

Pubblicazione quadrimestrale
numero 3/2015

afriche e orienti

www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/africheorienti

rivista di studi ai confini tra africa mediterraneo e medio oriente

anno XVII numero 3/2015

The New Harvest. Agrarian Policies and Rural Transformation in Southern Africa

edited by
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AIEP EDITORE



Land Grabbing and Agricultural Commercialization Duality: Insights from Tanzania's Transformation Agenda

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Introduction¹

Since 2009, Tanzania, as many African countries, have been implementing major agricultural transformation initiatives. These initiatives come against the backdrop of sustained influx of foreign companies acquiring large-scale land for commercial production of food, biofuels, tourism, forest plantations and industrial purposes referred to as 'land grabbing'. This paper, uses the term 'land grab', as defined by the International Land Coalition,² referring to acquisitions or concessions with certain characteristics that (might) turn into negative consequences for local people.³ The incidences of land grabs are prevalent in most of the developing countries. From 2005 to date, Tanzania has experienced a growing number of cases of land acquisition by both foreign and domestic investors. A range of studies (Cotula *et al.* 2009; Chachage, Mbunda 2009; Chachage, Baha 2010; Oakland Institute 2011; Locher, Sulle 2014; Locher, Müller-Böker 2014) provides an overview of land deals and their main purposes in Tanzania including the establishment of major biofuels plantations around 2006–2008 (see Kamanga 2008; Songela, Maclean 2008; Sulle, Nelson 2009; Mwamila *et al.* 2009). Other purposes of

land deals in Tanzania include the production of several types of food crops, forest plantations, tourism and speculative reasons.

In principle, this paper is not about agricultural commercialization, but rather focuses on the effects of the agricultural commercialization agenda implemented through various policy initiatives. It does this by posing two fundamental questions: 1) who is included and who is excluded in the agricultural policy making process and with what implications? 2) To what extent does the current agricultural commercialization agenda affect the land rights of various groups, particularly small-scale farmers and pastoralists. In answering these questions, the paper investigates agricultural policy-making processes in Tanzania. It assesses the implementation of high-level initiatives such as the Kilimo Kwanza (KK) (Agriculture First), the Southern Agriculture Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT), the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, and the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative.

The paper is informed by an intensive desk literature review and field-based research carried out from 2012 to 2015. It also draws from a number of previous works: the Land Deal Politics Initiative working paper (Locher, Sulle 2013) and the Future Agriculture's Working Papers (Smalley, Sulle, Malale 2014; Dancer, Sulle 2015). Additional information was gathered from ongoing field research, email exchanges, and phone calls with researchers and professionals dealing with land rights and agriculture.

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Based on the research findings, this paper argues that farmers and pastoralists at the grassroots level are keen to see an increase in investments in the agricultural sector, but they are not willing to give up their land to investors (see also Mbilinyi, Semakafu 1985; Locher and Müller-Böker 2014; Dancer, Sulle 2015). It thus recommends the adoption of more inclusive policy-making processes and the design of agricultural production models that are pro small-scale producers (farmers and pastoralists), while safeguarding their access to land, control and ownership of customary land by small-scale farmers and pastoralists.

The next section briefly introduces the scale and magnitude of land grabs globally and scholarly analysis. This is followed by an overview of global land grabs analysis, overview of 'land grabbing' and legal framework governing land in Tanzania. The paper then highlights key agrarian change debates and proceeds to provide descriptions and analysis of the selected agricultural policies and initiatives implemented as part of the agricultural transformation agenda; pointing out who is included and who is excluded in policy making processes and who drives such processes. Thereafter, the paper examines the implications of agricultural commercialization initiatives to the poor majority with attention to specific groups –small-scale farmers and pastoralists. The paper concludes with brief accounts on the need to reframe the current initiatives to ensure small-scale farmers—the key producers of food and cash crops and pastoralists are enabled to take part in production and their ownership of key resources are strengthened.

Global land grab and scholarly reactions in brief

Currently, it is only the Land Matrix, an interactive global database of land-based investments, which gives some indication about the magnitude of global land grabs. For example, its updated website shows that there are more than 38.5 million ha of concluded land deals, 16.9 million of intended land deals and 6.5 million ha of failed land deals across the globe.⁴ Most of these deals are transacted in Africa. The Land Matrix data, however, may not necessarily depict a true picture of what is really happening on the ground because of lack of accurate data sources and methodological flaws in land deals data collection processes (see Locher, Sulle 2013). Hence, there is a need for in-depth empirical research to understand the magnitude of land deals in specific countries.

Around 2008, the key drivers of land grabs globally were described as increased food and oil prices. At the same period, the number of investments operated by speculative investors and hedge funds from Western countries increased in Africa.⁵ This led to increased attention of investors mainly from developed nations who were eager to take opportunities to grow feedstocks for food and energy to meet emerging market demands (Hall 2011; Sulle, Nelson 2009); while host governments desperately in need of foreign direct investments welcomed most of the investment projects without necessarily having enabling legal frameworks (Hultman *et al.* 2012).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with diverse groups of experts and stakeholders from around the world has formulated and published the *Voluntary Guidelines (VG) on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (FAO 2012). Some of the VG principles are to recognize both formal and informal land rights. In addition, the FAO voluntary guidelines require states to consider a ceiling on the amount of land to be allocated to large-scale investments. To-date there are several voluntary guidelines related to land-based investments, but all of these are soft laws until they are domesticated by a specific country.⁶

Overview of 'land grabbing' and legal framework governing land

Land grabs

A number of studies have attempted to provide an overview on planned and established land deals for biofuels and other agricultural investments in Tanzania (e.g. Songela, Maclean 2008; ActionAid 2009; Mwamila *et al.* 2009; Sulle, Nelson 2009; Kaarhus *et al.* 2010; Oakland Institute 2011; Bergius 2014). Other reports go further to assess land grabs for the establishment of forest plantations (Locher 2015) and tourism initiatives (Nelson *et al.* 2012). All these reports face certain challenges in data collection such as the lack of national database available to researchers or the public in Tanzania (Oakland Institute 2011: 16), difficulty to secure reliable and transparent information from investors and the complexities that surround land-based investments which are subject to global economic and political developments.⁷ In addition, some investment

projects are sold to new companies and change their name,⁸ and more importantly, there are methodological flaws in reporting the collected information about land deals which make it even harder to follow this dynamic phenomenon (Locher, Sulle 2013; 2014). For these reasons, most information on land deals in Tanzania provided by the Land Matrix and by Locher and Sulle (2013) remains inadequate.

Despite these limitations, it is possible to make certain estimates on the magnitude of land deals in Tanzania. For instance, based on the literature review and data from fieldwork provided by Locher and Sulle (2013), there are 34 deals with about 1,000,000 ha owned by *foreign investors* (and joint ventures between the Tanzanian and foreign investors), whether announced, ongoing or concluded land acquisition processes. Out of these deals, only deals with a total of around 555,000 ha are reported by at least two different sources and can thus be considered as verified with certain reliability. Of the verified deals, only ten deals with a total area of 145,000 ha can be considered as concluded deals. The remaining reported area of 410,000 ha derives from deals that are so far only announced or that have land acquisition ongoing, but not concluded (including the contested AgriSol Energy deal with an area of 325,000 ha). Since these data are three years old, a number of new projects are likely in place and some projects have either ceased or become dormant. But, contrary to these findings, the updated Land Matrix database shows 31 land deals in Tanzania covering about 295,022 ha.⁹

From 2005–2008 many of the land-based investments focused on producing biofuels (mainly *Jatropha*). Since the global financial crisis in 2007–2008 most of the early biofuels projects have failed and investors have moved their focus into food crop production (Locher, Sulle 2013). Like the initial biofuels investments, current agricultural commercialization strategies have received criticism from academics, local and international organizations concerned with land rights of marginalized groups and those of customary rights holders (Sulle, Hall 2013; Bergius 2014; Coulson 2015; Twomey *et al.* 2015). While the government of Tanzania has introduced the concept of a land ceiling of up to 20,000 ha for biofuels development project through the liquid biofuels guidelines (United Republic of Tanzania – URT 2011), to-date, the proposed allocation of land under a SAGCOT initiative by far bypasses the proposed limit.¹⁰

Legal framework governing land

Land in Tanzania is of three categories: general land, reserved land, and village land – all governed by a number of different pieces of legislation. The *Land Act (LA) No. 4 of 1999* governs general land, and the *Village Land Act (VLA) No. 5 of 1999* governs village lands. Reserved land comprising of areas conserved for wildlife and forestry resources are governed by the *Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) of 2009* and the *Forest Act No. 14 of 2002* respectively. Both LA and VLA recognize the customary right of land occupancy as equal to the granted right of occupancy. The latter is signified by a title deed issued by the land commissioner. In principle the VLA empowers the village council to deal with land administration and management issues, including its allocation to

villagers and entering into joint ventures with investors with the approval of the Village Assembly formed by all villagers with or above 18 years. The authority of the village assembly to transfer land is however limited to less than 250 ha. The village council may process a request by local or foreign investor demanding more than 250 ha, and upon the approval by the Village Assembly forwards it to the Commissioner for land for authorization. The crux of land-based conflicts between investors and communities in the country emanates from these provisions. This is because about 70 percent of all land in the country (Hayuma, Conning 2006) falls under the village land category and therefore, for investors to secure this type of land, the President has to first transfer it to the general land category.

The transfers of village land to investors is happening at a time when the country has no formalized policy, legal and institutional frameworks to guide such processes. A prominent land lawyer in Tanzania, Ringo Tenga, has often expressed concerns that the country is not fully prepared to handle foreign direct investments (FDIs) in land (Tenga 2013). He further argues that, the existing legal framework remains weak, and as such, new FDIs in land are likely to infringe on existing legitimate rights. Available evidence supports Tenga's views because, to-date, there are no clear guidelines backed by legal frameworks to manage large-scale land-based investments in the country. The *Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuels Development in Tanzania* (URT 2011) were released in 2010 as the result of government response to widespread criticisms about a lack of coordination and regulation of massive allocation of land to biofuel projects between 2000s and 2010 (Sulle, Nelson 2013). One of the guidelines requirements was establishing a land ceiling of up to 20,000 ha for biofuel development projects. Currently, though, government earmarked pieces of land for large-scale estates under SAGCOT and BRN exceed this limit.¹¹

The dynamics of agrarian and rural change

Debate about land grabbing is incomplete without taking into account a broader picture of agrarian change. These issues are currently widely discussed by scholars from the South (Moyo, Yeros 2007; Shivji 2009) and the main message in these debates is that agrarian change and rural development cannot be separated from the "global process of imperialist accumulation, which is characterized by polarization producing an articulated accumulation at the center and disarticulated accumulation in the periphery" (Shivji 2009: 76).¹² As a result, a labourer in either urban or rural areas is forced to exploit himself or herself by cutting "the necessary consumption" (Shivji 2009: 76). In other words, the poor farmers exploit themselves to be able to produce sufficient output to reproduce themselves.

In recent years, part of this agrarian debate takes the form of small versus large-scale farming, the concepts that Henry Bernstein (2010) describes more broadly as family farming versus capitalist farming. It is, however, important to highlight that, the debates about whether it is possible to attain increased agricultural productivity without small-

scale farming dates back to 1850s particularly among the socialist European countries (Coulson 2015). These debates are still alive, especially in developing countries with scholars taking different positions. For example, in the case of Tanzania, Maghimbi *et al.* (2011) have argued that small-scale farming (peasantry) is no longer viable and there is a need to introduce farm consolidation and minimum farmland requirement. These views are currently reproduced in the wider government agricultural initiatives discussed below. A contrasting view of small scale farming in Tanzania is provided by Andrew Coulson (2015). He argues that small-scale farmers are able to thrive, producing for themselves and surplus for the market at least for the next two decades. Despite these varying views, in Tanzania, as some have argued (Maghimbi *et al.* 2011, Bernstein (2007), the agricultural sector has followed the same trajectory initiated by the colonial governments, that is the production of export crops. This vision was reinforced during the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) reforms. As is well documented, the implementation of SAPs, left the economy of Tanzania crippled because of the state withdrawal of agricultural subsidies and credits (Bryceson 2007). Further results of SAPs in the agricultural sector include privatization of state plantations and agro processing factors. While some of these plantations and factories are producing various crops in different arrangements with outgrowers, some are producing below their production capacity (Massimba *et al.* 2014; Smalley *et al.* 2014).

Agricultural commercialization: from 'Siasa ni Kilimo' to 'Big Results Now'

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The agricultural policies and initiatives based on *ad hoc* decisions are hardly new in Tanzania's history. Immediately after independence in 1961, Tanzania implemented a series of major economic, social and political transformation programmes – all meant to liberate the country from abject poverty and improve citizens' welfare. The agricultural sector was central to these programmes whereby many policies (slogans) to mobilize farmers were introduced from time to time (see Table 1). The best example is Siasa ni Kilimo (Politics is Agriculture) declared by Mwalimu Nyerere in 1972 in Iringa to mark the nation's dedication to agriculture as the central pillar of economic growth. Within the same context, Kilimo cha Kufa na Kuona ('Do or Die' Agriculture) was introduced in 1983 in Moshi. And hardly a year after, Kilimo cha Umwagiliaji (Irrigation in Agriculture) was announced in 1984 (Limbu 1995:2). A number of the initiatives implemented in the mid 1970s were basically government's attempts to address the effects of long droughts experienced in 1973-74.

Yet, while the previous government policy initiatives were responding to natural and man made calamities (Limbu 1995), recent policies are strongly influenced by global processes that aim to shift agriculture towards an industrial scale, responding to global market demands. For instance, in 2009, at the time the demand for land for biofuels production, tourism and forest plantation heightened, the Kilimo Kwanza initiative was launched by the Tanzania National Business Council¹³ (TNBC) in Dar Es Salaam. This is uncommon in a country in which most of its policies are formulated by the ruling

party's central committee or the cabinet. The overarching objective of Kilimo Kwanza is to transform agriculture through enhanced productivity. KK's architects claim that poverty remains the nation's greatest challenge while nation's endowments such as agricultural land, livestock and marine resources are underutilized (URT 2009).

Table 1: Selected Tanzania's agricultural sector policies and initiatives from 1972–2017

Year	Policy/Initiative	Author	Coordinator	Finance	Main focus
1972	Siasa ni Kilimo (Politics is Agriculture)	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	MoA	Government of Tanzania (GoT)	Smallholder
1983	Kilimo cha Kufana Kupona ('Do or Die' Agriculture)	MoA	MoA	GoT	Smallholder
1984	Kilimo cha Umwagiliaji (Irrigation in Agriculture)	MoA	MoA	GoT, World Bank	Irrigation
2006–13	Agricultural Sector Development Programme	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFSC)	MAFSC	GoT, donor basket fund	Smallholder production, irrigation
2009	Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First)	TNBC	PMO-RALG*	GoT, donors, private sector	Commercial agriculture
2010	South Agriculture Growth Corridor (SAGCOT)	MAFSC	SAGCOT Center	GoT, donors (G8), private sector	Commercial agriculture, smallholder
2012–17	Tanzania Agriculture & Food Security Investment Plan	CAADP*/MAFSC	MAFSC	GoT, donors, private sector, philanthro-capitalists	Smallholder production, Food security
2012	Big Results Now	Presidential Delivery Bureau	Presidential Delivery Bureau	GoT, Donors, Private Sector	Commercial agriculture, smallholder
2013	National Agriculture Policy	MAFSC	MAFSC	GoT, donors	Green Revolution

Sources: Limbu 1995; TNBC¹⁴ Cooksey 2013.

*PMO-RALG means the Prime Minister Office Regional and Local Government and CAADP stands for Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

Unlike the past initiatives, which have always focused on smallholder farmers, KK aims to mobilize private sector investments in agriculture (Cooksey 2012, 2013). In a rare move of implementing KK, in 2010, the government of Tanzania showcased the launch of Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) at the World Economic Forum Africa Summit in Dar Es Salaam. The multibillion-dollar project is part of the agricultural development corridors first coined and promoted by Yara – a Norwegian Fertilizer Company. The company first presented its idea at the United Nation General Assembly in 2008 and later at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2009 in Switzerland (Paul, Steinbrecher 2013; Laltaika 2015). Since then, the project has gained widespread support from the UN food, agriculture and development agencies, donor countries, financial institutions such as the World Bank and private sector dominated by the fertilizer and seed companies. SAGCOT aims to produce “inclusive, commercially successful agribusinesses that will benefit the region’s small-scale farmers, and in so doing, improve food security, reduce rural poverty and ensure environmental sustainability”.¹⁵ The government insists on mobilizing all partners and resources towards SAGCOT. It is estimated that by “2030, SAGCOT partners seek to bring 350,000 hectares of land into profitable production, transition 100,000 small-scale farmers into commercial farming, create 420,000 new employment opportunities, lift 2 million people out of poverty, and generate 1,2 billion dollars in annual farming revenue”.¹⁶

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In 2012, the government of Tanzania (GoT) together with then G8 leaders agreed to implement the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition initiative (New Alliance). Established by the Heads of G8 in collaboration with the Heads of the six African states and governments in Camp David, May 2012, the initiative aims to foster private sector and development partners’ investment in African agriculture and lift 50 million people out of poverty by 2022.¹⁷ By 2015, four more African countries had already joined the initiative making a total of ten African countries implementing New Alliance frameworks in their respective countries. These countries have agreed to implement New Alliance cooperation frameworks with specific commitments for each country to alter the policy environment and to facilitate the development of infrastructure – roads, irrigation schemes and markets to provide an attractive environment for private sector investments in the agricultural sector.

The New Alliance, which is built on public-private partnerships (PPPs) with funding commitments from G8 (now G7) governments, requires policy concessions and land reforms implemented by African host countries. In Tanzania, the implementation of New Alliance is aligned to both the CAADP and SAGCOT. CAADP, the first ever-African declaration passed by the Heads of African states and governments in Maputo in 2003, is the Africa’s policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth and prosperity for all.

Currently, as part of the implementation of CAADP, SAGCOT and the New Alliance

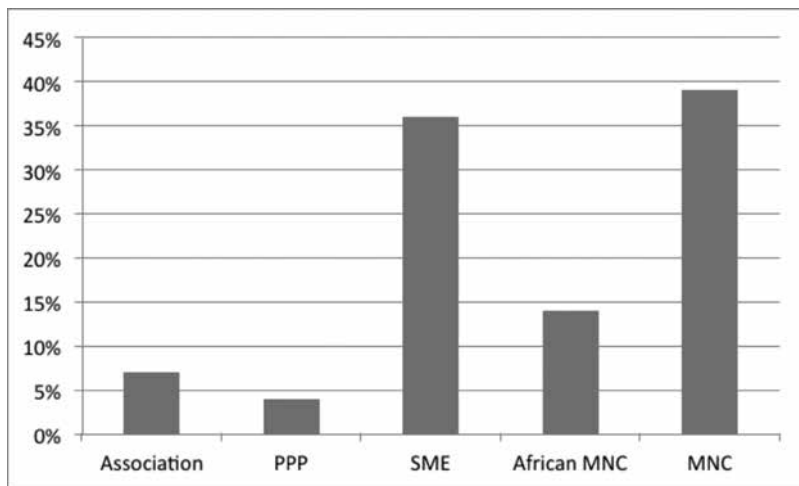
the government of Tanzania is addressing a number of commitments stipulated in the cooperation frameworks, which include: secure certificate of land rights (granted or customary) for smallholders and investors and ensure that "all village land in Kilombero [are] demarcated [by] August 2012; all village land in SAGCOT region demarcated [by] June 2014 [and] 20% of villages in SAGCOT complete land use plans and issued certificate of occupancy [by] June 2014 and additional 20% by June 2016".¹⁸

Although, not much of the land demarcations have taken place so far, it is important to take note of various initiatives underway. Some of these include the land tenure support programme (LTSP) funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) jointly implemented by the Ministry of Land, Housing and Human Settlement Development (MLHSD). The programme covers three districts within SAGCOT area including Kilombero.¹⁹

In addition, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is also implementing the Land Tenure Assistance Activity in Iringa and Mbeya districts to map and document land rights. In addition, a number of civil society organizations are facilitating limited land use planning and the issuance CCRO. Almost all these land formalisation projects, apart from those of the CSOs, are largely targeting the areas in which the government has rolled out large-scale agricultural initiatives. Indeed, the Land Transparency Initiative, launched a year after New Alliance agreements were signed, categorically promotes speedy issuance of land titling "underpinned by surveying and mapping to support the participatory land use planning process and identify land for investment".²⁰ This type of land tenure security promoted under the agricultural commercialisation initiatives, as illustrated above is likely to favour large-scale investments at the expense of small-scale producers, and opens room for local elites and multinational corporations (MNCs) to accumulate land.

It is also unclear how the PPP model promoted under these initiatives would benefit small-scale producers. By the end of 2012, for instance, the large numbers of investors that have indicated interest in investing in African agriculture are large MNCs which form 39% of the total companies investing in Africa such as Unilever, Yara International, and Monsanto rather than small African enterprises (see figure 1). A recent Oxfam report questions the viability of PPPs promoted in Africa, arguing that they remain "unproven and risky" and are likely to benefit the already "privileged groups" while leaving "the most vulnerable" to shoulder the risks (Oxfam 2014: 1). It thus recommends the use of existing successful methods in which the donor money and public investment have a greater chance to reach those in need, including direct investment in small-scale producers and women (Oxfam 2014).

Figure 1: Classification based on company size



Source: One.²¹

Amidst the implementation of KK, SAGCOT, CAADP and the New Alliance the Tanzanian government launched the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative. BRN is the result of the President Kikwete's visit to Malaysia in June 2011 where he was introduced to the Malaysian Transformation Programme – Big Fast Results (BFR) launched in 2009. Malaysia adopted BFR to transform its economy towards a high-income country by 2020. Inspired by the success of this initiative, President Kikwete and his cabinet launched the lab process in February 2013, with six priority areas: agriculture; education; energy; transportation; water and resource mobilization approved at the highest level Cabinet Retreat. BRN objective aims to transform the country from less income economy to a middle income economy by 2025, meeting the National Development Vision 2025 (URT 2013).

Unlike the previous investments in agriculture, which focused on smallholder farmers, the current government's efforts under BRN target medium and large-scale farming. BRN focuses on three priority crops: maize, rice and sugarcane whereby 2015, the target is to have 25 commercial farming deals for paddy and sugarcane; 78 collective rice irrigation and marketing schemes and 275 collective warehouse-based marketing schemes (URT 2013). Within BRN plans and those of the initiatives discussed above, the inclusion of small-scale farmers is often through outgrowers schemes without much detail. Yet, the empirical research shows that outgrowers schemes have a lot of challenges ranging from growing mistrust between outgrowers and the companies they are operating with to poor regulatory and institutional frameworks (Massimba *et al.* 2013; Smalley *et al.* 2014; Sulle, Smalley 2015).

To-date, however, despite the high level of engagement and funding allocated to SAGCOT and BRN implementation, there is little achievement in terms of land transferred to investors. This is because the government is still reconciling land-based conflicts pitting communities against investor(s) and or communities against the government in some areas earmarked for BRN projects.²² One of the most contested BRN projects – is the Bagamoyo EcoEnergy (BEE) which aims to develop sugarcane estates and an outgrowers' scheme. BEE got into land problems because it bought the properties of the former Swedish Company (SEKAB) which acquired land in Bagamoyo since 2009. Since then, and despite the push from the government and project funders, this project could not materialize. The main reasons include local communities' resistance to proposed involuntary resettlement to pave the land large-scale farming and outgrowing scheme as well as unclear and poor compensation offers (Chung 2015; ActionAid 2015).

The implications of agricultural commercialization to vulnerable groups

In Tanzania the agriculture sector supports the livelihoods of over 80% of the population and employs over 75% of the workforce (URT 2013). To-date about 90% of agricultural production is done by the small-scale farmers, hence driving its growth in the country.²³ Using the Tanzanian experience, Andrew Coulson demonstrates that "small farms can, in appropriate circumstances, compete with or outperform large [farms]" (Coulson 2015: 65). He further argues that small-scale farmers in Tanzania are likely to dominate the agricultural sector for the next twenty years (ibid.). Based on these facts, priority and high impact investment agriculture should target small-scale farmers by providing them with public goods and services they need most. These include access to knowledge, access to inputs and access to credit among others.

An investment that displaces rural people and turns them into wage or temporary laborers does not meet development goals. Assessing the impacts of large-scale farming using the World Bank's own data, Li (2011) concludes that the employment created in such large-scale investment is far less than the number of people displaced. Yet, the evidence shows that the current Tanzanian government focuses its attention on agricultural investments, which involves the acquisition of land rights through long-term leases or concessions instead of adopting alternative models, which engage more of the existing producers without displacing them (Vermeulen, Cotula 2010).

Therefore, without changing their current framings of KK, SAGCOT, the New Alliance and BRN are likely to displace the majority of the local producers and do more harm to marginalized groups such as pastoralists and women. In turn, this displacement would cause more land-based conflicts between investors and communities and among pastoralists and farmers as documented in other studies (Mwamfupe 2015).²⁴ The Executive Director of the national network of small-holder farmers in Tanzania, commonly known as Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA) aptly put it: "Frankly speaking, most initiatives like the SAGCOT, target large-scale farmers

and probably profit-oriented foreign companies operating in the country. Smallholder farmers are always losers in most government initiatives".²⁵ The worries about the negative impacts of grand schemes like SAGCOT in Tanzania is at least not new. A number of grand agricultural schemes initiated by then colonial government or independent Tanzania such as the groundnut scheme in central Tanzania, rice, cotton, and livestock/cattle schemes have either failed or never met their targets (Scott 1998; Coulson 1982, 2015). The core cause of these failures includes imposition of untested crops and technologies, and poor understanding of local contexts by project planners (Scott 1998).

Despite the growing interest in large-scale farming in Africa and particularly in Tanzania the grounds are not smooth for its success. As Andrew Coulson (2013) writes: "the large-scale farms have yet to prove themselves - and those who advocate them should remember that water resources are often less than anticipated, rains unreliable, the soils easily exhaustible..." (Coulson 2013: 18). A good illustration of this point is the wheat project in Basotu jointly established by the government of Tanzania and the Canadian Development Agency (CIDA). The project had all the resources - finances and expertise it required from Canada (Coulson 1982, 2013), but it failed, and more importantly led to the living legacy of Barabaig pastoralists' eviction. Some of the displaced communities currently live in Morogoro and Pwani regions - the areas overwhelmed by land-based conflicts. More recently, large biofuel investment projects implemented in mid 2000s, most of which have either stagnated or failed all together, leaving nearly 50,000 ha of transacted village lands undeveloped since 2006 (Sulle, Nelson 2013). Indeed, the current farming models promoted by the government, donor agencies and private sector radically shift the direction of agrarian change towards large-scale agriculture. This is particularly driven by the global capital interested in the use of capital-intensive production systems, which will drastically displace local farmers for the capital to be able to produce at scale for global markets (Sulle, Hall 2013). The SAGCOT implementation plans to introduce new settlement schemes to allow for the establishment of nucleus estates. As Michael Burges argues, the current SAGCOT project "represents an expansion of the corporate food regime in the country". (Bergius 2014: vii). The BRN plans of prioritizing three priority crops: maize, rice and sugarcane further ignore the existing grassroots communities' priority crops, production patterns that including intercropping, crop rotation and pastoralism as a mode of livelihood.

Land rights and tenure security

Land grabs (in the sense of large-scale land acquisitions with negative consequences for local people) are happening in Africa mainly because of the states' failure to recognize the customary tenure rights of the majority of the poor communities (Peters 2013). Although the protection of customary rights is provided in many states' laws, there has been a weak recognition of customary and communal land rights during the

implementation of most of the large-scale land acquisitions in many places in Sub-Saharan African states (Alden Wily 2011; Borras *et al.* 2010). Rights to access, control and own land is paramount, and it is an essential asset for many rural communities. The infringement of these rights systematically affects their rights to other resources attached to land: water, forests, and wildlife to mention a few. Forest is the lifeline of rural communities. The conservative estimation by the World Bank (2008) shows the contribution of forests at 75% of building materials, 95% of household energy supply, and 100% of traditional medicines used by local people in rural Africa (see also Sulle, Nelson 2009).

The Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania emphasizes the importance of land and other natural resources by imposing an obligation to each citizen to protect these natural resources.²⁶ Both the National Development Vision 2025 and National Poverty Reduction Strategy (commonly known as 'MKUKUTA') identify land as a strategic asset for the development of the country. Indeed, since 1977 the Tanzania Founding Father said: "Because the economy of Tanzania depends and will continue to depend on agriculture and animal husbandry, Tanzania can live well without depending on help from outside if they use their land properly. Land is the basis of human life and all Tanzanians should use it as a valuable investment for future development" (Nyerere 1977: 7). It was 'Mwalimu' Julius Nyerere's vision that land in Tanzania should remain the property of all Tanzanians and for their own benefit. While Nyerere's stand on some land-based investments remains controversial, his vision on land management and ownership has helped Tanzanians live in a country with little land related conflicts²⁷ especially during his leadership. Practically, any sale or transfer of communal or village land in rural areas has a devastating impact to that particular community or village that is used to hold such piece of land. Nonetheless, land as a resource is still undervalued by both the government agencies and the business community around the world (Alden Wily, 2011).

The implementation of KK, SAGCOT, the New Alliance and BRN put at risk the access, control and ownership of land of majority of the rural communities. This is because the government in partnership with donor agencies, focuses on securing land for agricultural investments through land use planning and issuance of individual land titles – mostly the Certificate of Communal Rights of Ownership (CCROs)²⁸ held under customary tenure of occupancy. Although, the *Village Land Act* of 1999 explicitly recognizes the customary ownership of land, these unregistered customary rights of occupancy are considered informal and unacceptable in a commercial sense (Mkapa 2013). This was the basis on which then President Benjamin Mkapa vigorously advocated for his neo-liberal policy initiatives, including the formalization of informal rights, including land and other businesses as suggested by De Soto's in his infamous book *The Mystery of Capital* (2000).

President Mkapa then launched an ambitious Property and Business Formalisation

Programme (Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge Tanzania – MKURABITA) in 2004, targeting to bring land and business assets existing in the informal economy into the legal and formal economy (URT 2010). Implementers and mobilizers of this programme claim that the poor would use their land titles as a collateral to earn credit (Sundet 2006). This, however, contradicts the well-documented evidence from across Africa, and particularly in Kenya, that individual titling does not achieve its goals of securing tenure, but, rather accentuates inequalities among rural communities, with particular negative impacts on women (Ensminger 1997). A recent and probably the only systematic review of land tenure security concludes that the secure tenure is not by itself a sufficient condition for the improvement of farmers' incomes rather the 'context' is what 'matters' (Lawry *et al.* 2014: 6). Unlike Latin America where governments have invested heavily in the provision of public goods and services (e.g. agricultural infrastructure) necessary to increase both efficiency of agricultural productivity, in Africa there is zero success of land titling. This is because, as Pauline Peters argues, the whole land titling in Africa is based on "old rationale of instituting private and individual titling" (see Peters in this issue). Indeed, even the basic argument used to advocate for land titling – that the poor farmers would use the CCR0s to access farming credit – is yet to materialize because banks in Tanzania do not accept them (Stein *et al.* 2016).²⁹

Escalated land-based conflicts

Currently, the rate of deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers is on the rise particularly in areas earmarked for large-scale estates under SAGCOT and BRN. It is important to note that both farmers and pastoralists groups are struggling against each other in order to safeguard their access to use, control and own land. Yet, there is growing tendency among the government officials who ignore pastoralists claims to land particularly when they have plans to evict them to pave land for agriculture or conservation purposes (Mung'ong'o, Mwamfupe 2003; Mwanfupe 2015). The current persistent conflicts and further empirical evidence negate the commonly held view that there is plenty of land in the country. However, the fact is that these groups of farmers are mostly competing over the same prime land that the government is planning to allocate to large-scale investors, particularly, in SAGCOT region.

Conclusions

This paper has shown that the current 'alliance' formed by local elites and expanding multinational corporations in agriculture in Tanzania and elsewhere is facilitating large-scale land grabbing. Indeed, as it was during the Structural Adjustment Programmes in Africa, the wealthier countries have once again framed the solution for Africa's problems: poverty, hunger and nutrition, and this time, these problems are to be addressed through public-private partnership in agriculture instead of direct aid to poor

countries. In order to secure this new framing, African governments have committed themselves to prepare concessions of large-scale land deals for large-scale investors to partner with small-scale farmers, often without much detail on smallholder farmer engagement.

Left unchecked, current initiatives promoted by the government, donor agencies and the private sector under the agricultural transformation agenda largely shift the direction of agrarian change towards large-scale agriculture. This is driven by the global capital interested in the use of capital-intensive production systems, which will drastically displace local farmers for the capital to be able to produce at scale for global markets. Within these processes, the national and local elites are likely to benefit through lease concessions and their direct accumulation of resources, as it is already happening in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa. In Malawi, for example, the Great Belt Initiative, which has a similar orientation to SAGCOT, has escalated land-based conflicts between rural communities who had to stand firm against the perpetuated land grabs by the local elites who advanced their interests through lease arrangements with multinational corporations (Chinsinga, Chasukwa 2012). These commercialisation initiatives will push the country further into plantations producing cheap exports. Instead, agricultural investments providing support to small-scale producers for local consumption, and high quality processed export products would not only add value to the local economy, but further strengthen social and political cohesion among the rural communities.

Research clearly indicates that in Tanzania small-scale farmers drive agricultural growth. Their displacement by large-scale farming is unprecedented. Small-scale farming in Tanzania will remain critical for Tanzania's development and can perform well with the right support, even in non-traditional crops for smallholders such as sugarcane which is considered a capital intensive crop (Sulle forthcoming). To achieve this, the government needs to facilitate more inclusive policy-making processes and the design of land-based investment models that are pro small-scale producers, while safeguarding their access to land, control and ownership of customary land. Some of the possible models may include hybrid ones – such as the partnership between outgrowers and processors. These arrangements, however, have no blueprint. These are business arrangements that need to be structured in such a way that they are flexible to allow necessary periodic amendment, they are enforceable by law, and they are context and crop specific.

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NOTES:

1 - I am thankful to Martina Locher, Ruth Hall, Katherine Snyder, Youjin Chung and Elifuraha Laltaika for their useful comments on the earlier draft of this paper and to the two anonymous reviewers. This research also benefited from the earlier joint work I carried out with Martina Locher, Rebecca and Smalley, Lameck Malale with funding support from Future Agricultures Consortium, United States Agency for International Development and Danish International Development Agency (The Hierarchies of Rights Project).

2 - ILC, *Tirana Declaration: Securing Land Access for the Poor in Times of Intensified Natural Resources Competition*, Tirana, 26 May 2011, endorsed by the ILC Assembly of Members on 27 May 2011 Available from: <http://newsite.landcoalition.org/en/tirana-declaration> (Accessed on 2 September 2015).

3 - Such characteristics include, among others, the violation of human rights and decisions that are not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land-users (ILC 2011).

4 - All these data are according to the Land Matrix's Website (www.landmatrix.org); last accessed on 25 September 2015.

5 - *Massive Land Grabs in Africa by U.S. Hedge Funds and Universities*, "Oakland Institute", 28 June 2011: <http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/massive-land-grabs-africa-us-hedge-funds-and-universities-0> (accessed 2 September 2013).

6 - For details on the key voluntary guidelines, their opportunities and challenges see Sulle and Hall (2014).

7 - Locher and Sulle (2013) list 12 ceased or aborted projects with a total area of around 300,000 ha, which illustrates that started land acquisition projects do not necessarily succeed.

8 - C. Chachage, *Land Acquisitions and the Politics of Renaming, Renaming Companies and Dealing in Land: from Infenergy to Agrica*, "Udadi Rethinking in Action", 6 August 2012: www.udadi.blogspot.ch/2012/08/land-acquisitions-and-politics-of.html (accessed 12 July 2013).

9 - More about these deals such as the investor countries can be found at *Web of Transnational Deals*, "Land Matrix": <http://www.landmatrix.org/en/get-the-idea/web-transnational-deals/> (accessed 23 September 2015).

10 - For instance, through the SAGCOT investment promotion, the government was auctioning an area of up to 65,000 ha for the development of sugarcane and rice plantation. For more information see: *SAGCOT Investment Partnership Program: Opportunities for Investors in the Sugar Sector*, "SAGCOT", October 2012: http://www.sagcot.com/uploads/media/Tanzania_SAGCOT_-_Sugar_Investor_Presentation.pdf (accessed 23 June 2016).

11 - See note 10.

12 - According to Shivji, "under disarticulated accumulation, capital shift the burden of social reproduction to labour, thus neither the peasant nor the proletarian labour is fully proletarianised" (Shivji 2009: 76). Although this paper does not delve into the details of these debates, it is important to note that some of the reasons, multinational corporations are moving into Africa or Tanzania in this case, is exactly, the such for resources: land and labour among others.

13 - TNBC (Tanzania National Business Council) is an institution established under the Presidential Circular No. 1 of 2001 to provide forum for public and private sector dialogue for change – and since its formation – the Kilimo Kwanza Initiative has enjoyed Presidential support with close monitoring from the office of the Prime Minister.

14 - TNBC, *Ten Pillars of Kilimo Kwanza*, "Tanzania On-Line", Dar es Salaam, 2009: <http://www.tzonline.org/pdf/tenpillarsokilimokwanza.pdf> (accessed 25 September 2015).

15 - For more details about SAGCOT, its partners and project plans: *Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania*, "SAGCOT": <http://www.sagcot.com/>.

16 - ERM, *Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Strategic Regional Environmental and Social Assessment, Interim Report*, prepared for the Government of Tanzania, July 2012: http://www.sagcot.com/uploads/media/Interim_Report_-_SAGCOT_SRESA_Final_12_02.pdf (accessed 12 May 2014).

17 - *G8 Camp David Declaration*, "The White House", 18-19 May 2012: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/19/camp-david-declaration> (accessed 23 June 2016).

18 - From the field research, there is little progress about the implementation of these targets (see also Sulle 2015; Dancer, Sulle 2015). The Tanzanian government commitments to New Alliance cooperation framework is available at: *Annex 1: Government Policy Commitments 2013*, "GOV.UK", 2013. Citation from pp. 22-23 of the same document: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271404/Gov-policy-comm.pdf (accessed 23 september 2015).

- 19 - British High Commission Dar es Salaam, *DFID supports Tanzania Land Tenure Support Programme (LTSP)*, "GOV.UK", 24 February 2016 (accessed 20 May 2016): <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/dfid-supports-tanzania-land-tenure-support-programme-ltsp>.
- 20 - G8, *Tanzania Land Transparency Partnership*, 15 June 2013, p. 8: <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/20674633/197938021/name/Tanzania+Land+Transparency+Partnership+Final+clean.docx> (accessed 23 September 2015).
- 21 - *New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition: Part 1, "One"*, 10 December 2012: <http://www.one.org/us/policy/policy-brief-on-the-new-alliance/> (accessed 27 May 2013).
- 22 - URT, *Hotuba ya Waziri wa Kilimo Mifugo na Uvuvi Mheshimiwa Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba Madelu (MB) Kuhusu Makadirio ya Matumizi ya Fedha ya Wizara ya Kilimo Mifugo na Uvuvi kwa Mwaka 2016/17* (The Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Budget Speech 2016/17), "The URT Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries", n.a.: <http://kilimo.go.tz/speeches/budget%20speeches/Hotuba%20ya%20Bajeti%202016-17.pdf> (accessed 19 May 2016).
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- 24 - See also C. Chachage, *Land Acquisition and Accumulation in Tanzania: The Case of Morogoro, Iringa and Pwani Regions*, "International Land Coalition: Commercial Pressures on Land", n.a.: <http://www.commercialpressuresonland.org/research-papers/land-acquisition-and-accumulation-tanzania> (accessed 25 September 2015).
- 25 - MVIWATA Executive Director Mr. Steven Ruvuga as quoted in the in the Business Week. *Tanzania: Smallholder Farmers Lose in Most Govt Programmes*, "Farmlandgrab.org", 7 August 2013: <http://farmlandgrab.org/post/view/22401-tanzania-smallholder-farmers-lose-in-most-govt-programmes>.
- 26 - Article 27 The Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania 1977 was amended from time to time.
- 27 - N. Kamata, *Mwalimu Nyerere's Ideas on Land*, "Pambazuka News", 13 October 2009: <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/59506> (accessed 9 June 2013).
- 28 - CCRO refers to the individual title issued either in the name of the husband or the both husband and wife or with the names of all members of the household. CCRO can also be offered to a community for a communal land like grazing area. Under the *Village Land Act* of 1999, a village must hold a village land certificate before any individual villager can apply for a CCRO.
- 29 - In one of my interviews with the loans' manager at the local bank in Tanzania, he stressed that CCROs are yet to be accepted by the local banks, but it is one step towards the realization of land use as a collateral by the poor farmers (Interview, Loan Manager, Ruaha, September 2015).

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ISBN 978-88-6086-125-2



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