

Land markets as a new way of managing lands in Senegal River valley?

In a global context of land pressures on arable lands and the progressive commoditization of agricultural areas, the Government of Senegal has embarked on a series of political and institutional reforms, guided by a vision of rural development based on highly productive sectors and the promotion of agri-industrial investors (Chouquer, 2012). Under this rationale, the Senegal river valley has been identified as a productive hub, where decision-makers foresee that agricultural intensification will address issues related to national production. For instance, agricultural policies have targeted that the development of irrigated areas in the Senegal River valley will be propelled by intensive rice production (PRACAS program). This orientation has been clearly defined in the government program entitled «Emerging Senegal» (PSE), which promotes agri-industrial sectors and the modernization of family farming. Several agricultural projects have then been envisioned by the government and its technical and financial partners to facilitate the arrival of international and national investors. Particularly, the World bank is supporting the Senegalese government with a project named “Inclusive and Durable Development for Agri-businesses” (PDIDAS). The rationale is to promote economic growth and employment by increasing the presence of agri-businesses in the regions of Louga and Saint-Louis. In order to better integrate agri-businesses in current land management and tenure regimes, PDIDAS is willing to experiment providing formal legal recognition to investors. The assignment of land to agribusiness projects would thus require formal agreements that recognize commitments for each stakeholder. For example, if municipalities and communities are willing to facilitate access to land for investors, the latter could ensure water access for populations’ plots. Formal agreements also help to create better conditions for negotiation and the conditions for monitoring the fulfillment of the commitments. The reform of the agricultural sector is also articulated with changes in territorial governance at the national level. Since 2014, the government initiated the third decentralization reform in order to revitalize the development of territories, and to fit the ambitions of the PSE and PRACAS at territorial scale. The third round of reform redefines territories and scales by considering regions as key units for development. This encourages middle scale initiatives and promotes the rapid integration of new actors, mainly city dwellers from the financial or political arenas, into the agricultural sector. Family farmers also take advantage of this new deal through a better integration in agricultural supply chains.

The promotion of new models for land governance and tenure questions their concrete applications on the ground and their impacts on durability: What will be the social, economic and environmental impacts of these new projects? How to promote integrating different production systems, at least in a transition phase and how to promote inclusiveness for improved management of land and water? Will the governance reforms secure access to resources, and hence more durable investments for the diversity of stakeholders in these areas?

Studying current arrangements between stakeholders, being spontaneous or institutionalized, allows picturing issues in terms of decision-making, management schemes and territories to consider. Interactions between stakeholders (farmers, breeders, investors) and their territories will be analyzed through a comprehensive study of the different forms of arrangements on land and water management, which will further be used to analyze social, economic and environmental impacts of the development of new projects. The study will analyze the functioning of informal land markets. It

will aim at understanding the strategies of the various stakeholders (family farmers, agrobusiness, communities, etc.) in these markets, as well as the regulating rules. Our methodology combines extensive field surveys with agro-investors and farmers in their vicinity, with participatory workshops. This process involves a range of actors (different types of farmers, investors, government agencies, NGOs, researchers, etc.) and is used to i) share an understanding of the land use/cover dynamics and the issues at stake in the given area (informal land market); ii) apprehend changes and unravel the stakeholders' strategies to overcome certain challenges

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