



After the consent: Re-imagining participatory land governance in Massingir, Mozambique



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 May 2016

Received in revised form 24 August 2016

Accepted 22 September 2016

Available online 30 September 2016

Keywords:

Community

Investment

Governance

Land

Participation

Mozambique

ABSTRACT

Massingir district is located in southern Mozambique, bordering South Africa. From the mid-2000s onwards, foreign private and domestic investments in the district have been on the rise in the agribusiness, tourism, and conservation sectors. This has resulted in events that scholars and activists have come to describe as land, water, and green grabs. The on-going discussions have urged the government to fully implement the policy and legal frameworks that oblige investors to undertake community consultations based on the principle of Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and to safeguard the communities' land right acquisition. However, little has been clarified about how the consulted communities actually have experienced the consequences of their consent after they agreed to resettle or to concede parts of their communally managed land to investors. This article elaborates on a case study of a community resettled from the Limpopo National Park in Massingir and the neighboring community, which, after struggling to secure land and to improve their livelihood, began to reflect on their initial consent, interact with various actors, and craft strategies for expressing dissent and re-negotiating the deal they had struck. The article argues that the current emphasis on consultation for the purposes of building consent overlooks the importance of paying systemic attention to these strategies that are emerging from the community's everyday experiences with the consequences of their act of giving consent. Inclusive land governance entails an institutional mechanism that closely responds to people's experiences with policy practices.

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1. Introduction: Experiencing the consent

Massingir district in Gaza Province in southern Mozambique has been attracting scholarly and activist attention. Being adjacent to South Africa and hosting the country's second-largest dam – the Massingir Dam on the Elephant River – and, after Mozambique began to host one of the fastest growing markets in the world (Hanlon and Smart, 2008; Kirshner and Power, 2015), public and private and both domestic and foreign (mainly South African) investments began to flow into the district's agribusiness and tourism sectors in the 2000s. As witnessed so far in other parts of Africa, the investments worked to establish “enclaves” in which selective capital investments benefit a handful of entrepreneurs and domestic elites and from which the majority of the district's population – which are small farmers – and their livelihoods are excluded (Ferguson, 2006).

This situation has led the scholars and activists to describe the investments in the district's earlier sugarcane plantations as the *ProCana* land and water grabbing case (Borras et al., 2011; Nhantumbo and Salomão, 2010; Milgroom, 2015); and the investments in conservation and tourism development by the Limpopo National Park, which led to the displacement of local communities from the Park within the district, a typical green grabbing case (Milgroom and Spierenburg, 2008; Lunstrum, 2015). In addition, in the 2010s, the Massingir Agro-Industrial practically replaced the company *ProCana*, claiming additional concessions for expanding sugarcane plantations, and private game reserves and new eco-tourism initiatives were introduced to communities around the Limpopo National Park. These newer investment developments are thought to aggravate the land, water, and green grabs and to intensify “capital accumulation by dispossession” in Massingir (Massé and Lunstrum, 2016: 239).

The on-going dispossession in Massingir is contradictory to what the existing Mozambican policy and legal frameworks are meant to achieve. Mozambique nationalized the nation's land after independence in 1975, and it instituted the relatively progressive

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national land policy, consisting of Land Act in 1997 and the Land Regulation in 1998 (Knight et al., 2012; Tanner, 2016). These frameworks affirm the power of the state to attribute the land use rights called *Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra* (DUAT) to individual or collective entities, and they recognize local communities' land use rights by occupation, inheritance, and custom. External investors who seek to appropriate the community land can only negotiate the DUAT when there is an officially approved process of community consultation (Art. 13, Land Act 19/97). This "mandatory community consultation is meant to pave the way for the negotiation of benefit-sharing agreements between local groups and the investor" and to minimize the chance of dispossession for local communities (Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010: 909). In other words, the officially mediated negotiations over land titling and building partnerships between investors and local communities for "sustainable and equitable benefit sharing" should have worked to reduce the incidents of land grabbing in Mozambique (Deininger and Byerlee, 2011; see also Boche et al., 2013; National Directorate for Promoting Rural Development, 2014).

The policy emphasis on consultation, partnership-building, and benefit sharing is in line with a wider international development focus on inclusive and participatory governance that centers on democratization, participatory planning, and community-public-private partnerships and on the promotion of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) (Fontana and Grugel, 2016). The recent rights-based development approaches and environmental and social justice frameworks endorse this trend to ensure procedural equity and to enhance the less powerful parties' bargaining power (Lake, 1996; Velicu and Kaika, 2015).

However, the above-mentioned cases in Massingir show that the assumption that led to this emphasis on consultation for the purposes of building consent—i.e., the partnerships and building of consent through mandatory consultation processes would lead to fair benefit-sharing—may be problematic. Firstly, as Fairbairn (2013) observes, there is an inherent and historically entrenched political inequality between national elites, local elites, community leaders, and the ordinary and more vulnerable parts of the community, including women, and this comes into play when large-scale investment projects are introduced to communities. This inequality in practice results in a consent that is *given anyway*, since there are no ways for all the community members to fully evaluate the fairness of the conditions presented at the table of negotiation, usually set up by district administration personnel and the investors and attended by a few community members close to the community leader (on average about five). Secondly, giving titles to communities in the face of investments through FPIC could actually "provide a legal means of foreclosure, alienation and expropriation" and excuses for "external actors to operate in areas where otherwise they would have been viewed with suspicion or barred" (Edelman et al., 2014: 923). At the same time, there are no actual institutional and judicial instruments to solve conflicts between external and community based actors and, even if benefit-sharing agreements are reached under relatively fair circumstances, the agreements are unlikely to be fulfilled due to a lack of clear documentation and elite capture by the local leadership (Fairbairn, 2013; Chachuaio et al., 2015).

In spite of these known problems, FPIC and participatory approaches to land governance are strongly promoted, not only by the state but also by the civil society organizations supporting local communities (Wijeratna, 2015; Pearce, 2016). Thanks to the promotion, local community members in Massingir would generally assert that the consultation had taken place and they agreed with the conditions presented to them. The problem is that, after giving their consent, they start perceiving problems and often seeking a remedy but do not know how or where to officially file complaints about the unfairness or absence of documentation of

the initial consultation. Even if they filed the complaints with the district administration, where the documents of consultations are supposed to be officially filed, they would have to face the prohibitive bureaucracy or blunt indifference and neglect. In general, "investment contracts have not commonly included grievance mechanism provisions", and this lack is acutely felt on the ground (International Senior Lawyers Project and Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, 2016: 21).

This means that the dispossession in Massingir is not exactly stemming from a lack of community participation in consultations or a failure of building consent; rather, is caused by the unfolding "micro-politics of how the policies get enacted in practice" (Milgroom, 2015: 585) and by the actual consequences of the built consent. In particular, when communities realize that their consent was a mistake or when they want to change the conditions they agreed to, it is extremely difficult to express dissent. Yet, little is known about how people actually deal with this difficulty in their on-going everyday life after they have agreed to concede their land and properties.

This article aims to explore how the participants who went through the consultation process experience and learn from the agreement being in effect, acquire new knowledge, and come to raise their voices and propose alternative agendas. It shows actual narratives and actions that shape the alternative agendas based on field research conducted intermittently between February and October 2015 in the communities affected by the Limpopo National Park and the Massingir Agroindustrial's sugarcane concession in Massingir (Otsuki et al., 2015). We explore questions such as: How do community members understand and tell each other about their initial consent, reflect on its consequences, and come to outline their alternative agendas? What are the outcomes of community members' everyday struggles with the consequences of their consent, and what does a potential follow-up mechanism look like, which would go beyond the current, rather ad-hoc mechanism of NGO advocacy and nominal local government involvement?

In what follows, this article first gives an overview of the historical process by which participatory approaches to land governance came to emphasize the importance of consultations and consent-building and highlights what our focus on experiencing the consequences of the consent specifically seeks to address. This overview is followed by methodology and a case study of the communities in Massingir, which clearly shows that the everyday struggles after the official consultations come to involve new actors and lead to new claims. The initial consultations should anticipate, from the beginning, the emergence of such new claims after the agreement has come into effect and include plans for the active involvement, officially, of the state (district administration personnel in particular), which enforces the consultation. This article argues that land governance is only inclusive when the everyday experiences of consent are taken into account in investment projects. And, the possibility for this genuine inclusiveness is critically analyzed by reference to the historical and international policy process that came to emphasize participation in African land governance.

2. Participatory turn in land governance

According to Colin and Woodhouse (2010: 3), "all but 10 per cent of land in Africa is considered to be occupied under customary land tenure". Historically, scholars and development agencies have studied and interpreted the customary – and mostly communal – land tenure in different ways, primarily in relation to recurrent land grabs (initially by colonial and domestic elites) and the directions of agricultural development (Peters, 2004; Lund and Boone, 2013). Earlier development studies and policies considered

customary land tenure to be an obstacle to the development of a market economy on the continent, and promoted a formalization (and individualization) of land tenure through widespread land reform. This formalization, mainstreamed in the 1960s and 1970s, eventually came to be perceived as an exclusive mechanism creating state land for official investment that benefits few (Kelly and Peluso, 2015). At the same time, because of the available space for formalization and further investment, the “negotiability, flexibility, and ambiguity” of the customary land tenure were interpreted as positive aspects of African land governance during the 1990s (Peters, 2004: 278), leading to the current emphasis on participatory and inclusive approaches to land governance (Pearce, 2016).

This section provides an overview of the evolution of these debates on African land governance for the purposes of investigating how communities that customarily use their land agree to concede their land through negotiations; and how this concession is considered to be an outcome of participation and community deliberation.

2.1. Formalization of customary tenure

The customary land tenure is known to have been created through the colonial period, as it facilitated the European colonial governing of land in Africa (Peters, 2004). The colonial powers defined borders at the end of the nineteenth century within which they gave classes of native African elites and entrepreneurs the land for management. In the post-independence state building process, new classes of elite Africans themselves furthered customary land tenure in order to control their new territory by constructing a “Black Africa” and, through this process, giving rise to new modernized nation-states governed by indigenous African citizens (Rosler and Wendl, 1999; Hanna and Hanna, 2009). The construction of a Black Africa required distribution of the land occupied by the colonial powers to the indigenous populations and a “big push” for national economic development (Sikor and Muller, 2009: 1308). Through this modernization process, the ruling African elites started to portrayed customary tenure as that which inhibited “individual (male) investment in agriculture” (Peters, 2004: 273).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the new African states advanced the land reform agenda, aiming at post-colonial redistributive justice by promoting individual land titling and by enhancing tenure security. However, this process did not involve all the indigenous Africans, as it rather simply visualized the “modernist vision” of “the powerful. ... [and]. ... other social groups who had gained in the post-independence widening of opportunities” (Rakodi, 2006: 314). As Peters (2004) points out, individual land titling and formalization of property rights in fact led to land grabs by domestic elites during the 1980s, widening social inequality and making ordinary people’s access to the means of their production and properties less secure. The insecurity was acutely felt in the countryside, where official documentations of land tenure were introduced but inconsistently applied, leaving those on customary land in a vulnerable position.

At the international level, the development community began to recognize the failure of modernization, based on the unequal distribution of state-building opportunities, which had led to economic failures and the aggravation of poverty in the newly independent African states. In the 1980s, international monetary institutions applied the structural adjustment policies to developing countries, based on neoliberal economic principles. The development economists who started to act as planners at this time took a great interest in the potential of the informal economy (Dorn et al., 1998), shaped by those who had been excluded from the process of formalizing property rights (The World Bank, 2009). They

began to argue that more vigorous application of property rights and tenure security would create opportunities for people to fully participate in the formal and free market economy (De Soto, 1989). Consequently, the international development agenda started to incorporate the formalization of the informal economy, including the turning of customary land tenure into individual and official land titles, with the aim of assigning property right to every individual citizen (Casson et al., 2010).

In this context, land governance became a bureaucratic, normative, and apolitical framework to facilitate the formalization of the informal economy (Engel and Olsen, 2005). The state was supposed to effectively manage the informal economy (Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2003), and “to enforce and monitor property registration strictly and effectively” in order to complete the formalization (Otsuki, 2011: 118). The underlying assumption was that the enforcement of property rights would automatically turn land occupiers into citizens who could rationally participate in formal land use and management, contributing the national economic growth.

2.2. From formalization to community participation

In practice, the tenure enhancement accelerated the modernization of agriculture in Africa by opening up the land market and allowed landed elites to accumulate capital by contracting small-scale farmers (Little and Watts, 1994). This capital accumulation and contract farming process consolidated social differentiation in the African countryside, and was coupled with a flawed land registration process by which different names were assigned to the same communal land; or the individual property rights allocation did not replace the customary tenure, enabling landed elites to expand their landholdings (Colin and Woodhouse, 2010). In a country like Mozambique whose struggle to become independent from its colonizer (Portugal) came late in the 1970s, the new government considered the formalization of individual land titles and private land ownership to be “feudal”, and it nationalized the entire territory in its move to become a socialist state after independence (Peters, 2004: 273; see also Pitcher, 2002).

Scholars have come to argue that the biggest problem with the formalization effort was that it did not sufficiently consider the ways in which the land registration had been embedded in local and traditional contexts (Peters, 2009). The neglect of the local contexts stemmed from the fact that conventional development planning had regarded the indigenous institutional elements of the African social environment – such as “big-man syndrome, clientelism, and moral obligations to family members and kin groups” – as “anti-developmental” (Booth, 2011: 21). In the 1990s, studies started to show that the local contexts represented the “local agency” of the African social environment, which needs to be taken seriously even if, or rather because, it worked against the formal land regulation and tenure registration (Rakodi, 2006: 316). Berry (2002) shows that the land tenure in Africa underpinned by local agency represents negotiability and indeterminacy, and that these elements have in fact contributed to the resilience of the African society. The appreciation of local agency implies that a land is not always an individual property to be formalized, commoditized, and invested in (Li, 2014); rather, it is what enables the construction of everyday places for “communities” that express “quite different sorts of social relations and forms” (Watts and Peet, 2004: 24).

The increasing attention to the concept of community worked to reveal that the formalization focus is based on a vertical understanding of society in which individual land users are expected to make rational decisions so as to comply with the formalization process. If this does not happen, the planning needs to be improved to induce compliance or it is possible that the people are simply irrational or anti-developmental (Watts and Peet, 2004). The focus

on community implies, instead, that horizontal social relations affect individual decisions with a wide range of motivations, such as religious beliefs, family relations, local political interests, or shared histories of migration and developmental struggles (Otsuki, 2011, 2015). Therefore, African land tenure and its negotiability must be understood through how communities operate and make decisions.

Following this community focus, which was in line with the broader popularization of common-resource and community-based natural resource management in the 1990s (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999), scholars came to argue for participatory land governance as seen in a recent proposal to establish a community-led land reform agenda (Sikor and Muller, 2009). Participatory land governance is essentially rooted in the negotiability of land ownership, management and uses, as it is about negotiating modes of governance by setting up “processes and procedures for managing...[a space]...and its activities which have at their core the participation and involvement of all citizens and their organizations; which provide for transparency and accountability” (McAuslan, 1998: 46). The international development community, including the World Bank, shifted its focus from the formalization of individual property rights to the recognition of customary and communal land tenure that is flexible and adaptive to negotiations and also potentially to business development (Peters, 2004).

2.3. Consent-building and its everyday implications

In the mid-2000s, when the global food and financial crises triggered global land deals and the new scramble for Africa by the foreign investors (Carmody, 2013), activists and scholars began to argue that customary and communal land tenure in fact facilitated the investors being able to grab the land, since communities lacked official documents to prove their ownership or user rights. The investors, on the other hand, easily obtained documentations from the government, which was generally eager to attract investors (Kelly and Peluso, 2015; Pearce, 2016). Yet, the formalization of individual property rights had been a failure and, therefore, activists and scholars now sought legal recognition of the communal land and began their attempts to prevent the negotiability and adaptiveness of customary land tenure from solely benefitting the investors (Oram, 2014). In order to increase the bargaining power of communities, they focused on mainstreaming FPIC and voluntary guidelines used for involuntary resettlement and displacement in order to oblige investors to “obtain the consent of indigenous peoples before large development projects and legal reforms that would affect them get underway” (Fontana and Grugel, 2016: 250).

Originally built on international human rights law, instituted in 1989 at the United Nation's International Labor Organization's Convention 169, the principle of FPIC has been ubiquitous in international development discussions on protecting the rights of indigenous peoples to be consulted and to make decisions about development interventions that affect the environment surrounding them. The African Commission on Human Rights supports the member countries in ratifying this principle, and this move towards mainstreaming the FPIC has emphasized state engagement in enabling and ensuring community participation in negotiations. However, the state frequently turns to be on the side of attracting investors, and there is no way to objectively evaluate to what extent the consent building process can be freely and fully informative to all the parties involved (Fontana and Grugel, 2016). This means that citizens are responsible for managing the procedures of their own development in order to monitor and evaluate the negotiation process. Therefore, they are supposed to be well organized through such channels as community-based organizations (CBOs) and associations and to build partnerships with

professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and state agencies that should, in turn, be collaborative (Gerometta et al., 2005; Bevir, 2013).

In other words, as Green (2010) points out, participation has become a common “boundary object”, rather than a transformative social action, towards which citizens, the state, and the investors work in cooperation. The consequences of engaging in the participation process tend to attract little attention in this context (Otsuki, 2015) and, when conflicts arise after the participation process, the resolution or grievance mechanism is often deliberately absent. The promoters of participation usually implicate the local government in charge of applying the FPIC principle as the potential mediator, but local government tends to reinforce rules and norms that work in favor of the investors in practice. Observing such a situation, Swyngedouw (2005: 1991) writes that the current promotion of “[land] governance-beyond-the-state” seems to deepen democracy but in reality it is merely reshaping the technology of governing and the political subjectivity of the citizens based on the neoliberal logic that has been providing the rules and order of civil society involvement in the past decades.

In Mozambique, for example, the government promotes so-called open governance and encourages organized citizens to participate and discuss their daily concerns with governmental officials in each district. While it is not explicitly regarded as an exercise of FPIC, the principle is to build consent around public policies that affect civic life. The participation is usually pre-organized, based on village councils instituted during the colonial and post-independence socialist regime between the 1970s and 1990s. The councils represent communities, and elected community leaders or traditional leaders preside over them. Even though colonial chieftaincy is officially abolished in Mozambique, some communities still acknowledge the authority of the chiefs, who co-exist with the contemporary community leaders (O’Laughlin, 2000). These community leaders are often subordinate to the state instructions and merely showcase the participation. The consultation and consent-building process for large-scale investment projects works in a similar way. The community participation is pre-organized based on visits by the investors who first approach the community leaders and chiefs, accompanied by government officials. The communities are consulted while being exposed to “encroaching imposition of market forces that set the ‘rules of the game’” (Swyngedouw, 2005: 1991).

At the same time, through this consent-building exercise and nominal participation process (Williams, 2004), communities do learn to expect to co-produce their development process and agenda with investors and the local government (Saul, 2011). They may not articulate this expectation in clear manners at the beginning of the encounter (Reed, 1996). Nevertheless, through reflection, the community members often realize that they had not been the ones to set the rules of the game and invite the government and the investors to the negotiation table. Or, they come to notice that they could have said no to sitting at the negotiation table in the first place, in order not to participate in the game that the investors initiated (Velicu and Kaika, 2015). At the very least, they come to understand that “the FPIC alone does not, and may not be able to, resolve issues of democratic inclusion and participation. Instead it opens up different kinds of political conflicts, between social groups and between society and the state” (Fontana and Grugel, 2016: 250).

It is at this point that we need to turn to the actual experience of the communities in Massingir where citizens have been organized and have participated in consultations and the consent-building process with respect to land concessions and resettlement. Or, more precisely, where the investors and the local government officials have invited communities to take part in delimiting their land to be ceded, demarcating their boundary, or agreeing on conditions

with respect to the compensation. As they experience and live through the delimitation, demarcation, and compensation, the communities shape and reshape the social and local political processes, which are intertwined with the everyday materiality of land, water, infrastructure, housing, and money that allows them to physically experience their consent and to continue making their places to live (Pierce et al., 2011). In other words, experiencing the outcomes of the consent they gave – such as resettlement – leads to new processes of everyday struggle for improved livelihood and security. The current focus on consultation and consent in the participatory land governance framework does not sufficiently enable us to analyze and understand these emerging new processes after the consent is given.

3. Methodology

The case study of the communities in Massingir presented below has been elaborated based on a participatory field research as a part of a research program that aimed to identify the relationship between land governance, existing business models, and food security concerns in Mozambican interior districts. The research team, consisting of Mozambican and international NGO workers and a university researcher, visited six communities in Massingir in February, May, August, and September 2015. First, the Mozambican NGO workers contacted the Massingir Platform of Forum of NGOs (PLADISMA), the confederation of local groups and associations working to take up problems expressed by local communities and district administrations through the so-called interface meetings. PLADISMA then discussed with each community leader who convened on average 10 men and 10 women in a series of focus group discussions and participatory diagnosis workshops. The research team led these workshops following the NGO's methods of identifying strength, weakness, opportunities and potential threats that each community has experienced.

The convened men and women were representatives of the community's neighborhood blocks or associations. The university researcher, in collaboration with PLADISMA, then conducted 25 household visits and interviews (in communities of on average 50 households) to clarify the processes by which the initial consent given to the investors and government officials led them to the actual livelihood conditions. The research team also carefully noted and recorded the voices raised by the informants as “individual voices of dispossession” (Bennett and McDowell, 2012), in relation to the official explanations that the investors and government officials gave on separate interviewing occasions throughout 2015.

4. Participatory land governance in Massingir

Historically speaking, Massingir was at the frontline of the resistance against Portuguese colonizers and the post-independence wars, making the district closely linked to the Frelimo party – that is, the country's dominant, ruling party, originating from the struggle for liberation. This is one reason why a majority in the district refused to learn Portuguese or adopt Portuguese names (unlike in the central or northern parts of the country). The district's apparent loyalty to the ruling party characterizes the communities' general willingness to give consent to the government when the government officials visit them with investors to discuss land concession.

For the government, investors are potentially an important source of revenue and key to the district's development. Massingir is in a semi-arid region that is vulnerable to droughts, and the government attributes the district's needs for investments to the “poor agro-ecological conditions” (Ministry of State District, 2005: 4). When the Limpopo National Park (hereafter, LNP) was established in 2001 as part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP), the

government used the low productivity of agriculture as the main reason for the need to develop tourism, even though evidences showed that agriculture in the area designated as the park had been feasible (Milgroom et al., 2014).

The GLTP is an investment of the South African Peace Parks Foundation, a private entity with an ample international funding that promotes conservation policies in post-conflict areas of Africa (Buscher, 2013). The GLTP consists of the LNP, South Africa's Kruger National Park, and Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park and covers a vast area equivalent to the size of the Netherlands (Peace Parks Foundation, 2016). The Ministry of Tourism of Mozambique was eager to develop the LNP within the GLTP context, based on the national ten-year strategic plan to boost the country's tourism industry (Ministry of Tourism, 2004). The German Development Bank (KfW) became the main financial supporter of this development, and the local populations see the investor as the national government and its international partners (they simply call it “the park”). While the LNP covers parts of three districts, the park administration's headquarters is in Massingir, near the Massingir Dam, as the district gave nearly a half of its district territory to LNP. The LNP development has triggered setting up of another large conservancy in the southern part of Mozambique in which new private business owners, mainly from South Africa with political connections in Mozambique, began to approach communities to negotiate land concessions to establish their reserves (Massé and Lunstrum, 2016).

In addition to LNP, the government also attracted a sugarcane industry called ProCana in 2007, based on the “policy and strategy for biofuels” (Borras et al., 2011: 217). ProCana was a sugarcane ethanol project of the British, Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC), and it acquired 30,000 land concession along the principal road leading to the district capital. The ProCana, however, never took off beyond the pilot 25 ha nursery, and the government revoked its concession in 2010. In 2011, the government put up a new tender for the use of the conceded land, and Massingir Agro-Industrial (hereafter, MAI) of the South Africa's TB Sugar won this tender and entered the district (Atanassov, 2013). While MAI is clearly a private company, its headquarters is housed in the district administration, and the local populations generally see it as the state-backed private investment.

These investors, together with local governmental officials, consulted communities of predominantly small, subsistence-level farmers, about their plans to acquire or use the communities' land for business development and the conditions with respect to compensation and benefit-sharing. For example, LNP has a plan to evict nine communities from the park, of which two communities have so far resettled outside the park. The park administration and the local government assert that they have followed the consultation process defined in the national policy concerning involuntary resettlement (PO4 12 14), which the Ministry of Tourism created based on the World Bank's “involuntary resettlement guidelines” (World Bank OP 4.12). The resettled communities confirm that this consultation process was followed and have explained how they collectively decided to give their consent to resettle at the time of the consultation.¹

However, after years of giving consent, the consulted communities are increasingly showing their dissatisfaction with the consent they gave to the investors, such as the park administration. One of

¹ Massingir is also known as a home of rhino poachers. In fact, experts who know the area agree that the political economy of Massingir cannot be completely understood without taking into account the benefits of poaching (Fenio, 2014; Grill, 2015). Park officials even confirm that until recently trade of rhino horns took place semi-openly in one of the district's hotel compounds at night (personal communication, February, 2015). Portraying communities in the park to be homes of poachers helps justify the current resettlement program (Massé and Lunstrum, 2016).

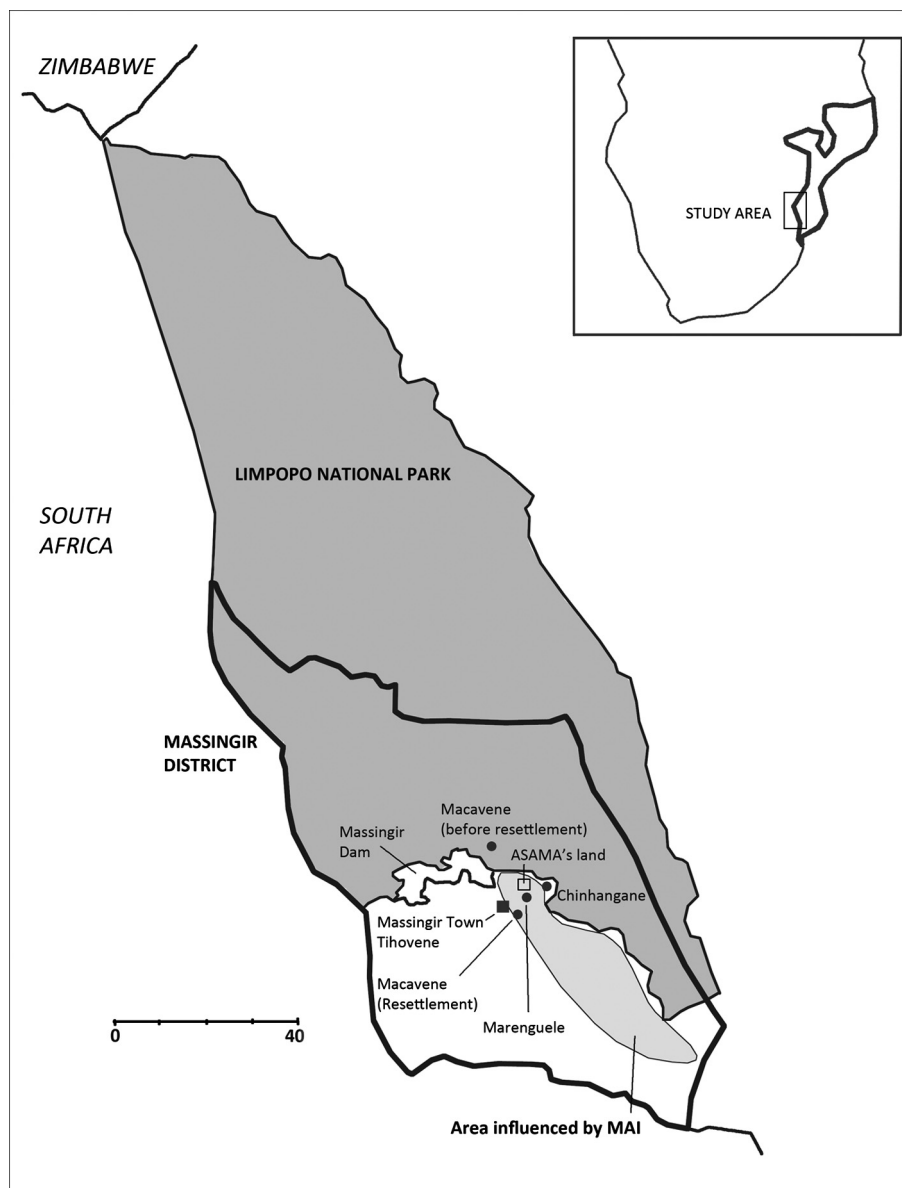


Fig. 1. Map of the study area.

these communities is Macavene-Tihovene (hereafter, Macavene). Macavene was one of the two communities that agreed to resettle from LNP. The initial agreement included the provision of improved houses, infrastructure, and farmlands, but the community members had not obtained farmlands nearly five years after the resettlement took place. Being “tired of waiting” for the state to provide their farmlands (according to the community leader, interview, February 2015), they started to negotiate with the neighboring community – called Marenguele – which, in turn, had agreed to concede parts of its community land to ProCana and MAI. Recently, Marenguele, under pressure from MAI and Macavene, started to claim that the Association of Farmers of Marenguele (ASAMA), whose members are mainly from the district capital of Tihovene, had unlawfully grabbed their land since the colonial period, and that Macavene could get ASAMA’s land while Marenguele should be also able to access the irrigated land developed by ASAMA (Fig. 1).

The case of Macavene in relation to Marenguele and ASAMA shows that how one consent can lead to the involvement of new actors and can create new claims. This development has also made

the community members of Macavene reflect on their initial granting of consent. In fact, there was a voice of dissent at the time of the consultations, which was ignored in spite of its relevance. The community as a whole gave the consent to resettle, and the recent reflections on the consent reveal the difficulty of paying attention to the voices of dissent when the community leadership is actively collaborating with the government from the beginning. At the same time, the reflection on the initial consent has created new spaces for re-negotiation, and whether this space for the re-negotiation can be used as a force for positive change for the communities will be discussed in detail below.

5. After the consent to resettle from LNP

5.1. Experiencing the initial consent

The LNP initially did not have a clear resettlement policy (Milgroom and Spierenburg, 2008). In 2006, the park administration, based on a mandate given by the Ministry of Tourism, decided

to remove the fence between the LNP and Kruger National Park to facilitate inflows of wild animals in order to accelerate the development of Mozambican safari. As Mozambique had decimated its wildlife during the prolonged civil war, the Ministry considered the removal of this fence vital to the effort to re-populate Mozambique with elephants and giraffes. But it was done without consulting the communities within the LNP. Consequently, the local communities suddenly started to encounter large animals destroying their farms, and they were told they would be arrested if they killed these animals. The park administration hastily drew up the resettlement policy in order to mitigate the human-wildlife conflicts emanating from these increasing encounters between local communities and large animals in the LNP (Massé, 2015).

Such lack of well-planned resettlement programs at the start of the park's establishment was already problematic since the FPIC principle and the World Bank guidelines clearly assert the importance of carefully assessing the investment plans that were going to accompany resettlements, in order for the resettled communities not to become impoverished (McDowell, 1996; Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau, 2006). Nonetheless, the resettlement program went ahead in 2007 with a removal of a small community called Nanguene.

Nanguene with 18 households left LNP voluntarily in 2009 because “the promise of the government was very beautiful”.² Living without any improved infrastructure within the park, the community members were easily convinced when the park officials (designated as resettlement officers) offered each community member a brick and concrete (and thus modern) house and access to tap water and electricity as the compensation for their residence, community farm, and grazing land in the park. The resettled community of Nanguene was absorbed into a larger community called Chinhangane, just outside of the LNP, becoming one neighborhood of Chinhangane. The members of Nanguene complain that they are not being treated equally as the original members of Chinhangane, and the quality of the houses and basic infrastructure is not as good as they had expected. However, the Nanguene members have at least obtained farms and grazing land from Chinhangane (Milgroom et al., 2014).

Following this example, the park administration set out to resettle a much larger community called Macavene in 2011. The community originally had 164 households, and 52 of them settled near Tihovene, the district's capital.³ A man loyal to the ruling Frelimo party led the new community. He persuaded the community members to agree to the government's proposal regarding the park development and resettlement program. According to a woman:

“We thought it would be better to move here, closer to the city (i.e. the district capital and the main asphalted road)... but even electricity has not arrived here. We did not expect this when the truck brought us here from the park”.⁴

In exchange for their residence, farm, and grazing land in the park, each Macavene community member obtained an improved brick house and monetary compensation for the loss of their land, in addition to the promise of farm and grazing land for their cattle. According to the community members, the park administration calculated this compensation based on an evaluation of the member's original property in the park, which was done “individually and secretly... not in a community setting” (according to a sub-leader of Macavene). In general, the compensation rate regarding displacement due to the public work and investment in rural areas,

as determined in Mozambican law, is very low (3000 *meticaís*, about 60 USD in 2015), which barely covers the costs of staple foods for an average family for a month (Dalupan et al., 2015; Otsuki et al., 2016). There is no official land market in Mozambique, and the value of land is unknown, though there are always illicit land transactions and everyone in fact knows the value (Serra and Carrilho, 2013). According to the sub-leader:

“They... [i.e., the park officials]... did not leave any papers with the people... so we signed and the papers stayed with them. No one knows how the money was calculated, no one has the receipt, and thus there is no way to complain now... also, those who had gone to work in South Africa did not qualify for the compensation. The criteria were not clear – those who did not get compensated returned to South Africa. Therefore, our community got diminished”.⁵

In addition to the meagre monetary compensation and no explanation of the land value calculation, the park administration entirely ignored “invisible losses”, such as regular accesses to cemeteries in the park or the traditional use of plants and animals (Witter and Satterfield, 2014). Such secrecy and neglect generated a general feeling of distrust with respect to the park officials who, at the time of the initial consultation, explained that their business model was based on the success of the resettlement program. In order to raise revenue and obtain enough money with respect to its compensation budget, the community had to leave the park. After nearly four years in a resettlement, people in Macavene started to claim that their resettlement did not necessarily increase the park's revenue or lead to fair compensation, primarily because they still did not find enough land that could be used for farming.

The community was bitterly experiencing the consequences of their initial consent to the resettlement proposal in their new houses, which had not been connected to electricity, while using two taps that provide water, which often broke down. Even if they wanted to go back to the traditional methods of getting firewood or fetching water from the river, the resettlement was now far from the forest and the river. The everyday struggles of survival and their views on the initial consultation process thus started to create the sense of wanting to seek justice within the community. However, as the sub-leader admitted, they did not know how to properly complain and to have their voices heard. Eventually, they started to take the matters in their own hands.

5.2. The search for farmland

At the time of the consultation, the park promised that the community would eventually receive farmland, with irrigation around the resettlement. In addition, until the farmland was secured, the park was going to provide each family with one kilogram of maize every month for the first five years, in addition to the monetary compensation. After four years of waiting, the community had received neither the farmland nor any bags of maize. Meanwhile, the areas surrounding the resettlement area had been claimed by MAI. The Macavene members have engaged in *barulho* or demonstrations to address their troubled situations. The park now insists that the resettled area is on the district's land, and the local government should solve the problem of providing farmland. The government, in turn, asserts that it is each community's own responsibility to communicate with neighboring communities and negotiate for farmland.

Without farms to cultivate their food, the community members started to work on farms that belonged to somebody else, such as the ones owned by the founder of ASAMA in Tihovene. They typi-

² Focus group discussion, Nanguene, 5 February 2015.

³ Macavene in the park was a unified community but in the process of resettlement, they were split into two communities; one settled near the town of Tihovene; and the other settled in the community of Banga.

⁴ Focus group discussion, Macavene, 4 February 2015.

⁵ Participatory diagnosis, Macavene, 23 September 2015.

cally receive 100 *meticaïs* (about \$ 3 in 2015) a day. At the same time, the community started its own negotiation with the neighboring community of Marenguele whose leader showed a willingness to let Macavene use part of their farmland.

Marenguele is a community of 40 households, led by a traditional leader who had been in charge of the area since the colonial period. This community went through a consultation process with the investors ProCana and MAI, who visited the community with local governmental officials to ask for parts of their communal grazing land to be conceded for the purpose of the sugarcane plantations. The investors promised employment for the community members once the plantations started to operate. Following the consultation, the community leader signed the document of consent to demarcate the community boundary, outside of which MAI could establish their sugarcane concessions. This signing led the MAI to insist that the acquisition of the concession was done lawfully.

However, the community members of Marenguele came to accuse its leader of giving up the community land without consulting others. The accusations against the leader of Marenguele intensified when Macavene approached them. The community felt that the negotiation with MAI resulted in insufficient compensation, as the sugarcane operation did not create more than a few seasonal jobs for the community members. The community now demanded that the leader firmly negotiate for reasonable compensation and benefit-sharing when Macavene was going to use their farmland. In this context, the leader started to emphasize the presence of ASAMA on their community land, which should first be returned to Marenguele and then a part of it could be used for Macavene. In this way, Marenguele will not lose out in the negotiations and will actually gain the benefit of extra land.

ASAMA is the oldest producers' association in Massingir, officially legalized in 1996 with 30 members. Currently, it had 125 members, mainly from Tihovene. The 280-ha area was originally the land of a state cooperative demarcated in 1975, adjacent to Marenguele's communal farmland. The association obtained their land user's right over this state land and, therefore, it continues to insist on the lawful occupation of the land now claimed by Marenguele. Yet, the negotiation between Macavene and Marenguele started dragging ASAMA into the discussion. According to a deputy of the community leader in Marenguele⁶:

"We ... [i.e., the community of Marenguele] ... want to rent out 15 ha to Macavene on the condition that they... [i.e., park] install water pumps, because the area we are proposing is in the ASAMA's 250 ha [sic], which is in the lowland, suitable for irrigation. ASAMA is not using the land. And, from this 250 ha, ASAMA had given 100 ha to ProCana, which started to make the seedling experimental field of sugarcane. This ProCana and ASAMA worked together, and altered our community border, practically invading our community. The ProCana field at least pushed 15 ha towards our farm area, which had to be returned to the community. Once it is returned, Macavene could use *this* land".

According to ASAMA, their land indeed requires water pumps for irrigation. Their cooperation with ProCana started in 2007 when the major flooding of the Elephant River destroyed the association's water pumps. ProCana offered the association new water pumps from South Africa in exchange for the association's land, to be used for a sugarcane plantation. After ProCana left, the flood hit the area again in 2010, damaging the water pumps. ASAMA then started to negotiate with MAI for the water pumps, but MAI was reluctant. ASAMA members thus could not continue working on

the land, leading to a situation where "ASAMA [was] not using the land". Meanwhile, the association does not recognize Marenguele's claim that it cheated the boundary and took 15 ha more than had been agreed to.

In other words, Macavene's struggle to obtain farmland, which emerged as a consequence of their consent to the resettlement program, led Marenguele to mobilize to negotiate with ASAMA. ASAMA is, in turn, currently proposing that both Marenguele and Macavene should become members of their association so that they can officially use the ASAMA's land and also they can gain more power to negotiate with the park administration about water pumps for irrigation. For ASAMA, the water pumps are the vital element in the negotiation since the government can revoke their land user rights if they fail to prove they have made productive use of the land in the coming years. At the same time, the association insists that Marenguele and Macavene should pay the initial membership fee of 3000 *meticaïs*, as well as four sacks of soya bean as an annual fee, according to ASAMA's rule. Both Marenguele and Macavene have rejected this proposal, insisting that they should have unconditional access to the irrigated land because they would be the ones who would obtain the water pumps. Consequently, the negotiations have stalled, keeping Macavene in a limbo, without being able to access any farmland.

Indirectly, ProCana and MAI's influence is undeniable since the sugar companies have been increasing the pressure on the district's land, especially surrounding Macavene, Marenguele, and ASAMA. The initial consultations between the park, local government, and Macavene, to build consent for resettlement did not take into account the existing pressure for land in the areas surrounding the future resettlement, as they failed to pursue the so-called land-based compensation strategy (Lassailly-Jacob, 1996). The community of Macavene had little awareness about this pressure for land when they gave the consent to resettle. At the same time, Marenguele and ASAMA, who were suddenly pulled into having got deal with the consequences of the resettlement, used their experience with ProCana and MAI to generate new claims, such as those with respect to the historically disputed land and water pumps.

The official consultation process, underpinned by the banner of participatory governance, has allowed the government and investors to explain away such consequences as unintended outcomes. This process also worked to discourage the community from carefully listening to the voice of dissent foreseeing this struggle at the time of the consultation.

5.3. A voice of dissent

In Macavene, there was one man, called Mr. Mafumo, who refused to move out of the park at the time of the consultation. After the resettlement went ahead, the houses in the park were demolished and, thus, Mr. Mafumo's family became the only family living in the former community area of Macavene. Mr. Mafumo was already indignant that the park let animals enter their land without consulting them in the first place. However, as it turned out to be impossible to co-exist with elephants, he decided to resettle from the old area of Macavene with his family. He just could not genuinely agree to the terms of the resettlement.⁷

"I saw the quality of the place where they indicated our new settlement would be. I thought the land was too small. The soil did not look bad but the size was very small. So I told the park official I would agree to resettle if they prepared the soil for farming beforehand so that we could get a sufficient yield on the reduced land. They promised then that they understood that the farms were sources of life for us and that they were going to

⁶ Focus group discussion, Marenguele, 5 February 2015.

⁷ Interview, old Macavene community in LNP, 4 February, 2015.

prepare the soil. But they did not do it. So, I said, I cannot go there because the conditions are not right for doing agriculture.

Then, the park administrator came and said they had constructed a house... [in another community] ... for my family. Just one house.⁸ I said, I have a grown up son who needs an independent house. If they cannot do it, just give me money and I will construct it myself. They did not accept this. Last November ... [in 2014], they came here again and said we had to leave before the New Year. I said, before the rain, I cannot move because I have to prepare my soil and plant maize. If they want to remove me from here, they have to show me where the farm is, for me to produce soon. Because we live from agriculture. There is no other work we can do.

They returned this January... I said, it rained already so I already farmed my farm. Now we have to wait for the harvest... If I have to farm another land now, it needs irrigation... They now say that they will give us money so that we can buy our own farm and grazing land for our cattle ourselves. I have 10 ha of land here, but they give only one hectare. Only one! The rest, they will give money. But we do not know what the amount is. No one knows how they calculate.

This talk of money offends us. We are very sad and uncomfortable. We would surely like to have our cattle be in some nice grazing land and also have our farm. Therefore, we ask that they prepare the land for our cattle and for us to farm our food. They should know where such farms are available out there... they say I am very stubborn, but if they just give me the farms and sufficient space for us to live, I will agree to leave. I just need to have the right condition to do agriculture. Until then, I cannot accept the resettlement”.

In June 2015, Mr. Mafumo moved to another community within the park that was not on the resettlement program. He did not agree with the proposed conditions and came to bring the park and local government to court. This is currently the only possibility for not giving one's consent in the consultation process. Whether the country's justice system responds to his appeal remains to be seen, but his case shows that such individual voices of dissent tend to be neglected in communities led by a community leader loyal to the state (such as Macavene) or by a traditional leader that culturally has absolute authority even if the leader mismanages negotiations (such as Marenguele). In Macavene, everyone knows about Mr. Mafumo, but few seem to genuinely sympathize with him. Once the community consent has been given, individual dissent is equal to defection.

This is why it is not sufficient to solely try to improve the community consultation process, though that is important. Even the most relevant expressions of dissent can be easily overridden by the current focus on consent-building, and the community will continue suffering from the consequences of the consent that they gave anyway.

6. Conclusions

This article has discussed the nature and extent of participatory land governance, which currently emphasizes the importance of consultations and consent-building between investors, the state, and communities, drawing on the case study of the district of Massingir, Mozambique. The essential messages have been two-fold. First, the consent-building principles assured by the FPIC and international guidelines should actively encourage the involved parties to look at foreseeable conflict situations, which

could emerge and come to involve new actors unrelated to the initial consultation process. For example, if everyone at the consultation table had been willing to be sure about the issue of land availability, the park's resettlement officers could have carried out a more thorough evaluation of the new resettlement area for Macavene. In the end, as Mr. Mafumo noted, monetary compensation was used to conceal the problem with the land availability and to silence the voice of dissent pointing out this problem. The current consent-building principles could allow this concealment to occur.

Second, to improve the consultation process so that it becomes genuinely fair and informative requires political will, as well as community members' cooperation, and this cannot be always ensured, given the historical, political and economic context of a country such as Mozambique. Therefore, an institutional mechanism is imperative for the involved actors to accompany and address grievances even if a consent has been given anyway without a thorough investigation about land availability or benefit-sharing. In other words, following [Agrawal and Gibson \(1999: 648\)](#), the focus on community participation is “a step towards right direction” in promoting inclusive and equitable land governance, but it does require more engaged approaches to accompany new social and political processes that appear from everyday struggles after the initial participation took place.

More specifically, the paper has questioned the prevailing assumption that community participation is inherently desirable because it includes communities in governance arrangements. Community participation tends to proliferate the idea that citizens can engage in “creation of rule and order in social practices” ([Bevir, 2013: 1](#)), even though this is based on plans presented by the state that are embedded in a larger context of market-oriented rules of the game, rather than based on the communities' own experiences and everyday struggles in dealing with the consequences of the consent they gave. The negotiability of African customary land tenure is used to justify nominal community participation instead of being used to open a new space where communities procedurally decide on their priorities, set up their agendas, and invite the investors to participate. Yet, the nominal participation works to make the communities feel responsible for the agreement they sign on to and its outcomes, even though they had been encouraged to do so through the mandatory consultation process. Meanwhile, the state and investors largely get away with their irresponsibility and lack of capacity with respect to addressing the communities' grievances after the consent has been given.

Nevertheless, community participation generally leads communities to become more reflexive, more knowledgeable, and justice-seeking, potentially enabling them to take new courses of action and to open new spaces for negotiation. The governance arrangements can be made more engaged, in such a way as to support the emerging community-led agendas. For example, if water pumps, as well as the proposal for the communities to become members of a well-structured association, should solve the land dispute problem between the resettled Macavene, the landed Marenguele, and ASAMA, the local government should facilitate negotiations between these actors and the park so as to frame the new claims as modified versions of the resettlement compensation, even though they are not specifically outlined as possible compensations in the national policies concerning resettlement. Flexibility is thus required of the local government, as the official intermediary in the consultation process, and this entails capacity development for local officials.

Currently, the Ministry of the State Administration and international donors in Mozambique envision capacity development for the officials in order to establish partnerships between local communities, companies and projects ([National Directorate for Promoting Rural Development, 2014](#)). This article has argued that

⁸ Polygamy is not uncommon in Massingir, and this is also one of the contestation when the new house only accommodates one family whereas traditional households in fact consist of several family houses, allocated to different wives and children.

the efforts for such partnership building should anticipate disputes and unintended consequences from the beginning, and the state officials and experts themselves need to learn how to play by the rules of the game set by the local communities. Such community-led rules of the game could lead to re-emergence of old community boundary disputes, as seen in Marenguele and ASAMA, in relation to new proposals since consequences of investments are embedded in the continuity of the life of communities. Inclusive land governance anticipates such embeddedness and emergence of new claims. In practice, the learning process for officials and experts to understand this process must be guaranteed in forms of periodic workshops and regular meetings in the on-going efforts to increase community participation and partnership building.

Acknowledgements

This work has been funded by the Dutch Science Organization (NWO)'s Applied Research Fund "Bridging the Gaps between Policy and Practice of Land Governance, Food Security, and Inclusive Business (Grant number: W08.270.202). We thank Mr. Salvador Chivite for coordinating the fieldwork; Marcia Cossa at ActionAid-Mozambique for comments on an earlier version of this paper; and participants at LANDac conference held in Utrecht in July 2015 for their engagement. In addition, Kei Otsuki would like to thank Douwe Halbertsma for creating the artwork, and participants of the International Development Studies Group's research seminar held in February 2016 at Utrecht University and of the Global Land Grabs session at the London School of Economics' Africa Summit in April 2016 for insightful comments on the use of the case study presented in this paper. Thanks are also to insightful comments by two anonymous reviewers.

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