Participatory action-research for improved land governance in Senegal

Using geo-information tools to assessing agribusiness dynamics as means to empower local communities

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Controversies

The private sector and foreign investments in African agriculture

• a key asset in the process of revitalizing agricultural production through agribusiness-led development?
  or

• A risk to the well-being of the poorest family farmers?
Observation

→ an urgent need for relevant and accountable data on the forms and dynamics of agribusiness and their interactions with family farming in developing countries
Participatory mapping: an empowerment tool at the local scale

- A way to enhance the transparency in land deals
- A way to increase local communities’ negotiation capacity
An example. The delta of the Senegal River
Intensification trend

Land cover/use

- Artificial lands
- Water bodies
- Ag areas
- Natural vegetation
- No vegetation
Current processes - occupation of “marginal lands”
STEP 1: A CRITICAL INVENTORY of EXISTING SOURCES AND NEW INVENTORY THROUGH MAPPING ACTIVITIES

• Collection of assessments reports on agri-business implementation in Senegal.
  – Pooling, comparing and analyzing data from several existing inventories
  – Setting up of a provisional list of the agri-business projects in Senegal fitting our definition of agro-industries
A large discrepancy in the results, ranging from 258,700 ha to 678,976 Ha

Areas (in Ha) cultivated by agro-industries from different sources for Senegal
STEP 2: ASSESSING CURRENT DYNAMICS USING GEOINFORMATION TOOLS AND FIELDWORK

22 companies

50 plots

52,699 ha (occupied)

6,262 ha (cultivated)
STEP 3 : A PARTICIPATORY ACTION-RESEARCH PROJECT

• A participatory action-research project in partnership with the National Observatory of Land Governance at the initiative of the civil society

• A gathering of counter-information on land deals and landscape dynamics at the national level
A two-fold method

• 1. Designing a participatory mapping methodology, combining both participatory mapping and web-mapping, that is accessible to all stakeholders, and is robust to produce relevant data.
2. Strengthening a network of farmers throughout the country that could contribute to upscale spatial data
Methods

2. Strengthening a network of farmers throughout the country that could contribute to upscale spatial data

- Public website
- National platform
- Collaborative web mapping platform (restricted access)
- Regional platforms
- Local platforms (or local land specialists)

Diffusion
Information
Requests

Updated information system
1- Drawing the shapes of agri-business farms

- Free
- Accurate satellite imagery at different dates
- User-friendly
2- Web mapping on a private server
3- Updating information and editing

- Controlled access
- Easy viewing and editing for all
- Free
- User-friendly
4- Dissemination to the general public

- Interactive
- User friendly
- Satellite view
Trainings

Land specialists at local and regional level:
- GPS
- Google earth
- Umap

Key-informants at national level:
- MAPBOX
- Umap
- QGIS (GIS software)
Low-cost & low-tech tool
High efficiency

• **Participatory**: method and tools according to the actors’ needs and wishes
• **Capacity building**: in-situ training workshops
• **Inclusive**: no matter the level of education
• **Free**: method developed from open source tools
• **Accessible**: sharable to the general public
• **Useful**: able to be up-dated easily, not project-based
Outcomes: improving social justice

- Get everyone to have access to accurate information on land deals
- Readjust the balance of power
- Be prepared for negotiation
- Be able to oppose divergent information (counter-mapping)
Thank you!

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