompassing all attributes of the biosphere immediately above or below this surface including those of the near-surface climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology (including shallow lakes, rivers, marshes and swamps), the near-surface sedimentary layers and associated groundwater reserve, the plant and animal populations, the human settlement pattern and physical results of past and present human activities’ (FAO n.d.).

For the purpose of this research Large Scale Land Investments will be defined as any land concession agreement that surpasses 1000ha, any concession equal or bigger than this area needs approval from the Provincial Government. But particular attention will be given to land deals bigger than 10,000ha since it is ruled by the Mozambican Land Law these deals have to be approved by the council of Ministers. It will be used the definition of local communities provided by Mozambique’s 1997 Land Law in which they are:

‘a group of families and individuals, living in a circumscribed territorial area at the level of locality or below, which aims to safeguard the common interests through the protection of areas of habitation, agricultural areas, whether cultivated or fallow, forests, sites of cultural importance, pastures, water sources and areas of expansion’ (Government of Mozambique 1997).

The term land conflicts will be used to refer to tensions between communities and investors in the form of violent or non violent disagreements which can be manifested through acts of boycott, pacific demonstrations and verbal or written complaints presented to the investors.

#### **4. Evolution of Mozambique’s land policy and its main drivers**

There are many internal and external dynamics that have shaped Mozambique’s Land Policy to become what it is today, considered one of the most progressive and participatory land laws in Africa. Land Law in Mozambique has been both reactionary and proactive to existing challenges at the time but also drawing from foreign examples, responding to ideological shifts and international pressure.

During the colonial era, across the continent, various tenure systems were set in place with nevertheless some common strategies implemented by the colonial administrations, among them were: the dispossession of indigenous people of their land and their resettlement to confided unproductive lands, the implementation of a hut tax to be paid by the indigenous people, the allocation of vast areas of fertile land to white settlers and concessionaire farming companies, the introduction of forced labor



in cash crops<sup>1</sup>.

Vast areas of plot were given to foreign companies for the development of plantations in the central and northern areas of Mozambique during the colonial period. Hence, the memory of expropriation for foreign investments to explore the land that should belong to the people is still new, thus the suspicion of new foreign direct investment in land.

While some of the policies were abolished right after independence, some others were inherited by the newly created states, particularly, the attribution of local administrative power to traditional or indigenous leaders and the recognition of customary land rights of the indigenous people (Mamdani 1996, Takeuchi 2014, Benjaminsen and Lund 2003). Benjaminsen and Lund (2003) defend that the legal pluralism that is prevalent in Mozambique and other countries is not an amalgamation of European law and traditional pre-colonial customs but a strategic selection of certain traditional customs while reinventing others, rendering customary law as a product of colonization.

Interestingly, after independence, the Mozambican government took a strong stance against all customary institutions and authorities as well as private entities, revoking the previous land tenure system and nationalizing all of the land and its natural resources through the Constitution of 1975. The total state ownership of land has remained in the following constitutions of 1990, 2004 and the 2007 amendment. However, throughout the years, the land law has seen some updates. The first post-independence Land law adopted in 1979, stated that the land was exclusive property of the state and it could not be sold, rented, mortgaged or subjected to any further type of alienation. This policy was adopted in a period where the government, a one party-state followed a Marxist-Leninist orientation, thus the justification for the nationalization of the land was aligned with the State's policy of collectivisation of the means of production through the creation of state farms and communal villages (Lunstrum 2008), similar to the policies implemented in the Soviet Union.

The government aimed to introduce reforms that would lead to the creation of a socialist state. However, this plan was challenged by the fragile economic situation inherited, the lack of qualified personnel, as well as the lack of capital. This situation was aggravated by the civil war that lasted 16 years, from 1986 until 1992. By the end of the civil war, the State was already undergoing major structural changes mainly influenced by the Peace agreement and the ideological shift initiated by Mozambique's negotiations with the Bretton Woods Institutions for financial assistance for post-war reconstruction. The combinations of these two factors resulted in an ideological shift in political, economic and social policies-to a more neoliberal orientation. These events set the path for Mozambique to become a multiparty state, decentralized, with a market oriented economy. Furthermore, there was a reverse in the nationalisation policies to privatisation of State owned enterprises and the ending of the

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous people were forced to abandon their lands and move to unproductive and dry lands and work in force labor called *Chibalo* in cash crops, a prominent case was the labor intensive cotton production in Mozambique.



state owned farms and communal villages. Another important development in this phase was in regards to the land tenure system. In 1997 a new Land Law was adopted with much acclamation due the national public consultation prior to its adoption. It can be said that the public participation in the land law reform was a result of the institutional reforms in the context of democratization and peace-building. Myers (1994) mentions several examples of land issues that emerged in post-independence period related to: land grabbing by the elites for speculative purposes, land disputes between displaced people and natives, overlap of land use concessions granted by different public institutions, disputes over historical occupation and lineage rights, and fears of land scarcity and class stratification. This issues were contrary to the governments vision of the ‘labor of the land as a universal means for the creation of wealth and welfare as the right of the entire Mozambican people<sup>2</sup>’ and particularly in such a fragile period of post-war reconciliation and state reconstruction, the rejection of the freehold or private ownership could be seen as a conflict prevention strategy to reduce social unrest. As mentioned by Benjaminsen and Lund (2003), when dealing with land issues, there is a confluence of multiple agendas that can cause socio-political tensions and require negotiation. Furthermore, Takeuchi (2014) mentions that the privatization of land was not a policy implemented right away in the newly independent African States, most governments extended their control to the customary lands. He also adds that the socialist ideology contributed to reinforcing the policy of national control over land because it was fiercely against the promotion of private property rights.

While in some countries the implementation of land redistribution reforms aimed to promote the increase tenure security to people who have been victims of social injustice, in Mozambique the monopoly over land ownership is also justified as a protection of peoples rights, in which land is a collective asset of the people of Mozambique, managed by the government. This idea is inspired by a marxist-leninist perspective of a classless society.

The new 1997 Land Law incorporated the right of use and improvement of the land (commonly called DUAT-*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra*) and recognized the right of occupancy in good faith to individuals who have been residing in the land for a minimum of 10 years as well as customary land rights to rural communities. It also allowed the transfer of land-use titles and its infra-structure through inheritance or sale. Individuals and collectives cannot own the land but for residential purposes they have indefinite right of occupancy, for economic activities there is a lease concession of 50 years that can be renewed. And communities with customary rights can request the delimitation of their land which renders a certificate of occupancy that can be followed by the formal lease title called DUAT. This 1997 Land Law is seen as a compromise between proponents of privatisation and those more concerned for the fate of the rural poor (Lunstrum 2008).

Since 2010, the Land Law has been under revision through an inclusive platform for dialogue by the

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<sup>2</sup> Republic of Mozambique, 1979 Land Law, art. 1 no.3



stakeholders called the Consultative Forum on Land where issues of institutional capacity, inclusive participation in the decision making process, tenure security, access to financial credit in the rural areas among other issues are being discussed. The government, with the help of international donors and local NGOs has implemented a national campaign for Land Delimitation and Titling of 5million units called ‘Secured Land’ (*Terra Segura*) (MITADER 2019).

#### **4.1. Timeline of the legal framework for land governance**

- 1975 First Constitution
- 1990 Second Constitution
- 1995 National Water Policy
- 1997 First Land Law
- 1998 Rural Land Law
- 1998 Forestry and Wildlife Regulation
- 1999 Forestry and Wildlife Law
- 2002 First Mining Law
- 2002 Forestry and Wildlife Regulation
- 2003 Decree No. 1/2003
- 2004 Third Constitution
- 2006 Urban Land Regulations
- 2007 Amendment of the 2004 Constitution
- 2014 Second Forestry Law
- 2014 Second Mining Law No. 20/2014
- 2015 Decree for Mining No. 31/2015
- ▼ 2015 Decree for Petroleum No. 34/2015

### **5. The large scale land investments in Mozambique**

#### **5.1. Drivers behind the investment boom**

The Neoliberal Agenda for Land Reforms has been accompanied by an avid interest in foreign land investment. There has been a shift from private land investment domestically to now becoming a transnational phenomenon. From the 1980s to present days there has been registered globally a race for foreign land that has been welcomed by the the wave of democratic and neoliberal reforms in course in the developing countries and particularly in regards to the agricultural sector and the land tenure system. A catalyst for this so called ‘scramble’ for land was the 2007/8 food, fossil and financial crisis with the price spike that revealed the urgency of ensuring global food security (Nalepa 2011). But contrary to this argument is the fact that the majority of the land investments go to other activities such as forestry and logging, biofuel production, mining, tourism and others (Nolte *et al.* 2016, Gironde and Golay



2016). It also can't be discarded that some investments are for speculative purposes since there have been registered many cases of approved land concessions that remained unoccupied for many years and resulted in the termination of the lease<sup>3</sup>. Whilst there have been registered land deals in many countries across the globe there are some patterns worth noticing. First, the majority of the transnational land deals target developing countries and Africa in particular has received the biggest share of foreign investors, the most targeted countries have high hunger index, the agricultural sector plays an important role for the economy, there is relative high population density and tenure security is low (which leads to competition and potential conflict) and most of the investors are private enterprises (Nolte *et al.* 2016). In the earlier stages, it was the low population density and information gaps in terms of the real availability of arable 'no-mans land' that made African countries such an attractive destination for investment. Some scholars have stated that this view was an overestimation and in fact even though agricultural production was low and small sized, there were parcels of land that were in fact inhabited or considered private or communal property, regardless of the legal rights status of their occupants.

## 5.2. Characteristics of the land investments

Cross country comparison has shown a strong correlation between weak tenure security and land deals and this could be explained by the fragility of the land governance and the opportunity to acquire concessions of large areas at a lower price with less contestation by the local communities due to their weak and informal land rights (Arezki *et al.* 2011, Deininger 2013, Anseeuw 2012, Nolte *et al.* 2016). According to Pauline E. Peters (2013) in Subsaharan Africa eight countries in particular have seen a boom in foreign agricultural investment namely, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana, Mali and Madagascar. Of the southern africa region, Mozambique<sup>4</sup> (63.5%), Madagascar (71.1%) and South Africa (79.8%) have the most arable land in proportion to the total land area comprising more than 50% of the countries total area (World Bank 2019). This is one of the factors that puts Mozambique and Madagascar in the top 20 global list of the targeted countries for large-scale land investments. According to Glover (2016), from 2004 to 2009, land concessions were given to 405 projects in a total land area of 2,670,000 hectares. And according to data from LandMatrix (2016) there were 60 land deals that reach areas as large as 1,500,000 hectares in Mozambique.

<sup>3</sup>According to some observers, some 90 percent of coastal land has been allocated as provisional DUATs. Van Den Brink, Rogier J. E. 2008

<sup>4</sup>Despite the amount of arable land there's low productivity in the he agriculture sector, it contributes to 26.6% of Mozambique's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but absorbs 75% of the total labour force, source: African Development Bank (2019) Southern African Economic Outlook



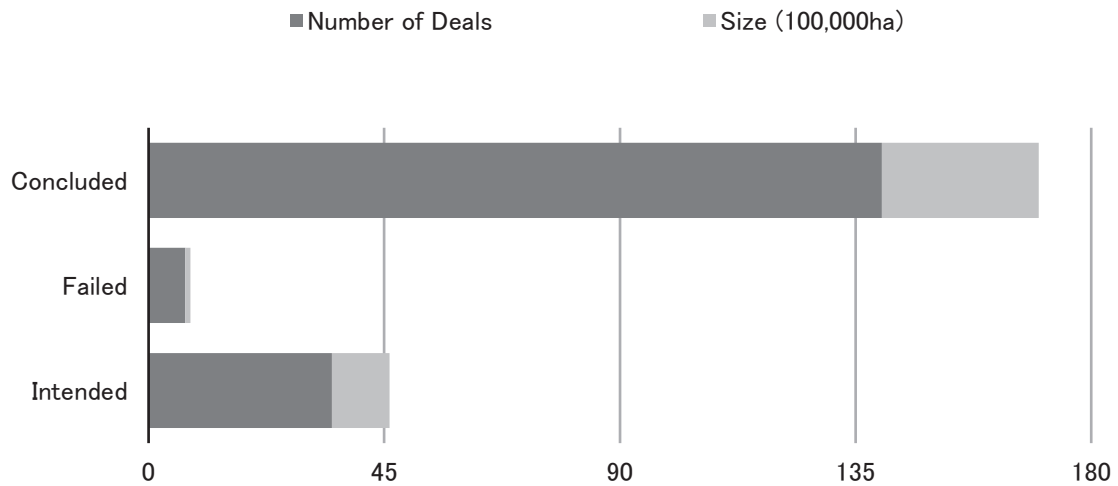


Figure 1. Status of Land deals and size

Source: LandMatrix 2019

Table 1. Land Deals by Type of Investment and Area occupied

Investment Type	Size	Number of Deals Concluded	Number of Deals Not concluded
Multiple Intention	1,920,556 ha	39	6
Timber Plantation	825,728 ha	9	1
Logging/ Management	505,465 ha	6	2
Livestock	226,736 ha	12	17
Tourism	217,500 ha	4	1
Conservation	200,000ha	1	0
Food Crops	147,451 ha	37	5
Biofuels	146,115ha	15	1
Mining	85,200 ha	4	0
Non Food Agricultural Commodities	49,465 ha	15	0
Carbon Sequestration/REDD	30,000ha	1	1
Forestry Unspecifid	1000ha	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,369,216 ha</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>34</b>

Source: LandMatrix 2019



The government of Mozambique has welcomed foreign investment in large scale agriculture to promote economic development. But questions arise in terms of how these investments fulfill the expectations of socio-economic development. For once, there is a dichotomy in terms of the common rhetoric pro-investment that links the development of the agricultural sector as a key factor to economic growth and to tackle food insecurity that prevails in many developing countries. As table 1 shows, although the majority of the land deals are for food crops, these are not the biggest deals in terms of area requested. Studies (Oxfam 2011, Nolte *et al.* 2016, Nalepa 2011) have shown that many of these agricultural investments are non food crops, such as biofuels and cut flowers, and the ones that are food crops are mainly for export and not to feed the domestic markets. An Oxfam report shows that in Mozambique, where household acute food insecurity accounts for 35%, only 7% (32,000 of 433,000 hectares) of the land deals made for agriculture between 2007 and 2009 were meant for food production (Oxfam 2011). As shown in figure 1, data from the Land Matrix further substantiates this information, Timber plantation and logging combined, with only 15 deals, occupy 1.3 million hectares. Biofuels, a non-food crop has also been a highly invested commodity with 15 investments occupying 146,115 hectares almost the same land area of the food crops and this combined with non-food crops (49,465ha) confirms that food production is not the priority of these land investments.

There is a larger concentration of agricultural investments in the Nacala Corridor as well as Zambézia Province, the biggest concentration of forestry investments is in the provinces of Manica, Zambézia and Niassa, which are the most fertile areas in the country, the cluster of investments in minerals are Tete, Manica, Nampula and Zambézia, investments in gas are in the province of Inhambane and Cabo Delgado and finally heavy sands investments are located in Nampula and Gaza Provinces.

## **6. The causes of the conflicts between investors and communities**

The causes of these land conflicts can be divided in two main parts: the first one has to do with the existing conditions or the weak state preparedness to receive large scale-investments such as the lack or poor knowledge among the stakeholders about the land law and other legislations that regulate land use, not only by the communities but also by government officials which leads to gross oversight of policy implementation procedures, private interests in the approval of concessions, poor information among all stakeholders of occupancy status of lands and lack of a deep study of the impact of the investment.

The second part, and the most salient, has to do with the interaction between the investors and the communities, mainly: how the role of communities are perceived by the investors and here lies the relevance of tenure security, the promises of socio-economic development that the investor conveys to the community as part of its Social Corporate Responsibility but also related to the allocation of profit revenues for community development which also involves the State and should in practice be decided with the participation of the communities involved and finally the implementation of these promises in a satisfying timeframe. For a better understanding of these causes, a compilation of cases of conflict will



be presented the table bellow and will further be discusses in detail.

## **6.1. Weaknesses in institutional capacity to reinforce tenure security**

### **6.1.1. Lack of information**

Despite the existence of an information law, many land deals are not made public by the government. Some prominent cases are reported in the news but others don't reach the public. This renders communities unaware of the law and the crucial information about the investments to make an informed decision of whether they should or not approve the land concession with consideration for their tenure and livelihood security.

### **6.1.2. Oversight of required procedures**

Most of the conflicts reported and mentioned in studies begin with the faulted community consultations. It is regulated by law that regardless the final decision making entity, the council of ministers, the provincial government or the local administrator, there has to be done a community consultation before the DUAT concession deliberation is done, this is not simply for informative purposes but in this process communities theoretically are given the right of vetoing the implementation of the project. However, there has been many cases of improper or no community consultation done prior to the DUAT attribution. Nonetheless, few cases have been presented in formal courts. Few prominent cases that have been taken to court and reported in the news are the case of Anadarko Company sued by the Mozambican Bar Association (OAM 2019), asking for the revocation of the DUAT given to carry a 20 billion dollars gas exploration project in the province of Cabo Delgado. Within the claims in the lawsuit are improper consultation, fraudulent minutes of community consultation and lack of public participation in the resettlement process.

### **6.1.3. Land registration and political interests**

Nalepa (2011) and Peters (2013) mention the documentation of 418 cases that overlap between approved land concessions to investors and delimited communal lands that correspond in total to 1.4 million hectares. This shows an administrative weakness of the Mozambican government in terms of land mapping and registration or a deliberate intent to not prioritise the rights of the communities. Castel-Branco *et al.* (2001) mentions that, in the process of privatisation, 'In some cases, 'traditional' community claims-to land and natural resources-were ignored in the scramble to dispose of state farms'. The relation between government and rural communities has historically been clouded with tension and beyond economic motivations, political factors have also played a role in the decision-making of the transfer of land use rights. Takeuchi (2018), Aminaka (2018) and PESA (2018) argue that the current land law has strengthen the State's control over rural societies and that in this process the land tenure security of communities that supported the opposition has been weakened. It is not enough that



communities have their rights protected if there is no registration that they are occupants of that space<sup>5</sup>. This is one of the factors mentioned as a reason for the delay in the land concessions. But this also means that to be diligent, communal land delimitation needs to be expedited which consequently results in a flawed implementation of the required procedures for land transfer from the communities to the investors being the community the weakest stakeholders this process ends in their disadvantage.

## **6.2. Weaknesses in the investor-community interactions**

### **6.2.1. Idle land due to speculation**

The major deficiency in state management of land use is manifested in the low monitoring capacity of the exploration plans. As a consequence, Investors usually ask for a larger size than what it is actually needed to carry the project. It has been argued that this is done due to lack of resources to explore the total area or for speculation purposes due to the commoditization of the land in international markets. Many investors end up successfully acquiring large concessions of land, dispossessing former occupants but keeping the land idle. In consequence, the former occupants end up trespassing and reoccupying this land which then becomes a cause of conflict with the legal occupants as has been reported. A national campaign was launched by the Ministry of Land and Rural Development to claim back idle land by revoking or reducing the DUAT from the investors who requested an area larger than 1000ha during the years of 2009 and 2012 and did not fully implement the exploration plan. The target is to reclaim 1,000,000ha (one million hectares) by the end of 2019.

### **6.2.2. Resettlements and the disruption of the way of living**

There is a lot of expectation related to the implementation of a large-scale investments in somewhat remote areas. With governmental backing and promises of economic development the public perception is that these investments will improve the quality of life, create infrastructures, jobs and a market. However, it has been proven that there is a frail connection between the implementation of large scale investments and rural development. A second point is that not all communities have the same economic activities, in some areas most members practice small scale agriculture but in some areas, near the coast some community members are fishermen or do other types of activities such as artisanal mining. These diversity is not always accounted in the resettlement plans and consequently there are cases of disruption of the way of living without the creation of satisfying alternatives that effectively create an improvement in the affected communities lives. Thirdly, besides the economic perspective, there is a social dimension that should also be accounted. Communities have their own particular social interactions and historical facts that creates proximity within them and creates emotional attachment to the land. There are family

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, the majority of the population in Mozambique resides in lands to which they do not have formal titles. In face of this concern the legislation accepts a lease based on occupation for more than 10 years. Most of the rural communities have this type of land right but this is not formalized in paper.



cemeteries, sacred trees, forests and mountains to which they are forced to part. And when there is a lack of satisfactory compensation this factors contribute for the refusal to leave the area.

### **6.2.3. Expectations regarding socio-economic impact**

Civil Society Organizations have been very vocal about the impact of the large scale investments in terms of job creations due to the fact that the local workforce usually does not have the technical skills that are needed to carry out the project. In the case of agricultural projects, they are mechanized and require low human labor in a context where there are many community members who have worked their entire lives in rudimentary agriculture lacking the skills to use the machinery introduced by the investors. Similar happens to mineral exploration, an area that also requires low human force and more specific technical skills. Therefore, to create jobs it is necessary to invest in skills development and education and without legal enforcement not all investors have the initiative to focus in job creation.

The social responsibility of investors was not regulated and therefore, it was a voluntary initiative by the investors in negotiation with the communities. In this situation, the communities had less bargaining power due to the fact that there was no legal obligation by the investors. It was only in 2017 that the government created a Guide on the Implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy for the Extractive Mineral Resources Industry (Ministerial Order 8/2017, of 16 January 2017).

### **6.2.4. Environmental Issues**

Some large scale investments, particularly related to mineral extractions can inevitably cause a certain level of pollution and diversion of natural resources available for the residents of a certain area such as forests and water. When people affected by the environmental impact of this projects are not resettled to areas with improved living conditions this too can be a source of conflict. There have been reported man-made floods in Angoche, Nampula province caused by the mining exploration of Haiyu Company, pollution caused by the coal exploration by Vale in Moatize, Tete province.



Table 2. List of Conflicts related to Large Scale Land Investments<sup>6</sup>

Investor Year	Type of Investment	Area Occupied Location	Causes of Conflict
ProSavana 2011	soybeans, cotton and maize	700,000ha Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula, Zambézia and Tete	Contestation by civil society because of lack of transparency and public participation began before the project implementation. The Mozambican Bar Association condemned the government of Mozambique for not making information available about this project.
ProSavana 2011	soybeans, cotton and maize	700,000ha Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula, Zambézia and Tete	Contestation by civil society because of lack of transparency and public participation began before the project implementation. The Mozambican Bar Association condemned the government of Mozambique for not making information available about this project.
Malonda Foundation	forestry	285,591ha Niassa Province	Non inclusive community consultations.
Green Resources 2009	forestry and carbon sequestration	126,000ha Niassa Province	Dissatisfaction with consultation and temporary jobs.
Tectona 2007	cellulose, eucalyptus, teak and carbon sequestration	66,000ha Zambézia Province	Only 500ha were used, communities wanted to claim the back the land. The project was cancelled.
Montepuez Ruby Mining 2011	minning rubis and emeralds	36,000 ha Cabo Delgado Province	Human rights abuses through: police torture of illegal miners, famine, burns houses and there is no development in the community (no electricity, no piped water and no resettlement)
Chikweti	pine and eucalyptus	30,000ha	Government reported that the company was occupying additional 32,000ha illegally and without compensating the communities, negotiating only with the community leaders regulos given them and their relatives preference in job offerings. Residents set fire to the companies plantation, sent cattle to graze in the area and chopped down trees. 12 people were arrested in these incidences.
Pro Cana	sugar	30,000ha in 2007 and revoked in 2009 Gaza Province	Community did not agree with the resettlement proposal and refused to leave. Only 800ha were used. The project was abandoned in 2008.
Vale 2007	coal	23,000ha Tete Province	One person was fatally shot by the policy during protests against the fencing of an area of mineral concession given to the company in Nhatchere, Moatize, Tete Province.
Wanbao Grain and Oil 2011	rice	~20, 234 ha	No consultation and Compensation. Community protested by marching from the company's office to the governor's office.
Hoyo Hoyo (Quifel) 2012	sunflower, sesame and soybeans	20,000ha Zambézia Province 8,000ha Tete Province	Unfulfillment of promises to provide compensation and resettlement
Jindal 2013	coal	17,600ha Tete Province	538 families in 5 communities need to be resettled. Delays in the Resettlement led to complains of risks to the residents health due to sound pollution and contamination of the water and soil.

<sup>6</sup> Compilation by the author from multiple secondary sources mentioned in the references.



<b>Investor Year</b>	<b>Type of Investment</b>	<b>Area Occupied Location</b>	<b>Causes of Conflict</b>
Energem 2007	jatropha	2,000ha in Gaza 15,000ha in Inhambane Province	297 workers were not paid and were then laid off in 2010. The labor Ministry intervened and the company was fined to pay 136,000USD.
Kenmare 2007	heavy sands	15,240ha Nampula Province	Improper consultation in the initial phase, disagreement over labor conditions and exploration activities in sacred places to the community.
AgroMoz	soybeans and rice	2,100ha extended to 9,000ha Zambézia Province	Dissatisfaction with the compensation amount. Health complaints due to aerial spray of pesticides.
Anhui Economic Construction 2014	heavy sands	10,840ha Gaza Province	Poor fulfilment of investment plan. Promised infrastructure (factory, health center, school and others) was not created and only 150ha were used and communities protested.  Lack of community consultation, deforestation and environmental degradation.
Aviam	jatropha	10,000ha Nampula Province	
Ntacua 2014	cellulose, eucalyptus and pine	9,500ha Zambézia Province	
Cabo Delgado Ports 2014,	construction of gas and oil logistics.	8,000ha Cabo Delgado Province	Communities Insatisfaction with the compensation offered and resettlement and lack of access to drinking water.
Sasol 2004	natural gas	Inhambane Province	Reidents of Vilanculo, Inhassoro, Govuro e Funhalouro complain that the company is not fullfilling its social responsibilities promises.
Anadarko	hidrocarbonates	7,000ha Cabo Delgado Province	Issues related to the resettlement of communities in the district of Palma, Cabo Delgado Province. The company has been sued for illegally obtaining the DUAT.
Corredor Agro (Rift Valley Holdings & Matanuska Mauritius) 2010	field crops and banana	6,200ha	The government fined the company for labor law violations. Community at Metocheria complains of lack of sufficient information during consultation fulfillment of promises made at the consultation
Sun Biofuels	jatropha	5,000ha Manica Province	Dissatisfaction with seasonality of jobs created, water contamination by pesticides used in plantation.
Haiyu Mozambique Mining 2011	heavy sands	4,920ha Nampula Province	Insufficient Community Consultations, Environmental Impact (floods in 2015 that displaced 290 people) disagreement over resettlement proposal.
MOZACO 2013	soy, cotton, corn and sunflower	2,389 ha/ Nampula Province	No community consultation, only 400ha were used, the communities reoccupied the idle land.
Emvest	potato, tomato and maize	1,000ha Gaza Province	Plan to expand to 2,000ha was met with protests by the communities that claimed they needed the land for farming and grazing.
Alfa Agricultura 2013	poultry and soybeans	1,000ha Nampula Province	Consultation was done with the leader of a neighboring community and the affected community members refuse to recognize the agreement.



## 7. Conflict resolution mechanisms

Most of the conflicts that occur in the rural area are solved through informal channels of mediation and conciliation such as community courts or through negotiation involving traditional leaders, local government entities, NGOs as well as the parties in conflict. According to DFID 2013:39, the judiciary courts do not properly address the causes of the conflict and usually intervene only when there is a criminal act related to the conflict. The Mozambican Bar Association (Ordem dos Advogados de Moçambique), supported by OXFAM, has released for the first time a Human Rights Report. And through its Human Rights Commission it began to sue both investors and the government for violation of the communities human rights. So far, Judicial Courts have received cases against mining companies, Jindal, Vale and Anadarko and against the ProSavana Project for not making available information about this project to the public (OAM 2018).

## 8. Discussion

### 8.1. The pro foreign investment attitude

Numerous senior government representatives have stressed the importance of attracting investments to materialize Mozambique's development potential. Agriculture has always been the center of the government's agenda under the slogan 'Agriculture as the base of Development' which is a sound directive line if considered that the majority of the active labor force is concentrated in this sector which is still low in productivity due mainly to the small scale and rudimentary techniques used by the majority of farmers and the great agricultural potential that the country has, still relatively untapped. The agricultural sector in subsaharan Africa has not yet reached its potential for catapulting the economies of the countries in this area. But to avidly invest in the agricultural sector African states need capital, technology, know-how and access to the international market, aspects that international investors offer to provide in return for the right of use of these lands which are comparatively cheap due to an undeveloped land market. Facing the challenge of low productivity, and with incentives from the international community specially financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, Mozambique has prioritized the agenda of modernization of the agricultural sector by creating incentives for the increase of private investments in this sector. The centrality of the agrarian reform in Mozambique is demonstrated by the adoption of Pro-Agri I, a National Plan for Agricultural Development between 1994-1999, and Pro-Agri II between 1999-2006, the Strategy for the Green Revolution in 2007, the Action Plan for Food Production between 2008-2011, the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agriculture Sector in 2011, to name a few. All of these policies and strategies aimed to revitalize the sector, increase productivity, ensure food security and reduce Mozambique's dependence on food commodity imports. This explains why, when the 2000s land rush began, many concessions were given to large scale land investors. But soon began the debate on whether these investments that implied the resettlement of many rural communities were aligned with the State's



agenda of poverty reduction. As was shown in previous sections only a fraction of these investments went to food production and the majority of them being for export and not for the domestic market. It has also been widely debated the benefits of focusing rather on medium scale investments to promote a more sustainable and equitable rural development.

The Mozambican government sought to maximize the investment promotion opportunities presented in the early 2000s and therefore, it did not shy away from welcoming investment diversification. The government not only granted land concessions but openly advocated for other types of non food commodities such is the case of Biofuels, local farmers were incentivized to substitute food crops for non edible commodities<sup>7</sup>. There were high expectations for the dividends of the production of *Jatropha* in particular. But soon enough expectations were crushed when problems of market access arose.

The attention given to the forestry sector has a reasonable rationale behind it, forestry has a great socio-economic impact in a threefold manner, firstly, forests provide an important livelihood for rural communities; secondly, in a context of environmental changes, they are crucial for counterbalancing environmental degradation and reducing carbon dioxide, rendering an important role in the preservation of biodiversity and thirdly, regarded as an exploitable or marketable resource, unlike *Jatropha*, wood products are in high demand in international markets, therefore, dividends from the exploration of forestry resources can significantly contribute to the economy. However, despite attributing the largest concessions to forestry investments, a lot of Mozambique wood exports are illegal, which means that the government loses large sums of money while its forests are being depleted with no concern for the environmental regulations. Furthermore, many investors did not fulfill their exploration plans within the timeframe which means that vast tracts of land allocated for forestry were idle which in consequence led to conflicts with the expropriated communities who lost access to their resources but did not see any dividend coming from these concessions. In 2017, to countermeasure the contraband of wood in the country, the Ministry of Land and Environment launched a national monitoring campaign called ‘Operation Trunk’ (*Operação Tronco*) in the northern and central provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Manica and Sofala, areas with the biggest forestry potential. The monitoring campaign was able to recover 222.376 cubic meters of wood log and 18.293 cubic meters of lumber and other products. The apprehended wood was then used to the construction of school desks distributed in public schools around the country (Portal Do Governo de Moçambique n.d.) but nevertheless, communities alone have to bear the consequences of the deforestation caused.

Finally, the recent discoveries of Mozambique’s natural resources and the ‘boom’ of investments in this area has raised domestic and foreign attention to the impact of the extractive sector in the country’s economic development. This sector already contributes to 57% of the country’s exports, 20.6% of government’s revenue and 3.5% of the GDP, a bigger contribution than the agriculture, manufacturing

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<sup>7</sup> A Biofuels Policy Strategy was adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2009.



and services sector. It also represents two thirds of the total Foreign Direct Investment. However, despite its significant contribution it only employs 33,000 people while the informal mining sector employs 150,000 artisanal miners (EITI 2019).

In face of this figures, Mozambique has made improvements to its mineral resources management, by updating its mining and oil legislation to better adjust to the new trends of investment in this sector and by joining the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative EITI in 2009 and in line with this action, more information about the land concessions is available to the public such as the contracts signed, a list of the main investors, a database with the location and area of each type of mining concession. The biggest concentration of investments in the extractive sector are located in the north and center of the country, mainly in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Manica, Nampula and Tete.

## **8.2. Need for a policy integration strategy**

Despite the promising contributions of these different types of investments to economic growth, based on the information collected of land conflicts, there are more cases of conflicts between mining and forestry companies and communities reported compared to other types of investments. In particular, there seems to have been registered less conflicts between investors in food crops and local communities. Perhaps mining and forestry due to its environmental consequences and the large areas occupied have created a more negative socio-economic impact in the livelihoods of the communities but further comparative studies need to be conducted to reach a better understanding of this matter.

It is also notable that some provinces attract multiple types of investment who compete for vast tracks of land in areas of comparative high population density such is the case of the Nampula province. Furthermore these investments are related to different sectors of the economy, namely agriculture and industry. As mentioned before there is a disproportion in productivity and labor allocation between these sectors. This factors aligned with different types of regulations, monitoring and socio-economic impact in the livelihoods of the rural communities calls for the importance of an integrative strategy where the government takes into consideration the trade-offs of this activities and its implications for its central development strategy.

## **9. Conclusion**

This paper brought an overview of Mozambique's Land governance in the context of increased international demand for land in diversified areas of investment. It also provided a look at the investments characteristics and its impact in the lives of local communities by addressing some of the causes of the conflicts that have been reported by the media and academic researchers.

In summary, it can be concluded that when it pertains to large scale investments, the government has a central role, as the ultimate decision maker in terms of land allocation to investors. Assuming this role, it has made some efforts to tackle the challenges presented in the process of management of land



and its natural resources as a key element to achieve its planned economic growth and development. However, the poor participation of communities in the decision making process of deals that deeply affects their lives clearly reveals some fragilities in the State preparedness to ensure the security of the local communities and the improvement of livelihoods provided by this recent increased demand for land which in consequence has affected the occurrence of conflicts between investors and communities.

Lately, there seems to be a tendency of a more reactive government action in the land governance in the last decade due to an active participation of the civil society which has rendered some positive gains to the communities. But there is still a need of a proactive role in the deeper analysis of the trade offs of land allocation in diversified areas of investment. Certainly economic diversification is important in risk reduction but it should be harmonized, mutually reinforcing and aligned in the central agenda of rural development and economic growth. There is much that can be learned from best practices and negative impacts of each type of investment and more comparative analysis should be done to improve land governance in Mozambique.

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# **Mining developments and land acquisition processes in Zambia**

Moonde Kabinga

Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa

## **Abstract**

Zambia has in the last two decades experienced a resurgence of the mining industry due to increased global commodity prices. This has in turn led to the development of new mine projects and large-scale land acquisitions. Most often, these large-scale land acquisitions for mining purposes take place on customary land which results in displacement and disruptions of rural livelihoods. Using a sociological lens, I discuss in this paper, the contestations and socio-economic disruptions that arise from the processes of acquiring land for the purpose of mining. I also leveraging on three case studies to propose tenets of an alternative and standardised process for land allocation that allows for better negotiation and compensation for rural residents in countries with weak institutions.

**Keywords:** mining, customary land, processes, land acquisition, allocation, Zambia



## 1. Introduction

Many countries in Africa have witnessed a rise in large-scale land acquisitions due to many development projects taking place such as mining, dam developments for hydro-electricity production, commercial agriculture, etc. These large-scale land acquisitions can be attributed to the fact that most of the African countries particularly in sub-Saharan in the early 1990s, went through structural adjustment programs and new policies which aimed at recognizing customary rights and liberalizing the land market (German *et al* 2011). Among other new policies introduced, were land reforms aimed at allowing rural development through foreign direct investments (FDI). Often, these land reforms have caused contestations particularly in customary areas where land acquisition and allocation processes take place, and Zambia is no exception to this phenomenon. This paper discusses contestations and socio-economic disruptions arising from processes of acquiring large-scale land for purposes of mining in Zambia. This paper situates itself in the broader debates of large-scale land acquisitions.

Most of the new mine developments in Zambia like in many places in Africa, have often taken place on customary land. This suggests that traditional authorities who are normally the custodian of customary land which they hold on behalf of rural communities, need to be engaged in order to acquire land for large-scale mining projects. However, in the three cases discussed in this paper, it is evident that the processes of land acquisitions and allocation varied to a certain extent depending on the area and the role traditional authorities followed on allocating customary land for purposes of mining. In this paper, I therefore argue that, there are no written standard guidelines or policy stipulating how customary land should be allocated (in areas practicing customary tenure). Such situations have often given rise to contestations over how land is administered or negotiated for among various stakeholders involved in the process. Further, the rural communities affected by such large-scale land acquisitions rarely or effectively participate in the negotiation processes of their land, and compensation packages.

This paper is divided into five sections. From the introduction, is the second section which discusses literature on land tenure and administration in Zambia, and mining development and large-scale land acquisition in Zambia. The third section highlights the methodology and profiles the case study sites which are Lumwana, Kalumbila and Munali Nickel mine projects. Forth section discusses the findings on the contestations and socio-economic disruptions arising from the processes of acquiring large-scale land for mining as observed in each of the three case studies. Then, the last section is the conclusion, which also proposes tenets (guidelines) of an alternative standardized process for land allocation that allows for better negotiation and compensation for rural residents in countries with weak institutions.



## 2. Literature

### 2.1. Land tenure and administration in Zambia

Land in Zambia is prescribed under two tenure systems which are ‘customary’ and ‘leasehold’ (Land Act 1995). Currently, customary land constitutes 53.8 % of total land in Zambia (which is 752,000 km<sup>2</sup>), while state land is at 8.8% and the remainder is public land with 37.4 % (Chitonge 2018, Mulowa 2016, Sikamo *et al.* 2015). Land which falls under customary tenure was formally *Native Reserve* and *Trust land* in the colonial and pre-independence Zambia and was set aside for native Africans. From pre-independence to date, customary land has been managed using customary law. It is held in the custody of a person of a chief, on behalf of the rural community members, and is communally owned (Roth 1995). The chiefs or traditional authorities with the help of headmen, administer the allocation of customary land for rural community use and occupancy, and anyone else outside the community seeking to acquire land for private use or investment purposes. Customary land does not have any form of registration or ownership rights (*ibid*). Some scholars have argued that the lack of ownership rights or form of certification, makes customary land insecure because the rights are not recognized and protected by law, particularly for rural residents or communities who derive a living from this land (Mudenda 2006, Roth 1995).

Then land which is under leasehold tenure in Zambia, is known as ‘State land’. The term of leasehold is limited to a maximum of 99 years. The other terms of leases include 14-year leases which are provisional, 30-year leases for resettlement schemes, 30-year occupancy licences for housing improvement areas, and 10-year land records which are issued by local authorities (Chitonge 2018, Mulolwa 2016, Hansugule 2002). During the colonial era and pre-independence Zambia, leasehold or state land was referred to as *Crown land* and was managed by British statutory law. It was the best land (for farming and had minerals) which was situated along the line of rail and was reserved for white settlers only. *Crown land* was managed under freeholds and leaseholds (with 99 lease) (Van Loenen 1999). After Zambia gained its independence (1964), *Crown land* fell under the state control and has since been managed by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. In 1975 the socialist government under the United National Independence Party (UNIP) radically changed the Land (Conversion of Titles) Act. Among other provisions, the amended Act vested all land in the President who held it in perpetuity of the Zambian people. The Act also did not allow for private ownership of land because all land was declared not saleable or a mortgageable commodity, as it was nationalised. Land was rendered to have no value, and any non-Zambian who wished to acquire any land were prohibited, unless they got consent through the president. This made it difficult for Zambia to attract any foreign investments (Van Loenen 1999).

In 1991, a new government was elect under the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), promised to change the socialist policies. Thus, the MMD proposed new policy reforms (during the structural adjustment program – SAP period from 1991-2001), which included the land reforms. The



land reforms sought to institute a system which would attach economic value to undeveloped land and reward the private titling of customary land so that investors could access it easily (Tagliarino 2014, Brown 2005). Thus, the aim of titling land was to make it more secure and allow it to be used as collateral for any financial credit. To regulate these land reforms, the 1995 Land Act was passed, and continues to allow all land to be vested in the President on behalf of the Zambian people. Among other provisions, the Act also has made it possible for land to have a market value, allows non-Zambians to acquire land with the consent of the president, and also continues to recognise customary tenure and law (GRZ 2016, Land Act 1995).

#### Customary Land acquisition processes

In Zambia, anyone holding or wishing to acquire customary land, and wishes to convert it to leasehold, must seek the approval of three authorities, these being: the traditional authorities or chief(s), the District Council and the Commissioner of Lands (who act on behalf of the president) (Administrative Circular No 1, 1985). According to the Land Act 1995, in Part II, Sec. 8. (1) ‘... any person who holds land under customary tenure may convert it into a leasehold tenure not exceeding ninety-nine years.’ And further, in the same Act, sec. 8 (2) states that, ‘the conversion of rights from a customary tenure to a leasehold tenure shall have effect only after the approval of the chief and the local authorities in whose area the land to be converted is situated, [...] the land to be converted shall have been identified by a plan showing the exact extent of the land to be converted’. So, the approval by the chief takes the form of a written consent, which is given to the applicant to submit to the District Council, where further recommendations are made to the Commissioner of Lands (Administrative Circular No 1, 1985). If the applicant of land is non-Zambian, then they must seek approval from the President according to the provisions made in the Land Act 1995, Part II sec. 3 (a) to (k). However, the President may not alienate any land in the customary area without the approval of the chiefs and local authorities.

## 2.2. Mining development and large-scale land acquisition in Zambia

In the last twenty years, Zambia like many African countries has been in the forefront of promoting large-scale investments, which have often been driven by foreign governments or corporations (Schoneveld *et al.* 2014). These large-scale investments have mainly been in mining, dam developments, tourism, agriculture, game-farming, etc. Most often, these investments have taken place in rural areas where most of the land is managed under customary tenure, resulting in land conversions, displacement and disruptions of rural livelihoods. In this paper, the focus is on large-scale land acquisition associated with mining projects in the post-privatisation era (after 2000s).

The mining industry in Zambia has been the economic back-bone of the country from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and continues to be so today. During the 1990s, Zambia witnessed the expansion and development of new large-scale mines, which allowed conversions of large tracts of land from customary to leasehold



tenure (Schoneveld *et al.* 2014, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Development 2013). The increase of these mines was stimulated by two main reason. The first was the structural adjustment programs and introduction of the new neo-liberal policies which allowed for land to have a market value. The second reason which also caused a rise in mine developments, was an increase in commodity prices on the international market which gave many resource-based countries confidence to promote foreign direct investments particularly in resource-rich counties like Zambia.

Following the introduction of the new neo-liberal polices such as the land reforms, this gave investors (both local and non-Zambians) the opportunity to hold land for a period of 99 years leasehold, and other varied duration depending on the proposed use on customary land (Munshifwa 2018, GRZ 1995). Often, Customary land is converted to leasehold, but the later cannot be converted back to customary land (Chitonge 2018). So, when large-scale land is acquired for mining, the investor can engage the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) for land or assistance in acquiring land, or alternatively negotiate for land from chiefs or traditional authorities (Zambia Investment Business n.d.). Process of acquiring land from traditional authorities can be tedious and sometimes problematic as it may involve both informal and formal process. The informal processes of land acquisition may vary across different cultures in customary areas. This has the potential to delay progress when it comes to prospecting or mining (Chu and Phiri 2015), particularly when there are no proper guidelines of administering customary land. Therefore, this paper discusses contestations around large-scale land acquisitions in customary areas in Zambia. The paper also proposes alternative standardized tenets or guidelines that could help reduce contestations that surround the process of land acquisitions in customary areas with such weak institutions.

### **3. Methodology**

In this paper, I use three greenfield mine case studies namely, Lumwana, Kalumbila and Munali Nickel mine projects to discuss the contestations and socio-economic disruptions arising from processes used in acquiring land for mine purposes, in customary areas where these projects were established. Two forms of data collection are used in this paper, and these are primary and secondary methods. Thus, in the case of Lumwana mine project (LMP), I used primary data coming from my current research work in Kalumbila district, north-western Zambia. Then for Kalumbila and Munali Nickel mine projects, I use secondary data compiled from desktop research, reports and other relevant documents.

#### **3.1. Location of the three mine case studies in Zambia**

Figure 1. below, shows the location of the three mine case studies in Zambia. These being Lumwana, Kalumbila and Munali Nickel mine projects.



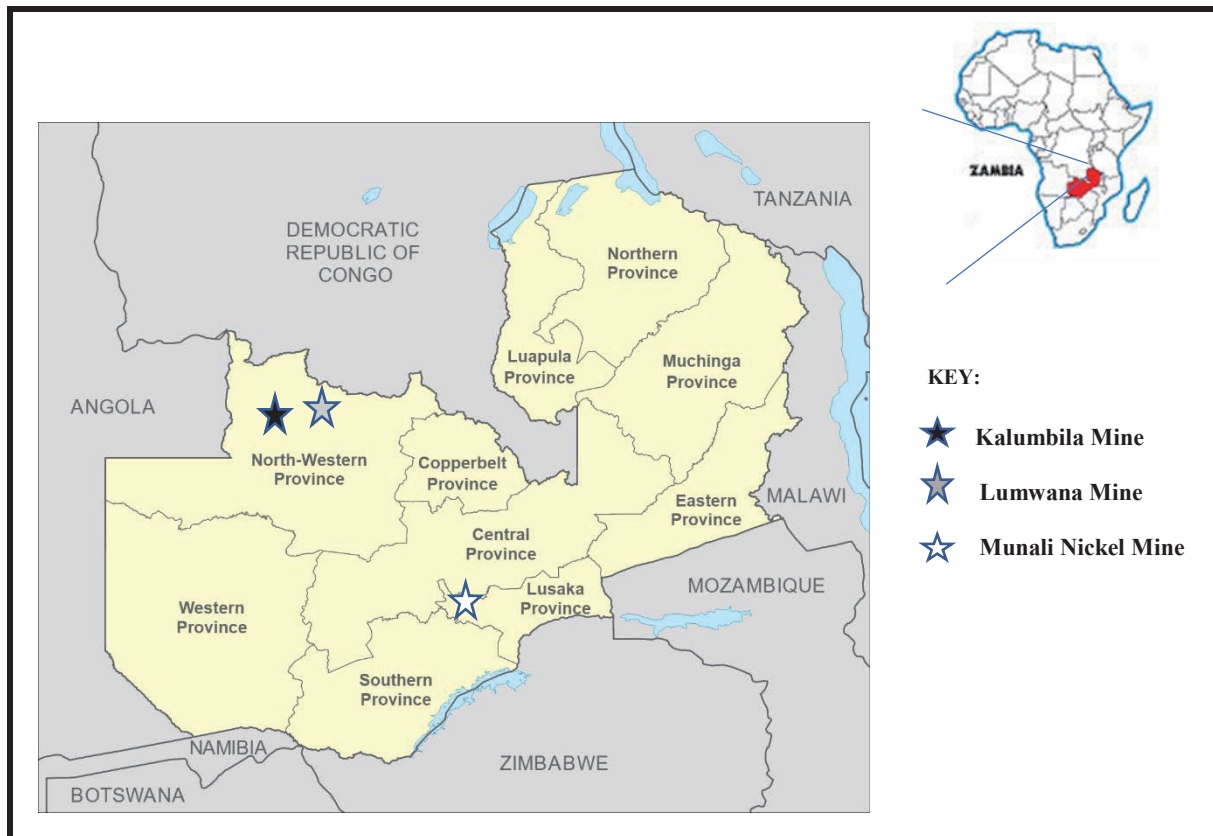


Figure 1. Location of Lumwana, Kalumbila and Munali Nickel mine projects in Zambia

### 3.2. Overview of the three mine case studies

#### Case 1: Lumwana Mine Project (LMP)

LMP is a greenfield, open-cast large-scale mine. It is situated in Lumwana area (constituting Mukumbi, Matebo and Mumena chiefdoms), which is about 65km west of the provincial capital - Solwezi, along the T-5 North-West Highway to Mwinilunga, in the new Kalumbila District, North-western Zambia (Barrick Gold Corporation 2014.) The mine was commissioned in 2008. The mine has a licence area of 1,355 km<sup>2</sup> which includes the two major copper deposits - *Malundwe* and *Chimwungu* together with numerous exploration prospects which make up the Lumwana project (Barrick Gold Corporation 2014, Equinox Copper Ventures Limited 2005). The mine is operated by Lumwana Mine Company Limited (LMCL) which is owned by a Canadian based company called Barrick Gold Cooperation. Most of the land where the LMP is operating from, is under customary tenure except for land owned by the two large-scale mines namely, LMP and Kalumbila Mine Limited (KML), a few private businesses and farm blocks which are held under the leasehold tenure. The establishment of LMP resulted in the displacement of about 108 rural residents in Lumwana from their agricultural (farm) land. These displacements also caused socio-economic disruptions for those affected.



### **Case 2: Kalumbila Minerals Limited (KML) – Trident Project**

Like Lumwana mine project, the KML -Trident project (which I also refer to as Kalumbila Mine in Figure 1 above) is also a greenfield, open-cast large-scale mine. It is situated in Musele chiefdom in the new Kalumbila district, in the North-western province of Zambia. It is approximately 150 km west of the town of Solwezi (First Quantum Mineral Limited 2015). The mine is solely owned by First Quantum Minerals (FQM), which also owns Kansanshi mine located in Solwezi town. The Kalumbila Minerals Limited (KML) runs the Trident Project, which includes two development projects namely, *Sentinel* and *Enterprise*. The *Sentinel* deposit is a copper orebody and the *Enterprise* deposit is a nickel orebody. The project currently has a licence area of 518 km<sup>2</sup> (Mumba 2014, First Quantum Mineral Limited 2015). The mine was officially open in 2014, and mainly mines copper with other minerals such as nickel, cobalt, gold, silver, iron and selenium. Before the mine, the area was all customary land and rural residents used the land for mainly subsistence agriculture. The coming of the KML and its acquisition of large-scale land for the purpose of mining, resulted in the displacement of approximately 566 rural residents in the Musele chiefdom (Chu and Phiri 2015).

### **Case 3: Munali Nickel Mine Project (MNMP)**

The Munali Nickel mine project is a greenfield, large-scale underground mine project, which is situated in Naluama chiefdom, in Mazabuka district in Southern province of Zambia. The mine is approximately 60 km south-east of Lusaka - the capital city of Zambia. The mine has a licence area of 238.69 km<sup>2</sup> (Mungu 2017, African Mining Consultants Limited 2006). And it was officially opened in 2006 (Mungu 2017, African Mining Consultants Limited 2006). The mine project consists of two deposits which are *Enterprise* (also known as Munali Phase 1) and *Voyager*. Although the Munali is labelled as a nickel project, it also contains commercial quantities of copper, cobalt and platinum group metals (PGMs) (ibid). MNMP was first owned by Albidon, a Zambian registered company. Albidon, was solely owned by a subsidiary of an integrated Australian explorer and resource development company listed on the London and Australian Stock Exchange markets (ibid). Between 2011 and 2013 the MNMP was owned based on a partnership between Albidon and Jinchuan (a Chinese based company) following financial challenges and temporal closure the mine faced, as a result of a slump in prices of nickel on the international market (Mungu 2017). In 2013, Jinchuan acquired 100% shares of MNMP from Albidon (Zambia) Limited. Currently, the mine is being run by Mabiza Resources Limited (MRL) on behalf on Jinchuan. MRL is a local subsidiary of Consolidated Nickel Mines which is based in London. In the case of MNMP, a total 79 rural residents were affected by the construction of the mine. However, these numbers increased with time.



#### 4. Findings and discussion: Contestation around land acquisitions for mining in Zambia

This section of the paper discusses the contestations and socio-economic disruptions arising from large-scale land acquisitions in the case of Lumwana, Kalumbila and Munali mine projects situated in Zambia.

##### Case 1: Lumwana Mine Project (LMP)

In the case of Lumwana, the contestations around land acquisition were mainly on power struggles between traditional authorities and government (state) on allocation of land, failure for the mine investors to fulfil the promises made during land negotiations. Further, the other contestation was on lack of participation and inadequate compensation for rural residents of Lumwana, particularly those who were affected by socio-economic disruptions caused by large-scale land acquisitions to pave way for the LMP.

Regarding the traditional authorities and government, one of the contestations was around power struggles, when it came to who has the right to allocate customary land for mining investments purposes. Thus, during my fieldwork in Lumwana, one of the traditional authorities I interviewed stated that:

They (investors) got the land, it's all there in the reports. Although we were talking, they (investors) were not seeking permission, no. We sent the document which indicated that they have 17 years to operate there. [...] They (investors) signed the surface rights for 17 years and that is when they had this land. We did participate, but we didn't know what we were doing. By then we didn't understand about the mines. We were only told that we are coming here to begin operating the mine. Mainly it is government which gave out the land (interview with chief 1, 8 March 2017).

Considering the excerpt above, it can be argued that even though the traditional authorities had signed off their land for the LMP during the land negotiations process, they believed that their land had already been pre-allocated to the mine investors by government before they were even engaged. This is evidenced in the manner the mine investors sought to acquire land for the LMP. Thus, they did not seek for any permission but rather, informed the traditional authorities in Lumwana that they were coming to begin mining operations in their territories. This was done in the presence of government consultants and representatives from various relevant departments, mining legal consultants, and a few headmen who constituted the land negotiation committee for Lumwana. This did not seem to sit well with the traditional authorities in Lumwana, as it undermined their authority to administer customary land, which they hold on behalf of rural communities. Also, the chiefs felt intimidated by the lack of support by government when the investor made their claim that they were coming to open a mine in their territory. Further, another traditional authority asserted that:



[...] I think they (the mine investors) [...] came with tact when they came for negotiations, but we also had to make certain demands such as: employment for our people, 'Oh that one we'll do'; helping us with more schools, 'Aah, we are a big company that is simple', this and that and that? 'We'll do' (these were the responses from the mine investors at the time of land negotiations) (interview with Chief 2, 17 March 2017).

The narrative above shows that, during the land negotiation process, the LMP investors also used tact in convincing the traditional authorities to realise the benefits the mine project could bring in their territory. Promises like job creation, building of school infrastructure, etc., for rural residents in Lumwana were made by the mine investors to persuade the traditional authorities as they made certain demands to benefit and develop their communities where the project would operate from. However, years later, some of the promises made by the mine investors did not follow through like reserving all unskilled and semi-skilled employment for rural residents in Lumwana. This angered both the traditional authorities and rural residents as most of the jobs offered by the mine were given to 'outsiders' from the Copperbelt province mainly and other parts of Zambia. The traditional authorities confronted the mine investors to rectify their employment concerns as promised during the land negotiations (interviews with rural residents and traditional authorities, 2017).

The contestation between the rural residents and their traditional authorities were on mainly on little or no proper consultation and participation of rural residents in the land negotiations process for the LMP, and inadequate compensation for loss of their agricultural land. One of the rural residents affected by displacement due to the LMP project narrated that:

What happened in 2005, let me say in the early 2000s when the mine owners had done there explorations, thus before the mine was established by Equinox then. We were called by the chief, us the local people, and we all gathered. We were informed by the chief that, ' my people, this area where you are currently farming, I have given it out to the mine. What will follow is that you will be given money. That is those of you who have been farming in this proposed mine area, you will be given some money, they will compensate you'. That was what happened. We were not consulted so-to-say (interview with Respondent 3, 20 March 2017).

Based on the excerpt above, the rural residents who were affected by the coming of the mine project were called by their traditional authority and merely informed that their land which they relied on for subsistence farming and rearing of livestock for their livelihood had been given out. The rural residents complained that they were not consulted or participated in the land negotiation process. This created



mistrust and loss of confidence in their traditional leaders, as the displaced residents wondered whether their needs well considered, particularly when it came to compensation. This was reiterated by many displaced residents who were interviewed. Further, on compensation, many displaced residents were unhappy because the compensation was not significant, as they felt they were underpaid for their land and crops in the fields (interview with displaced rural residents 2017).

### **Case 2: Kalumbila Minerals Limited (KML) – Trident Project**

The Kalumbila mine case also suggests large-scale land acquisition by the First Quantum Minerals Limited (FQM) to facilitate the establishment of the Kalumbila Trident mine project. The project is in Musele chiefdom, not far from the three Lumwana chiefdoms. The contestations in the Kalumbila case were mainly about size of land to be alienated for mining, and the mine investors for Kalumbila Trident mine project (thus FQM) not following the due process in acquiring the customary in Musele chiefdom (Lusaka Times 2011).

Right after being granted the large-scale mining licences by the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, FQM proceeded in engagement with ZDA to start the process of acquiring land and permits. However, this process was delayed. Agreements were conducted with the traditional authority in Musele chiefdom so that FQM could get the surface rights (Chu and Phiri 2015). Initially, FQM indicated surface rights for an area of 750km<sup>2</sup>, but this was contested by the chief who refused to sign the surface agreement until the land requested for by the FQM was reduced. According to chief Musele, he argued that ‘if the mine is given that much land (750 km<sup>2</sup>), his people would have nowhere to settle and do their farming activities from, because the whole area would be taken up (by the mine)’. Further the chief also complained about the gaps in the way information flowed between the two parties and cited that the non-availability of the map which clearly stated the boundaries of the mine as well as the non-disclosure of the number of people to be displaced by the mine was a cause for concern (Lusaka Times 2011). After the strong contestation on the land size, finally the FQM mine investors reduced the land to its present size of 518km<sup>2</sup> (51,800 ha). In an article by Mumba (2014), published by the *Zambian Mining Magazine*, it was reported that:

The Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) mid last year ordered FQM to stop developing its Kalumbila mine project until controversial issues surrounding the development of the mines are settled.

The environmental agency disclosed that FQM had acquired 50,000-hectare surface rights without following procedure as they did not obtain presidential consent as required by law (Mumba, 2014).



Considering the excerpt above, FQM could not be allowed to continue prospecting as they did not get additional consent from the President through the Ministry of Lands, so that they could be issued with a leasehold title for land. According to the Lands Act, Chapter 184 of the Laws of Zambia, it states that “Except for a right which may arise under any other law in Zambia, no title, other than a right to the use and occupation of any land under customary tenure claimed by a person, shall be valid unless it has been confirmed by the chief, and a lease granted by, the President.” In the case of FQM, they did not seek presidential consent after acquiring surface rights from the traditional authority. This raised a lot of controversies that due process of acquiring large-scale land was not followed by FQM. Further, the sitting president at the time, Michael Sata had to constitute a task force to probe the acquisition of the land by FQM for the Kalumbila Mine project was done after establishing that there were serious irregularities in the manner it was acquired (Mumba 2014). Such irregularities suggest a lack of clear policy guidelines for land acquisition and allocation to facilitate such large-scale land-based projects (Chu and Phiri 2015).

### **Case 3: Munali Nickel mine project**

The contestations in the Munali Nickel mine project (MNMP) case over large-scale land acquisition for mining, which left some rural residents displaced included: loss of access to good farming land, loss of access to water sources, and not accessing benefits which were promised by the mine investors.

Regarding loss of access of good fertile farming land, displaced residents in the case of MNMP were unhappy with the new resettlement area. Based on an excerpt below, extracted from a research by Mungu (2017), one of the respondents stated that:

People were not happy to go to the new area and some are deciding to go back to the place where they were staying. This is because during the rainy season there is water everywhere as the place is easily flooded. That is the main problem and the reason why people are not happy. You will find that even in the field there is plenty of water. And, if there is plenty of water in the field you cannot grow anything. But they were promising that they will make field reengineering. But, up to now they have not done it. They are always saying that they will do it, but they are not doing anything (Kalembelo, interview, 31/03/2015 in Mungu 2017).

As indicated in the excerpt above, the land in the new resettlement area for the displaced residents in Munali Nickel case was not good for agricultural production because it was always flooded during the rainy season. This posed a threat to the food security of the displaced residents, particularly that they rely on subsistence farming as a source of their livelihood. Further, the loss of land to MNMP, by implication, also meant a loss of access to water sources for those displaced. In her research, Mungu



also indicated that the displaced residents mentioned that their livestock farming was also proving to be difficult in the new resettlement area, because there was insufficient water for livestock, particularly in the winter season (see excerpt below).

Even our animals, in winter season they do not have enough water. Let me just say they do not have water. We are using our boreholes to give animals water for drinking. There is a dam around but during winter season there is no water. That dam they [Munali nickel mine] made is not good for animals so we have to pump water for animals to drink and it is a big problem. Like now water is becoming yellowish from our pump. That is why people are complaining (ibid).

Another contestation was around unfulfilled promises which were made by the mine investors to the displaced rural residents. One of them stated that:

When they shifted us, they were promising that they will put electricity that is why they put houses in a certain order. But, after shifting us they changed their minds. They are not giving us electricity and we do not know why. We have tried to talk to them (mine investors) and they are saying that we do not have money (ibid).

The excerpt above highlights that the displaced rural residents were promised among other things, electricity for their new homes which were built for them by the mine investors (Albidon). However, this electricity was never put for the displaced residents. When the mine investors were confronted by displaced residents about the electricity, they stated that they have no money. This can be attributed to the fact that, the mine had financial challenges, and had to close the mine several times, making it difficult to fulfil any promises made to improve or develop the community they were operating in.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the three case studies above, it is evident that the contestations that emerged were centred around large-scale acquisitions of customary land. The contestations emerging included: power struggles on who should allocate customary land between traditional authorities and government or the state; exclusion of rural community members from participating in the land negotiation processes; inadequate compensations, unfulfilled promises (e.g. jobs, electricity, etc.) made by mine investors during the land negotiations, and irregularities in land acquisition processes. All these contestations were due to the various informal land acquisitions and allocation processes of customary land which are not guided by any legal policies or guidelines, and vary depending on place, cultural background and social political practices (in any given rural area of Zambia). Secondly, the current land policy in Zambia



is also problematic, as it indicates that all land is vested in the president on behalf of the people, and at the same time suggests that customary land is vested in the person of a chief on behalf of the rural community. This has often created contestation, particularly when allocating customary land as the president can override the decision made by the traditional authorities.

It is for these reasons that certain tenet or guidelines which are standardised should be suggested to help reduce the contestation surrounding the processes of acquiring and allocating customary land. Such guidelines should be regulated by a body that would insure that they are implemented. Below is a list of proposed tenets of an alternative and standardised process for customary land allocation:

- In any rural communities (under customary tenure) affected by any proposed mining projects, the affected communities should have business and legal consultants who have knowledge or expertise in the mining industry to represent them or their concerns and needs during the land negotiation processes.
- Any rural communities affected by any proposed mining development need to be given sufficient time to consult and deliberate among themselves, and with their traditional authorities if they would be happy or not to have the proposed mine project established in their area.
  - If possible, a voting system can be put in place to get a representative view of members of the community. This is also to ensure that participation of rural community members affected by the proposed development is effective.
  - Women and youth should be encouraged to participate in the consultations, and their views should also be taken into consideration. Thus, some women and youth representatives should be present during all the stages of the land negotiations process.
- Rural communities should be given workshops and seminars before and after the mining projects are established, to equip the affected communities with relevant information on what the proposed mining projects involve, the benefits, challenges and other relevant information to create awareness.
- Compensation packages for loss of land to mining projects should include: substantial amounts of money, alternative resettlement areas which are habitable (thus, with proper housing, good fertile land for farming, access to proper water and sanitation, and accessible to roads, schools, health centres, markets, etc).
- Mining or prospecting should only take place when compensation has been completed for rural communities affected by mining.
- The government should allocate a fixed percentage for revenue realised from mine taxes and ploughed back into developing communities where these large-scale mining projects operate from.
- Government should create a deliberate policy on Social Corporate responsibilities, to allow project/companies such as mines to give back to the communities where they operate from.



- Government or the state, should ensure that they also play their part in improving the welfare of communities in areas mining project take place, by partnering with the mine investors. The investors should not be the only ones seen to be contributing to the growth or developments of communities they operate in.

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### Part III

#### Realities of Natural Resource Management







# **Nature conservation policies and practices in Africa: Critical analysis, ideological challenges and strategic vision for protected areas sustainable management**

Gloriose Umuziranenge<sup>ab</sup> and Elysée Ntiranyibagira<sup>ac</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Rwanda

<sup>b</sup> PhD Candidate, University of Bamberg, Germany

<sup>c</sup> Center for Environmental Research, Training and Expertise for Development in Africa, Rwanda

## **Abstract**

Africa is the most important testing ground for international conservation policies and standards. Their internalization had positive impacts on the extension of protected areas networks. However, these ones are undergoing great degradations that call for a revision of the management systems. The study aimed to: (1) explore and synthesize conservation policies and practices, (2) identify and analyze gaps between standards and field practices and (3) detect bottlenecks and propose alternative strategies for sustainable management. The methodology adopted relies on the interpretative and analytic synthesis of available literature on nature conservation. The results showed that the conservation policies and practices have generated devastating social conflicts and continuous degradation of most of protected areas because of many factors including the lack of management goals, categories and plans. Due to a painful past and an inconsistent present, the management rules have globally failed to maintain original situations at least. The study proved that the poor performances of protected areas management are explained by recurrent conflicts of ideologies, interests and agendas between conservation stakeholders. The vision developed to address the ideological and management challenges relies on a deep reorientation of normative classifications, strategic partnerships and administration, financing and compensation mechanisms and ecotourism development.

**Keywords:** conservation policies, conservation practices, conservation challenges, community centered conservation, sustainable compensation



## 1. Introduction

Today, protected areas and biodiversity represent multiple and important interests for different actors involved in the management of natural resources (Colchester 2003, Giraut *et al.* 2004, Kaboré 2010, Kasisi 2012). The diversity of interests, the complexity of actors and the variability of strategies lead to exploitation pressures that threaten biodiversity at all scales. To give an example, biodiversity would have decreased by 30% globally and by 60% in the tropics between 1970 and 2008 (WWF/BAD 2012).

The degradation of the biodiversity has been accompanied by a considerable loss of ecosystem products and services of which 60% would have deteriorated globally (MEA 2005). These trends would result from several factors, including the predominance of direct socio-economic benefits over the indirect benefits of conservation or ecological services and the impacts of climate change (MEA 2005, Dudley *et al.* 2010, FEM 2010).

While the global system of protected areas is one of the most effective solutions for the adaptation to climate change and the mitigation of its effects (Dudley *et al.* 2010), 89% of the world's natural systems already suffer from adverse effects of climate change (McCarty 2001). In this context, projected climate changes call for the revision of current assumptions, plans and tools for protected area management (McCarty 2001, Welch 2005, Hopkins *et al.* 2007). This initiative should lead to fundamental innovations for continuous adaptation of the management goals and systems of degraded or threatened ecosystems.

The in-depth assessment of the appropriateness, relevance and effectiveness of the conservation policies and practices is of particular interest for Africa which represents the continent of conservation per excellence, the testing ground for international conservation policies and the symbol of degradations of protected areas in the world (Rodary 2001, Rodary *et al.* 2003, Triplet 2009).

Since the colonial period, the creation of African protected areas has systematically been inspired by international conservation policies and standards under the influence of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Trinity of the conservation composed of World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Conservation International (CI) (Dumoulin and Rodary 2005, Deguignet *et al.* 2014). The internalization and national ownership of these policies and standards have had largely positive impacts on the extension of national networks of protected areas on the continent. With 2.4 million km<sup>2</sup> of protected areas covering 14.7% of its global area, Africa now has one of the largest networks of protected areas in the world (Deguignet *et al.* 2014). At regional levels, protected areas cover 10.5% of West and Central Africa and 14.5% of Southern and Eastern Africa (Triplet 2009).

At national levels, the coverage of protected areas of African conservation champions such as the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea exceeds 20% of the territory (Triplet 2009, Ndemanou 2012). In addition, while the continent has only 3.3% of the protected sites in the world, of which 65.6% are located in Europe, it has the highest proportion of large protected areas which are



generally national parks because 52% of them cover more than 100 km<sup>2</sup> each (Deguignet *et al.* 2014). With very few exceptions, such as Rwanda which lost more than 50% of the original extent of protected areas following decommissioning for the settlement of landless returnees (Rwanyiziri 2009), African countries have continued to expand their protected areas networks since the 1960s, despite increased demands for agricultural and livestock land, deep land-related tensions and a world trend towards subsidence (Aubertin and Rodary 2008, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

The Aichi Targets and their Strategic Action Plan for the Expansion of the Global Network of Protected Areas by 2020 (CBD 2011, Montpetit 2013) have further boosted the dense African network of protected areas. These dynamics widely praised by the international conservation community, were however based on the break of the historical human-nature relationships that have long ensured the sustainable management of natural resources through community regulations. Across Africa, the creation, extension and status changes of protected areas have generally been accompanied by forced evictions of local populations (Neumann 1998, Colchester 2003, Descola 2008) and the setting up of military or paramilitary administrations to avoid or limit inevitable pressures coming from the populations driven out from the places.

However, protected areas are continually experiencing increased exploitation pressures and severe degradation in a way that the majority of them would be dangerously endangered or would only exist on paper (Binot 2010). Actual, the population growth, the rising energy demand and the increasing urbanization that are usually blamed for the continued and significant degradation of protected areas (Williams 2000, Raven *et al.* 2008, Barima 2009, Bamba 2010, Bogaert *et al.* 2011, WWF2012) do not justify enough observed declines in conservation.

Conservation policies and practices that are largely inspired by the North American ideology of ‘protected areas empty or emptied of men’ (Calas 2003), which dedicates the total absence or inequalities of access to natural resources for rural populations depending exclusively on the primary sector and natural areas that were historically inhabited and anthropized (Rossi 2000, Colchester 2003), should contribute to these negative trends. Indeed, they are the ones that determine or direct spatialized peripheral socio-economic interactions and therefore, the evolution of protected areas themselves (De Fries *et al.* 2010, Veyret 2012, Ntiranyibagira *et al.* 2019).

On one hand, the present study aims to explore the conservation policies and practices from the beginning of normative classifications in the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to now for critical analysis and the identification of incoherence, contradictions and bottlenecks strangulation that jeopardize the effectiveness of conservation. On the other hand, it will define an ideological re-foundation of conservation strategies that will ensure effective conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and equitable sharing of the benefits of the biodiversity.



## 2. Method of analysis

The method adopted by the study relies on three stages, namely: (1) a broad exploration and an interpretative synthesis of normative ideological currents, policies and practices of conservation in the world and in Africa, (2) a rigorous and critical analysis of conservation policies and practices in Africa and an identification of inconsistencies, contradictions, bottlenecks and uncertainties that undermine the effectiveness of conservation in Africa; and (3) the definition of alternative ideological options and strategies to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of conservation on the continent. The study used the following documents and data sources: (i) international conventions and policy documents on nature conservation, (ii) theoretical bibliographic data and scientific publications on nature conservation, and (iii) quantitative and qualitative empirical data from periodic reports of international and national institutions and services specialized in nature conservation.

## 3. Evolution of conservation policies

Historically, it is the mystic and religious considerations that motivated the creation of former protected areas often called ‘sacred forests’ in indigenous societies of the tropical world and considered as the first protected areas in the world (Ramade 1981). Actually, these are integrated spaces of life, production and cultural expression that are subject to regulated and sustainable community management by means of ancestral customs and specific ritual practices. This is what we name the first time of conservation or the time of man-nature harmony characterized by essential extractions and non-market uses of vital resources.

Protected areas of the modern era appeared in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of the emblematic Yosemite Regional Park and the Yellowstone National Park in the United States of America, respectively in 1864 and in 1872 (Calas 2003, Colchester 2003, Descola 2008). Since that period, the dynamics of creation of protected areas will spread in Europe and irradiate in Africa through European colonization.

On the African continent, it is the Kruger National Park created in South Africa in 1898, the Albert Park known today as the Volcano National Park established between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda in 1925 (IUCN 1999, Pélerin *et al.* 2011), the Akagera and Nyungwe National Parks established in Rwanda in 1933 (Rwanyiziri 2002) and the Waza National Park established in Cameroon in 1934 which are the first modern protected areas. Here, things take a new direction in the design and purpose of protected areas that are based on the principles of social exclusion and openness to external tourism. Protected areas now respond to the growing need of civilized and urban populations to relax through walks in parks and reserves known for their aesthetic, landscape and tourist qualities (Calas 2003, Colchester 2003, Descola 2008). The founding idea of vision tourism will become the universal driver of conservation policies around the world.

In Africa, specifically, the creation of protected areas focused on natural areas of high tourist



interest by targeting strategic hunting areas and endemic species that can feed Western world mass tourism (Huxley 1961, Myers *et al.* 2000, Triplet 2009). As wild animals have become ‘things to think about’ for rich urban populations rather than ‘things to eat’ for poor local people (Colchester 2003), it is the savannahs full of wild animals of which the ‘charismatic mega fauna’ or the ‘big five’ (Elephants, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Buffalo, Lions) that fit exactly the Western world idea of wilderness, game reserves and national parks (Triplet 2009).

In very rare situations, however, especially in the mountainous areas of Central Africa, the creation of protected areas was primarily a matter of water and soil conservation to fight erosion and water imbalances (Harroy 1949, Rwanyiziri 2009). As a general rule, the creation of African protected areas has been carried out in violation of the interests and dignity of indigenous peoples and has deeply altered traditional ways of life (Calas 2003, Colchester 2003, Descola 2008). Almost everywhere, the process was conducted in pain and desolation because it involved massive and militarized expulsions of local populations (Mengue 2002, Rossi 2002, Rwanyiziri 2002, Colchester 2003, Triplet 2009).

Like the sad experience of some native tribes in the creation of American national parks, several peoples lived very bad moments in different parts of the continent (Turnbull 1987, Constantin 1994, Péron 1995, Rossi 2000, Cochet 2001, Colchester 2003, Aubertin and Rodary 2008, Descola 2008). They were suddenly and violently deprived of free access to key natural resources like crop lands, pastures and water resources, without other survival alternatives (Cochet 2001, Pélerin *et al.* 2011). In facts, protected areas have become ‘food pantries surrounded by hunger’ (Sournia 1996) that are permanently exposed to desires of marginalized peripheral populations, ruling elites, private economic operators and even rebel movements (Mengue 2002, Binot 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

This kind of conservation policy based on the American vision of ‘uninhabited and uninhabitable protected areas’ (Calas 2003) will ideologically mark the establishment and considerable extension of African national networks of protected areas until the 1980s (Myers *et al.* 2000, Colchester 2003, Raffin 2005, Triplet 2009, Aubertin and Rodary 2008). This is the second time of conservation or the time of the fortress conservation characterized by the prohibition of access and use of protected resources.

In the aftermath of African independences, growing challenges to the continuation and the strengthening of colonial conservation policies will force Western conservationists to open up an era of international negotiations and develop new arguments to convince skeptical leaders of the interest of the conservation (Sournia 1996, Rossi 2000, Rodary 2001, Rodary *et al.* 2003). To this end, the African conferences of Arusha (Tanzania) and Algiers (Algeria) held respectively in 1961 and 1968 will have a great impact on the maintenance, the extension and the creation of protected areas in Africa (IUCN 1992, Rwanyiziri 2009). They promoted tourism as a major opportunity for independent governments to increase financial revenues and launch their young economies (Rodary *et al.* 2003).

This strategy of legitimizing conservation through socio-economic arguments was pursued through the concepts of ‘sustainable development’ and of ‘integration of populations’ that appeared with the



World Conservation Strategy in the 1980s (UICN *et al.* 1980, Rossi 2000, Veyret 2012). It was reinforced by the concepts of ‘Ecosystem Products and Services’ and of ‘Economy of Ecosystems and Biodiversity’ that have been developed in the 2000s (MEA 2005).

The integration between conservation and development is an indirect conservation strategy based on integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) that relies mainly on ecotourism development projects in forest areas (Rodary 2001, Nicholls 2004, Binot 2010). It opens the third time of conservation or the time of the participatory approach based on the involvement of local populations in the economic valorization of biodiversity and the redistribution of its benefits. This new conservation approach has gradually emerged as a universal model for the management of protected areas, particularly with the emergence of decentralization policies in Africa during the decade 1980 (Rodary 2001, Adams *et al.* 2004, Giraut *et al.* 2004).

In principle, it came to break the North American model of ‘uninhabited and uninhabitable parks’ which deeply upset the socio-economic and cultural order of the native populations, by considering the objectives of sustainable development and the interests of the local populations (Dumoulin 2005). The major arguments that supported the participatory approach are the following: (1) most of natural ecosystems that were under protection in the colonial period were largely anthropized (Neumann 1998, Rossi 2000); (2) protected areas particularly conserved by native peoples loose less forest than areas under other management systems (Hannah 1992, Rossi 2000, Dumoulin 2005, Nelson and Chomitz 2009), (3) national governments having not enough resources for interventions, local populations with a strong knowledge of biodiversity should be key and alternative actors for better control of the use of natural resources, once motivated and appropriately incentivized (Manuel and Doumenge 2008, Dudley *et al.* 2010) and (4) the transfer of protected areas and natural resources management to local communities was consistent with the decentralization policies of the 1980s (Dudley *et al.* 2010, Veyret 2012).

In thinking and practice, three major inflections have marked the participatory approach, namely: (1) the shift from centralized and state governance to local participatory governance, (2) the re-conceptualization and refocusing of conservation on the notion of sustainable development and (3) the incorporation of liberal ideas and the use of market forces to finance conservation (Hulme and Murphree 2001, Rodary 2001).

Because of the recurrent financing difficulties, the weak performances or even the failures of participatory management and the continued degradation of protected areas, deep ideological antagonisms still oppose defenders of fortress conservation or complete protection of richest natural areas in biodiversity and advocates of a participatory management approach that reconciles forest conservation and local development (Guéneau and Franck 2004).

The conservationist communities with high financial capacities are openly showing renewed interest for the fortress conservation approach that appears through the definition of priority



conservation and funding areas such as WWF Ecoregions, CI Biodiversity Hotspots and TNC portfolios (Myers *et al.* 2000, Olson *et al.* 2001, Olson and Dinerstein 2002, Wes *et al.* 2002, Brooks *et al.* 2006, Aubertin and Rodary 2008) and the abandonment of participatory management approaches by international financing mechanisms. This is the fourth time of conservation or the time of selective and large-scale fortress conservation.

It is within the framework of the implementation of these global conservation policies that we see emerging regional governance initiatives in the form of politico-technical structures and bodies for the harmonization and the coordination of actions. This is particularly true for transboundary protected areas that are facing national legislative discrepancies and need concerted action frameworks, as single geographic entities. This is the case of the Conference of Ministers of Central African Forests (COMIFAC), the Central African Forest Ecosystems (ECOFAC) and the Protected Areas Network of Central Africa (RAPAC) which were set up with the support of international donors and conservation NGOs (Vives 2001, Doumenge *et al.* 2015).

In order to overcome the persistent ideological oppositions and the heated and unsuccessful debates it is feeding, a new conservation approach based on the paradigm of ‘You should pay for what you want to get’ or ‘You should pay for conservation and not for conservation related activities’ was recently proposed (Ferraro and Kiss 2002, Brown 2003). According to the authors, biodiversity is in danger in developing countries because the material benefits that local populations derive from its destruction far exceed what they expect to gain from its preservation (Ferraro and Simpson 2003).

This still theoretical conception of conservation opens or prefigures what should be the fifth time of conservation or the time of real compensatory merchant conservation. In fact, the raised up question is the direct and indirect financing of conservation. In terms of funding, conservation policies provide two major mechanisms, namely: (1) external subsidies that are defined according to the specific ecological importance of protected areas and (2) fees and duties generated by products and services provided by protected areas (Emerton *et al.* 2006). This clearly means that income from resource exploitation and ecotourism must be reinvested in the management of protected areas.

Between the two funding sources and in the context of responses to climate change adaptation, Smith (2013) identifies three sources of funding that are: (i) private and public financing, (ii) commercial financing, and (iii) financing under form of subsidies. According to other authors, the national benefits of conserving biodiversity such as the willingness to pay resource users downstream of protected areas and ecotourism are two potential sources of sustainable funding for the cost of the management of protected area networks (Carret and Loyer n.d.).

To achieve efficient and sustainable protected areas management, financial planning and self-financing mechanisms based on rational exploitation of resources are needed for sound and credible business plans that should attract the private sector and additional resources in the framework of public-private partnerships (Landreau 2012).



In summary, the nature conservation policies in Africa can be divided into five crossed times or periods: (1) from the pre-colonial period to the start of the colonial period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when customary law and community regulations were guiding resources management, (2) from the colonial period to the independence of nations and years 1970-1980 when the fortress conservation was the key word, (3) from the decade 1980 up today when the participative approach is the leading conservation method supported by various tools and instruments, (4) from the 2000s to present time when policies of sanctuary management of priority and selective regional areas re-emerge from big conservation international NGOs and (5) from years 2002-2003 up today when theoretically emerges a truly merchant and equitable conservation approach that has not yet shaped up.

These conservation policies are inspired by four paradigmatic currents that govern human-nature relationships, namely: (i) the utilitarian or unregulated approach and (ii) the resource-based or regulated approach with management plans and anticipative restrictions that are anthropocentric, (iii) the preservationist or non-use approach that is bio-centric, and (iv) the conservative or limited-use approach that is eco-centric (Rodary *et al.* 2003, Depraz 2008).

#### **4. Evolution of practices, tools and management models**

The section shows how the conservation policies have been materialized and reflected into conservation practices and actions. In theory, conservation practices are based on the main characteristics of a protected area that emerge from internationally-agreed normative definitions (CBD 1992, UICN 1994).

As the definition of the CBD is a minimal statement that results from difficult negotiations and political compromises and is unclear on conservation goals, the characteristics drawn by the UICN definition were considered in the study, namely: (1) the existence of precise geographical boundaries, (2) the existence of a mechanism of recognition and management, and (3) the focus of conservation goals on ecosystem services and cultural values.

In Africa, where national parks are by far the most common type of protected areas, management practices are also based on the attributes of the standardized definition of a national park, namely: (i) a large territory containing one or more ecosystems, (ii) the absence or low level of human occupation and exploitation, (iii) the highly aesthetic and touristic character of sites, habitats and species, and (iv) the restriction of human uses to research, education and recreation (Veyret 2012).

In the framework of fortress conservation, the first two criteria imply large population displacements and serious limitations, and even deprivations of access to protected resources, which are also applicable to the many natural forest reserves found in Africa. In order to avoid exploitation pressures resulting from peripheral populations driven out of protected areas, these ones are most of the time endowed with militarized or paramilitary administrations, as in the United States of America, where, however, they have only survived until 1916 (Colchester 2003, Rwanyiziri 2009).



Later, the legislations evolved towards the creation of buffer zones of 500 to 1000 m large from the limits to compensate socio-economic losses and reduce the anthropogenic pressures of peripheral origin (Mengue 2002, Rwanyiziri 2009, Ntiranyibagira 2017). For that purpose, pilot participatory projects focused on green jobs of the types ‘Work for Water’, ‘Work for Wetlands’, ‘Food for Work’ and ‘Wood for Work’ were launched around protected areas in Southern Africa before spreading on the continent (Giraut *et al.* 2004, Granier 2009, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

In the framework of participatory approaches that have been codified and standardized internationally since 2004, through the Working Program on Protected Areas (CDB 2004, Triplet 2009 Montpetit 2013), high levels of protection must be embedded in socially and culturally acceptable processes for fair compensation and fair allocation of costs and benefits (Dudley *et al.* 2010). To allow minimal access to vital resources and to compensate the limits of ecotourism (Héritier 2007, Dudley 2008, Mahamadou and Boureima 2015), national parks could be dismembered into several protected areas managed under various statutes with adequate zonings combining a wide range of management approaches and categories (IUCN 2006, 2008).

The aim of such strategy is to build a multi-category network of sanctuary protected areas in the center (categories I, II, III) and buffers with less strict protection around (Categories IV, V, VI), while excluding degrading activities such as clear cuts, industrial plantations and unsustainable extractions of resources (Tardif 1999). These areas or zonings with multiple regimes of protection often consist of: (i) zones under integral protection, (ii) reserves for the management of species and habitat, (iii) ecological corridors or bio corridors for the migration of wildlife, and (iv) buffer zones for the compensation of imposed deprivations (IUCN 2006, 2008).

In terms of management practices, protected areas refer to a wide variety of goals, management models and legal statutes (Aubertin *et al.* 2008). Since the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Protected Areas held in Caracas (Venezuela) in 1992, the international typology recognizes 7 categories of management goals numbered from I to VI, that are defined according to the types of use and interventions authorized within protected areas (IUCN 1994, Hugh 2000, Héritier 2007, Triplet 2009, Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2013). It also recognizes two special categories of UNESCO that are ‘Biosphere Reserves’ that can be modeled on each category of management and ‘World Heritage Sites’ (Héritier 2007).

In principle, periodical assessments and the analysis of consistency between the management categories and the management practices allow to modify or to adapt the management categories if the actual management methods do not fit to them (IUCN 2008). Similarly, the transformation of existing protected areas into parks and nature reserves should not be used as a pretext for dispossessing the inland or peripheral populations of their lands (IUCN 2008).

In terms of governance or of the structure and the management of the decision-making power (IUCN 2004), the typology decided by the 5<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Protected Areas held in Durban (South Africa) in 2003 recognizes 4 types of governance that are applicable to each of the 7 management



categories (Dudley 2008, Dudley *et al.* 2010). In Africa, protected areas are gradually moving from state governance (Type A) towards co-managed governances (Type B), except in few countries like Rwanda where all the protected areas remain totally under the state governance (Ntiranyibagira 2017). At the same time, we see progressively emerging new protected areas under community governance (Type C) and private governance (Type D).

In terms of participatory management, the legal solutions proposed are of three types, namely: (1) the creation of community protected areas on the initiative and under the direct management of local populations, (2) the financing of income-generating activities with the revenues from protected areas exploitation; and (3) the direct employment of local people in protected areas management (Granier 2009). The sources of financing of income-generating activities include taxes, miscellaneous fees and conservation budgets, in this case royalties on sport hunting concessions in village hunting areas (Granier 2009). Usually, collaboration agreements are in the form of contracts between the public or private manager and the neighboring or peripheral villages (Nouidemon 2004, Granier 2009).

The technical and financial management tools are the management plans (Mackinnon *et al.* 1990, Chiffaut 2006, Bioret *et al.* 2009, Benkara 2014), the business plans (Landreau 2012) and the assessment models of management effectiveness (Hocking and Philips 1999, Hockings *et al.* 2006, UICN 2012). The current models of assessment used for the adaptation of the management modes and judicious allocation of financial resources are the following : (i) ‘Pressure, State, Responses’ (PSR) (OECD 1993); (ii) ‘Driving forces, Pressure, State, Impact, Responses’ (DPSIR) (Requier-Desjardins 2012), (iii) the ‘Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management’ (METT-RAPPAM) (IUCN), (iv) the ‘World Commission on Protected Areas Assessment Framework’ (IUCN), (v) the ‘Protected Areas Benefit Assessment Tool’ (PA-BAT) (Dudley *et al.* 2010), (vi) the African Protected Areas Assessment Tool (APAAT) (Hartley *et al.* 2007) and (vii) the Protected Areas Trends Assessment and Adaptive Management on the basis of long term Conservation Objectives (PA-TAMCO Analytic Model) (Ntiranyibagira 2019).

After the developments about the conservation policies and practices, we analyze and present hereafter the differences between international standards and actual management practices in order to identify inconsistencies, contradictions and bottlenecks that characterize the conservation sector before proposing our vision for effective conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in Africa.

## **5. Critical analysis of the conservation sector in Africa**

### **5.1. Travers, implications and setbacks of conservation policies**

In the pre-colonial period, the effective and sustainable management of African natural ecosystems relied on traditional beliefs, ancestral customs, and community-based management mechanisms (Hannah 1992, Mengue 2002). Through exclusionary policies in conservation and religious missions, European colonization and its Western lobbies have fundamentally disrupted traditional ways of life of



the people by breaking the historical relationship to nature and the management rules of territories and natural resources (Niang 1990, Hannah 1992, Rossi 2000, Mengue 2002).

By forcing the almost systematic eviction of indigenous peoples from protected areas and the brutal abandonment of ritual practices in many sacred forests (Neumann 1998, Colchester 2003, FAO 2012), the founding myth of conservation policies based on ‘a primitive, wild, uninhabited, and uninhabitable nature’ where man is a visitor who does not stay long (Colchester 2003) and ‘protected areas empty or emptied of men’ (Calas 2003) engendered permanent hostility from local populations that lead to increasing illegal exploitations and continued degradation of natural ecosystems that have traditionally been well managed and safeguarded (Rossi 2000, Mengue 2002, Dudley *et al.* 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

Indeed, the incompatibility between man and nature set by the two pillars of the global conservation policy embodied by the Yellowstone national Park (Colchester 2003, Descola 2008) and the sanctuary management model did not at all fit to historical, socio-economic and cultural realities (Rossi 2000).

First, the myth of ‘wilderness’ that makes one believe in the virginity of natural ecosystems that man has never changed and the incompatibility of national parks with the permanent human presence is an illusion, if not a nonsense (Rossi 2000, 2002).

Secondly, the establishment of protected areas for the exclusive enjoyment of wealthy visitors from cities and elsewhere, given the touristic qualities of sites and species, did not meet any discernible and relevant demand in African socio-cultural contexts (Ntiranyibagira 2017).

Despite progress in international conservation policies on social openness and participatory management since the 1980s, African protected areas remain large and largely uninhabited at a time when 70% to 85% of the world's protected areas are partly or fully occupied (Dumoulin 2005) and when the world global trend is dominated by small soft-protected areas (Ghimire and Pimbert 1997, Chape *et al.* 2003).

The recognition and reality of human interventions in the majority of protected areas in the world allow to reject the idea of protection ‘against humans’ in the absolute as indicated by some critical authors (Carrere and Bravo 2004). They confirm that the fortress conservation of tropical natural areas is a kind of ecological extremism and interference as already stated by other researchers (Rossi 2000). In reality, the dichotomy between ‘natural areas’ and ‘man-made areas’ is illusory because all regions of the world have experienced or are experiencing a variable degree of artificialisation (Rossi 2000, Dumoulin 2005). Thus, the abusive pursuit of forced displacements of populations in the creation, extension and changes of status of protected areas and the maintenance of these outside the sphere of socio-economic action are always felt as serious attacks to the rights of local communities over confiscated lands that lead to chronic food crises and hunger (Neumann 1998, Rossi 2000, Cochet 2001, Rodary 2001, Rwanyiziri 2009).

The socio-economic losses suffered by local populations are the more important and damaging than



the majority of African protected areas are centered on wetlands, large rivers and good agro-pastoral lands (Hughes and Hughes 1992, Ntiranyibagira 2017). The recurrent situations of ecological and touristic priority over socio-economic benefits make African protected areas ‘foreign territories’ to local communities (Ntiranyibagira 2017) and ‘pantries surrounded by hunger’ (Sournia 1996) which are only useful for ‘foreigners and national elites’, especially through tourism activities and revenues (Mengue 2002, Colchester 2003, Triplet 2009).

Actually, African protected areas have become geopolitical instruments for independent states where land dispossession, social exclusion and external appropriation of natural areas and resources replaced in the state domain reinforce poverty and generate significant social conflicts (Neumann 1998, Giraut *et al.* 2004, Raffin 2005, Depraz 2008, Dudley *et al.* 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017). The exception or better, the African rule of ‘uninhabited parks and protected areas’ proceeds in principle from an imported and imposed governance that perpetuates the colonial conservation policies in opposition to vital interests of local communities (Weigel *et al.* 2007).

In Africa, the reference of protected areas to wildlife, hunting activities and tourism, which is permanent in conservation philosophy, rhetoric and practices (Mengue 2002, Colchester 2003, Binot 2010) generates and maintains multi-faceted stresses among local populations who are constantly confronted to the destruction of crops, properties and human lives by wild animals that feed the Western vision tourism (Rossi 2000, Mengue 2002).

In the absence of relocation and fair and equitable compensation for physical evictions and material destructions, indigenous peoples remain confined to the peripheries of protected areas from where they develop rejection feelings, open hostility and rebellious behaviors (Mengue 2002, Colchester 2003, Triplet 2009, Ntiranyibagira *et al.* 2019). Protected areas in general and national parks in particular are subject to intense anthropogenic pressure and degradation, more because of social exclusion and inequalities in access to resources than because of rapid population growth and increasing urbanization, contrary to official speeches (UICN-PAPACO 2012, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

Consequently, we realize and note that the substitution of the ‘state constraint’ to the ‘community civic awareness’ and of the ‘international arbitrariness’ to the ‘local rationality’ creates a permanent struggle of interests between the conservation authorities and local communities who finally and openly fight against the spoliation of their land (Cochet 2001). In this context too, the international framework of participatory management approaches constitutes a paradoxical negation of the traditional knowledge and know-how in the effective management of biodiversity and a major obstacle to the free choice of types and forms of sustainable exploitation of resources.

The incrimination of local communities in the degradation of protected areas by conservationists is also expressed by their strong opposition to the new participatory management categories V and VI from Durban Congress on protected areas that are struggling hard to take place in Africa (Locke and Dearden 2005). Contrary to the fortress conservation management categories I to III favored by



conservationists, donors and national governments themselves, management categories IV to VI where human interventions are authorized are rare in Africa where states still play a central role in the regulation and legislation of participatory management (Binot 2010, UICN-PACO 2012, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

At the same time, state mistrust of groups of citizens escaping or being beyond its control severely limits achievements in community and private managed protected areas (Granier 2009). Through the relegation of social concerns in decision-making (Mac Chapin 2004), regional and selective priority conservation policies also take the opposite view of the participative model that has been professed (Balmford *et al.* 2002, Wilson *et al.* 2006, Manuel and Doumenge 2008). In fact, there is also a lack of consensus on which human activities may be permitted in national parks in the case of occupation and use (Western and Wright 1994, Oates 1999, Hulme and Murphree 2001, Terborgh *et al.* 2002) that paradoxically prevents any activity.

In the case of political conflict and instability, social exclusion often serves as a pretext for uncontrolled occupation and significant destruction of protected areas by people fleeing war or seeking for new agricultural land (Kanyamibwa 1998, Katembo 2011). Because they are uninhabited, protected areas often constitute bastions, sanctuaries and rear bases for militias, guerrillas and rebellions that make them their guards, their training areas and their hiding places (Katembo 2011).

This dilemma of the conservation in Africa is accompanied by instability in laws, statutes and field practices that increases frustration, stimulates social conflicts and further exposes protected areas to degradation by strategically and usefully repositioning actors at each new conservation initiative (Ntiranyibagira 2017). This is more evident in countries with limited resources where the fortress conservation approach is the most inefficient (Raven *et al.* 2008, Honloulou 2014).

## **5.2. Inadequate, poorly mastered and inefficient management systems**

As already mentioned, the management of African protected areas is based on imported governance characterized by the ex-cathedra adoption of the principles and objectives of protection decided at international level but which are unfortunately disconnected from the traditional mechanisms of management of shared natural resources (Weigel *et al.* 2007). This mode of governance articulated on a system of co-management of protected areas between States, conservation NGOs and/or international donors promotes the ecological interest of protected areas against the socio-economic concerns of local populations which are often poor, heterogeneous and politically weak (Binot 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

In most countries, the agencies responsible for the implementation of this kind of governance are usually associated with dominant ministerial structures and do not have the necessary administrative and financial autonomy to take initiatives and to achieve a management effectiveness that should be comparable to that of autonomous or semi-autonomous structures that have their own budgets and a sufficient administrative autonomy (Rwanyiziri 2009, Triplet 2009).



Thus, African protected areas remain largely managed according to a centralized, authoritarian and bureaucratic vision of planned resource management (Giraut *et al.* 2004). In general, the laws do not set management goals, management plans and boundaries of protected areas of which some would only exist on paper and would be dangerously threatened (Triplet 2009, Binot 2010, Benkara 2014).

In this respect, it is estimated that 85% of African protected areas have no management categories, goals and plans (Deguignet *et al.* 2014). In cases where management plans exist, they are rarely validated, applied, evaluated and updated (IUCN-PAPACO 2012). In the majority of protected areas, these fundamental deficiencies are aggravated by four major physical constraints, namely: (1) the absence of precise boundaries that are materialized on the ground, (2) the absence of buffer zones defined by the theoretical concentric structure of protected areas for the absorption of peripheral social conflicts (Mengue 2002), (3) the asymmetric and irregular shapes that increase linear exposure and strengthen physical vulnerability to peripheral pressure (Ntiranyibagira *et al.* 2019) and (4) the geographic dispersion that often makes it difficult or impossible to build connective networks for easy biological migrations (Bonnin 2008, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

On the African continent, there are generally significant gaps between conservationist rhetoric and actual management practices that remain largely unchanged, despite the good intentions of official policies and speeches (Binot 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017). These differences are expressed by sometimes glaring discrepancies between the management categories and the actual modes of management. For example, occupations and activities of authorized exploitations of natural resources corresponding to management category VI are often carried out in protected areas of management category IV (IUCN 2014, Ntiranyibagira 2017). In addition, management categories often serve as pretexts to dispossess people of their lands when they are only indicative (IUCN 2008).

In this respect, national parks are still managed according to the guidelines or the international and normative definition of category II, which excludes any human activity other than research, education and tourism (IUCN 1994, 2008, Manuel and Doumenge 2008). As an illustration, the creation of national parks and the transformation of existing protected areas into national parks are continuously and still leading to population expulsions (Ntiranyibagira 2017). With regard to the accompanying measures of participatory approaches, also the reasoned zoning of national parks and the creation of multi-category networks for a minimal exploitation of resources are rare, so that the participatory management activities organized in protected areas of category II are conducted in violation of the normative management criteria.

In other countries, type A or state governance is abusively assimilated to co-management or participatory management systems while it is heavily administered and overseen by central governments. From another angle, the lack or insufficiency of reliable research and databases jeopardizes the development and updating of conservation goals and management plans; which mortgages the necessary evolution and the efficiency of the management systems (Sambou 2004, IUCN-PAPACO 2012). In



many protected areas, the updating of the management plans does not rely on in-depth assessments of global evolutionary trends, due to the lack of appropriate technical tools and of human and financial resources (Dudley and Stolton 1999, Mengue 2002, Ntiranyibagira 2019).

### 5.3. Limitations and weaknesses of ecotourism

Since eco-tourism was presented as the great socio-economic argument that could justify and legitimize the nature conservation in Africa, it has got very little impact in many countries (Dumoulin 2005, Binot 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017). Despite the spectacular evolution of nature, safari and culture tourism during the 2000s, the continent remains one of the world's least popular tourist destinations.

In 2011, Africa counted for only 5.1% of the world's international tourist population. In general, the creation of local wealth based on tourism shows huge disparities between countries and regions. While tourism remains weak or quite inexistent in many protected areas in Western and Central French-speaking Africa, it is successful in a few English-speaking Eastern and Southern African states well-known for their protected areas (Triplet 2009). Beyond the obvious negative influence of structural, organizational and strategic factors, political crises and instability explain the poor tourism performances of protected areas in some countries, particularly in Central Africa (Ntiranyibagira 2017).

According to the World Bank, tourism receipts contribute only for 8.9% of Gross Domestic Product in East Africa; 7.2% in North Africa; 5.6% in West Africa; 3.9% in Southern Africa and 1% in Central Africa. The revenues from the economic valuation of protected areas and tourism are mostly distributed on a macro-economic scale between foreign or national private companies, park management services and states (Landreau 2012). They often remain an exchange between foreign tourists and external operators; so that the benefits generated by the tourism valorization go largely to the private sector (Dumoulin 2005, Doumenge *et al.* 2015).

In the few countries where ecotourism and the share of tourism revenue are some successes, the tourist income is administered according to public rules and directed towards traditional development activities like the construction of schools and health structures that do not compensate the direct socio-economic losses and needs of local populations (Ntiranyibagira 2017, Umuziranenge 2019a). Moreover, official statements on the socio-economic benefits of tourism only announce the turnover generated by ecotourism activities and the usual proportion of 5 to 10% which is often offered to local communities to finance common development activities (Doumenge *et al.* 2015, Umuziranenge 2019a). Nothing is said about operating expenses, related tourism revenues, actual net profit, and the distribution of profits between stakeholders that is defined without the involvement of local communities. This obviously raises the problem of relevance of participation, transparency in management, equity in benefit sharing and environmental justice, in short (Umuziranenge 2019b).

In most cases, local communities involved in ecotourism projects would receive only a small share of the benefits and would depend only on other activities that are sometimes very predatory for their



livelihood (Oates 1999, Nicholls 2004, Dumoulin 2005, Aubertin and Rodary 2008, Doumenge *et al.* 2015). Except the sale of some handcraft products and low-paid jobs by local staff such as tour guides, tourist baggage handlers, maids in hotels and car drivers, the economic benefits of tourism are derisory in Africa (Aubertin and Rodary 2008, Doumenge *et al.* 2015, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

In many countries, the low income from ecotourism and wildlife related commercial activities and their retrocession to central services exclude or limit the socio-economic impacts on local populations and protected areas self-financing (Triplet 2009, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

The gradual decreasing of international funding, the weak national investments in nature conservation, the persistent human wildlife conflicts, and the lack of fair and equitable compensation for damages (Colchester 2003, Webber *et al.* 2007, Wanyingi 2016, Ogunjobi *et al.* 2018), persistent insecurity and ongoing protected areas degradation are factors that do not promote positive tourism development in Africa. Indeed, well financed, secured and managed protected areas have a more interesting development of tourism and touristic incomes.

#### **5.4. Inefficacy and weak performances of participatory management**

If participatory management seeks to reintegrate local populations into the management of protected areas for the re-appropriation of lost profits, it is true that the initiative and the power of the organization of space and activities are still beyond their control (Niang 1990, Wood *et al.* 2000). Actually, beyond the legislation that speaks about the interests of the populations, the management of many protected areas still remains under the protectionism approach for the capture of external financings that are more and more conditioned to the fortress conservation.

In participatory partnerships for conservation, states still play a central role as it concentrates the ownership and the responsibility for the management of protected areas under co-management status (UICN-PACO 2012). This is the case in West Africa where the control of protected areas is often subject to conflicts between states and local communities (UICN-PACO 2012).

Most often, local populations are only auxiliaries or relays for conservation who serve to diffuse unilateral management decisions, without having any prerogative (Binot and Joiris 2007, Binot 2010, Laslaz 2010). Participation has simply become a way of legitimizing and validating decisions already made by protected area managers, in complete contradiction with theoretical principles of this decentralized and democratic management approach (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2000, Joliveau 2001, Ribot and Peluso 2003, Bioret *et al.* 2009, Laslaz 2010, Veyret 2012, Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2013). In its current form, participatory management seems to involve local people to protect protected areas 'against themselves' ultimately (Ntiranyibagira 2017). Finally, the real commitment of local populations and the community partnership for conservation are still weak (Binot 2010, Ntiranyibagira 2017). Despite the old introductions of the participatory paradigm and the legislative advances in this field (Hulme and Murphree 2001, Guéneau and Franck 2004), the current management methods remain



dominated by centralized and coercive practices (Brown 2003, FEM 2010, UICN-PACO 2012). This often appears through the determination of the methods for the resource exploitation, the definition of the tourism revenue sharing mechanisms and the choice of the community development investments that are, in any case, the responsibility of states, regardless of the presence of protected areas.

Generally, participatory management regulations are only articulated on good principles that are part of the classic rhetoric of conservation because states often lack the means for the implementation of their policies (Binot 2010). While participatory management recognizes the land rights of indigenous peoples and the abandonment of forced displacements in the establishment and the management of protected areas (CDB 1992), the violation of these rights has continued in the great majority of protected areas (Nelson and Chomitz 2001, Manuel and Doumenge 2008).

When through the decentralization processes, certain transfers of powers and responsibilities become effective; they are quickly recovered by powerful groups of interests for their own benefit (Binot 2010). This means that the decentralization often generates a new centralization at a lower level, which perpetuates the same imbalanced powers, the same democratic deficits and the same negative effects (Ntiranyibagira 2017). The recurrent advisory role of local populations in the protected areas management does not yet allow to reverse trends and to engage a fruitful participation (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2000, Binot 2010, Laslaz 2010, Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2013).

As a result, the social impact of conservation projects ‘for, with and by’ communities based on direct and controlled exploitation of resources and the financing of income-generating activities by protected areas is insignificant in the majority of protected areas (Compagnon and Constantin 2000, Triplet 2009, Binot 2010, Bonnin and Rodary 2012). In addition to the very limited impacts of participatory management actions, participatory management programs are fundamentally unfair for two main reasons. Firstly, farmers pay dearly in work the access to previously owned natural resources through common participatory projects based on work against resources (Granier 2009, Ntiranyibagira 2017). Secondly, the real benefits from the exploitation of resources are largely captured by elites (Doumenge *et al.* 2015).

Actually, socio-economic opportunities related to participatory management are derisory with regard to local communities. They rely only on few local jobs of eco-guards, trackers and lodge staff, limited extraction of some non-timber forest products and little income-generating activities. In fact, the low level of operating revenues from protected areas and the retrocession of a large part to central conservation services do not allow to finance truly income-generating activities and to create consistent jobs for local populations (Granier 2009, Ntiranyibagira *et al.* 2017).

In summary, the main factors that limit the effectiveness of participatory management are: (1) internal contradictions and conflicts of interest between stakeholders that are generally heterogeneous (Agrawal and Gibbson 1999, Binot 2010), (2) the current incompatibility between the exploitation of resources and conservation goals due to lack of prior or accompanying research (Ntiranyibagira 2017),



(3) the frustrating position of landless people who often serve as workforce for wealthy and powerful individuals in participatory management projects (Binot 2010), (4) the highly restrictive conditions for the sustainable use of natural resources through various mechanisms of regulation of extractions and the high taxation of products (UICN *et al.* 1980, Ntiranyibagira 2017), (5) the anecdotal and symbolic nature of local job opportunities and access to resources in comparison with the immense socio-economic needs of peripheral populations (Granier 2009, IUCN-PACO 2011), (6) the weaknesses of net operating revenues compared to the great profitability of non-sustainable management activities (Ferraro and Simpson 2003, Nicholls 2004, Binot and Joiris 2007, Binot 2010, Bonnin and Rodary 2012), (7) the inability of participatory management programs to respond to external forces that threaten protected areas such as the attractiveness of migrants, the degradation induced by successful projects and the short duration of the projects (Soulé and Terborgh 1999), (8) the determining role of territorial administrations in the creation and the management of the abusively named communitarian protected areas (Granier 2009), (9) the underfunding of participatory management projects for protected areas whose major threats come from powerful and external economic interests and projects (Guéneau and Franck 2004) and (10) the incoherence between common participatory management and the principles of conservation marketing, particularly with regard to the socio-economic equity and the maximalist trade profits (Koontz 2008).

### **5.5. Funding structural crises, prioritization and selectivity**

In Africa, the conservation sector is characterized by low budgets and chronic underfunding that hinder the effectiveness of the protected areas management. With annual average budgets reaching hardly 5 US\$ /ha/year (Carret and Loyer n.d., Ntiranyibagira 2017), it remains one of the neglected sectors in African economies despite the enormous interests that it represents and the challenges it faces. Despite the generalized insufficiency of conservation budgets, huge disparities exist between countries. National conservation budgets range from a few thousand to a few million US dollars (WCMC 1992, Ntiranyibagira 2017).

Studies have shown that most African countries devote less than 20% of the amount considered as appropriate to national park management (WCMC 1992, IUCN 1999, Colchester 2003). They indicate that the investment per km<sup>2</sup> in United States of America national parks is six times higher than in Central Africa, despite a much lower biodiversity (Guéneau and Franck 2004). The weakness of national conservation budgets, the inability of protected areas to generate enough revenue through tourism and exploitation of resource, the return of most of the operating revenue to central services and the high dependence on external financings that becomes uncertain explain the ineffectiveness and the inefficiency of conservation policies (James 1999, Mengue 2002, Guéneau and Franck 2004).

In African countries, the cuts of budget that are common to protected areas are unfortunately increasing in times of political conflicts and crisis; precisely when they face widespread destructive



assaults (James 1999, Hugh 2000, Dumoulin 2005, Ntiranyibagira 2017). This politico-financial paradox is prejudicial to protected areas and conservation because the times and conditions of high vulnerability occur simultaneously. The low capacity for internal and external financial mobilization which is common to many protected areas results from the lack of financial planning and the multiple challenges of tourism that are driven by conflicting interests (Dumoulin 2005, Landreau 2012).

Unlike Western countries where protected areas operate on the basis of state budgets and the reinvestment of revenues from private exploitation through state representatives at the central and decentralized levels (James 1999).

The extension of protected areas networks and the cuts of budget in state subsidies are leading many protected areas in huge financial difficulties (Hugh 2000, Deguignet *et al.* 2014), as much as international financial donors like the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Trinity of Conservation (WWF, TNC, CI) allocate the available funds by prioritizing the so-called priority protected areas to secure their financing outside state frameworks (Bonnin and Rodary 2012).

Since Rio Conference in 1992, international funding is focused on the differential and preferential ecological interest of protected areas and countries (IUCN 1999). Today, international conservationist currents and lobbies exchange funds against the maintenance and the multiplication of protected areas with sanctuary management. In fact, only the major international conservation NGOs are able to implement the new regional policies of priority conservation zones because of their prohibitive costs that are unaffordable to many other actors (Aubertin and Rodary 2008).

The global triage policy in conservation that favors areas of maximum diversity and reduced vulnerability has limited or canceled the funding of many protected areas of lower priority with regard to the great threatens they are facing (Colchester 2003).

This selective policy was reinforced with the Digital Observatory of Protected areas (DOPA) initiative that manages protected areas larger than 100 km<sup>2</sup>, mainly in Africa (Dubois *et al.* 2015). Under this initiative, the allocation of funds gives priority to protected areas requiring greater attention and countries with the greatest potential in relation to agreed or decided global conservation goals, including the most recent Aichi conservation objectives (CDB 2010).

At the same time, the extension of African protected areas networks and the affirmation of participatory management approaches lead to a reduction in the availability of international funding on which most of countries rely, including for the funding of regional conservation institutions that are gradually emerging in Africa (Doumenge *et al.* 2015).

The GEF which is the largest international mechanism for conservation funding, provides only punctual and unforeseeable contributions due to equally timely contributions from its financial supports (Mengue 2002, Dumoulin 2005). In addition to being unpredictable, external funding often only covers protected areas research and management activities, while being limited by the duration of specific projects (Mengue 2002, Ntiranyibagira 2017). In this context of international financial crisis; the high



dependence of African protected areas on external financing and the enormous selectivity of zones and protected areas that are eligible to financings, the question of financial planning, self-financing and empowerment becomes a particular concern (Dumoulin 2005).

In the absence of sufficient budgets and financial autonomy, national conservation organizations are unable to conserve funds raised in protected areas (James 1999, Mengue 2002). They are also not encouraged to develop revenue-generating programs that they are obliged to hand over to the public treasury, or to cooperate with the private sector. Under these conditions, participatory management projects receive only small conservation grants for emergency management and short-term actions, especially in protected areas of categories IV and VI (UICN-PAPACO 2012, Agence Française de Développement 2014).

## **6. Bottlenecks and challenges for conservation**

The in-depth critical analysis of the governance systems of the conservation in Africa shown that the ongoing conditions of the protected areas management are responsible for a systematic, increasing and continuous degradation that makes many protected areas open agricultural and agropastoral parks under a protection status that only exist on paper. It revealed that the major bottlenecks and challenges to be addressed are the following: (1) the still dominant model of uninhabited protected areas in a context of high population densities and deep land tensions, (2) the lack of compensation and relocation of populations expelled from protected areas that leads to the concentration of these people at the immediate peripheries of protected areas, (3) the absence, narrowness or non-functionality of buffer zones for a minimum socio-economic compensation of imposed deprivations, (4) the persistence of centralized and coercive management methods, insufficient guarding staff and increased illegal agropastoral pressures, (5) the chronic internal underfunding and unreliable external financing, (6) the quite inexistent domestic tourism, and the limited socio-economic benefits of ecotourism and of activities of exploitation of resources, (7) a lack of data, tools and indicators for planning and management that lead to sight navigations and trials and errors in management, (8) democratic and managerial deficits in participatory management, and unequal distribution of the conservation benefits in the disfavor of local populations, (9) the persistence of human-wildlife conflicts and the lack of effective and equitable economic compensation systems and (10) the instability of conservation statutes and the proliferation of concessions of economic exploitation for the benefit of external private investors.

The management challenges result from a certain number of interferences, incoherence, contradictions, ambiguities and misunderstandings that the new vision for a fair and sustainable conservation will address.

Firstly, the primacy of external institutions and actors in the choice of the main areas to be protected or kept under protection, the definition of conservation policies and practices, the financing of protected areas and the growth of tourism makes conservation an interested external business that is often



disconnected from basic socio-economic concerns and needs of local populations. Secondly, the world conservation enterprise conveys now a fundamental contradiction or hypocrisy that recognizes and theoretically promotes the interests and know-how of local people, while effectively making them passive and marginalized partners in accessing the benefits of the conversation. Thirdly, the coming in of private investors devotes capitalist practices that further marginalize local communities in management and fair access to conservation benefits. Fourthly, the easy neo-Malthusian argument about the negative impact of the population growth on the exploitation of natural resources obscures the social exclusion and inequalities of access to natural resources as the main causes of exploitation pressure and degradation. Fifthly, the current coverage of illegal activities and demands by local governments and political elites for political purposes is frustrating protected areas managers and deserving the cause of conservation. Sixthly, the lucrative illegal or legal exploitations of protected areas by wealthy and powerful individuals using poor local populations as labor deconstruct the universal interests and benefits of conservation. In fact, African protected areas are more threatened by powerful economic interests carried by large agribusiness projects than by the survival resources extractions of local populations. Seventhly, the quasi-generalized democratic deficits in African countries and the persistence of top down approaches do not allow a truly democratic management of natural resources required by participatory approaches.

## **7. Vision and options for sustainable conservation**

The vision and options proposed to address management challenges and ensure broadly inclusive, mutually beneficial and sustainable conservation of protected areas in Africa are built on the key results emerging from the critical analysis of conservation policies and practices namely, (i) conservation involves multiple actors with conflicting interests, unbalanced powers and unequal means of intervention, (ii) community-based and traditional non-market management of natural resources are the most effective and sustainable forms of conservation, (iii) the substitution of ‘man in nature’ by ‘man and nature’ made possible by the strengthening of fortress approach and the weaknesses of participatory approaches are the major ingredient of the hostility of populations and the main driver of degrading pressures, (iv) the establishment of many large-scale protected areas maintained outside the sphere of socio-economic action contribute to create stresses and to reinforce illegal pressures, (v) the lack of fair, equitable and timely compensation for expropriations and deprivations still justifies illegal loggings and degradation of protected areas, (vi) the international and national benefits of ecosystem services provided by protected areas inevitably result from direct losses of benefits for local communities that are not at all or not enough compensated, (vii) the ineffectiveness of the fortress conservation approach and the low efficiency of participatory programs are based on many factors that are external to local communities, (viii) the decentralization in natural resources management actually leads to a low-level centralization that perpetuates the state's diktat and the imbalanced powers in disfavor of local



populations, (ix) the interest of conservation for local populations and national governments is generally perceived through direct socio-economic benefits and financial support or income, and (x) the achievement of the Aichi goals for the extension of protected areas networks is compromised by deep land tensions, large-scale community opposition and significant financing difficulties.

The options proposed to achieve sustainable conservation are based on eight fundamental principles: (1) the effectiveness of conservation has to be thought and assessed as a balance between the achievement of global ecological and economic goals and the satisfaction of vital socio-economic needs of local communities, (2) sustainable conservation approaches should guaranty a minimum access to vital natural resources or alternative fair, equitable and sustainable socio-economic compensation in the case of exceptional sanctuary conservation, (3) efficient conservation approaches have to rely on community commitment and responsibility for conservation instead of individual or associative involvements of persons considered in local communities, (4) genuine and active participation of local communities in management mechanisms and conservation benefit sharing have to rely on broadly representative and democratic bases, (5) decision making and powers involved in conservation partnerships have to be rebalanced in favor of local communities through a democratic and sufficient representation of communities in administrative and management bodies, (6) the management bodies have to be administratively and financially autonomous for each protected area, (7) the sustainable financing of conservation and the efficiency of conservation have to rely mainly on the development of domestic tourism and on internal resources, and (8) the financing of socio-economic compensations and continuous protected areas management have to be based on international and national citizen awareness and solidarity for the safeguarding of ecosystem services which are also of universal interests.

The vision defends the reproduction, the modernization and multi-level financing of community-based conservation known to be a successful approach of conservation, while adapting it to current realities. At ideological, strategic and operational levels, the new options are as follows: (i) the replacement of the concept of protected areas that conveys a strongly homophobic connotation by the more neutral but evocative concept of 'biodiversity conservation areas', (ii) the systematic and prior evaluation of the management of existing protected areas for the characterization of spatial transformations and landscape dynamics, the identification of the global evolutionary trends and their classification taking into account the degree of threats and degradation, (iii) the transformation of highly degraded or threatened protected areas into natural communitarian landscapes to be managed according to the principles of agro-ecology and to concerted conventions of conservation management, (iv) the priority allocation of financial savings, available resources and funding mobilized to the management of protected areas with positive evolutionary trends or enough stability for the development of peripheral sustainable projects and ecologically connective networks, (v) the focus of conservation on the paradigms of 'protection through production' and 'production through protection' based on the development of peripheral compensatory projects oriented towards agro-pastoral modernization and



intensification and energy substitutions thanks to universal compensatory funds and socio-economic benefits of conservation, (vi) the delimitation of peripheral socio-economic dependent zones and the democratic establishment of autonomous community councils representing different groups of interests for protected areas active management, (vii) the establishment of state-local communities-private joint shareholdings and autonomous protected area boards of directors composed of the representatives of stakeholders and notably intended to vote programs and operating budgets, to define periodic extractions of resources that are essential for vital socio-economic uses, to adopt accounts and management reports, to decide on the allocation of operating profits, to endorse community development projects that support conservation and to update management objectives, plans and tools, (viii) the establishment of national environmental pilgrimages for the development of patriotic mass tourism relying on the principle of proximity, community-based logistics and affordable tariffs, and (ix) the establishment of universal national and international funds to finance compensatory projects and actions for short and long terms socio-economic deprivations and damages by wild animals.

## 8. Conclusion

The critical retrospective analysis of policies and practices of nature conservation in Africa showed that they are characterized by a certain number of incoherence, inconsistencies, contradictions and ambiguities that lead to inefficient management and serious challenges for sustainable conservation of protected areas. It revealed that the governance systems are creating management conditions that favor uncontrolled exploitations and almost systematic and continuous degradation of protected areas of which the majority have become open agro-pastoral parks, under legal protection status. Since the colonial period, the conservation governance has globally failed to achieve and maintain a minimum of efficiency in the management of protected areas.

The study showed that poor performance and continuous degradation of protected areas are mainly justified by conflicts of ideologies, interests, and agendas between multiple actors having imbalanced means of intervention, positions and powers. Beyond the financing difficulties and obvious technical and managerial gaps, the main challenges that the sector of conservation is facing are the important role played by external bodies and actors, democratic deficits and the persistence of centralized approaches at the national level, the ambiguity of territorial administrations and political elites in their relations with local communities regarding conservation actions, the interferences and capitalist activities of external economic operators, the weakness of the participatory management approaches and the marginalization of the local communities in protected areas management and access to the socio-economic benefits of the conservation.

The vision proposed to address the conservation challenges considers and evaluates the conservation effectiveness as a balance between the satisfaction of vital non-market community socio-economic needs and the achievement of global ecological and economic goals through compensatory



market preservation. Its starting point is the preliminary assessment of the evolutionary trends of protected areas for an in depth rethinking and restructuration of the conservation statutes and the management categories, the conservation partnerships, the modes of administration and management and the financing modalities. It fundamentally refocuses conservation on community interests, commitment, responsibility and participation, a rebalancing of forces and powers in the partnerships, the institution of State-Local communities-Private joint shareholdings, the universal solidarity financing of socio-economic compensations and permanent management of protected areas and equitable sharing of socio-economic benefits. In practice, it involves a well thought revision and the improvement of the management based on strategic decommissioning and reclassifications of existing protected areas, and the extensions of protected areas networks centered on local community.

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## **Preliminary reflections of the potential of climate smart agriculture (CSA) in the Tshopo Province (DRC)**

Denis Jean Sonwa<sup>a</sup>, Lisette Mangaza<sup>b</sup>, Germain Batsi<sup>c</sup>, and Jérôme Ebuy<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Cameroon

<sup>b</sup> Department of environment, Faculty of Science, University of Goma,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>c</sup> Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources Management, University of Kisangani,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

### **Abstract**

Agriculture is the main activity in Tshopo province and concerns about 84% of households. In the post-conflict context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the country needs to use agriculture for food and employment, responses to climate change protection of biodiversity hotspot as it is the case in the Tshopo province cannot be ignored. The current agricultural practices are still very vulnerable to climate change and are threatening the biodiversity and carbon stock of the Tshopo forest landscapes. The challenges of the state and other stakeholders are thus to improve the productivity of this agriculture and make it resilient with less carbon footprint. Such 3 pillars (increase of productivity, provide adaptation and mitigation responses) correspond to CSA (Climate Smart Agriculture) that need to be achieved in an integrated way. Unfortunately, from the review at the national level and at the Tshopo principal scale, activities in which agriculture is involved target mainly one/two main objectives (food security, mitigation, adaptation or Biodiversity conservation) during a well-defined period and specific geographical locations. CSA could thus be a potential frame to improve the sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Tshopo Province, in the center of Congo Basin.

**Keywords:** climate change, adaptation and mitigation, climate smart agriculture, Tshopo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



## 1. Introduction

Agriculture is one of the most important activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), about three-quarters of the working population (Kadima *et al.* 2017). It is crucial for food security, smallholder's income and many ecosystem services (FAO 2010).

However, it is largely dominated by traditional low input/low output subsistence systems, and the gap between potential and actual yields is huge (Megevand *et al.* 2013). It is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which are unavoidable and even in the most optimistic scenario will have adverse effects on agricultural production and performance (Locatelli *et al.* 2008, Brown *et al.* 2011). The province of Tshopo is not an exception to this reality face by agricultural sector in developing world. Agriculture in this forested province is almost rainfed and exposed to multiple constraints due to climate change (Kasongo 2013, Bokana 2016).

Nowadays, in the context of climate change, agriculture must be developed to ensure food security and the sustainable management of forest resources that are linked to the agricultural sector. To do so, there is a real need to contribute to adaptation to climate change and to mitigation efforts (FAO 2010).

Climate smart agriculture (CSA) is emerging as an approach that ensures food security and provides income-generating opportunities by enhancing the productivity of the farming systems while responding to climate change (Both Adaptation and Mitigation). By protecting ecosystems and landscapes, it contributes to the protection of natural resources for future generations. It has great potential to help farmers achieve food security while adapting to changing conditions and combating climate change (Sullivan *et al.* 2012). The current working paper explore the potential of climate smart agriculture in the context of the Tshopo Province, in the northeast of DRC.

## 2. Tshopo province (brief history, administrative context, geography, socio-economy context)

### 2.1. A brief history

Tshopo Province was an integral part of Orientale Province, which was dismembered following the promulgation of Programming Law No. 15/004 of 28 February 2015 determining the modalities for the establishment of 26 new provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with Article 2 of the Constitution (Ndeke and Tamidribe 2018).

### 2.2. Geographical location

Tshopo province is located in the northeastern part of the DRC. It is located on the Equator between 2° South latitude and 2° North latitude, i.e. about 400 km and between 22° and 28° East longitude, i.e. about 600 km. The province is also crossed by the Congo River, which flows through the main upstream and downstream entities: Ubundu, Kisangani, Yangambi, Isangi and Basoko (Lejoly *et al.* 2010).

It is bordered to the east by the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and Maniema, to the west by the province of Mongala, to the north by the provinces of Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé, to the south by the



province of Tshuapa and to the southeast by the province of Sankuru (Ndeke and Tamidribe 2018).

## **2.3. Administrative context**

From an administrative point of view, the province of Tshopo has one city (the city of Kisangani: the capital of the province), 7 territories (Bafwasende, Banalia, Basoko, Isangi, Opala, Ubundu and Yahuma), 6 urban communes, 8 rural communes, 39 sectors, 19 chiefdoms, 269 groups and 2,438 villages. It has an area of 199,567 km<sup>2</sup> (Termote *et al.* 2011, INS 2018), which corresponds to 8% of the area of the DRC (Lejoly *et al.* 2010).

The land use of Tshopo Province is as follows: 21.5% forest concessions, 12% mining squares and 4% protected areas. The rest of the territory is either unoccupied or made up of agricultural complexes where local communities practice slash-and-burn agriculture. There are also about 100 to 300 old abandoned medium-size plantations (100 to 500 ha) containing oil palm, rubber, coffee and cocoa trees (FONAREDD 2019).

### **2.3.1. Socio-economic context**

The population of Tshopo province is estimated at 5,032,472 inhabitants (Ministry of Public Health 2014), corresponding to 7% of the national population, of which about 20% live in the city of Kisangani alone. The rural population represents 73.3% of the provincial population (IPC 2017).

The Province of Tshopo is characterized by a very high ethno-cultural diversity. Bantu represent the majority ethnic group although there is a small minority of pygmies (indigenous peoples) in the territories of Bafwasende, Banalia and Opala (FONAREDD 2016).

The province offers several economic opportunities, including its equatorial forests, which are rich in precious and rare species of wood, as well as its ecosystem rich in biodiversity. There are also several non-industrial mining resources (Ndeke and Tamidribe 2018).

The province's economy is based on traditional agriculture and livestock (Moloba *et al.* 2019). The main economic activity in the region is agriculture, which is practiced in a shifting cultivation system. Furthermore, exploitation of non-timber forest products (bush meat, caterpillars, wild edible plants), commercial and artisanal logging, artisanal mining and petty trade provide sources of income to households (Moonen *et al.* 2016).

### **2.3.2. Climate, relief and soil**

The province of Tshopo is under a humid (continental) equatorial climate characterized by an absence of a specific dry season. It belongs to the Af type of the Köppen classification. Annual rainfall varies between 1800 and 2000 mm. Temperatures remain high throughout the year, ranging from 23 to 32°C (Bolakonga 2013). In Tshopo, rains are suitable for planting from March to November, with some days/weeks of dry season in July or August. The 1st and 2nd planting seasons start in March and



September, respectively. In Tshopo, the 1st rainy season is more suitable for cropping as it is followed by the shorter dry season. Furthermore, during the 2nd season in Tshopo rains may be excessive from September to November. On average, 36% of the total annual rainfall occurs during these months (Kintché *et al.* 2017).

The landscape is characterized by a relatively flat relief, whose altitudes vary between 200 and 500 m (Sys, 1960). The major soil groups dominant in the Tshopo are ferralsols and undifferentiated rock ferrisols, Yangambi type plateaus ferralsols, Salonga type sand areno-ferralsols and recent tropical soils (Ministère du Plan 2005).

### 2.3.3. The biodiversity

The animal and plant biodiversity of Tshopo province is rich and diverse. Many protected areas have been created to protect this biodiversity. The province of Tshopo is totally forested.

The total gross area of its forest ecosystems is estimated at 87% of its area (FONAREDD 2016). Vegetation is mainly composed of dense and humid equatorial forests (Bamba 2010). Swampy or periodically flooded forests occupy large areas in the Ubundu, Opala, Isangi, Yahuma and Basoko Territories (Ministère du Plan 2005).

With regard to protected areas, the main ones are the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve with an area of 6,297 km<sup>2</sup> (Drachoussoff *et al.* 1991) containing an important species diversity (Raghuathan *et al.* 2013), the Yoko Forest Reserve with an area of 6,975 ha and the Masako Forest Reserve with an area of 2,105 ha (Iyongo *et al.* 2013).

From a phytogeographic point of view, the province of Tshopo is part of the central forest sector of the Guinean region (Germain and Evrard 1956).

There are also two protected areas, large part of which are located in the Tshopo province: Maiko National Park and Lomami National Park. Maiko National Park (MNP) covers an area of 1,083,000 ha. Its fauna is very rich and diversified. Wildlife specificity is marked by the presence of both rare species, which are okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*), eastern lowland gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla graueri*), Congolese peacocks (*Afropavo congoensis*) and pangolin (*Manis sp*) (UICN 2010, Katembo 2011). Lomami National Park (LNP) covers an area of approximately 888,000 ha. More than 50 species of large mammals are present, including the emblematic species: the bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), the forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), the okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*), the bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*) and the leopard (*Panthera pardus*). In addition, a new species of *Cercopithecus* was described in this park in 2012: the lesula (*Cercopithecus lomamiensis*). This park has the highest number of endemic animals in the DRC of any protected area in the country (Hart *et al.* 2015).

### 2.4. Agricultural activities

Agriculture is the main activity of Tshopo and concerns about 84% of households (UNDP 2014). This



is done by slash-and-burn and is mainly oriented towards food crops, with cassava, rice, plantain bananas, maize and groundnuts as the main crops in order of importance (Van Hoof 2011, Moonen 2017). Although in decline, perennial crops (coffee, cocoa, rubber, and oil palm) are also present. There are two operational agro-industrial concessions in the province: PHC/FERONIA (Basoko and Yahuma) and Busira Lomami/Groupe Blattner (Isangi) both operating oil palm plants (FONAREDD 2016).

Access to arable lands is by family inheritance or by cutting down a primary forest. Generally, farmers clear around 0.5 to 2 ha either in a primary, secondary or fallow forest. The fields are cultivated twice and then abandoned. The observed fallow period is too short, not enough for the restoration of soil fertility. The age of the fallow land selected for cultivation varies according to household preferences and needs, but a deviation from the preferred age is dependent on the increase in population density (Moonen 2017).

The main constraints of agriculture in Tshopo province are the lack of technical supervision, difficulty in obtaining quality inputs and equipment, declining soil fertility, the proliferation of diseases and pests, the absence of rural microfinance services and very weak local capacity for the conservation and processing of agricultural products. In addition, there are difficulties in accessing markets due in particular to the lack of transport, storage and marketing equipment and infrastructure, as well as the lack of reliable market information (CIFOR 2018).

Otherwise, the lack of access to credit is the major factor limiting the expansion of industrial crops and their transformation (Bolakonga 2013). Also, the political climate is unstable and the previous inter-ethnic conflicts considerably slowed down agricultural development. In addition, poor governance leads to a loss of confidence in producers who no longer dare to invest in their productions (CTB 2012).

*Table 1.* Evolution of the main agricultural food crops in the Tshopo province (DRC)

Crops	Crops informations	Crop years				
		2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
Cassava	Cultivated area (ha)	17,774.1	16,761.6	276,799.3	235,283.2	
	Production (t)	188,405.00	177,673.00	2,934,073.00	2,494,002.20	3,101,149.10
	Yield (t/ha)					8.83
Rice	Cultivated area (ha)	1,818.1	1,674.2	1,781	1,919.5	
	Production (t)	2,327.2	2,143	2,279.7	2,457	
	Yield (t/ha)					0.82
Maize	Cultivated area (ha)	10,677.6	14,864	21,0541.4	24,2619.7	16,2352.6
	Production (t)	12,172.5	16,945	240,017.2	276,586.5	131,662.3
	Yield (t/ha)				1.14	0.62

Source: MINAGRI-RDC (2018).

### 3. Forest importance and threats

The tropical forests of Tshopo province have significant potential to ensure the survival and economy



of the local population (Lisingo *et al.* 2010). They store carbon and contribute to the regulation of climate change. They also help to regulate one of the world's largest river basins. It is also a unique reservoir of biodiversity (Debroux *et al.* 2007). The vast majority of the population depends on the forest for their livelihood. This forest is a source of protein, medicines, energy, materials and income for the local population. It also has a great importance of social and cultural significance for people living in forest areas (Makana 2004, Debroux *et al.* 2007).

However, this forest is a victim of anthropogenic pressure that leads to deforestation and forest degradation. The direct causes of deforestation and degradation at the provincial level are slash-and-burn agriculture, industrial and artisanal forestry, mining, wood energy and brick making. The indirect or underlying causes are the migration of populations, economic factors, former armed conflicts, weak enforcement of legal texts, corruption and impunity (MECNT 2011).

The loss of fertility of agricultural land is forcing the population to clear more and more forest areas to meet their ever-increasing needs. Trees felled when new agricultural plots implantation are collected for fuelwood or charcoal production (Defourny *et al.* 2011). Clearing for the installation of new fields is best done in the forest for several reasons: (i) drop in yield in fallows due to soil impoverishment after 1 to 2 crop cycles, (ii) arduous work (ploughing, weeding in particular) in fallows, (iii) availability and easy access to land in forest areas, (iv) internal competition between clan members for the securing of land to descendants or sharecropping, through the 'right of axe', (v) lack of viable alternatives to slaughter-burning techniques, as well as various socio-cultural aspects perpetuating these practices. The factors favouring the expansion of slash-and-burn slaughter are (i) the absence of well-structured agricultural sectors, which benefit small producers, (ii) the absence of economic alternatives and (iii) the lack of support from the technical services of agriculture (FONAREDD 2016).

From a public administration perspective, deforestation and degradation hotspots in Tshopo province are concentrated mainly along practicable roads (roads, Congo River, rivers) and around major urban areas, the Isangi territory and the entire north-eastern part of the province (MECNT 2011, Potapov *et al.* 2012).

#### **4. Vulnerability to climate change**

Climate change is having a negative impact on agriculture. They are inevitable, and even in the most optimistic scenario, they will have adverse effects on agricultural production and yield (Locatelli *et al.* 2008, Brown *et al.* 2011). Climate change affects agriculture and food production in complex ways. It affects food production directly through changes in agro-ecological conditions and indirectly by affecting growth and distribution of incomes, and thus demand for agricultural production (Schmidhuber and Tubiello 2007).

The National Action Program for Adaptation to the Effects of Climate Change (PANA) presents agriculture as the sector most vulnerable to climate change in the DRC (Kengoum 2014). This



vulnerability is linked to the rainfall character of agriculture (GIEC 2007), extremely low adaptive capacity and lack of investment in mitigation and resilience building systems.

Rural areas are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because of their high dependence on rainfall agricultural production systems. Their capacities for adaptation and mitigation are still very low or almost non-existent (Brown *et al.* 2011, Bele *et al.* 2014).

It should be noted that about 70% of the population in the DRC lives in rural areas. In Tshopo province, the rural population represents 73.3% of the provincial population (IPC 2017), making the province more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

## **5. Food insecurities**

The province of Tshopo has significant agricultural potential through its arable land and abundant rainfall and water (FIDA 2016). However, despite its considerable agricultural potential, Tshopo is highly food and nutritionally insecure and has a high poverty rate. The main causes are low productivity, low diversification and value-added of agriculture.

In addition, more than 80% of households live below the poverty line. Indeed, the decline of the agricultural system in the region is characterized in particular by the lack of availability of agricultural inputs, the lack of supervision of farmers and the non-existence of cooperatives ensuring the purchase and sale of agricultural products. Also, there are climate changes and the consequences of the slash-and-burn system, which affects soil fertility. Over all, around 26% of food are supplied by other provinces or is abroad (CIFOR 2018)

## **6. Climate smart agriculture (CSA) as potential responses**

Climate smart Agriculture (CSA) is an approach based on 3 pillars: sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and income through sustainable use of natural resources (production); adaptation of populations to the effects of climate change and strengthening their resilience (adaptation); and reduction of emissions and/or absorption of greenhouse gases and deforestation (mitigation) (Caron 2016, FAO 2018).

### **6.1. Agriculture in food security projects**

Agriculture is crucial for food security (FAO 2010). Several programs aimed at ensuring food security through the promotion of agriculture have emerged in the province. This is particularly important in the post conflict context of DRC in which agricultural sector had been affected by conflicts.

One of the most important of these programs is the Agricultural Rehabilitation Program in the district of Tshopo, former Eastern Province (PRAPO) from 2008 to 2013. The overall objective of the program was to contribute in a sustainable way to increase incomes, food security, nutritional status and improving living conditions for 50,000 households, including about 25,000 agricultural households and



about 6,000 fishermen in the former Tshopo district (FIDA 2016).

To date, in the agricultural sector, the main program in which the province is involved is the Program for Agricultural Development and Access to Markets in Tshopo Province (PRODAT). It operates in 3 territories (Banalia, Opala, Isangi) and 3 sectors (rice, cassava and oil palm). The targets are family farms that should improve their production and direct it towards markets. The levels of intervention are access to improved seeds and markets through the strengthening of grassroots agricultural organizations to develop services to facilitate the improvement of agricultural techniques. A second component is aimed at strengthening provincial public actors in their support, monitoring and coordination functions in the agricultural sector. This program began in 2015 and will end in 2020 (FONAREDD 2019).

## 6.2. Agriculture in adaptation responses

Adaptation to climate change in the agricultural sector requires improved production systems and adaptive capacity building (IPCC 2007). In relation to climate change, agriculture is both a victim (because it suffers from climate change: temperature rise, water shortage or excess, new diseases, etc.) and a responsible (because it emits significant amounts of greenhouse gases: 12% directly and up to 24% indirectly) (IPCC 2014). Thus, as the challenges are interconnected, they must be addressed simultaneously. This implies the direct integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation into agricultural development planning and investment strategies (FAO 2010). Agriculture is therefore at the crossroads of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (Harvey *et al.* 2014).

For agriculture development to become ‘compatible’ with climate change challenges, it is necessarily to combine mitigation and adaptation objectives with the aim of higher yields and food security. This is the genesis of the CSA concept (Torquebiau 2017).

CSA helps to ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation are directly integrated into agricultural development planning and investment strategies. It is widely promoted as the future of agriculture and as a viable solution to climate change. Because agriculture remains the key to development in Africa, CSA has the potential to increase productivity and resilience while reducing the vulnerability of hundreds of millions of smallholders (Sullivan *et al.* 2012).

However, there is no explicit policy or strong CSA practices in the DRC (Chinedum *et al.* 2015) in general and in Tshopo province in particular. Similar situation is found in the entire Congo Basin. For example, the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) launched in June 2008, in order to promote sustainable forest management by communities and governments with the coordination of the African Development Bank in 10 Central African countries (the DRC included) where aiming at providing multiple benefits practices such as increase productivity, carbon sequestration, rehabilitate degraded lands and build resilience. This regional program was implemented primarily for reducing deforestation, forest degradation and poverty through better land use planning; developing sustainable management



mechanisms for the natural forests of the region; stabilizing the agricultural sector; and promoting local development. It is only some year ago, that some activities of the program were labeled as CSA examples (Nyamisi *et al.* 2014). One of the Pilot site (Named: ‘Projet Pilote REDD Géographiquement Intégré d’Isangi (PPRGII)’) of this program was implemented in the Tshopo Province.

We thus have a situation where beside adaptation objective, other ambition are related to climate change mitigation and improvement of food yields.

### **6.3. Agriculture in REDD+ responses**

In 2009, the DRC embarked on the REDD+ process (which aims to mitigate GHG emissions and combat deforestation and forest degradation) in order to reduce its emissions and thus participate in the global climate change mitigation effort (REDD-RDC 2014). This process seeks to save forest land by reducing the yield gap or developing agriculture on available non-forest land (MINAGRI 2010, Carter *et al.* 2015). In 2017, for the agricultural sector several studies done within the Tsopo province reveal 5 key value chains (Cassava, Maize, Rice, Groundnut and Plantain) that can be supported in the Yangambi Protected area landscape (CIFOR 2018). The study proposed that each step/node of the Value chain be strengthened. Some propositions included: the development of a reliable and sustainable seed system for each crop to provide efficient varieties that are also resistant to the main diseases; the reorganization of the extension service that properly ensure the knowledge transfer of research results to farmers; strengthening of the involvement of the private sector in the supply of agricultural inputs ; new settlement of the agricultural system by promoting integrated soil fertility management and by introducing perennial crops such as coffee; avoid/reduce seasonal fluctuation in the price of products by staggering the planting and harvesting of cassava, and by irrigating cereals and legumes; enhancement of post-harvest capacities by constructing of pilot storage, processing and sales units (CIFOR 2018).

The agricultural techniques most recommended for REDD+ and whose feasibility in the DRC has been demonstrated concern ecological agricultural practices, including the use of fallow improvement plants, cultivation under plant cover, the use of biochar, composting, agroforestry and the use of natural fertilizers or pesticides (MINAGRI 2010).

The REDD+ National Found (FONAREDD) plans to launch in 2019 the ‘support program for the sustainable development of savannahs and degraded forests’ for a period of 5 years. The aim of this program is to ‘contribute, through an improved service offer, to the appropriation by agricultural farms and (SMEs) of sustainable practices for the development of savannah lands and degraded forests, in order to consolidate local economies, maintain forest landscapes and reduce pressure on forest resources.’

This program supports the development of degraded forests and savannahs will work closely with the Sustainable Agriculture Management Program (SAMP) implemented by FAO, the Youth Entrepreneurship Project in Agriculture and Agro-Business (YEPA) funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Sustainable Forest Management Program (SFMP) of the Agence



Français de Développement (AFD). Its purpose is to encourage the mobilization of private investment in the implementation of the agricultural sector program of the REDD+ investment plan. On this 'private investment' dimension, it will complement the Integrated REDD+ Programs (PIREDD). It will be carried out in two provinces: Kwilu province (Kikwit Capital) and Tshopo province (Kisangani Capital). The project will work in collaboration with integrated PIREDDs to also respond to productive alliance initiatives in their provinces of intervention.

A forest cover monitoring system will be set up in the Project's right-of-way areas, and a duly mapped annual report will be produced, in order to ensure that forest cover and landscapes are maintained, that there is no rebound effect and that the deforestation front in Tshopo Province is limited to the farms supported by the project (FONAREDD 2019).

With Agriculture already been recognized as one of the main drivers of deforestation, many REDD+ project generally have an agricultural response.

#### **6.4. The need for better coordination for CSA at the provincial level**

Climate smart agriculture (CSA) is not a single specific technology or agricultural practice that can be universally applied. This is an approach that requires site-specific assessments of social, economic and environmental conditions to identify appropriate agricultural production technologies and practices. A key element of the CSA is the integrated landscape approach that follows the principles of ecosystem management and sustainable land and water use (Williams *et al.* 2015).

It should be noted that of all sources of growth, the agricultural sector has the greatest potential for poverty reduction. First of all, it is labour intensive. Second, farm incomes tend to be spent on locally produced goods and services, which has a significant multiplier effect on the local economy. Finally, agricultural productivity growth reduces food prices, thus providing 'invisible transfers' to the entire population and other sectors of the economy (Chausse *et al.* 2012). Hence the need to promote agriculture through the CSA approach.

From the previous review at the national level and at the Tshopo principal scale, we noticed a multiplication of activities in which agriculture is involved targeting mainly one/two main objectives (food security, climate mitigation, climate adaptation or biodiversity conservation) during a well-defined period and specific geographical locations. For the sustainability of the agricultural sector, coordination between research institutions, government, the private sector, and local and international NGOs is thus essential to promote CSA in Tshopo province.

### **7. Conclusion**

The agricultural sector in Tshopo province has enormous production potential. However, the current productivity is well below the potential. This is due to multiple constraints, including those related to climate change. As rural populations are the most vulnerable, it is therefore necessary to put in place



strategies to strengthen resilience and enable the population of Tshopo to adapt to climate change while at the same time protecting the biodiversity and carbon stock of the forest landscapes of the province. The promotion of agriculture from traditional subsistence agriculture to climate-smart agriculture is an appropriate response to climate change as more than three-quarters of the population is engaged in this activity. The implementation of climate smart agriculture requires support and coordination from many stakeholders around smallholders' farmers including research institutions, non-governmental organizations and government institutions.

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# **Governing wildlife resource in DRC: Challenges of local actors in Rubi-Tele hunting domain**

Eliezer Majambu<sup>ab</sup>, Sagesse Nziavake<sup>c</sup>, Ranulph Hangi<sup>d</sup>, Salomon Mampeta<sup>e</sup>,  
Daddy D. Kipute<sup>bf</sup>, and Denis Jean Sonwa<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> PhD student, Le Mans University, France

<sup>b</sup> State's University of Mbujimayi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>c</sup> Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)-Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>d</sup> Kisangani's Bar, Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>e</sup> Environmental Sociology, University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>f</sup> PhD Student, University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>g</sup> CIFOR, Cameroon

## **Abstract**

Forestry ecosystem of Democratic Republic of the Congo is the base of rural people economy. But, these people do not have sustainable practices on natural resources. Therefore, the objective Pursued in achieving the present study is to determine the impact of the peasant practices on the local natural resources and to analyze the role of traditional power in Ngbete and Mabanga's villages. To achieve this, we submitted 63 persons to a mixed questionnaire. We completed the methodology in using the unstructured individual interviews. The average age of those surveyed varies between 30 and 50 years. The main findings show that the traditional authority doesn't influence positively the sustainable use of wildlife. Though, the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (CINC or ICCN in French) which is in charge of Rubi-Tele hunting domain hasn't the appropriate means for taking care of this protected area. In this case, the traditional authority who could ensure the sustainable management of natural resources, especially the wildlife, is in the lack of legitimacy whose the roof taken in the history of creation of these villages, namely Mabanga and Ngbete. This situation leads to the scarcity of wildlife which is the main source of peasant's income.

**Keywords:** traditional authority, governance, wildlife resources, Rubi-Tele hunting domain, Democratic Republic of the Congo



## 1. Introduction

The forest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accounts for sixty percent (60%) of Congo Basin forests; and forty-seven percent (47%) of Africa's forests. It is therefore a real global lung, after the Amazon (Oyono *et al.* 2006, Eba'a Atyi and Bayol 2009). Indeed, considered as an important reservoir of biodiversity, the DRC forest is a vital resource for human beings (Counsell 2006). Since more than 70% of the population depends directly on it (World Bank 2003). Behind the forest-wood, also hides the real forest which is travelled, worked, modified and rebuilt by the farmers. It is this forest that is the base of village's economy and therefore their heritage. This latter is managed according to so-called 'customary' norms, rules and practices defined, effective and respected at the local level (Michon and Moizo 2011).

It Cline-Cole is clear that the elements of biodiversity that we have reached nowadays are because they were used sustainably. Formally, the exploitation of the resources, in particular, the fauna was made in harmony with spirits of the ancestors and under the guidance of the traditional institutions (Chambers and Conway 1991, Bonye 2007).

Today, the sustainable use of forest resources by local communities cannot be proven since all the world's societies experience socio-culture mutation (Kyale and Maindo 2017) due to the globalization. Yantibossi (2011) goes further; the mentality of local populations has evolved in using the gift of nature. Despite this reality, customary power remains the true manager of grassroots communities in the rural areas (Bonye 2007) and therefore best placed to help the government in achieving its goals for the Sustainable Development (SDG). Considering the above, we propose, as part of this study to analyze the perceptions of users of the wildlife that the power of village leaders Ngbete and Mabanga, finding in Rubi-Tele hunting domain.

Thus, we believe that the population of Mabanga and Ngbete villages perceives the wildlife resources found in Rubi-Tele hunting domain as their ownership. This perception is reinforced by the lack of leadership on the part of traditional authorities on the one hand, and negligence if not oblivion plaguing the DCRT from the State Congo foreshore and conservation NGOs on the other hand.

The structure of this article is organized in four parts. In the remainder of this brief introduction, we detail in the second part of the text the conceptual approach and methodology. This part includes a presentation and justification of the case study, the mode of collection of our quantitative and qualitative data, and the analytical approach used to treat such data. The third part of the article presents the findings and discusses the validity compared to similar studies conducted in relatively comparable political social contexts in Africa and throughout the tropics. The latter part of the article proposes a succinct conclusion of the study.



## 2. Conceptual approach and methodological framework

### 2.1. Presentation and justification of the case study

The Mabanga and Ngbete villages (Figure 1) are part of the Bobate group, which is one of eight groups present in Rubi-Tele hunting domain. Created by the law N° 51/Agri of 12<sup>th</sup> November 1930 and supplemented by the law N° 61 / Agri of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1932 amending the boundaries of this hunting domain; the latter covers 5 administrative territories which three of them (Aketi, Buta, Bambesa) belong to the Bas-Uele province others territories namely (Banalia and Basoko) are in Tshopo province. When it was created, this protected area extended over an area of 11,302,72 km<sup>2</sup>, but nowadays, it occupies only 6227.74 km<sup>2</sup>.

The interest that led us to carry our attention on Mabanga and Ngbete villages is justified by the fact that this protected area has remained nearly 80 years after its creation, neglected without benefiting necessary means to allow the Congolese Institute of Nature Conservation (CINC) to assume its role. Faced this reality, wildlife resources are used unsustainably. In addition to this, the choice of Mabanga and Ngbete villages is due to their accessibility because they are located along the national road (Kisangani-Buta).

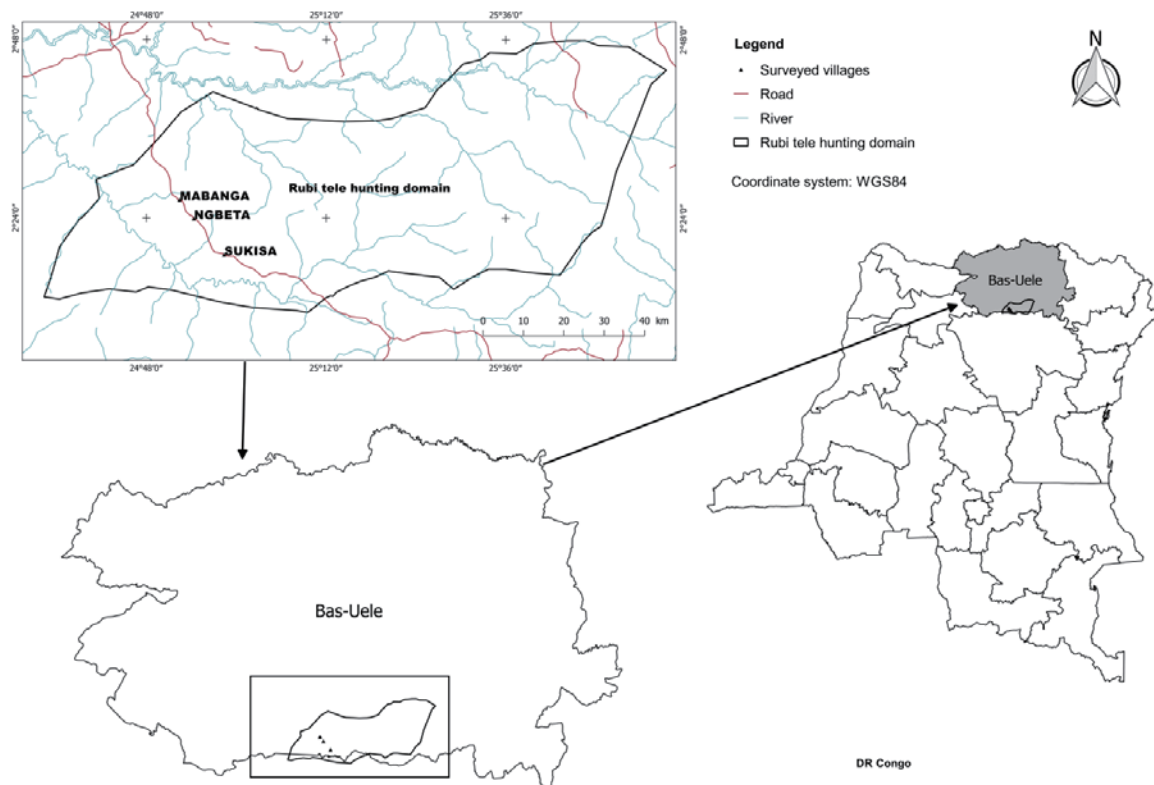


Figure 1. Location of surveyed villages in Rubi-Tele hunting domain



## **2.2. Collection of data**

This study is based on a mixed methodological approach of qualitative and quantitative analysis (Creswell 2009). Qualitatively, the first part of this research was structured around the household survey, because they constitute the basic unit of resource exploitation in a village, then two focus groups and numerous individual interviews were conducted in villages Mabanga and Ngbete. The aim of this approach was to collect the opinions and testimonies of peasants and managers of the hunting domain based at the checkpoint notably their experiences on the change observed over the years in the production of the game, on the availability of wildlife resource, the involvement of traditional authorities in the regulation of access to wildlife resource, the contribution of the checkpoint Sukisa in the management of that area. To achieve our purpose, the survey was close to 63 households among them 32 to Mabanga and 31 Ngbete were involved in the investigation by questionnaire. The questions were about the observed change in access to wildlife resources, the frequency of hunting, the number of games taken by hunters, the most captured species, the level of production, the legitimacy of the authority of village leaders in the regulation of hunting and the capacity of CINC to assume its role. These informations were intersected and crossed with those from individual interviews (18) and focus groups made during our field study.

## **2.3. An analytical approach guided by the logic of induction**

To better capture the logic of the actors studied as part of this study, qualitative data collected were analysed using an approach comprehensive type 'systemic' (Morin 1977). Their interpretation has been systematically checked and strengthened by the above-mentioned quantitative analysis. In line the interdisciplinary approach was privileged in this study, we mobilized the sociological studies of organizations (Crozier and Friedberg 1977). In an inductive logic, the aim of this initiative was to better define the role of actors who rely on the wildlife (villages) at the one hand and those whose have the conservation of wildlife resources as their role (Congolese institute of nature conservation) .This approach allows us to observe strictly the relations of different forces in the local governance of wildlife in Rubi-Tele hunting domain landscape in focusing on Mabanga and Ngbete villages. At the sociology approach of the organization, we have associated critically observation of governance process of commons (Ostrom 1990, Locher 2013). This combination was made for understanding how the role and formal and informal interest of the local actors in the wildlife governance resources impact negatively on the state of resources. Besides interpretations qualitative analysis of our date, a statistical analysis (R software) was also made.



### 3. Findings and discussion

#### 3.1. Unsustainable governance of wildlife resources in Rubi-Tele hunting domain

Empirically, our work shows that several factors hinder the sustainable governance of wildlife in Rubi-Tele hunting domain in general and in Mabanga and Ngbete villages in particular. The most raised during our data field collection are:

#### 3.2. The omission of Rubi-Tele hunting domain as much as by the government than the NGOs of conservation

With an area of 6,227.74 km<sup>2</sup>, the hunting domain of Rubi-Tele has only 42 agents assigned by the Congolese Institute of Nature Conservation to secure this protected area. Consequently, each guard has to watch on an area of 148.27 km<sup>2</sup>. Curiously, only 6 of the 42 agents are paid by the Congolese government, the others are not. The sole argument from government is the fact that the concerned are new recruits though some of these ‘new officers’ have more than 15 years of service. This situation reveals how the management of this hunting domain is not a priority as well as for government as the NGOs. Concerning the latter, the conservator in chief of this hunting domain, testifies in saying that: *‘we didn’t receive financial support from partners till in 2012. We received the foundation of Therese art. When they came, we hoped that at the end of their remote sensing and the wildlife inventory, this hunting domain would be known and through their scientific report, the partners would be attracted. Unfortunately, their work was stopped and from that time they haven’t been back’*. Though, this hunting domain is the living place of some species strictly protected as *Okapi Johnstoni*.

#### 3.3. Governance characterized by mistrust of actors

The continued misuse of wildlife resources leads to the imposition of ineffective punitive measure which tends to further erode the influence of traditional rulers (Majambu *et al.* 2019; Lewis *et al.* n.d.). The absence of boundaries between hunting grounds and villages is one of the causes of this mistrust. This observation is strengthened by the fact that almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of those investigations (this proportion is higher in Ngbete than in Mabanga) they assert to master upstream and downstream of Rubi-Tele hunting domain. The lack of clear boundaries of this hunting domain on the one hand and the one of financing and to take in charge the Congolese institute of nature conservation’s agents; leads the wildlife users to misuse resources. The wildlife resources’ users accuse the Congolese institute of nature conservation’s agents to mismanage this hunting domain. For them, this hunting domain was well managed when chieftaincy was in charge of management of the hunting domain land. Thus, the participants at the focus group organized with villages’ actors at Bokapo argue that: *‘may the management of this hunting domain be returned at our chieftaincy. When it was the case before the coming of colonizer this area was well managed. Since the Congolese institute of nature conservation is in charge of management, the depletion of wildlife resources goes worse and worse’*. For the CINC it is the population who abides in



villages located in this hunting domain who is responsible of the degradation of natural resources in general and wildlife resources in particular. Those words show clearly the opposition which characterize the key actors in governance wildlife resources in this hunting domain. It does prove that where resources are linked with survival people with very low incomes survive as best they can. The temptation to break preservation laws is great, since wild animals can provide food and cash. Furthermore, the people who should enforce the law (agents of Congolese institute of nature conservation for instance) often receive inadequate salaries and therefore they may be tempted to turn a blind eye to or even to aid exploiters (Lewis *et al.* n.d.). For Mampeta (2017), the matter of wildlife conservation comes from the fact that the policy of protected areas in Africa is built on the dichotomy of land tenure legacy of colonialism and nationalism. In this case, we support with Lewis *et al.* (n.d.) that the urgent requirement today is for a significant and sustained effort to include the evaluation, development, management and utilization of wild animals in national plans for socio-economic development. The involvement of national planning and financial institutions at all levels is essential and assistance may also be required from competent international agencies to ensure success. At the same time long term sustained utilization of wildlife resources cannot succeed without local people participating in management and receiving a fair share of the benefits that accrue.

### **3.4. Traditional power crisis as a cause of natural resource degradation**

Chiefs and /or headmen are the cornerstones of African rural societies and the traditional customs that bind and regulate village communities (Lewis *et al.* n.d.) because of their authority. For, the authority is the ability of an actor to act on others, is the recognition of formal actor A to govern other (Crozier and Friedberg 1977, Weber 1978). The abolition of these powers during and after colonial administration has led to situation where central governments are unable to sustain the needs of adequate law enforcement to protect wildlife resources. Land tenure and access to natural resources were formerly determined by these chiefs in the common interests. The case of Mabanga and Ngbete villages reveals the inescapable role of traditional authority. The population are consciousness that when disorder became rule of life in any society, traditional authority may play great role. But concerning the depletion of their wildlife resources, they are disappointed in the fact that traditional authority, especially the chiefs of their villages are unable to stop the degradation of resources. No surprising for them to argue I the following words when we ask them if their chiefs cannot stop the depletion of wildlife resources. They react in saying that: *‘what kinds of chief have we? They are powerless and lack initiative. They are unable to regulate access to our forestland’*.

Free access to resources natural wildlife including in the villages’ surveyed notes the lack of organization at the local level and the weakness of traditional power. It should be noted that this weakness is rooted in the context that characterise the creation of the surveyed villages. Created by Ngelema tribe from Basoko territory and around (Province Tshopo), none of them had legitimacy to



lead others. Those who have become leaders subsequently became by the head of group host's will, and therefore, not enjoying any legitimacy within their entity. This situation leads to the uncontrolled exploitation of resources. However, when a resource is subjected to a common exploitation, it is doomed to disappear. Thus, when resources are degraded or depleted, it is local communities that will suffer most; because of they are relying on those resources for their basic needs (Ostrom 1990). Considering that the common utilization of resources leads to depletion, Bigombe (2004) recommends initiating the villagers or local users to decentralized management. For him, this taste must be made with social institutions such as the lineages. Then it is possible to strengthen these local institutions, including increasing their abilities so that they can finally commit and respect of contracts relating to the use of natural resources.

In comparing our results to theirs, we realize that ours differ from those found by Fairhead and Leach (1994), Andriamalala and Gardner (2010), and Tohinlo *et al.* (2001). The first found in the Mende region (Eastern Africa) that the laws established by the local community was respected and it was regulating access to the natural resources. The second found at Velondriake (southwestern Madagascar) a local tool of governance of natural resources called 'Dina'. The third authors found that in Benin, particularly in the complex of Agonvè, the rules of access and use of natural resources were adopted by local institutions (customary power) and respected by all.

### **3.5. Scarceness of game: Cause of traditional authority inaction**

Although the chiefs of the villages of Mabanga and Ngbete do not have the absolute legitimacy, their populations recognize in them the possibility of denouncing unsustainable hunting practices close to the state administration which has invested them. However, the fact that they have no salary from administration, they prefer to hold one's tongue. This is revealed in the statements required by the chief of Mabanga village. He declared: *'How can we prohibit unsustainable hunting practices? We have no salary from government. The latter pays only the leaders of chieftaincies and sectors. We are not paid. Therefore, hunting allows us to live. This is why we practice hunting as we cannot wait only the products of fields. Sometimes others members of the village come to offer us some game after a successful hunt'*. The chief village's argument needs to be qualified because unsustainable hunting practices are not the sole cause of scarcity of game. In the context of poverty as is the case of villages which are located in this hunting domain, populations rely not only on hunting activities. Beyond hunting, they practice also agriculture and charcoal production which are the cornerstone activities of deforestation. Though, the deforestation is the base of the rarefaction of game. However, there is clear evidence that attempts to protect or re-establish wildlife resources that into consideration the socio-economic needs of local people are doomed (Lewis *et al.* n.d.).



### 3.6. Impact of users' practices

The hunting impact on wildlife resource as revealed by the decrease (84%) in the production game. This situation is justified by the fact that 68% of respondents have decided to practice hunting more than 3 times between two weeks. During this hunting period, most hunters capture on average, fewer than 5 games whose species are indicated by the graph Below (Figure2).

The figure above indicates that two species are the most captured. It concerns *Cephalophus dorsalis* and *Cephalophus monticola* each representing 25% of the catches made. On the other hand, the least species caught remains *Manis sp* which represent 1%. These results do not differ from those found by Ndambo (2014). The latter noted that the hunting pressure is mainly on large rodents and which represent 80% of captured animals on Matadi- Boma road.

Indeed, Madzou and Ebanega (2006) found in Southeast of Cameroon at the north periphery of the Boumba-Bek reserve that about 450 animals captured by villagers hunters, the majority consisted of ungulates and primates which represent more than 88% of the total and antelopes (*Cephalophes sp.*) and monkeys (*Cercopithecus sp.*) were the proportion of game.

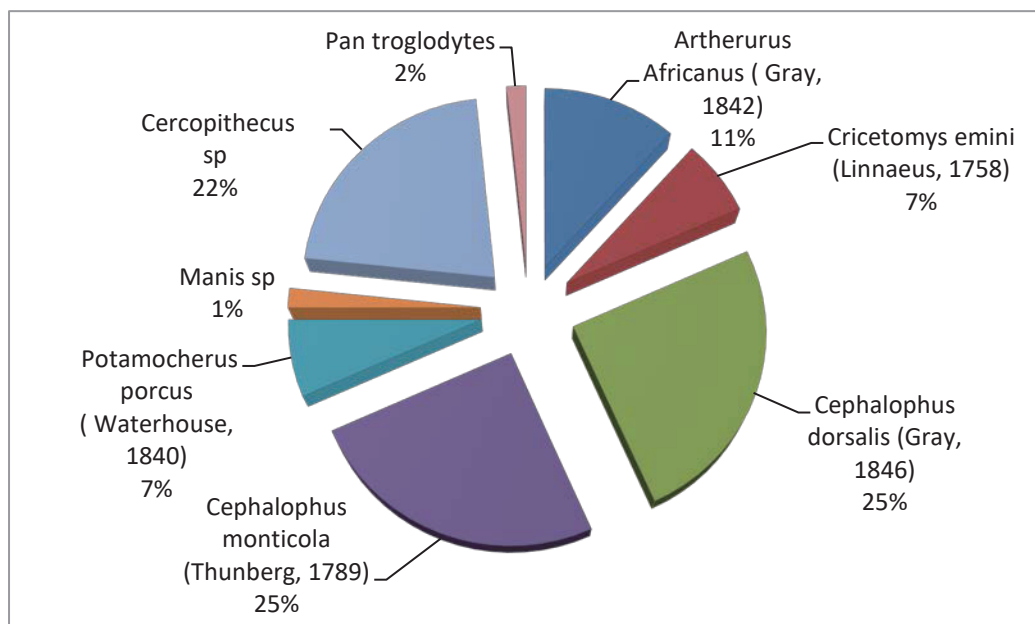


Figure 2. Game currently captured in Rubi-Tele hunting domain

Focusing on the above reality, some scholars consider that Wildlife management typically considers 2 kinds of capacity. The one which interests us is the first which is described as wildlife acceptance capacity (Decker and Purdy 1988), cultural carrying capacity (Minnis and Peyton 1995), and wildlife stakeholder acceptance capacity (Carpenter *et al.* 2000). Each stakeholder has a capacity relative to positive or negative impacts. Or acceptance capacity varies with stakeholder knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, and with their economic, social, and environmental conditions (Riley and Decker 2000). If



these conditions are not considered by stakeholders, the consequence will be the loss of these species as it was the case in the Amazon and Congo basins (Nasi *et al.* 2011).

#### 4. Conclusion

The sustainable management of wildlife resources in Rubi-Tele hunting domain requires consideration of different perceptions and practices of wildlife resources' users. However, users developed since years, strategies that allow them easy access to those natural resources despite the presence of Congolese institute of nature conservation agents who are in charge of controlling this area. In the context of weakness and incapacity of government to manage sustainably this protected area, it was important to focus on the ability of traditional authority that are representing administration among natural resources' users in Mabanga and Ngbete villages in order to analyse their ability of ensuring the sustainable management of wildlife resources. The findings show that the management of the wildlife resources by the villages concerned by our survey is not possible for the following reasons: (1) the omission of Rubi-Tele hunting domain as much as by the government than the NGOs of conservation. This hunting domain does not benefit neither of the regular functioning fees from the government nor the support from nature protection international NGOs. This situation leads to the *Governance characterized by mistrust of actors* (2) because of absence of boundaries between hunting grounds and villages. Beyond the above reasons, let's confirm together with the findings that (3) traditional power crisis is one of the causes of natural resource degradation. This reality comes from the context of creation of those villages that leads nowadays to the Scarceness of game which has negative impact (4) on the wildlife resources. To change this situation requires considering the life mode of population who lives in this hunting domain; to involve him in the management. It is to say that they have to participate in all decisions which concern this hunting domain. These populations are ready to use wildlife resources sustainably, but on one condition: they want to see the positive impact of conservation on their livelihoods. Therefore, it appears urgent for Congolese national institute of conservation which is in charge of the management of this hunting domain to work in synergy with local population and traditional authority.

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# **A preliminary report on the diversity of forest landscape recognition among the Baka hunter-gatherers of Eastern Cameroon**

Takanori Oishi<sup>a</sup> and Evariste Fedoung Fongnzossie<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

<sup>b</sup> Advanced Teacher's Training School for Technical Education,  
University of Douala, Cameroon

## **Abstract**

Indigenous peoples living in tropical forest have developed their own traditional ecological knowledge base, which has enabled their sustainable exploitation of local natural resources. Whereas there are many studies on ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, and cultural recognition of plants of Congo basin hunter-gatherers, less focus have been put on their recognition of forest landscape itself. Investigating folk classification of tropical forest landscapes can help us to more exhaustively assess habitat diversity, and to demonstrate its potential for the subsistence and well-being of forest-dependent local peoples, as well as provide meaningful information for establishing sustainable social forestry programs. We described 20 folk vegetation categories or habitats in the Baka forest nomenclature. Recognized habitats are defined based on their flooding regime and soil characteristics, indicator species, distance from the village, visibility in the understory, canopy structure, history of past land use, and forest hydrology. The Baka informants clearly distinguish and name relatively stable habitats featured by hydrological constraints, land form, and monodominance by specific species. We observed, however, considerable variations in their cognition of forest vegetations between individuals. Further study is needed to examine what factors of socioecological and/or socioeconomic conditions influence on their diverse ways of forest landscape recognition.

**Keywords:** landscape ethnoecology, African tropical rainforests, Congo basin hunter-gatherers, Cameroon



## 1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples living in tropical forest have developed their own traditional ecological knowledge base, which has enabled their sustainable exploitation of local natural resources. Also, such traditional knowledge have contributed to the development of scientific knowledge about tropical forest, as René Letouzey (1976) collected Baka lexicons related to forest botany as he owed much from Baka botanical knowledge during his fieldwork in Eastern and Southern Cameroon.

There are many studies on ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, and cultural recognition of plants among Congo basin hunter-gatherers (Motte-Florac 1980, Tanno 1981, Bahuchet 1985, Terashima *et al.* 1988, Ichikawa and Terashima 1996, Betti 2004, Hattori 2006). Most studies, however, focused on plant knowledge at (ethno-)species level and less focus have been put on their recognition of forest landscape itself. Bahuchet (1985: 49-65) applied ethno-linguistics to describe and analyze the ecological processes as understood by the Aka hunter-gatherers of the Central African Republic. Bahuchet pointed out some similarities between traditional folk and modern biological descriptions of the dynamics of tropical rainforest. The Aka informants described natural forest habitats under specific conditions related to forest gap dynamics (Bahuchet 1985).

For forest-dwelling farmers, labeled habitats tend to be related to the agricultural activities. Mvae farmers who reside at village in Campo-Ma'an National Park recognizes village forest (slash-and-burn fields, fallows and cocoa agroforests), anthropogenic forest (secondary forest, abandoned settlements), and deep forest (Dounias 1996). Nguenang *et al.* (2010) reports that Bajoué in Dja biosphere reserve (South-East Cameroon) distinguish four main vegetation types: *Ebour* (young or old fallow aged 4 to 11 years dominated by weeds like *Chromolaena odorata* in early stage and by *Musanga cecropioides* in the old stage; *Kwalkomo* (corresponding to secondary forest with characteristic species like *Zanthoxylum gillettii*, *Pentaclerathra macrophylla*, *Terminalia superb*; *Ekomo* (corresponding to mature forest more or less disturbed with the shrub layer dominated by *Rinorea* and *Drypetes*; *Zam* (corresponding to swamp forest with dominance of *Raphia* species).

Whereas these previous studies give us glimpses on variation of forest recognition by forest dwellers of central Africa, the content and structure of folk knowledge about forest landscapes, especially those of complex secondary vegetations, has not been properly investigated as of yet. Investigating this type of folk classification system can help us more exhaustively assess habitat diversity (Abraao *et al.* 2008) and demonstrate its potential for the subsistence and well-being of forest-dependent local peoples, as well as provide meaningful information for establishing sustainable social forestry programs.

Form of local knowledge on forest diversity is not uniform among tropical forest dwellers in different regions and cultures despite of similarity in environment (Ellen 2010). Ethno-ecological tropical forest classification have been studied in Amazonia and then in southeast Asia. There are two patterns reported: detailed and relatively definitive fixed classification with many lexicalization of



specific vegetations (such as among the Matsigenka in Peru Amazon: Abraao *et al.* 2010, Shepard *et al.* 2001) and flexible, multidimensional, less or non-fixed classification with less lexicalization of specific vegetation (such as among the Nuaulu in Eastern Indonesia: Ellen 2010). To which extent local people share systematic categorization may depend on both of the pattern of forest diversity and each group's mode of forest recognition. In this paper, we try to describe the folk forest recognition among the Baka and its intracultural diversity in relation to their daily livelihoods.

## 2. Study area and people

This study has been conducted in southeastern Cameroon. The study site was Ndongo village located at 2°05'N 14°5'E near the Dja River, which is the international border between Cameroon and the Republic of Congo (Figure 1). The altitude is about 360 m above sea level. The vegetation of this region has been described as mixed forest, with a dominance of deciduous species (Letouzey 1985). Annual rainfall varies from 1300 to 1600 mm and annual average temperature is 25 °C (Sighe-Nkamdjou 1994). The area is subject to a Guinean equatorial climate with four seasons divided as follows: a long dry season from December to mid-March, a short rainy season from mid-March to June, a short dry season in July and August, and a long rainy season from August to November. The weather pattern is distinctive from the other parts of Congo basin because a clearly defined dry season exists, when semi-deciduous species.

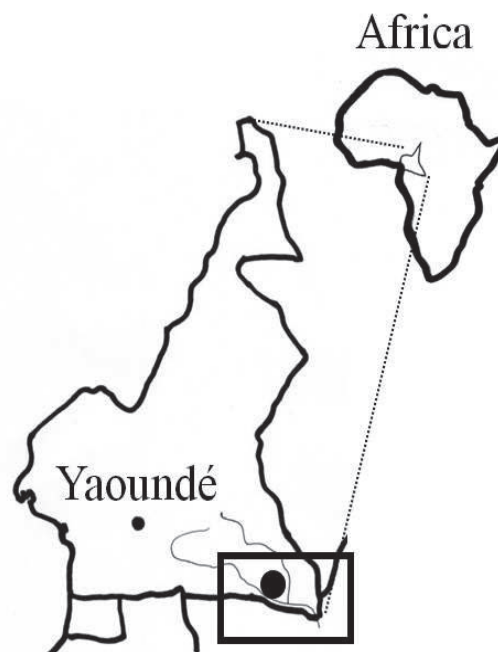


Figure 1. Research area

The Baka is one of the Pygmy hunter-gatherer groups who are assumed to be the first people of Congo Basin tropical forest, whose total population is estimated as 30,000 to 35,000 (Njounan Tegomo *et al.* 2012). Reflecting forest dependent life, the Baka are well known for their botanical knowledge



(Letouzey 1976). Since 1950s, Lifestyle of the Baka became sedentary and adoption of agriculture proceeded (Althabe 1965). Current subsistence activities of Baka consists of a combination of hunting and gathering, fishing, small-scale shifting cultivation, and cocoa farming (Oishi 2012).

Total population of local community of Ndongo is around 350. Whereas the inhabitants of research area are multi-ethnic with 15 ethnic groups resulting from operation of commercial logging operation in the past, major part of population are dominated in number by two indigenous groups of the Baka hunter-gatherers and Bakwele fisher-farmers (Oishi 2012). There were eight separate sedentary camps for the Baka, each of which has a population between 27 and 58 at the time of fieldwork.

### **3. Methodology**

We conducted field research for two weeks in February 2009 and three weeks in July 2010. The visits were made in the middle of the major and minor dry seasons, respectively. Interviews were conducted in Baka and French languages throughout the research.

First we made a preliminary group discussion, which had been held with 27 Baka adults (15 men and 12 women) living in Ndongo village to explore terminologies of the different forest landscapes that are recognized by the Baka. The group interview was conducted as a free-form conversation among the participants with a minimum of intervention by the researchers. We asked informants simple questions such as ‘*What kinds of forest do you know?*’. There were often differences of opinion among participants.

Confusing and conflicting opinions were recorded and translated from Baka language with the help of research assistants. After some discussion, participants of the group discussion reached a consensus on the major forest categories. The result of this discussion was repeatedly verified by cross-checking with different Baka informants throughout the field research in the forest.

### **4. Results**

In total, 20 folk vegetation categories or habitats were preliminarily recorded in the Baka forest nomenclature. Table 1 characterizes the 20 habitats and the matching floristic forest types based on contemporary ecological classification systems (Photographs of each landscape were given in the appendix).



Table 1. Baka vegetation categories

No.	Baka vegetation category	Description
1	<i>bele</i>	generic term of "forest"
2	<i>bai</i>	wet savannah, the Baka don't recognize as forest
3	<i>njambo</i>	<i>Raphia</i> forest, the Baka don't recognize as forest
4	<i>wundo na gbie*</i>	agricultural fallow, the Baka don't recognize as forest
5	<i>bele na bundja</i> or <i>saka*</i>	periodically flooded forest
6	<i>tobele</i>	deep forest far from village, etymologically meaning is "the heart (centre) of the forest"
7	<i>bemba*</i>	<i>Gilbertiodendron</i> monodominant forest
8	<i>liwala*</i>	forest with understory dominated by <i>boboko</i> ( <i>Marantochloa purpurea</i> ) and where you can find many <i>bala bala</i> trees ( <i>Milletia</i> sp.) with cacao like large leaves. Surface soil is blakish.
9	<i>buya*</i>	forest with open canopy and more or less thick understory. Only few heliophyte trees emerge the canopy. Could be understood as young growing secondary forest.
10	<i>buka</i>	physically and physiognomically similar forest to <i>buya</i> . <i>Buka</i> is smaller forest patch than <i>buya</i> .
11	<i>bi*</i>	forest with very thick understory where it is difficult to see at long distance.
12	<i>koko na bele*</i>	forest gaps created by the falling down of trees.
13	<i>kpwoto*</i>	heavily disturbed areas near wet savannah where elephants and the other large mammals use to come and feed.
14	<i>dobo</i>	swamp forest along streams, poorly drained.
15	<i>diko bala (na bele)*</i>	forest regenerated after the abandoned temporary camps for hunting and gathering, fishing, and small-scale agriculture.
16	<i>diko ba (na bele)*</i>	forest regenerated after the abandoned villages.
17	<i>bikolo*</i>	mature forest with many big trees and more or less thick understory.
18	<i>mandja*</i>	mature forest with very clear understory where you can see somebody at or something very far.
18a	<i>mandja na bi</i>	forest mosaic where one can find discontinuous patches of <i>mandja</i> and <i>bi</i> forests categories.
18b	<i>mandja na bikolo or bikolo na mandja</i>	forest mosaic where one can find discontinuous patches of <i>mandja</i> and <i>bikolo</i> forests categories.

Note: Photographs of the categories with \* are provided in the Appendix.

The generic Baka term for forest is *bele*. *Bele* is thought to occupy the semiotically opposite position of *ba* (sedentary village). Wet savannah, *Raphia* forest, and agricultural fallow lands are not recognized as forest. Excluding generic and composite terms, the Baka lexicalize more on natural habitats (11 habitats) than on anthropogenic habitats (3 habitats). Baka categorization and recognition of forest reflects multiple frameworks, that include physical structure, flooding regime, dominant species, topography, distance from settlement (sedentary village), animal disturbance, and anthropogeneity (past human activities, human settlement history). Among these forest understory visibility and canopy openness were frequently cited as reasons to explain the differences between forest habitats.

As can be seen in the case of combined categories of *mandja na bikolo* and *mandja na bi* (categories 18a and 18b in Table 1), the Baka do not always set clear boundaries between different forest categories. The correspondence between the present forest and forest categories is not fixed and does not always have a one-to-one relationship. The Baka informants claimed complicated varieties of forest vegetation in various ways. This flexible and elastic characteristic mode of their forest recognition might be a practical to cope with constantly changing diverse situation of forest micro-environments (Ellen 2010).



Natural vegetation and anthropogenic vegetation appear to be similar in their physical structure. The Baka perceive a similarity between agricultural fallow and young forest vegetation undergoing the process of regeneration. *Wundo* is a term used for agricultural fallow, but sometimes the Baka also use this term for *buya*, large sized forest gaps. In such cases, the Baka distinguish *wundo na bele* (fallow of forest) from *wundo na gbie* (agricultural fallow) near the village.

The *tobele* category is unique from the other habitats in that it is defined only by the distance from sedentary villages or camps. Considering that it can also contain many of the other habitats of forest, it cannot be treated in the same way as the categories of vegetation type. In general, the distance appears to be far more than 15 km (in a straight line) from the current village, but it is impossible to clarify and quantify the boundary of *tobele* because the Baka recognize *tobele* in a continuum with other habitats, and more importantly, they “feel” it according to the informants.

We also observed a considerable intra-cultural variations about forest landscape recognitions among Baka informants. Whereas some informants stressed the importance of soil and land form, the others stressed the potential distribution of edible wild and semi-wild plant and animal species for gathering and hunting activities. In addition, gendered differences are evident in some forest habitat uses. For example, whereas female Baka tend to tell importance of secondary forests to fetch *Marantaceae* herb leaves that are indispensable for roofing traditional *mongulu* mobile huts, male Baka tend to tell importance of Primary and *Raphia* monodominant forests to fetch tree species and *Raphia* shoots for house construction at sedentarized camps. This may reflect modification of gendered roles among the Baka following continuous tendencies of sedentarization.

## 5. Discussion

In general, Baka forest habitats are defined based on their flooding regime and soil characteristics, indicator species, distance from the village, visibility in the understory, canopy structure, history of past land use, and forest hydrology. The Baka clearly distinguish and name relatively stable habitats featured by hydrological constraints, land form, and monodominance by specific species. Four of the Baka habitats (*bemba*, *njambo*, *liwala*, and *bai*) were specifically defined based on the presence of characteristic indicator species: *Gilbertiodendron dewevrei*, *Raphia* spp., *Millettia* sp., and savannahs grasses, respectively. *Gilbertiodendron* monodominant forest (also refer to as *limbali*) and *Raphia* forest types are also considered as modern ecological classifications (Aubrevile 1957), as well as in the Cameroon national forest classification of ONADEF (1992). Knowledge about these habitats were extensively shared among people. On the contrary, habitat like the *tobele*, which etymologically means “the heart [center] of the forest,” cannot only be clearly defined but individual perception may also vary a lot depending on his/her cumulative experience in the forest.

The *bi*, *buka*, *buya*, *koko na bele*, *diko ba*, *diko bala*, and *wundo na gbie* respectively represent different conditions of secondary vegetation. Only three categories of *diko ba*, *diko bala*, and *wundo na*



*gbie* reflected human use history. Different from the previous studies on forest dwellers who principally rely on swidden agriculture (Dounias 1996, Nguenang *et al.* 2010), the Baka lexicalize more on natural habitats than on anthropogenic habitats. The *koko na bele* forest category reflects a natural disturbance (trees falling down) and same terminology is also reported in the forest nomenclature of Aka pygmies of the Central African Republic (Bahuchet 1985), as well as in ecological classifications. The *bi*, *buka*, and *buya* reflect the physiognomical aspect of the forest (understory density and canopy structure, respectively). *Dibo* and *saka* (or *bele na bundja*) are associated with forest hydrology and soil characteristics, and these characteristics are also reflected in modern ecological classification systems (Aubreville 1952, Letouzey 1985, ONADEF 1992). Similarly, the *kpwoto* category, which is ‘a place where elephants gather and feed’, is well known in the scientific literature as *saline*. Although *mandja* and *bikolo* both represent mature stages of forest growth, the Baka clearly distinguish them based on their understory structure. Frameworks in which the Baka recognize secondary forest are multidimensional, sometimes overlapping, and complementing each other to draw diverse and intermediate features of dynamic forest landscapes. This may allow the Baka to make ad hoc reference to a particular condition of forest, as their “pragmatic” response to the high complexity of environment (Ellen 2010).

Thus, our results are in line with previous studies that have argued that folk forest classification systems can provide novel ecological information for modern ecologists (Abraao *et al.* 2008, Sheil and Lawrence 2004, Halme and Bodmer 2007, Shepard *et al.* 2001). Whereas previous quantitative analysis on forest landscape recognition were mostly from Amazonia and Southeast Asia and absent from central Africa, the present research suggests that the traditional ecological knowledge of forest dwellers such as the Baka have enough potential to be used to identify major landscape units in southeast Cameroon rainforest areas.

The question arises whether the Baka have a similar type of ethnotheories or the perspectives to grasp the ecological relationships between their recognized habitats. When we asked how they observe vegetation changes in the long term, Baka informants told us about their understandings of vegetation changes, for example, from forest gaps to open canopy forest or very thick undergrowth forest, depending on the gap size (cf. Bahuchet 1985). Of course the Baka are also aware that fallow land will return to forest. Although their images of vegetation change may not be arranged systematically and there observed were considerable variation in their ways of expression, it is clear that the Baka view forest vegetation not as a static entity but as a dynamic one (Ellen 2010). Further study is needed to examine what factors of socioecological and/or socioeconomic conditions influence on their diverse ways of forest landscape recognition.



## Acknowledgements

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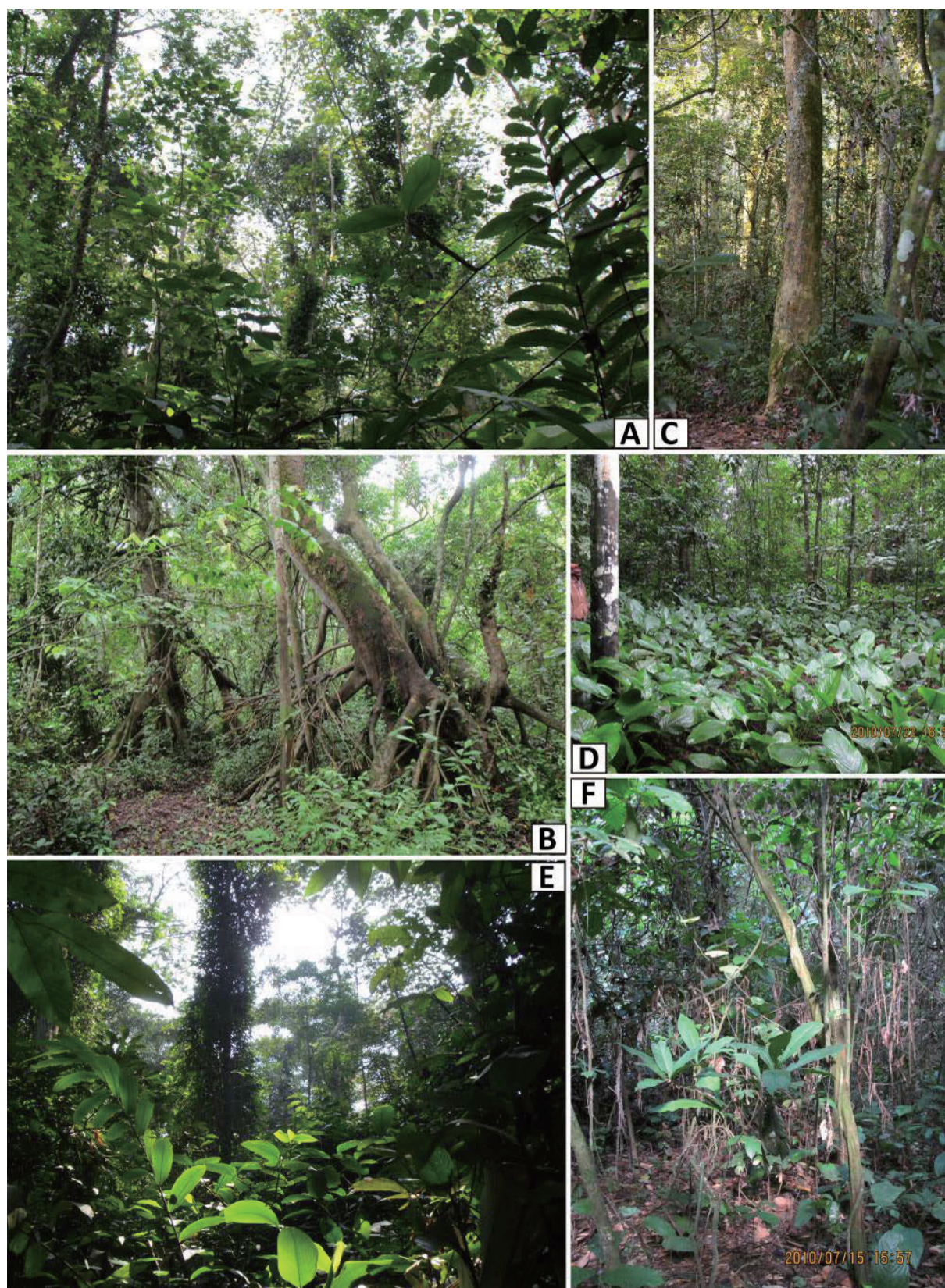
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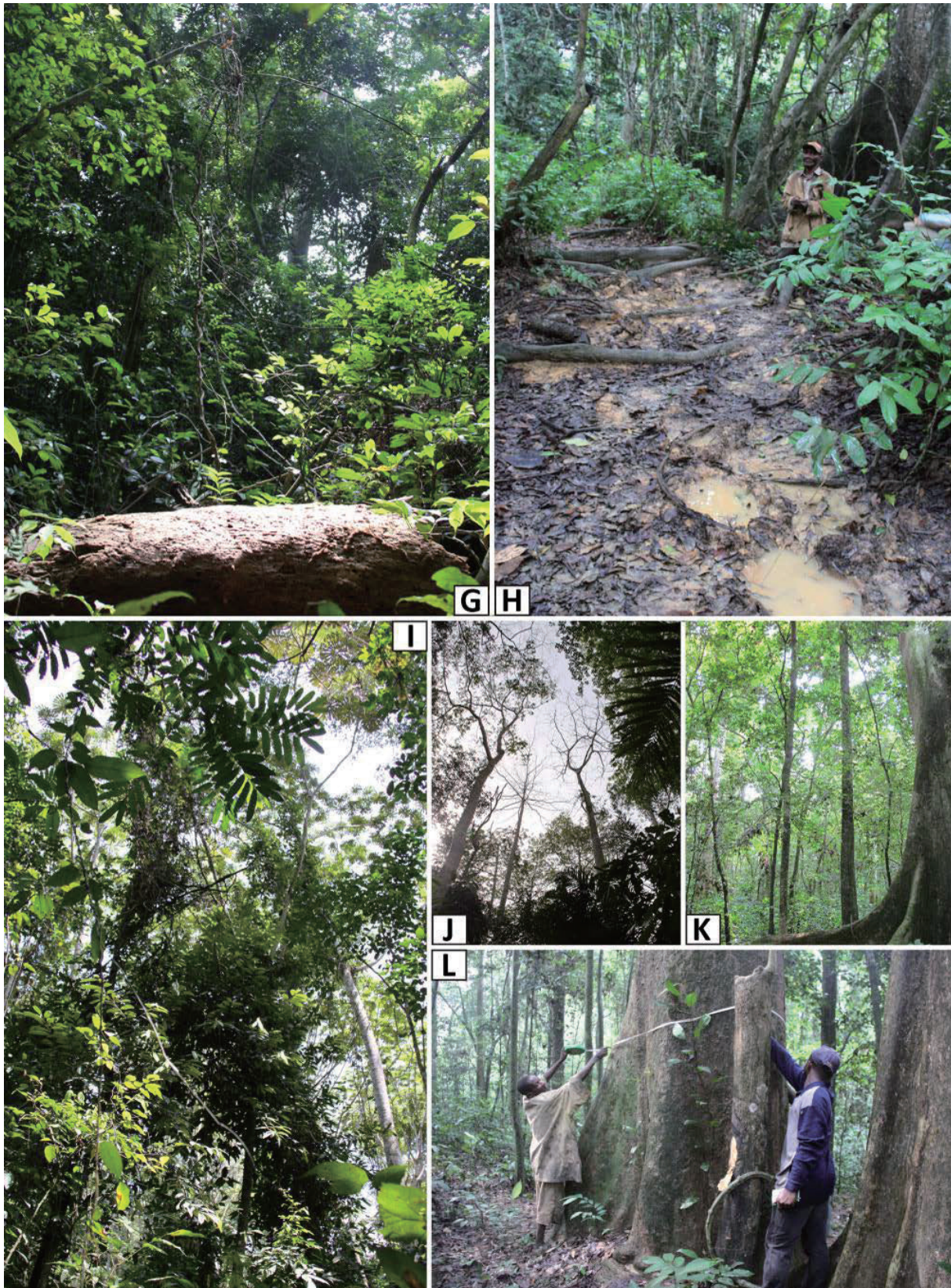


**Appendix. Photographs of observed forest landscapes.**



*Figure 2. (A)wundo na gbie, (B)bele na bundja, (C)bembamba, (D)liwala, (E)buya, (F)bi*





(G)koko na bele, (H)kpwoto, (I)diko bala, (J)diko ba, (K)bikolo, (L)mandja







## Exploring farmers' vulnerability and agrobiodiversity in perspective of adaptation in Southern Cameroon

Forbi Preasious Funwi<sup>ab</sup>, Denis Jean Sonwa<sup>c</sup>, William Armand Mala<sup>b</sup>, Takanori Oishi<sup>d</sup>,  
Marlene Toukam Ngansop<sup>ab</sup>, and Marie Mbolo<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Millennium Ecologic Museum, Cameroon

<sup>b</sup> Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaounde I, Cameroon

<sup>c</sup> Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Central African Regional Office, Cameroon

<sup>d</sup> African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

### Abstract

Climate change is a global phenomenon that indiscriminately affects all sectors of the economy and social life-support systems. New trends in climate change will leave high impacts on rural populations, whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and natural resources, leaving them increasingly vulnerable. Agrobiodiversity management is a promising method of facilitating adaptation to climatic changes. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the vulnerability of farmers and assess agrobiodiversity in Southern Cameroon in the context of adaptation. Focus groups and surveys were conducted in 31 villages in Ayos and Bokito in Southern Cameroon. The vulnerability index was computed for selected indicators of different components of vulnerability (exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity). Data analysis revealed that in the two communities, the majority of villages were moderately vulnerable to climate change. However, Bokito community appeared to be more vulnerable than Ayos community. Farmers adopted several climate adaptation strategies such as crop replacement, replanting, planting of trees, cultivation of crops in swampy areas, and the expansion of cocoa cultivation in savannahs. Rich agrobiodiversity was identified in both sites; however, Ayos was richer than Bokito for wild plants, wildlife, and fisheries resources. The Bokito community also had a higher dependence on agriculture. Sustainably managing the rich agrobiodiversity of the landscape can provide a critical method to build the resilience of farmers.

**Keywords:** farmers, climate change, vulnerability, agrobiodiversity, adaptation



## 1. Introduction

Climate change is a global phenomenon that indiscriminately affects all sectors of the economy and social groups (Dendir and Simane 2019). This change manifests itself through rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and frequent and severe weather events, which increasingly affect societies and ecosystems globally and in turn require support to adapt to these changes (IFAD 2013, Fedele *et al.* 2019). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the negative impacts of climate change will be most severely felt in the Least Developed Countries (FAO 2017). Several studies have shown that Africa is the most vulnerable continent (e.g. Rockstrom 2000, Sonwa 2018, Sarkodie and Strezov 2019). This vulnerability is attributed to limited skills and equipment for disaster management, inadequate financial resources (poverty), weak institutional capacity, heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture, as well as socioeconomic and ecological conditions (Rockstrom 2000, Mulwa *et al.* 2017, Sonwa *et al.* 2017, Agovino *et al.* 2018, Sonwa 2018). Sarkodie and Strezov (2019) summarise Africa's vulnerability by reporting that Africa has a high sensitivity, high exposure, and low adaptive capacity.

Studies have asserted that climate change will continue at an accelerating rate, thereby raising the adaptation challenge for agriculture (IPCC 2013, Fan *et al.* 2017), and that this poses a major and growing threat to global food security (FAO 2018). Thus, as the impacts of climate change on agriculture intensify, it will become increasingly difficult to grow crops, raise animals, manage forests, and catch fish in the same ways and same locations as in the past (FAO 2016). This situation exacerbates the vulnerabilities of poor farmers in rural areas, whose livelihoods primarily depend on agricultural, forestry, and fishery resources, by creating major challenges to attaining sustainability through the depletion of natural resources (Agovino *et al.* 2018). Adesina and Odekunle (2011) posit that to effectively address adaptation to climate change, it is critical to have clear perceptions of the vulnerabilities of ecological, economic, and social systems within a country. Hence, there is an urgent need to continue seeking reliable solutions to the numerous problems posed by pervasive climate change. This further heightens the need for assessing vulnerability.

Vulnerability has been defined as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, the adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes (IPCC 2007). This definition embodies three elements often used to assess vulnerability: the exposure of a system to climate variations, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity (Luers *et al.* 2003, Turner *et al.* 2003, Füssel and Klein 2006, IPCC 2007). Exposure refers to the degree of climate stress to which a particular unit or system is exposed. The stress could be changes in climate conditions or variability in climatic behaviour, including the magnitude and frequency of extreme events (O'Brien *et al.* 2004). Sensitivity is the degree to which a system is modified or affected by an internal or external disturbance or set of disturbances (Adesina and Odekunle 2011). Several approaches to climate change adaptation exist and one of them is the management of agrobiodiversity.



Agrobiodiversity has been identified as a key indicator of the sustainability of food systems (Sthapit *et al.* 2017). In addition, agro-ecological practices promoting the optimal use of crop genetic diversity (Hajjar *et al.* 2008) can sustainably intensify agricultural production, whilst simultaneously increasing ecosystem resilience and reducing gas emissions per unit of production (Hughes *et al.* 2008), and contributing immensely to the global resilience of agriculture-based communities.

Several studies have been undertaken to address adaptation to climate change in Cameroon. For example, Ngondjeb (2013) assessed the impact of climate change and adaptation options of agriculture in the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Cameroon. Tingem *et al.* (2008) studied the impact of climate change on crop production, whilst Brown and Sonwa (2015) investigated rural local institutions and climate change adaptation in Cameroon's forest communities. These studies did not tackle the issue of climate change vulnerability, with the exception of Fongnzossie *et al.* (2018). Their study assessed vulnerability of coastal dwellers to climate risks in the Campo-Kribi area of Cameroon. Hence, assessing vulnerability with the aim of providing more information for climate change adaptation planning is an ongoing research target for Cameroon. The objectives of the present study were to assess the vulnerability of farmers in Southern Cameroon and examine the potential for adaptation of agrobiodiversity in natural farmers' livelihood support systems, with a special focus on the Ayos and Bokito communities. The study sought to describe the vulnerabilities of these communities and the factors that explain them to understand the agrobiodiversity stock of each site and determine how it can contribute to climate change adaptation.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Study sites

The study was conducted in Ayos in the Nyong and Mfoumou Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon, and in Bokito in the Mbam and Inoubou Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon (Figure 1). Ayos is located east of the capital Yaounde, whilst Bokito is found west of Yaounde. Yaounde is the main urban market for both areas. The climate of Ayos is humid tropical whilst that of Bokito is humid subtropical. However, both areas are characterised by the same seasons:

- A long dry season from mid-November to mid-March, characterised by end of year festivities in the early part of the season and farm preparation activities for replanting towards the end of the season;
- A short rainy season from mid-March to mid-June during which farmers concentrate on crop cultivation and most especially short-cycle crops;
- A short dry season from mid-June to mid-August during which farmers harvest some of the crops planted during the short rainy season and also prepare farm plots to receive seeds during the long rainy season; and
- A long rainy season from September to mid-November with major farming activities.



The vegetation of Bokito is dominated by herbaceous and shrubby savannah grassland whilst Ayos is dominated by gallery forests and *Raphia* swamp forests. Bokito has a population of 72,000 inhabitants, spread across 36 villages, with a total surface area of 1,115 km<sup>2</sup>. Ayos has a population of 22,899 inhabitants with 29 villages and a total surface area of 1,250 km<sup>2</sup>.

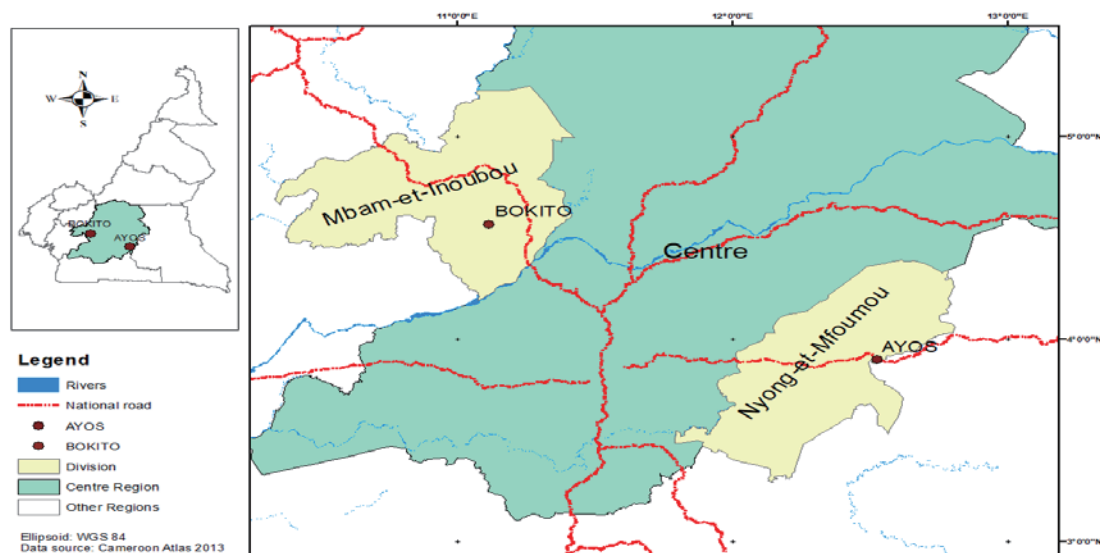


Figure 1. Map indicating study sites

## 2.2. Vulnerability assessment framework

Vulnerability arises from complex interactions between socio-economic, institutional and environmental systems, which complicate any assessment or quantification (Krishnamurthy 2014). Hence, several approaches have been developed to assess vulnerability to climate change in different contexts. However, there is no ‘one size fits all’ method for the assessment of vulnerability. Doch *et al.* (2015) reported that vulnerability assessments link the social and biophysical dimensions of environmental change. Several authors conceptualise vulnerability as the exposure of a system to hazards, sensitivity of the system to change, and its adaptive capacity to the changes in the environment (IPCC 2007, 2013, Heng *et al.* 2013). The vulnerability assessment framework developed by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC 2007) has been widely used to analyse vulnerability, due to its robustness and adaptability. This approach uses indicators to assess vulnerability through a vulnerability index.

## 2.3. Data collection procedure

Data were collected through focus group discussions and completed using the council development plans of the two areas. The focus group data were collected in 31 villages and these were selected based on the size of their population, access to the market, and ethnicity (Table 1).



Table 1. Villages where focus group data were collected

Ayos		Bokito	
Village	Number of participants	Village	Number of participants
Nsan 1	10	Tchekos	8
Niamvoudou	10	Omeng	8
Wong	10	Tobagne	11
Ebeck	18	Bongo	7
Ndelle	14	Batanga	19
Abeng Nnam	25	Yangben	13
Melan	10	Kedia	9
Yebe	8	Bokaga	24
Ngoun 2	23	Guefigue	17
Mbaka	13	Yambassa	16
Tomba 1	7	Bogando	10
Akam Engali	20	Balamba	11
Mbang	13	Yoro	32
Olembe	7	Assala 1	16
Nyabewa	7	Begni	9
Biwo	7		
Total	202	Total	210
Grand total	412		

#### 2.4. Data analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS software. The weighting of indicators was done through ranking scores provided during focus group surveys, and expert judgments. The indicators for sensitivity, exposure and adaptive capacity were chosen through literature review of multiple vulnerability studies (e.g. Adesina and Odekunle 2011, Atedhor 2015, and Žurovec *et al.* 2017) and focus group data. The weighted values were further used to compute Vulnerability (V) using the equation developed by Gehendra (2012):

$$V = (E \times S) / AC$$

Where V: vulnerability, E: exposure, and AC: adaptive capacity.

The vulnerability of each community was categorised using five ranking classes, as used by Fongnzossie *et al.* (2018), as follows:

Low:  $V \leq 1$ ; Medium:  $1 < V \leq 2$ ; High:  $2 < V < 4$ ; Very high:  $V \geq 4$ . Where, V= Vulnerability Index.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the adaptation strategies of farmer communities.



### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Exposure

##### 3.1.1. Farmers' perceptions on temperature, rainfall, and other biophysical climate variables

All farmers in Ayos and Bokito acknowledged that the seasons are changing. A high number of villages (26 villages) in both sites also reported less rainfall, the shortening of the rainy season and longer duration of droughts and frequent whirlwinds. Higher temperatures were reported more frequently in Bokito.

##### 3.1.2. Farmers perception of climate change impact

Farmers in Ayos and Bokito both reported the prevalence of plant pest and diseases, and land degradation as the biggest impacts of climate change (Table 3). Farmers in Bokito reported the drying of soils frequently as the most severe impact of droughts on their livelihood support systems, which includes water sources and difficulty in undertaking tillage farming practices. Farmers in Ayos villages indicated that crop failure was more severe.

Table 2. Farmers' perception of climate variables

Climatic variable	Number of villages signalling event	
	Ayos	Bokito
Less rainfall	15	11
Number of rains vary	1	3
Number of rains increase	0	1
Early onset of rains	2	5
Late onset of rains	1	1
Unpredictable onset of rains	13	9
Shortening of rainy season	14	13
Lengthening of rainy season	0	1
Early ending of rains	9	8
Unpredictable ending of rains	6	6
Frequent occurrence of droughts	12	2
Varying occurrence of droughts	12	12
Long duration of droughts	10	14
Higher temperatures	3	8
Extreme hot and cold temperatures	3	6
Varying temperatures	7	15
More frequent and violent winds with storms	15	12



*Table 3.* Impacts of climate change per number of villages listing them per site

Impact	Number of villages signalling impact	
	Ayos	Bokito
Poor growth of plants	2	9
Crop failure	4	1
Destruction of crops	6	4
Drying of soils	3	8
Destruction of houses	2	2
Drying of crops	2	7
Rivers drying up	8	15
Land degradation	8	9
Prevalence of crop pests and diseases	14	12
Human health problems	5	11

### 3.1.3. Occurrence of extreme climatic events

Major, extreme climatic events recorded in the study area were violent winds and long droughts. The drought conditions could be responsible for the water scarcity and recurrent drying of rivers in Bokito.

## 3.2. Sensitivity

### 3.2.1. Relative livelihood importance of forest, savannahs, and other land use types

Five major functional landscapes were identified on the study site based on community perception (streams and rivers, savannah, forest, fallows and croplands) but for functionality reasons, fallows and cropland were merged and referred to as farmland (farming systems). The results revealed that the most important landscape for the provision of trade products was farmland for both sites, followed by forest and aquatic areas (streams and rivers) in Ayos only. The forest emerged as the most important landscape for construction materials, followed by rivers/streams and farmland with a higher relative importance for farmland in Ayos. The major hunting ground for the Ayos community was forest whilst the major hunting grounds for Bokito were savannahs and forests. Fishing activities were more important in Ayos than in Bokito.

On a general note, the Ayos community recorded a higher dependence on resources favoured by the presence of a forest than the Bokito community, who showed a higher dependence on agriculture (Table 4), although agriculture was practiced in both forest and savannah landscapes. This confirms the place of savannahs in the society, as highlighted by Boke-Olén *et al.* (2016) who reported that savannahs are particularly important because they are populated with societies dependent on subsistence farming.



*Table 4.* Relative importance of landscapes for the provision of goods and services

Goods and services	Streams/rivers		Savannah		Forest and forest products		Farmland	
	Ayos	Bokito	Ayos	Bokito	Ayos	Bokito	Ayos	Bokito
Trade products	20.80	9.35	2.14	6.33	35.27	15.62	41.79	68.70
Construction	19.50	17.90	1.04	2.86	61.38	70.35	18.08	8.89
Food	20.78	14.43	0.78	13.97	36.72	16.09	41.72	55.50
Fuelwood	1.79	1.90	2.29	24.75	61.74	41.86	34.18	31.49
Hunting	7.00	5.62	4.43	51.86	63.67	40.24	24.9	2.28
Tools	1.94	2.22	2.50	20.06	69.4	2.11	26.16	15.61
Traditional medicine	11.88	10.12	2.08	21.12	63.85	52.64	22.19	16.12
Total	83.69	61.54	15.26	140.95	392.03	298.91	209.02	198.59

### 3.3. Adaptive capacity

#### 3.3.1. Literacy rate

Within the framework of this study, the literacy rate was considered as the proportion of the persons in a community that could read and write. The average literacy rate was 60.91 % for Ayos and 79.73 % for the community of Bokito. In Ayos, the highest literacy rate was 98 %, whilst the lowest was 45 %. For Bokito, the highest literacy rate was also 98 %, whilst the lowest was 50 %.

#### 3.3.2. Sanitation

Sanitary infrastructure was absent in most villages. In villages where this was present, the quality of service rendered to the populations was generally poor due to the lack of equipment and an insufficiency of qualified staff.

#### 3.3.3. Housing quality

Houses in the two study sites were generally made of thatch, mud, planks, and cement bricks. The majority of houses in most villages were poorly constructed thatched houses. Housing quality was better in Bokito than in Ayos.

#### 3.3.4. Markets and transportation

In Ayos, the main market is located in the Ayos urban area. Braving the odds of bad roads, which are mostly unmaintained earth roads (in 14 villages), is a major constraint for farmers to market their products and/or to obtain substitutes for household consumption. Villages located a great distance from the divisional headquarters suffer more, as the majority of goods transportation is conducted by motor bikes, which carry very small quantities. There are periodic markets (once a week) in some villages in the vicinity of Bokito that give some farmers the opportunity to sell their products without having to



transport them. Roads in the Bokito area are also predominantly earth roads with very high levels of inaccessibility. Motor bikes are also the main transportation means, but private vehicles intervene occasionally in the transportation of goods.

### 3.3.5. Organisations

The study found that at the village level there were very few local institutions and associations working in the domain of agriculture and conservation. Focus group results also revealed a low level of collaboration among farmers, hence making it difficult for them to create and manage their cooperatives and farmer groups.

### 3.4. Vulnerability

The analysis of data revealed a high number of farmers being moderately vulnerable with a very high vulnerability obtained for only one village in the Bokito community (Table 5).

*Table 5.* Exposure, sensitivity, adaptive capacity and vulnerability index per village

Site	Village	Exposure index	Sensitivity index	Adaptive capacity index	Vulnerability index
Ayos	Nsan 1	1.67	2.13	1.57	2.25
	Niamvoudou	1.67	1.63	1.43	1.90
	Wong	1.67	2.00	1.14	2.92
	Ebeck	1.67	2.00	1.43	2.33
	Ndelle	1.67	1.88	1.71	1.82
	Abeng Nnam	1.67	1.88	1.43	2.19
	Melan	1.67	2.13	1.14	3.10
	Yebe	1.67	2.13	1.29	2.75
	Ngoun 2	1.67	2.00	1.14	2.92
	Mbaka	2.22	1.88	1.57	2.65
	Tomba 1	1.78	2.00	1.57	2.26
	Akam Engali	1.78	2.00	1.14	3.11
	Mbang	1.89	1.88	2.00	1.77
	Olembe	1.78	1.75	2.00	1.56
	Nyabewa	1.78	2.00	1.57	2.26
	Biwo	1.78	2.00	1.29	2.77
Bokito	Tchekos	2.11	2.00	1.29	3.28
	Omeng	2.44	2.00	1.14	4.28
	Tobagne	2.56	2.00	1.43	3.58
	Bongo	2.56	2.00	1.43	3.58
	Batanga	2.56	1.88	1.43	3.35
	Yangben	2.56	2.00	1.57	3.25
	Kedia	2.56	2.00	1.71	2.98
	Bokaga	2.56	2.00	2.00	2.56



	Guefigue	2.56	2.00	1.86	2.75
	Yambassa	2.56	1.88	2.00	2.40
	Bogando	2.56	2.00	1.57	3.25
	Balamba	2.56	2.00	1.43	3.58
	Yoro	2.56	2.00	1.43	3.58
	Assala 1	2.56	1.88	1.86	2.58
	Begni	2.56	1.88	1.57	3.05

### 3.5. Local adaptation strategies

Farmers use different local strategies to cope with the effects of climate change, mainly based on the impact. In Ayos, farmers mostly resorted to fallowing, the use of fertilisers, cultivation in swampy areas, waiting for rains, mixed cropping, replanting, and crop replacement, as climate adaptation strategies (Table 6). However, some farmers lack adaptation strategies and bear the consequences of climate change. In Bokito, the major local adaptation strategies were fallowing, planting of cocoa in savannah, mixed cropping, crop replacement, and planting of trees. Farmers revealed that in the past, cocoa was cultivated only in the small forest patches of Bokito.

Table 6. Local adaptation strategies reported by farmers

Adaptation strategy	Number of villages that listed them	
	Ayos	Bokito
No adaptation strategies	2	2
Wait for rains before planting	4	2
Replanting	3	5
Mixed cropping	5	7
Anticipation of planting	4	1
Crop replacement	2	4
Planting of trees	3	3
Planting cocoa in savannah	3	5
Farming in swampy areas	4	1
Use of pesticides and insecticides	1	1
Fallowing	6	10
Use of fertilisers	5	1



### 3.6. Agrobiodiversity in forest landscape of Southern Cameroon

#### 3.6.1. Agrobiodiversity in cultivated species

The study revealed that similar food crops are cultivated in the two study areas. However, the main food crops cultivated in Ayos are cassava, plantain, groundnuts, and egusi. These crops are often mixed with other crops, including maize and cocoyams. In Bokito the major cultivated food crops are maize, cocoyams, plantain, groundnuts, yams, egusi, and sweet potatoes. The planting of fruit trees is practiced more frequently in Bokito than in Ayos. The major cash crop cultivated in Bokito is cocoa, with a large number of plantations established in savannah areas, whereas two major cash crops are cultivated in Ayos (coffee and cocoa). Market gardening is more developed in Bokito with a high level of cultivation of tomatoes and pepper.

Table 7. List of agrobiodiversity in cultivated plant species

Scientific name	Family	Common/local name	Ayos	Bokito
<i>Alium cepa</i>	Liliaceae	Local onion	×	
<i>Amaranthus esculentus</i>	Amaranthaceae	Amaranth	×	×
<i>Amaranthus hybridus</i>	Amaranthaceae	Amaranth	×	×
<i>Annona muricata</i>	Annonaceae	Soursop	×	×
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>	Fabaceae	Groundnut	×	×
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	Solanaceae	Poivron	×	×
<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Solanaceae	Pepper	×	×
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	Paw paw	×	×
<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Watermelon	×	×
<i>Citrus aurantium</i>	Rutaceae	Lime	×	×
<i>Citrus limon</i>	Rutaceae	Lemon	×	×
<i>Citrus paradisi</i>	Rutaceae	Pamplemousse	×	×
<i>Citrus reticulata</i>	Rutaceae	Mandarin	×	×
<i>Citrus sinensis</i>	Rutaceae	Orange	×	×
<i>Cocus nucifera</i>	Arecaceae	Coconut		×
<i>Coffee</i> spp.	Rubiaceae	Coffee	×	×
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Araceae	Taro	×	×
<i>Cucumeropsis mannii</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Egusi	×	×
<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Pumpkin	×	×
<i>Dacryodes edulis</i>	Burseraceae	Safou	×	×
<i>Dioscorea</i> spp.	Dioscoreaceae	Yams	×	×
<i>Elaies guineensis</i>	Arecaceae	Oil palm	×	×
<i>Glycine max</i>	Fabaceae	Soybean		
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Convolvulaceae	Sweet potatoes	×	×
<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	Asteraceae	Lettuce		×
<i>Legenaria siceraria</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Calabash		×
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	Mango	×	×
<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Cassava	×	×
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae	Plantain	×	×
<i>Musa sapientum</i>	Musaceae	Banana	×	×
<i>Ocimum gratissimum</i>	Lamiaceae	Messep		×
<i>Persea americana</i>	Lauraceae	Avocado	×	×



<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	Fabaceae	Beans	×	×
<i>Psidium guayava</i>	Myrtaceae	Guava	×	×
<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	Poaceae	Sugarcane	×	×
<i>Sesamun indicum</i>	Pedaliaceae	Sesame		×
<i>Solanu tuberosum</i>	Solanaceae	Irish potatoes	×	×
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	Solanaceae	Tomatoes	×	×
<i>Solanum macrocarpon</i>	Solanaceae	Eggplant	×	×
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Solanaceae	Black nightshade	×	×
<i>Spondias cytherea</i>	Anacardiaceae	Casmanga	×	×
<i>Talinum triangulare</i>	Portulacaceae	Waterleaf		×
<i>Telfairia occidentalis</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Fluted pumpkin	×	
<i>Theobroma cacao</i>	Malvaceae	Cacao		×
<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>	Asteraceae	Bitterleaf	×	×
<i>Xanthosoma sagittifolium</i>	Araceae	Macabo	×	×
<i>Zea mays</i>	Poaceae	Maize	×	×
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Ginger		×

### 3.6.2. Agrobiodiversity in wild plant species

The study revealed a higher number of wild plants used for food and nutrition in Ayos. Among these species, many are not found in Bokito. Examples include *Garcinia cola*, *Cola ricinifolia*, and *Baillonella toxisperma* (Table 8). Additionally, *Tetracarpidium conophorum*, which is found in Bokito, does not occur in Ayos.

Table 8. List of plant agrobiodiversity in wild plant species

Scientific name	Family	Common/local name	Ayos	Bokito
<i>Acalypha ornata</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Sondo	×	
<i>Aningeria robusta</i>	Sapotaceae	Abam	×	
<i>Annona muricata</i>	Annonaceae	Wild soursop	×	×
<i>Baillonella toxisperma</i>	Sapotaceae	Moabi	×	
<i>Beilschmidia obscura</i>	Lauraceae	Kanda	×	
<i>Bulchozia caribaea</i>	Piperaceae	Lion's cola	×	
<i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i>	Burseraceae	Canarium	×	×
<i>Cola acuminata</i>	Malvaceae	Cola nuts	×	×
<i>Cola ricinifolia</i>	Malvaceae	Monkey's cola	×	
<i>Coula edulis</i>	Olacaceae	Komen	×	
<i>Dacryodes macrophylla</i>	Burseraceae	Tom	×	×
<i>Garcinia cola</i>	Clusiaceae	Bitter cola	×	
<i>Gnetum</i> spp.	Gnetaceae	Eru	×	
<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	Irvingiaceae	Bushmango	×	×
<i>Monodora myristica</i>	Myristicaceae	Pebe	×	
<i>Myrianthus arboreus</i>	Cercropiaceae	Mva'a	×	
<i>Nuclea diderichii</i>	Rubiaceae	Angokom	×	
<i>Nuclea pobeguinii</i>	Rubiaceae	Akondoc	×	
<i>Ocimum</i> sp.	Lamiaceae	Masseb	×	
<i>Pentaclethra macrophylla</i>	Leguminosea	African bean tree	×	



<i>Piper guineense</i>	Piperaceae	Bush pepper	×	×
<i>Ricinodendron heudelotii</i>	Phyllanthaceae	Njansang	×	×
<i>Tetracarpidium conophorum</i>	Euphorbiaceae	African walnut		×
<i>Tricoscypha acuminata</i>	Anacardiaceae	Mvut	×	
<i>Uapaca</i> spp.	Cannabaceae	Ezen	×	
<i>Voacanga africana</i>	Apocynaceae	Voacanga	×	
<i>Xylopia staudtii</i>	Annonaceae	Avom	×	
		Caterpillars	×	
		Mushroom	×	×

### 3.6.3. Agrobiodiversity of domestic animals (livestock)

Similar domestic animals were being reared in the two study areas. However, the varieties of these animals were mainly local. In addition, animal rearing was practiced on a small scale in both communities.

Table 9. Diversity of livestock in Southern Cameroon.

Scientific name	Family	Common/local name
<i>Bos taurus</i>	Bovidae	Cattle
<i>Canis lupus familiaris</i>	Canidae	Dog
<i>Capra hircus</i>	Bovidae	Goat
<i>Carina mischata</i>	Anatidae	Domestic duck
<i>Felis catus</i>	Domestic cat	Domestic cat
<i>Gallus gallus domesticus</i>	Phasianidae	Domestic fowl
<i>Ovis aries</i>	Bovidae	Sheep
<i>Sus scrofa domesticus</i>	Suidae	Pig

### 3.6.4. Agrobiodiversity in wild animals (wildlife) and fishery resources

The study revealed a rich diversity of wild animals are used as food (Table 10). However, variations in availability of the animals exist, with bush meat being increasingly available in the Ayos forest area. Bokito farmers reported low availability, mainly due to the bushfires and overgrazing on the savannah landscape, which chase away animals. Bushfires also cause habitat destruction thereby reducing animal availability and causing land degradation.

Table 10. Agrobiodiversity in wildlife

Scientific name	Family	Common/local name
<i>Atelerix</i> sp.	Erinaceidae	Hedgehog
<i>Cephalohus dorsalis</i>	Bovidae	Bay duiker
<i>Cephalophus callipygus</i>	Bovidae	Peter's duiker
<i>Cercopithecus erythrotise</i>	Cercopithecidae	Red eared monkey
<i>Crossaculius</i>	Viverridae	Mangoust



<i>Dendrolyrax arboreus</i>	Procaviidae	Dama/Tree hendrax
<i>Epus europaeus</i>	Erethizontidae	Porcupine
<i>Gazella</i> sp.	Bovidae	Gazelle
<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Leporidae	Rabbit
<i>Manis</i> spp.	Manidae	Pangolin
<i>Pelusios gabonensis</i>	Testudinidae	Bells hinged tortoise
<i>Potamochoerus larvatus</i>	Suidae	Bush pig
<i>Sciurus</i> sp.	Sciuridae	Squirrel
<i>Thryonomys</i>	Thryonomyidae	Greater cane rat
<i>Tragelaphus</i> sp.	Thryonomyidae	Cane rat
<i>Viverra civetta</i>	Viverridae	Civet

Major rivers in both areas are rich in fishery resources that support human life. However, these resources are more abundant in Ayos than Bokito. In addition, *Hererotis niloticus* (Kanga) is specific to the Ayos site in the Nyong River. Farmers in Ayos also practice fishing throughout the year, with the exception of the period of very heavy rains when rivers are flooded and high risk.

Table 11. Fishery resources that are used as food in Southern Cameroon

Scientific name	Family	Common name
<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	Cichlidae	Tilapia
<i>Hererotis niloticus</i>	Osteoglossidae	Kanga
<i>Brachyura</i> sp.	Ocypodidae	Crabs
<i>Channa</i> sp.	Channidae	Snakefish
<i>Ciprinus carpio</i>	Cyprinidae	Carp
<i>Esox lucius</i>	Esocidae	Brochet
<i>Holothuria</i> sp.	Holothuriidae	Pentard
<i>Neochanna burrowsius</i>	Galaxidae	Mud fish
<i>Penaues monodon</i>	Astacidae	Crayfish
<i>Silurus</i> sp.	Siluridae	Catfish
		Aquatic snails
		Oysters

Reptiles used as food in the study area include *Nana* spp. (Elapidae), *Varanus* spp. (Varanidae), *Bitis gabonica* (Viperidae), *Dendroaspis angusticeps* (Elapidae), and *Gongylophis* sp. (Boidae).

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Vulnerability to climate change and agrobiodiversity potential of Southern Cameroon

In the last decade, farmers have recognised the impacts of climate change in the study area. Farmers reported lower amounts of rainfall, the shortening of the rainy season, longer duration of droughts, and frequent whirlwinds. Several studies have reported similar variability of climate factors (e.g. Fongnzossie *et al.* 2018). These changes caused numerous impacts, including prevalence of crop pests



and diseases, land degradation, and human health problems. Additional studies (e.g. Travis *et al.* 2015) obtained similar results.

The results demonstrated that farmers in both localities (Ayos and Bokito) were vulnerable to climate change. However, one village in Bokito (Omeng) had high vulnerability. The high vulnerability index value of this village reflects the reality observed in the field, and can be explained by its poor access, low literacy rate, poor health and education facilities, and limited access to the market. The road linking this village to the subdivisional headquarters of Bokito is an unmaintained earth road crossed by a big river lacking a bridge. Farmers here face tough circumstances in order to transport their goods to the nearest market. This area was also highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, thereby increasing its vulnerability. Similar results were obtained by Oo *et al.* (2018). On a general note, more villages in the Bokito area recorded moderate vulnerability indices than in the Ayos area. This result aligns with the high level of sensitivity of the different landscapes to climate change. In addition, Ayos communities were less dependent on agriculture when compared to Bokito. Several studies have shown that farming communities that are highly dependent on agriculture are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The vulnerabilities of these villages can also be associated with their socioeconomic characteristics, extreme climatic events (long droughts, high temperatures, and erratic rains) and their ecological profile (Mekonnen *et al.* 2019).

Despite several developed strategies, adaptation to climate change appears to be difficult for farmers. This suggests that the vulnerability of farmers may be determined by the availability of public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, markets, and health and educational facilities. Furthermore, extension services and conservation institutions were lacking in both localities, thereby preventing farmers from acquiring knowledge that could facilitate their adaptation.

The study revealed that farmers in the two areas cultivated similar food crops. However, differences could be observed in the main crops that were cultivated. Farmers in Ayos cultivated mostly cassava, groundnut, plantain, and cocoyam. These are the staple food crops they use in their meals with bush meat and freshwater fish. This feeding habit is part of their culture and might contribute to the vulnerability of the farmers. Thomas *et al.* (2018) argued that culture could be used to clarify the adaptive capacity of local communities, as it could be the basis for decisions taken by farmers. Meanwhile, farmers in Bokito cultivated more maize, cocoyams, plantain, groundnuts, yams, egusi and sweet potatoes. However, farmers in Bokito adopt new crops more frequently than farmers in Ayos.

Major differences were observed between Ayos and Bokito in terms of agrobiodiversity in wild plant species. These differences arise from the variation in landscapes. Ayos has higher forest cover than Bokito, which is endowed with few patches of forest and more savannahs. The greater number of wild plant species available for food reduces the vulnerability of farmers. This result is supported by the findings of Fongnzossie *et al.* (2018) who observed that farmers resort to the collection of non-timber forest products as strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Since there are limited forestlands



in the Bokito area, there appears to be greater pressure facing these resources from local populations. This may account for the diminishing forest resources in the area. This might also explain why farmers in recent years, have relied on the cultivation of cocoa in savannahs alongside an increased intensity in the cultivation of subsistence food crops in swampy areas.

#### **4.2. Linking climate change adaptation and agrobiodiversity in Southern Cameroon**

Farmers in Southern Cameroon are exposed to the risks of climate change. Managing agrobiodiversity sustainably in the area appears to be a better option for adaptation. However, this management is dependent on the legitimate power that governs the collection of natural agrobiodiversity and power related issues around the landscape include land disputes. In these situations, the groups who are most vulnerable are the poor, widows, orphans, and youths. The youth have limited access to land due to such disputes and are therefore more exposed to climate risks. According to The World Bank (2005), because natural resources are such an important source of value for so many people, it is of little surprise that politics and power relations should strike at the heart of natural resource management. Power could influence access to land in a biased manner.

A strong correlation in many societies has been identified between the decision-making powers that a person enjoys, and the quantity and quality of land rights held by that person (FAO 2002). Access to land is often regulated by the land tenure system. In most rural areas, including the study area, only the male children have access to land inheritance. This increases vulnerability of unmarried women and widows in rural areas. This affirmation is supported by the studies of Brown (2011), who showed that women are dependent on agricultural and forest resources for their livelihood and are often marginalised within the society. Orphans, whose parents die young, suffer from the seizure of their land by their paternal uncles, as well as influential people and elites in the community. Fairbairn (2013) argued that elites exercise 'access control' over land may contribute to community dispossession despite a national legal framework that protects peasant land rights. Such influences limit the availability of agricultural land for poor rural farmers.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This study revealed that farmers perceived climate variability in Southern Cameroon. The savannah ecotone of Southern Cameroon is increasingly sensitive and exposed to climate change than the forest zone. Farmers in both areas also use different measures to cope with climate change. The majority of villages in the two communities are moderately vulnerable to climate change. A large potential of agrobiodiversity was obtained for Southern Cameroon, with a higher diversity in the Ayos site. From this, we can conclude that the Ayos community has more safety nets, through the agrobiodiversity present in its livelihood support systems, than the Bokito community, which is more agriculture-dependent.



The vulnerability trends of farmers can be reversed through the sustainable management of the rich agrobiodiversity of the study area. It is therefore imperative for policy makers, adaptation planners and private initiatives working in Southern Cameroon to place agrobiodiversity management at the centre of action in all the life-support systems, including agrobiodiversity. Additionally, agrobiodiversity needs to be incorporated in climate-smart agriculture in Southern Cameroon. Alongside this, good institutional frameworks are required at the local level, through which national and regional policies can address the impacts of climate change and provide more options for climate adaptation.

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# **The persistence of spleen sickness culture in Cameroon: A comparison between a remote village in the Eastern Region and an urban area of the Central Region**

Moïse Mvetumbo<sup>a</sup>, Takanori Oishi<sup>b</sup>, Paschal Kum Awah<sup>a</sup>, Marlène Toukam Ngansop<sup>c</sup>,  
and Léonelle Touyou Akepta<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

<sup>b</sup> African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

<sup>c</sup> Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

<sup>d</sup> Catholic Health Centre Holy Mary of Soa (Yaoundé), Cameroon

## **Abstract:**

‘Spleen sickness’ is a pathology characterised by a set of abnormal abdominal swelling and pains affecting the human body that is uniquely recognised by traditional medicine. This sickness continues to affect diverse categories of the country’s population. Our objective is to describe the varied ways of perception and management of ‘spleen sickness’ by local peoples in the different contexts of health care development and urbanisation. Of the informants, only two living in Yaoundé (1.7%) replied that they had found a solution to their problem by receiving care in biomedical health facilities. The others (98.3%) stated that their health had been restored by receiving care from traditional healers. Whereas the rural population tended to use more diverse plants for management than urban populations, they commonly depended on medicinal plants. However local knowledge related to ‘spleen sickness’ tends to be closed within each community of hunter-gatherers and farmers in Ndongo, it is more open in Yaoundé. Ethnomedicinal recipes are exchanged and hybridised between different cultures in the urban area. The commonalities and differences identified between the two sites illuminate the common patterns of a culturally constructed disease, but also the dynamics of therapeutic knowledge under the urbanisation.

**Keywords:** cultural diversity, ethnomedicine, health care development, urbanisation, Cameroon



## 1. Introduction

Conventional medicine conceives of disease as an exogenous entity breaking into the patient's body and of medicine as the healing of that health problem. Major causes include genetic factors; infectious agents (viruses, bacteria, or parasites); poisons and drugs; pollution in its various forms (e.g. atmospheric, habitat-related), and immunological factors. To cope with these health problems, it is recommended that local 'healers', 'herbalists', and 'birth attendants' compensate for the shortcomings of national health systems (WHO 1978). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 80% of the population of developing countries are dependent on traditional medicine, mainly using extracts of plants to meet their needs. This situation can be explained by the poverty of the populations, their socio-cultural habits, the isolation of rural areas, the absence of sanitation or rudimentary infrastructure, the high cost of pharmaceutical remedies, and low incomes (Dibong *et al.* 2011), and is experienced differently in urban and rural areas. In this respect, the city of Yaoundé has a large number of health facilities and qualified personnel (ONU-HABITA 2007), while the populations of rural areas have enormous difficulty accessing health care. Indeed, the Ndongu locality, for example, has an Integrated Health Centre with a health staff that for various reasons is not always on site. The local population sometimes spends one or two weeks without access to quality health services.

This situation increases the health vulnerability of these populations, who can suffer from common diseases falling within the expertise of conventional medicine. In reference to biomedicine, Boltanski (1971) makes it clear that familiarisation with morbid and symptomatic taxonomies, as well as the acquisition of new categories of perception of the body, are essentially the result of attendance of professional health services by the population. In South-East Cameroon, for example, several studies have shown that migration from the forest and increased contact with nearby ethnic groups have contributed to poor Baka health and increased disease prevalence in general (Froment 2014, Ndembi *et al.* 2003) and newfound illness in particular (Carson *et al.* 2019). According to Mbonji (2009), new diseases are born while others disappear; new drugs are being manufactured to replace those less effective or less available. As regards the asymmetric relationships between diseases and drugs, it should be noted that they are not always due to the emergence of new pathologies, resistance of old ones, or incompleteness of the care offered. In Africa, these relationships are explained in particular by the existence of a certain number of morbid cases that do not necessarily fall within the official categorisation of the disease, a categorisation based more on a biomedical and institutional vision than the ethnographic conception of health or disease.

'Spleen sickness' in this regard is not a pathology recognised by scholarly medicine, while the local populations consider biomedicine incompetent to find effective solutions. According to Eloundou (2009), 'spleen sickness', known as *tsite* among the Ewondo population, is a health problem that they hold can only be solved at the level of traditional medicine. In daily life, any society develops methods to cope with a disease, a set of means to stop it and explain its appearance (Meziane 2003: 65). By



consulting literature on the most recurrent diseases in our contemporary society, we realised that what rural and urban populations in Cameroon call ‘spleen sickness’ has not been the subject of much research in social science. At this stage, some studies have focused on plants used against this health problem in Cameroon (Adjanohoun *et al.* 1996), among the Baka of Cameroon (Brisson 2011) and Gabon (UNESCO 2009), and among the Baboua population of the Central African Republic (Jacqueline 1959). Our objective in this work is not necessarily to justify the relevance of social practices, but to explain how people live and express this reality. In this movement, Fainzang (2000) considers that what is important from the anthropological point of view is not whether such a practice is effective, but why it is thought to be so by the society studied, what its meaning and social significance are and how this is constructed in practice. The main question at the centre of this research is: What are the sociocultural considerations that the population has regarding ‘spleen sickness’ and its management practices in rural and urban Cameroon? To achieve this goal, we aim in this work to describe multiple ways of perception and management practices of ‘spleen sickness’ by local peoples in the different contexts of health care development and urbanisation.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Study area

We conducted this research in two localities of Cameroon: Ndongo in the Eastern region and Yaoundé in the Central region.

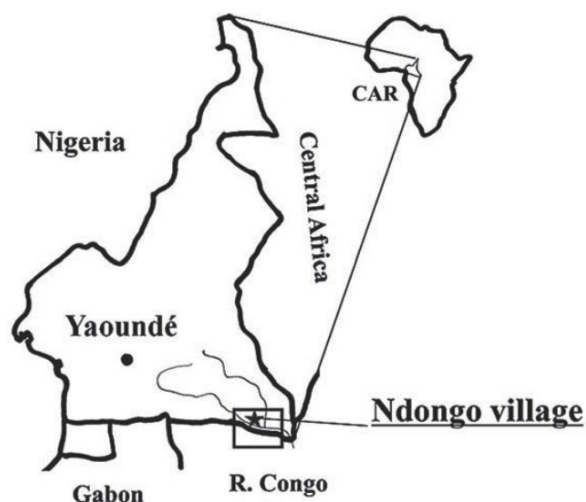


Figure 1. Study areas

#### 2.1.1. Ndongo village

Ndongo is a village situated in the Moloundou subdivision of the Eastern region. It is located along the Dja River, which forms the international border between Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo. Ndongo is located at 650km southeast of Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. The Ndongo villagers belong to more than 10 ethnic groups, including the Baka, Bakwele, Djem, Bangando, Konabembe,



Hausa, Fulbe, Kotoko, and Bamileke. Ndongo inhabitants can be classified into three categories based on lifestyle and ethnic identity: the Baka are hunter-gatherers, the Bakwele are farmers, and the Hausa, Bamileke, and Bamoun are merchants. Their respective populations number around 300, 250, and 50 persons, giving a total population of approximately 600 (Oishi 2016a). We focused only on the Baka and Bakwele, who constitute the majority of the population. This situation afforded us the opportunity to meet the maximum number of informants, and also allowed us to cross check the names of plant specimens before leaving the field.

### **2.1.2. Yaoundé city**

Yaoundé is the capital of the Mfoundi Division in the Central Region and the political capital of Cameroon. The city is located at latitude 3°90 North and longitude 11°50 East (Aimé *et al.*, 2015). This area is a little larger because as there are few ‘spleen sickness’ traditional therapists, this allowed us to obtain the same number of practitioners as at the rural site. It is also a multi-faceted town with a strong diversification of activities and a high concentration of populations originating from various localities of the country (Hirano 2014, Porto 2012). The average density of the population in relation to the territory of the CUY is 45.25 hab/ha, and that relative to the urbanised area is about 153 hab/ha (CUY 2008).

## **2.2. Data collection method**

### **2.2.1. Focused population**

The focused population for this research consisted of persons who have experienced ‘spleen sickness’. Regarding the first category, the choice focused on the victims and their relatives (patients, parents, accompanying persons). When a case of illness occurs in the community, the patient’s entourage mobilises itself to help the patient through this delicate moment of life. This means that in many cases, the victim does not follow the pattern they lay down. The second category comprises health practitioners who recognise this reality as a health problem. These are traditional healers, and any member of the community may master the therapeutic knowledge and apply it to ‘spleen sickness’ patients. This study was conducted with 120 informants, 40 in Ndongo and 80 in Yaoundé. The difference in number is due to Yaoundé being larger and more populous than Ndongo. Thus, in Ndongo we consulted 20 Baka and 20 Bakwele, while in Yaoundé the 80 respondents interviewed consisted of 29 Ewondo and 51 allogens (i.e. 17 Bagam from the Grass Field region, 17 Mabi from the coastal region, and 17 Toupouri from the Sahelian region of Cameroon). Given the cosmopolitan character of the city of Yaoundé, we tried to do this to take into the population waves of the great cultural changes of Cameroon. This justifies the use of the concept of ‘allogen’ used to designate inhabitants not living in their birthplace. The respondents in our sample voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. Apart from the general population, four anthropological criteria borrowed from De Rosny (1981: 164) by which populations identify true healers



guided the inclusion of that category of informants in our sample: their stability in the community where they were born; the origin of their power/healing knowledge (the inhabitants of their respective villages must be able to testify to the reality of their vocation); the duration of the cures they have made; and good knowledge of medicinal plants and the proper use of therapeutic rites (Wamba *et al.* 2017: 168).

### 2.2.2. Data collection and processing

We organised home interviews with the holders of knowledge on their conception of ‘spleen sickness’ and the medicinal species their therapies use. We then went with them into the forest or the gardens around their houses, where we identified with them the species they used, the privileged parts as well as the instructions for use. In this context, we started by collecting specimens, which were well preserved in the Plank and protected from moisture. After the fieldwork, the different species collected were identified at the National Herbarium of Yaoundé. We subsequently constructed an Excel database with such items as family names; scientific names; biological types; parts used; modes of care administration; and sources of therapeutic knowledge. These different elements afforded us a global idea of the management strategies of this disease in traditional societies and the dissemination of related therapeutic knowledge. Data interpretation was based on cultural ecology theory, which has the aims of ‘the study of dynamics, active human behaviour in the context of a changing environment, [and] interconnections among the dynamic components of our system’ (Jochim 1981: 5). This perspective allows us to demonstrate how populations use their environmental resources to solve human health problems.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Contrast between the sociocultural conception of ‘spleen sickness’ and biomedical considerations

#### 3.1.1. The sociocultural conception of ‘spleen sickness’

In Ndongo, ‘spleen sickness’ is conceived mainly as the result of the consumption of the animal's liver, a part of the wild animal, which is considered harmful to children's bodies among the local populations (both Baka and Bakwele). We illustrate our remarks through a consideration of the expression *kò na ngéndè-so*, which means the ‘disease of the animal's liver’ in the Baka language. We also have the expressions *epial-e-tsité* and *epial-e-zock*, meaning ‘animal's liver’ and ‘elephant's liver’, respectively, in the Bakwele language. What is important to observe here is that these populations sincerely believe that the consumption of the ‘animal's liver’ is one of the main causes of ‘spleen sickness’. According to them, this organ contains toxic agents responsible for the appearance of this health problem once this nutriment enters children's bodies or their mothers'. In this area, while all meat (liver) species suitable for consumption are incriminated among the Bakwele community, the Baka focus only on the doe and the hare, whose livers they consider harmful to children and to pregnant and lactating women.

In Yaoundé, several populations gave us an understanding of the local meaning of this health



problem in relation to their environmental resources. For the Ewondo, the indigenous population of the city, for example, *tsite* ‘meat’ is the denomination used to express ‘spleen sickness’. According to them, this health problem is caused by the consumption of banned meat and is manifested by an inflammation of the abdomen that resembles a piece of meat to the touch. The Bagam informants (from the Western region) used the term *bagyec* ‘cricket’ to describe this reality, these populations explaining that the movements of the chest of a person suffering from ‘spleen sickness’ is like the normal movements of a cricket’s chest. Also, when the disease gets worse, the patient loses weight and becomes skinny like a locust, often described as meat without flesh. Mabi (coastal populations) used the expression *tchiri* ‘animal’ and *tchiri da'a* ‘crab spleen’ to describe the same pathology. In substance, within these various communities mentioned, the populations explained the disease with reference to the behaviour of animals and insects and their similarities with the characteristics or forms of ‘spleen sickness’ that may justify the name at the local level. Here as elsewhere, the natural environment has always been a source of inspiration for people in their daily lives (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of local denomination of ‘spleen sickness’

	Local denomination	Meaning in English	Link of causality
<b>Baka</b>	<i>kò na ngéndè-so</i>	‘disease of meat liver ‘	The consumption of the liver of animal by the baby, mother, or a pregnant woman predisposes children to ‘spleen sickness’
<b>Bakwele</b>	<i>epial-ε-tsité</i> <i>epial-ε-zock</i>	‘disease of animal liver’ ‘disease of elephant liver’	The consumption of the liver of an animal by the baby, mother, or pregnant women predisposes the child to ‘spleen sickness’. Also, the two denominations are used to indicate the size of the sickness as small (or simple) or large (or dangerous)
<b>Ewondo</b>	<i>Tsite</i>	‘animal’ or ‘meat’	The ‘spleen sickness’ is manifested by the presence of a ball at the level of the patient’s ribs; said ball is compared to a piece of meat buried in the body. It may have been the result of consuming a snail or the liver of the animal.
<b>Mabi</b>	<i>tchiri</i>	‘Animal’	The movement of the patient is compared to that of an animal in a trap (fighting death). This disease can be the result of the consumption of a snail.
<b>Bagam</b>	<i>Bagyec</i>	‘Cricket’	The movement of the infected side is comparable to that of a cricket. Although crickets are not implicated in the genesis of the disease, they are nevertheless a well-known therapeutic element in the community.



### 3.1.2. Contrast with the biomedical conception

From the biomedical perspective, the spleen is an organ located on the left side of the abdomen that plays the special role of ‘cleanser’ of the blood. It is the main site of the destruction of red and white blood cells at the end of their lives (Orphanet 2010), which increases the volume of this organ (spleen) as a consequence of the intensification of its work. In the literature, several researchers have provided explanations of spleen pain, a situation that can create confusion in the mind of the population. Thus, a link between malaria, schistosomiasis, and inflammation of the spleen has been clearly established (Gentilini 1995). In the same direction, Greenwood *et al.* (1987) conducted research on ethnic differences in the prevalence of splenomegaly and malaria in three populations (Mandinka, Wolofs, and Fulas) in the Gambia, where they identified a high prevalence among Fulas, suggesting that this community is predisposed to this health problem. We have also noted an abundant literature on the pathological ‘wandering’ spleen, which is a rare malformation due to hyperlaxity or agenesis of the suspensory ligaments of the spleen arising from a congenital or acquired anomaly (Germain *et al.* 2018, Dème *et al.* 2016). In Cameroon, Mbanya *et al.* (2008) observed in a study carried out in Yaoundé that an imbalance in the level of haemoglobin in a patient is a risk factor that promotes splenomegaly cases. Bernard *et al.* (2001) highlighted the relationship between the existence of splenomegaly, a marker of a state of chronic parasitism, and the saturo-weight growth of a population of young children in southern Cameroon.

Globally, ‘spleen pain’ is perceived by health professionals as a symptom of a variety of pathologies (malaria, cancer, sickle cell anaemia, various infections). Based on this clinical reality, biomedical practitioners believe that the good management of these causes can generate the disappearance of pain and inflammation. In the context of our study we observed that the choice of treatment of the population, as indicated above, is traditional medicine. Of the 120 respondents at both sites, only 2 informants in Yaoundé (1.7%) reported that they had found a solution to ‘spleen sickness’ by receiving care in health facilities. Almost all of the informants estimate that their state of health has been restored thanks to the care received from traditional healers (98.3%). This information is more significant because the respondents belong to all social classes (rich and poor, children and adults, men and women, religious and nonreligious)

### 3.2. Species used for treatment

In this work, 88 species have been identified from the two research sites, with 63.6% from Ndongo and 36.4% from Yaoundé. From the Ndongo informants, 35 plants were found among the Baka and 21 among the Bantu population. In this locality the most commonly used species are *Cylicodiscus gabunense* (8.9%), followed by *Schumanniohyton magnificum* and *Anchomanes difformis* (7.1% each). Among the least common, 16 species were mentioned once, among which are *Ceiba pentandra* (1.8%) and *Afzelia bipindensis* (1.8%). From Yaoundé, 32 species were cited by the informants, 15 species by



the Ewondo and 17 by members of the other cultural groups interviewed. The most important species are *Ageratum conyzoides* (12.5%), *Carica paya* (9.4%), and *Aframomum melegueta* (9.4%), while 16 species were mentioned once (see Table in appendix section). Of the 88 plants identified in this work, only 3 appeared in the lists from both Yaoundé and Ndong ( *Aframomum melegueta*, *Elaeis guineensis*, and *Carica papaya*).

### 3.2.1. Biological type and part used

#### 3.2.1.1. Biological type

Generally, the main species used by populations come from trees (58%), grasses (36.4%), and liana (5.7%). In the Ndong locality, trees made up a high proportion (70.9%) of the responses, followed respectively by herbs (21.8%) and liana (7.3%). On the other hand, there was a preponderance of herbs (62.5%) among the informants in Yaoundé, followed by trees (34.4%) and liana (3.1%). This situation can be explained by the adaptation of populations to their immediate environment in the city as in the countryside.

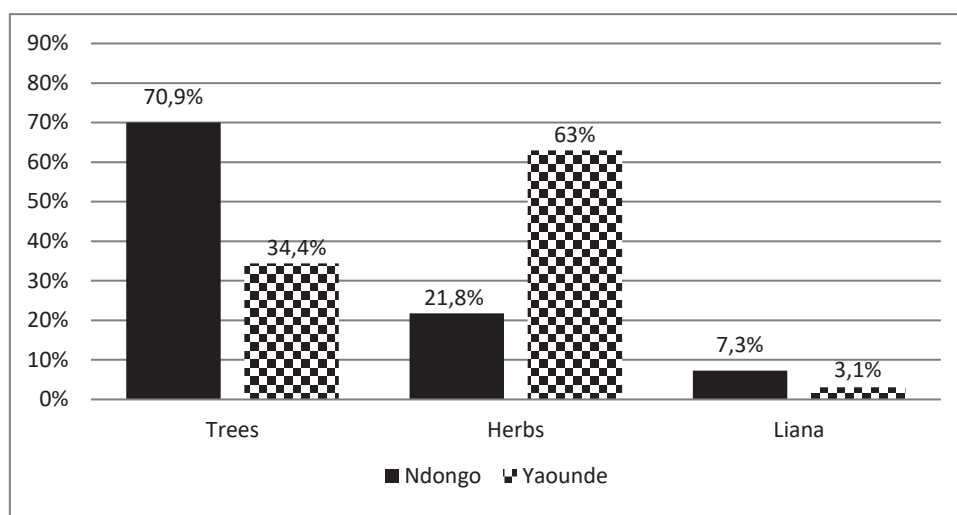


Figure 2. Biological types



### 3.2.1.2. Parts used

Globally, the main parts used by population to treat ‘spleen sickness’ are bark (47.1%) and leaves (26.4%), while the least common are fruit/seed (8.1%) and stalk (3.4%). According to Ndongo respondents, the most popular parts are bark (58.2%), followed by roots/tubers (21.8%). For informants in Yaoundé, we noted the use of leaves (59.4%) followed by bark (28.1%). These different parts are chosen for their virtues backed by the experience accumulated by the population regarding their use. The bark and the leaves are the most popular parts among the Ndongo and the Yaoundé, respectively, which also reflects the predominance of trees and leaves in the primary choices of informants in their respective localities.

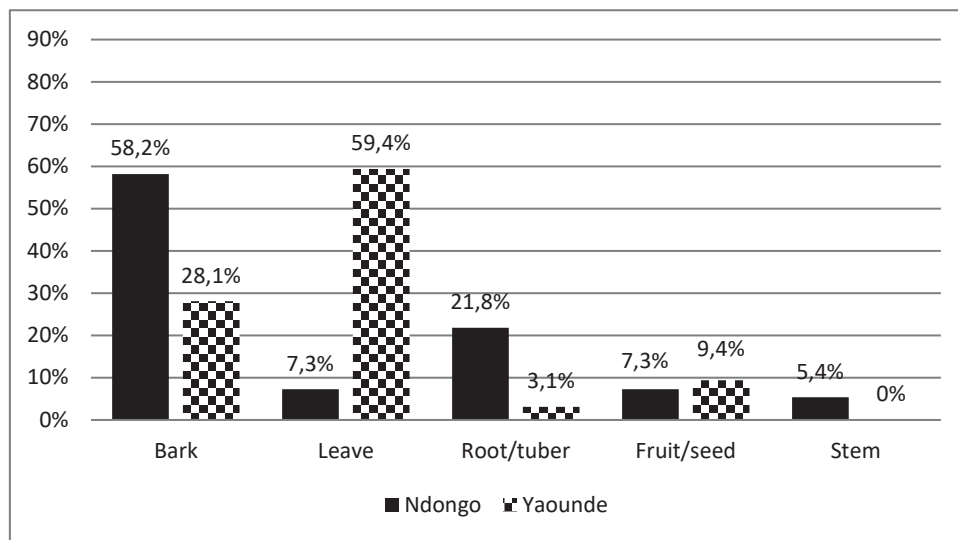


Figure 3. Parts used



#### 4. Modes of care administration

Globally, the main methods of care administration revealed by our informants from both sites are scarification-massage combination (39.8%), bleeding (25%), single massage (18.2%), and oral administration (10.2%). In Ndongo specifically, the most commonly used modes are scarification-massage (47.3%) and bleeding (23.6%), while in the city of Yaoundé, the major modes of administration are scarification-massage (25%) and bleeding (25%). According to these populations, scarification and massage can easily destroy the ‘spleen sickness’ from the outside while purging and oral intake are responsible for the destruction of the disease from the inside. The high demand of care applying scarification at both sites (47.3% for Ndongo and 25% for Yaoundé), for example, is justified by the belief shared by the populations that contact between the remedy and the patient’s blood is a direct means of counteracting an affection. According to them, through this method the medication can treat the illness both at that moment and in the future by affording direct access to the deep pain of the patient. Whether in Yaoundé or in Ndongo, the management of ‘spleen sickness’ involving scarification associated with massage has proved to be a sure and lasting solution, according to the testimony of many informants. It offers the opportunity to access the ‘root of the evil’ in the body for some, but also and especially in the blood.

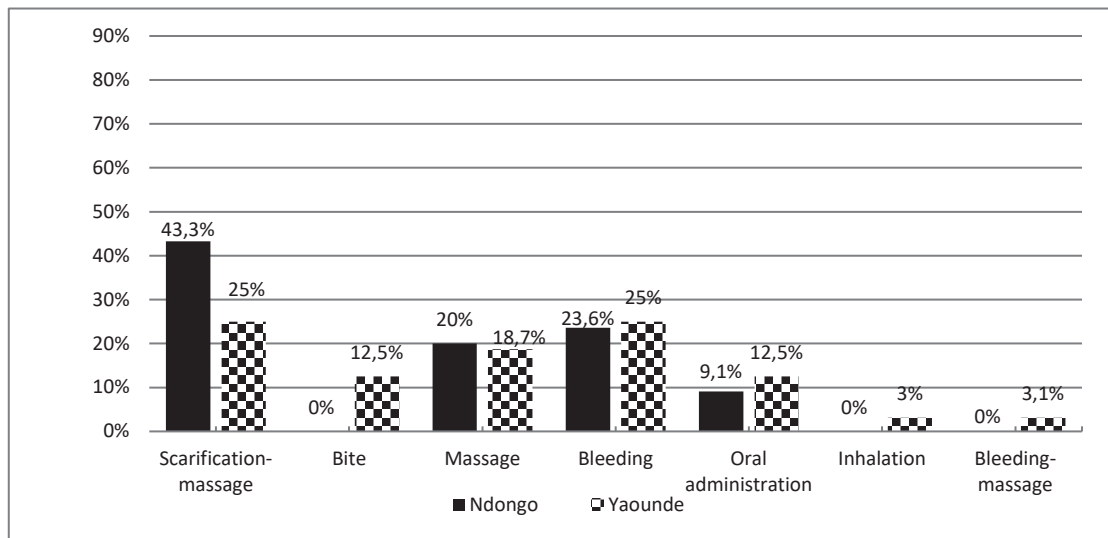


Figure 4. Modes of care administration



### 5. Influence of the natural environment on ‘spleen sickness’ management

During our stay in the field, informants of both sites allowed us through their narration to understand the close relationship they have with their natural environment. Among the 88 plant species identified for medicinal use for ‘spleen sickness’ treatments, 56 were collected from rural informants and 32 from urban informants, as mentioned above. Apart from the diversity of the vegetal therapeutic resources revealed in the field, we also observed the regular solicitation of some animal species for the same purpose. Within the Bakwele community for example, we noted that snails and the liver of the hare are used by populations as therapeutic element to neutralise ‘spleen sickness’. The Baka informants for their part used the nails and skin of the elephant to solve this health problem. In Yaoundé, cows’ hooves, crickets, and dragonflies were recorded among the Bagam, lizards, frogs, and snails among the Ewondo, and snail slime among the Mabi and Ewondo informants. All these elements of the animal world are taken from the daily environment of the populations (Table 2).

Table 2. Animal resources used to cure ‘spleen sickness’ in the population

Locality	Therapeutic elements	Synthesis	Community
Ndongo	Snail	Burial of the living snail at the end of the patient’s massage	Bakwele
	Hare liver	Scarify and embalm the chest of the victim with the powder of the liver of the hare	Bakwele
	Nail of elephant	Massage of the patient’s rib by pressure from the elephant’s nail	Baka
	Skin of elephant	Massage with charred skin, associated with bark	Baka
Yaoundé	An aquatic insect (Gyrinus natator)	Gyrinus natator is returned to the water at the end of the bite care.	Bagam
	Beef hoof	Massage of the patient’s rib using powder from a charred cow’s hoof.	Bagam
	Shell of the snail	Massage of the patient with powder from the charred shell	Ewondo
	Frog	Burial of the living frog at the end of the patient massage	Ewondo
	Snail slime	Scarify and embalm with snail slime	Ewondo, Mabi



## 6. Cultural transmission of local knowledge at both sites

Therapeutic knowledge is transmitted through (1) dreams, (2) from parents to children, and (3) between members of the community at both sites. Here we describe how each knowledge transmission process occurs.

### 6.1. Dreams

Dreams emerge as an essential means of access to the therapeutic knowledge regularly mobilised for the management of this health problem. The populations explain that during sleep, a spirit presents itself to reveal to a family member a recipe that will enable him to neutralise ‘spleen disease’. Generally, this spirit explains the composition and the mode of administration. At both research sites, 10 people admitted to have acquired some therapeutic knowledge via this channel. This was much more common among the eight Ndongo respondents (six Baka and two Bakwele) who attested to this, while in Yaoundé, only two people gave the same testimony. Several studies have highlighted this means of access to therapeutic knowledge (Nkonmeneck 2007, Mbonji 2006). On the whole, the density of know-how acquired through this channel testifies to the nature of the relationship between the living and their ancestors. According to Mbonji (2006) for example, those who contributed during their lifetime to the well-being of their fellow man have the responsibility to continue their good works in the afterlife. Based on this consideration, some informant from Grass Field region of Cameroon believed that it is therefore necessary for the living to remain in harmony with this higher entity in order to arouse its awakening and sympathy when passing through difficult times. Through this harmony, this entity looks after the health and destiny of family members and society in general.

### 6.2. Transmission from parents to children

To achieve this, elders are accompanied in their activity by the youngest to gradually instil knowledge and therapeutic practices. In fact, 18 out of 20 caregivers in Ndongo stated that they received therapeutic knowledge from their parents. Here we note a strong connection, with 100% among the Baka and 80% among their neighbours, the Bakwele. In Yaoundé, this trend is generally maintained, with 13 of 20 carers interviewed reporting having benefited from their parents’ know-how, 7 among the Ewondo (35%) and 6 among the non-indigenous groups (30%). This means of transmission has been mentioned in several studies (Nyeyambe 2017, Mve Belinga 2011). For parents, not all children have the same potential at birth that can promote their cooptation into the circle of traditional healers. Indeed, some children have a more open mind and the skills to master the herbs, barks, and objects that can heal a victim of this pathology. On a day-to-day basis, the caregiver looking for a successor starts by observing his children or his family closely in order to identify the one who has the most aptitude to serve his family and perpetuate his therapeutic knowledge in the long term. Whatever the community and practice, the responsibility of adults in this case is to channel young children and aspirants ‘endowed with gifts’



so that they can better express their genius.

### **6.3. Acquisition from a third party who is not automatically a member of the family**

The study also revealed a significant openness of therapeutic knowledge to learners of all backgrounds who meet the basic requirements instituted by the ancestors. In Ndongo, 2 ‘spleen’ caregivers out of 20 interviewed (10%) mentioned having received additional training from a third party with whom they are not related, though this was only noted by Bakwele informants. In Yaoundé, 7 out of 20 ‘spleen’ caregivers (35%) reported having received training from a person to whom they were not related. The fact that this type of knowledge transmission is less common among the Baka is explained by the diversity of knowledge within this community. On the other hand, the significant proportion observed in Yaoundé reflects the adaptive dynamics of people in search of effective therapeutic formulas applicable to victims of the ‘spleen sickness’ in a multicultural context.

## **7. Discussion**

### **7.1. Biological types and parts used**

Our results revealed a preponderance of trees as the source of the therapeutic elements used in Ndongo, unlike Yaoundé, where herbs are most common among the populations. This variation can be explained by the judicious exploitation of environmental resources by the rural and urban populations. In this sense, the large equatorial forest that predominates in southeastern Cameroon has a significant influence on the way of life of local populations. It has been shown that the Baka, for example, are still highly dependent on forest resources despite having been sedentarised fairly recently, starting in the 1950s (Lueong 2016, Hewlett 2014). Similarly, the majority of the Bantu for their part depend on agriculture for sustenance (Hattori 2014, Neumann *et al.* 2012). This may explain the orientation of their therapeutic knowledge centred on the abundance of herbs in the fields. All this happened in the context where more than two-thirds of the world’s plant species have medicinal value (Sofowora 2010). Among these species, some studies have found a strong preponderance of woody species in traditional pharmacopoeia (Nana 2005, Olivier and Sanou 2003).

Regarding the plant parts used in the management of ‘spleen sickness’, the populations explain that each part of the plant contains specific therapeutic substances that effectively counteract this health problem. The choices by the population are guided by the experience acquired by the ancestors regarding the effectiveness of each specimen targeted by the therapists in the locality of Ndongo (among the Baka and Bakwele) or Yaoundé (among the Ewondo, Bagam, Mabi, and Toupouri). From this perspective, some studies have demonstrated that certain plant organs such as leaves, barks, and roots are used in traditional medicine in the treatment of common diseases in many African societies (Mbonji 2009, N’Guessan *et al.* 2009). In general, herbal medicines include whole plants, parts of plants, plant-based materials, herbal preparations, and herbal finished products, which contain as active ingredients parts of



plants, other materials, or their combination (Nacoulma 1996). ‘Spleen sickness’ is a health problem that affects mostly young children and requires the rapid response of parents, but also the mobilisation of appropriate therapeutic resources adapted for their age. In this perspective, Flahaut (1999) observed that leaves are more widely used in the treatment of childhood diseases, while Burgund (2002) found that the peripheral organs (leaves and roots) play a protective role and are consequently used in the prevention of childhood diseases. The strong preponderance of barks among Ndongo informants and leaves in Yaoundé are also explained by the initial choices recorded among biological types, with a preference for trees in rural areas and herbs in urban areas. Regarding the reasons for these choices, Betti (2001) highlighted that leaves are easily accessible and contain metabolites responsible for their therapeutic properties. The preponderance of this peripheral part of plant has been noted in many recent studies in Cameroon (Etame *et al.* 2018, Ngoule *et al.* 2015).

## 7.2. Hybridisation of ‘spleen sickness’ cultures

The hybridisation of the therapeutic practices used to cope with ‘spleen disease’ can be observed at two levels, the patient and the caregiver, though we only observed this phenomenon in the urban area. Its absence in Ndongo can be explained by the diversity and density of therapeutic knowledge within the local communities (among the Baka and the Bakwele), a situation that has so far given satisfaction to their respective members. As regards the manifestation of hybridisation in Yaoundé level, we found a strong commitment on the ground on the part of the population to seek care with the nearest therapist regardless of their socio-cultural background. Here what matters for the patient without a family member entitled to perform treatment is the search for an effective solution. This can be understood in that when the populations migrate towards urban centres like Yaoundé, they do not move systematically with their local healers, and those practitioners who do settle in the city are faced with the difficulty of accessing certain species they need. Given their instinct for survival, all the patients who thought that they were suffering from ‘spleen disease’ struggled to find a solution to this crisis. It is thus possible to see an Ewondo patient from the Central Region being treated by a Mabi therapist from the Southern Region, a Bagam from the Western Region by a Toupouri from the Far-North Region, a Mabi by a Bagam or a Toupouri by an Ewondo, and vice versa. According to the testimonies recorded in the field, it is customary to observe the same patient soliciting the services of several practitioners in succession before finding the cure. This itinerary is explained by the belief shared by the people about the omnipotence of traditional medicine, whatever the origin of its practitioner.

The second dimension is that of the caregivers of ‘spleen sickness’ themselves. At this level, there is also the circulation of a category of therapeutic knowledge between the different existing cultural communities. Our research reveals that 35% of ‘spleen sickness’ caregivers working in Yaoundé reported to have received training from people from the same socioculture. Their local know-how, now shared by the community, contributes to strengthening the capacity of certain practitioners, but also and



above all the cultural proliferation of care for this condition. Indeed, each technique and medication is backed by a cultural base of design that gives it meaning and coherence and is the trademark of a community of practitioners who at one time in history integrated a practice into their repertoire of tricks to remedy health problems. With reference to the substantial questions inherent in human communities, Sigaut asserts that learning transmits effective knowledge, meaning, and identity together (Sigaut 1988:24). What usually happens in the case of ‘spleen sickness’ is that when an insider meets a person of good character and believes that the latter can use it as a ‘gift’, to support his fellow citizens, he transmits some of his knowledge to him. Some access conditions are the disbursement of material and financial resources, so that any person who satisfies this request is eligible to benefit from knowledge of ‘spleen sickness’ care practices. What is common and constant in this process is the favourable social context of transmission marked by the good relationship between the holder of the knowledge and those who desire. Sabinot (2008: 307) notes that intimacy and social proximity between learners and teachers is an essential dimension of learning.

### 7.3 Influence of the natural environment on ‘spleen sickness’ management

The disease is first of all indicative of the sense of the world of a given human society that is at the symbolic or ideological level meditated by language (Meziane 2003: 66). On the subject of ‘spleen sickness’, the Cameroonian people adopt various denominations to qualify it by putting a particular emphasis on the environmental reality. In this context, the informants of our two sites explicitly adduce connections between this ‘evil’ and the elements of nature. We have therefore collected the names *kò na ngéndè-so* ‘animal liver disease’ in the Baka language, *epial-ε-tsité* and *epial-ε-zock* ‘disease of the liver of the animal’ and/or ‘Elephant liver disease’ among the Bakwele, *tsité* ‘meat’ among the Ewondo, ‘*tchiri*’ ‘animal’ among the Mabi, and *bagyec* ‘cricket’ among the Bagam. The adoption of these concepts to describe the ‘disease of the spleen’ raises a part of the veil covering the relations that these different peoples maintained in the past with the fauna around them.

The multiple names recorded for ‘spleen sickness’ both in urban and rural areas reflects the history of populations, but also express the context within which this health problem occurs. In this perspective, Mebenga (1988: 19) observed that verbal symbols constitute the sources of knowledge, the screens of people’s lives, and the retrospective knowledge of their civilisations. If the historical proximity between humans and animals is unmistakable in the south-east in the heart of the equatorial forest, several works have highlighted that the denominations of many quarters of Yaoundé city have direct links with animals or environment (Essono 2016, Pondi 2012). The relationship with wildlife is not limited only to the level of denomination, and the conception of the origin of this health problem also indicates the people’s views of therapeutic potentialities. We noted in this context in Ndongo the use of nails and elephant skin by the Baka and hare liver and snails by the Bakwele to cope with this disorder of the ‘spleen’. The same observation holds in Yaoundé, notably the use of snail slime by the Mabi and Ewondo, dragonflies,



locusts, and cows' hooves by the Bagam, and frogs by the Ewondo. Each cultural group applies its fund of knowledge to its members but also to all outsiders who seek their health services. These are traditional practices that have been perpetuated from generation to generation since they were first invented. This rapprochement between the animal kingdom and the field of health is a current issue for many researchers. Indeed, the use of fish or animal resources to treat current health problems has been studied among the Bakwele population (Oishi 2016b), the Baka of Central Africa (Brisson 2011, Sato 1998), the coastal populations of central and western Africa (Mvetumbo 2013, Sabinot 2008), and by other African peoples (Maindo *et al.* 2017).

Other recipes (the majority) are concocted from materials from trees, herbs, and lianas, all essential components of the plant cover. The Rubiaceae appeared to be the most representative with 12 occurrences, followed by Asteraceae with 6 appearances. Concerning the first group, Lachenaud (2017) revealed that Rubiaceae family is one of the largest families of flowering plants and it is very diverse in the tropics, where the vast majority of its representatives are trees or shrubs. Several studies conducted in Benin revealed the preponderance of the Rubiaceae family (Adjakpa *et al.* 2013, Sangare 2012). On the other hand, the predominance of the Asteraceae family has been reported by Betti *et al.* (2013) in a survey of plants used in the treatment of malaria in the Dja Reserve and by Etame *et al.* (2018) in a study of medicinal plants and their traditional uses in Lom and Djerem (Eastern Region-Cameroon). The density of these families supports their importance to the population for medical purposes. Several researches have investigated the medicinal plants used against 'spleen sickness' by populations in Cameroon (Brisson 2011, Adjanohoun *et al.* 1996), in Gabon (UNESCO 2009), and in Central African Republic (Jacqueline, 1959). This indicates the extent of this health problem both inside and outside Cameroon and the necessity of carefully understanding the dynamism of 'spleen sickness' culture.

## 8. Conclusion

'Spleen sickness' is a social disease rather than a clinical health problem in many Cameroonian and African societies, while biomedical practitioners consider this health situation a symptom that can disappear if the disease in which it originates is fully treated, as mentioned above. The populations attribute its source to heredity, mysticism, or violations of dietary prohibitions. They also believe that this health problem can be solved only at the level of traditional medicine. Of the 120 respondents in our two sites, only 2 informants in Yaoundé stated that their problem had been treated by receiving care in health facilities. Almost all of the informants consider their state of health to have been restored thanks to the care they received from traditional healers. Overall, therapeutic practices are denser and more diverse in Ndongo than Yaoundé. This situation is due to the proximity of local populations to the forest, which is their main source of supply of therapeutic resources, while the city is marked by a coexistence between hospitals and culturally diverse local therapists. In the city and in the countryside, the strong cultural anchoring of health perceptions and practices related to 'spleen sickness' is an ambient reality.



It is therefore imperative to perpetuate the transmission of the therapeutic knowledge employed by African populations and to foster better collaboration between traditional and conventional medicine in order to limit both juvenile and adult mortality risks. Also, concerns about the harmful effects of chemical drugs and the high costs of care in hospitals are in favor of the growing success of traditional medicine (Dibong *et al.* 2011, Mpondo and Dibong 2012).

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**Appendix 1.**

Table 3. List of plant

Scientific name	Family	Vernacular name/commercial name
<b>Ndongo</b>		
<b>Baka</b>		
<i>Afzelia bipindensis</i>	Leguminosae-Caesalpinioideae	<i>Timi</i>
<i>Alstonia boonei</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Guga</i>
<i>Anonidium mannii</i>	Annonaceae	<i>Mbe</i>
<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Bombacaceae	<i>Coulo'o</i>
<i>Cordia platythyrsa</i>	Boraginaceae	<i>Mbwabi</i>
<i>Cylicodiscus gabunense</i>	Leguminosae-Mimosoideae	<i>Bolouma</i>
<i>Desplatsia dewevrei</i>	Tiliaceae	<i>Liamba</i>
<i>Dracaena sp.</i>	Dracaenaceae	<i>Bingi</i>
<i>Erythrococca sp.</i>	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Ndoukou</i>
<i>Erythrococca sp.</i>	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Ndoukou</i>
<i>Millettia sanagana</i>	Leguminosae-Papilionoideae	<i>Ngada</i>
<i>Myrianthus arboreus</i>	Cecropiaceae	<i>Ngata</i>
<i>Persea americana</i>	Lauraceae	<i>Avocado</i>
<i>Picralima nitida</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Motokotoko</i>
<i>Pycnanthus africana</i>	Myristicaceae	<i>Tombè</i>
<i>Rourea obliquifoliolata</i>	Connaraceae	<i>Toukoussa</i>
<i>Schumanniphyton magnificum</i>	Rubiaceae	<i>Gogologo</i>
<i>Strombosiaopsis tetrandra</i>	Olacaceae	<i>Bobongo</i>
<b>Bakwele</b>		
<i>Aframomum melegueta</i>	Zingiberaceae	
<i>Anchomanes difformis</i>	Araceae	<i>Deuleuzock</i>
<i>Boerhavia cf. coccinea</i>	Nyctaginaceae	<i>Naleke</i>
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	<i>Papaya</i>
<i>Citrus reticulate</i>	Rubiaceae	<i>Mandarin</i>
<i>Citrus sinensis</i>	Rutaceae	<i>Orange</i>
<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>	Arécaceae	<i>Palm oil</i>
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	<i>Mango</i>
<i>musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae	<i>Banana</i>



<i>Pausinystalia johimbe</i>	Rubiaceae	<i>Ngorgue</i>
<i>Persea amer</i>	Lauraceae	<i>Avocado</i>
<i>Theobroma cacao</i>	Sterculiaceae	<i>Cocoa</i>
<i>Uncaria sp.</i>	Rubiaceae	<i>Becoline</i>
<b>Yaoundé</b>		
<b>Ewondo</b>		
<i>Aframomum melegueta</i>	Zingiberaceae	<i>Mvonlo</i>
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Asteraceae	<i>King grass</i>
<i>Annickia chlorantha</i>	Anacardiaceae	<i>Nfouol</i>
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	<i>Papaye</i>
<i>Chenopodium ambroides</i>	Chenopodiaceae	
<i>Combretum micranthum</i>	Combretaceae	<i>Gometane</i>
<i>Dichrocephala Integrifolia</i>	Asteraceae	<i>Midzala</i>
<i>Erythropheleum suaveolens</i>	Celastraceae	<i>Tali</i>
<i>Gnetum africanum</i>	Gnetaceae	
<i>Morinda lucida</i>	Rubiaceae	<i>Akeng</i>
<i>Vernonia amigdalina</i>	Asteraceae	<i>Bitter leaf</i>
<i>Voacanga africana</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Etoam</i>
<b>Allogen population (Bagam, Mabi and Toupouri)</b>		
<i>Aframomum melegueta</i>	Zingiberaceae	<i>so'o</i>
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Asteraceae	<i>King grass</i>
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	<i>Gaillé</i>
<i>Canarium schweinfurthii</i>	Burseraceae	<i>Bé</i>
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	<i>Papaye</i>
<i>Clerodendron aff. Anomala</i>	Lamiaceae	<i>Queen of herbs</i>
<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>	Arecaceae	<i>Palm oil</i>
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Boungmon</i>
<i>Harungana madagascariensis</i>	Hypericaceae	<i>Ntounyé</i>
<i>Khaya senegalensis</i>	Meliaceae	<i>Bagué</i>
<i>Palisota ambigua</i>	Commelinaceae	<i>Mbolimbo</i>
<i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Touna</i>
<i>Triumfetta cordifolia</i>	Malvaceae	<i>Chimbelè</i>



## Appendix 2. Photographs



*Figure 5. (A)Massage of a ‘spleen sickness’ patient (Yaoundé, 2017), (B)Care administration by inhalation (Yaoundé, 2017), (C)Care administration by scarification (Ndongo, 2017), (D)Care administration by scarification (Ndongo, 2018)*



# **Political conflicts and resource capture: Charcoal in the Ghanaian savannah and transition zones**

Tontie Lurimuah Kanton

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Ghana

Department of Geoscience and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

## **Abstract**

This paper examines charcoal policy in Ghana and conflicts within charcoal producing communities. Policies use narratives about charcoal production to blame charcoal burners and to justify the need to regulate it. All these policy narratives are underscored by political conflicts over the exercise of power, legitimacy and control over resources. This paper argues that there are four distinct types of conflicts within charcoal producing districts: 1) conflict between chiefs and local government over regulation and control; 2) conflicts between chiefs over exercise of power over subjects and over legitimacy; 3) conflicts between chiefs and their subjects over the allodial and use rights in land and extraction of rents; and 4) conflicts between categories of charcoal producers with different rights and access to land resources.

**Keywords:** political conflict, resource capture, transition zone, charcoal, policy



## 1. Introduction

Charcoal is presented in policy as a harmful product-that destroys the environment and thus its production must be regulated and controlled. To achieve this goal - regulating and controlling the charcoal resource, policies use narratives about charcoal to blame charcoal producers in ways that the basic assumptions seem to be taken for granted (Leach and Mearns 1996). This paper is based on field research carried out in the West and North Gonja Districts of Ghana. It demonstrates that political motives underpin policy using as illustrations the political conflicts that engulf charcoal production in the Ghanaian transition and savannah zones.

The main argument of the paper is that there are four distinct types of conflicts within the charcoal production districts: 1) conflict between traditional authority (the paramount chiefs) and the local government over regulation and control of the charcoal trade; 2) conflict between chiefs over exercise of power over subjects and over legitimacy; 3) conflict between chiefs and their subjects over allodial and user rights in land and extraction of rent; and 4) conflict between categories of producers with different rights and access to resources.

The paper contends that policy is used in an attempt to extend state control and regulation over charcoal production and over the charcoal resource. This is in line with the notion that political context and interests, especially the range of competing actors' interests involved shape policy discourses and outcomes on the ground (Keeley and Scoones 2003). The politics of policy is often marked by a complex and messy processes involving a range of competing actors. Thus, contrary to the conventional and dominant perspective, policy making does not happen in clear-cut distinct-stages. Rather, policy processes are complex and involve interactions between multiple actors with different interests and power.

Understanding the policy processes thus requires, among other things, knowledge or awareness of the narratives that tell the policy stories and the enabling or constraining power dynamics inherent in the policy process (IDS 2006, Bangura 1996). This implies that policy processes also embody power struggle, struggles for political legitimacy and social mobilization by multiple institutions and actors at various stages and levels.

At the local level, this often reflects a struggle involving multiple social actors, especially, a struggle between politico-legal institutions over natural resources and the legitimacy and power of these institutions. These struggles often result in some politico- legal institutions reviving or solidifying and expanding their power, while others are weakened or eroded altogether (Lund 2008, Sikor and Lund 2009). It is also argued that in societies characterized by legal pluralism, institutions compete for recognition as the legitimate institutions to sanction and validate peoples claims to land resources. In the process, the institutions build and consolidate their legitimacy and power among their competitors (Lund 2008, Sikor and Lund 2009). Thus, Sikor and Lund (2009:1) assert that 'the process of recognition



of claims as property simultaneously works to imbue the institution that provides such recognition with the recognition of its authority to do so’.

With regards to legitimacy, it has been argued that the land resource in Africa is a contested arena involving two contradicting claims with different sources of legitimacy. While the state and its institutions power over land resources is rooted in the formal processes of statutory law or constitution - political legitimacy, the traditional authority’s claim of legitimacy and power over land resources is drawn from historically constructed social structures and relations embedded in tradition-traditional legitimacy (Okoth–Ogendo 1989). Hence, the political legitimacy of state institutions is backed by the formal processes of law or constitution while the legitimacy of the traditional authorities (chiefs) is backed by sociocultural beliefs, norms and values, perceptions, lineage ties, customs and traditions.

Another perspective about the legitimacy of chiefs in Africa can be deduced from the argument of Amanor (1999). He argues that the empowering of chiefs and the incorporation of this invented traditional sector into the state as an arm of rural administration by the colonial and post-colonial state, created an alliance between traditional authorities (chiefs) and the state in labour, land and natural resource administration (Amanor 1999: 43, see also Konings 1986). By implication, therefore, the bifurcated status or position of the traditional authorities (chiefs)– representing both the state and the people of the community at the same time, guarantees them (chiefs) both formal and informal legitimation (Gyekye 2013).

This framework presents a holistic view of the charcoal trade and unmasks the power relations and the various interests often concealed in environmental policies and policy processes in Africa. Contrary to the dominant policy assumptions, communities are highly differentiated and hierarchically stratified: politically and economically. This suggests that, institutions and powerful social actors can mobilize the narratives that inform policy, or manipulate and exploit policy to control, regulate and maintain access to resources, or to capture the benefits that accrue from natural resources. There is therefore the need for policies and their implementation to be recognized as negotiated outcomes involving multiple actors with different cultures, powers and interests.

The next sections describe the research area and method used to collect the data, and the study context. Further, it describes the types of conflicts in the Ghanaian transitional and savannah zones. The final section provides the summary and conclusion of the study.

## **2. Research area and method**

This article is based on ethnographic surveys and two months of fieldwork to study the dynamics of charcoal production and resource capture in the new frontier of charcoal production. Fieldwork was conducted from 2017 to 2018, mainly in the transition and savanna zones of Ghana, which is the main centre of charcoal production in Ghana (Nketiah and Asante 2018).



During the fieldwork, I interviewed eighty-four (84) individual participants comprising charcoal producers, chiefs and elders, gang chairmen or leaders, District Assembly Officers, Assembly Men, youth leaders and charcoal transporters. I also observed charcoal production and negotiation processes for concessions between charcoal producers and chiefs. The research areas are located in the West and North-Gonja Districts, in the Savannah Region of the Republic of Ghana (Figure 1). Three of the case communities Soalepe, Soreto No.1 and Soreto No.2 are located in the West-Gonja District and only one community, Kupoto, which is one of the largest charcoal production centres, is located in North-Gonja District, nine miles from the district capital Daboya. Soalepe is located near the district capital of West-Gonja, Damango. Sorto No.1 and Sorto 2 are close to each other but a bit far from the capital. The communities are in the Gonja traditional area, headed by the paramount chief. The area is on the northern boundary of the transitional zone and lies within the Guinea wooded Savannah vegetation. The climate is tropical continental. The mean annual rainfall is between 1000mm and 1500mm.

The population of the West-Gonja is 51,716 (Density=10.96/Kmsq) and the population of North-Gonja District is 55,110 (Density=11.37/Kmsq) (GSS 2010). The Gonja are the majority and the indigenous people in the two Districts. Damango serves as the seat of the traditional authority headed by the over-lord, and is also the regional capital of the Savannah Region. The area is predominantly inhabited by the *Gonja* but there are also other ethnicities- *Hanga*, *Dagomba*, *Mamprusi*, *Tampalma*, *Frafra*, *Dagaaba* and *Fulani*.

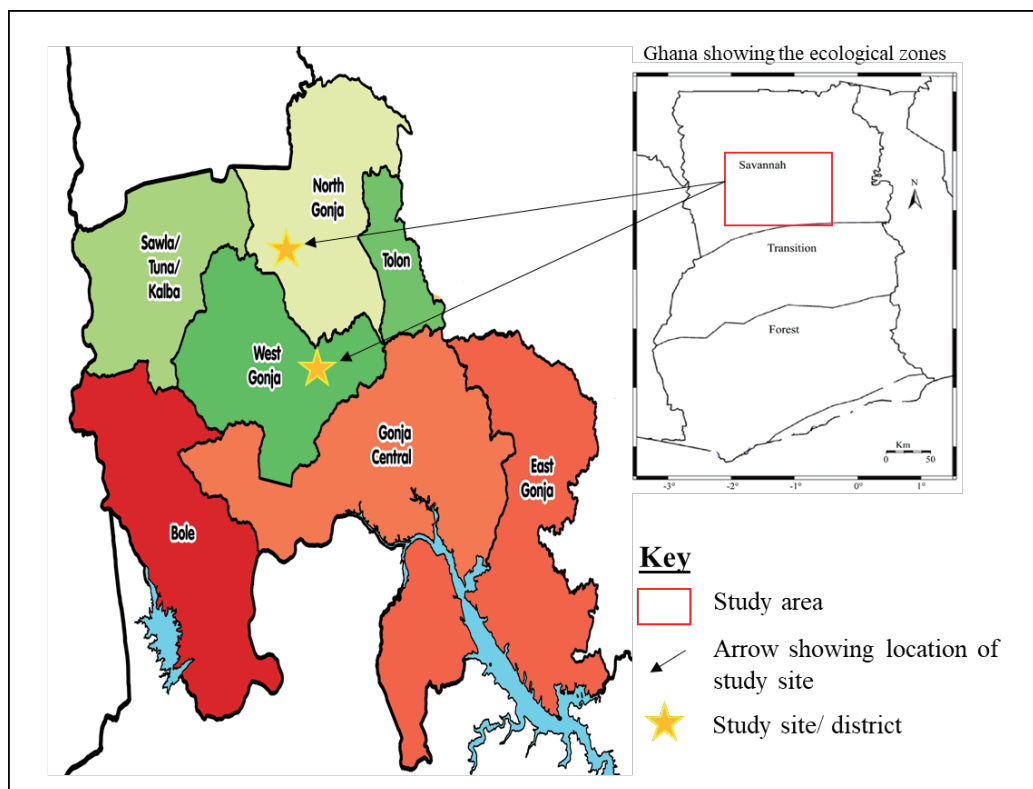


Figure 1. Research area



### 3. The context

Charcoal is mainly produced in the savannah and transitional zones of Ghana, where the hard wood and fire-resistant tree species that make the best quality charcoal are found (Amanor 2007). The trees of this vegetation zone are robust, resilient and regenerate rapidly from coppice and root suckers, and thus adapt well to the environment. The main charcoal producers are migrants from the Sissala area of the Upper West Region of Ghana who have the expertise in charcoal burning. They control a large portion of the charcoal market and transport trade. The Sissala charcoal producers are socially stratified. While the rich Sissala charcoal merchants acquire permits, have their own transport and hire labour, poor Sissala charcoal producers only hire their services out to the merchants (ibid).

In the study area, three distinct types of charcoal production occur. The first type consists of small-scale production by local farmers who are citizens and therefore have secure access to farmland and have rights to exploit the tree resources freely. The second production system is characterized by the rich individual Sissala charcoal merchants who have strong links to political authorities (both the traditional and government bureaucrats). These merchants have capital and can mobilize labour and acquire concessions from chiefs to produce charcoal. The third system of production consists of mainly the Sissala professional charcoal producers and some other ethnic groups who organized themselves into charcoal production groups called gangs. The gang members pool their resources together under the group's leader known as 'chairman'. The chairman of a gang is responsible for scouting for wood, negotiating with the chiefs for concessions and making arrangements for the transportation and marketing of the charcoal in the cities. The chairmen are also very rich and powerful persons who have access to capital, labour, transport and are well connected to government officials, and the traditional authorities (the chiefs).

In the political hierarchy or chain of command of the Gonja, the *Yagbumwura* is the overlord of the Gonja Kingdom. Below him are the divisional chiefs who in theory owe their offices to appointment by the paramount chief, but in practice, they are rulers of independent-states whose subjects owe allegiance immediately to them alone and only indirectly, through them to the paramount chief- the overlord (Jones 1962).

Migrant Sissala charcoal producers, wishing to gain access to tree resources in the Damango area in the Savanna zone, visit the chief of the area where they wish to burn the charcoal to obtain permission. They make a token presentation of cola and drinks or a small amount of money. These are given to the chief to enable them obtain a permit which grants them rights to exploit trees for charcoal production within a particular area. This way of negotiation for concession rights has led to conflict between the paramount chief and the sub-chiefs. This is because, initially, the migrant Sissala charcoal burners visited the paramount chief first before going to negotiate with the sub-chiefs for their concessions. In this way, the token presentation that was supposed to be made to the sub-chiefs and landlords was rather



made to the paramount chief who also collects rent and tax charges from the charcoal burners after the charcoal is produced. This, however, has been resolved in favour of the sub-chiefs and the landlords.

The migrant Sissala charcoal burners, in the Damongo area, are not charged for access to concessions, unlike in the other areas of the transitional and savannah zones. After visiting the chief and making the token payment, the migrant charcoal burners are given parcels of land where there are no farms to exploit the trees. However, the charcoal burners pay GHC 1.00 per every 50kg bag of charcoal produced. Producers usually transport between 300 to 400 bags per load of a single and double axel kia trucks respectively. This translate to monitory income of GHC 300.00 (\$63.00) and 400.00 (\$83.00) to the chiefs and the District Assemblies. With the long haulage articulator trucks, the charcoal burners pay between GHC 1000.00 (about \$208.00) and GHC 1500.00 (about \$313.00) for every load between 1000 and 1500 50kg bags of charcoal respectively. Payments to the chiefs and the landlords are made after the charcoal has been produced. This has led to conflict between the rival chiefs in the area. In addition to paying these amounts to the sub-chiefs, similar payments are made to the paramount chiefs and to the District Assemblies through their Area Councils. In most of the communities, a separate payment is also made to the area councils. In all, before charcoal leaves the Damongo area to the urban markets, four different payments are made for four permits. Then another mandatory payment (which is considered controversial) is also paid to another chief in the central Gonja District where all the charcoal passes to the south. This has also led to the intensification of simmering tension between the paramount chief, and the divisional chief over power and the legitimacy of their power.

#### **4. Charcoal conflicts in the savannah and transition zones of Ghana**

##### **4.1. The conflict between local government and traditional authority (chiefs), over the regulation and control of charcoal resources.**

Tree resources under the customary land tenure are recognized as belonging to the chief. The District Assemblies are responsible for enacting sound environmental policies for sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. The local government authority is headed by the District Chief Executive (DCE), and it collaborates or works with the Chiefs (traditional authorities) in many areas of development, including the management and regulation of natural resource use. Hence, they work together to threaten charcoal burners and actually introduce by-laws to ban charcoal burning on many occasions, using narratives of environmental decline. They consider charcoal production to be destroying the environment and resulting in desertification. These bans, any time they have been imposed they have been quickly lifted or not effective at all because tolls on charcoal production is one of the major revenue sources for the district assemblies in the transition and the savanna zones. The chiefs also depend on the rent on charcoal concessions for many purposes.

The increasing commodification of natural resources and the pressure on District Assemblies to create revenue sources to generate revenue internally to supplement the governments' common fund



which is not enough and also not regular, led to intense competition and conflict between local government authorities and chiefs over the control and regulation of natural resources and the extraction of revenue or rent from the charcoal trade. A chief in one of the case communities stated that ‘the land and the trees belong to me and my people the District Assembly has no power over our land and trees’. This reflects the tensions, contestations and the struggle between the traditional authorities and the District Assemblies over natural resources and over the legitimacy and power of institutions at the local level. These major actors- the chiefs and the District Assemblies, any time they need money often mobilize narratives about charcoal to blame charcoal burners especially, the migrants. They then threaten a ban on charcoal burning, the main source of livelihood for the migrant charcoal burners and increasingly, the youth of the communities. Whenever the chiefs ban charcoal production, they say or claim that it is a government policy while the District Assemblies justify their ban by saying that the chiefs support them. Any time the chiefs place a ban on charcoal burning, two things happen; (i) the amount of money charcoal burners pay to the chiefs before they can transport charcoal to the markets will be increased and (ii) the migrant charcoal producers will mobilize a huge sum of money and pay to the chiefs. Similarly, if the ban was placed by the District Assemblies, the amount of money charcoal producers pay to secure council permit will automatically increase and the migrant charcoal burners will contribute huge sums of money and pay to the District Assembly officials. This has been the situation in the area, where the District Assemblies led by the District Chief Executives and the traditional authorities (chiefs) both collaborate and compete over the control of the charcoal resource. The district assemblies and the chiefs both deploy their own task forces to enforce compliance anytime they ban charcoal production. The task forces of the traditional authorities are also used to collect tax from the migrant charcoal producers. The Chiefs always used rhetoric of the invasion and destruction of their lands by the Sissala migrants charcoal burners to justify attempts to gain greater control over the charcoal resource and over the migrants and levy more taxes on them. As a result of this, Assembly officials, not the Assemblies, and the chiefs benefit from the charcoal resources more than the poor charcoal burners most of whom are indigenes of the area. The majority of the people remain poor and marginalised.

#### **4.2. Conflict between chiefs over exercise of power over subjects and over legitimacy.**

*‘The chiefs are fighting because every chief in this place wants to make money from charcoal’* said by a youth leader in West Gonja District. This statement exemplifies the importance chiefs in the area attach to the charcoal trade as a vital source of revenue, and the conflicts that emanate from charcoal production. This conflict emerged from within the local traditional political hierarchical structure in which different actors claim different privileges in relation to claims on land and natural resources based on the allodial rights and user rights. The production of charcoal and the competing claims of rent on resources from charcoal have intensified simmering tensions and conflicts between chiefs of different traditional authority hierarchies (between paramount chiefs and divisional chiefs) and between chiefs of the same



hierarchy of traditional authority ( between a paramount chief and another paramount chief or between a divisional chief and another divisional chief). My informants say that charcoal production and its trade has reignited and intensify contestations, tensions and conflicts between the overlord of the Gonja traditional area and a divisional chief over power and legitimacy. There is also a chieftaincy dispute between two rival sub chiefs in Damango town who both claim the right to collect rent on charcoal in the Damango lands.

As has been narrated above, charcoal burners have to make three mandatory payments (ie., to the chiefs, the District Assemblies and the Area Councils) for permits before they can transport their charcoal to the cities. This is expected to be the final payment. No other chief should also take any tax from them. However, the Buipe chief whose town the trucks pass to the urban markets in the Southern part of Ghana charges them mandatory fees before the trucks are allowed passage. This is considered an affront and disrespect to the powers and legitimacy of the overlord of the Gonja traditional area. The Buipe chief claims that, he has the right to collect taxes and rent from every charcoal truck from both the West Gonja and the North Gonja Districts passing through his town. The collection of taxes or rent by both the paramount chief and the divisional chief is a show of power by the two, at the same time legitimizing their power (Lund 2008).

Damango, the traditional and administrative capital of the Gonja land is the seat of the overlord. However, the Damango town has its own chief. Over a decade now, there has been a protracted chieftaincy conflict between two brothers who both claim to be the rightful successors to the skin (chieftaincy) office. This generated tension in the community between the rival chiefs and between their supporters. With the influx of the migrant Sissala charcoal burners into the area, and the increasing commodification of the natural resources, the two rival chiefs to the Damongo skin make competing claims as the allodial title holders to the Damongo land. The simmering tension between the two rival chiefs and their supporters was intensified and exploded into open confrontations over who has the right to collect rent from charcoal burners in the community. In resolving this conflict by the overlord, it was agreed that both rival chiefs should issue permits to charcoal burners (thus, charcoal burners could pay to any of the rival chiefs for their permits). Charcoal burners therefore decide which of the rival chiefs to pay their money to. The collection of rent from the charcoal burners and the granting of permits by rival chiefs has therefore led to competing parties claiming legitimacy of their powers. As Lund (2008, Sikor and Lund 2009) show, those who have control over land and natural resources use their powers to grant access or receive rent and at the same time legitimize their power and consolidate their position as allodial title holders. The rent from charcoal is a vital source of income to the chiefs in the area, hence, the competition for control over the charcoal resource.



### **4.3. The conflict between chiefs and their subjects over allodial title and over rights to land and extraction of rents.**

Initially, the District Assembly in collaboration with the ministry of Agriculture and the chiefs manipulated environmental decline narratives that are rooted in a discourse of blame to force the sub-chiefs to ban charcoal production in their communities. However, the sub-chiefs quickly realized that most of the youth in their communities had learnt how to burn charcoal from the migrant Sissala charcoal burners and were also seriously producing charcoal. The youth realized that it was more rewarding to do charcoal business than farming. So, most of the people in the communities went into charcoal production on their farms. The ban on charcoal therefore affected both the local people (indigenes) and the migrant Sissala charcoal burners. This did not go down well with the indigenes and led to a conflict between the youth and their chiefs because charcoal production has become a major source of livelihood for the people, especially the youth. According to the youth, agriculture was no longer profitable or rewarding. This view is clearly captured by a farmer who is also a charcoal producer in Kuputo, a village in the North Gonja District ‘for eight years now I have not been able to harvest enough crops to feed my family how much more to sell and pay for my children school fees, charcoal is my only helper now’. Views like this are common among the indigenes and show the importance of charcoal as a source of livelihood to the people. The youth claim that they have rights to the trees and must be allowed to continue to exploit them for charcoal.

However, because the youth, or the indigenes have user rights to the land and the tree resources and therefore could not be charged any rent, the chiefs are usually less enthusiastic to lift the ban on charcoal in the communities, while at the same time the paramount chief acquiesces to the continuous operations of the migrant Sissala charcoal merchants in their concessions, because the paramount chief benefits from the extraction of rent from the migrant charcoal burners which the chief cannot do to the youth who are indigenes and thus have user rights to the forest. The chiefs and elders say the youth are lazy and do not want to farm. They claim that the youth are only interested in quick money. As a result, there are tensions and conflicts between the youth and the chiefs and the elders in the communities over the use of the charcoal resource and other natural resources (see Amanor 1999, 2001, 2009, and Yaro 2010).

### **4.4. Conflict between categories of producers with different access to resources and different claims on charcoal through market and birth rights.**

*‘This is our land; it belongs to us and we must benefit from it not strangers’* a statement by an indigene of Soalepe in the West Gonja District of Ghana. This statement highlights the tensions, contestations and struggles between indigenes and migrant charcoal producers over natural resources. The charcoal market in the savannah and transitional zones of Ghana is composed of migrant Sissala charcoal burners (made up of wood cutters, those who combine both wood cutting and charcoal burning and the



merchants who hired labourers to burn the charcoal) and the youth of the communities. Most of the migrant charcoal burners are organized into gangs headed by rich merchants who have links with the political authorities as chairmen. The migrant Sissala merchants have access to capital (in terms of finance from plough back profits, and equipment/tools), labour, authority (chiefs and the District Assembly officials) and also control the charcoal market. They also have the knowledge and experience in the charcoal business. The indigenes (the youth) of the area, unlike the migrant merchants, only have user rights to the forests. While the migrants mostly operate in gangs and thereby pooling their resources together, the indigenes operate individually. In view of this, the migrant merchants are able to gain access to large concessions, produce a lot of charcoal frequently and transport the charcoal to the various markets (which they also have control over). The migrants therefore dominate the charcoal trade in the area and also make more money than the indigenes.

The indigenes therefore do not understand why they, having the user right to the resources, benefit marginally, while the migrants gain more benefits from the charcoal trade. They therefore blame the migrants for destroying the environment and must therefore be chased out of the area. The youth also claim that, the authorities (ie the chiefs and the DCEs) often connived and collude to apply the bye-laws differently in favour of the migrants and accuse the DCEs and the traditional authorities of discrimination. According to the youth, anytime a ban was placed on charcoal production, they the indigenes were not allowed to engage in charcoal burning but the merchants were always allowed to go on with their charcoal production with the excuse that, the merchants needed to recoup the investments they had already made on their concessions. They also accused the migrant charcoal burners of always breaking every ban and bye-law on the Gonja land and that with their financial muscle, the Sissala merchants were able to buy off the chiefs and the DCEs. As a result of these claims, the youth were also engaged in mobilizing the same narratives about charcoal that the Chiefs and the DCEs often manipulate, used and exploited to further their economic and political interests; and to justify their call for the migrants to be ban from their communities. The youth even went to the extent of courting and enlisting the support of environmental NGOs to put pressure on the overlord and the DCEs to ban migrant charcoal burners from the area.

Ribot (1998) observed that, communities that control direct access to forests may reap a small portion of its benefits, if they do not also have access to capital and markets; and that political elite and powerful entrepreneur class with linkages to political authority, and access to labour, capital, and control over charcoal markets, and aided by policy, benefited disproportionately from the charcoal trade in Senegal. In a similar study, Ribot (1999), in his historical account of the resistance of the forest villages of Makacoulbantang of eastern Senegal to charcoal production, reveals, not only how flawed, selectively and skewed implemented policies created a struggle and competition between local populations and powerful actors for the control of access to the benefits derived from forests and the



charcoal trade, but also enables the political elite and the merchant class with links to government bureaucrats and agencies and traditional authorities to capture the benefits of the charcoal trade.

Larson and Ribot (2007) examine how forestry policy and implementation maintain double standards in an uneven playing field in a manner that permanently excludes the rural poor from the wealth of forest around them – producing poverty and marginalization in the process. They contend that, like Ribot (1998) and Faye and Ribot (2017) double standards in forest and market access through the implementation of policies and regulations have tied the charcoal trade in the hands of a small privileged group of elite and well-connected patrons.

It is therefore important to recognise that having direct control of access to forest and other natural resources (in terms of property rights) by people in the forest/resource communities without access to capital and markets is futile (Ribot 1998, 1999, Ribot and Peluso 2003), and that policies and their implementations can exacerbate inequality, unfair competition, resource capture, exclusion of the poor and conflicts. This also draws attention to the question many people have been asking- whether the chiefs are for the people or on the side of the government and merchant capital? This is because resource communities are politically and economically stratified and elites such as chiefs often make decisions that are not in the interest of the community as a whole. Recognising this will enable us to focus on how power and resources are distributed and contested in different contexts by social actors, and to get beneath the structures to unmask the underlying interests and incentives that are often embedded in policy and the corresponding institutions that enable or constrain equity in the distribution of resource benefits.

## **5. Summery and conclusions**

Traditional political authority (chiefs), and the legislative political and administrative authority (Assemblies) collaborate, mediate and contest for power, authority and legitimation over the regulation and control of the charcoal resource. The chiefs are the custodians of the land. Article 245 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana mandates the Assemblies to formulate and execute plans, policies and programs for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the development of their areas. Clearly, there is the need for collaboration, not competition, and conflicts between the chiefs and the Assemblies. In any case, it would be too simplistic to reduce these contests over natural resources to a straightforward conflict between the Assemblies and the chiefs over the revenue from charcoal. For these contests are also, probably, about struggles for legitimacy, power and resources. Hence, when traditional authorities (chiefs) use task forces in periodic and surprise raids on illegal charcoal producers and wood cutters, it is a statement about the deployment of power and authority to charcoal producers as it is to the District Assemblies and the other state institutions who are mandated to do so. These conflicts, as the study has shown, are not only between different institutions, but also occur within the hierarchies of institutions – the conflicts between chiefs over legitimacy and the exercise of power over the charcoal resource. The



issue of permits, and collection of rent and taxes from resource users, by the chiefs simultaneously strengthens and legitimizes their power and authority in relation to their competitors (Lund 2008, Sikor and Lund 2009).

Another important issue the study highlights is the conflict between the chiefs and the youth over right to land and tree resources. The state recognizes the allodial rights as being vested in the chief and user rights in the indigenes (subjects). This allows indigenes to use land and trees freely for farming, charcoal production and many other purposes but does not allow the indigenes to sell their land, since the land by customs belongs to the skin. Chiefs can therefore transact trees and natural resources with migrants, but not with the indigenes who have rights to use the trees freely.

Since the chiefs cannot gain or extract revenue from the youth who are indigenes, they are often interested in transacting trees and land with the migrant charcoal producers. This has led to the conflicts between the youth and the chiefs since the youth wants to protect their own use of the trees, and the chiefs are interested in transacting the trees with the migrants and to prevent the indigenes from exercising their use over the natural resources (see Amanor *et al.* 2005, and Amanor 2009 for a detail discussion).

In view of this, Ribot (1999), like Amanor (1999) and Cline-cole (2000), questions the legitimacy of traditional authority, whether chiefs actually represent their communities or their self-interests? and draw attention to the contradictions inherent in the chieftaincy institution as a colonial tool for indirect rule and resource appropriation. Further, Ribot (1999) implicates policies for their frequent failure to recognise that a 'community' is not made up of a homogenous population, but according to Ribot (1999) are '*stratified ensemble of persons with different needs and power*'. Hence, powerful actors, in collusion with policy agents, can manipulate policy processes and implementations to capture the benefits of forests and the charcoal trade.

Finally, the conflict between the indigenes and the migrant charcoal producers indicate that there is no balance use of the natural resource by the locals and other actors. The resources tend to be concentrated in the hands of both traditional and government institutions and elites, who use policy to their own advantage. The study reveals that the indigenes or the local people are not able to compete effectively with the migrants for the production of charcoal because they do not have access to capital, labour, transport and markets. The indigenes are further constrained by the differential application of by-laws and rules by both the chiefs and the District Assemblies; and the preference of the chiefs to transact land and resources with the migrants than to allowing access to the same resources by the indigenes, since the chiefs cannot gain revenue from them (indigenes). The only way the citizens can protect their own use of the resources is to fight for the expulsion of the migrant charcoal producers in the communities. This insight corroborates the view that forest communities that control direct access to forests may reap very small portion of the benefits from the resource if they do not also have access to markets and capital (Ribot 1998). This finding is also similar to Ribot (1999) account of the resistance



of the forest villages of Makacoulibantang of Senegal to charcoal production. Ribot, in his historical account of the resistance of the forest villages of Makacoulibantang of eastern Senegal to charcoal production, reveals, not only how flawed, selectively and skewed implemented policies created a struggle and competition between local populations and powerful actors for the control of access to the benefits derived from forests and the charcoal trade, but also enables the political elite and the merchant class with links to government agencies and traditional authorities to capture the benefits.

## 6. Conclusion

Policies and their implementations are not neutral. The political conflicts that engulfed the production of charcoal in the savannah and transitional zones of Ghana show how policies can be manipulated, exploited and used in an attempt to control, and to capture the benefits that are derived from natural resources. Chiefs have, on the one hand acted, contested, disputed and competed over allodial rights to land and natural resources, and the control over the benefits that are derived from them. The local governments have, on the other hand cooperated with the traditional authorities, in most times to regulate the use of natural resources but sometimes too competed with the same institution for the control and extraction of rent and revenue from the charcoal resource. Through these struggles, the chiefs strengthen and consolidate their legitimacy and power in relation to their competitors. The charcoal merchants who manipulated, and are being manipulated by the system also competed with the poor youth of the area for the benefits of the charcoal trade. Clearly, the winners are the powerful elite – chiefs, the District Assembly officials and the few powerful charcoal merchant-class who had access to capital, labour, markets and most importantly, access to the political authorities. The losers are the village populations, who are alienated and marginalized.

There is therefore the need for policies and their implementation to be recognized as negotiated outcomes involving multiple actors with different cultures, powers and interests. Instead of merely reaffirming assumptions within national policy processes, policies that are implemented at the local community level must reflect conditions on the ground and be responsive to the needs and interests of the people (Amanor *et al.* 2005).

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## List of Contributors

(in alphabetical order)

Amélia Maisha Silas Tunzine

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Daddy D. Kipute

PhD Student, Faculty of Natural and Renewable Resources Management, University of  
Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Teacher-researcher, State's University of Mbuji-Mayi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Denis Jean Sonwa

Senior Scientist, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Cameroon

Eliezer Majambu

PhD Student, Le Mans University, France

Teacher-researcher, State's University of Mbuji-Mayi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Elysée Ntiranyibagira

Part-time Lecturer, Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Rwanda

Director, Center for Environmental Research, Training and Expertise for Development in Africa,  
Rwanda

Emmanuel Vincent Nelson Kallon

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Evariste Fedoung Fongnzossie

Senior Lecturer, Advanced Teacher's Training School for Technical Education, University of  
Douala, Cameroon

Forbi Preasious Funwi

Assistant Conservator, Millennium Ecologic Museum, Cameroon

PhD Student, Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Germain Batsi

PhD Student / Teacher-researcher, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources Management,  
University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gloriose Umuziranenge

PhD Candidate, University of Bamberg, Germany

Head of Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, Protestant Institute  
of Arts and Social Sciences, Rwanda

Horman Chitonge

Professor, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa



Ian Karusigarira

PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Jérôme Ebuy

Professor, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources Management, University of Kisangani,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Kazue Demachi

Lecturer, African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Kinyua Laban Kithinji

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Global Politics – Hosei University, Japan

Léonelle Touyou Akeptu

Midwife, Catholic Health Centre Holy Mary of Soa, Cameroon

Lisette Mangaza

PhD Student, University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Teacher-researcher, Department of Environment, University of Goma, Democratic Republic of  
the Congo

Marie Mbolo

Associate Professor, Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Marlène Toukam Ngansop

Conservator, Millennium Ecologic Museum, Cameroon

PhD Student, Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Moïse Mvetumbo

General Secretary, Millennium Ecologic Museum, Cameroon

PhD Student, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Moonde Kabinga

PhD Student, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Paschal Kum Awah

Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Peter Narh

Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Ghana

Ranulph Hangi

Green Lawyer, Kisangani's bar, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Sagesse Nziavake

MSc. in biodiversity Management and Junior Researcher at CIFOR-Kisangani, Democratic  
Republic of the Congo



Salomon Mampeta

Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Shinichi Takeuchi

Director / Professor, African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Takanori Oishi

Lecturer, African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Tontie Lurimuah Kanton

PhD Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Ghana

PhD Student, Department of Geoscience and Natural Resource Management, University of  
Copenhagen, Denmark

William Armand Mala

Associate Professor, Department of Plant Biology, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Yasuo Matsunami

Specially Appointed Researcher, African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies,  
Japan







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**ASC-TUFS**

**African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (ASC - TUFS)**

Address) 3-11-1, Asahicho, Fuchu-shi, Tokyo, 183-8534, Japan.

Tel/Fax) +81-42-330-5540

e-mail) [africanstudies-center@tufs.ac.jp](mailto:africanstudies-center@tufs.ac.jp)