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PROGRAMME

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Development, donors and direitos: interrogating the 'global land-grabbing' narrative in rural Mozambique

Sarrok Talhada

Since the 2008 financial crisis, there has been growing concern amongst activists, academics and journalists that companies and foreign governments are increasingly engaging in large-scale land acquisitions, also dubbed 'land-grabbing', interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the low investment in agriculture in some targeted countries and the yield gap between these countries and the rest of the world, a renewed interest in agriculture and the purchase of large-scale agricultural land by different entities worldwide has raised a number of questions concerning appropriateness of this type of investments. The paper puts forward a political economy conceptual framework for understanding this phenomenon, henceforth designated Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLA). The paper considers this phenomenon in relation to the one of the most targeted country in the global land market, Mozambique. Investments in Mozambique include: Three African Agricultural Growth Corridors, namely, Nacala Corridor, Zambezi Valley and Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) (Paul and Steinbrecher, 2013) and the programme Prosavanna in Mozambique that is projected to occupy 14 million hectares (Chichava et al., 2013). These investments in land are occurring in a country where the average area cultivated by the small farmer remain below 1 hectare (Deininger et al., 2011) and agriculture is the source of income of nearly 80% of the population. Particularly relevant in understanding LSLA are the institutional arrangements and processes conducive to LSLA.

ABSTRACTS

This paper looks at the role played by some intermediaries or development brokers that establish the links between the external capital and investments in agricultural land in rural Mozambique. It argues that, although of serious concern, the actions of foreign actors operating in international financial markets only partially explain the phenomenon of land appropriation in this country, and that the national desire for rapid agricultural modernisation, the activities of government-based elites, and the roles of development donors are also major factors. These insights suggest that the notion of the 'global land-grab' should account for these important but often overlooked development brokers.

ABSTRACTS

Environmentality discourse for carbon forests for the poor in Ghana.

Saeed Abdul-Razak

Addressing environmental problems such as climate change has increasingly seen the introduction of neoliberal technologies that commodify nature. This paper aims to explore through a lens of 'environmentality' how the making of environmental markets, embodies inequalities of knowledge access, distribution of resources and dissemination of information by regulatory frameworks to marginal communities in the Global south. In exploring UNFCCC REDD+ mechanism, it is argued that inequalities are (re) produced through the selling of the idea rather than embodying of the concept in actions that address inequalities in society. Using Ghana as a case, this paper, based on interviews with policy makers, pilot proponents and local stakeholders further unpacks the political ecologies of who benefits and loses from marketization in the context of mechanisms for engagement.

ABSTRACTS

Participatory Social Impact Assessment for addressing land and labour rights in the context of the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Izabela Stacewicz

"Commodity roundtables" are multi-stakeholder initiatives designed to address sustainability problems associated with commodity production on a multinational scale, through voluntary certification systems. In such schemes, multiple stakeholder groups, including business and civil society actors enter the governance process traditionally reserved for governments. Commodity roundtables are portrayed as providing stakeholders with equal positions in negotiations, implying that they offer accountability, transparency, legitimacy and inclusiveness through participation (Ponte, 2014). While little consolidated research exists examining the effectiveness of commodity roundtables, studies to date have largely concentrated on the environmental aspects of such schemes. The under-representation of social stakeholders (particularly from developing countries) in decision-making processes (Fransen & Kolk 2007; Schouten & Glasbergen, 2012; Elgert, 2012), may have a profound effect on the level of attention and scrutiny of social requirements to which roundtables have received.

As a key mechanism for mediating social impacts associated with palm oil production, the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) requires producer companies to conduct participatory Social Impact Assessment (SIA). This research examines the nature of participation in SIA processes in the context of the RSPO, and the extent to which SIA practices are effective in addressing land

rights and labour rights. The study is informed by: (1) an extensive literature review; (2) interviews with grower companies, auditors, social NGOs, SIA consultants, workers' unions (November 2014 – July 2015); (3) interviews, focus groups and Basic Needs Analysis with plantation workers, smallholders, and local communities in West Kalimantan, Indonesia and Sabah, Malaysia (April – July 2015).

When examining local enactments of the RSPO standard, the assumption that commodity roundtables offer accountability, transparency, legitimacy and inclusiveness through participation is challenged. Although the RSPO is intended to standardise sustainable practices on a multinational scale, the way in which SIA is viewed and conducted is highly inconsistent, leading to the exclusion of certain stakeholder groups. Participation in SIA is found to be at most, consultative and top-down. Power imbalances between local communities/plantation workers and companies are identified in discourses and language in participatory processes. Currently, third-party audits do not complete adequate checks on participatory processes, limiting the capacity of the compliance mechanism to ensure full implementation of the RSPO standard. The RSPO cannot be the sole agent for addressing land and labour rights. The state plays a key role in regulating industry and should exert authority over companies to ensure land and labour rights are upheld. In its current form, the RSPO has limited capacity to address land and labour rights through participatory SIA.

ABSTRACTS

A critical Assessment of governance of urban ecosystems services: A case study of Kibera slums, Nairobi Kenya

Dennis Mailu

Increasingly the linkages between the role of ecosystem services and complexity of the relationship between human well-being and poverty are being addressed in the literature. Yet, research on the role and cultural value of ecosystem services in poor urban areas has been limited to date. This novel work in contrast focuses on the under explored role of ecosystem services, the institutions that mediate these services, and the cultural values that are placed on ecosystem services by poor informal settlements in the global South.

Water poses the largest problem in Africa's largest urban slum, Kibera, located in Nairobi, Kenya. The communities rely heavily on hawked water drawn from piped water and a borehole to meet its water needs. Historical and socio political factors have led to improper urban planning resulting in extensive environmental pollution and drainage problems. In this context the connection between poverty and ecosystem services is evident and it is emerging that they exacerbate each other. This study critically examines the meanings and value of water among people in two villages in Kibera, and explores the assumptions underpinning the institutions that mediate these values. This study is informed by (n= 37) community interviews, (n= 25) key governance actor interviews, (n=10) focus groups, documents and participant observations were conducted in Nairobi and Kibera at two stages in November-January 2014 and December-February 2015.

ABSTRACTS

The research identifies that it will be important to understand water as an ecosystem service in a poor urban context especially due to the fact that ecosystem services are not yet fully mainstreamed in development thinking, and its capacity as a conduit to transformation. The research concludes that the role of culture, especially on identity and sense of place will inform important cross scale governance interactions involving non-state actors including NGOs, transnational environmental organisations, intergovernmental and multilateral organisations, and local communities to aid and improve adaptive strategies toward resilient futures.

ABSTRACTS

Invited spaces for participation-tokenism or transformation? Lessons from a community planning process in Nigeria.

Tariya Sarauta Yusuf

ABSTRACTS

Failure of top down approaches to development has made participation the 'new paradigm' of development. Despite its 'supposed' benefits, participation has since been criticized for been depoliticized and technically oriented. International development agencies in responding to these criticisms have developed several approaches to ensure that participation goes beyond tokenism and leads to transformation. This paper as part of ongoing PHD research seeks to examine the nature of invited spaces for participation. The study employs a case study approach to examine the Sustainable Total Sanitation (STS) project in Nigeria implemented by WaterAid. The STS seeks to improve sanitation uptake in three states in Nigeria, using a community led total sanitation approach (CLTS). A major strategy for community engagement under CLTS is the community-planning meeting. The study observed planning meetings (N=9) in selected beneficiary communities. Focused group discussions (N=3) and key informant interviews (N=5) were also carried out with participants after planning meetings. Preliminary findings from the study showed a representative deliberative space facilitated by local facilitators in the local language. An opportunity was also provided for participants to make decisions regarding the project. A desire for project efficiency and getting numbers right however defined the nature of the planning meetings and invited spaces for participation.

Governing & Implementing REDD+ in view of Adaptive Co-management (ACM) Initiatives in Sierra Leone: Leveraging Empirical Lessons

Abu-Bakar Massaquoi

This study explores whether adaptive co-management (ACM) provides a suitable governance approach for REDD+ implementation in Sierra Leone, and Africa in general. It approaches this question through a study of ACM initiatives in selected communities within the Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP) and with specific focus on the impact of ACM-based governance in enhancing livelihood resilience in these communities. A close examination of the prospects and limits of ACM in an African context is warranted because it has been touted as offering the means to overcome intractable natural resource governance challenges in a developing country context through its focus on participation and learning-by-doing. At the same time, enhancing livelihood resilience while simultaneously protecting forests is seen as critical for the success of REDD+ in a local context. Hence the key question the research seeks to answer is: what are the prospects and limits of ACM as a suitable approach for governing REDD+ in Sierra Lone? The study uses a mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative instruments. First using a survey method and a lessons-learning framework proposed by Atela and colleagues (2015), I seek to assess the level of livelihood resilience through a study of two key determinants: community engagement (participation and learning), and community benefits (livelihood capital assets and strategies). Then, using ethnographic methods (semi structured interviews and focus groups), I seek to explain the utility of ACM broadly, and in enhancing livelihood resilience in particular.

ABSTRACTS

An investigation of the benefits and challenges of using scenario planning for managing challenges in social-ecological systems

Samuel Poskitt

ABSTRACTS

Scenario planning can be described as the process of creating plausible narratives of future events, conditions and trajectories, often reflecting several alternative perspectives on how the future could develop (van Notten et al., 2003; Wilkinson and Eidinow, 2008). Originally developed in military and business frameworks, scenario planning has increasingly been applied to managing challenges in social-ecological systems - the joint development pathways of ecosystems, ecosystem management and human wellbeing (Biggs, 2007; Ostrom, 2009). It is often stated that the future is inherently uncertain and can never truly be known (Bohensky et al., 2009; Reilly and Willenbockel, 2010). This is especially salient for challenges in SES, where a complex array of interacting human and environmental factors is compounded by uncertainty in the future (Carpenter et al., 2006). Approaches that plan responses to such challenges through linear projections of past trends are therefore considered inadequate (Rickards et al., 2014b; Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010). Proponents of scenario planning hold that it can assist in dealing with the substantial complexity and uncertainty involved in managing challenges in social-ecological systems, but thus far little work has evaluated these claims (Amer et al., 2013; Rounsevell and Metzger, 2010).

A literature review was undertaken to seek out papers on the expected benefits and challenges of using scenario planning for challenges in social ecological systems. Many of these took the form of case study examples and the

literature review later turned specifically to look at case studies. The findings were compiled into two tables: one comparing the expected benefits and observed challenges of scenario planning and one outlining a set of 35 case studies, their objectives, expected benefits, outcomes and challenges faced. The two tables were coded manually to identify a number of key themes. These themes were then used to generate categories into which the initial table was organised.

The study observes that the main benefits expected of scenario planning in social-ecological challenges are: anticipating and adapting to threats, uncertainties and opportunities, knowledge sharing, co-production and social learning, stakeholder participation, assisting policy-making developing understanding across scales, and generating creative imaginations of the future. The main challenges encountered in using scenario planning are: the power dynamics between different stakeholders and their knowledges, the difficulty for some participants of engaging in an abstract, hypothetical process, the trade-off between processes that are creative and iterative and processes that are realistic and attractive to policy-makers. My research will continue to explore the benefits and challenges of using scenario planning in tackling social-ecological challenges. The intention is to develop the collection of case studies further, progressively narrowing down to a point where empirical data will be collected and analysed on either a single or a small number of specific case studies.

ABSTRACTS

Dealing with the Aviation Challenge

Peter McManners

Aviation is a growing source of carbon dioxide emissions and an enabler of the global economy leading to a polarised debate about the economic benefits versus the environmental impact. This makes the sector a barometer of the world's willingness to change economic models to deliver climate change mitigation. Currently aviation is outside the UNFCCC framework, with work on developing a way forward delegated to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Aspirational targets have been proposed by the ICAO to limit net emissions based on a combination of shifting to bio fuel and market-based measures.

However there are no plans to limit gross emissions, which are expected to more than double by 2050. The research reported in this presentation has identified a way forward, which requires moving away from fast-jet technology, except for an expensive First and Business Class service. Affordable flying will be on a new design of efficient and relatively slow air vehicle. Interviews with stakeholders found that passengers were generally content with the proposed changes and environmentalists were enthusiastic to shift from opposing flying to supporting the low-carbon model. Industry outside aviation was also willing to embrace the new model and focus on thinking through how they would adjust operations to suite. However, resistance was encountered from the two prime players, the aviation industry and government. The aviation industry was concerned at the impact on their business; concurring with the research, which indicated that parts of the industry are likely to be bankrupted. Governmental actors did not foresee aviation coming high enough up policy

priorities for them to expend political capital on taking action. In conclusion, there is a bright future for low-carbon aviation but the demand for change will have to come from society to bring the future of aviation onto the political radar so that politicians agree the policy changes required to force a reluctant industry to respond.

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