Food Security and the Political Economy of Land Grabbing: A Case Study of Two Food-Producing Projects in Northern Madagascar

By

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Abstract: The recent rise in land grabbing in the Global South has sparked an intense debate about how land grabbing impacts the rural poor. International development organizations have claimed that these investments, with the support of good policies, can create a "win-win" scenario meaning that both investors and the poor can benefit. Some critics have warned that land grabbing threatens rural livelihoods and access to natural resources. This thesis explores the socioeconomic costs and benefits of land grabbing, especially those incurred by the rural poor. Based on field research conducted in northern Madagascar, the thesis reveals that land grabbing produced highly uneven outcomes for the actors involved in terms of their access to natural resources and income. From a political economy perspective, I argue that the reason for the uneven outcomes and high costs experienced by the rural poor is due to a combination of both weak institutions and asymmetrical power relations.

July 30, 2012.

To my parents.

Thank you for being there every step of the way.

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While my name appears as the sole author, this thesis is very much the product of many others who have generously shared their knowledge and wisdom, provided encouragement and inspiration, and offered emotional and financial support. In other words, this thesis is nothing short of a team effort from various parts of the globe.

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development studies and has generously shared his insights and expertise. Jun piqued my curiosity in agrarian studies. His knowledge about land grabbing and rural poverty was hugely beneficial. He played a key role in shaping my understanding of the link between land, food insecurity and poverty, and my critical analytical lens. I am also grateful for the opportunities he has created for me.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Figure

Chapter 1: Conceptualizing the Problematic

In Madagascar and other developing countries, a phenomenon called land grabbing has revealed itself in recent years sparking international concern and debate. The phrase "land grabbing", also referred to as "large-scale land acquisitions" in the thesis, has been used to describe the recent scramble for natural resources in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Those eagerly seeking for, and acquiring land and water in these countries are from corporations, investment banks, hedge funds and commodity traders based in developed countries. In the developing countries, referred to as "host countries" in the literature and in the thesis, where investors have leased, purchased or concessioned resources, the overwhelmingly majority suffer from poverty and hunger. More specifically, many of these investments are taking place in rural areas where one finds some of the highest rates of poverty and hunger.

The possibility that these investors will bring much-needed resources and added value to the agricultural sector and economy in these income-poor countries has led many to argue that land grabbing is an opportunity for national and local development. Depending on the kind of agricultural project (or "agro-project" for short), so-called investments in land and agriculture have the potential to contribute to development through unleashing socioeconomic benefits. If the mode of production is labour-intensive or if a contract farming system[1] is established, there can be more employment opportunities for local

[1] Contract farming (also called outgrower program) is an agricultural system where an investor or company provides capital and technology and farmers provide labour.

people. If the agro-project introduces modern technology, the local people can learn and adopt newfound knowledge or tools to improve their own farming activities. If the project has strong links with international markets, local people can increase their income through trade and the governments can increase their revenues through taxes. The project can also contribute to local infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, hospitals, and schools. Again, depending on the project type, there can also be local economic spillovers, such as contributing to other local businesses or entrepreneurs in various sectors, i.e. tourism and construction.

On the other hand, it is likely that agro-projects will perpetuate existing problems of poverty and hunger by reducing rural peoples' access to land and water, which support their livelihoods. Some argue then that these risks outweigh the possible benefits in a way that poses a threat, rather than an opportunity for host countries. The kind of costs and benefits incurred in these countries has much to do with the kind of project and the agendas of those involved in the negotiation phase. Nevertheless, at the heart of land grabbing access to land, as well as water, has been and will be reduced for local populations, especially the rural poor. Land grabbing has and could continue to also aggravate existing socioeconomic inequalities that already exist in these areas, which contribute to poverty.

The debates about land grabbing and its impact on development present an interesting and classic dilemma that comes up in development studies theories, which has to do with access to income versus access to natural resources. In order for a country or community

to develop, it is ideal to have access to both income and natural resources. When this ideal is not possible, it begs the question what kind of development path is being paved if one has to choose one versus the other.

The dynamics that land grabbing has unleashed in host countries and communities has created an environment where people have to choose (or are coerced into choosing) between having access to income gained through temporary employment opportunities while at the same time losing their access to land, water, and livelihoods. In subsequent chapters, I will refer back to this dilemma about the impacts of trading one's access to natural assets at the expense of temporary economic gain.

The dilemmas, which I have presented very superficially up to this point, represent one of the reasons why I undertook this research project. The debates about land grabbing and the dilemmas it poses within development studies struck my curiosity, which later drove me to investigate explore land grabbing on the ground in Madagascar. For this thesis, I chose to focus on two specific statements made within the land grab debates that have been made in reference to the impacts of land grabbing on development. The first statement is that land grabbing can produce a "win-win" scenario between investors and the host countries. The second statement is that land grabbing can alleviate poverty and food insecurity in countries where land grabbing is taking place.

These two statements are important to mention here as they helped me frame the research project and shape the fieldwork conducted, so they will reappear as the main themes in

subsequent chapters. I selected these two because they are some of the most contentious claims presented and pushed by some of the most powerful international development organizations in the world. In the following chapters, I will explore the ways in which the viewpoints of various actors and institutions have converged and diverged on these two statements, which challenge the assumptions made in these two arguments.

I lead off with an examination of the win-win scenario argument because it provides a starting point from which I can examine the actors involved in land grabbing. In other words, by focusing on this dimension I have a platform from which I can get a general picture of what kinds of actors are involved and what they do. According to those who claim that land grabbing can produce a win-win scenario, there are mainly two groups of actors: investor and host country. In my thesis, I dig a little deeper to reveal that there are more than two groups of actors and within these groups of actors there are dynamic interests and conflicting agendas at play.

Subsequently, I look at two specific ways in which land grabbing will have an impact on: poverty and food security. The purpose of focusing on these two topics is to reveal two ways in which land grabbing impacts one group of actors: the rural poor. This allows me to deepen the examination of the rural poor and my analysis of how they have gained or lost as a result of land grabbing. As I reveal this, I can compare how the rural poor have fared (so far) in land grabbing compared to other actors. This is important to illustrate how the lack of political leverage for the rural poor has profoundly impacted the way in which they gain or lose.

Unraveling the Impacts of Land Grabbing

The objective of the thesis is to add to the existing knowledge about the impacts land grabbing unleashes on actors involved in, and affected by it. My central research question is then: what kind of socioeconomic impact does land grabbing unleash on actors involved in, and affected by it? To answer the research question, I have broken down the thesis into two parts: the global picture and the specific focus (Figure 1). By obtaining a global understanding of land grabbing and how it manifests on the ground, I start by examining the different actors involved in and affected by land grabbing such as the investor, intermediary, governments and local populations. To measure the socioeconomic impacts, I focus on their access to natural resources and income, which I will explain in more detail later. The second part of the thesis focuses specifically on the rural poor, namely small-scale farmers. In addition to examining their access to natural resources and income, I also examine their access to food and agricultural capital. To offer some insights into these two parts, I ask three interrelated research questions.

Figure 1 The Thesis' Central Research Question and Thesis Structure

Central Research Question:
What kinds of socioeconomic impacts does land grabbing unleash on actors involved in, and affected by it?

Part	Scope	Actors	Impacts
Part 1.	Global Picture	- Investor - Intermediary - Government - Rural Poor	Access to: - Natural Resources - Income
Part 2.	Specific Focus	Rural Poor	Access to: - Natural Resources - Income → *as well as* - Food - Agricultural Capital

Source: Author

The first research question I ask is: who are the actors involved in land grabbing and what do they do? For the "what do they do" part of the question, I look at the different roles that the actors played during two phases: the land acquisition phase and food production phase. Until now, there is limited detailed information about the actors involved in land grabbing and their respective interests, objectives, and agendas. The question was formulated using the four foundational questions used in political economy theory: who owns what, who does what, who gets what, and what do they do with it (Bernstein 2010)? The first three of these questions allowed me to explore what land grabbing "looks like" on the ground and to see land grabbing from multiple perspectives, not just from the investor, the government, or the local people. Taking this approach allowed me to identify actors and describe the roles that they play. This allowed me to build foundation from

which to work from in order to identify the actors' gains and losses, and to reveal the asymmetrical power relations between actors (Table 1).

With this information, I developed the second question: in what ways do the actors involved in land grabbing gain and lose in terms of their access to natural resources (land and water) and income; and, why? I chose to examine these two variables because I observed that all actors involved were interested in mainly two things: securing their access to land and water, and increasing their income (Table 1).

By asking this question I intended to reveal the uneven outcomes between and within groups of actors. To answer questions of access, I employed Ribot and Peluso's "access framework" analysis, which asks: who gets to use what, in what ways, and when? They define access as the ability[2] to derive benefits from things (i.e. material objects, persons, institutions and symbols), not just the right to benefit from things, which is the definition of property rights (2003: 153). Their analysis expands beyond the "bundle of rights" notion of property to a "bundle of power" approach to access, which advocates for locating "power" within the social and political-economic context, that shape people's abilities to benefit from resources (173). I chose this framework because it can be used to understand why some individuals are unable to benefit from resources even if they have rights to them and to understand the micro-dynamics of who benefits from resources and how (Table 1).

[2] Ability is akin to power, which is "the capacity of some actors to affect the practices and ideas of others". Power is inherent in certain kinds of relationships. For the authors, they argue that "laws can never completely delineate all the modes and pathways of resource access along complex and overlapping webs of power" (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 156).

Through asking the second research question, I found that the ones who lost the most are the ones that the advocates of land grabbing claim should benefit: the rural poor. This finding led me to investigate the socioeconomic impacts on the rural poor more closely. When analyzing the impacts on the rural poor, I also examined how land grabbing impacted their access to food and agricultural capital.

For the third research question I ask: How does land grabbing impact small-scale farmers in terms of food security? Food security, in this thesis, means when individuals have, "physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, at all times"(FAO 2010a). The purpose of asking this question is to focus deeply on one group of actors, small-scale farmers (also referred to as 'farmers' in the paper), to tease out the ways in which they are affected. To measure the impact on food security, I examine the changes in access to food, natural resources, income, and agricultural capital. By using these variables, it was revealed that farmers' access to food and agricultural capital remained unchanged, some farmers' experienced an increase in income, and that their access to natural resources decreased and/or is in jeopardy (Table 1).

Table 1 Summary of the Objectives and Findings for Each Operational Question that Have Been Framed Using a Set of Guiding Questions

Operational Questions	Sub-Set of Guiding Questions	Objective	Findings
1. Who are the actors involved in land grabbing and what do they do?	Who owns what, who does what, who gets what, and what do they do with it?	Identify new actors and describe the roles that they play.	Asymmetrical power relations exist between actors and groups of actors.
2. In what ways do the actors involved in land grabbing gain and lose in terms of their access to natural resources (land and water) and income; and, why?	Who gets to use what, in what ways, and When?	Identify the costs and benefits incurred and the reasons for it.	Uneven outcomes were produced between and within groups of actors.
3. In what ways small-scale farmers' access to food, natural, income, and agricultural capital changed and why?	What food is produced, how is it produced, and at what scale?	To focus deeply on one actor to tease out the ways in which they are affected.	Access to food and agricultural capital remained unchanged, some farmers' experienced an increase in income, and access to natural resources decreased and/or is in threatened.

Source: Author

I chose to focus on small-scale farmers for three reasons. First, the areas where these investments are happening are in rural areas where most people are small-scale farmers. Second, the advocates and proponents of land grabbing often assert that farmers can benefit from foreign investments, through employment, technology and knowledge transfer, infrastructural development, and better access to markets. These opportunities could help reduce poverty in rural areas –where an estimated 75 percent of those living in poverty today work and live (IFAD 2011, World Bank 2011). Thus, I am interested to see if investments deliver these benefits. Third, small-scale farmers play a significant role in food security, particularly in SSA where the majority of the population are small-scale farmers and consume food produced on small farms.

I focus on the four variables mentioned above for the following reasons. For access to food, I examined the ways in which local small-scale farmers were able to access the food produced from the project sites. For access to natural resources, I examined in what ways the agro-projects affected their access to local land and water sources. For income, I identified in what ways the projects impacted farmers' access to income through wages or salary. Lastly, for access to agricultural capital, I investigated in what ways the projects established by the investor improved the farmers' access to farming techniques, tools, and inputs. I focused on these variables to illustrate how land grabbing not only threatens food security but also food sovereignty.

I argue that access to these resources is essential for food security for small-scale farmers in the short- and long-term. Without these resources, farmers are likely to face hunger, malnutrition, and a low quality of life. I included these variables for the following reasons. For access to the food produced, I examined how an increase in local food supply can impact farmers. At the same time, I consider the food sovereignty movements' concerns about what food is produced, how is it produced, and at what scale? (Desmarais 2007). According to La Via Campesina[3], one of the most vocal proponents of food sovereignty, food security should not only be a question of ensuring that a sufficient amount of food is produced and made accessible to everyone. What is equally important, they argue, is what is being produced and how.

[3] La Via Campesina is an "international movement of poor peasants and small farmers in developing and industrialized worlds," (Borras and Franco 2010: 5). Their concept of food sovereignty places peasants and small-scale farmers' interests and roles at the center. The goal is for peasants to have democratic control of the food system (Desmarais 2007).

I entertain the food supply question to see if an increase in food supply can reduce food security and poverty, which is a major contributor to food insecurity. For Amartya Sen (1981, 1983), a Nobel Peace Prize recipient in 1998, food security is not caused by a lack of food (supply), but rather the lack of political and economic power to access food. Thus, access to income is one potential means for alleviating food insecurity. Therefore, I look at how land grabbing impacted famers' access to income.

Having access to income, however, is often not enough to be food secure for farmers. They may also need access to natural resources. Boyce (2001) argues that if the poor have better access to natural assets this can advance the goals of poverty reduction among others. For Boyce, poverty is not just about having a low income but having a lack of natural assets, which can yield income today and other benefits (i.e. a better environment, political empowerment) tomorrow. In addition, I included access to agricultural capital because without adequate techniques, tools, inputs and the knowledge of how to employ them, farmers' production is threatened and, more generally, their food security.

An Overview of the Fieldwork and Findings

To answer the research questions, I chose to conduct fieldwork in Madagascar where land grabbing has occurred on a large-scale and where there is a lack of information about how the dynamics of land grabbing impact food security. In most host countries, there is a lack of information, which is due to the fact that most deals are done behind closed doors

(HLPE 2011). The UN (2010) has found that, to date, no investment contracts appear to have been made available to the public, and only a very few have been made available to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations seeking to better understand and evaluate these issues.

In the case of Madagascar, there is little information about land grabbing, as land deals are often discretely negotiated (Burnod et al. 2011). Investors and governments are not willing to disclose the information because it could incite more social and political unrest. Gathering information about land grabbing is also a risky endeavor in Madagascar given that one of the reasons that sparked social unrest in Madagascar was in response to former president, Ravalomanana's decision to lease over a million hectares of land to foreign corporations. Therefore, the issue of land grabbing is one that is politically and socially sensitive, which deters transparency.

Land grabbing aside, land in general in Madagascar is a highly political and socially sensitive matter. In the Malagasy judicial system, the majority of cases that come to the court have to do with land conflicts, which is in part due to the land reform that was launched in 2005 and is ongoing. These tensions on the ground tend to get left out in the discussion, but are important to mention to show that land grabbing can seriously aggravate existing conflicts.

For my research project, I selected two villages where two food producing projects are being financed by two different Indian companies. Both companies commissioned the

same Malagasy company as an intermediary to broker the land deals. It was found that the large-scale foreign acquisition of land in Madagascar is the intermediary represented by the local elite as it has the greatest access to political and economic power, which is evident in the roles it takes on during the processes of acquiring land, and during the production of food on the project sites.

Revealing the findings and arguments

In this section (and in Chapter 5), I will present my findings that came out of the three operational questions. For the first operational question, I find that there are asymmetrical power relations between the groups of actors identified and within these groups. Asymmetrical power relations mean that some actors or groups of actors have more political, economic or social power than others. One's power usually depends on one's class, gender, race, religion, ancestry, education among others. In the context of the case study, I found that the ones having the most power in land grabbing are the intermediary, specifically the managing director who is an influential businessman in Madagascar and in the international development community. His social network has helped him gain power on the supply and demand side of land grabbing. In Madagascar, he has strong social connections with people who inform him about land availability. His connections abroad also provide him with some insight into international demand for land and water. With this knowledge he is able to establish himself strategically to profit from the situation using his social ties.

The second finding, in reference to the second operational question, is that within groups of actors and between actors there were uneven outcomes, meaning that different kinds of socioeconomic costs and benefits were incurred. The costs and benefits are measured based on one's access to natural resources, income, food, and agricultural capital (Table 2). For the investors, they gained by accessing land and water, but incurred a high financial cost as profits were not realized. For the intermediary, they gained financially, mainly the managing director, but did not gain in terms of access to natural resources, for now. The government (including the military) lost access to land and water but gained in terms of wages and revenue. The local population (including farmers) lost access to land and water, but a few could gain financially by working for the projects established by the investors. The reasons explaining why the costs and benefits were distributed unevenly have much to do with two interrelated phenomenon: weak institutions and asymmetrical power relations.

In the third question, which zooms in on the farmers' situation and impacts on their food security, it was found that farmers' food supply and access to agricultural capital remains unchanged, which means that their food security remains unchanged. The poor performance of the projects meant that very little crop could be used for human consumption. However, by employing a critical lens inspired by the concept of food sovereignty, farmers' control over the food system has been threatened with the loss in access to land and water. Also, given the fact that famers were not consulted prior to cultivation, food produced and the way it was produced was not in line with the local agricultural and food system. For example, maize was planted in an area where most eat

rice, and it was done using harsh chemicals, which are also rarely used in the area. Therefore, as food sovereignty is threatened, so is food security.

Table 2 The Variables Examined to Measure the Socioeconomic Impacts on Actors and Findings

VARIABLES	ACTORS			
	Investor	**Intermediary**	**Government/ Military**	**Local Population**
1. Access to Natural Resources	- Land ⬆ - Water ⬆	- Land ✖ - Water ✖	- Land ⬇ - Water ⬇	- Land ⬇ - Water ⬇
2. Access to Income	- Profits ⬇ (revenue minus costs)	- Revenue ⬆ - Commission ?	- Wages ⬆ - Revenue ⬆	- Wages ⬆
3. Access to Food				- Food supply ✖
4. Access to Agricultural Capital				- Farming techniques, tools, inputs ✖

Note: ⬆ signifies increase in access, ⬇ means decrease in access, ✖ means no change, and ? means unclear.
Source: Author

Returning back to the general research question (How does land grabbing impact development in Madagascar?) it is found that land grabbing negatively impacts development in Madagascar for the following reasons. First, the local population, namely the farmers, incurred more costs than benefits, which do not contribute to the poverty and food insecurity they face. Second, the government, as a whole, has not gained significantly other than the few individuals within the government. Third, the intermediary and investor, representing the private sector, have not incurred significant gains, which have potential positive and negative benefits on development depending on one's perspective. However, the investor and intermediary had the potential to contribute

more to local development with the resources they had. I will elaborate more on these points in subsequent chapters.

These specific and broad findings raise some interesting points relating to the two themes, which were presented as statements at the beginning of the chapter. The first statement is that land grabbing can produce a "win-win" scenario between investors and the 'host countries'. The second statement is that land grabbing can alleviate poverty and food insecurity in countries where land grabbing is taking place. In respect of these two statements, the thesis argues that land grabbing does not produce a "win-win" scenario on the ground. Furthermore, I would add that the win-win narrative is a limiting dichotomy as it portrays actors as uniform and static, thus overlooking the dynamic interests and agendas involved. It also undermines the highly complex realities by not contextualizing the realities. When used in framing policies, this narrative is thus extremely dangerous in the sense that it overlooks the realities of which the policies are framed to improve.

As for the second statement, I argue that land grabbing is limited in alleviating poverty and food insecurity based on the findings that land grabbing reduces the poor's access to the resources sustaining their livelihoods and survival. While some employment opportunities were provided, it appears that there are likely to be temporary. When the jobs are no longer offered, farmers have very little to fall back as many are likely to lose access to land and water. So, in the short-term the benefits have been found to be high, but in the long-term it appears that farmers' food security will be threatened based on the investors' plans and the historical record.

My conclusion is then that land grabbing comes up short in contributing to development given the high costs and few benefits that were realized. It does not necessary mean that foreign investments in land and agriculture are "bad" for development, but there needs to be more discussion and research to explore the ways in which investors can channel resources to developing countries that can contribute to sustainable development, in an social, economic, and environmental sense.

Before making recommendations about how to regulate, improve or stop land grabbing, one needs to understand the importance and consequence of the asymmetrical power relations and weak institutions found in these countries that investors are targeting. I suggest that there be a list of prerequisites that the investor and governments must achieve before deals enter the negotiation phase. Until certain political and economic problems are dealt with in these countries, it may be beneficial in the long term for countries to suspend such investments to give them time to improve institutions. To be sure, there are limitations of merely fixing institutions; however, it is one place to start.

Placing the thesis within development studies

The thesis explores the ways in which actors that are involved in and affected by land grabbing incur certain socioeconomic costs and benefits within the context of international development studies (IDS). Within IDS, scholars and students seek to find solutions to transform and improve the lives of the world's poor, underprivileged and

marginalized. To arrive these solutions an interdisciplinary approach is employed whereby the contributions of history, economics, political science, geography, philosophy and other disciplines, are drawn upon to assess a wide range of issues from the global to local level. This topic of land grabbing and its impacts links with development studies in the sense that land grabbing is and will impact poverty – one of the central problems in development studies. I present this thesis for the purpose of contributing to international development policy by revealing the institutional weaknesses and structural inequalities.

The structure of the thesis argument

In the following chapters I present my conceptual and empirical findings. The first chapter provides a review of the relevant literature about land grabbing and the impacts it has on actors involved. In Chapter Two, I identify the theoretical approach employed. Chapter Three explains how I conducted the research and the case studies I used. Chapter Four presents the findings revealed throughout the fieldwork, which aim to answer the four research questions. Chapter Five compares the findings from the field to the findings presented in the literature, and analyzes the impacts of land grabbing on food security. Lastly, in Chapter 6, I provide a summary of the research, offer some reflections, and identify some areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Land Grabbing

In this chapter, I present a literature review including a background of land grabbing, the actors that have been identified in land grabbing and the costs and benefits they incur. I also examine the two popular narratives coming out of the literature regarding the impacts of land grabbing and the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments that promote and challenge them.

Global, regional and national contexts

In the past few years, there has been an explosion in international reports about the 1.3 million hectare (ha) land deal between the South Korean corporation, Daewoo Logistics, and the government of Madagascar. In March 2009, Daewoo was close to acquiring large swaths of land in Madagascar to grow maize, mainly for export to South Korea. The deal subsequently fell through when political unrest broke out in Madagascar, which led to the fall of the former president, Marc Ravalomana. Daewoo may have been the largest and most-publicized of foreign investment in recent history, but it was not the first. The proposed land deal raised international attention to the various land grabs (also referred to as 'large-scale land acquisitions' in this thesis) taking place across the globe, particularly given the concurrent food crisis.

The 2007 – 09 global food crisis that drove the incidence of hunger and malnutrition to record levels (FAO 2011) has raised concerns about how the world will keep up with global food demands in a way that is environmentally sustainable. At height of the recent crisis when food prices soared, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) announced that food production would need to double by 2050 to keep up with growing food demands (2008b). Mounting fears about the future of food has in part led to a surge in competition over farmland in developing countries, particularly those with an apparent "surplus" of land. The World Bank (WB) (2010) has estimated that 45 million hectares (ha) of land has been leased, concessioned or purchased in 81 countries in recent years. Ironically, many of the countries that are selling large swaths of their land to foreign corporations also have some of the highest rates of undernourishment and poverty in the world (UN 2010).

The international community has raised concerns about the threat land grabbing poses on food security. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, explained that in countries where land grabbing is happening, there will likely be problems with food security as food will be produced for export (Amanor 2008). GRAIN[4] and Oxfam[5] have reported that the latest land grabs ignore the rights and needs of local land users, which further aggravates poverty and food security (GRAIN 2010, Vidal 2011). The World Bank (2010) recorded that local people have been displaced has occurred in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which reduced locals' access to agricultural and

[4] GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.
[5] Oxfam is an international confederation of 15 organizations operating in over 90 countries. Their work involves working with other to find solutions to end poverty and injustice.

grazing land. In Madagascar, for instance, Medernach (2011) found that as a result of a 5,000 ha Jatropha project financed by a European company, cattle rancher's access to land was reduced as the investor did not respect customary land rights.

Amidst the growing evidence that illustrates the negative impacts on local populations, heated debates have emerged about the implications land grabbing will have on food security. Some argue that if there are better policies in place, land grabbing can reduce poverty and food insecurity. The World Bank, for example, as well as the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, and International Federation for Agricultural Development, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, have put forward a Code of Conduct (CoC) for the purpose of minimizing risks and increasing opportunities. The seven principles that form the CoC, which is not legally binding, call upon actors to ensure food security, to respect land rights, and so on. At the regional level, the African Development Bank has advised African governments to "design appropriate legislations and mechanisms to benefit from foreign investment in agricultural land, while preserving the livelihoods and interests of the local population," (Castel and Kamara 2009: 3).

International scholars and institutions argue that this optimistic reaction to land grabbing should be met with serious concern. The IIED argues that the CoC is deeply flawed based on evidence pointing to the fact that in many of these countries where land grabbing is taking place there is an absence of "sufficient mechanisms to protect local rights and take account of local initiatives, livelihoods, and welfare," (2009: 17). It has been found that in the countries where land grabbing is taking place, investments have little connection to a

country's domestic plans for agricultural development (UN 2010), and that many local governments lack the necessary tools to control the externally determined situation (Zoomers 2010). Moreover, the UN Rapporteur, De Schutter, charges that the CoC is advocating an agenda that will "responsibly" destroy the world's small-scale farmers (2010).

Causes, Current Conditions, and Consequences

"Land grab" is a term used to describe large-scale, transnational farmland acquisitions carried out by transnational corporations and/or initiated by foreign governments (Zoomers 2010). Between 2005 and 2009, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) estimated that 15 to 20 million ha exchanged hands in the form of land grabs (von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009). Based on World Bank estimates, land deals were highest between 2008 and 2009 when 56 million ha worth of land deals was announced (Deininger et al. 2011).

These figures represent a sudden surge in interest in land in developing countries, namely SSA where the majority of the deals have taken place. This is reflected in the rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa. In 2006, FDI levels were at $22 billion[6]. In just a year, FDI shot up to $30 billion in 2007 (FAO 2008). It is also reflected in the expansion of cultivated land. Typically, cultivated land expands by 3.8 million ha per year globally (Deininger et al. 2011). In recent years, up to 45 million additional ha of

[6] In the paper, all monetary figures using the "$" indicate the United States Dollar (USD).

agricultural land, valued at $919 million, have been targeted – but not necessarily been brought into cultivation – globally (FAO 2010b), most of it located in SSA.

In Madagascar, for example, there was sudden spike in "foreign investment in agriculture" (as it is termed by the World Bank) not seen within the past few decades. Almost overnight, Madagascar's land became a high value commodity. Between 2005 to around 2008, 3 million ha were under negotiation by 52 foreign companies seeking to invest in agriculture (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011, Üllenburg 2010). However, about one-third of these investments were eventually cancelled or postponed. It appears that now "only" 400,000 ha are targeted by 18 foreign companies (Burnod et al. 2011).

These characteristics of land grabbing in Madagascar are also found in other parts where this phenomenon is occurring. Like in the case of Madagascar, most of the announced deals have not been implemented. The Bank found that only 21 percent of the announced deals had begun farming. Some of the reasons to explain why some of the deals have not materialized include "unrealistic objectives, price changes, and inadequate infrastructure, technology, and institutions," (Deininger et al. 2011: xiv). In Madagascar, it was found that political and social opposition to such land deals, finance issues due to the global financial crisis, and conflicts between investors and local populations during negotiations contributed to cancelled projects (Andrianirina-Ratsialoanana et al. 2011).

Many investors have become especially drawn to SSA because of its low land prices, land availability, and productive potential. SSA is said to have the highest amount (200 million

ha) of potentially available uncultivated land, according to the World Bank (Deininger et al. 2011). The Bank estimates that 6 million ha of additional land in developing countries will be brought into production each year until 2030, two-thirds of which will likely be in SSA (ibid).

In Madagascar, for example, investors can expect to rent land for as little as $0.90 per hectare per year (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011). According to the FAO, Madagascar has 40 million ha of agricultural land that could be used. Of the 40 million ha, as much as 15 to 20 million is "potentially" arable, according to the FAO, or as "little" as 8 million ha, according to the Ministry of Agriculture (MAEP 2005, FAOSTAT 2006). These statistics tend to portray Madagascar as having an enormous amount of "untapped" or "unexploited" available land, which it may or may not have.[7]

The current land grab is different from land grabbing in the past, i.e. during colonialism. Borras and Franco (2010: 4) identify one key characteristic separating the current land grab from previous ones, which is this desire to have "long-term control of large landholdings beyond one's own national borders...to supply the food and energy needed to sustain one's own population and society into the future". Another difference is that the latest land grab is more strongly driven by food, water and energy security rather than the notion of "comparative advantage in the large scale production of indigenous crops for global markets, which has been more characteristic of foreign owned plantations since the end of the colonial era" (UN 2010).

[7]A closer examination of the statistics reveals that Madagascar may not have millions of idle land. The total land area of Madagascar is 58 million ha, 64 percent (37 million ha) of which are permanent pastures and meadows (FAOSTAT 2006). This kind of land, which is typically seen as abandoned, is used pastoralists for grazing animals. Such factors tend to be absent in land assessments.

Other causes of this global land rush can be traced back to the recent convergence of crises (food, fuel, and financial). One of the most "visible" drivers of land grabbing is the food crisis of 2008, which drove an estimated 100 million more people into poverty (Ivanic and Martin 2008). Other drivers include high oil prices in 2007 and early 2008, which triggered interest in energy crops, such as biofuels. Another driver was the recent financial crisis which led investors to search for new sources of investment (UN 2010).

In addition to the food crisis, land grabbing has been sparked by recent fears about how the changes in environment will impact access to natural resources, such as land and water. A GRAIN researcher noted that rich countries are targeting SSA not just for a "healthy return on capital", but also as an insurance policy. With declining water supplies, climate change and a rapidly growing population, the interest in, and value of land has increased (Vidal 2010). According the UNDP (2007), water scarcity will be the major constraint to increasing food production over the next few years. Close to 70 percent of all freshwater appropriated for human use goes to agriculture. Thus, as water supplies are threatened so will agricultural production and people's access to food.

The actors

In this section, I begin by identifying three sets of actors: investors, governments (including the military) and local populations. For the investors, I focus on the foreign investor from companies, corporations, governments, financial institutions and private

equity funds based outside the country where the land has been acquired. The last group I focus on is the local population, which includes various groups in both urban and rural areas and private and public sector. In my case study, it was found that rural poor and capitalist farmers and local businessmen were the predominant actors. The following describes three sets of actors and identifies some of their interests and actions.

The investor

A wide range of investors have become involved in land grabbing, many of which are foreign to agriculture. Some of the main actors in land grabbing are investment banks, hedge funds, and commodity traders (UN 2010). In Madagascar, some of the largest investors have been from the industrial and energy sectors. For example, two of the largest land deals involved a logistics corporation (Daewoo Logistics Corporation from South Korea) and a global conglomerate of businesses that includes stainless steel raw materials, steel ware, mining, wind energy, oil and gas, gems, and jewelry (Varun Industries Limited from India).

Given that many investors are foreign to the agricultural sector explains why some of the announced deals fell through as well as why few have contributed to local development. Some of these actors may underestimate the work involved with agriculture, which led to cancelled projects or may have little understanding of the long-term prospects or even a solid development plan (De Schutter 2011). In Madagascar, some investors seem to be

attracted to the fact that it costs less than one dollar to lease 1 ha[8] of land. Once they begin the processes of acquiring land and preparing the soil, they are blind-sided by the real total costs involved, i.e. preparing the contract, negotiating it with the population, the local governments and so on (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

In terms of acquiring land, it has been found that investors can secure large swaths of land and for a long period of time, despite that fact that international law generally does not give foreign investors the right to invest in land and water in another state (IISD 2009: 14). Many investments are in excess of 10,000 ha and are long-term in that the lease periods are for 30-99 years, and most of these allocations put pressure on higher-value lands (i.e. those with irrigation potential or that are closer to markets) (Zoomers 2010).

In terms of how investors acquire land, it has been found in Madagascar that most investors are still in the negotiation or prospecting phases. In Madagascar, investors are looking to lease (not purchase) land for 18 to 99 years to produce agro-fuel on "idle" land. Based on the announced deals since 2005, investors are interested in food commodity production, agro-fuel production, and forestry for carbon sequestering (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana et al. 2011). Investors tend to look for land with appropriate climate conditions, non- or under-productive, un-owned, and close to a highway or waterway for transporting raw materials and inputs (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana et al. 2011). Typically, competition and tensions between local actors can mount when investors target higher-value lands (i.e. those with irrigation potential or that is closer to

[8] 1 hectare (ha) is about the size of two football fields.

market) (Zoomers 2010). In Madagascar, it was found that "only" 23,050 ha have been developed by foreign investors: 21,700 ha for biofuel, 1,100 ha for food crops and 250 ha for forestry (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

At the global level, another finding is that actors are simply not interested in growing food for human consumption. In fact, many investors are not necessarily interested in using land for food production, but mainly for cash crops and biofuels (World Bank 2011).

Answeeuw et al. (2011) call this phenomenon, "production grabbing" not land grabbing. The grabbing of productive resources involves particular actors that are controlling, to varying degrees, the process of agricultural production.

Production grabbing is different from land grabbing in that the latter involves investors, public or private, national or foreign, acquiring land for agricultural purposes, especially primary production activities. Production grabbing, in contrast, includes actors foreign to the traditional farming sector mainly from the financial sector aiming at diversifying their portfolio. These actors "perceive the agricultural sector as an investment for the future" (3). Production grabbing, according to the authors, can transform the agricultural sector as few traditionally non-agricultural actors increase control over the agricultural productive cycle, especially primary production established through a strengthened vertical integration. Downstream (including financing) and upstream (to the distribution and commercialization) undergo an ever-increasing concentration process. Characteristics of

production grabbing have been revealed in the fieldwork as the case shows that one of the Indian investors has received financial assistance from a transnational insurance company headquartered in Germany.

During the initial phase, investors tend to first approach the central or regional government and then the local elected representatives. For example, Daewoo and Varun invested less time consulting and negotiation with the lower administrative levels (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al., 2011).

When it comes time to formally acquire land in Madagascar, foreign investors are legally bound to abide by the Constitution, Investment Code and Circulaire[9] No. 2010-321 of 2010. The Constitution, which was recently re-written and accepted by referendum, is ambivalent on how foreigners can acquire land. Currently, it does not clearly state that foreigners cannot buy land (Burnod et al. 2011). On these matters, the new constitution refers to the Investment Law (2008) established by the Economic Development Board of Madagascar[10]. The Law states that foreign investors having a Malagasy company can acquire land by obtaining an acquisition permit (Law No. 2007-036). In practice is easy to create a Malagasy company given that one just has to have one of the associates registered as a resident of Madagascar. However, the modalities of enforcement of this authorisation are still vague (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

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[9] A *circulaire*, in the French legal system, is an interpretation of legal text or regulation meant for members of government. It only comments on existing laws and explains its application in concrete terms.

[10] The EDBM was established in 2008 for the purpose of contributing to the development of an incentive framework for foreign and national investors (taxes, customs, duties); simplifying administrative procedures (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

The last piece of legislation that investors must follow is the Circulaire, a new regulation enacted by the current government. For investors planning to use more than 250 ha a commission of representatives from each of the concerned ministries has to evaluate and approve the investor's business plan. For those planning to use more than 2,500 ha, the investor's plan has to undergo an evaluation process by the Council of Ministers. The government's objective is to ensure investors' projects are suitable but also to obtain and centralize information on the on-going agribusiness projects (Burnod et al. 2011). Part of the Circulaire includes a clause that investors must have an environmental permit in order to lease more than 1,000 ha of land.

In order to obtain the permit, investors must conduct an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), as part of the Investment and Environment Compatibility Act (Mise en *Compatibilité des Investissements avec l'Environnement*, MECIE Decree[11] 2004). The environment permit is obtained from the National Environment Office (ONE). Based on MECIE decree (2004), investors must consult local populations and authorities (e.g. village chiefs, mayors) through public hearings but does not state that they must negotiate with locals. In other words, locals receive and provide information, which may or may not be taken into consideration or respected by the investor and governments. The investor is not obliged to make the results of an EIA publicly known, which prevents civil society from holding the investor accountable. Moreover, an EIA cannot be used as a tool

[11] The MECIE is a national decree on environmental compliance for investment projects in Madagascar.

to select or refuse investment projects or to modify their business plans (Burnod et al. 2011b).

In addition, Madagascar's state land services have demanded investors seeking to acquire land by following certain steps in order to verify that the targeted land is genuinely unoccupied in the sense that it is "vacant and ownerless". Since October 2010, investors were asked to (a) obtain the mayor's approval; (b) map out the land with the land registry service to verify the absence of titled and untitled private property; (c) receive a field visit by a recognition commission organized by the state land service to verify the presence of existing claims to land on the targeted area; (d) receive approval from the regional representatives of the concerned ministries and, ultimately, validated by the ministry in charge of land issues. Some of these procedures tend to be adhered to; however, *how* these steps are followed is questionable (Burnod et al. 2011).

Government and military

It has been found that, in some cases, national governments are actively shopping around for possible land investors (Borras and Franco 2010) and generally welcome foreign investment, even though much of their own populations are food insecure (Zoomers 2010). Zoomers goes on to explain that "when approached with land deal proposals, many African governments readily accept them, partly because they need FDI and want to promote rural development – even though smallholders are usually not involved in the deals and local communities are at risk of losing their access to land," (2010: 436).

In the case of Madagascar, the central government was soliciting investors years before the global land grab climaxed. In the early 2000s, the former president, Marc Ravalomanana, created Agricultural Investment Zones (ZIAs) for the purpose of making it easier for private investors – national or foreign – to access land. According to the latest national development agenda, the Madagascar Action Plan (2007-2012), by creating such zones, it is expected that it would attract investors (agribusinesses or corporations) that have the capacity to increase and intensify agricultural production, which goes alongside the governments' vision for a so-called "sustainable green revolution" in agriculture (see Chapter 1.5).

More recently, the current president, Andry Rajoelina, has sent some mixed messages about where his government stands on land grabbing. In his first public speech, Rajoelina expressed his opposition to foreign investments like the Daewoo deal, which ultimately led to the failure of the investment (Burnod et al. 2011). In practice, however, Rajoelina's government has maintained the policies of the former government with regards to international investment. New foreign economic partnerships are therefore still promoted, all the more as international aid has been suspended in the meantime due to political instability (Burnod et al. 2011); however, with the recent political changes, the ZIA lands have not officially been recognized by the new government.

Currently, it has been found that in Madagascar the central government is often the most involved during the negotiation phase of the land deal. Except for projects promoted by

companies based in Madagascar, mayors are generally informed at the end of the chain, if not by-passed altogether, and when they are consulted it is usually symbolic. When the mayors are eventually consulted, they willingly accept the establishment of private agribusiness projects, as investors tend to promise mayors that they will provide jobs, construct schools, water wells, community clinics, and to pay land fees (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

Acting as the main brokers between local people and investor, mayors do not necessarily improve communication between investors and local communities. Burnod et al. (2011) found that mayors often welcome an agro-project in the same way that they receive an international aid project. They see it is a means to compensate for the economic and financial deficiencies of the state. In a context where state subsidies granted to local government are still low and local taxes are limited, the average annual budget of Malagasy communes is between 5000 and 12,000 USD.

Mayors, aware of the different layers of land tenure systems and how they might lose access to land, tends to think that the benefits of the project outweigh the risks. The mayor, however, is easily tricked by the investor whom is not always forthright with information about the amount of land they plan to use. Moreover, they do not realize that the list of compensation commitments promised by the investors is not legally binding.

Similar situations have been found in other countries where land grabbing is happening. Zoomers (2010: 443) describes the problems and dilemmas facing local governments:

> One of the main problems is that many local governments lack the necessary tools to control the externally determined situation. Local governments tend to be either not accountable to the local population, or insufficiently strong to be able to counterbalance the power of external actors and/or the central state (which often have a major interest in stimulating economic growth, sometimes to the detriment of local populations)...Many local governments are faced with a fundamental dilemma: should they create an enabling and friendly environment for foreign investors and protect those investors, or secure the rights of their local populations? And how should they deal with new and foreign populations?

So, even when local governments are included in negotiations they are typically not prepared to ensure that the investments work for the local governments and local communities.

Not only are their agendas conflicting, but so are the policies. Recent government legislation to help local populations formalize their rights while promoting foreign investment is, in principle, conflicting (Teyssier et al. 2010). Since the onset of Madagascar's land reform beginning in 2009, locals have been able to formalize their legal ownership. However, at the same time, the government promotes foreign investments, which puts more pressures on rural populations who have limited access to land and/ or limited knowledge about formalizing their land rights. In communities where investors target land, populations are at risk of losing their land and livelihoods, especially if they cannot legally prove their ownership. Nonetheless, even a certificate or title deed does not necessarily protect local populations from displacement, but at least with some form of legal documentation they may be able to receive some compensation for losses incurred. Between the legislation that seeks to protect the land user and the policies that seek to facilitate land investment, the government's agenda to promote land

investment may threaten to override the new land laws and, in essence, local populations' access to, and control over natural resources.

In practice, it has been found that investors and state representatives often ignore or bypass official legal channels which threaten local land rights. Customary land rights in particular are partly not respected due to the imperfect implementation of the law (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011; Evers et al. 2011). This lack of recognition of the local land laws, and adherence to – and implementation of – the new land laws at the various levels of government has caused problems between local populations, government, and investors. The confusion and conflict within and between local, national, and central governments about which regulations are to be followed and enforced can make it easier for powerful actors to take advantage of a weak governance system by developing their projects without respecting the regulations.

Intermediary

For the purpose of this thesis, an intermediary is understood as an individual, group of individuals, a company, and/or government entity that is based in the 'host' country and engages with investors, governments, local populations, and/or other actors in land grabbing. Intermediaries can take the form of agricultural engineering companies. The aim of these companies is to "centralize all the farmer oriented services (input supply, technical support, commercialization) within the same entity. It thus proposes to the

producers a contractual arrangement representing an all-in-one integral solution," (Answeeuw et al. 2011: 8).

In West Africa, most investors used an intermediary to help them identify the plot of land and the owner or user of the land. Some intermediaries have even put pressure on customary right holders to sell. The intermediaries, with the investor, also make use of loopholes and weaknesses in current customary land governance systems and slow implementation of new land policies. The latter generally foresee the creation of new community level institutions around land governance (Hilhorst et al. 2011).

In Madagascar, the intermediary is supposed to be the Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM). It has been found that investors do not systematically use the EDBM's services, because it does not effectively guide investors through the various steps (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011). When investors do use the EDBM, it is to obtain information about how to contact concerned ministers and the regional representatives. Sometimes, the EDBM will accompany the investor in the negotiations (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011). Other investors hire consultants with the country to assist them in the various institutional procedures.

These consultants offer (or claim to offer) advice on the various procedures needed to establish their projects, the national laws, and/or local agricultural conditions. Because of the "newness" of these large-scale agricultural projects, few consultants are really in a position to call themselves experts. Consultants who position themselves as "jacks of all

trades" are retired or public officials and are generally recruited because of their networks within the public service or their agronomic knowledge. Their competencies in a single area have at times lead projects down difficult paths (wrong choice of agronomic area, unfamiliarity with the institutional processes). Consultants, through by their experience within the first projects in Madagascar, as either a manager or an agronomist, are emerging and sell their services of institutional and technical support (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

Local populations

Local populations primarily include rural people from various classes, races, social classes, and occupations. As in most developing countries, rural people are primarily comprised of the rural poor, which can include small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, and so on. It is important to note that local populations include migrant labourers in the context of land grabbing. For example, it has been found that when word spreads that an investment is coming to a certain area new populations arrive, which can increase competition for resources, and create tensions with traditional populations.

Broadly speaking, the local population is generally attracted to so-called investments depending on what kind of information they have access to and when. In Madagascar, local populations are generally informed about the investment plans only when the necessary procedures for land access are needed, i.e. the environmental and social impact

assessment. Typically, investors and governments promise that the projects will improve their livelihoods, giving them better opportunities for employment.

In principle, foreign investment in agriculture has the potential to bring a number of developmental benefits: "increased employment, technological development, increased trade benefits, new markets, and local economic spillovers" (UN 2010: 5). When presented in such a favourable light, local populations often welcome the projects, especially those members who can secure a position with investor or government to allow them to advance their social status and gain access to natural resources and income. For those populations who are at risk of losing such resources, they are more inclined to resist the project. As was already stated in the Introduction, the stakes are very high for the majority of the local populations who often have more to lose and less to gain in terms of their access to natural resources.

In Madagascar, local populations should be protected from land grabbing, in theory, based on the new laws passed during the ongoing land reform. In 2004 the Malagasy government implemented new laws to strengthen land security for local land users (Teyssier et al. 2009). Prior to the land reform, land that was untitled but occupied was deemed to be state-owned but users could claim the land through customary laws. Under the current land reform, however, untitled and occupied state-owned land has been reclassified as "untitled private property," which means it is no longer considered state property (Teyssier et al. 2009, Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011). Consequently, the state can only lease or sell state-owned land but it has no purview over titled private

property or occupied land (i.e. untitled private property) (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011, Burnod et al. 2011).

The second major change brought about through the land reform was the establishment of local land offices for the purpose of increasing local populations' ability to obtain a land certificate formalizing their private property rights. Before the land reform, the only way that someone could legally secure their land was through applying for a title deed issued by the country's state land registry services. Now with the new laws, local people can obtain a land certificate, which confers similar property rights as a title deed, from a local land registry office (called guichet foncier in French) (Teyssier et al. 2009). The certificate is more accessible to the average Malagasy as it is around $10 and takes only 6 months, not 6 years and $500, which is required to obtain a title. Not only is it more accessible for the population, but it bestows more power to local governments rather than central government, to issue land certificates (ECR 2008, Teyssier et al. 2009, National Land Observatory 2011). Even though formalizing land rights has been facilitated for some local populations, most communities determine one's access to land based on customary rights (Evers et al. 2011).

Costs and benefits incurred by actors

It is now evident that there are a wide variety of actors involved in land grabbing with various interests and agendas. In Madagascar, the investor is foreign to the agricultural sector and interested in leasing land for several years for producing agro-fuel. The

government tends to be attracted to investment projects when it is convinced that it serves their own interests and the interests of their constituents. Local populations are also interested in the potential opportunities and are not well-informed about the risks. This section continues to examine the investor, governments, and local populations in terms of how, in the literature, they have been found to gain or lose in terms of their access to natural resources and income.

Investors

In terms of their access to natural resources, it was found that investors, out of all the actors, can acquire land fairly easily given their power in the land grabbing nexus. The World Bank found that in a "number of countries, investors are treated more favourably than local smallholders, for example, in terms of tax payments and the ability to obtain land and other resources," (2011: 141). This has much to do with the contracts and treaties, which provide greater rights and protections to foreign investors over a weak or incomplete domestic legal base on social, economic or environmental issues. The UN (2010: 3) confirms that the "legal pyramid" is slanted in a way that favours foreign investors. The World Bank (2011) warns that this unequal playing field can do little to prevent investors from exploiting, corrupting or indebting governments in developing countries that are not well-equipped to ensure fairness in transactions or prevent buyers from exploiting the poorest rural communities. Ansoms (2011) argues that this "elite capture" of the opportunities allow investors to reproduce and reinforce structural forms of poverty and existing patronage networks.

The UN (2010) argues that this uneven playing field has to do with international financial institutions, companies and governments (including embassies) that have been found to buttress investors' positions in land grabbing by giving them exclusive information on the area where the investor wants to invest. Agribusinesses, for example, in West Africa, have been found to have "considerable leverages through international financial institutions to create pressures on governments to create favourable reforms for their operations," (Amanor 2011). Embassies often encourage potential investors and point out the risks and pitfalls, a large number of specialized firms assist potential investors to purchase land, and many governments organize excursions to their countries or offer special guided tours that allow people to "test the water" with no obligation (Zoomers 2010).

The latest reports show that, although foreign investors are cultivating more than 20,000 ha of land in Madagascar, few investors have begun to formally acquire legal rights to land where production is occurring. They generally begin this process when their financial backers (banks and shareholders) demand it. Most investors opt to establish informal land contracts through negotiations with the local mayor and the main representative of the regional government. Their plan is to acquire the land legally in the future. Their priority is to begin cultivating or conduct agronomic trials and also to attract new investors (Burnod et al. 2011a). It was found that 23,050 ha have been developed by foreign investors: 21,700 ha for biofuel, 1,100 ha for food crops and 250 ha for forestry. For the food production, the investors look for, or use shoal lands, which are also

generally used by family farms (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011). This will create pressure on local farmers and pastoralists as investors seek to acquire similar kinds of land.

There are various ways in which investors fare in terms of accessing income. The millions to billions of dollars in investments lead one to assume that land grabbing is lucrative. For example, Susan Payne, CEO of Emergent Asset Management (an investment fund in the United Kingdom planning to spend $50 million on African land) declared: "Farmland in sub-Saharan Africa is giving 25 percent returns a year and new technology can treble crop yields in short time frames..." (quoted in Vidal 2010). In the case of Madagascar, profits have not been documented given that few have legally acquired land (Burnod et al. 2011). Unlike other countries, it is not easy for the investor to acquire land in a way that is transparent given the political instability and tensions (Burnod et al. 2011).

Globally, it was found that in some cases, investors who were unable to turn a profit due to "unrealistic plans started to encroach on protected areas or on land that had explicitly been set aside for use by local people, causing environmental damage and threatening local food security," (World Bank 2011: 142).

Government and military

Governments can expect to lose access to state land given that, in the case of Madagascar, the investor can only lease state land. In many cases, it is likely that governmental elites can capture most of the short-term benefits from investors, or receive bribes in exchange for giving land away (De Schutter 2011). The taxes that investors should pay can also help increase government revenues, which can be re-invested into public programming and local development projects.

In Madagascar, mayors are likely to benefit the most as they tend to be the main interlocutor and mediator between the investor and communities. The investors generally interact with mayors and leaders of villages and not with the whole population (Burnod 2011). Indeed, they are not only the authority from which investors seek agreement; they are also the ones in charge of leading the consultation with local leaders and communities. By mastering the code and the language that matches their audience, mayors can adapt their communication tactics to please and appease the investor and their constituents. To strengthen their position, they claim a genuine will to enhance the well-being of the local society as a whole, even if in practice, they support some interests more than others (Burnod et al. 2011). Investors have been found to give mayors and other government authorities priority access to employment. The mayors can also count on the land tax, which investors must pay to the local government where the project is located (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

The power that the mayor and local government hold has much to do with the larger, long-term agenda for decentralization. Since the 1980s, Madagascar and many other developing countries have been following the World Bank's advice to decentralize by transferring more political power to the local governments. In several reports, the World Bank (1981, 1989, 2003, 2008, 2010) has advised governments in developing countries to reform their land management systems in a way that gives more power to local governments. This can be achieved by creating land offices in local villages and communities to issue land titles and certificates, handle land claims, and resolve land conflicts – all of which have recently materialized in Madagascar. The message in the World Bank reports is that land affairs should be "managed by the people". Thus, as decentralization has increased the power of local mayors, it has also put them in a position to easily benefit and make them a target for corruption.

In Madagascar, the regional government can also gain by receiving income tax. When the investor establishes itself as a Malagasy company, the operator must pay this tax to the regional government where the company is registered on the commercial registry (Andrianirina Ratsialonana et al. 2011).

Intermediaries

To date there is a lack of information about how intermediaries gain or lose in terms of access to income and natural resources. The intermediaries hired by the investors have, however, increased access to income through wages or salary paid by the investor. In the

case study presented, the intermediary can also serve as a platform for elite-led land grabbing in their own countries.

Local populations

In terms of accessing natural resources, it is the poorer groups that are usually the first to lose their land, especially if they do not possess land titles or certificates. In many instances, enclaves of privilege arise in land grabbing, which often lead not only to fragmentation and segregation in rural areas but also to "large-scale displacements of local populations". (Zoomers 2010: 442). Small-scale farmers, who typically do not have legally-recognized rights, often lose access to land through displacement or restrictions imposed by investors.

The costs small-scale farmers incur in terms of their access to natural resources have to do with the land policies in the developing countries where investments occur (Zoomers 2010). There is often a problem with land rights and competing jurisdictions. This gap between de jure (legally-recognized rights) and de facto (customary rights) creates a vacuum allowing more powerful actors to assert their rights and establish claims to other people's land (HLPE 2011). To legitimize their land claims, there often ends up being a competition between legal jurisdictions between local practices of land access (*lex loci*) and positive law (*lex fori*).[12]

[12] "*Lex loci* is the concept which refers to the law of the place and includes local land access practices that are deemed legitimate in terms of local land ownership perceptions. *Lex fori* refers to the law of the forum, or court; that is, the

Local populations cannot secure or gain access to the so-called opportunities spurred by investments due to the inequality built into the social structures making it difficult or next to impossible for the rural poor to be empowered. These structures then make it easier for the elites or the powerful actors to exclude the poor from negotiations and decision-making processes. Given that local mayors (elites) tend to be the main interlocutor between the investor and communities, locals are not sufficiently consulted and informed (Burnod et al. 2011). In fact, local populations are often the least involved in the negotiation processes and lack necessary information to evaluate the envisaged projects (Evers et al. 2011), which make it easier to exclude those who will mostly be affected by the project – the rural poor. The discrimination and marginalization inherent in these processes, is not due to a lack of legislation, but the tensions between the legislation and its effective enforcement (Evers et al. forthcoming).

In terms of accessing income, the overwhelming majority of the poor do not possess the skills needed to become eligible for newly created employment. As a result, newly created jobs are often taken up by better qualified or cheaper migrants from elsewhere (Zoomers 2010). This was confirmed by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition's (HLPE)[13] report, *Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture* (2011), which states that of the few jobs available, outside labourers are

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positive law of the state, country, or jurisdiction. Courts, where the suit is brought or remedy sought, are an integral part of *lex fori*," (Evers 2011)

[13] The HLPE is a group of experts established by the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for the purpose of getting credible scientific and knowledge-based advice to underpin policy formulation, thereby creating an interface between knowledge and public policy. The HLPE is directed by a Steering Committee that was appointed in July 2010.

selected over local people. Even when employment is offered, the contracts are often vague leaving more opportunity to take advantage of those hired (World Bank 2011: 25-26). For example, in Rwanda, influential rural entrepreneurs could extract power from their negotiation capacity with external donors and their socio-political relations with authorities at local and higher levels. In the process they reinforced their position by acquiring increasing control over the use and distribution of marshlands (Ansoms 2011). The targeted land became yet another political arena in which the rural poor end up losing in the bargaining process (Ansoms 2011).

In a recent study (Medernach 2011) concerning a 5,000 ha Jatropha project financed by a European company in western Madagascar, it was found that local populations, specifically cattle ranchers lost access to land as the investor did not respect the customary land rights. The problem lies in the fact that the investor did not carry out a detailed study of the land targeted in terms of land usage, rights, and so on. In terms of labour, employment opportunities have increased as a result of the project based on jobs per unit area, however, the investor has favoured migrant labourers rather than locals, because the investors are not willing to hire those who cannot work some days as they are busy with their own farming activities. In terms of income, labourers hired were paid less than if they sold their labour power to a family farm. This lead them to sell their labour power to work to supplement their income and keeps them in a precarious situation. Medernach argues that rather than getting hired by the company, cattle ranchers could improve their situation by having secured access to new lands.

The Small-Scale Farmer, Peasant, Peasantry and the Rural Poor

As the literature indicates, land grabbing produces uneven outcomes for local populations. Actors with the right social connections and/or higher social status are better able to access income allowing them to mitigate some of the impacts of losing access to natural resources. Those with fewer or weaker social connections are less likely to gain access to income or natural resources. In rural areas, the latter group can be understood as the peasant(ry) or the rural poor.

Up until now, I have used the term small-scale farmer without introducing the term, "peasant". For this thesis, farmer and peasant are used to describe the same population; however, each term is used for different purposes[14]. "Small-scale farmer" is usually employed within the neoclassical economics discipline to portray farmers has self-interested and rational actors. The term "peasant", on the other hand, is often used within Marxist economics to reveal the political dilemmas faced by farmers. Peasant is generally defined as an agricultural worker engaged in household, subsistence-oriented farming[15], which is organized for simple (re)production of, most notably, its own food (Bernstein, 2010). In other words, I use the term "farmer" when referring to actors who behave in accordance with the assumptions found in neo-classical economics and "peasant" when

[14] Bernstein notes that terms like "peasant," "small" or "small-scale" farmer and "family" farmer are often used interchangeably in ways that are easily confusing. This is not just a semantic issue but has important analytical issues and differences (Bernstein, 2010, 3)

[15] The terms "farming" and "agriculture" are commonly used interchangeably, which I have avoided, apart from describing what is produced on farms — crops and animals — as "agricultural." Rather I rely on the term "agrarian" to describe the social relations and practices of farming, societies based on farming and processes of change in farming (Bernstein, 2010: 61).

highlighting political marginalization of small-scale agricultural producers and their struggles for empowerment.

I also make reference to the rural poor and the peasantry, which are for the purpose of this paper I use interchangeably. Borras (2010) defines the rural poor also the, "the peasantry with its various strata, landless rural labourers, migrant workers, forest dwellers, subsistence fishers, indigenous peoples, and pastoralists." Byceson (2009) defines the term "peasantry" as "rural dwellers who occupationally live off the land as farmers and/or pastoralists combining subsistence and commodity production. Socially they group in family units that form the nucleus for organizing production, in addition to consumption, human reproduction, socialization, welfare, and risk-spreading." Johnson (2004) argues that if the "peasantry is a unit engaged in a form of production based solely on agriculture, then the world is indeed witnessing a process of widespread depeasantization."

Implications on poverty and food security for the rural poor

In their 2011 report, the High Level Panel of Experts on Food and Nutrition revealed that many recent land acquisitions by large scale investors have been damaging to food security as projects have shown to adversely affect rural livelihoods and famers through reducing their access to key resources, e.g. land and water. In a 2010 report entitled *Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?* the World Bank economists state that foreign direct investment in agriculture has the

potential to offer an abundance of opportunities that can reduce poverty and food security (Deninger et al. 2010). These two positions illustrate the two ways in which land grabbing has been viewed. The following section will examine how the dominant development narrative, commonly expressed by the World Bank and the critics of this narrative converge and diverge in terms of two arguments:

- Land grabbing is an opportunity because it can help increase agricultural productivity, which can reduce poverty and decrease food security.
- Land grabbing poses as a threat to the rural poor, but risks can be managed through better regulations and institutions, which can ensure that countries capture opportunities that will reduce poverty and food insecurity.

Land Grabbing: Increasing Agricultural Productivity or Aggravating Poverty?

Much of the evidence presented above goes contrary to the World Bank and other agencies' advocacy for land grabbing. The World Bank's 2010 report states that foreign direct investment in agriculture has the potential to offer an abundance of opportunities that can reduce poverty and food security. They state that investments can improve social infrastructure through community development funds, generate employment, provide local producers with better access to markets and technology and contribute to local and national tax revenue. More specifically, the Bank claims that these investments can help improve smallholder agricultural productivity, which can reduce poverty and hunger. It

explains that there is large amount of potential for developing countries to break the vicious poverty cycle by exploiting its "largely untouched" resource base.

This is true: agricultural growth can contribute to a country's development and have far-reaching socioeconomic benefits for the rural poor. Irz et al (2001: 462) suggest that "a yield increase of one-third might reduce the numbers in poverty by a quarter or more," as labour demands increase. They point out that by improving agricultural production poverty and food security can decrease, in principle, in the following ways (449-450):

- More jobs are created in agriculture and food chain upstream and downstream of farm.
- More jobs or high incomes are generated in non-farm economy as farmers and farm labourers spend additional incomes.
- Increased jobs and incomes in rural economy allow for better nutrition, better health and increased investment in education amongst rural population, which lead directly to improved welfare and indirectly to higher labour productivity.
- Prices of food are reduced for rural inhabitants who are net buyers of food.

In the past few years, these findings have further strengthened agendas put forward by international development organizations, namely the World Bank, to put agriculture back on the development agenda. After 25 years or so of development policies that neglected agriculture, the World Bank came out with its "new agriculture" agenda outlined in the

2008 *World Development Report: Agriculture for Development*. The report declares how "agricultural growth has *special powers*[16] in reducing poverty across all country types," (World Bank 2007: 6). Surely, agricultural growth can have the potential to reduce poverty and food insecurity, especially in SSA where some of the highest rates of poverty and hunger exist. It is necessary to improve the agricultural sector given that the agricultural sector accounts for 25 percent of GDP and 70 percent of the labour force (UNECA 2009). Worldwide, an estimated 1.4 billion people are poor, many of whom are part of the 1 billion suffer from hunger (IFAD 2011). According to the Bank, people are poor because they cannot work, which can be attributed to poor health and poor diet. People are food insecure because they cannot buy food with their income, they lack the resources to produce it themselves, or they lack access to social institutions that would allow them to acquire food in non-market ways (e.g. state or communal redistribution, non-market exchange, etc.).

The World Bank's view is that developing countries need to unlock the potential of the agricultural sector, which means closing the agricultural yield gap in these countries. The yield gap refers to the space between attainable and potential yields in agriculture. To close the yield gap, the Bank states that countries will "require public investment in technology, infrastructure, and market development to raise smallholder productivity [and] private investment through contract farming [, which can] can promote diversification into high value and export markets," (2010: xxxvi). Based on this statement, investors, whom are for the most part from the private sector, should not be

[16] Italics inserted by author.

investing in land not farmers. Therefore, land grabbing should not be necessary. This statement appears to go against their position as facilitating "smart land grabs".

According to the Bank then, the cause of poverty and food security in these countries is low productivity and low food supply. The solution is then to increase smallholder productivity, which it claims is "essential for reducing poverty and hunger." The so-called FDIs in agriculture, which typically aim to establish larger-scale farming systems, have a place in increasing smallholder productivity through the outgrower programs. At first glance, this agenda to promote smallholders appears to be counter-intuitive to the former plans to increase production through large-scale, industrial agriculture. While they seem to be promoting both large-scale and small-scale agriculture, they are in fact promoting two complimentary practices which promote agribusiness at different scales, i.e. large-scale agribusiness and small-scale entrepreneurial farmers. So, in fact the Bank seeks to improve entrepreneurial farmers or those smallholder farmers seeking to be entrepreneurial farmers who will purchase inputs from and sell their output to large-scale agribusiness. The bottom-line, for the Bank, is that by increasing productivity through agribusiness is the key to tackling poverty and food insecurity.

The dominant development narrative, commonly expressed by the World Bank, is thus advocating for similar changes to agriculture, which have happened throughout history. Since colonialism, the agricultural model in developing countries has been restructured again and again to fit the needs of foreign demands (McMichael and Raynolds 1995). This is due to the popular claim that developing countries and former colonies have a

comparative advantage for producing raw materials. The current arguments do not deviate much from what has been prescribed over the years, which raises doubts as to how the current agenda will bring about real change for the rural poor. As one looks back over the past few decades at attempts to reduce poverty and improve food security, one cannot help but notice the similarities between the agendas now and in the past.

During colonialism, agriculture was reoriented in tropical, settler colonies to provide "cheap food and raw materials to fuel industrialization in Europe," (Holt Giménez & Shattuck 2011: 110). In Madagascar, for example, industrialized agriculture was first introduced to Madagascar during the French colonization (1885-1960) as a way to participate in international markets. The industrialization and commercialization agriculture was introduced and initiated by Colonel Joseph-Simon Gallieni from France, who was Madagascar's first military governor from 1896 to 1905 (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 156). Agricultural production dramatically changed with the introduction and establishment of plantations and foreign markets. Large-scale, monoculture plantations were established to grow export crops, such as vanilla, cloves, and coffee. Through plantations, wage labour was introduced. Galleni's system of "poll and cattle" taxes forced peasants to participate in the market economy by selling their agricultural produce or their labour (Pryor 1990: 205). The result was that these "industrial monocultures transformed farmers into recipients rather than agents of on-farm research and innovation" (Weis 2007: 109). After Gallieni's term in office, the "trading regulations he established persisted in various forms throughout the colonial period, which arrested land and labour markets in rural areas," (Pryor 1990: 211).

During post-colonial era, the global spread of industrial agriculture continued, where again agriculture was reoriented to the global market weakening peasant agriculture and increasing the power of large landowners, which pushed peasants off the land and into urban slums (Holt Giménez 2011). In the post-colonial era (post-1960s), the national economic policies leaned in favour of urban as opposed to rural development. Government investment turned away from agriculture and toward industry, which saw a reduction in the real price farmers received for their goods (Pryor 1990).

In the latter part of the twentieth century, global economic shocks of the 1970s and 1980s ushered in neoliberal capitalist expansion. During the 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were launched in developing countries such as Madagascar. One of the most elemental assumptions of SAPs policies for agriculture was that freer markets would improve food security (Weis 2007). The SAPs policies for agriculture advocated for less state interference in markets (i.e. price controls), and to dismantle state marketing boards and transfer them to more efficient private actors. The belief was that this would 1) decrease marketing costs; 2) increase flexibility; 3) increase farm-gate prices; 4) stimulate production (Weis 2007). As seen during colonialism, the SAPs were all about pushing developing countries to engage with the global economy (Chang 2003) and making trade easier for large commercial farmers. These policies were in-step with the neoliberal agendas found in bilateral and international free trade agreements, the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), which "institutionalized the process of agricultural liberalization on a global scale by restricting the rights of sovereign states to

regulate food and agriculture," (Holt Giménez & Shattuck 2011). In the end, "when small farmers took on increased debt loads in an attempt to participate in new, higher-value agro-export networks, for instance through contract farming, these became a major cause of land loss among the marginalized and poor sectors of society, with larger landowners able to capitalize on distressed sales by buying land at deflated prices," (Leonard and Manahan 2004:9 cited in Weis 2007: 123).

After the failed SAPs, which produced massive amounts of debt, some 40 developing countries became part of the Heavily-Indebted Countries (HIPC) initiative established by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Starting in the early 2000s, in order to get out of debt, the governments in developing countries wrote (under the supervision and direction of the WB and IMF) a series of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers to prove to the WB and IMF that they were "serious" about eradicating poverty by revamping their economy along a neoliberal development agenda. In exchange, the government received assistance from the WB and IMF to help them increase economic growth and reduce poverty.

Between 2000 and 2009, Madagascar's government wrote seven PRSPs, most which said that the only way that the poor are going to "escape" poverty is by getting out of agriculture. Or, if they want to stay in agriculture the 2007 PRSP advises them to modernize their farming activities using inputs, tools, and techniques that can stimulate a Green Revolution. The only way then to escape poverty, according to the PRSPs, is to either get out of agriculture or to industrialize agriculture.

For example, in the 2007 PRSP also known as the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP) 2007-2012, it stated that in order to combat food insecurity and poverty, a "sustainable Green Revolution" was needed in order to increase agricultural production, mainly to rapidly increase the production of rice. The main goal is to increase rice production from 3 to 7 million tons per year, and to increase productivity from 2 towards 3 to 5 yields per hectare.

Increasing agricultural production of rice in particular are echoed in National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) (2008-2018) written by the Ministry of Agriculture in Madagascar and the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD)[17], which ambitiously intends to develop Madagascar into the "Indian Ocean's Rice Basket" by doubling or tripling rice production by 2018 to fulfill domestic needs and export the surplus (MA and CARD 2008). Its main objectives are to contribute food security, economic growth, and income of farmers by implementing similar strategies outlined by the MAP.

Both the MAP and NRDS state that traditional practices used by smallholder farmers need to be improved by adopting modern agricultural practices that use modern inputs (i.e. improved seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides), and modern machinery (i.e.

[17] CARD is an initiative launched at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 2008 spearheaded by the Japanese International Cooperation Association, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and Africa for a Green Revolution Association. Together with research agencies and regional and international financial institutions, CARD aims to double rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa from 14 to 28 million tons in 10 years (CARD and IFAD 2010).

plows and motor cultivators). In addition, improved infrastructure of roads, buildings, and irrigation networks are also claimed to be the key for a production increase. In order to achieve this goal, it is purported that foreign capital is necessary to finance research, development and manufacturing of modern agricultural inputs and the latest technology and machinery.

Madagascar's chronic poverty and food security is case in point to illustrate that decades of attempting to industrialize agriculture has come up short in contributing to alleviating rural poverty and food insecurity. Since the year 2000, 70 to 85 percent of the Malagasy population has been living in poverty, which is concentrated in rural areas where the majority are smallholder farmers. In rural areas, 83 percent are poor and 35 percent suffer from hunger (UNHCHR 2011).

The push for – and limits of – regulations

It has been found that land grabbing can pose risks (such as loss of land access for local people, undermine local businesses and environmental damage) as well as opportunities in terms of access to capital, technology and markets (Cortula et al. 2009). To minimize risks and maximize opportunities the World Bank and other agencies argue that regulations are needed to improve the way investments are established. According to their 2010 report, even some of the profitable land use projects do not generate satisfactory local benefits (World Bank 2010). To ensure 'host' countries can "capture" the benefits, they prescribe governments in these countries to reform their institutions to create a

"supportive policy environment" (92). To achieve this end, the World Bank other agencies like the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have put forward a Code of Conduct (CoC).

The CoC, titled the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respects Rights, Livelihoods and Resources, is meant to "point toward a toolkit of best practices, guidelines, governance frameworks, and possibly codes of practice by the major sets of private actors" (World Bank et al. 2010). The CoC calls upon actors involved in investments to respect land rights, ensure food security, maintain good governance, engage concerned groups into consultation and participation, uphold laws, and maintain social and environmental sustainability. The goal is that actors will voluntarily take the initiative to adhere to these policies to ensure that a "win-win" scenario is realized.

Borras and Franco (2010) issue several warnings about the dangers that the CoC unleashes. In reference to the voluntary nature of the CoC, they state that it will be difficult to identify violators and hold them accountable. Voluntary international principles are nothing new to the international investment arena. The World Bank and IMF have created Performance Standards and there is also the Equator Principles. These kinds of voluntary principles, I argue represent a way in which the World Bank, IMF and other institutions facilitating neoliberal development exercise their power to coerce countries and people into accepting this form of development.

Borras and Franco also find it concerning that the CoC is in effect supporting the idea that there is large swaths of idle land available for the taking. In Madagascar, the government and intermediary have been found to distort the actual land size acquired by the investor and have not clearly informed the investor about the kind of land tenure systems that exist on the land. The central government, as a whole, has also produced misleading information. They seem to exaggerate the amount of available land by including grazing land, which in effect undermines pastoralists' customary land rights and user's rights.

Leaving it up to a Code of Conduct to ensure that investments bring about poverty reduction and better food security is deeply concerning. First of all, it does not account for the main objective of the most powerful actors involved, namely the investor, which is to generate profit. In order to realize that goal, profit-seeking companies are less likely to go the "extra mile" to meet international principles if it means a lower return. Another problem is that these principles are voluntarily, meaning that if investors do not respect the principles they will not face disciplinary actions. Of course, a company will want to please its national and local stakeholders, but more often than not the rural poor are not a primary stakeholder they want to have a strong relationship with because, for the most part, they do not have as much political power as say the central government, which can jeopardize the investor's project.

This leads me to my third point, which is that the CoC overlooks the asymmetrical relationships between "policy frameworks, processes of accumulation in agriculture, power relations, property rights, the relative influences and pressures that agribusiness

can exert over policy formulation at national and global levels," (Amanor 2011: 2). These relationships are important to take into account because they often are a major driver of poverty and food insecurity. In sum, the Code of Conduct is unlikely to guarantee that actors involved will implement these principles, which spell unfortunate news for the rural poor.

To be fair, the CoC is doing what it can within its ideological limits. As agencies ascribing to the neoliberal ideology, they are bound by the neoliberal economic doctrine, which states that free market capitalism is the way for countries and people to escape poverty. Generally, the proponents of neoliberal-driven development advocate for "private property rights, free markets, and free trade with the overall goal of bringing all human actions into the marketplace," (Harvey 2005: 3). According to neoliberal ideology, poverty is caused by a person or country's relation to the market. The idea is that if one is far removed from the market, the more likely they are to be poor. The solution to poverty is then to bring more people to the market, which is why the World Bank and other agencies often promote market-led development. To participate more in the market, individuals are supposed to privatize resources and property, liberalize the provisioning of goods and services, and deregulate, meaning reducing government intervention. Therefore, land grabbing is portrayed favourably as it can help to integrate more economies into the market.

One of the reasons to explain the limitations of the responses coming from the World Bank and others is their narrow understanding of poverty. For the World Bank, poverty is

"pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity," (2010). It makes sense then for the World Bank and other agencies to push an agenda that stands for bringing people closer to the market.

Another reason to explain the weaknesses in their arguments is due to the fact that their analytical lens overlooks political and historical realities embedded in society. Such elements are important in not only analyzing land grabbing but development issues in general. Without the historical and political facts, one is left with a de-contextualized and isolated understanding of a problem, which limits the ability of provide nuanced analysis and solutions. This is why, in my paper, I will institute a historical and political analysis within a rural development setting.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The literature presented in Chapter 2 challenges the optimistic position that land grabbing can offer more opportunities than threats for the rural poor. In this chapter, I define the terms used and outline my analytical entry point from which I argue that land grabbing needs to be viewed through a critical lens that considers political and historical contexts.

Land grabbing as primitive accumulation

The recent phenomenon of large-scale land acquisitions has been conceptualized in various ways. I employ the term land grabbing to emphasize the political dynamics of these acquisitions. Other ways of conceptualizing these acquisitions have come from the apolitical and a historical viewpoints. For example, phrases such as foreign direct investments in land and/or agriculture, cross-border transactions, large-scale commercial land transactions, or some combination of these, tend to decontextualize the phenomenon and portray events in isolation from the political realities and historical patterns in which land grabbing takes place.

I view land grabbing as a form of capitalist agriculture meaning that the characteristics and dynamics of land grabbing reflect similarities with land grabbing and previous forms of capitalist-driven agriculture. The capital enclosure of farmland is symptomatic of capitalist development (Woodhouse 2003). Land grabbing is an expansion of capitalist

provisioning, including capitalist accumulation, which has been replayed throughout the years. During the colonial times and post-colonial era, the commons (land, air, water) in developing countries have been appropriated by the global elite. Marx described the enclosures of the commons as a period of primitive accumulation, the stage before capitalist accumulation. During the former stage, he describes it as a period when "great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled into labour markets as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil is the basis of the whole process" (Marx 1954: 669).

Bernstein describes that capitalism conditions agriculture by 1) technological innovation to simplify and standardize the conditions of agricultural production; and 2) integration of farming by capital conditioned upstream (inputs) and downstream (output) of production on land (cited in Weis 2007). As defined by Bernstein (2010: 1), capitalism is a "system of production and reproduction based in fundamental social relations between capital and labour: capital exploits labour in its pursuit of profit and accumulation, while labour has to work for capital to obtain its means of subsistence". The exploitation of labour in the capitalist system manifests itself in various processes, such as the industrialization, commoditization[18], commercialization, modernization, corporatization and liberalization of agriculture.

[18] Commoditization happens, "when something is acquired through market transaction and its use is governed by the logic of the market," (van der Ploeg 2010). Commoditisation is the "penetration into reproduction of commodity relations... [and] a process of deepening commodity relations within the cycle of production," (Friedmann 1980: 158)

Poverty as relational

There are various ways of defining poverty and explaining what causes it. The World Bank defines poverty as: "pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity," (2010). The UN sees poverty as the "absence of opportunities" not the deprivation of them (Blanco 2002). In other words, poverty is caused by a lack of opportunities for people to live in dignity. For the International Federation for Agricultural Development (IFAD), "Poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon, defined (and explained) as a situation in which a person lacks the necessary capabilities and entitlements to satisfy his or her basic needs and aspirations".

I view poverty as being caused by asymmetrical power relations, based on the idea that the rural poor are relational, meaning that they are rarely self-sufficient and do not live in isolation (Akram-Lodhi & Kay 2009: 3), and that land creates relationships between buyer, seller, user, owner and so on. To further illustrate this point, I use some of the principles coming out of the Agrarian Political Economy (APE). This approach is primarily concerned with social relations of production, social divisions of labour, and technical divisions of labour. I have selected this approach, because it allows me to explain why land grabbing initiatives have had the adverse outcomes and because it focuses on social relations within an agrarian[19] setting.

[19] Agrarian, in this paper, is understood as the, "social relations and practices of farming, [and] societies based on farming and agriculture," (Bernstein 2010: 62).

Through a social relations-based lens, the cause of poverty is understood to be relational, meaning that the poor are "trapped in poverty" because of the social context in which they operate, including their relations to the market. The solution therefore is to create transformative policies and political processes that restructure such social relations. The "relational theory" is often contrasted with the "residual theory" described by Bernstein (2007). The "residual theory" argues that the poor are poor because they are excluded from the market and its benefits. The solution, therefore, is to bring the market to the rural poor, or vice-versa. In this paper, I ascribe to the "relational theory", which means that my analysis is framed on the assumption that poverty is rooted in asymmetrical social relations.

APE, a class-based approach, offers a more nuanced understanding of the impact of development policies and programs on the rural poor (Borras 2009: 1). Land grabbing is likely to impact populations differently according to class, as well as gender and race. Therefore, by employing a class analysis I can better explain how society is differentiated and how the impacts will therefore be different according to different social groups.

The theoretical underpinnings of the relational approach characteristic are based on Marxist political economy and neo-Marxian theories. The renowned German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-83) made a name for himself in his critique of capitalism, which formed the theoretical foundations for critical political economy. In his critique, Marx saw capitalism as a dynamic, rapacious system which functioned through the alienation and exploitation of labour. Contrary to the purported beliefs that capitalism would be

beneficial for all, "Marx wrote about the failures of capitalism which ultimately produced glaring economic inequalities and led to the commodification of social life," (Stilwell 2006: 97).

Unequal Distribution as Symptomatic of Skewed Social Structures

To understand how costs and benefits are distributed amongst actors I employ the principles of political economy, namely its four foundational questions: who owns what, who does what, who gets what, and what do they do with it? (Bernstein 2010). Using a political economy (PE) lens, specifically these questions, allows me to identify the costs and benefits incurred by different sets of actors.

The question of the distribution of economic surplus has long been an issue in political economy, which has been debated by both classical and contemporary political economists. For example, in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith famously argued that if markets were left untouched and unregulated by governments, an "invisible hand" would do the best job of allocate resources and bringing about benefits for all. Recognizing that markets were imperfect, Smith argued that a strong economy was one that allowed people to act in their own self-interest and not be hampered by government monopolies, bureaucracies, or regulations.

Like Smith, David Ricardo (1772-1823), the English economist, also advocated for protecting markets from government interference. In addition, he advocated that

capitalists will act in the best interest of society through driving economic growth and distributing income. In terms of international trade, he devised the free-trade theory of comparative advantage. Through this theory, Ricardo makes an argument for getting countries to produce only what they specialize in. So for countries with a large agricultural base, they should continue to specialize in agriculture and stay within the primary sector, not manufacturing or service sectors. For Ricardo, this would maximize benefits for countries.

In the long term, however, Ricardo as well as Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), another political economist, raised concerns about how fair distribution of economic surplus would be threatened as population increases. Given that resources are scare, they warned that population, which increased at a geometric rate, would threaten food security in particular as food production increased at merely an arithmetic rate. Based on Malthus' predictions, the distribution of resources would be squeezed with an increase in demands for resources due to population increases.

Karl Marx (1818-83) also had many things to say about the distribution of economic surplus in his critiques of the capitalist system. In his seminal work, *Capital*, Marx wrote about the failures of capitalism which ultimately "produced glaring economic inequalities and led to the commodification of social life," (Stilwell 2006: 97). Contrary to the previous three economists, Marx disagreed with the idea that, if left alone, the market would unleash benefits for all. Rather, he argued that the market does not work for everyone because society is differentiated into classes, which means that the costs and

benefits unleashed through capitalism are also different. In other words, capitalism produces uneven outcomes across various classes in society.

While Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus appear to be looking out for the best interests of society by advocating for individual rights and freedoms, their assumptions and field of vision is also limited. Their units and levels of analysis are the individual and the micro-level, respectively, which means that their lens is limited in the sense that it cannot understand the *global* land grab. The principles of Marx, on the other hand, can better comprehend the dynamics of land grabbing given that his unit and level of analysis is class and macro-level, respectively. For this thesis, I use Marxist principles because they can be useful in explaining the inequalities embedded in land grabbing, the distribution of costs and benefits, all of which help to offer a critique of the existing narratives that promote land grabbing.

Development as mainstreamed along a neoliberal model of capitalism

In mainstream international development circles, land grabbing is being promoted with much optimism as an opportunity for development, meaning an opportunity to combat poverty and other socioeconomic problems. Those that advocate in favour of land grabbing (or, better regulated land grabbing) tend to uphold the neoliberal model of capitalism. Neoliberalism is an macroeconomic doctrine and ideology which "proposes that human well-beings can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights,

individual liberty, free markets and free trade," (Harvey 2006: 145). Under neoliberalism, the goal is to expand free market capitalism to all corners of the world, which has been pursued by powerful actors for the past few decades.

Critics of neoliberalism argue that this model of development has produced more unequal distribution of the economic surplus, which has been acquired by a small chunk of the world's population. As international development continues to embrace the neoliberal ideology, it is likely that greater economic inequalities between social classes will result.

Challenging neoliberalism and pointing out its weaknesses comes as a great challenge within development studies. This dysfunctional model of development sustains itself in what Antonio Gramsci calls hegemonic structures. The Italian Marxist came up with the concept of hegemony to describe "the complex and often hidden ways which class domination seeps into social institutions, becoming particularly pervasive in advanced capitalist societies; concerned about the unequal relations between social classes" (Swift 1990: 50). In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci challenged the innocent image emitting from neoliberalism as they advocate for laissez-faire "hands off" economics – ideas originating from the work of Smith and Ricardo. Gramsci argues that neoliberalism is in fact "a form of state regulation, introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means. It is a deliberate policy, conscious of its own ends and not the spontaneous, automatic expression of economic facts," (Gramsci 1995: 160).

In the context of land grabbing, the insights and language offered by Gramsci are useful to reveal the political agenda of the authors of the CoC. They maintain that by regulating

land grabbing, countries can ensure that the poor will benefit. By adopting the ideas of hegemony put forward by Gramsci, I reveal that these regulations are in fact a means of coercing countries into accepting land grabbing in such a way that leaves them with a false sense of security and hope. While the CoC can be argued as a start to ensuring investments are done smartly and safely, a deeper analysis reveals that this is one way that powerful development organizations are exercising their coercive power on their subordinates, as referred to by Gramsci.

Understanding the problem as structural

My methodology pays close attention mainly to the asymmetrical power relations between actors, which are a product of the inequalities embedded in the social structures. At the same time, I look at the institutional weaknesses that foster an elite capture of the benefits unleashed through land grabbing. However, I argue that even by reforming and/or adding policies, the broader, unequal social and economic structures can manipulate policies to further reinforce the structures in place.

In *The Critical Development Studies Handbook* (2010) Parpart and Veltmeyer (2010:14) describe two kinds of perspectives to be used in building an analytical framework: strategic and structural. The former views development as "the outcome of consciously directed actions pursued by an actor or agency." The latter views development as "the outcome of forces beyond individual control, generated by the social and institutional structures of the system." In this context, 'structure' means "the way society is organized,

including the institutional practices that give form to social behaviour and provide the boundary conditions for consciously directed individual actions or social strategies," (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2010: 13-14).

Chapter 4: Methodology and Case Study

This chapter restates the research questions that framed the research project. A hypothesis is then developed, followed by an overview of the multi-level governance framework that was used to design the methodology, which comprises the final section of this chapter.

Research Questions

In order to understand the costs and benefits of land grabbing, the research project attempts to answer three interrelated questions:

1. Who are the actors involved in land grabbing and what do they do?
2. In what ways do the actors involved in land grabbing gain and lose in terms of their access to natural resources and income; and, why?
3. In what ways does land grabbing impact small-scale farmers in terms of food security?

Methodology

The research was carried out in three phases. The first entailed exploratory fieldwork oriented towards developing an understanding of the situation of land grabbing in Madagascar and develop a specific research focus. The second and third was to collect

data from the area where the land grabbing occurred.

Stage One: Interviews and Participant Observation in Antananarivo

The first sets of interviews were conducted in Antananarivo (the capital of Madagascar) with the land deal orchestrators (e.g. the country manager working for one of the investors and the manager of the intermediary). The purpose of interviewing the investor and intermediary was to find out: 1) if the investors had any agro-projects in the country; 2) the details of the projects (i.e. location, kind of project, and general timeline); 3) and to ask permission to visit their project sites in northern Madagascar.

In Antananarivo, I was an intern with the Land Observatory[20] where, through participant observation and informal exchanges with other scholars and students, I was able to gain a sense of what was happening in terms of land issues more broadly at the national level. I also learned about other case studies being carried out at the local level in other communities.

In the capital, I also interviewed representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture (MA), National Office of Nutrition (ONN), National Environment Office (ONE), National Research Center for Rural Development (FOFIFA), and the World Food Programme

[20] The Land Observatory is considered a research organization within the Ministry of Land and Decentralization, whose mission is to produce information and knowledge in the field to support the formulation and monitoring of land policies adapted to monitor the implementation of these policies and assess their impacts. It is, therefore, acts as an aid to government institutions, donors, civil society, projects and field operators to guide business decisions and policy choices. (Taken from their website: http://www.observatoire-foncier.mg)

(WFP). The purpose of these interactions was to get a sense of the main development issues facing Madagascar in terms of food and agriculture.

Stage Two: Project Sites and Surrounding Villages – First Visit

During the second stage of data collection, my research assistant and I went to northern Madagascar for five days to visit the project sites and villages. The purpose was to 1) confirm that the information given by the investor and intermediary were true; 2) to gather technical information about the projects from the project managers; 3) to gather information about the socioeconomic issues in both villages from the local authorities; 4) to get permission from project managers and regional authorities about returning to the villages and project sites in the near future; 5) regional authorities to confirm information about the land tenure systems in the project areas and process of acquisition.

To gather information about the projects and to understand what the actors do, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the project manager in Site P [21]. I conducted four group interviews with those employed by the intermediary, e.g. project managers, administrative assistants and agricultural technicians employed as consultants by the investors. To get a sense of the regional land issues and the projects to compare the information from the former informants, I conducted two interviews with the regional government authorities working in land and agricultural departments.

[21] Investor Munja's project is called project M, the project site is referred to as site M and the village where the project is located is village M. Investor Penja's project is called project P, the project site is site P and the village where the project is located is village P.

During the fieldwork, I identified two relatively new actors in land grabbing: the military and the intermediary. The military is involved not in a combative role but rather as the owner of the land acquired by the investor. The other actor, the intermediary, is revealed to be the main power broker in the land deals as the main "grabber" of land.

Stage Three: Project Sites and Surrounding Villages – Second Visit

For the third stage of data collection, my research assistant and I went to northern Madagascar for ten days to visit the project sites and villages where I conducted 14 interviews and two group interviews. The purpose was to 1) collect information from local populations to assess the socioeconomic impacts of the agro-projects; 2) gather detailed information describing how the investor, local governments, military, and intermediary have gained or lost in terms of access to natural resources and income.

To gather information about how the local populations gained and lost, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with five small-scale farmers having various income levels. The first was a project manager for Project M who owned land. The second was a day labourer for Project M who used land with no formal title or lease. The third worked as a labourer and was also landless. The fourth chose not to work for the project and was using land without a formal contract but had a brick, and tin-roof house. The fifth informant was a capitalist farmer who worked as a day labourer for Project P.

On three occasions, I interviewed one of the lawyers working for investor Munja. The lawyer provided information about the roles and responsibilities of both investors involved and the intermediary and gave some insight as how they gained and lost. More detailed information was provided by the intermediary who gave me some of their financial records. I also interviewed the mayors, vice-mayors, and a regional government authority to better collect information on how they could gain and lose as result of the projects.

Interviews and informants

Quantitative and qualitative data was solicited from key informants through semi-structured interviews with individuals and focus groups. Interviews were semi-structured so that predetermined questions based on the initial framing of the research are asked, but at the same time the interviews could be flexible in a way that it is possible to allow an unanticipated line of discussion during the interview with the aim of gathering as much appropriate information as possible.

Semi-structured interviews were used because they provide both structure and flexibility when asking questions that draw out the lived experiences of interviewees. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows:

> "the interviewers both to ask a series of regularly structured questions, permitting comparisons across interviews, and to pursue areas spontaneously initiated by the interviewee. This [can result] in a much more textured set of accounts from participants than had only scheduled questions been asked," (Berg 2009: 109).

Flexibility offered in semi-structured interviews is especially important for this research project where language and cultural differences existed. Semi-structured interviews allowed me (and the translator) the opportunity to adjust or rephrase questions in a way that accommodates a translation or makes a question more understandable to the interviewee. Berg explains that questions asked in a semi structured interview are, "typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions (107).

Snowball technique means that one can use key informants and/or documents to locate one or two people in a population (Bernard 2006: 193). The snowball technique was useful in this case where my research was exploratory. For example, there was no existing information on the projects, the actors involved, and the socio-economic characteristics of the communities. This technique then allowed me to establish connections with potential participants in the study.

Ethical Considerations

This research project was designed to uphold the Canadian Tri-Council Policy's guiding principles, which advocate for the respect for human dignity, the importance of free and informed consent, consideration of vulnerable persons, the need for privacy and confidentiality, and the need for justice and inclusiveness in order to ensure minimal harm and maximum benefit.

Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to interviews. Informants were told that their participation was voluntary, that they are free to leave at any point during the study, and that their identity will not be released or published without consent. In the case of individual interviews and group interviews, consent was obtained orally given the cultural sensitivities regarding formal and/or legal documents, low literacy rates, as well as language and cultural barriers.

It is expected that foreseeable benefits outweigh the risks associated with participating in this study. Participants could benefit as a result of being part of the study as they were able to express their point of view, could engage in a dialogue about the projects, and become more aware of some of the possible issues raised as a result of the projects with others.

Prior to fieldwork my research project was approved by the Ethics Board at Saint Mary's University.

The case study

The thesis employs a case study approach to reveal the nuances within large-scale land acquisitions in Madagascar. The fieldwork was designed to examine the patterns and dynamics unleashed through land acquisitions at the micro level to unveil the different players and their positions at various levels. From a policy and rural development perspective, Tsikata and Yaro (2011) note that such studies are useful for generating policy and practice which takes into account different interests within the land acquisitions.

Within Madagascar, I chose two villages in an attempt to compare and contrast the actors, institutions, and structures in each village. Byres (1995) states that a comparison is useful for securing analytical judgments and opening up analytical perspectives. Both villages are primarily made up of small-scale, subsistence farmers producing mainly rice. They are different mainly in size, population and area, and land tenure system. In the small village, the military and a French corporation own most of the land; and in the bigger village some of the land was marked out as an agricultural investment zone by the regional government. The following chapter examines the country case study, Madagascar, and the two villages where my fieldwork took place.

Madagascar and its Challenges

To answer the research questions, I carried out fieldwork in northern Madagascar where investors have leased large swaths of land and where food insecurity is high. The majority of people in Madagascar, the African island famous for its diverse ecological systems, suffer from poverty and food insecurity. At the same time the country as a whole faces challenges on the political and environmental front as it deals with a two-year-long political crisis, climate change, and environmental degradation and extreme weather patterns.

Located off the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, Madagascar has some of the highest rates of poverty and food insecurity in the world (Table 3Table 3). Approximately 35 percent are fully food insecure and 49 percent suffer from chronic malnutrition (INSTAT 2011, UNICEF & WFP 2010). Compared to other developing countries, Madagascar is ranked ninth for being one of the "hungriest" countries[22] (IFPRI 2010).

[22] Ranking is based on the Global Hunger Index conducted by International Food Policy Research Institute. Calculations are based on the proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population, the prevalence of underweight children under the age of five, and the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Table 3 Poverty, Development, and Hunger Indicators for Madagascar

Indicators	Value	Source
Poverty Rate[23]	77% or 15 million people	INSTAT 2011
Human Development Index[24]	0.435 (ranked 135 out of 169 countries)	UNDP 2010
Global Hunger Index[25]	27.5 (ranked 9th out of 122 countries)	IFPRI 2010

Source: author

Food insecurity appears to be on the rise with the sudden increase in poverty over the last five years, which some attribute to the ongoing political crisis. In 2010, poverty affected 76.5 percent of the population representing a 5.5 percent increase from 2005 when 69 percent were poor (INSTAT 2011, UNHCHR 2011). Food insecurity is often highest in areas with high rates of poverty, meaning those living on less than $1 per day. Poverty is concentrated the most in rural areas where the majority are small-scale farmers. In rural areas, 83 percent are poor and 35 percent suffer from hunger (UNHCHR 2011). Those who are poor and hungry make up the 80 percent of the country's rural dwellers and the 81 percent who work as small-scale farmers (INSTAT 2011).

It appears that in recent years, the political crisis has adversely affected the country's battle with poverty and food insecurity. The crisis began in March 2009 when the former president, Marc Ravalomanana, was removed from office, following seven weeks of civil

[23] Poverty includes those living on less than 468,000 MGA per year which is equivalent to $1 per day in 1993 constant value.
[24] A measurement of human development based on health, education and income indicators.
[25] Calculations based on the proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population, the prevalence of underweight children under the age of five and the mortality rate of children under the age of five (calculated average, in percentages).

unrest. The protestors were dissatisfied with Ravalomanana over some of his recent decisions, including a $60 million presidential jet he bought and 1.3 million hectares of land he leased to Daewoo. After losing power, his political rival, Andry Rajoelina became the President of the High Transitional Authority of Madagascar. Since the political crisis began, Andry Rajoelina has remained the country's president and Ravalomanana has been living in exile in South Africa.

As a result of the political crisis, Madagascar has received less aid from its international donors and lenders. When the crisis began, the international community, including France, the United States, the European Union and African Union, refused to recognize the new de facto government asserting that Rajeolina's rise to power was undemocratic and unconstitutional. Many countries and organizations suspended aid and development funds to the country. Lenders, such as the World Bank, reduced financial assistance to Madagascar from US $172 million (2008) to $86 million (2011). It is estimated that Madagascar incurred a EUR 600 million loss – the amount that the European Union was anticipated to channel to the island (UNHCR 2011).

In addition, the island is also one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. In the future, climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters, are having – and are projected to have – a large impact on small-scale farmers as their livelihoods directly depend on the conditions of the natural environment. Examples of environmental degradation include deforestation and soil erosion. For instance, 200 to 400 tons of soil's arable layers in 1 ha per year are washed away by rain, which is extremely high compared

to the world average of 11 tons in 1 ha per year (IMF 2000: 17-18). As for deforestation, Madagascar has already lost 80 percent of its forest cover (Bergeron 2002). Deforestation and soil erosion threaten the soil fertility, the natural water supply, and leaves communities more vulnerable to natural disasters and renders poor farmers vulnerable to environmental shocks.

Climate change also threatens the farmers' agricultural production as the phenomenon is likely to adversely impact yields through the increase and intensification of natural disasters. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Madagascar is the third most vulnerable country in the world to climate change, after India and Bangladesh (UNHCHR 2011). The Ministry of Agriculture asserts that the impacts of climate change have already been felt by farmers as they have experienced difficulty in predicting weather patterns in comparison to previous years.

Madagascar is also one of the most vulnerable countries natural disasters (i.e. cyclones, flooding, and drought), which are likely to increase in intensity and frequency affecting food production in the agricultural sector. Already, 14 percent of the population is exposed to natural disasters, especially cyclones, which hit the island three to four times per year on average (UNISDR 2009).

Madagascar's rural poor

Those that usually take the brunt of all of these problems are the rural poor, most of who fight to gain access to food, income, natural resources, and agricultural capital. Amongst the rural poor, I focus on the small-scale farmers, which includes those that work less than 1 ha of land of which they do not legally own and produce primarily rice for subsistence. Most farmers do not legally own land, but rent. For those who rent, 48 percent work as tenants and 52 percent are sharecroppers (MAEP 2005). In the tenancy system, farmers typically rent land to work and pay the landowner a rental fee that is between MGA 100,000 to 200,000 (US $45 to $90) per hectare per year. In the sharecropping system, farmers work less than 1 ha of land and give approximately 30 to 50 percent of their output to the land owner as a rent payment.

In Madagascar, having a land title is rare, as approximately 78 percent of agricultural land is not titled (MAEP 2005). In some cases someone may own the land but it is not titled, instead it is owned through customary laws by which land can be owned through social and cultural norms. It has been estimated that 77.5 percent of cultivated land (1.6 million ha) fall into this category of having an owner but not titled (ibid).

Most farmers cultivate rice, which is the cornerstone of the Malagasy diet. Eighty-five percent of farmers (2 million households) practice rice farming (MAEP 2005). To cultivate rice, the majority use small tools such as spade and sickle, use water from

irrigation systems[26], and use local seed varieties and non-chemical fertilizer. Many farmers do not weed, plant rice in a line, or have machinery to flatten the land, which can all lower their productivity. Due to farmers' current practices as well as environmental constraints, rice productivity has remained at about two tons per ha per year for the past 30 years or so (MA 2008, IMF 2007).

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out between April and August 2011 in Antananarivo, the capital city, and in two villages, referred to as village M and village P[27]. Within and near these two villages, there are two commercial agricultural project sites. The two sites were chosen because they make up the largest food-producing, foreign-financed sites that have actually harvested output in Madagascar. The two agro-projects are run by two Indian corporations, Munja and Penja, respectively, who finance the projects in site M and site P, and are managed with the help of a Malagasy intermediary firm, Maco. The projects mainly produce maize as well as arhar[28].

Project M covers 450 ha of land and has been established on military land (Table 4). These projects were chosen for the case study because both have begun cultivation and have harvested crops, which make it possible to analyze the impacts. Cultivation began in

[26] Most of the small-scale farms in Madagascar, except for rice, are rain-fed.
[27] To respect the informants and to limit the possibility of aggravating current conflicts relating to land, I use codes and pseudonyms to describe and differentiate between localities and actors.
[28] Arhar (or Arhar dāl) is the Indian name for pigeon pea. This lentil is mostly produced and consumed in the Indian subcontinent.

2009 on site M (277.5 ha), representing 62 percent of the area acquired. So far, there have been two harvests on site M. The project is a part of a two-year pilot project that will come to a close in a couple of months.

In site P, the land leased covers a surface totaling 6,450 ha. Penja has acquired land consisting of three different kinds of land tenure: (a) unoccupied, (b) titled private property, and (c) untitled private property. During the survey, Maco's senior-level employee revealed that 4,000 ha were unoccupied, and 2,000 ha were titled property and untitled private property. However, a local government official claimed that only 2,000 ha were unoccupied and that the remaining land is all private property. This shows the discrepancy and inconsistent information about land status between the actors, which has caused conflict between investors, government, and local populations.

Until now, Penja has only cultivated 262 ha (representing 4% of the total land acquired), which does not infringe on those private lands. There has been one harvest on site P. In subsequent harvests, it plans to expand cultivation, which may lead to more conflicts in the future. Nonetheless, there has already been resistance from local populations who used to use part of the 262 ha for animal grazing and growing trees, mainly fruit trees.

Table 4 Breakdown of the Agricultural Projects

First Production year	Project/ Site	Investor	Land Ownership	Land Leased (ha)	Area cultivated in 2010 (ha)	Area cultivated per crop in 2010 (ha)	
						Maize	Arhar
2010	P	Penja	Mix*	6,000	262	262	0
2009	M	Munja	Military	450	277.5	19.5	158

Source: Fieldwork in the northern region of Madagascar (2011).

Notes: *The land includes: (a) unoccupied, (b) titled and, (c) untitled private property.

Description of Site M and P

Site M is on military land located in village M. The area is easily accessible – the roads leading to the village are paved and it takes less than 1 hour to get there from the main city. The project site is divided into two parts: the main part is located on a former training ground and shooting range totaling 434 ha, and another part is in and around a military camp totaling 16 ha. For the project, the military also allocated one building inside the camp to be used as a warehouse for storing crops. The land was originally inherited by the Malagasy gendarmerie (rural military) from the French military. The military camp mainly serves to train civilians who will eventually become part of the reserves.

In village M, most of the land has been titled to the military as well as a French corporation which acquired land during the colonization period (1896-1960). In addition

to the land occupied by the military, over 2,555 ha of land are titled to the French corporation, which makes up more than half of the total available land in village M. For villagers in the area, most are using land but have no rights to it. Some are now trying to negotiate with the French corporation to own the land.

Site P is located on a vast plain close to the Indian Ocean. Access to the areas is poor as it takes over 1 hour to get to the village on dirt roads from the highway. The warehouse, used as the main office for the project is about a 30 minute walk from village P where most employees and day labourers live. The area acquired by Penja covers 6,000 ha and encompasses three communes[29]. In 2007, Site P was classified as ZIA by the regional government. Munja negotiated the land lease from the central government through Maco. In 2010, Munja subleased the land to Penja. When Penja began cutting trees and removing stones to prepare the land for cultivation, Penja realized that some parts of the land had owners, some even held land titles.

During the survey (described below), a Maco senior-level employee revealed that out of the 6,000 ha leased by Penja, 4,000 ha were unoccupied, and 2,000 ha were titled property and untitled private property. However, a local government official claimed that only 2,000 ha were unoccupied and that the remaining land is all private property. This shows the discrepancy and inconsistent information about land status between the actors, which has caused conflict between investors, government, and local populations. Until now, Penja has only cultivated 262 ha (representing 4% of the total land acquired), which

[29] Commune is the second smallest administrative division in Madagascar.

does not infringe on those private lands. In subsequent harvests, it plans to expand cultivation, which may lead to more conflicts in the future. Nonetheless, there has already been resistance from local populations who previously used part of the 262 ha for animal grazing and growing trees, mainly jujube (fruit) trees.

Results of production on Site M and P

It was found that both agro-projects did not contribute to the local food supply, as most of the output was not consumed by locals. From the two harvests, the output produced on site M and P was both low in quality and quantity. Most of the maize produced was sold locally to a poultry farmer as animal feed or eaten by insects. On both sites the yields were below the national, regional, and local averages of maize production and below the potential yields expected when using the variety of maize, IRAT 200[30]. In site M, the two harvests that they had in the past two years, both have performed poorly as productivity was 0.5 tons per ha[31], which is less than one-sixth of the local average for maize production and less than half the national average[32]. In site P, the yield per ha was also only 0.5 tons per ha. As in site M, poor agricultural techniques resulted in crop loss. About three-quarters of the cultivated area did not produce any crop. If correct techniques were used, the maize should have reached between 4.5 and 7 tons based on information about how to plant IRAT 200.

[30] IRAT stands for the International Research on Tropical Agriculture, an agricultural research center based in France.
[31] This does not include the 3 ha-worth of crop produced that was taken by the gendarmerie.
[32] The local average is 3.2 tons per ha and the national average is 1-1.5 tons per ha.

The low yields can primarily be attributed to poor management between actors involved, which resulted in executing poor techniques. Some of the poor techniques included improper planting, lack of weeding, and poor use of fertilizer. In site M, seeds were not sown in a line but scattered randomly, and the Malagasy and Indian seed varieties of maize and arhar were also mixed. Therefore, some plants grew in crowded areas making it difficult to weed and harvest, and making it difficult to know the results of production by each kind of seed. In both sites, fertilizers and insecticides were also applied too late or with insufficient quantity.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter, I describe the findings revealed through the fieldwork, which I present into three sections in accordance with the three operational questions

The actors

In this section I seek to answer the first part of the first research question: who are the actors involved in land grabbing and what do they do? The latter part, "what do they do" will be addressed in section 5.2.

Munja and Penja

Munja is a subsidiary of a large Indian corporation that has carried out activities mainly in the energy sector in India for the past few decades. The corporation began investing in Madagascar's energy sector in 2008 and the agricultural sector in 2009. Prior to 2009, the corporation and its subsidiary had no previous experience in conducting agricultural activities in Madagascar. Before setting up the projects in site M, Munja's first agricultural investment took place in a different region to cultivate various grains and vegetables on a much larger scale. This first project failed in large part to the political crisis in early 2009, which was triggered by controversy over large-scale foreign investments. Munja abandoned that project and nine months later set up two projects

adopting another strategy to access land. This led them to acquiring military land, which was advantageous for them as the land was titled, meaning that they needed to only negotiate with the military.

According to one of its lawyers, Munja's main objective on site M is to produce food in order to create a showcase of agricultural development to present to other prospective investors. Munja is more interested in land and project management and land speculation rather than producing food. Munja's primary role is financing the land lease from the military and deciding what food is produced and how.

It was found that Penja is a subsidiary of an international insurance company headquartered in Germany. The insurance company has existed in Madagascar for the past few years. Like Munja, Penja has no prior experience in agriculture in Madagascar. Penja started to invest in food production in Madagascar in 2010 on site P. Its main objective is to produce maize for export. The owner of the company is not clear but it is managed primarily by individuals in Indian and Indian ex-pats living in Madagascar. Details about the company are not publicly known.

Maco

Maco, a Malagasy company operating as the intermediary, was created in 2009. Before 2009, it had a different company name and was involved in the import-export industry. Currently it is an agricultural engineering company that functions as a developer and manager of projects in many regions of Madagascar and in various sectors, i.e. agriculture, energy, and tourism. In the studied region, Maco has acquired for lease or is in the process of acquiring just over 12,000 ha of land, half of which is on military land. Outside the region, Maco is in the process of negotiating over 40,000 ha of land for other projects, for agriculture but also for oil and hotels.

Maco is able to negotiate and acquire vast amounts of land given the powerful members of the company. The managing director of Maco is an influential, well-known, well-connected business person living in Madagascar. S/he even represents Madagascar within one of the UN's agencies. Another reason is that some of their senior-level employees and consultants are also current and retired government employees at the local and regional level who are familiar with government procedures and laws pertaining to land and investment. Through Maco's political and social connections it can have privileged access to state institutions, which can provide them with information about how to "work the system" to their advantage.

Maco identifies itself as a facilitator of investment, meaning that it sells investment opportunities in Madagascar to foreign investors. In agriculture, Maco deals with all the

procedures that foreign investors need in order to carry out their projects from the finding and leasing of land to project management and building infrastructure. In both sites M and P, investors finance the projects.

Government and Military

The government and, surprisingly the military, are important actors in the land deals. At the central level, the government has no knowledge of either of these agro-projects, based on their reports and my communications during the time when I was an intern at the Land Observatory, which claims to have the most up-to-date information on land grabbing. The military, at the central level, however, is involved in the land grab in site M as the land belongs to them. In other words, the central-level military was involved in the negotiations. The military at the local level, however, was not. However, when the project began hiring day labourers, some of the military trainees were hired as a favour to the military.

At the regional level and local level, the government is aware of some of projects, but the information provided by each is different in terms of the size of the land acquired and the land tenure systems. At the regional level, the topography office plays a major part in drawing the maps and the regional government plays the part of identifying the status and size of the land.

Local Populations

The two villages are similar in that they are made up of mostly smallholder rice farmers, but they are different in terms of size and population and their source of income (Table 5). In both villages, most farmers are either tenant or sharecroppers managing less than one ha of land. For the most part, people earn money by selling tomatoes (in site P), maize, cassava, and chickens (in site M). They produce rice for self-consumption.

Table 5 Size, Household, and Agricultural Crops Grown in Village M and P

Village (fokontany*)	Size (Ha)	Number of Households	Most Produced Crop	Cash Crops
M	4,600	350	Rice	Maize, Cassava
P	10,000	500	Rice	Tomatoes

Sources: Fieldwork in northern Madagascar (2011).

Note: Fokontany is the smallest administrative division in Madagascar.

In village M, Mr. Ramarison, a smallholder farmer uses a total of 0.8 ha of land to cultivate rice, cassava, maize and groundnuts – each on 0.2 ha plots. Crops are mostly produced for household consumption and for animal feed as the family also raises chickens (40 heads) and two cows. To obtain cash, Mr. Ramarison and his three family members sell chickens. Mr. Ramarison sells one chicken about one or two times per month, so his annual cash income is on average $71 per year, or $0.20 per day. Before the

project arrived, Mr. Ramarison had no off-farm sources of income. Since 2010, he has worked as a guard in project site M.

Contrast Mr. Ramarison with Mr. Josia in village P who is an entrepreneurial farmer and Vice-Mayor of the commune. Compared to the others farmers, he is a better-off farmer in the sense that he has a higher income, uses more than 1 ha of land, is self-sufficient in rice, and can afford to buy chemical inputs. He cultivates a total area of 2 ha. By renting 1 ha of land from his father, Mr. Josia is able to produce enough rice to feed his family of four. He also produces tomatoes, the main cash crop. The total annual cash income from selling rice and tomato can reach MGA 2,000,000 ($1,000) for Mr. Josia, or $2.70 per day on average. For the project in Site P, Mr. Josia was hired as a day labourer.

The Actors' Actions

In this section I seek to answer the second part of the first research question: who are the actors involved in land grabbing and what do they do? I examine what the actors do and the roles they play in two phases of the project: the phase where the powerful actors acquire local natural resources and the food production phase.

Munja and Penja

Munja's main role in the land acquisition phase was the financier. When Munja first decided to invest in agriculture in Madagascar it made a contract with Maco to establish a

project in site M. Munja asked Maco to carry out the procedures associated with finding land suitable for maize and arhar production and to acquire the land. Munja gave money to Maco to carry out these activities. Eventually, Maco with its social connection found site M, which belonged to the military. Munja then paid the military at the central government an unknown amount. According to Munja, there is no formal contract for any of the land deals.

In site P, Munja acquired the land selected by Maco. The land was chosen by Maco using its connections with the Ministry of Agriculture regional office.

Munja's main interest in acquiring land in site M and P is to showcase the agricultural potential to prospective investors. In site P, it was eventually successful when it attracted Penja, another Indian corporation, to take over the land and produce maize.

In the end, the investors have (up to this point) failed to produce high quality and quantities of food that would be considered a promising showcase. Munja is in part to blame because it did not execute the advice given to them by the local agricultural experts. Munja's own agricultural experts (brought to Madagascar from India) often overruled the local technicians. For example, the local technicians sent a report to the Munja with their recommendations about how the seeds should be planted, when the fertilizer should be applied, when the weeding should happen, and so on. Instead, the seeds were randomly thrown, making weeding hard or impossible, and fertilizer was either applied too late or in insufficient quantities.

Munja, however, has been successful in attracting other investors such as Penja who ended up leasing the land from Munja in site P in 2010. Penja also began working with Maco in December 2010 to help manage the project in terms of hiring labourers. As of April 2011, Penja demoted Maco giving it only an advisory role so that it could directly manage the project. This meant that all the personnel hired by Maco became employees of Penja, including the farm manager, supervisors of day workers, warehouse keepers and guards.

In addition to acquiring land, both investors have begun acquiring or plan to acquire water sources and improving local infrastructure. For example, Munja has dug 20 wells so far but they only use 2 now. For the 2011-2012 harvest year, Penja plans to build a dam for irrigation, in addition to improving roads. The dam will re-route the water that currently flows in the local river towards the project site.

Maco

Maco's managerial staff and advisors are composed of businessmen and womeen, former government employees, agricultural technicians, and recent university undergraduates from various disciplines. They were hired by the investor to find appropriate land and in some cases manage or assist in managing the agro-projects. For example, Maco employed regional representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and, with this information, Maco made field visits to various communes to assess whether or not the area was

suitable for maize and arhar production (i.e. soil quality and water availability and how it could be accessed physically).

Their obligations to the investor are not very clear according to Maco's staff. Their obligations to the commune are to: a) hire local labour, b) give money to the commune (from the investor), c) help to provide electricity, and, d) provide clean water.

To assess the land tenure, Maco employed a former government employee working in topography. Using information provided by this employee and others, the company learned that the land was owned by the military. According to Munja's legal counsel, Maco's managing director approached the Secretary of State of the gendarmerie and directly negotiated the land deal for 7 years, extendable to 15 years.

As for the military land, Maco selected a zone with a legal status appropriate to ease the land acquisition – in this case an Agricultural Investment Zone (ZIA). As in site M, Maco strategically employed consultants to lead the next step, such as the Vice Mayor of the commune hosting the targeted land to convince the local authorities to agree to an rent (or land tax) of MGA 400 per ha per year (US $0.20). Maco's managing director employed the local topography agent to get a map of the chosen location. Later, Maco got authorization from the regional government allowing Munja to acquire the land and then sublease it to Penja.

It was revealed that Maco's managing director has been planning to title the 6,000 ha in site P under her/his name. According to the 2008 law, a Malagasy individual or company

can buy "unoccupied" land from the state. However, only 4,000 ha are vacant and 2,000 is untitled and titled private property. So, legally he can only buy 4,000 ha.

Maco's employment policy states that it will hire only those who are "willing to work every day". In some areas in the northern part of Madagascar, it is forbidden to work on someone else's land on Tuesdays, based on the belief that people should take the time to work their own land. Some people do not want to work for Maco because they want to grow their own food and do not have enough time to work for both. According to the intermediary, there are not enough people in local areas to work for them, so they seek outside the local area for labourers.

Government and Military

In site M, the regional and the local government and the local gendarmerie camp officers did not participate in the negotiation. They were informed about the lease of land to an Indian investor after the deal was signed.

The regional government in northern Madagascar is interested in promoting the area to foreign investors. They are especially interested in promoting the large plot of land in site P.

In site M, the local government resisted the agro-project and protested about it to the regional government. The regional government responded by saying that the local

government should welcome the project with open arms and be "thankful" that the investor has chosen their village.

During the production phase, in site M the gendarmerie trainees were hired mostly as day labourers as a favour to the head of the local gendarmerie camp, who claimed that they were not benefiting from the project. In site P, I found that at least one member of the local government was hired as a day labourer.

Local Populations

In site M and P, the local populations did not participate in the negotiation. They were informed about the lease of land to an Indian investor after the deal was signed. Local populations were mainly involved during the production phase. The majority of those that were hired were day labourers.

In site P, during the land acquisition process, the local population was not involved in the negotiations. The communes informed the locals about the land deal after it was made. Conflicts have now erupted between local populations, local authorities (i.e. the mayor of the commune), Maco, and Penja because the 6,000 ha that has been leased is not completely state-owned land. There is an estimated 2,000 ha of titled and untitled private property that is occupied by approximately 100 households (approximately 500 people). This demonstrates that the legal procedure to access land is not respected as the legitimate path for setting up investments. Maco plans to offer compensation to those households

that will be displaced so that Penja can get the 6,000 ha on one block of land. According to the national laws, this process of displacing or expropriating people cannot be done by a company, but by the government only.

In site M, the other jobs that were available were contract workers including farm managers, supervisors of day workers, warehouse keepers, guards, and tractor drivers. In total, 6 jobs were offered. The contract workers were paid MGA 100,000 to 150,000 (US $51-77) per month, which is slightly higher than the legal minimum wage in Madagascar. The contracts were for three months, renewal of contracts was possible, but this was up to the Munja to decide.

In site P, most activities were done manually, which means that more employment opportunities were offered to locals. Out of all the activities carried out, only once was a tractor used, which was for ploughing the land. About 700 day labourers were hired for clearing activities (cutting trees and removing stones), sowing and weeding. Ten contract farmers, including a farm manager, supervisors of day workers, warehouse keepers and guards were also hired (Table 6).

At the time of my fieldwork, Penja had not finished harvesting because it was carried out at a slow pace. Harvesting was done manually and labourers had to walk about two kilometers (two ways) to carry crops from the farm to the warehouse. The timing of the project's harvest also coincided with the locals' rice harvest, so few people were interested to work for the project as they were already occupied with harvesting their own

crops. According to project managers on site P, there were never enough workers, meaning that they were always looking for more workers to complete the activities faster and even had to get workers outside of the village area. Day workers were asked to work 10 hours for MGA 5,000 (US $ 2.50). Even though, the rate was the equivalent of the average local wage rate, it is well below the legal minimum wage rate[33].

Table 6 Employment and Income Earned by Day Labourers on Site P

Activity	Total Number of Labourers Hired	Total Number of Work Days	Average Work Days per Labourer	Total Income per Labourer (MGA)	Total Income per Labourer (US$)
Cutting Tress and Removing Stones	400	5,735	14	71,688	36
Planting	150	2,611	17	87,033	44
Weeding	150	7,075	47	235,833	118
Harvesting (ongoing)	45	899	20	99,889	50
TOTAL	745	16,320	98	494,443	247

Source: Fieldwork in northern Madagascar (2011).

The Impacts on Actors

In this section I attempt to answer the third research question: in what ways do the actors involved in land grabbing gain and lose in terms of their access to natural resources (land and water) and income; and, why?

[33] The legal minimum wage for a 10 hour work day is MGA 5,596.91 (US$2.60). So, labourers were paid MGA 596 (US$0.10) less than the legal standard (Madagascar's National Social Security Fund (CNaPS)).

Investors

Investors, as a whole, have gained in terms of acquiring medium to large tracts of land for agricultural production, and will soon gain control of local water sources needed for food production on the sites. While the investors have acquired a valuable asset (viz. land), their control over that land is uncertain given the contesting claims to land. In site P, for instance, the local resistance to the project and the uncertain status of some 2,000 ha of land within lease may threaten Punja's future activities. As for net income earnings, investors have thus far lost based on the evidence indicating that the income earned from poor harvests has not yet covered their production costs.

Project M incurred a loss of MGA 11,354,000 (or US $5,150) during the second production year (Table 7). The data presented only concerns the direct variable costs incurred, and does not take into account the commission on harvest to be paid to the commune, the investment costs (i.e. the importation of eight tractors and purchase of other agricultural machineries for well digging and land clearing) and overhead costs (i.e. Maco's fees and commission, and land rental fees).

In Site P, I was unable to calculate the income and expenditure because harvesting is still ongoing. However, based only on the day labour costs already incurred (Table 7) and the expected output from the first harvest, there was likely a financial loss. This based on calculations in which I subtract the labour costs from the expected income. Based on the expected output (130 tons) and the price per kilogram (MGA 300) income is MGA

39,000,000 (or $17,687). The labour costs for planting, weeding, harvesting is MGA 52,925,000. Without including other costs associated with the project, Penja can expect to incur a loss of at least MGA 13,925,000 (about $7,000).

Table 7 Income and Expenditures for Project M in July 2011

		MGA
Income		12,000,000
Output sold on the local market: 40T of maize		
Market price: MGA 300 per kg		
Expenditure		23,354,000
Contract labour: (4x100,000 + 2x150,000) x 6 months	4,200,000	
Day labour (436 person-day x MGA 3,000)	1,308,000	
Fuel for tractor	17,000,000	
Seeds (47 ha x 45 kg x MGA 400/kg)	846,000	
Loss (MGA)		-11,354,000
Loss ($ USD)		- 5,149

Source: Fieldwork in the northern region of Madagascar (2011).

Intermediary

Maco and its employees have gained financially through being employed by the investors for the purpose of finding and acquiring land and managing the projects' food production. Maco was paid to carry out these tasks, however the amount they were paid in wages, salary and/or commission was not found. Given that Maco's costs were financed by the investor, they did not lose financially.

As for access to natural resources, the company was able to access land easily for the the investor, but the company itself has not acquired any land as a result of the investment. However, for the managing director of Maco, the investment may work to his/her benefit in his/her pursuit to title the land under his/her name. In the application to title land, one should be able to show that one uses the land and values the land. Showing that s/he can attract the investors who can increase the productivity of the land may improve his/her application to title the land.

Maco has displayed mixed reactions about the poor production and financial loss. In some instances, they were embarrassed to reveal the poor results on both sites; however, they quickly blamed the investor for the lack of, or nonexistence of payments. In other instances, they did not seem to be too concerned about the financial loss, which could jeopardize further contracts with Munja, Penja, or other investors in the future. According to Maco, they are not too worried about future clients because the senior-level employees are aware that there are other foreign investors interested in investing in land. So, if their relationship with the Indian companies falls through, who Maco claims are "not serious" (meaning not dedicated to the projects), Maco will be able to work with the other investors. Therefore, it appears that Maco does not bare any risk, which means it may not be doing its job and therefore is in part to blame for the failed harvests.

Government and Military

The land rent, income tax and other taxes and commissions paid to the central and regional government were not disclosed. In theory, the regional government should receive an income tax from the investor when the investor establishes itself as a Malagasy company. It was found that the Ministry of Land is against the project in site P because it has not yet received this tax. While it appears that, at this stage, the investor does not yet have to pay income tax, the Ministry has disapproved of the project and has gotten into conflicts with the local governments who appear to be profiting from the project.
The government has gained and lost depending on the level and section of government. In both sites, the mayors and vice-mayors of the communes have gained financially as they have received taxes paid by the investors and employment opportunities. It remains to be seen what the mayors did with this income. For project M located on military land, the high-ranking gendarmerie officers have also gained as the investor paid them the land rental fee. Members of the regional government could also gain financially as they received a commission for helping to find the land. The ones who lost financially were the central government as they were excluded from negotiations, during which point they could have collected the land rental fee.

In site M, Maco leased the land from high-ranking members of the gendarmerie based in the capital city. The local gendarmerie that once used the land as a shooting range was not directly involved in the negotiation process. It was not until after the decision was made between investor and military authorities in Antananarivo that the local gendarmerie was

informed. As a result, conflicts have ensued within and/or between the local and national gendarmerie, and between the gendarmerie and Maco and Munja. For example, due to the late payment of the gendarmerie's wages and the unfilled request made by the gendarmerie's head for more commission, the gendarmerie members themselves took the project's crop on three ha of land.

The local government was also not involved in the negotiation and yet they have received threats from local people who think that the local authorities have sold the land to Munja. The local government tried to get some assistance from the regional government in resolving conflicts but no support has been offered. Although, the mayor of the commune received a tax by Maco (which comes from Munja) called "ristourne" which is a kind of tax paid when transporting raw materials outside the production area for commercial purposes.

In site P, the local government could gain financially by receiving a tax paid by Penja and through job opportunities that were taken by individuals like Mr. Josia, the Vice-Mayor. Contrary to site M, the mayors and vice-mayors of the three communes located within the land acquired were involved in the negotiation. Despite the fact that the local authorities knew that some of the land that Munja wanted to acquire was private property, they agreed to the project because of the tax benefits they would receive. The tax the three communes could expect to receive is MGA 2,400,000 ($1,200) each. This represents an increase of 10 to 30 % in the government budget, based on the average local government budget which is about $5,000 to $7,000.

It appears that the local authorities enticed by money and overruled by the regional government's authority were not in a position to negotiate an alternative. And, some did not want to jeopardize the project given the financial perks that they could receive. This is evident by the fact that local authorities were working for Maco and Penja during the negotiation period and during the food production phase. For example, the Vice-Mayor of one commune was hired as a day labourer (Mr. Josia), and one of the mayors was a consultant working for Maco. The local government, specifically the high-ranking authorities, have profited from the project in terms of the tax received and employment opportunities.

Other than the technical consultants hired by Maco, smallholder farmers and gendarmerie trainees in village M were hired mostly as a day labourers. About 30 day labourers were hired; most of them trainees from the local gendarmerie camp. The workday lasted 8 hours and people were paid MGA 3,000 (US$1.50) per day. This rate is lower than the legal minimum wage[34]. The gendarmerie trainees were hired through an informal deal between Maco and the supervisor of the local gendarmerie camp.

Impacts on the Rural Population

In this section I attempt to answer the third and fourth research question but in reverse order. The fourth question is in what ways have small-scale farmers' access to food

[34] The legal minimum wage for an 8 hour work day is MGA 4,224.08 (US$1.20). So, labourers were paid MGA 1,224.08 (US$0.30 less than the legal standard (Madagascar's National Social Security Fund (CNaPS)).

(through the investments' production), natural resources (land and water), income (through employment), and agricultural capital (inputs, tools, and techniques) changed and why? And the third is: in what ways does land grabbing impact small-scale farmers in terms of food security?

Limited Change to the Local Food Supply

It was found that both agro-projects did not contribute to the local food supply, as most of the output was not consumed by locals. From the two harvests, the output produced on site M and P was both low in quality and quantity. Most of the maize produced was sold locally to a poultry farmer as animal feed[35] or eaten by insects.

In village P, it was observed that their access to food was reduced as a direct result of the project's activities. Prior to cultivation, the land was cleared, which involved cutting down thousands of fruit trees (the fruit of which was previously consumed by locals). On the other hand, the investor gave locals the trees that were cut down, which they could have used as kindling for cooking, which would have reduced the costs of preparing food.

[35] It is possible that the price of chicken may have come down as a result of the maize that was sold to the farmer and that the increased supply of chickens could have made chicken more economically accessible to local people. However, this variable was not examined.

Minimal Change to Farmers' Access to Knowledge, Inputs, and Tools

Given the kind of project established by the investors, local farmers could have gained in terms of learning modern techniques and have better access to modern input and tools. Since most of the farmers in the local areas plant rice, few could learn how to improve their own farming techniques. Nevertheless, the techniques used by investors were not well-calculated, so even if some of the farmers planted corn, there was little that they could learn and bring back to their own farms. In terms of inputs and tools, it was found that investors did not formally give or sell seeds or fertilizers to the local farmers.

Loss of Usufruct Practices

In village M, the investors acquired the land informally from the national military. Before the investors came, some local pastoralists used the land for grazing and some farmers used it for rice farming. After the investors acquired the land they were told by either Maco or Munja to use other land areas. There appears to be land available for grazing, but most of the land is either owned by the military or the French corporation. Therefore, the pastoralists and farmers' access to land is more tenuous and insecure.

In village P, farmers' access to land and water has remains unaffected at this point. Of the land that was informally acquired by the investor from the local government, there is some untitled and titled private property within the land acquired; however, the area that is used by the investor does not infringe on those households, at least not yet. As in

village M, it was found that the land was used by pastoralists as grazing land, but the exact number of users remains unknown. In the future, problems with local's access to land and water will be an issue as the entire acquired land is brought into production, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Income Increases

In site M, the project had a significant impact on the income of farmers as proven by Mr. Ramarison's case. He worked as a guard for six months and could make MGA 600,000 ($300) during these six months representing three times his previous annual income. However, the farmers who benefited from the project were few. Only 5 percent of 700 economically active people living in village M were hired.

In site P, more employment opportunities for locals were available. From a total of 500 households in village P, 750 individuals were hired as day labourers – meaning that a large portion of the labour force in village P was employed. Compared to the income levels before working for the project, the cash earned from being a day labourer allowed farmers to earn cash during the period in between harvests, which is when food security is usually higher. Therefore, the project could allow people to make some money at a time when their economic access to food is low.

At the same time, in site P, it was observed that the jobs did not go to the poor. Better-off farmers in village P could work for the project using their social connections. For

example, the entrepreneurial farmer and Vice-Mayor, Mr. Josia was hired as a day labourer. He could make an additional income, which represents 20 percent of his total income. With the cash that he earned, he used it to pay for chemical inputs and land rental fees allowing him to expand his own farming activities. Also, those farmers who followed the local customs were excluded from employment opportunities. For example, some of the local people think that it is taboo to work on someone else's land on Tuesdays, based on the belief that people should take the time to work their own land.

Impacts on Farmers' Food Security

In both village M and P, a portion of the population could benefit from the projects mainly through the employment opportunities, which increased their income. As a result, their purchasing power increased allowing them to buy more food and, in some cases, to improve their productivity by reinvesting in their own farming activities. While it was not revealed in the fieldwork, it is possible that those who worked for the project experienced a decrease in income and productivity as the time used for taking care of their own agricultural projects was reduced. However, income increases were not necessarily realized by the poorest people of the villages based on the fact that better-off farmers were also hired.

When compared to the situation before the investment, which was agricultural self-provisioning, it is not evident whether acquiring food through market exchange improved access to food. By having more money, one can have a greater capacity to diversify their

diet by purchasing different kinds of food, which can then improve one's nutrition. However, relying on cash to access food may not be sustainable in the long term given that the case study shows fewer jobs will be available in the future. Therefore, the cash income seems to be a short-term and uncertain strategy for food provisioning.

From the fieldwork, it was found that the Indian investors plan to reduce labour costs by replacing human labour with machinery. To cultivate 6,000 ha on site P, it is more efficient and cheaper to rent tractors compared to hiring local labourers. Using machinery will also contribute very little in terms of technology transfer as few can afford to buy a tractor to use on their own farms, and as few will be trained on how to operate the tractor as a trained operator comes with the tractor rental fee. This means that local income levels will not increase as they did during the first production. Therefore, over the next few years as the agro-projects expand cultivation and machinery is introduced it is likely that the projects will not contribute to the local's economic access to food through employment.

There is a possibility though that farmers' economic access to food could improve as the investors improve local infrastructure, namely roads in and around village P. Penja plans to improve roads, which can benefit locals in the sense that they can have better access markets where they can trade their food. The roads can also help to reduce their transportation costs. However, at the same time they are planning to build a dam which will likely threaten locals' access to water as the water is re-routed towards the agro-

project. So, even with improved roads, the farmers cannot benefit entirely if there is not enough water to produce food, or land to grow it on.

Many farmers, especially in village P, will lose access to their land, which will reduce, if not eliminate, their crops and livelihoods. Given that the land has already been acquired by the investors, local farmers will have very little bargaining power, especially those who do not have a title deed or certificate. Even if they wanted to get a land certificate or title now, it would take up to six years and $500 to obtain the deed.[36] Therefore, with limited access to land to grow crops or to graze animals, farmers' food security will be threatened as the resources needed to grow food will be reduced.

As for the food produced from the project sites, it is likely that in site M the local food supply will increase, based on the Munja's plans to sell the output in local markets. However, in site P, Penja's strategy is to export the maize, which will not directly contribute to the farmers' access to food. They are located near the ocean and are building roads – all of which will be important when the time comes to export.

Lastly, in terms of the farmers' access to agricultural capital, the lack of knowledge transfer has not directly contributed to local farmers' activities. It is often touted by advocates of investments in agriculture that these projects can modernize small-scale farmers' activities. This case study raises questions about if investors are capable of even

[36] Another option is that the farmers could obtain a land certificate which is much cheaper and "only" takes six months to get. However, at the time the fieldwork was carried out, there was no local land office where locals could apply for a certificate.

producing food. With Munja and Penja's lack (or non-existence) of experience in agriculture, at least agriculture in Madagascar, the investors offer very little to the small-scale farmers who typically have lived most of their lives as farmers and know more about the natural environment of which agricultural production depends on.

In sum, based on the evidence, the activities of, and plans for the agro-projects, local farmers have little to gain in terms of improving their food security over the long term. The financial gains, though significant for a few, are temporary. In the long term, farmers in site P in particular will face growing pressures as their land and water supplies are appropriated by the investors. Perhaps there will be some form of compensation distributed; however, it is likely that such compensation will be limited in contributing to locals' food security in the long term given the asymmetrical power relations between investor and farmer. This raises questions about sustainability and whether or not such projects can contribute to food security.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The Actors

The four groups of actors identified were the investors, the government, intermediaries, and local populations – all of which were disaggregated in this thesis, i.e. various levels of government and investors from the private and public sector. In Madagascar, the literature indicates that investors are foreign to agriculture and are looking to rent land for the long term. The government, particularly local mayors, have been receptive to foreign investments as they can be easily enticed by the benefits proposed by the investor. The intermediary is a company or consultant that investors hire based on the idea that the intermediary can point them in the right direction when it comes to the national processes of acquiring appropriate land for their project. The local populations, particularly the rural poor are often excluded from negotiations, which reduces their bargaining power and access to information. Therefore, the actor best positioned to capture the most gains is the investor and the mayor.

Through identifying the actors, the most interesting finding was the role of the military and military land. In relation to the literature, the investors decided to use military land in their pursuit to find unused land. While it was used by local farmers and pastoralists, it was declared by the owners of the land – the military – that it was not used by them. This raises questions as to why the military has the land if they do not use it, and whether

using military land for food production is a good thing. In the area where the fieldwork was carried out, much of the land is owned by the military, which was previously owned by the French military during colonization. So, it appears now that the military is not as active as it perhaps once was, but yet still owns large tracts of land in the area. In the case of village M, this is concerning for local villagers where the majority of land is owned by the military, which means they are limited as to where they can claim their right to land.

This finding also brings up the issue of whether or not it is beneficial for land to be used for food production on military land. At first glance, it looks like the investors are making better use of the land by using the land no longer used by the military to grow food to feed the local population. However, the fieldwork showed that the land was in fact used by farmers and pastoralists for rice production and animal grazing. So, some of the land that was acquired resulted in a loss in food production and threatened pastoralists who appear to be running of out of land to use.

This finding confirms the idea that in many cases those who are involved in acquiring the land often overlook or ignore land users. The military and Maco stated the land was no longer being used by the military. It was not until I began interviewing the locals that I discovered the land was also used for agricultural production. And, for these users it is likely they do not have the capacity to challenge their usufruct rights as users, especially given that the military could intimidate those wanting to speak out.

The Actors' Actions

In investigating what the actors do, I found that the intermediary is the most powerful actor in both sites, specifically during the land acquisition phase. Unlike what was found in the literature on the topic of land grabbing in Madagascar, the intermediary, not the mayors, is the main power broker. In this position, they have failed to do their job yet they incurred zero financial losses. For example, they informed the investor that the land was unused and available, and poorly managed the projects resulting in a financial loss. This finding raises some questions about how Maco could get away with this and what the government is doing about it. Maco could manipulate others through its strong political connections and knowledge about the policies and legal frameworks. With this, Maco could find the loopholes and take advantage of confusing regulations.

In both sites, Maco, the Malagasy intermediary, was the main actor in terms of finding and acquiring the land. For both projects, the local populations (including the smallholder farmers and gendarmerie trainees) were not consulted and did not participate in the negotiating processes. For negotiating the land, the high-ranking officials of the gendarmerie and the regional government in site M and site P, respectively, were the main decision makers and entities involved in negotiation. The local gendarmerie, local government, and local people were informed after their superiors finalized the deals.

It was found in Chapter 2 that Madagascar's policies are problematic in that their objectives are conflicting and confusing. This confusion was apparent in the field where

powerful actors (i.e. investor, intermediary, local and regional government leaders) used their positions of power to exert their own agenda without upholding laws and regulations. For example, the investor did not respect the national law on minimum wage as the day labourers that they hired did not receive remuneration equal to or above the minimum level. Also, a field visit by a recognition commission organized by the state land service was not carried out to verify the presence of existing claims to land on the targeted area to ensure that land allocated for development purposes is genuinely "vacant and ownerless". The intermediary also did not engage concerned groups into consultation and participation. And, there was a lack of transparency.

It appears that Maco has been able to capitalize on the weak institutions in Madagascar. First it could use the weakness of Madagascar's EDBM, which is supposed to be the one that acts as the intermediary. The weak EDBM has enabled the rise of powerful actors from the private sector like the managing director of Maco to emerge and take advantage of the weak institutions. It could also capitalize on the weak legal framework, which does not seem to have rules in places for foreign companies who want to establish a pilot project before formally acquiring the land. This seems to be important given that over 20,000 ha of land have been "developed" by foreign actors yet the government authorities have no record of having approved such plans.

It was also discovered that state demands and national labour laws were not respected. In Madagascar, the state land services demand that investors take certain steps to ensure the land they acquire is genuinely unoccupied. Such steps were not carried out by the investor

or the intermediary, which was put in charge of acquiring the land for the investor. It was also found that the investor did not pay the day labourers in accordance with the labour laws. In Site M and P, labourers were paid $1.00 and $2.40 less per day than what they were supposed to be paid. A dollar or two, which may not seem like much, goes a long way in these poor communities where most live on less than one dollar per day.

Previous studies have found that the demands set by the land services are not followed because public land services are not prepared to deal with large investments, or because these services have not mastered and/or have different interpretations of the laws (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana et al. 2011). I found that the main reasons to explain why laws and regulations were not followed in our case is because of (a) the strategic position and power held by the local elites, namely the intermediary, (b) the competition between governments to make decisions which leads to a competition over whose jurisdiction the projects' activities falls under.

The Costs and Benefits Incurred by Actors

The cluster of actors that gained the most is the local government. The cluster of actors that lost the most is the rural poor. Most of the actors lost more than they gained on the whole. The ones who incurred the greatest losses the most were the rural poor because the projects threaten their own land security situation, which is a major factor that perpetuates their impoverished livelihoods. Despite the employment opportunities offered, they were not available to the poor. While most were negatively impacted, the rural poor are in a

more precarious position and, thus the project has had and will continue to have a greater impact on their lives and livelihoods.

It appears in the case study that there are some gaps in Madagascar's policies. First, the national legal framework does not address the role of the intermediary nor does it set laws for those investors wishing to acquire land for the purpose of a pilot project, which seems to be the route most investors have taken. This takes one back to the questions raised in the literature review about whether or not land grabbing can benefit the poor better through regulations. The case study shows that the elite's social power can easily manipulate the system without penalty. It appears that the only law broken is the labour laws about minimum wage. However, in the future it appears that Maco will have to break some laws to fulfill its objective of helping the investor to lease 6,000 ha of land, which by law cannot be leased out in its entirely given that some of it includes private property. Therefore, it appears that regulations cannot prevent some from rising above the laws in pursuit of their own objectives.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that land grabbing is part of a larger, complex process that is squeezing the peasantry, forcing it to compete in global markets and value chains. This study challenges the CoC and the dominant narrative in general, which tends to assume that everything will work out for the best if land grabbing is regulated. Furthermore, it appears largely oriented towards maximizing efficiency, with little concern for the fair distribution of costs and benefits. By employing the framework of political economy, which emphasizes the distribution of costs and benefits, my study

reveals that powerful actors, particularly within Maco, are able to benefit at the expense of weaker actors, most notably the rural poor.

It must be noted that by instituting a new regulatory framework into an unequal socioeconomic landscape, asymmetrical power relations will not be rectified and may, in fact, justify and facilitate growing inequality. The proponents of the CoC tend to overlook the already present pressures that small-scale farmer's face and the already present land conflicts. The advocates of land grabbing seem to think that farmers can adapt to the new situation, can move to new land, and capture the opportunities. In fact, farmers are not malleable economic inputs and should not be treated as such. Instead, they should have the right to practice to create an agricultural system that works for them.

Impact on Farmers' Food Security and Sovereignty

Even with reported increases in income, poverty and food security cannot be combatted sustainably through land grabbing. Boyce (2001) points out the limitations of income-based strategies to poverty reduction:

> "Income transfers offer only temporary relief from poverty... meaning that the impact of such transfers is transitory". Assets, [on the other hand], generate income now and in the future, offering a long-term escape from poverty rather than a mere reprieve. Second, assets provide a source of leverage, enabling their owners to gain indirect benefits above and beyond those inherent in the asset itself, from more favourable access to credit markets to greater social standing and power" (269).

And as Medernach has argued, it would be perhaps more useful for the investor to compensate locals affected by giving them land rather than just temporary employment.

The case study raises questions as to whether or not the dynamics unleashed through land grabbing work in favour of the rural poor and their pursuit to live without poverty and food insecurity. It appears that in both project sites the poor's access to natural resources, which sustains their livelihoods, will be reduced in the future. Given that the investors, the government and intermediary do not uphold customary land rights, it appears that pastoralists, the ones who rely heavily on this right, will also lose their access to grazing land.

It has been said that in order for food security to be reduced in Madagascar and in other developing countries, farmers need to improve their productivity. One of the major barriers to productivity is insecure land rights. Land grabbing, as it has manifested in Madagascar, threatens local land rights, which for the most part are based on customary land. Therefore, land grabbing, through dispossessing the poor, is a threat to rural livelihoods and local food security.

From a food sovereignty perspective, land grabbing also comes up short in including farmers in their own development. In some cases, recommendations were made by local agricultural technicians about how maize should be planted; however, they were not listened to. Farmers' interests and demands were not respected as evident by the lack of consultation and engagement with them.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I present some final insights in reference to the central research question, offer some thoughts on the implications that my study has on development policy and practice, present some reflections about the study (including some recommendations) and identify some areas for future research.

Returning Back to the Central Research Question

In this thesis, I have analyzed land grabbing in Madagascar through the lens of political economy, paying particular attention to the different sets of actors, how they exercise their power, and how the kinds of benefits and loses they incurred. I used three operational questions to help me answer the central research question: what kind of socioeconomic impact does land grabbing unleash on actors involved in, and affected by it? I have found that the actors involved in land grabbing often benefit more than those affected by it. The main actors involved in land grabbing are the upper echelons of the intermediary who appear to have the greatest access to information about the supply of land and the international demand for it. The actors affected by it mainly concern the rural poor, who were not involved in the negotiations nor merely consulted. The reasons to explain these uneven outcomes have much to do with the weak institutions and asymmetrical power relations.

Implications on development policy and practice

For both the groups of actors involved in, and affected by land grabbing it appears that there were more losses than gains, especially considering the amount of resources that went into the projects. So, what does this mean for development policy and practice in Madagascar? In Madagascar, there is a definite need for investment in agriculture. The latest attention in Madagascar's agricultural sector has been received by many in positions of power as a blessing, rather than a curse. The two agro-projects I examined revealed that small-scale farmers achieved higher yields than the projects. This raises questions about whether or not foreign companies are better equipped to bring about increases in production and productivity than small-scale farmers. At this stage, it appears that foreign investors (especially those outside the agricultural sector) offer very little to the local communities that already face insecurity in terms of land, water and food.

The case study in Madagascar also reveals that even the investors are vulnerable, which raises questions about who can benefit from large-scale land acquisitions? The study shows that the ones that seem to be driving the global land grab are not benefitting, namely the investor. To be fair, it appears that the projects are in their infancy stages, but even so, there does not seem to be a guarantee that they will their desired profit margins will be achieved in the end.

It also raises questions about whether or not foreign direct investment is a pathway out of poverty. Based on the dynamics of land grabbing and its agenda to help bring countries

closer to global markets, it appears that the results have been far from being "pro-poor". The proponents of liberalization and neoliberal globalization may argue that "things will get better soon" and that capitalism can work for the poor. They may go on to say that once governments are less corrupt, once the poor have the right kind of technology, and once institutions are reformed to be more investor friendly, then the poor will be able to benefit. Through a critical lens, one could argue that such a situation is unlikely. These ideas reflect the ones made by classical economists who put their faith in the markets and who were waiting for the markets to resolve their own imperfections. There will always be imperfections in markets and in land grabbing and institutions will always need to be fixed. In this light, the critics tend to ask, "what are the alternatives?" at which point the orators protecting the hegemonic interests say that the markets, that land grabbing is the way forward. Entertaining the alternatives and getting to the roots of the problem appears to be too radical for those that support today's form of neoliberal model of capitalism.

Recommendations

Karl Marx wrote that, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is to change it." In this section I switch gears to put forward some recommendations. In Madagascar, as in other parts of the Global South, land grabbing will likely continue in the future. While noting the high costs incurred by actors, there are some small-scale short-term to large-scale long-term measures to be considered.

In countries like Madagascar where the intermediary plays a powerful role, one suggestion would be to regulate the intermediary by issuing them a license to operate.

The license can be obtain by the government when the intermediary demonstrates that it has or will meet certain requirements and be subjected to audits in order to be held accountable. The purpose of such a license would be to protect local populations as well as the investor from being misled and marginalized in these deals.

Another possible recommendation would be to have a bidding system by which there is a transparent system in which investors can bid on a piece of land and the government chooses the best bidder. The purpose being to increase transparency about who is involved in land grabbing and what they do. It can also help to hold these actors accountable.

These suggestions may come as surprise given that the main finding of the study showed that few benefits were realized by the actors involved in, and affected by land grabbing – namely the rural poor. However, considering that these kinds of deals will likely continue in the future, there should be some safe guards in place (in the short term) to manage the these deals, for the short term.

Another interesting possibility, which has been launched in other host countries, is to institute a moratorium that would temporarily suspend these land deals until stronger institutions are established that can better handle these deals. The purpose of a moratorium would be to give countries some time and resources to assess the situation, to take a step back and consider the implications on the country's development. The problem is that some countries are desperate for foreign currency to pay off their debt; so

few countries are in a position to refuse such deals. Convincing them that a short-term loss could result in a long-term gain is possible, but difficult to do.

From a political economy lens, there are a number of limitations with the recommendations I put forward. As mentioned Chapter 1, the problems that land grabbing creates in these countries is not only due to weak institutions, but also due to the asymmetrical social structures that justify and allow powerful actors to exercise their power to access and control scarce resources and coerce others into accepting the status quo. The policy recommendations I put forward could then be used another opportunity for powerful actors to leverage their own power at the expense of others. For example, an intermediary license may be issued to those companies not based on merit, but rather on their social connections and relations with the institution issuing the license.

On the other hand, the recommendations I made could stimulate a "ratchet-effect" meaning that by taking one step another step or a movement might materialize in a direction that one intended. For example, by creating a bidding system, there can be more transparency about the land deals. By having more transparency, the public (it is hoped) can learn more about these deals and be more aware of the extent of these land deals. This can allow various actors to make a more informed decision about how these deal deals should be handled or whether the country should be allowing such investments at all.

Direction for future research

In this section, I offer a few areas that require further research. To better understand the impacts land grabbing has on food security in the future it will be important to look at how food consumption is affected. As the cultivated area expands, access to natural resources will be reduced and jobs will be fewer. At the same time, it is possible that the production of food can counteract the negative impacts. Therefore, it is necessary in the future to examine the ways in which food is made accessible to local farmers in order to assess the impacts on food security.

Gathering more detailed information about small-scale farmers in Madagascar is also important to better understand the problems they face. In Madagascar, national policies about food security repeatedly point out the problem of food security in the country has to do with low agricultural production. Given that most of the food produced in Madagascar is by small-scale farmers, it is important to determine in what ways investors affect small-scale farmers' production. In the fieldwork, it was found that the investors did not directly contribute to improving farmers' production. In the future, the relationship between farmers' production and foreign investments in agriculture will need to be further analyzed.

Outside the coasts of Madagascar, the impacts on small-scale farmers should be a priority elsewhere. Small-scale farmers alone make up more than one-third of the world's population, or two billion people (Bello, 2009: 15). What happens to farmers has

widespread implications on the world's quantity and quality of food, especially in developing countries, which are for the most part inhabited by farmers, or more generally the rural poor. Thus, to address the issues of food security in these areas the workings of the farmer should be at the center of global discussions.

Learning more about the role of the intermediary would also be an area for further research, as they have appeared to be the most instrumental actor and thus the one that should be adhering to the laws and regulations. Maco has represented itself as the main "go-to" company for foreign investors who want to invest in Madagascar. They claim to be the one that knows-all when it comes to the procedures for acquiring land and managing agro-projects. Having a company to assist investors throughout these processes can be seen as an attractive partnership. Thus, to address the lack of adherence of the laws and regulations, it is important that policy-makers are aware of the intermediary and their functions.

In the context of climate change, it is also important to examine the environmental impacts unleashed through land grabbing. The paper finds that the activities carried out on the agro-projects could adversely impact the natural environment in the future, which could have serious implications on climate change. Given that Madagascar is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and extreme weather patterns, it is imperative that future research considers the environmental impacts. To be sure, small-scale farming also uses practices that are not sustainable. Therefore, it is necessary that

one investigates what kind of agricultural system can meet growing food demands while at the same time leaving a small environmental footprint.

There are some dimensions that I had intended incorporate but could not do so adequately. First, I expected to gather information on the gendered impacts. It is often said in the literature that the gender dimension is often left out. At this point, it seems difficult to gather information on the gendered impacts because many of these projects have started and stopped or have not started at all. However, I did discover that many of the day labourers in site P were women. In the bigger picture, there is a devaluation of women's knowledge and role in agriculture as less work is done to produce subsistence ("female") crops. This is one area that needs further exploration.

Final reflections

I realize there are many dimensions of land grabbing and its impacts that I covered too much of, and in some instances not enough. First, I set out to grapple the costs and benefits of land grabbing, generally, and then the impacts on food security and poverty, more specifically. I can see now that perhaps I should have focused more on one or the other. However, I hope that by covering a lot of territory I could provide a multidimensional perspective. I found it important and necessary to understand the "lay of the land" in terms of how land grabbing manifested on the ground, before selecting a specific dimension to focus on. To do it any other way would have been difficult given the lack of information about projects in Madagascar. I had to start from scratch in terms

of finding the project/investor I would focus on, which makes this piece of work is an exploratory study.

By unraveling the various layers and dimensions of land grabbing, I hope that this study can in some way contribute to the knowledge about the impacts it unleashes in these countries. Land grabbing has often been characterized as one of the next major opportunities or threats to the Global South, mainly Africa. The study reveals the costs of land grabbing are high, which begs one to question about the alternatives. There appears to be many ways in which poverty and food security can be combated that appears to be more beneficial and pro-poor than foreign investments. The main dysfunctional trait of land grabbing is that it marginalizes those that should benefit: the rural poor. Classical economists may argue that we should rely on the capitalists or the markets to distribute resources for everyone. It appears that for past few decades relying on capitalism (or more recently the neoliberal model of capitalism) has created more inequalities in distribution. It makes sense then that the alternatives should be incorporated more into development and to believe in the fact that "another world is possible" (Patomaki and Teivainen 2004).

ABBREVIATIONS

CARD – Coalition for African Rice Development

CNaPS - Madagascar's National Social Security Fund

CoC – Code of Conduct

EDBM – Economic Development Board of Madagascar

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAOSTAT – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Statistical Unit

FOFIFA – National Research Center for Rural Development of Madagascar

GDP – Gross National Product

HIPC – Heavily-Indebted Countries

HLPE – High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition

IDS – International Development Studies

IFAD – International Federation for Agricultural Development

IFPRI – International Food Policy Research Institute

IIED – International Institute for Environment and Development

IISD – International Institute for Sustainable Development

IMF – International Monetary Fund

INSTAT – National Institute of Statistics of Madagascar

MA – Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar

MAEP – Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery of Madagascar

MAP – Madagascar Action Plan

MGA – Malagasy Ariary (currency in Madagascar)

ONE – National Environment Office of Madagascar

ONN – National Office of Nutrition of Madagascar

NRDS – National Rice Development Strategy

SAPs – Structural Adjustment Programs

UN – United Nations

UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNHCHR – United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WFP – World Food Programme

WB – World Bank

ZIA – Agricultural Investment Zones

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Sample Questions Used in Interviews with Informants

Sample Questions for Investor's Managers

What are your roles and responsibilities?

What kind of projects has the company established in Madagascar?

When did the company first begin investing in Madagascar and why?

What companies based in Madagascar does your company work with?

Where are the projects located?

For the agro-projects, why was this location chosen?

When did the projects begin?

At what stage of development are the projects?

What has been planted, and why?

What has been harvested, and why?

How much land has been acquired; and if so how was it acquired?

How much land has been used for cultivation, and why?

What are the objectives of the projects?

How do you plan to reach those objectives?

What explains the poor harvests?

Sample Questions for Intermediary's Managers

What is the mission/objective of the company?

Does the company have other partners? If so, who?

Does the company have other activities in Madagascar? If so, where and what kind?

When did the company enter a business contract/partnership with the investors?

What is the nature of the contract/arrangement?

What are the obligations of both sides?

Why did the company choose to enter a partnership with the investor?

What is the nature of the contract/arrangement between the company and local government and people?

What are the obligations of both sides?

Why and how did the company choose to invest in these areas?

Who was involved in the negotiation of the contract/arrangement?

What is the size (in hectares) of each site?

What are the names of the communes (large communities), and fokotany (small communities within communes) where the sites are located?

How many households, hamlets, and/or villages are within each site?

Who owned the land before the project began?

Who owns the land now?

How was the land used for before the project began?

If farming existed, what crops were grown, at what scale, and who produced them?

How is the land being used now?

How much land is being used for maize, lentils, etc.?

Who and how many people worked the land before?

What kind of work did they do?

Who and how many people work the land now?

What kind of work do they do and how much are they paid?

Who consumes the output that is produced on each site?

Sample Questions for Intermediary's Technicians

How did you come to work with the intermediary?

How long have you worked for the intermediary

What are your roles and responsibilities?

What has been planted and where?

What kinds of techniques were used and why?

What are the factors that contributed to a poor harvest?

Sample Questions for National and Regional Government

What kinds of agricultural projects established by foreign investors are located in the northern part of Madagascar?

When were they established?

Which investors have established these projects?

How much land has been used for each project?

What kind of land has been acquired?

Have any investors formally acquired the land?

What steps must be followed by an investor wanting to establish an agricultural project?

Sample Questions for Local Government

How did you come to know about the projects?

How were you involved in the projects before they were established?

When were they established?

What kind of land tenure systems exist in village?

What is the population?

How do most people make a living?

Sample Questions for Small-Scale Farmers Who Worked for the Project

How long did you work for the project?

What were your roles and responsibilities?

How often did you work?

How much were you paid?

Did you receive other kinds of compensation from your employer?

What did you do before you worked for the project?

Will you work for them again in the future?

Where were you born?

Where do you live now?

How many people in your house?

Did you use the project land before the investors came?

If so, how did you use it?

What do you produce?

How do you produce

How much is for your consumption, how much is stored, how much is sold?

What kinds of food do you eat every day?

Do you have enough to eat throughout the year?

Do you have a shortage of food during the lean season?

Sample Questions for Small-Scale Farmers Not Employed by the Intermediary

Why did you not work for the project?

What kind of work do you now?

What do you produce?

How do you produce

How much is for your consumption, how much is stored, how much is sold?

What kinds of food do you eat every day?

Do you have enough to eat throughout the year?

Do you have a shortage of food during the lean season?

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