A justice approach to the African 'land rush'

Investigating the social dynamics around agricultural investments in Mozambique

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This thesis is 85,339 words long

Abstract

This thesis offers an empirical study of environmental justice, focused on the social dynamics prompted by the recent 'rush' for African arable land. It consists of a comparative analysis of two agricultural investments in Northern Mozambique, one of the regions that have attracted more investors. It followed a qualitative methodological strategy, which involved rural appraisal activities, observation and semi-structured interviews.

The conceptual framework combines the approach of environmental justice with contributions from the property rights literature. Following Axel Honneth, I adopt a recognition-based approach, as an underlying sphere that informs participatory processes and distributive outcomes. From this perspective, I analyse how these agricultural investments have come to be; how have they changed the local dynamics; and how different notions of legitimacy, consent and fairness have emerged over time. In doing so, I identify the material and immaterial resources that social actors mobilise, in order to sustain their ownership claims, or their role under the new 'social order'.

A salient issue emerging from the case studies is the importance of historical legacy in building consent and legitimacy for corporate land *owners*. In the first site, characterised by the continuous existence of a plantation, before and after independence, local populations are more willing to accept a new concession. This is contingent, though, on the respect of former boundaries, and on the recognition of their labour skills and experience. Conversely, in areas that have been explored by local peasants since independence, material compensation plays the key role.

By offering a new angle of analysis, whilst taking account of the materiality and temporality of land concessions, this thesis aims to contribute new theoretical and empirical perspectives to the study of land deals in Africa. Furthermore, it offers a contribution to emergent trends of environmental justice research, as well as recognition theory.

Keywords; land deals; Africa; Mozambique; environmental justice; recognition

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

	English	Portuguese
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism	Mecanismo de Desenvolvimento Limpo
CEPAGRI	Commercial Agriculture Promotion Centre	Centro de Promoção da Agricultura
DUAT	Right to use and develop the land	Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
IMF	International Monetary Fund	Fundo Monetário Internacional
ITC	Initiative for Community Lands	Iniciativa de Terras Comunitárias
ORAM	Rural Association for Mutual Help	Organização Rural para a Ajuda Mútua
PEDSA	Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector	Plano de Desenvolvimento do Sector Agrário
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services	Pagamento por Serviços do Ecossistema
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation	Redução das Emissões por Desmatamento e Degradação Florestal
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	Objetivos para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável
UNAC	National Peasants Union	União Nacional de Camponeses

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Sumário

Esta tese consiste num estudo empírico de justiça ambiental[1], focado nas dinâmicas sociais em torno da recente 'corrida' às terras aráveis em África, que tem sido denominada na literatura como 'land rush' ou 'land grab'. Mais concretamente, o presente estudo debruça-se sobre os investimentos na área da agricultura em Moçambique, na linha da chamada nova 'Revolução Verde' para África. Moçambique é um dos países que têm sido alvo de maior interesse por parte dos investidores, a nível global.

Trata-se de uma análise comparativa de duas concessões de terras para fins agrícolas, em duas províncias do Norte de Moçambique, Nampula e Cabo Delgado. Ambas as áreas de estudo estão abrangidas por programas nacionais de desenvolvimento rural, respetivamente o Prosavana (Corredor de Nacala) e o Projeto de Desenvolvimento do Vale do Rio Lúrio. Os programas estão ainda em fase preliminar de implementação, mas têm gerado forte controvérsia entre ONGs e movimentos da sociedade civil, pelo receio de que tenham impactos negativos sobre as populações rurais, nomeadamente limitando o seu acesso à terra e prejudicando, por conseguinte, a segurança alimentar local nas zonas de implantação dos novos investimentos agrícolas.

O capítulo 1 contextualiza a problemática das concessões de terras, em particular em África, apresentando as suas linhas de evolução e as preocupações que o fenómeno tem gerado na academia e na sociedade civil. De seguida, apresento as perguntas de investigação que guiam a análise empírica, bem como os principais objetivos da investigação.

O capítulo 2 apresenta o enquadramento teórico e conceptual da tese, começando por fazer uma revisão da literatura na área das concessões e aquisições de terras. A secção 2.2. introduz a evolução recente da justiça ambiental, enquanto corrente académica, nas suas dimensões distributiva, processual e de reconhecimento. Aborda-se ainda uma corrente que tem sido apresentada (Schlosberg, Edwards) como possível quarta dimensão da justiça ambiental, as "capabilities" (Sen, Nussbaum). Por fim, discuto o potencial dos estudos de

[1] The inclusion of this extended summary in Portuguese is a requirement of the co-tutelle agreement between the University of East Anglia and the University of Lisbon.

propriedade para, a par da justiça ambiental, contribuírem para uma nova visão do fenómeno em estudo. Tendo por base estas considerações, apresento no final do capítulo o enquadramento conceptual que irá orientar toda a análise da tese. Este tem por base os trabalhos de Axel Honneth (1995, 2004) e Christian Lund (2016) sobre o reconhecimento intersubjetivo e as dinâmicas de "reconhecimento recíproco". Ambos os conceitos serão centrais para uma análise das concessões agrícolas da perspetiva da "justiça como reconhecimento". Procura-se desta forma desenvolver um novo ângulo de abordagem sobre a problemática da Revolução Verde e das concessões de terras em Moçambique, uma vez que a análise deste tema tem sido dominada pela perspetiva da economia política, que se concentra essencialmente na sua dimensão transnacional.

O capítulo 3 refere-se à abordagem epistemológica e metodológica da tese. A tese adota uma metodologia qualitativa, incluindo discussões em grupos focais, observação direta e análise documental. Foram ainda realizadas 90 entrevistas semiestruturadas a representantes do governo, de empresas investidoras, consultores e ONGs, bem como autoridades locais, chefes tradicionais e população em geral, aos níveis nacional, provincial, distrital e local. A amostra da população local inclui camponeses reassentados na sequência de um processo de concessão de terras, mas também grupos sociais indiretamente afetados pelos investimentos. Inclui ainda reflexões sobre a posicionalidade da investigadora no campo, bem como sobre as implicações éticas e as limitações do estudo. Apresenta-se uma descrição detalhada de cada método de investigação aplicado, bem como da análise dos dados recolhidos, com recurso a *software* especializado para a análise de dados qualitativos (NVivo11).

O capítulo 4 inclui uma contextualização histórica das zonas rurais em Moçambique, desde o período colonial, abordando as implicações do colonialismo, independência e guerra civil para os padrões de ocupação e os modos de vida, até à atualidade. Apresenta-se uma discussão detalhada das políticas de distribuição de terras no país, nomeadamente da principal legislação nesta área, a Lei de Terras em vigor desde 1997. Introduz-se ainda as principais estratégias políticas e programas nas áreas da agricultura e desenvolvimento rural, incluindo a Estratégia para a Revolução Verde em Moçambique. O capítulo fecha com uma caraterização mais

detalhada de cada uma das zonas em estudo, Malema e Ocúa, nos seus aspetos sociais, económicos e culturais.

O corpo central da tese consiste em três capítulos empíricos. O primeiro deles, o capítulo 5, aborda os processos de participação pública que precederam a aprovação das concessões em cada uma das zonas de estudo. Reflete-se nas limitações dos processos participativos, quer por via das relações de confiança e influência que se estabelecem no terreno, quer pelos constrangimentos que persistem à liberdade de expressão e à afirmação da identidade dos camponeses locais. Uma perceção enraizada, entre os próprios camponeses, de atraso social e tecnológico acaba por limitar a influência das populações locais que, apesar de estarem representadas nas consultas comunitárias, aceitam por norma os projetos por uma multiplicidade de razões. Por considerarem que são facto consumado, que as empresas investidoras são apoiadas pelo Governo, e portanto não devem ser contestadas, e também pela expetativa de receber compensações financeiras, investimentos na comunidade e oportunidades futuras de emprego nas plantações. Resulta daqui que, do ponto de vista formal, as populações dão o seu consentimento, mas que este consentimento é superficial e pouco inclusivo.

O capítulo 6 – "Terra do Dono" – analisa os projetos agrícolas como 'contratos' de reconhecimento recíproco, cuja manutenção depende da assunção, por parte das populações locais, das áreas de concessão como 'território reservado', sujeito a regras de uso e a limitações. A existência prévia de projetos empresariais de agricultura favorece a aceitação de novas concessões, mas está, no entanto, condicionada pelo respeito de limites geográficos e temporais. Os antigos marcos das plantações anteriores, bem como o respeito por funções laborais anteriormente exercidas, são fundamentais para garantir o reconhecimento por parte das populações. Outros recursos materiais, como a maquinaria, no caso das empresas, e a plantação de árvores, no caso das populações locais, afirmam-se como elementos cruciais na afirmação de um sentido de pertença e partilha de território.

No capítulo 7, o último capítulo empírico, analisa-se a forma como os usos da terra, das empresas e dos camponeses locais, são considerados mais ou menos legítimos, por via das dinâmicas de reconhecimento mútuo que têm lugar ao nível local. A falta de reconhecimento das práticas locais de gestão dos recursos naturais,

e de acesso à terra, associada ao uso do capital financeiro – sob a forma de compensações monetárias e de investimentos na comunidade – acaba por conduzir a processos de reassentamento que podem aumentar a vulnerabilidade de certos grupos na comunidade, afetando as suas estratégias de resiliência climática. Episódios climáticos súbitos, como as cheias no rio Lúrio em 2014/2015, podem por sua vez alterar as perceções de justiça das comunidades quanto aos processos de reassentamento.

O capítulo 8 apresenta uma síntese dos principais resultados da investigação de doutoramento, bem como os contributos para as literaturas sobre as concessões de terras, a justiça ambiental e o reconhecimento. Aponta-se ainda as implicações para as políticas de gestão de terras, desenvolvimento rural e alterações climáticas. Finalmente, deixo algumas reflexões e sugestões sobre oportunidades de investigação futura, em particular sobre o desenvolvimento rural e a justiça ambiental nos países do Sul Global.

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a qualitative study of agricultural investments in Mozambique, one of the countries in the world that have been most targeted by private investors over the last decade, in the context of the so-called 'land rush'. In conceptual terms, I approach the subject through the perspective of environmental justice, with contributions from property rights studies, in order to explore the diverse social dynamics that have been emerging around land concessions at the local level.

In the wake of two consecutive and prolonged wars – independence (1964-1974) and civil (1977-1992) – Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world, was deeply impoverished, covered in landmines, with its basic communication and social infrastructures destroyed. A former Portuguese colony, the country has been recovering and growing fast since the early 1990s, but has been highly dependent on foreign aid (Arndt *et al.*, 2006). It has even gained the status of 'donor darling', for the diligence in implementing the conditions imposed by aid agencies, starting with market liberalisation policies (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012).

Twenty years ago, the country started a process of land reform that has been widely praised as exemplary in the African context (Hoekema, 2012). The 1997 Land Law (Law nº 19/97) paves the way for a wide recognition of customary land use rights, whilst also regulating access to land by corporate investors. Particularly over the last decade, land investors and agribusiness companies have regained interest in the country's rural areas. Agribusiness projects, many of them coming to revive old colonial plantations, bring promises of creating jobs, fostering economic growth and investing in social infrastructure for long deprived subsistence farmers. However, in Mozambique, as elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, agrarian movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) joined forces to oppose new plans for rural development, fearing negative outcomes in land ownership and food security.

In principle, legal recognition of use rights is a landmark achievement for rural communities, in a country where more than 70% rely on agriculture for their

living. Nonetheless, the transparency and fairness of consultation procedures has been one of the key concerns for civic movements and academic researchers alike. Empirical research on land deals peaked after international non-governmental organisations raised awareness of the negative impacts of the 'land rush', particularly between 2012 and 2013 (Oya, 2013a). Recent field research in Mozambique, such as Nhantumbo and Salomão (2010) and Hanlon (2011), demonstrates how a progressive legislation can, in practice, prove insufficient to ensure just outcomes for rural communities.

In the wake of this academic interest, this research interrogates how land concessions, in this case agricultural investments, unfold over time, after the first stages of gaining consent and granting access to land and resources. It is an in-depth case study of two foreign-owned plantations located in Northern Mozambique (Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces), the poorest region in the country and currently the focus of ambitious development programs, such as Prosavana and the Nacala Development Corridor.

Based on qualitative methods, mainly interviews and observation, the study investigates the multiple layers of interaction between the social actors involved in these two concession processes: government officers, customary chiefs, local authorities, NGO activists, plantation managers and the local population. Whilst taking into account the approval and consultation processes, from the national administration to the village, the research gives special relevance to the social dynamics that unfold at the local level, in each site. I seek to distinguish the divergent notions of consent, legitimacy and fairness that will emerge amongst local populations over time, as they observe the development of the projects and how well initial commitments are honoured, in terms of labour opportunities and community benefits.

Whilst most research on land deals has come from the field of political economy, and particularly dominated by neo-Marxist approaches, I argue that the justice perspective can contribute new insights into the social outcomes of the 'land rush'. I propose to do so by grounding the analysis on the concept of recognition, namely intersubjective recognition, as the underlying element that frames processes of public participation (community consultations), and ultimately also the

distributive effects of land concessions. In doing so, I seek to capture how the material, spatial and temporal dimensions interact to shape notions of legitimacy towards agribusiness investors.

The following section will introduce the thematic background of the thesis, explaining the drivers, features and main concerns of the land deals phenomenon. I will then outline the research objectives and present the research questions that guided the fieldwork and empirical analysis. The last section of this chapter outlines the structure of the thesis, summarising the key insights from each of the chapters.

1.1. Background: land deals in Africa

A concurrence of global crises – energy, climate, food prices – along with globalisation and markets liberalisation, has driven a resurged interest of transnational corporate investors for land and natural resources across the Global South, over the last decade (Cotula, 2012a; De Schutter, 2011b; Grain *et al.*, 2014; McMichael, 2014; Zoomers, 2010). Land, particularly arable land, came to be increasingly perceived as a global commodity and investment opportunity (Chouquer, 2012; Galaty, 2012; Li, 2014b). This phenomenon has been especially apparent since 2008, and came to be frequently named under the politically charged label of 'land grabbing'. Multiple reports from transnational organisations have shown concern over the possible impacts on food security, rural poverty and community lands in the host countries. Impacts that are expected to be exacerbated by scarcity of arable land, due to soil degradation, climate change and population growth (Grain *et al.*, 2014).

The new surge of large-scale acquisitions – usually in the form of long-term land concessions - was shaped by major shifts in the international political economy of agriculture and the environment. Firstly, a dilution of boundaries between the governance systems of food, energy, climate, industry and finance. Secondly, the rise of BRICS and middle-income countries, along with changes in the role of nation-states, which drove the emergence of a more polycentric food and agro-commodity regime, traditionally centred in the North Atlantic (Borras *et al.*, 2013). In the words of Peluso and Lund (2011: 669), in practice "there is no one grand land

grab, but a series of changing contexts, emergent processes and forces, and contestations that are producing new conditions and facilitating shifts in both de jure and de facto land control".

Investor countries are diversified. Top investors come both from developed economies, such as the United States and several European countries (United Kingdom, The Netherlands), but also from emerging powers – China and India – as well as Asian and Middle East countries, concerned with ensuring food security to their own growing populations. In the case of Mozambique, Portugal is also amongst the main investing countries.

Other global drivers have been contributing to the rising interest in land: the commodification and financing of carbon sequestration, leading to investment in biofuels and forests, in what some called a "green grabbing" (Fairhead *et al.*, 2012). This new valuation of avoided emissions or protected forests in the markets is behind the emergence of an "economy of repair" (Leach *et al.*, 2012), characterised by multiple efforts to compensate damage caused by economic growth and a re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and nature (Cotula, 2012a). This includes global policies and programmes aimed at preserving environmental assets in the developing countries – in order to compensate for the environmental and climate degradation caused by the developed nations - such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

Furthermore, the implementation of global policies to fight climate change by reducing emission of greenhouse gases (Kyoto Protocol, 1997), coupled with a rise in oil prices, has driven private corporations to invest in biofuel plantations across the Global South. Governments and investors held high expectations of 'win-win' results around such crops as jatropha, which many governments across Sub-Saharan Africa promoted as a means to tackle rural poverty while reducing global emissions. However, the drop in oil prices had the biofuels industry crashing down, and many investors abandoned projects or shifted to other crops. The financial crisis may be also a general driver for the abandonment of investment intentions, and for the protracted implementation of some projects, which reflects on the delivery of promised community benefits and local employment.

Amidst the surge of interest for available land in Africa, claims that agriculture is crucial for economic growth and poverty reduction on the continent have been renewed. In face of persistent food insecurity, lack of infrastructures and public services in rural areas, national governments turn to private corporations (most often transnational, in agriculture and other sectors, such as forestry and mining) as the solutions to foster development, through direct investment in infrastructures and jobs creation (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012; Hall *et al.*, 2015).

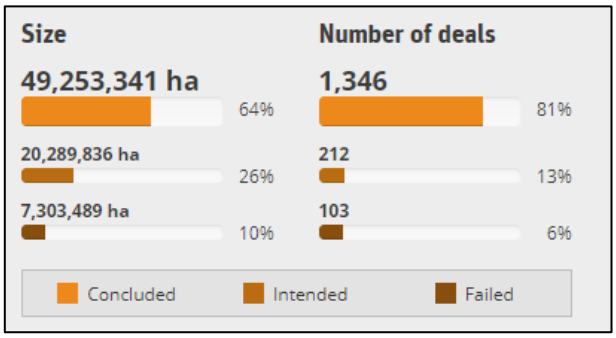
The so-called 'land rush' coincides with increasing calls for a new 'Green Revolution' for Africa (Diao *et al.*, 2008), that is expected to propel investment in new crop varieties and technology, and ultimately reduce poverty and food insecurity across the continent. An Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) was created in 2006, chaired by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. The hope is that foreign direct investment in agricultural growth will contribute to increase productivity on the continent, with benefits for local food security, poverty alleviation and global markets, a vision supported by global institutions such as the World Bank (Deininger, Byerlee, *et al.*, 2011). Technology and legitimising discourses thus produce "an expanded capacity to envision 'underutilised' land as a globally important asset capable of producing food, profits and a reduction of poverty as well" (Li, 2014b, p. 12).

The Land Matrix Global Observatory[2] - a project created to collect data on the 'land rush' – registered 2450 land deals on 22th August 2017 (since 2000). Of these, 1661 were transnational, involving foreign companies, and 789 only domestic investors. Of the foreign investors, around a hundred have abandoned their projects, corresponding to 10% of the total concession area (7.3 Million hectares, figure 1).

[2] The Land Matrix Global Observatory - http://www.landmatrix.org - is an online database that collects data on land deals, from sources such as local NGOs and key informants. It was founded by a group of research institutions and NGOs, including: International Land Coalition (ILC), Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). [accessed on 22th August, 2017]

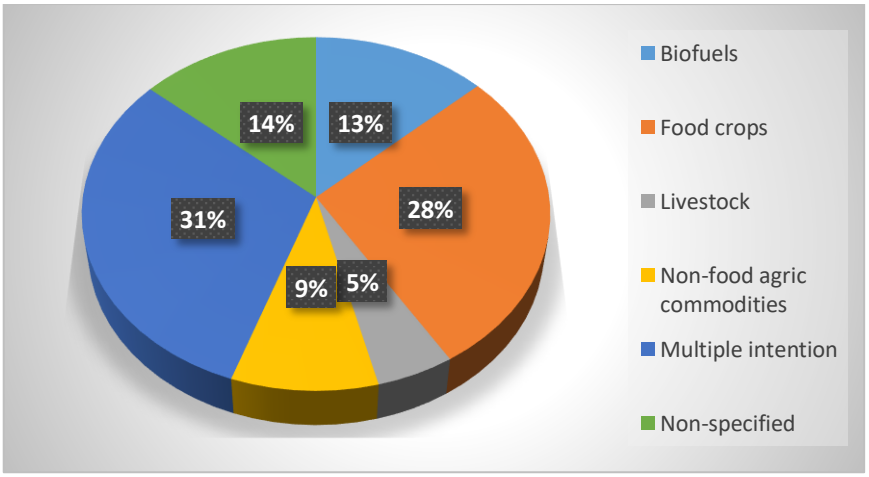
Figure 1 - Transnational land deals

(Land Matrix, as of 22 August 2017)



The same database showed that most transnational investment, at the global level, have their focus on agriculture (959 deals), followed by forestry (139), industry (20), tourism (13), renewable energy (9) and conservation (4)[3]. Agricultural investments have mostly targeted food crops and biofuels (figure 2). In Southern Africa, most agricultural investments have targeted biofuels (e.g. jatropha, sugar cane for bioethanol) and, more recently, preference goes to food crops (soya, rice, maize) (Hall, 2011).

Figure 2 - Intentions of land investments



(Based on Land Matrix data, 22th August 2017)

Much of the 'Green Revolution' discourse is based upon the assumption that a large portion of the arable land on the continent is underused, or even unused

[3] Land Matrix, as of 22th August, 2017. Based on information for 1336 deals. Excludes "multiple intention" (183) and "other" sectors (9).

(Galaty, 2012; Li, 2014b; Purseigle & Chouquer, 2013), and hence should be exploited more intensively. The argument is part of a global food and energy crisis narrative (White *et al.*, 2012), whereby less densely populated areas are categorised as 'marginal' or 'empty', something the world cannot afford under the pressure of climate change and population growth. A vision of Africa as a 'sleeping giant' is central to landmark World Bank reports, such as Deininger, Byerlee, *et al.* (2011) and Byamugisha (2013). They acknowledge that land investors have tended to target countries that are perceived to have vast productive lands available, besides being characterised by a weak governance.

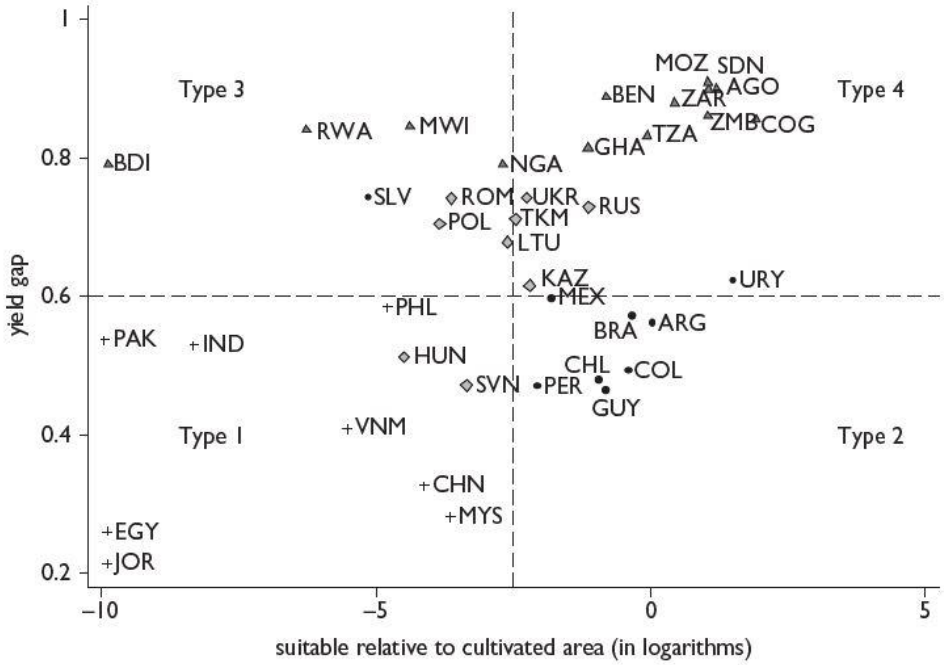
A World Bank assessment estimates that the "non-cultivated area suitable for cropping that is non-forested, non-protected, and populated with less than 25 persons/km2 (or 20 ha/household) amounts to 446 million ha, the equivalent to almost a third of globally cropped land (1.5 billion ha)" (Deininger, Byerlee, *et al.*, 2011). Figure 3 represents the yield gap[4] in selected countries across the globe, classified in four types: little land for expansion, low yield gap (type 1); suitable land available, low yield gap (type 2); little land available, high yield gap (type 3), suitable land available, high yield gap (type 4). Most countries identified as type 4, i.e. with larger yield gaps, are in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Mozambique (MOZ), Tanzania (TZA), Sudan (SDN) or Zambia (ZMB). Some of these countries have been top targets for land investors, such as Mozambique, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Between 2008 and 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture in Mozambique received 224 request for land concessions from private investors, covering more than 2.8 million hectares (roughly equivalent to the total area cultivated by smallholders in the country). From these projects, 129 targeted agriculture, including biofuels, food production and livestock. Initially, there were many projects targeting biofuels, including sugarcane (bioethanol) and jatropha. However, biofuel projects almost disappeared after 2010[5].

[4] The amount by which output could be increased under best practice management and production technologies (Deininger et al., 2011).
[5] Data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Maputo, 2015.

Figure 3 - Potential Land Availability vs. for Increasing Yields

(source: Deininger *et al.*, 2011[6])



Still, investors have tended to concentrate around the most accessible lands, near strategic transport and communication infrastructures, and rivers, which are precisely the most densely populated areas (Cotula, 2012a; Kaarhus & Dondeyne, 2015). In Mozambique, the 1977-1992 civil war between the ruling party Frelimo and the opposition guerrilla Renamo (see chapter 4), population growth and urbanisation resulted in a sharp increase in population density in urban and coastal areas, posing an increasing risk of land scarcity. As I will discuss in my empirical chapters, my interviews in the field, both with government officials and the local population, corroborate that this image of a 'no man's land', lying idle waiting for investors, has proved to be more of a myth than a reality on the ground. If there is such land, investors are usually not interested in it.

Moore (2010) has interrogated whether a new Agricultural Revolution is currently viable, or we are in face of a crisis of capitalism instead. Capitalisation requires rapid appropriation of ecologies - water, land, peasant societies – in order to generate an ecological surplus. This condition, he argues, was present for the

[6] © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2263 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

most part of the last 200 years, but is now increasingly compromised. The other face of the narrowing 'ecological surplus' is the generation of 'surplus people', when they are forced to leave agriculture but their labour is not absorbed in other economic sectors (Li, 2009b; McCarthy, 2010). There is some consensus that, with population growth and increasing land scarcity, alleviating poverty will require further support for non-farm activities and urban growth (Ellis, 2005; Wiggins *et al.*, 2010). However, in the absence of adequate livelihood alternatives, 'deagrarianisation' may come at the expense of the most vulnerable and poor, especially those who become landless in the process (Li, 2009a).

At the time of the first 'Green Revolution', in the 1970s, agricultural investment was centralised in the state, the key actor in fostering modernisation policies. In Africa, however, the 'revolution' did not achieve the expected results. Currently, the idea that investment in agriculture will directly impact on poverty reduction is mostly abandoned. Instead, it is expected that this will be achieved indirectly, through trickle-down effects from private investments, the creation of job opportunities and diversification of non-farm economic activities (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012).

Processes of land acquisition (or concession), as noted by Fairhead *et al.* (2012) and Cotula (2012a) involve a wide range of new actors, including NGOs, geographical services providers, venture capitalists and even final consumers. They are also highly politicised (Zoomers, 2010). Transnational corporations reinforce their influence as powerful players, commonly backed by national governments, who see in foreign investment the 'silver bullet' for both economic growth and investment in social infrastructures in rural areas (Hall *et al.*, 2015). Through the negotiation of foreign investment, the central state – often in Sub-Saharan Africa the owner of all land - repositions itself as a key actor in the development process (Borras *et al.*, 2013; Sassen, 2013).

The accumulation of land property and its means of production is by no means a new phenomenon, of course. Large-scale plantations were dominant in the colonial period in Africa – especially late 19th and early 20th centuries. The decolonisation process started in the 1950s-1960s has brought about new labour

legislation, and many governments opted for the model of contract farming[7], in order to increase agricultural productivity and improve food security. More recently, there has been a shift, and land investors started opting for direct land acquisitions (Cotula, 2012a). However, outgrow schemes persist, and many land deals include them at least partially (Hall *et al.*, 2015).

The term 'land grabbing' was first coined in an English translation of Karl Marx's "Capital" (Marx, 1867), where he discussed the appropriation of rural lands in England for the development of large-scale agriculture. The expression, implying illegitimate appropriation, has become widespread amongst civic movements, NGOs, and in the academic literature concerned with the recent surge in land deals. A report published in 2008 by the NGO Grain was perhaps the first to declare a global trend in 'land grabbing' linked to ramped-up biofuels promotion and food-for-export initiatives, associating the phenomenon with a return to the exploitation logics of colonialism (Grain, 2008). Soon, other civil society groups joined the debate, such as the Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN).

Amidst the 'land rush' controversy, global institutions came forward with policies and recommendations aimed at mitigating the impacts of land deals. Olivier De Schutter (2011a), the UN Special Rapporteur for the right to food, was one of the key actors who raised awareness to the negative impacts of land deals in food security amongst the world's poorest countries. Codes of conduct and Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investments' or 'RAI Principles' (Deininger, Ali, *et al.*, 2011) were launched, aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of land deals, as well as ensuring that these were implemented through democratic and inclusive processes. International NGOs, such as Via Campesina, advanced new civic movements for food justice, mobilising peasant organisations in host countries.

At a first stage, there was some over-simplification of the land deals debate, following the tendency of NGOs' reports to emphasise the role of foreign investors as 'baddies' and portray local peasants as either victims or unified resisters of land investments (Fairbairn, 2013; Hall *et al.*, 2015; White *et al.*, 2012). There is a

[7] Contract farming or outgrow schemes, whereby smallholders commit to grow a specific commercial crop and sell the produce to an investor, usually on their own lands. In exchange, they receive support to purchase chemical inputs and machinery, and discount the costs at the end of the season.

profound division nowadays between different conceptions of precisely what rural development should look like. One based on large-scale investments - mostly supported by private corporations and national governments – and another that poses the hope for the future on direct support for smallholders and the development of smaller farms. As White *et al.* (2012) emphasise, the reality on the ground does not fit neatly into any of these polarised views. Many land concessions involve areas under 1,000 hectares and engage local communities through outgrow schemes. We can neither expect land investments to only bring benefits to rural communities, in a perfect win-win scenario, nor can we discard all of them as a devastating threat in economic, ecological and social terms.

The policy debate roughly divides between supporters of large-scale investments and advocates of small farms. Lack of productivity, or the 'yield gap', has been the key argument for freeing up land for investors across the world, as World Bank reports demonstrate (Deininger, Byerlee, *et al.*, 2011). The persistent vulnerability of smallholder farming is though not surprising, due to the lack of government support, the impacts of market liberalisation, pushed by structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s, and public policies that prioritised land access over productivity increase (Berry, 1984; De Schutter, 2011b). In promoting the development of small farms and directly supporting smallholders, the problem of public investment remains. Solutions advocated to give small farms more leverage are mostly based on increasing direct public investment in infrastructures and public goods.

Finally, there are recent developments in land and agricultural markets that have direct implications for land deals research. Not all investment comes from agribusiness companies. Venture capital is also involved. In some cases, private corporations seek to take advantage of the low prices in the host countries, intending to sell the land later on, not to directly invest in agriculture. In addition, there are often greater-than-expected difficulties on the ground, or difficulties in financing (Cotula, 2012a). For instance, Nhantumbo and Salomão (2010) estimated that 2,670,000 hectares were under operation in Mozambique, compared to media reports of 10,305,000 hectares leased to private corporations. In some countries, the legislation allows the government to claim back the lands if specific conditions are

not met after a given period, and some, such as Mozambique and Ethiopia, have already done that in some cases.[8]

Before I proceed, it is important to leave a note about terminology. In referring to land deals, NGOs, institutions and academic researchers have used multiple terms. One of the most commonly employed is 'large-scale acquisitions', a relatively neutral expression. Nonetheless, in many of the target countries, socialist or post-socialist, there is no formal private property, and all land belongs to the state. The model most common across Sub-Saharan Africa is that of long-term concessions (usually 50 years, renewable up to 100). In practice, they can be considered almost equivalent to private acquisitions, as their duration extends across several generations. Besides being long-term, these concessions are usually above 1,000 hectares - therefore can be considered 'large-scale' - and may involve areas up to the tens of thousands of hectares (although in countries such as Mozambique this is most common in forestry investments). The terms 'land concessions', 'land deals', or still 'land leases' are also appropriate in this context. Throughout this thesis, I will mostly use the term 'land concessions', which I consider to be the most accurate for the Mozambican context, but also the more generic 'land deals' (either acquisitions or concessions). The term 'concession' encompasses a wide array of economic sectors and investors, and every land transfer where the state retains legal property (Hanlon, 2011). As this thesis specifically focuses on concessions for agricultural purposes, I will be resorting interchangeably to the terms 'agribusiness projects' and 'agricultural investments' as well.

It is also important to clarify the notion of 'local community', widely present in the literature of land deals, and also in this thesis. Although the empirical analysis assumes individuals and intersubjective relations as its focus, the expressions 'local community' or 'local population' will be used throughout the thesis. This should

[8] The Procana project in Massingir (Gaza province, Southern Mozambique) was led by Zambian and Zimbabwean investors. They signed a contract with the Mozambican government in 2007, which involved a sugarcane plantation of 30,000 hectares, to produce 600 million litres of bioethanol per year. In 2015, due to lack of results, the government decided to claim the land back and started looking for other investors. TSB, a sugar company from South Africa, decided to invest in Massingir, producing both sugar and ethanol. The company eventually abandoned the project for lack of profitability. [Source: http://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-yet-another-foreign-plantation-failure-joseph-hanlon; accessed on 23rd September, 2017]

not imply that I understand 'communities' as an amorphous or homogeneous body. There are contradictions, different aspirations and expectations amongst individuals, which reflect on their perceptions of agricultural investments. Those social dynamics, at times contradictory, or surprising, but certainly never obvious, are exactly the core of this research.

In the Mozambican administrative system and land legislation, 'community' is however a key concept. A 'community' (*comunidade* in Portuguese) is a small administrative unit below the locality level (*localidade*), meaning that a single village can comprise several "communities". For the purposes of the empirical analysis, I will employ the terms 'local' or 'rural community', when referring to the population living in the village where the concessions are located.

1.2. Rationale and research objectives

Mozambique is a paradigmatic case for studying the effects of land deals, in that its land rights legislation has been considered progressive and exemplary at the world scale (Hoekema, 2012). However, the implementation of the system has raised doubts and criticisms, and proved difficult. It is raising multiple justice issues on the ground. A key argument of this thesis is that, to understand processes of land concession in a country such as Mozambique, it is fundamental that we pay attention to the context-specific dynamics, at the local level, that shape land use and control of natural resources. I will do so through a comparative analysis of two case studies in Northern Mozambique. I offer a socio-economic characterisation of these research sites in chapter 4.

I will support my analysis by working with the conceptual framework developed by environmental justice scholars, who have tended to organise their inquiries around three dimensions of justice: distribution, participation (procedure) and recognition (Schlosberg, 2013). Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive review of this literature. In this thesis, I will attribute a central role to recognition, which I see as an underlying dimension that informs participation and distribution. In order to fulfil this purpose, I explore theories of recognition, namely the framework developed by political philosopher Axel Honneth. Taking into account the geographical and political context of the research – a developing African country –

I complement this analytical framework by integrating contributions from recent property rights studies, particularly the literature suited to analysing social dynamics around land and natural resources in the Sub-Saharan Africa (reviewed in section 2.2.).

From a comprehensive review of the above-mentioned literatures, as well as studies of agrarian political economy, it was possible to identify the key gaps remaining on the research of the 'land rush' in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well on environmental justice scholarship and recognition theory. I outline these briefly in this section, proceeding to detail, in chapter 2, my conceptual approach to addressing these lacunae. Finally, I will discuss, in chapter 8, how far I have contributed to improve knowledge in each of these areas. The three main gaps relate to an emphasis on global processes, a focus on the formal and institutional aspects of the 'land rush', and finally a lack of attention to specific environmental and conditions and resources.

An emphasis on global processes *versus* diversified local dynamics. Recent studies and reviews have highlighted the need to go beyond a focus on global processes (Zoomers *et al.*, 2016), adopting a more nuanced approach to empirical research on land deals (Smalley & Corbera, 2012; White *et al.*, 2012). This will imply, for instance, taking a better account of individual (Sikor & Newel, 2014) and cross-scale agency (Smalley & Corbera, 2012), as well as the multiple possible reactions, including incorporation into the investments, and the absence of resistance (Hall *et al.*, 2015).

A focus on the formal and institutional dimensions. Zoomers (2013) stresses how the policy debate has focused on governance, rules and institutions, and how taking historical legacies into account is crucial to go beyond a symptomatic approach to land deals. Borras and Franco (2012) note an emphasis on 'form', rather than substance, and appeal for more studies that address land uses and property relations, whilst Bernstein and Brass (1997) defends a better acknowledgment of cultural dimensions. Oya (2013) has also appealed for more in-depth (quantitative and qualitative) research on labour trends in African contexts.

Materiality and environmental conditions. A need to pay more attention to the relation of rural people with the environment (Sikor & Newel, 2014), as well

as particular environmental conditions (Bernstein & Byres, 2001), including the vulnerability of local populations to climate risks (Zoomers, 2013). I consider that environmental justice scholars are especially well positioned to make a rich contribution to this dimension, as I will develop further in this section and in chapter 2.

Environmental justice concerns inequalities in the distribution of environmental risks and benefits, as well as inclusive participation in decision-making processes, and finally the recognition of other's values, knowledge and identities. It focuses attention on the dynamic interactions between social groups and the environment, which is key to the rationale of using this framework for analysing land concessions. Balancing social and environmental aspects within the same empirical analysis allows us to better capture unintended, or underexplored justice outcomes of land concessions, for instance increased exposure of local populations to climate change risks.

The ability of local populations to secure access to land and natural resources is not contained in the strict legal dimension of land rights. In a country where the official land tenure system overlaps with customary practices, social and family relations, as well as identity categories, are crucial resources. Still, financial capital remains fundamental, even in cases where all land is State property (and thus not subject to sale). Depending on the specific social and cultural context, there is a myriad of resources, immaterial and material, which concur to raise, or decrease, access to land and natural resources (Ribot & Peluso, 2003, Li 2014). The ability to mobilise them can mitigate or exacerbate the distributive outcomes of a land concession.

On the ground, the researcher comes across a variety of logics, social relations and connections that continue to evolve well after a land concession is approved and settled. The notions of fairness or legitimacy towards the new concession will depend, for instance, on whether local peasants perceive their labour skills or knowledge to be recognised. These I will call, following Lund (2016) and Sikor and Lund (2009), recognition dynamics. These encompass both formal and intersubjective dimensions (Honneth, 1995), which evolve in dialectic relation between each other.

Following James Fraser (2017) and Christian Lund (2016), I argue that attention to processes of mutual recognition and intersubjective relationships is crucial for understanding justice issues in the context of African agrarian societies. This is a core argument driving the thesis, and will be explained in more detail in the conceptual framework (section 2.4), in the next chapter. Furthermore, this research seeks to contribute to the emerging literature on justice as recognition, within the environmental justice scholarship (e.g. Martin et al., 2016; Coolsaet, 2016). In doing this, the thesis also contributes to the emerging scholarship applying Honneth's theories of recognition to agrarian contexts in the Global South.

Drawing from the review summarised above, I have designed this research in order to give emphasis to a number of key aspects: the historical and political context of each case study; the acknowledgment of local strategies for environmental management; and the impacts of environmental change. I assume, therefore, that the temporal and material dimensions are crucial for understanding the social implications of the 'Green Revolution' land deals. With this in mind, I have defined the following key objectives for this research:

- To observe the local recognition dynamics that develop during the initial years following agricultural investments, paying attention to both formal and intersubjective dimensions of recognition;
- To analyse how ideas about justice are intersubjectively constructed between social actors, paying attention to notions of consent, fairness and legitimacy towards specific uses of land and natural resources, as well as their users;
- To identify the key legitimising resources that different social actors mobilise to support their recognition claims, paying particular attention to resources such as historical legacy, memories, social relations and identities.

1.3. Research questions

In order to explore the objectives outlined above, I established one overarching research question and four sub-questions, which will guide the empirical analysis of the thesis. Each one of the sub-questions will address a specific aspect of the inquiry, leading to a more thorough understanding of the current situation in the two research sites.

How do local ideas about justice evolve during and after the implementation of an agricultural investment?

Sub-questions:

1 – How do recognition dynamics affect processes of public consultation and consent around a new land concession?

2 – How do investments constitute 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition, and which (material and immaterial) resources do social actors mobilise, in order to confer legitimacy to their ownership claims, or otherwise seek incorporation into the projects?

3 - How do notions of fairness evolve over the first years of a farmland investment, amongst the resettled populations?

4 – How do recognition dynamics influence the distributive outcomes of compensation schemes, in terms of equity and vulnerability of the local populations?

1.4. Overview of the thesis

This thesis is structured around three empirical chapters, which encompass a comparative analysis of the two case studies in Northern Mozambique. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical debate about land deals, addressing the approaches of especially three schools of thought: environmental justice, agrarian political economy and property rights. Here I discuss the complementarities and divergences between the different approaches, and introduce the conceptual framework for this thesis, which combines the perspectives from environmental justice and property scholarships.

Chapter 3 introduces the research design of the study and the research methods I employed during the fieldwork in Mozambique. Here I discuss the epistemological stance of the research, as well as the criteria for selecting two specific cases in the Northern provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado. This chapter also includes considerations about the ethical implications, risks and particular challenges involved in conducting this field research.

Chapter 4 presents a historical, economic and political contextualisation of Mozambique, including a brief analysis of policies for land allocation and rural development in the country. Section 4.4. introduces the customary land practices common amongst the Macua, the dominant ethnic group in Northern Mozambique. Section 4.5. introduces the two research sites, offering a social, cultural and political characterisation of each one.

Chapter 5 discusses the current situation of land deals in Mozambique, how legislation on land concessions has been applied, the challenges these processes have been raising for procedural justice, and ultimately how these have been reflecting on the selected research sites. Although the land legislation in Mozambique has been considered exemplary at the global level, as I have previously discussed, its application on the ground has raised some challenges. The Mozambique case proves interesting as a starting point to argue for the importance of looking beyond processes of formal recognition, as expressed through consultation mechanisms, to the intersubjective dimension of land allocation

processes, where social relations, identities and subjective experiences play a central role.

Chapter 6 discusses how, independently of the land tenure systems and formal land rights in place, the process of implementation of a land deal will have significant differences in each geographical and social context. Historical legacy emerges as a strong legitimising device for new investments in agriculture, in areas with a long, continuous history of occupation by corporate or state land 'owners'[9]. Such is the case of the first research site, Malema (Nampula province), where the identity of the population has come to be strongly attached to the presence of a plantation. I identify elements of coloniality in the way this project is accepted and dealt with by the local population. Linked to historical memory, social identities emerge as a strong basis for ownership and incorporation claims on the part of local peasants. However, this acceptance is not without conditions. Farmland investors can mobilise historical memories in their favour, yet they are bound to spatial and temporal boundaries, which are determinant for maintaining their legitimacy.

In Chapter 7, we will see how, where there is no continuous historical legacy to favour the implantation of a land investor, which is the case of the second research site (Ocúa, Cabo Delgado), monetary compensation assumes the key role in legitimising the occupation of community farm plots and the displacement of local peasants. The intersubjective dynamics of recognition, once again, influence the outcomes of the process. Ultimately, what appears to determine the acceptance of these projects is a widespread misrecognition of customary land uses and practices. In face of a short-term monetary compensation, rural villagers themselves underestimate the consequences of resettlement over the longer-term. The perception of traditional land uses as 'backward' and 'ineffective' facilitates the legitimising process. Progressively, the tendency is for local populations to be 'squeezed out' to more remote and marginal areas. Furthermore, in "critical resource areas" (Unruh, 1998) - where there is increasing competition for productive land and access to natural resources (wood, water) - these displacements may reinforce social inequalities. Greater distances make life more difficult for

[9] Although the term 'owner' is not the most exact in the Mozambique context (unless referring to the state), it is widely employed in the country in relation to customary ownership or corporate investors. I will adopt it throughout the thesis in this figurative sense.

women with children and older peasants, for instance. In the meantime, local peasants seek to minimise the impacts by cultivating marginal areas and often any remaining “interstices” (Chouquer, 2013), enclaves inside of the plantations, however precarious these may be. Finally, this chapter addresses how land concessions influence the vulnerability of displaced populations to environmental change, namely climate risks.

Finally, chapter 8 summarises the main findings of the research, considering their implications for policy-making. It reflects on how this thesis has contributed to the academic debate on land deals, as well as to environmental justice scholarship and recognition theory. It then highlights the remaining research gaps, and offers recommendations for future research on land deals and environmental justice.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Largely dominated by the field of political economy, land distribution issues in Africa have also captured the interest of anthropologists, political ecologists and human geographers. These diverse perspectives contribute to a rich academic debate on the impacts and future prospects for rural development on the continent. In this chapter, I will discuss how different schools of thought have conceptualised recent land dynamics in Africa and elsewhere. I will then proceed to show how the combination between the environmental justice and property perspectives offers a new angle of analysis for the study of land deals in countries such as Mozambique.

The conceptual framework for this thesis, which I explain in detail in section 2.4., assumes that a recognition-based paradigm is the most adequate to study social realities that are inextricably linked to ecological processes (Whyte, 2018). Such is the case of the peasant communities in Northern Mozambique, where social identities are attached to particular territories, land use practices and environmental resources. An analysis of the justice outcomes of land deals will necessarily require attention to this spatial and material dimensions.

For the analysis of the empirical data, I will therefore draw upon Honneth's conceptual model of recognition, focusing on two particular elements: rights (legal domain) and solidarity (intersubjective and legal domains). I will analyse how local peasants seek incorporation into agricultural projects, through recognition of their accumulated experience and their identities as farm labourers. Drawing upon property rights scholars such as Lund (2016) and Li (2014), I will analyse agricultural investments as 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition, contingent on relations of mutual acknowledgement, and the respect of spatial and temporal boundaries. In doing so, I will demonstrate how local peasants seek to capitalise the intersubjective dimension of solidarity by summoning material and immaterial resources (stories, historical memory, identities) that can grant them a better social esteem, and thus possibly better rights of access to land and natural resources.

2.1 Land deals: the lens of agrarian political economy

As I have explained in chapter 1, the attention given by international NGOs to the 'land grabbing' issue, followed by interest from worldwide media, propelled a surge of research and policy around land concessions over the last few years. International organisations, such as the World Bank, while advocating for a 'Green Revolution' on the continent, responded with policies and recommendations aimed at minimising the negative impacts of the 'land rush'. In parallel, there was a spike in academic work on land deals since 2008. Examples of this academic visibility are the Land Deals Politics Initiative of the Institute of Social Sciences in The Hague, Netherlands, as well as the Land Conference organised at the University of Cornell in 2012. Following these calls for papers, the body of scholarly work on land concessions rapidly expanded.

Nevertheless, recent reviews have found that most of the early research did little to clarify the impacts of land deals on the ground (Oya, 2013a). Scoones *et al.* (2013) also pointed out the methodological weaknesses of this first cycle of academic work on land deals. Early academic research tended to over-simplify the political and economic context of land concessions, by either approaching it through a large-scale quantitative perspective (Edelman, 2013), or by looking at individual cases through local-based studies, though lacking the methodological rigour to offer a precise analysis that allows extrapolation (Oya, 2013b). The focus on the negative impacts of land deals – particularly in terms of smallholder farmers evictions or resettlements, when these occur – has obscured the complexity of the new social relations and 'patterns of accumulation' they can also originate amongst smallholder farmers. Hall (2011) gives the example of biofuels plantations, in which smallholders are often involved and able to obtain an additional income.

A more recent strand of land deals literature has focused attention on actors, dynamics and power relations at the local level. Local authorities, for instance, may be considered too weak in face of national governments and investors, particularly transnational ones (Zoomers, 2010). However, it is impossible to ignore that, in contexts characterised by legal pluralism - such as postcolonial and post-socialist countries (as many of the host countries are) - authority and property are under

constant negotiation and redefinition. Local actors, their subjective experiences and individual agency, play a fundamental role in this context (Berry, 1993; Sikor & Lund, 2009). Furthermore, it is evident that the connection of local actors to transnational activist networks generated new perspectives, audiences and scenarios for the social contestation of 'land grabbing'. From the interaction with Brazilian organisations, for instance, peasant movements in Mozambique became aware of the landless problem in that country, and this shaped their discourses and concerns about rural development programs (see section 5.3.3)..

There are other areas deserving further attention from land deals researchers. Although current land concessions may create problems and conflicts amongst future generations (De Schutter, 2010), the generational dimension has been largely absent from social research in this field (Hall *et al.*, 2015). There have been recurrent calls for a more nuanced and local-based empirical research on land concessions, as other areas of concern have received little attention. Local population, for instance, has been assumed as a given. While most research forgets the newcomers attracted by land investments, there is a need to understand mobility patterns and pay attention to competing claims and the emergence of conflicts with the new populations (Zoomers, 2010).

There has been a call for more local-based analysis of the new dynamics implied in the implementation of land deals (Hall *et al.*, 2015; Smalley & Corbera, 2012) –, be it in agriculture, mining, forests or other sectors. Within agrarian studies, there is still much scope to develop a more critical understanding of the academic perspectives and outcomes themselves. Political economic narratives such as the 'struggle against dispossession' and the 'struggle against exploitation', have been fundamental in understanding global trends of agriculture commodification. This focus on global processes has been dominant in agrarian political economy, but may obfuscate the diversity of outcomes in different local contexts. As Hall *et al.* (2015) argue, the "classic political economy-based framing of people's struggles may not fully capture the range and complexity of the politics around contemporary enclosures where the ecological dimension has become increasingly prominent" (p. 467-8).

Contestation is frequently assumed as the most obvious and common

popular reaction (Hall *et al.*, 2015). Notwithstanding obvious power asymmetries *vis-à-vis* corporate investors and political elites, rural populations will develop a myriad of responses to land concessions – which may include violence or more covert forms of resistance, such as planting in already occupied lands (Moreda, 2015; Scott, 1987). They will also hold expectations, seek alliances and obtain arrangements from the corporations present in their areas. Frequently local villagers will instead seek incorporation in the new setting, as the most recent empirical work has been demonstrating (Mamonova, 2015; McCarthy, 2010). Acknowledging these realities is crucial for understanding the social impacts of the 'land rush' in the Global South.

More recently, the agrarian and environmental justice movements have been converging, especially around two pressing concerns – food security and climate change (Borras & Franco, 2012). In an effort to better grasp such transversal phenomena, the natural and social sciences have been converging under a common research agenda, and social sciences themselves increasingly benefit from interdisciplinary dialogues. The work of political economists has been able to capture the global trends of the 'land rush' and its transversal impacts in terms of capital and labour. Still, there is a considerable scope for other academic currents, such as environmental justice and property rights scholarship, to contribute new perspectives in understanding the current dynamics around land and natural resources across the Global South.

As Sikor and Newell (2014), Walker (2009) and Li (2014b) point out, the materiality of natural resources matters, and as such the contributions from interdisciplinary academic approaches, that cross over the boundaries between environmental and social sciences, are fundamental in understanding land issues in the Global South today. This is one of the key distinct elements of the approach of environmental justice, when addressing inequalities in relation to the environment. The landscape – as well as our specific history of relating to these non-human actors (such as water, land, forest, wildlife) – shape different understandings of what 'environment' and a just relationship to it should be (Holland, 2008; Latour, 2005). As we will see in the following section, the environmental justice perspective is emerging as a novel way of exploring ontological, spatial and temporal boundaries

- between human and non-human, local and global processes, present and future generations (Holifield *et al.*, 2009; Walker, 2009).

2.2 Environmental and social justice

Environmental justice (EJ) scholarship emerged in the United States, with some works focusing on the location of hazardous waste dumping sites. These showed that racial minorities ended up more exposed to increased environmental risks. From North America to Europe, environmental justice scholars focused primarily on the developed countries of the North, but more recently have been moving their attention to the Global South. Over the last few years, environmental justice scholars have been focusing on the impacts of global environmental policies and regulations in developing countries. Some examples are the case studies compiled in Sikor (2013b), or the extensive empirical research across Africa, on ecosystem services and conservation by Martin *et al.* (2014) and Gross-Camp *et al.* (2012).

Initially work on environmental justice was mostly concerned with how environmental risks and benefits (e.g. natural resources) were locally distributed. For long environmental justice scholars discussed justice issues in terms of distribution, particularly concerned with equality in access to resources or exposure to environmental risks (Walker, 2009). More recently, other dimensions have been emerging, namely procedural justice, which concerns equal participation in decision-making processes, as well as recognition, referring to the acknowledgement of alternative values, identities and knowledges (Schlosberg, 2013).

Official development and environmental policies are necessarily informed by given conceptions of justice (Sikor & Newell, 2014) – such as the human rights approach – however social actors and movements have more recently challenged conventional notions of justice. In their effort to better understand notions and meanings of justice, environmental justice scholars have observed the claims and discourses of activist movements. Environmental justice scholars such as David Schlosberg have drawn their conceptualisations from social movements “in order to better understand what constitutes a pluralist conception of justice” (Schlosberg, 2004, p. 537).

Along with globalisation, justice movements increasingly collaborate across international borders, with peasant organisations, for instance, but also across fields, with academic researchers (Anguelovski & Alier, 2014). Climate change is a clear example where the framing of harms and responsibilities permeates geographical boundaries. The concept of 'climate justice' emerged when it became clear that many of the countries most affected are not those that most contributed to raising carbon emissions (Walker, 2009). Other global processes, such as food production, generate global injustices and disparities between countries, leading to the creation of civic movements for food justice sovereignty. The most recent emergence of a crisis in capitalist systems, since 2008, along with the climate crisis, are changing social and ecological relations, producing new injustices in the systems of production and consumption, with consequences still to be seen (Holifield *et al.*, 2009).

If environmental justice scholars started by focusing their attention on distributive issues - the just distribution of benefits and burdens, or environmental 'goods' and 'bads' (section 2.2.1) – there are other two dimensions with utmost relevance for environmental justice research. These are procedural justice (section 2.2.3), which concerns political representation in decision-making processes (public participation), and recognition of others' different views, knowledge, and identities, more frequently associated with processes of cultural integration (section 2.2.4). Finally, some scholars propose there is an interesting potential in combining the capabilities framework (2.2.2), developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, with the environmental justice scholarship (Edwards *et al.*, 2016; Schlosberg & Carruthers, 2010). I will now describe in more detail how environmental justice research evolved in relation to each of these dimensions.

2.2.1 Distribution paradigm: 'goods' and 'bads'

The most commonly adopted principles of distributive justice emerge from John Rawls' theory of "justice as fairness" and David Miller's (1999) principles of social justice.

John Rawls (1971), who has long been considered the father of the liberal theory of justice, defined liberty and difference as the two basic principles of justice.

Through his well-known metaphor of the 'veil of ignorance', he derives the principles that individuals would follow when asked to decide about the distribution of goods in society, within an idealised social model. The veil of ignorance means that individuals would not know their relative position in the system, neither their personal characteristics (race, gender, social status, etc.), allowing for an impartial evaluation of the best solution for the whole of society. From this thought experiment, Rawls derives his two principles of justice as fairness: liberty and difference. The liberty principle presupposes that everyone should be allowed wide liberties of political representation and association, as well as equal economic opportunities. The difference principle allows, though, that primary goods be distributed unevenly, in the cases that this would benefit the least advantaged members of society, in the context of the experiment. In contrast with utilitarian conceptions of justice - which envisage to maximise happiness in the society as a whole – Rawls' account can be said to be egalitarian, even though founded on liberal political grounds.

David Miller advocated a pluralistic conception of social justice, and that different principles should be adopted depending on the type of social organisation in question. In his well-known book "Principles of Social Justice" (1999), Miller defined need, equality, and desert (merit) as the main pillars for just decisions, but does not apply them equally in any social context. Whereas equality should be the standard for justice within nations, he argued, in the case of a workplace - an instrumental association - desert should be the guiding principle for distribution of benefits.

Distributive conceptualisations of justice were central for early environmental justice research (Walker, 2009), which emerged in the United States, in close proximity to social movements that were drawing attention to how racial minorities were more exposed to environmental risks. The environmental justice movement was symbolically initiated in 1983 in Warren County, when a low-income black community sparked a protest over the location of a hazardous waste dumping site. Other social movements followed, and some NGOs even published research on the unequal exposure to pollution along lines of social class, for instance Friends of the Earth in the United Kingdom in 1999, who coined the term 'pollution justice' (Agyeman, 2014).

Earlier academic works on environmental justice have analysed how particular vulnerable groups were exposed to higher environmental risks, along the lines of race and social class (Sze & London, 2008). From there, they proceeded to focus on the access to environmental 'goods' such as land and natural resources (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). More recently, especially over the last decade, this focus broadened to encompass global challenges, such as climate change, regional issues and other dimensions, including participation procedures and recognition of different social groups, their views and values (Fraser, 1995; Holifield *et al.*, 2009; Sikor, 2013a; Walker, 2009). In parallel, environmental justice scholarship expanded its disciplinary and geographical boundaries, as it became increasingly clear how crucial it is to understand how injustices are expressed in different geographical contexts (Harvey, 1996). Furthermore, with the emergence of Marxist urban political ecology, environmental justice research has increasingly sought to contextualise injustices within social structures and political-economic processes (Holifield *et al.*, 2009).

In epistemological and methodological terms, environmental justice research has expanded rapidly as well. It became more independent from activist movements, and also more closely engaged with different social theories and traditions. Quantitative methodologies dominated at first, but nowadays environmental justice research spans across disciplines and employs a diversity of qualitative methods to address issues of knowledge and representation.

Empirical studies on environmental justice have explored different conceptions of justice, and how they reflect divergent justice principles, moving across to the Global South to examine, for example, how local conceptions of justice conflict with the underlying logic of international environmental policies such as REDD and Payment for Ecosystem Services (Martin *et al.*, 2014; Sikor *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, researchers have been looking to better understand how the application of different justice principles leads to different justice outcomes and what harms and mechanisms (e.g. of misrecognition of local values) are at play in these processes. Drawing on social theory, they seek to identify the most appropriate responses, which can serve as reference for policy-making.

The move away from a sole distributional focus followed the realisation that justice conflicts increasingly concerned indivisible resources, such as social respect, which came to be theorised as recognition issues (Honneth, 2004). In addition, other dimensions have been theorised within an environmental justice framework, including human capabilities and participation procedures. I will focus on these two dimensions in the following sections.

2.2.2 Capabilities: development as freedom of choice

Schlosberg (2007) has suggested the inclusion of capabilities as a fourth dimension in the environmental justice framework, seeking to establish a link to liberal theories of freedom and human development put forward by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011). These links have just started to be explored in theoretical terms, and are even more preliminary in field research (Edwards *et al.*, 2016).

In fact, when one looks at the capabilities list outlined by Martha Nussbaum (2011a), the overlaps and synergies with the dimensions of environmental justice are evident. Distributive concerns, for instance, are reflected in such capabilities as bodily health (2) – including adequate nutrition and shelter, or material control over one's environment (10B), including the right to hold property. Participation in decision-making is explicitly expressed under the capability of "political control over one's environment" (10A), including the right to political participation, free speech and association. Recognition resonates with other capabilities, such as being able to use one's senses, imagination and thoughts (4), or else to form a conception of the good (practical reason – 6), or still to have concern to other species (8). In practice, recognition can be related to the whole of capabilities, in one way or another. With this in mind, it is probably more useful to regard these concepts as an alternative way of articulating the justice dimensions – for instance, through the analysis of harms as lack of opportunities - rather than a separate dimension alongside the other three.

More recently, capabilities scholars have been broadening the spectrum of their analysis, encompassing environmental dimensions and non-human actors. Nussbaum (2011) has been working to better understand the relation between

citizens and the non-human species. This involves the conceptualisation of non-human capabilities, as a means to identify the rights of other species and our duties towards them, from a philosophical point of view. On her part, Holland (2008) has introduced environmental quality as an instrumental condition to the pursuit of the ten capabilities. As Schlosberg (2013) points out, if we adopt a capabilities perspective, then we ought to recognise the value of natural systems (for processes and provisions), in order to avoid threatening the basic needs of those who depend on them.

Grounded on a liberal approach and focused on the individual level, the key pillar for the capabilities framework is the concept of human development developed by Amartya Sen (1999). According to this notion of development as freedom, human development should be measured in terms of how people are able to pursue the kind of life they value, he argues, in contrast to measures of development solely based on indicators of economic growth. The capabilities approach advocates development policies that allow the flourishment of each individual. The standards for evaluating these policies are expressed in the form of capabilities, which a "decent political order" should ensure to all citizens, at least at a "threshold level" (Nussbaum, 2011a, p. 33).

What is more difficult is to link the individual perspective to societal goals, defining which needs, at which level, should inform public policies. As Edwards *et al.* (2016, p. 766) note, capabilities theory understands justice "in only comparative terms, not transcendental ones", reason why this theoretical approach may prove difficult to apply in development research and practice. Complementarily, other schools of thought have been contributing to identify which key elements of subjective wellbeing (White, 2013) and basic needs (McGregor *et al.*, 2009) should deserve recognition.

The danger in capabilities theory is that we attribute an absolute value to individual needs and desires, losing sight of how these are intersubjectively constructed in society. What we value and desire for our lives is rooted in social interactions and mutual influences. If we are to transfer an approach such as the capabilities framework to the analysis of social realities in the Global South, we ought to take stock of this intersubjective component of well-being notions. Our

subjective notions of well-being, and the 'good life', also depend on what we think we ought to achieve, in order for our contribution be regarded as meaningful by other members of society. Depending on the geographical, political and cultural context, different factors may interfere with this notion. In African developing countries, for instance, the colonial legacy influences notions of self-worth, social respect and esteem. These ingrained coloniality (Fanon, 1952) will then limit people's expression in public *fora*, hindering the potential of participatory mechanisms.

2.2.3 Participation and procedural justice

Policy discourses and practices have increasingly acknowledged public participation in decision-making – procedural justice – as an indispensable part of democratic processes. In the field of international development, a key reference is Robert Chambers (1981), who has worked since the 1980s to develop a participatory approach to policy and research in rural areas in the Global South. His concept of 'participation ladder' (Chambers, 2004) has actually been employed in recent studies on land concessions, to analyse the level of inclusiveness of public consultations (Nolte & Voget-Kleschin, 2014), from a one-way 'cosmetic' process to the empowerment of the most vulnerable in the community.

The effectiveness and inclusiveness of participation processes has been long under debate, and is a pressing concern for justice and governance researchers, amongst others. Representativeness of specific minorities, individuals and groups, as well as their effective influence in the outcomes of participation mechanisms, are some of the issues that have been deserving attention. Public participation in decision-making has also emerged as one of the three main dimensions of environmental justice more recently (Schlosberg, 2009; Schlosberg & Carruthers, 2010; Walker, 2009).

Justice scholars from the political philosophical tradition, namely recognition theorists Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, have also reflected on the value of participation for justice. Fraser regards participatory parity as the key element that can articulate both distributional and recognitional justices, as I will discuss further in section 2.2.4. She acknowledges, however, that some material

(distributive) conditions have in place first, in order for individuals to be able to freely interact in the public sphere.

Honneth, instead, considers that recognition plays a crucial role in intermediating participation processes. He views public participation as a consequence of identity formation, which in itself depends upon relations of mutual recognition. That is, a person engages in a full participation in public life when the reactions and expectations of others allow them to freely express their opinions. For "we learn about the aspects of public life that are of importance in realizing individual autonomy only from a conception of personal wellbeing, no matter how fragmentarily developed" (Honneth, 2004, p. 357).

The absence of a political expression, in political *fora* or via civic movements, should not lead us to assume the absence of injustice. There are various factors interfering with the contestation of injustices, that may lead someone to voice it in the public sphere, via protest or political debate, or not. "The organized opposition to injustice depends on the availability of discursive resources and interpretative schemas that permit its articulation and open expression", argues Nancy Fraser (2012, p. 51). Here Honneth would add that the visibility of individuals, their opinions and causes is always contingent on processes of intersubjective recognition (Honneth & Margalit, 2001, p. 111). The next section (2.2.3.) further elaborates on the importance of recognition as an underlying condition for procedural and distributive justice.

There are a number of complications if we assume a central role for participatory parity, as Fraser proposes. On one hand, it requires that claims be "fully explicit and determinate", which is not always the case, argues Kompridis (2008, p. 300). On the other hand, it is difficult to establish criteria through which to distinguish justified from unjustified claims, i.e., mere assertions of self-interest (Sikor & Newell, 2014; Zurn, 2003).

Multiple factors can constrain participation, including the communication techniques and devices employed, such as maps and technical language (Martin, 2007), as well as historically informed identity-biases (Martin & Rutagarama, 2012) or different cultural framings (Schlosberg, 2013). For voice to take effect, it has to be expressed, as Appadurai (2013) notes, within cultural norms and

ideologies that are to some extent shared by other social actors, including, in this case, corporate and government actors. Only in this way can they be rendered visible and have some practical effect on policy decisions. The analysis of consultation procedures included in this thesis will therefore take into account both the formal and the intersubjective dimensions of recognition that inform participation processes and their results. I will specifically examine the (mis) recognition mechanisms that may have influenced the outcomes of consultation processes in each of the research sites.

As I will discuss in section 2.4., which details the conceptual framework of this thesis, degrees of influence in public participation are of utmost relevance for analysing the justice of land deals in Sub-Saharan Africa. In most countries, land legislation requires community consultations prior to the approval of any concession. Yet, their practical implementation on the ground has revealed a number of problems, such as lack of transparency and asymmetries of information, which raise doubts on the quality of the consent obtained from consultations with local populations (Nhamtumbo & Salomão, 2010; Hanlon, 2011). It is debatable whether participatory parity is achievable in post-colonial countries in the Global South, which face structural inequalities of recognition, influenced by colonised views of knowledge and modernity (Fanon, 1952), that may hinder the application of a deliberative model of environmental justice (Fraser, 2017; Williams & Mawdsley, 2006).

In Mozambique, while provisions are in place to reduce information asymmetries – e.g. the presence of translators in consultation meetings - most people are unfamiliar with technical language and the use of maps, which are important limitations for procedural justice. It is also necessary to acknowledge that political liberalisation in Mozambique is recent and rather superficial, and that freedom of expression and participatory parity are often problematic (Hanlon, 2004; Meneses & Santos, 2009).

In the case of the above discussed land concessions, local peasants associate "white men" (*mukunia*) and "foreign investors" with power, technology and knowledge (Quijano, 2007), which in their eyes limits their capacity to influence the outcomes of a land negotiation. Especially when the government backs

investors and conveys the message that private capital is the only alternative for improving local economy and social infrastructure (Hall *et al.*, 2015). In this sense, material constraints can produce asymmetries of power and pave the way for consent. I will develop this discussion further in the empirical chapters (especially chapter 5, on participation and consultations).

Recent empirical research on land consultations identifies multiple degrees of influence and inclusion (Nolte & Voget-Kleschin, 2014) in participative processes, independently of whether the authorities comply with the minimum legal requirements. Following this line of reasoning, I consider that there are diverse degrees of consent, subject to different interpretations according to actors involved. A more superficial consent confers a limited degree of legitimacy to a land concession, but that does not mean the participation process is perceived as genuine and inclusive by all social actors involved.

Analyses of actual participation processes within the environmental justice literature are still scarce, but can help shed some light on the multiple layers of public participation. Franks *et al.* (2016) propose an equity framework to analyse the fairness of conservation policies in the Global South. They include in this model a series of principles they consider key for just conservation, such as transparency, accountability (e.g. clear time frames for agreed benefits) and clear definition of responsibilities, as well as mechanisms for subsequent resolution of disputes, should they arise. The fulfilment of these principles, in practice, will require, according to the same authors, a set of enabling conditions. Recognition plays a central role here: legal, political and social recognition, as well the awareness and capacity of relevant actors "to achieve recognition and participate effectively" in decision-making about protected areas. Other key conditions, linked to these, will be an adaptive, learning approach and "the alignment of statutory and customary laws and norms" (p. 3).

In another study of environmental justice, Huang *et al.* (2013) applied a justice framework to analyse the location of nuclear plants in Taiwan, and identified six elements as fundamental for any fair process of public participation. These are: mechanisms to avoid discrimination of any social groups (based on their social, economic or cultural characteristics); ensure broad political representation in

decision-making processes (decisions made without knowledge or consent of the community, no previous information); an effective access to information (for instance by providing technical advisors or removing jargon from documents); incorporation of local knowledge; and trust between stakeholders (and in the information they provide).

The element presented as the sixth ingredient of inclusive participation is, once again, recognition, here understood as "sensitivity to differences". This concept, presented in this way, seems to overlap with the first element of the list proposed, non-discrimination. However, the critical point here is that recognition - widely conceptualised as a distinct dimension of justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 2004; Walker, 2009) - appears here reduced to a constitutive element of the participatory domain. From my perspective, this proceeds from a narrow view of what counts as recognition, which in the end reveals problematic for empirical understandings of justice.

2.2.4 Recognition: identities, values and knowledge

The issues discussed above are inextricably related to what EJ scholars defined as a third axis of environmental justice: recognition. This concept remains under intense academic debate, and there is not a fixed definition of its nature and scope. Different conceptualisations have been proposed, and I adopt here the operationalising concepts of recent empirical research on justice, such as:

> *"Recognition is about acknowledging people's distinct **identities and histories** and eliminating forms of **cultural domination** of some groups over others. It calls for respect for social and cultural difference" (Sikor 2013; p. 7)*

Sikor and Stahl (2012), for example, have identified the following traits in recognition-based struggles amongst forest rights activists:

> *"... Recognition of forest people's **identities, experiences and visions**. (...) Respect for visions of **desirable lifestyles**, economies and forest **landscapes**... attention given to **traditional knowledge** (e.g. efforts in Southeast Asia to validate shifting cultivation as a sustainable practice of land management)". (Sikor and Stahl 2011, p. 3)*

Recognition has been knowingly under-theorized (Coolsaet, 2016; Fraser, 2017; Martin, Coolsaet, *et al.*, 2016), and current theories focus mostly on European and North American social contexts. It is still an emerging concept in justice empirical research, especially across the Global South. The very meaning of the concept is still under active dispute (Kompridis, 2008), as well as its role as a separate justice dimension, or rather a common force underlying distributive and procedural issues (Honneth, 2004). "Some theorists of justice argue that recognition and respect are accounted for in theory. But no pragmatic discussion of recognition is offered, and no link between a lack of recognition and existing maldistributions is forthcoming", as Schlosberg (2004) contends (p. 520). The extent to which misrecognition contributes to maldistributions, for instance, is not yet clear, which makes it an interesting concept to explore further in field research (Martin, Coolsaet, *et al.*, 2016; Martin *et al.*, 2014).

Whilst distributional justice is about the allocation of 'goods' and 'bads' in society, as I have explained in section 2.2.1., recognition generally concerns indivisible aspects of justice, such as specific values and ways of seeing and relating to the environment (Martinez-Alier, 2014). In sum, recognition is about acknowledging and respecting the experiences, visions and knowledge of different individuals and social groups, which are determinant for their identities. These definitions distinguish social and cultural elements of identity, but integrate both within the sphere of what should be recognised.

In Rawls' theories of justice, recognition was taken account of through the inclusion of self-respect as the most important of primary goods in society (Middleton, 2006; Pogge & Kosch, 2007). However, for recent debates amongst political philosophers, Charles Taylor and Iris Young, subsuming recognition as merely one aspect of distribution is not satisfactory. Since the 1990s, there has been a particularly fierce debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth. Both are widely regarded as representatives of the third generation of the Frankfurt school of critical social theory, following the legacy of Max Horkeimer and Jürgen Habermas. Each argues for a different approach to building an integrative social theory of justice. I will explain both their points of view in the following section. Then, I will justify why I depart from Honneth's perspective in establishing the conceptual and analytical framework of this thesis.

2.2.4.1 Monist and dualist models

Nancy Fraser views distribution and recognition as separate aspects of justice, the latter having gained ground more recently amongst activist movements and political *fora*. Her main argument resides in that what grants a fair distribution in society is not always compatible with measures to promote recognition. In her perspective, whereas distribution implies uniformity, recognition requires affirming the differences that distinguish a person or a social group. For Fraser, social struggles have shifted from a focus on the fair distribution of goods to a concern with indivisible aspects of reality. The trade-offs between distributional and recognitional justice require, therefore, that they be analysed as two separate, however intertwined, spheres (Fraser, 2001). She then proposes to bridge these two dimensions through the deontological principle of participatory parity, which will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to express their views and needs.

For Hegelian scholars, though, such as Axel Honneth, only an integrative social theory of recognition will measure up to the challenge. Honneth defends a monist approach to justice as recognition. From this standpoint, recognition from an 'other' provides a pre-condition for the formation of a social identity, and therefore to both distributive outcomes and participation processes. In his book *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (1995), he distinguishes three mechanisms of social integration: emotional bonds (love); granting of rights (legal sphere); and solidarity (shared orientation to values). Each of these dimensions will differ in relation to three elements: the medium of recognition; the form of the relation-to-self being made possible; and the potential for moral development. He then proposes a typology that identifies three basic forms of misrecognition: physical harm, denial of equal rights (exclusion), and denigration of individual and cultural ways of life.

Honneth contends that every mechanism that matters for social justice involves a form of recognition, encompassing intersubjective and legal spheres. Drawing upon Hegel, he distinguishes three types of mutual recognition relationships, along with their contribution to individual self-realisation. The first relates to family and friendship relationships of love (inter-subjective recognition),

which foster self-confidence. The second is rights - e.g. of citizenship and property – linked to the legal (or formal) aspects of societal organisation - which contribute to raise self-respect. Finally, the third type pertains to social networks of solidarity, which foster social esteem, permeating both intersubjective and legal domains[10].

These three spheres of recognition are not neatly separate, though. They interact dialectically, and inform each other. Intersubjective relations of mutual recognition, within a community, will eventually give way to a struggle for recognition, and ultimately to the incorporation of new social rights in the legal framework (formal recognition). For Honneth, the moral progress of a society is gradually improved through these struggles for recognition.

Honneth (2004) illustrates this reasoning with examples from history, in this case struggles for the recognition of specific economic activities as meaningful work. He notes that in 'modern societies' of Europe, for instance, social status has become detached from an achievement principle. In these societies, legal recognition as a full citizen does not depend upon the accumulation of personal wealth, as it once did. "There is moral progress when the social conditions of personal identity formation for the members of single groups or classes undergo lasting improvement through the partial conversion to a new principle [as legal rights]" (2014, p. 362). In this sense, the monist model of recognition endeavours to create a unifying theory of development.

From this standpoint, recognition goes beyond a politics of difference, or the institutional recognition of social minorities by a given political system. It is rather an underlying force, which pervades the social, economic, cultural and political domains of our identities, as well as our relations to others in society. In this context, the harm of maldistribution results from the misrecognition of an individual's contribution to society (social disrespect). Here Honneth approaches the reasoning of the capabilities framework, focused on individual freedom of choice capabilities (Sen 1999, Nussbaum 2011). "In modern society", he explains,

[10] In "Freedom's Right" (2014), Honneth discusses whether the market should be considered as a "relational institution of social freedom" (a 'solidarity' network). He considers that the political removal of barriers to the capitalist economy, over the last two decades, "undermines the normative potential of the market", and therefore represents a "social misdevelopment" (p. 177).

“the conditions of individual self-realization are only socially secured when subjects are able to experience intersubjective recognition not only of their personal autonomy, but also of their specific needs and their particular capabilities” (Honneth, 2004, p. 13). Development, here understood as moral progress of societies, is the result of political institutions recognising those needs and capabilities, making them “an imperative of legal recognition” (p. 362). In sum, societies evolve through a struggle for recognition, a productive and dynamic interaction between personal, legal and social spheres.

The debate between Fraser and Honneth culminated in the joint publication of a book in 2003, in which both scholars debated the advantages of adopting the monist or dualist model. In this volume, Honneth argued that separating experiences of injustice between recognition and distribution would introduce “a theoretically unbridgeable chasm between ‘symbolic’ and ‘material’ aspects of social reality”. Instead, under an integrative theory of recognition, “the relation between the two can be seen as the historically mutable result of cultural processes of institutionalization” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 113), he argued.

Honneth has been criticized for losing sight of the structural political and economic forces in society, while centring attention on the phenomenology of intersubjective interactions (Thompson, 2017). Conversely, Nancy Fraser’s stress on political and economic structures foregoes the psychological dimension of recognition, as well as important aspects of identity formation that are crucial for post-colonial contexts, argues James Fraser (2017). Following Schlosberg (2009), my view is that Fraser’s and Honneth’s approaches are not necessarily incompatible, and can be explored in complementary ways. The former derives from the Rawlsian tradition of analytic philosophy, whilst the latter is rooted in Hegelian, continental philosophy. Although environmental justice scholars have shown preference for Fraser’s model, some have pointed out a need to give more attention to intersubjective relationships in empirical research (Martin, Coolsaet, *et al.*, 2016). In this thesis, I argue that Honneth’s model offers a useful contribution to fill that lacuna.

2.2.4.2 Labour, social identities and meaningful work

One crucial aspect of justice as recognition, central for the analysis in this thesis, is the respect of specific kinds of work as a meaningful contribution to the social order. This aspect revealed to be of foremost importance to understanding the social dynamics and responses to land concessions in Africa, as labour remains a central aspect for the formation of social identities and struggles for recognition in rural Mozambique. It is therefore a key theme in the empirical chapters of this thesis, especially chapter 6.

Honneth has been consolidating his analysis of the problem of labour in his most recent books, such as "The I in We (2012)" and "Freedom's Right" (2014). In "The I in We", he laments that the welfare state, and social research as well, have been retreating from the question of labour, despite the fact that work is becoming increasingly precarious in our societies. Despite views that now social movements are concerned with the recognition of indivisible values, such as cultural differences, Honneth insists that distributional concerns remain at the core of social struggles. Social scientists, he adds, have been the ones shifting their attention. "The academia, including sociology, is increasingly turning its attention to processes of cultural transformation and away from production and labour issues (especially over the last 40 years)" (p. 56). The problem with this, he goes on, is that these trends simply go against the desires of the majority of the people, for whose identity, and idea of a 'good life', having a fulfilling job remains crucial.

The third form of self-realisation in Honneth's model - along with self-confidence and social respect - is social esteem. He argues that feeling our abilities are useful to society as a whole is central for the integrity of social identity. Conversely, the denigration of specific ways of life – their misrecognition - is one of the main forms of social disrespect. Only work that is organised in a certain way is deemed worthy of recognition by the whole of society, and ultimately by the political system (Honneth, 1995). Success and wealth achieved, as well as one's position in the market (or an organisation) are determinant factors for the recognition of certain types of work (Voswinkel, 2012).

The intersubjective sphere of social relations is thus fundamental for distributional justice: "the rules organizing the distribution of material goods derive

from the degree of social esteem enjoyed by social groups, in accordance with institutionalized hierarchies of value, or a normative order. (…) Conflicts over distribution, as long as they are not merely concerned with just the application of institutionalized rules, are always symbolic struggles over the legitimacy of the sociocultural norms which determine the value of activities, attributes and contributions", he argues (Honneth, 2001, p. 54). From this perspective, distribution conflicts can be understood as "the specific kind of struggle for recognition in which dispute is about the appropriate evaluation of individuals' or groups' social contributions" to culturally defined societal goals (Honneth, 2004, p. 353).

2.3 Property rights studies

Under recent theorisations of property, recognition is the element that interconnects property and citizenship (Lund, 2016) in postcolonial countries. Colonisation has caused a rupture of property and political subjectivity by dispossessing native peoples and establishing new property regimes. The hierarchisation of citizens, through the imposition of constructed identity categories, represented an inalienable part in this colonisation process. "Ideologies and legalities structure the categories through which legitimate claims to land and other valuable resources can be put forward", observes Lund (2016, p. 1211). This conception resonates well with Honneth's understandings of 'reciprocal recognition'. Whilst formal property belongs to Honneth's sphere of legal rights, the alternative forms of access can be viewed as social networks of 'solidarity', which simultaneously mobilise the spheres of intersubjective and legal relations. For example, governments may recognise customary arrangements for land access as formal land rights, given that favourable political conditions are in place.

There has been an interesting cross-fertilisation between recognition theory and property studies, along these lines. In introducing a selection of case studies for Development and Change, Sikor and Lund (2009) argue that, in the context of land property, recognition is a dynamic two-way process, whereby a certain institution concedes formal rights, but also relies on social actors for recognition of its legitimate authority to do so. This is particularly the case in postcolonial and post-socialist countries, characterised by normative and legal pluralism.

Sikor and Lund (2009) consider that indigenous tenure systems have been analysed in an over-simplified fashion, under the broad term of 'ownership', when they include in fact multiple mechanisms of access. They bring two strands of literature together – one on access-power relations (Berry, 1993, Ribot and Peluso 2003), and another one on the dynamics between property and authority (Lund 2002). As Ribot and Peluso (2003) argued before, people can obtain access through various ways, resorting to a 'bundle' of power and resources, which include social relations and identities, technology and knowledge.

Formal property rights are not mandatory where there are other alternative social arrangements in place, such as loans, shared labour or collective ownership. All of these constitute, in practice, 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition, they require recognition within a community, and their legitimacy remains under permanent scrutiny. Understandings about ownership of a an area, as well as the criteria that allow someone to hold onto it, require a mutual recognition from the other community members, on the ground, and these understandings change over time (Toulmin, 2008). In this light, African institutions are well more than "passive receptors", they appear as processes, interacting with social entities (families, communities) as constellations of social interactions, where production, authority and obligation are constantly negotiated (Berry, 1993, 1997).

Conversely, even if users have formal property rights, it does not guarantee they share equal benefits from resources. There are multiple factors that will mediate their ability to benefit from a land plot or a woodland, for instance an income that allows investment in machinery, or to hire human labour. Or even their ability to "put history on display", constructing a narrative on which to base their own claims (Berry, 1997, p. 1237).

Especially in postcolonial and post-socialist countries, as Sikor and Lund note, property, ownership and authority are fluid dimensions, under permanent negotiation. After independence, property rights remained flexible (Berry, 1993). The overlapping between different tenure systems created ambiguity between different logics of distribution, for instance between land legislation and customary traditions that discriminate against women, as is the case in many African countries (Hoekema, 2012).

As Sara Berry has contended in her landmark book on land property in Africa, “No Condition is Permanent” (1993), in addition to formal land rights, social networks remain determinant for access to land and natural resources on the continent. In this context, culture, power and material resources are mutually constitutive, continuously shaping economic and social change. This perspective is contrary to neo-classic and Marxist approaches, which tend to treat culture as subordinate and exogenous to economic processes, she adds.

The land ‘assemblage’, in the words of anthropologist Tania Li (2014), will have boundaries that distinguish legitimate and illegitimate users. To make land productive requires creating regimes of exclusion, which are contingent upon constant reinforcement and actualisation, through physical devices, such as tax registers and maps, as well as immaterial resources, including actions, such as farming (eg “guerrilla farming”) (Hall et al., 2015), stories (Fortmann, 1995; Berry 1997), laws, technology, knowledge and identities (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). Other resources, such as trees or ancestral graves, have a more fluid nature, somewhere between the material and the symbolic worlds. In sum, the material, symbolic and temporal dimensions are crucial for understanding social dynamics around land ownership.

As Li elaborates, land represents irreplaceable affordances, especially the capacity to “sustain human life”, and therefore it is crucial that specific land uses and environmental management practices are deemed productive and justifiable, so they can be rendered visible and attributed a role by present authorities. Rigidity, misunderstanding, misrecognition, all can be used to describe what is still, to this day, the constant struggle between storylines and inscription devices used by a diverse range of actors. Li’s (2014b) account of the way colonial officers viewed land when approaching the Indonesian island of Sulawesi is particularly expressive of misrecognition issues that, after all, we still face today:

> *"The meaning of the axe as an inscription device did not travel well. Officials viewing the highlands from the coast did not acknowledge that wielding an axe produced both property and livelihoods. They called highlanders ‘forest-destroyers’ and described their rotational cultivation system as ‘just moving around’” (p.2)*

Discursive strategies will then appear as powerful immaterial tools on this trade. Property studies developed in the 1990s are clear in demonstrating the strategical importance of storylines for securing access to land and natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa (Berry, 1997; Fortmann, 1995). As Fortmann demonstrated, in developing their discourses, landowners assume particular roles and narratives. The white farmland owners in Zimbabwe view themselves as **'**stewards of the land**',** in opposition to the indigenous communities who are said to be destroying nature with their management practices. This is valid for both land owners and local communities. During her long-term fieldwork in Asante, Ghana, Sara Berry observed how local actors negotiated their roles and access to land through constant negotiation, not necessarily contestation. "Putting history on display" was also determinant for local leaders in consolidating their power over land and the community.

The studies presented in this section offer a crucial understanding of land ownership dynamics of land in Africa. They will therefore be fundamental references for the empirical analysis of this thesis, alongside environmental justice scholarship and recognition theories.

2.4 The conceptual framework for this thesis

Figure 4 (next page) represents my analytical approach to the new "recognition dynamics" (Lund, 2016) triggered by land concessions at the local level, combining the approaches of recognition and property scholarship. In this diagram, I maintain distribution and participation as different, separate dimensions, for analytical purposes. Yet, it assumes the perspective of Honneth's monist model, in that it positions recognition as a central element, connecting the other two justice dimensions. In this framework, I see recognition – with its formal and intersubjective components – as informing both distributive outcomes, and participatory processes. This becomes, then, a tentative model to explore trade-offs and synergies between procedural and distributive issues. I consider it can be fruitfully applied to other fields, such as environment, food and climate justice.

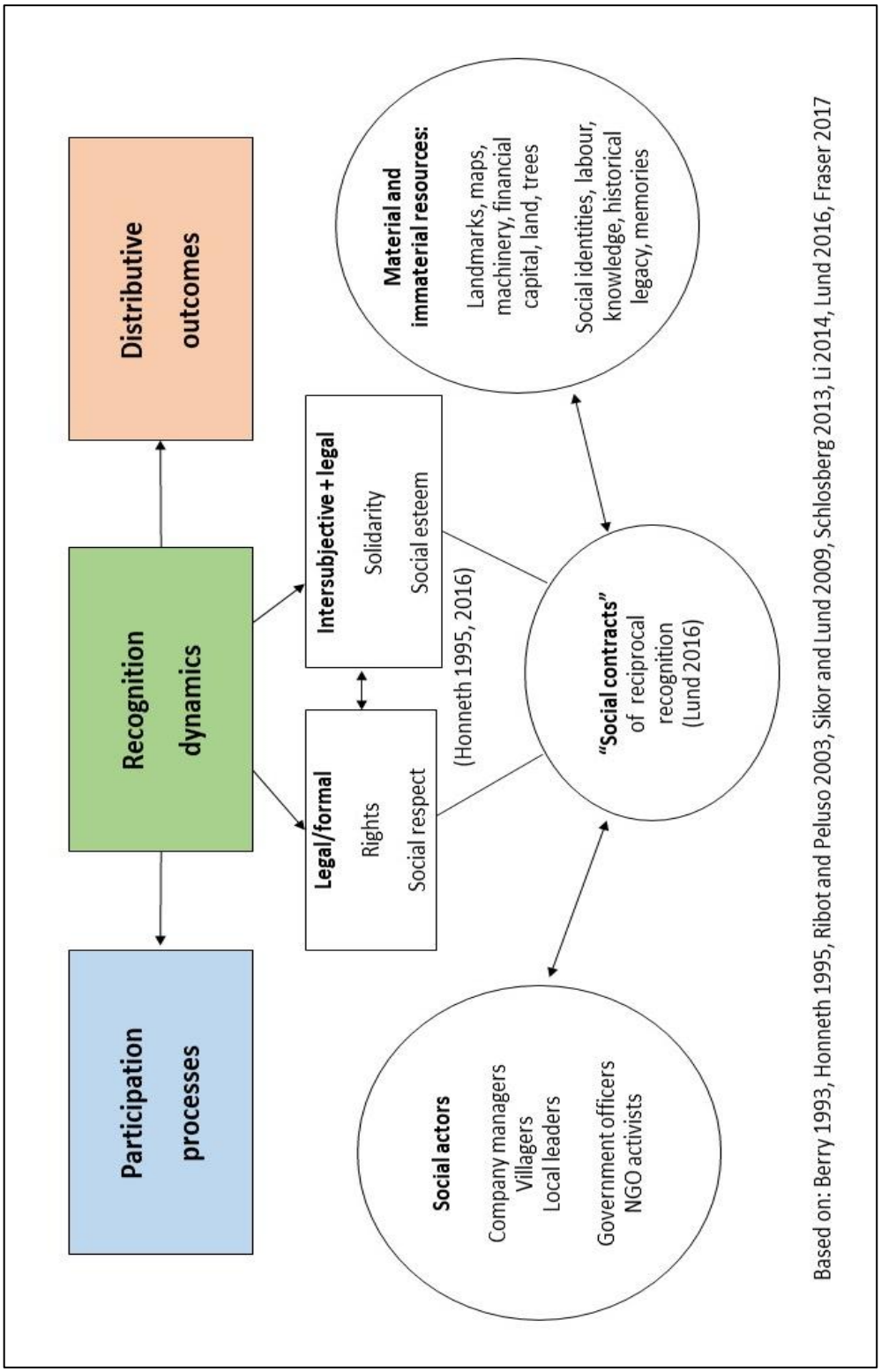
A process such as the 'Green Revolution' for Africa entails a dispute between divergent land uses and environmental management strategies. From this

perspective, the ‘land rush’ problematic can be regarded as a struggle for visibility within a ‘recognition order’ (Honneth, 2004), which will ultimately reflect on both participation and distributive outcomes. On the ground, agricultural investments will create new recognition ‘contracts’, with their implicit norms and relations of mutual recognition between, for instance, company managers and local peasants.

While acknowledging the extensive work of agrarian political economists, it becomes necessary to take into account the spatial and temporal dimensions of land deals, at the local level. Firstly, there is a need to clarify the relation between identity and territory, which especially suits environmental justice research. This means observing the dynamics of place attachment of individuals and social groups, as well as their environmental management strategies, but also how recognition mechanisms ultimately reflect on the physical landscape. Secondly, we need to acknowledge the temporal and dynamic nature of identity, by observing how social identities articulate with historical memories and narratives (Berry, 1997; Fortmann, 1995). It is in the field that we may give substance to these theories, and attempt to understand the nuances of dispossession and territorialisation processes, and even interrogate our own preconceptions of what justice, ways of life and the relationship human-nature should look like (Williams & Mawdsley, 2006).

Development theory has increasingly acknowledged the importance of agency and subjective experience. These elements are crucial for recent approaches such as subjective wellbeing (White, 2009) and the capabilities framework (Nussbaum, 2011b; Sen, 1999). From my point of view, Nancy Fraser’s conceptualisation of recognition leaves this dimension mostly aside. Throughout this thesis, though, I demonstrate that subjective experience is determinant for understanding social and property dynamics in the Global South.

Figure 4 – Conceptual framework for this research



While both Fraser and Honneth regard recognition as instrumental (Kompridis, 2008), the fact that the former assumes her framework as dualist, and the latter tends to view justice under a monist lens is, in the end, secondary. They basically differ on which dimension they give prevalence to in justice analysis. Whereas Fraser sees participatory parity as connecting distribution and recognition issues, Honneth attributes that central role to recognition. Although there has been more support for Fraser's approach, this debate is far from settled. Neither of the theories, *per se*, and to their current state of development, seems to be sufficient to support an integrated assessment of justice issues in the Global South. After all, they are both essentially euro-centric. Therefore, by exploring the empirical advantages of Honneth's approach – the focus on subjective experiences and intersubjective relations - and complementing it with the grounded experience of property scholars, I expect to contribute empirical insights to this debate, as well as uncovering remaining research gaps.

While acknowledging the importance of political economic structures that determine fluxes of capital and labour – the analysis of which has in fact dominated the academic approach to the 'land rush' - it will be necessary to further analyse the intersubjective relations of mutual recognition that play out at the local level, ultimately influencing the justice outcomes of land deals.

Interactions between company managers and local peasants are constantly evolving. In this context, the local populations resort to a myriad of material and immaterial resources to base their claims for access to productive land, water sources and natural resources, as well as to (sometimes in alternative) labour opportunities. It is on these terms that local peasants will bring their social identities to the fore and attempt to secure recognition, drawing on their own resources (expertise, social networks, roles as stewards of the land). Or, on the other hand, summon their historical memories, for instance by comparing current land owners with previous ones, and recounting stories of the good relations of the past, much like the peasants interviewed by Berry (1997) in Zimbabwe. Once they understand which roles and individual characteristics count in the new recognition order, they will seek to frame their claims under these terms (see chapter 6 of this thesis, "Owner's land").

Historical legacy, along with the diverse categories of social identity it produces (Lund, 2016), will play a key role in the acceptance of new corporate land 'owners' within a rural community. Conversely, it is also determinant for local villagers, in their strategies for claiming, and maintaining, some level of access to land and resources, as well as incorporation into the life of these agribusiness projects. The geographical and cultural context, for example colonial history or the past experiences with farmland labour, will play a crucial influence on the justice outcomes of a concession. Therefore, attention to specific local and historical contexts is key to understanding this phenomenon, as well as attention to labour, skills and knowledge as key elements in struggles for recognition.

Legitimising devices can include, on the part of the investors, technology, satellite images, technical language or agricultural machinery. The same material devices, such as landmarks and fences are crucial devices for creating regimes of exclusion (Li, 2014; 2015), and can simultaneously be used by corporate land 'owners' and local populations in support of their ownership claims (Fortmann, 1995), as I will demonstrate through my case studies. Other resources, such as huts and trees, are powerful devices through which local populations inscribe their de facto histories of occupation over a territory. Their presence is testimony of more permanent claims of ownership, or place attachment. Conversely, their absence is also expressive. It translates an acknowledgment, and to some extent acceptance, of previous ownership rights, formalised or not. I will demonstrate how this happens in practice in chapter 6.

As a postcolonial and post-socialist country, in Mozambique multiple layers of land property and ownership developed before and after independence from Portugal, in 1975. Land was nationalised following independence, but land markets were latter opened. The current legislation (Land Act 1997) allows private corporations, whether national or foreign, to apply for concessions that may extend for up to 100 years. On the other hand, it recognises community land rights, overlapping with customary rules. However, community rights are mostly kept in the sphere of ownership, through processes of delimitation, while private corporations operate at the property level. The vast majority of smallholder farmers do not hold any formal land use title, even when they live within delimited community territories. The tension between ownership and rule, between the

framing of space as territory (of a community) and property (Lund, 2016) is particularly evident in such a political landscape.

The dynamics, and the relationships between peasants, rural labourers, local leaders, farmland investors and their local managers continued to evolve beyond independence. Previous relationships with farm owners, memories and stories of life "in the farm" distinguish individuals within rural communities and produce different recognition claims. These processes of reciprocal recognition are also affected by internalised conceptions of modernity, knowledge and "backwardness" (Li 2014), which reinforce the asymmetry of power in land negotiations.

As postcolonial scholars have contended, internalised preconceptions from colonial times continue to exert influence in perceptions of self-worth (Fanon, 1952). It is clear from the research in Mozambique, though, that coloniality, rather than the defining trait of rural populations, is one of the elements that compound multifaceted social identities, and therefore drive highly dynamic social relations. Following James Fraser (2017) and Christian Lund (2016), I understand identity here in a broad and fluid sense, encompassing social identities related to one's history, their social relations and position in the recognition order of labour (Honneth, 2014).

Identity categories such as "owner" – as well as resources such as 'agricultural techniques', science and knowledge - are strongly associated, as I will discuss through my interviews in Mozambique, with colonial memories. Especially amongst older generations (+70) that still hold strong memories of the pre-independence period. On one hand, this invokes painful feelings and resentment. In both research sites, I interviewed people who had vivid memories of forced labour in the colonial plantations, including women who had to endure the constant imprisonment of their husbands. On the other hand, one cannot ignore the underlying association (at times nostalgic, at times expectant) of the 'white, wealthy man' (*mukunia*) with employment, organised labour and modernisation.

Acknowledging the coloniality of rural societies in Mozambique is hence fundamental to clarify the recognition dynamics that influence processes of land concession. This in turn will affect the recognition of environmental management strategies - including for climate risk mitigation - and may ultimately drive

investors and authorities to underestimate some of the longer-term impacts of the concessions. Mechanisms of (mis) recognition, informed by the above-discussed factors, may ultimately reflect on the organisation of the physical landscape. In this case, the territory under a land concession, but also around it, including the marginal areas to where populations resettle in search of alternative plots to farm.

This section demonstrated that there is potential for developing a recognition-based theory of environmental justice, and apply it to the analysis of land-related social dynamics. The approach of environmental justice has the advantage of giving appropriate salience to both material aspects, such as land and natural resources, and immaterial ones, including knowledge, historical memories and social identities. Rather than organised around separate dimensions of participation, distribution and recognition, the three empirical chapters of this thesis build upon themes that are transversal to all of them. Moreover, they highlight how recognition links both distributional and procedural aspects. Before proceeding to the central nucleus of the thesis, though, I will present, in chapter 3, the methodological strategy adopted for collecting and analysing the field data.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the epistemological and methodological approach of the thesis. I will present each of the qualitative methods I applied in the field, as well as discuss the ethical challenges and risks of undertaking this research in Mozambique.

3.1. Research design

3.1.1. Ontological and epistemological considerations

In designing the present research, I have chosen to ground my epistemological approach on critical realism. This means that I am assuming that, although my research object obeys to underlying observable structures and mechanisms, I can only partially apprehend them through my chosen methodologies (Bryman, 2012). In critical realism, there is a dialectical relation between deductive and inductive processes, not an exclusive approach. The research remains open and flexible throughout the stages of design, data collection and analysis (Yeung, 1997). Throughout the next sections, it will become clear how an iterative process between deductive and inductive approaches was central for this thesis. It enabled me to integrate new perspectives that I gained from the interactions with local populations, and that I was not aware of from the beginning.

In critical realism, causation means to "seek out generative mechanisms that are responsible for observable regularities in the social world and how they operate in particular contexts" (Bryman, 2012, p. 74). Roy Bhaskar (1978), considered the main proponent of critical realism, explains the ontological perspective of this epistemological current:

> *"Society… is a complex and causally efficacious whole-a-totality, whose concept must be constructed in theory, and which is being continually transformed in practice. As an object of study, it cannot be read straight off the empirical world. But neither can it be reconstructed from our subjective experiences. But, though positivism would have had us forget it, that much at least is the case with the objects of study in natural science too." ("Possibility of Social Scientific Knowledge and Limits of Naturalism", 1978, p. 24)*

In order to maximise the validity and reliability of their data, critical realist researchers can resort to different methods. Yeung (1997) has identified three methods that are especially relevant in the context of human geography: iterative abstraction, grounded theory, and triangulation. Ways of ensuring triangulation, the methodological approach adopted in this research, are, for instance, to engage multiple observers in the research process (investigator triangulation); to triangulate the data (e.g. in terms of time, place, level, person); triangulate between and within methods; or to combine intensive and extensive methods (e.g. mixed quantitative-qualitative).

Although the present study is a qualitative one, it resorts to different triangulation strategies between methods: semi-structured interviews, policy documents, informal conversations and rural appraisal activities (including focus group discussions). In addition, the research follows an iterative process across multiple levels of inquiry: the interviews and conversations with key informants, at the national and provincial level, inform the data collection at the district and local level, and *vice versa*.

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, in a postcolonial and post-socialist context - where various "legal" frameworks came to be juxtaposed – the researcher has to take into consideration the diversity of the local dynamics, including the multiple social arrangements that grant land access, independently of formal tenure dispositions (Berry, 1993). To understand how the materiality of natural resources matters for land related dynamics (Li, 2014b), a local-based in-depth research is essential. This can be achieved through adequately conducted case studies (Sayer, cited in Cox, 2013:16). In order to better understand the influence of different specific social and cultural factors in the outcomes of land concessions for local communities.

The literature 'rush' on land deals has certainly raised epistemological and methodological concerns. As Oya (2013a) points out, when reviewing almost a decade of literature (2005-2013), empirical research on land deals in Africa has been dominated by structuralist understandings of the agrarian question. According to Oya, there is a need to balance these approaches with attention to the different layers of "African capitalism". There is to say, one has to take into account the

specific social dynamics that unfold around a land concession, and the multiple outcomes and responses by local actors. Critical realism, in this research, allows for a balanced and pluralizing approach (Cox, 2013) to land and justice issues. Whilst still acknowledging the political-economic structures that influence processes of land commodification, I explore the context-specific social dynamics, in order to understand how these mitigate, or else exacerbate, the effects of land concessions.

In this thesis, I assume that researchers cannot rely exclusively on 'top-down' imposed political-economic structures to understand socio-environmental processes, such as land and natural resources management, as has been mostly the approach of political economists studying the 'land rush'. Nor should they, for that purpose, fall into an absolute relativism. Researchers should rather acknowledge the different social constructs of environmental resources, productive land and environmental management. From this standpoint, one can observe how these constructs interact to generate particular social mechanisms.

In this thesis, I understand the land 'grabbing' issue as a socio-environmental problem. This phenomenon lies at a crossroad between diverging understandings of socio-nature relations and development pathways. In future research, a step further into an interdisciplinary approach would be to embrace the contribution of natural scientists (e.g. agronomists, climatologists). This would be especially valuable for further studying pressing issues that I just touch upon in this thesis, such as the effects of land concessions in climatic vulnerability, local resilience strategies, or else the environmental impacts of new mobility patterns (resettlements and other indirect effects of increased competition for land, influenced by recent land deals).

3.1.2. Methodological approach

I organised the fieldwork for this research into two separate stages. In June 2014, I spent a brief period in Northern Mozambique, in Nampula and Cabo Delgado, conducting a series of semi-structured interviews, made field visits to select the case study sites and started building a contact network that later supported my prolonged stay in the region. This first visit allowed me to refine the focus of the research and

the interview guides, as well identifying the most appropriate locations to develop the main fieldwork stage.

I travelled to Mozambique again in November 2014, staying in the country for seven months, until late June 2015. During this period, I travelled across four different provinces. I spent a preparatory stage in the capital Maputo (November-December 2014), and from there went to Nampula in January 2015. After some preparation and contacts, I settled down in my first research site, Malema district for around two months (February-April 2015), and spent another two-month period in the second research site, Ocúa (Chiúre district) in Cabo Delgado province, up North. I also had the opportunity to visit the hinterland cotton plantations in Cuamba, Niassa province, close to the Malawian border.

I undertook the fieldwork for this study in Mozambique, over a period of eight months, from 2014 to 2015. This consisted of two case studies, supported on a range of qualitative research methods and instruments:

a) semi-structured interviews

b) rural appraisal activities (incl. focus group meetings and participatory mapping)

c) informal conversations with key informants (across four administrative levels - national, provincial, district and village)

d) direct observation

e) documental analysis of policy documents, legislation

The main bulk of the data in this thesis come from a series of semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. Together, these amount to a total 90 individual exchanges, across the national, provincial, district and local (village) levels.

Given the sensitivity of justice issues, and the political and social context in which I undertook this field research, in some specific occasions I opted for carrying informal conversations, instead of recorded interviews. This flexibility allowed to gather the opinions and reflections of a broader range of participants, as well as helping to make people feel more at ease to discuss issues that might be considered

politically sensitive. As the upgrade examiners had advised in 2014, before the main fieldwork, informal conversations should assume a fundamental role in such a sensitive context, and thus be given appropriate relevance, in parallel with more structured interviews.

Following the same reasoning, I adopted a flexible approach to rural appraisal activities. Depending on the specific circumstances of each case, in order to triangulate information from individual interviews, I organised community focus groups (Cameron, 2016). I prepared a semi-structured guide, partly based on the interview guide, and convened the discussion in an organised fashion, with the assistance of a local interpreter.

The research also involved direct observation in the field. Besides agricultural practices and other activities, I observed discussions amongst villagers, public meetings and meetings of local organisations, such as the local representation of the Peasants Union. As initial consultations for the approval of the concessions had already occurred at the beginning of the fieldwork, I collected testimonies and every existent record (sound files, written notes, reports) to which I could obtain access.

The research has also comprehended some longitudinal elements: on the one hand, the participants provided retrospective accounts of their relations to past land owners, enabling me to analyse the importance of historical factors (colonial heritage, civil war) on current perceptions and behaviour (Bryman 2012); on the other, I conducted the inquiry as to capture the recent change in fairness and legitimacy perceptions. These accounts express concerns that are likely to increase in the near future, such as land scarcity and climate risks.

Instead of focusing on the procedural aspects of the concessions approval, the time lapse since the approval of the concessions allowed me to capture how circumstances unfolded over this period. This includes the degree of fulfilment of the company's promises, the benefits for the community, how the investment progressed and the land was being used, and, last but not least, how the justice perceptions of the community developed around this. As my experience in the field clearly demonstrated, the temporal dimension is key for analysing the local dynamics of distribution and recognition. Furthermore, it allowed me to interrogate

the various participation issues in deeper terms, observing the multiple understandings of what 'informed consent' should be, and how these evolve according to the development of the farmland project.

In addition to these qualitative methods, I carried out an extensive collection of secondary data (official statistics, reports) during the research period, in Mozambique and Portugal (historical documentation from the colonial period), and through the Internet whenever possible. The qualitative data collected from the interviews was coded and thematically analysed with resort to CAQDAS[11] software (NVivo11). Over the following sections, I will explain in more detail the procedures for the selection of the case studies, as well as describe how I applied each method in the field.

3.1.3. Case study selection

This research has followed a comparative most-similar approach (method of difference), using cases in which most variables are constant (Lijphart, 1971) but which diverge in historical and geographical contexts. The intention is thus to understand how these contextual factors influence the perceptions of fairness held by local actors towards the agricultural investments in each site. It can be considered a multiple-case study, able to contribute to theory improvement (Bryman, 2012). I selected the cases following a purposive approach: on one hand, I have sought to select areas that would allow me to answer my research questions; on the other hand, I made this particular selection to ensure some variation in the outcomes, as Rihoux and Lobe (2009) recommend. The aim here is to gain a deeper understanding of how social dynamics can shape the justice outcomes of a land deal, in each local context. This comparison may "suggest concepts that are relevant to an emerging theory". In such a multiple case-study approach, "the researcher will be in a position to examine the operation of generative causal mechanisms" (Bryman, 2012, p. 74), in this case in similar contexts.

Before starting the fieldwork, I relied mostly on media reports, as well as reports and databases compiled by NGOs such as Grain and Land Matrix, to gain a

[11] Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS.

sense of the existing concessions in the country. However, the first trip in June 2014, as well as the first stage of the main fieldwork (November 2014 to January 2015) allowed to triangulate this information with testimonies of key informants, field visits and data directly provided by the Mozambican government (at national and district level), further refining my sample of cases.

I have come to realise some discrepancies between the accounts from NGOs and the reality in the field, starting with the number and extension of concessions. In truth, in terms of the scale of these deals, the reality was often more modest than stated. In addition, it was difficult to find enough information on deals that reportedly involved exceptionally vast areas, in the order of tens of thousands of hectares. These discrepancies may reflect the abandonment of some investment proposals, which have not gone beyond the probationary period. This occurred in particular with biofuels projects. Other factor that might help to explain discrepancies is that projects go through different stages, from initial proposal to operation, often not clearly reflected on existent databases. For the above-mentioned reasons, I had to adjust my preliminary selection of cases during the first stage of fieldwork.

The case studies for this research were selected through a purposive method, taking into consideration the relevance of each of them to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2012). Following the first visit to Northern Mozambique in June 2014, I selected three preliminary research sites – in the districts of Chiúre (Cabo Delgado province), Sanga (Niassa) and Malema (Nampula). During the fieldwork, as logistic difficulties arose, I agreed with the supervisors to narrow down to two cases (Malema and Ocúa), in order to spend enough time at each one and achieve a more detailed data collection. Both cases are representative of recent land use and tenure changes in Mozambique.

The selection observed a specific set of criteria:

- concession above 1,000 hectares and with 30+ years of duration;
- some years lapsed since the approval of the project;
- nature of the investment (food crops, direct plantation);

- geographical location in most attractive investment areas (special development plans, development "corridors");
- resettlement of land users (houses and farm plots).

In each site, the research involved interviews at the provincial, district and local levels (administrative post and village). Although I visited several villages in each district – Namele, Nholo, Nataleia and Mutuali, in Malema; Mahurunga and Samora Machel, in Ocúa, Chiúre – the main field research is centred in the villages most directly affected by the land deals under study. These are Namele (Malema district) and Mahurunga (Chiúre district). For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the research sites, throughout the thesis, by the names of the administrative posts, Malema (*Malema-Sede*) and Ocúa. These are also the units with the most detailed statistics available, at the local level, from the Population Census (sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2).

In terms of geographical location, both cases are situated within or in the proximity of the "Nacala Corridor", the area that has been receiving the most attention and investment in agriculture in Northern Mozambique. For each of these areas the government is preparing a vast rural development program, including multiple land concessions to agribusiness investors. Both areas are located near important road or rail infrastructures and rivers, and therefore are representative of the reality in the field: that most investors converge to densely populated areas, within reach of infrastructures, transportation and good water sources, therefore increasing competition for arable land where it is already high. This contradicts widespread assumptions about agricultural investments – that investors contribute to develop marginal rural lands – which empirical research on land deals has been generally dismantling (Cotula, 2012a; Hall *et al.*, 2015; Hanlon, 2011). Both of the research sites in this thesis have been attracting interest from multiple investors, but the cases selected were the most advanced at the time of the fieldwork.

Amongst the variety of land investments currently in place – with areas that range from less than 1,000 ha to more than 10,000 ha and encompassing different sectors and objectives – I selected cases in which land was attributed through direct negotiation with the local communities and the projects had already been under

operation for some years. Both concessions surpass the 1,000 hectares and were granted for 50 years. In terms of land tenure, in both cases there is an overlap between customary and legal systems – as elsewhere across Mozambique and most Sub-Saharan Africa (Otto & Hoekema, 2012). Although there has been significant progress in the delimitation of community lands throughout the country, this mostly depends on the initiative of NGOs (e.g. ORAM, Kulima) and external support for the costs. None of the areas selected for this research had been delimited as "community land" at the time of the fieldwork, except for Nholo village in Malema.

Malema and Chiúre districts, as well as the administrative posts and villages included in this research, are located on the map included in section 4.5 in the next chapter. Table 1 summarises the characteristics of the cases.

As for the nature of the investment, the concessions in place consist of commercial direct plantations (sugarcane and soybeans). Both required eviction of the then land users and resettlement of residents as well, although in a smaller proportion. Whereas the second case (Ocúa, Chiúre) started as a biofuels plantation and later converted to sugar production – reflecting changes in the global energy markets – in the first case (Malema) the investor applied for cotton production and later converted most of the area to soya.

Although these cases share the characteristics outlined above, they are located in different provinces across the Northern part of the country and vary in their social, historical, and geographical context. They were affected differently by the colonial organisation of labour (colonial plantations, forced labour, "Companies"), and later, after independence, by processes of nationalisation, creating villages, and civil war. In terms of their cultural context, though, in both the research sites the Macua are the dominant ethnic group. This means most of the research participants, at the local level, share the same language, although with slight variations. This had obvious practical advantages for the fieldwork, besides conferring some homogeneity and a greater consistence to my empirical analysis.

Table 1 - Common features and differences between the case studies

Malema-Sede	Ocúa
2,389 hectares (2012)	1,000 hectares (2008)
Food production – soya beans (started as tobacco concession)	Food production – sugarcane (started as biofuels, now sugar)
Near infra-structures – main road, railroad, and water sources (Malema and Mutivaze rivers)	Near infra-structures – main road, and water sources – Lúrio river
Area partially used by the investor, delays	Area partially used by the investor, delays
Ethnicity of local population – majority Macua[12]	Ethnicity of local population – majority Macua
Prosavana – rural development program (under revision)	Lúrio river development program (expected)
Key differences	
Successive plantations, under different tenure regimes; almost continuous occupation before and after independence	No recent history of concessions, since colonial period (40 years)
Population increase during civil war, most newcomers (1980s) settled here permanently	Older settlement; most families in the area since before independence (1975)
Investor retained the use rights, most people only lost access to plots; 12 families resettled	Full resettlement process, 277 people with land use rights, eligible for compensation

The most important difference between the two cases is their experience with large-scale farm estates since independence. Whilst in Malema the farm estate had different "owners" since the end of the colonial period in the 1970s – State plantation, then Portuguese corporate investment, currently new concession

[12] *Emakhuwa* in some sources. I have opted to use the Portuguese spelling in the thesis, as it is the most common in Mozambique.

involving the same investor -, in Ocúa there is no continuous history of ownership from “outsiders”. Here, the last “owner” of the concession area backs to the colonial period, and some of the resettled residents had been living there for 40 years. This difference is key to understanding the implications of historical memory, past experiences and stories to current legitimacy perceptions (recognition dynamics), and hence to answering the research questions.

3.2. Research methods

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

This research involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with the key actors in the concession process:

- Government officers (national, provincial, district, municipal and village levels);
- National NGOs, including representatives at the provincial level;
- Consultants working on land and agriculture;
- Representatives from the Peasants Union (national, provincial, district and village levels) and farmers associations;
- Representatives of investors, as well as their on-site managers;
- Village chiefs and customary leaders (régulos);
- Local population, including resettled people and other residents.

As the fieldwork progressed - from the capital Maputo to the provincial capitals, and from there to the district towns and villages - I interviewed the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the members of the local governments, as well as the main NGOs and the Peasants Union, at all administrative levels. This enabled me to build a cumulative, and gradually more defined, portrait of the land management and agriculture issues. The main objective of the interviews with NGOs, particularly at the national level, was to draw the background for the study, and inform subsequent inquiries at the local level. For that reason, these are not analysed in detail, *per se*, in the empirical chapters.

At the national level, I conducted interviews with two government officers from the Ministry of Agriculture (including the department responsible for evaluating land concessions). I also identified and interviewed the leaders of the main NGOs working with land and environmental justice matters, including the

National Peasants Union (five interviews). These include organisations involved in the delimitation of community land across the country.

I conducted 23 interviews amongst the local residents in the first village (includes local chief and traditional leader), seven of those with women; five interviews at district level, with the district and municipality authorities (major, administrative post chief, agriculture officers); and interviews with the national and local managers of the agricultural project selected (2 each at different times, plus other informal conversations). In Mahurunga (Ocúa), I conducted 37 interviews with villagers (including the village chief and the traditional leader, the *régulo*), 19 of those with women. In addition, I conducted four interviews at the district (Chiúre) and local levels (Ocúa administrative post) with authorities (chief of the administrative post, Agriculture directorate and Administrator in Chiúre). I have also interviewed the local manager of the agricultural project (2 each at different times, plus other informal conversations).

I have followed different sampling methods for the interviewees, depending on the administrative level and the objectives of each stage of the research. At the provincial and district level, interviewees were purposely selected, with the objective of covering the key responsibilities within the agriculture and land departments in the government (director, agrarian services, geographical and cadastral services). In each site, I also interviewed the chief of the administrative post where the village was included (equivalent to parish), as well as the officials at the extension services. In addition, I identified and interviewed the representatives of the Peasants Union and other NGOs working in relevant areas (smallholder farmers' support, delimitation of community lands).

This being a qualitative study, the interviews assume here the central role as research methods. For this reason, I sought to balance the extension of the sampling with level of depth, and conduct a wide number of interviews in each case study. The company managers and government officers, as well as the traditional leaders *régulos*, are all included in the study, so in their case the interviews cover the universe of the relevant actors (from the national to the local level, including provincial and district governments). At the village level, the approach to sampling had to be different though. The concern here was to cover a diversified group of

people and obtain a nuanced insight of how different individuals were affected by the land concession, how they responded to their new circumstances (including strategies for managing compensations) and how their own perceptions of fairness evolved depending on their relative position within the new "order".

At the local level (village), the main relevant interviewees were the farm estate managers and the local populations, including residents directly and indirectly affected by the concession. In each site, I interviewed the customary leader (*régulo*), the traditional authority responsible for land allocation. For the villagers, I resorted to a combination of complementary sampling methods to identify relevant interviewees: purposive, convenience and snowball. Firstly, I followed a purposive approach, by identifying the main social groups affected by the land concession and their geographical distribution, with the help of the community leaders and other key informants. This includes people who were resettled in result of the concession, others who lost their farm plots but kept their houses, residents who received compensation, and also those who expect to be resettled and receive compensation. Different groups are affected in different ways, and this mostly depends on their location at the onset of the land concession.

As a starting point, and in consideration to the political protocol in Mozambique, in each site I started by introducing myself to the village chief, who promptly suggested a number of people to be interviewed. Balancing respect for the protocol and the necessary independence of the research, I followed some of their suggestions, using them as a starting point to explore the field. From there, it became easier to identify further individuals, households and social groups. I asked for further suggestions from my interviewees (snowball sampling), and was able to identify others myself, as I conducted more conversations and became more familiar with the village history, social context and the circumstances of the land concession. At some point, especially in Ocúa, people would come to me and ask to be heard, sometimes just to unburden. They would take pride, I realised, in that I would not skip their house. I would have a flexible approach towards these "requests", and would interact with as many people as possible when walking around the village. The following table summarises the interviews that took place during the main fieldwork, as well as the sampling criteria.

Table 2 – Semi-structured interviews in each research site

Malema-Sede (Malema district, Nampula province)	**Ocúa (Chiúre district, Cabo Delgado province)**
Non-governmental organisations (NGO) – provincial and local level	
6 leaders and members	4 leaders and members
Government officers (provincial level)	
1 interview (Agriculture Directorate)	3 interviews (Agriculture Directorate)
Government officers (district and village level)	
6 interviews – district, municipality and local authorities (incl. parish/*posto administrativo*)	4 interviews - district and local authorities (incl. parish/*posto administrativo*)
Local leaders (village heads and customary chiefs – "régulos")	
2 interviews	2 interviews
Villagers	
20 interviews (7 women) - distributed across different areas, differently affected by the investment (Namele village and "19 de Outubro" neighbourhood)	35 interviews with villagers (19 women) - distributed across different geographical areas (South – closer to river; North and South to Ocúa road (see map)
Agribusiness investors	
National and local manager of Mozaco (4 interviews at different times, plus other informal conversations and visits)	Local manager of Ouro Verde (2 at different times, plus other informal conversations and visits; contact via mail with former manager)
Total number of interviews per case study (excludes national interviews and informal conversations)	
39	**50**

I prepared the interview guides (see guides for company managers and local communities in the appendices) according to the different dimensions of environmental justice – distribution, participation, recognition – and in order to uncover the issues that were relevant to answer each of the following research questions. I followed an iterative approach, whereby I adjusted some points of the research questions following insights from the fieldwork in the villages.

I asked villagers whether they had participated in consultation meetings, which type of benefits (in terms of investment and jobs) the investor had mentioned, and how the participants had agreed on the terms of the contract (e.g. written form). The objective of these questions was to assess how inclusive consultation meetings had been, and how the project originated. Some of these issues had to be elicited more inductively, such as the memories and stories related to past experiences with colonial plantations and corporate investors. The identification of the social identities important for incorporation claims, for instance, emerged through the analyses of these stories and through more direct observations. Other aspects, such as the effect of land concessions on land management practices and the vulnerability of populations, also emerged in a similar way, through indirect mentions and post-fieldwork during the analysis of the data.

Regarding company managers, I also employed a combination of direct and indirect questions, raising as much background information as possible to understand how these projects unfolded since their approval. I sought to repeat interviews and intercalate them with more informal conversations and visits to the projects, in order to build trust, clarify aspects raised by other interviewees (without mentioning them) and gain a gradual understanding of the whole concession process, as well as about the relations between the company, the authorities and the local community at large.

I adjusted the structure of the guide when the first contacts with key informants (at national, provincial and district levels) raised important issues that I considered I should investigate further in each research site. It was adapted to each interviewee profile – company manager, government officer, village leaders, resettled and non-resettled peasants - and covered the history of the village, since the colonial period, as well as the history of the concession in question and its recent

evolution, such as the arrangements concerning specific community benefits. In the case of local farmers and villagers, I included more specific and detailed questions related to everyday farming; resources management practices; sources of income; share of farm goods sold in the market and those who are destined for household consumption. The inclusion of such topics contributed to characterise local livelihoods, as well as enabling me to capture different notions of fairness and legitimacy around the impacts of the concession. This was particularly relevant as these notions, for their own nature, could not be directly addressed, but had to be indirectly raised, by, for instance, inquiring about the process of land allocation and the current situation of natural resources management in the area.

I discussed with each research assistant which terms would be most appropriate for the local social and cultural context. Most interviews with rural villagers were conducted in Macua (23 out of 35 n Ocúa, 18 out of 20 in Malema) and required additional attention to language, concepts and meanings. Even when in Portuguese, we had to adjust the wording and expressions as to ensure comprehension of such concepts as “climate change”, “agricultural techniques”, and “consultations”. I would then make the necessary adjustments to ensure both comprehension and rigour, whilst keeping an open mind to any interesting cultural meanings or expressions that could be relevant for the analysis.

In each interview, I adopted a flexible approach, seeking to make sure that all topics were covered, however adjusting to the flow of the conversation. When interviewing the rural villagers, I would start with some “warm up” conversation (Dunn, 2016), asking about the weather, their activities, or about their region of origin. This means that each interview follows a different order, and covers additional topics that would just came up during the conversation. This includes aspects of the interviewees’ life stories, as well as pieces of the village history and memories from the colonial period. Each conversation provided rich data, informing subsequent interviews, as well as observation missions.

Usually at the end of the interviews with villagers, I would collect some profile data, namely age, instruction level, marital status. Other profile questions that would fit more naturally in the flow of the interview would be embedded into the conversation, such as number and dimension of farm plots, or region of origin.

I would often pose this type of questions at the very beginning, depending on circumstances and the person interviewed, as these often revealed a good way to start the conversation, in a more neutral tone.

Although each interview was fully recorded, I took notes of the main points of the conversation, including surprising details, interrogations, new factual information and particularly expressive quotes, hesitations or facial expressions (with recording times when relevant). I sought to strategically balance note-taking and recording, in order to capture a register as complete as possible of the interviews (Dunn, 2016). I kept the notes sparse and concise, in order to focus my attention on the interviewee and avoid disrupting the flow of the conversation. These notes revealed invaluable during the fieldwork, especially as the opportunities to transcribe any material as I went along were rare (especially in the second village, where we did not have electrical power).

Once back from the fieldwork, I fully transcribed the recordings by myself. This had the advantage of allowing me full control of the process and the contents. I had carried each interview myself, though often with the presence of an interpreter, and therefore it was easier to confront recordings with notes and my own memories of the conversations, making the most of the information captured. However, the fact that I am not fluent in Macua implies that there is some risk of bias, and interference, during the translation process. In order to manage this risk, I kept frequent follow-up conversations with the interpreters, on reliability, neutrality and confidentiality.

Due to the heavy rains that affected Mozambique in January 2015 – prompting the Government to declare the state of emergency – electricity was cut in the whole of Northern Mozambique, including the provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado. This has caused the disruption of communications, affecting my own work of preparation before moving to the rural areas, as I was not able to use the computer for several weeks. For these reasons, I ended up spending less time than initially intended in my first research site, Malema. The semi-structured interviews in the villages started only in early March. In addition, I had to delay some of the field trips planned for that month due to the heavy rains. For these reasons, as is clear from table 2, I conducted fewer interviews in Malema than in

Ocúa. As it became evident that I would not be able to conduct around 40 interviews at the village level as initially intended, I decided to complement them with community discussions (section 3.2.2.) that would allow me to better understand the diversity of justice issues raised by different social groups, depending on how they were affected by the land concession.

Although I sought to maximise the time available, gathering as much information as possible, I have to acknowledge the disproportion between the interviews in the two study sites. This has implications for the comparative approach of the thesis, especially as the number of women whom I interviewed individually in Malema was significantly lower than in Ocúa. This difference may have affected the relevance given to issues raised by women and the gender implications of the land concession. Even so, the women interviewed covered a diverse group, in terms of work situation, age and history with the company. The diversity of this sample has allowed to identify key justice issues, for example the notion that women lacked more permanent work opportunities in the Mozaco plantation.

In terms of age groups, the majority of the villagers interviewed are older than 40, due to the fact that I have given priority to people who had a longer experience with the plantation estate, or had been resettled recently due to the land concessions under study. In Ocúa, three of the villagers interviewed were between 30 and 39 at the time of fieldwork, and four were in their 20s. In the case of Malema, two interviewees were in their 30s, and three in their 20s. This has implications for the results of the research, especially when dealing with future trends and risks. I address this issue later in this chapter, on section 3.3.4.

3.2.2. Focus groups and village meetings

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, I organised group discussions in different geographical settings across each research site. The fact that I had started fieldwork in Malema one month later than planned – due to the impacts of heavy rains, and disruptions in transportation, energy and communications – has meant that I had a shorter period available for personal interviews. Moreover, being this the first study site, it had taken longer to plan the approach to the field and adjust

to the local conditions. Taking these circumstances into account, I have sought to create more opportunities to engage and learn from diverse social groups. This was especially important as I was covering an area with different situations in place: people who had been resettled from the plantation area ("19 de Outubro" neighbourhood), and others who were leaving in the surrounding area, but had lost their land plots.

Therefore, in Malema, the first research site, focus group discussions assumed a more central role than anticipated. I organised community meetings to complement the information obtained from the interviews. I resorted to the help of my research assistants in order to gather different groups of people in three instances and locations. In two instances, I met a group of villagers in a local church, after the Sunday mass. In the first meeting, we gathered a group of eight people, five men and four women. These were people who had lost their land plots in the plantation area. In another occasion, we gathered the families who used to live in the plantation area, and had been resettled to the "19 de Outubro" neighbourhood.

The groups selected were relatively homogenous – in terms of their personal circumstances in relation to the land investor. This might have interfered with the research results, by emphasising certain effects of the project implementation, and a certain kind of grievance, in these cases the loss of land plots deemed essential for growing household crops. Still, amongst the participants there was some variation. At the first meeting in Namele, there were people who worked as labourers at the plantation, at the time, and others who had been labourers, but at the time had no direct relation with the agricultural company.

At the second meeting, at a different church, I had a larger group of participants, 22 people, 13 women and 9 men. This second meeting was meant to complement the first one and, due to the number of people involved, it was more difficult to organise the discussion around specific points. However, I had assumed from the start that this meeting would be rather informal, with the purpose of covering the widest possible number of villagers in my interactions, as well as identifying possible nuances between different neighbourhoods in Namele village. In this case, the selection of the group followed mostly a convenience approach – as these people stayed after the mass and anyone was free to join the discussion. It

also had the purpose of triangulating the information obtained from interviews and informal conversations. I had already interviewed some of the people attending the meeting. In addition, this meeting had the advantage of gathering a more diversified group of people (except in terms of religion, as it was held at a catholic church).

The meeting at the "19 de Outubro" neighbourhood had the explicit objective of gathering testimonies about the resettlement and compensation processes that had taken place in 2013. In this case, I had already interviewed some of the people present as well. Twenty-five people participated, 14 women and 11 men.

The primary purpose of the community meetings in Malema was to collect data on the relationship between Mozaco and the local peasants, as well as complementing the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the sampling process followed a purposive and convenience approach. The history of the participants, whether they had a land plot in the plantation, had been farm labourers with one of the companies in the past, or had been resettled in consequence of Mozaco's project, were the main criteria for selection. Therefore, participants with a longer history with the plantation estate, and in older age groups, are in practice overrepresented. The age of the participants varies widely, as age was not a key criterion for selection. Different generations are represented (ranging from people in their 20s to older than 70), yet older generations (plus 50) are predominant).

For the first meeting in Namele (15th March, 2015), I selected the participants with the help of one of my research assistants, being the main criterion that they should have some direct experience of the Mozaco concession, including former labourers of the JFS tobacco plantation, resettled villagers and peasants who had lost their main farm plots. We were therefore able to gather a small but diversified group, which allowed me to capture a range of issues and clarify how different groups had been differently affected by the concession, and also which expectations did they have towards the current "land owners" and how this informed their fairness perceptions of the land concession. As this meeting was organised at a mid-stage of the fieldwork, it also contributed to inform subsequent

individual interviews and group discussions. The second meeting held on the following Sunday, also at a local church, followed the same approach.

The meeting in the "19 de Outubro" neighbourhood, a resettlement area, had different contours. Here I met, along with the other research assistant, with a larger group of people, with the specific purpose of clarifying their situation, living condition, and compensations received. Unlike the other two meetings, the families present at this one belonged to the group that had obtained compensation to resettle to a new area (this was understood as a gracious compensation by Mozaco, as this people had unduly built houses in the concession area). The participants were invited through the neighbourhood officials. At this group discussion, I was able to raise different perspectives and collect more detailed information about compensation amounts, and especially about the conditions of the resettlement area.

In Ocúa, where I had obtained a higher number of individual interviews - as well as opportunities for direct observation and informal conversations - I arranged a community meeting with a specific purpose: to sketch a map of the village. In addition to the meetings in the main research sites, I had a group discussion with cotton contract farmers during a visit to the JFS plantations in Cuamba (Niassa province).

In both research sites, I obtained maps drawn by local villagers, which was a means of identifying locations and the respective names. Whilst in Malema the village chief offered to draw Namele's map (figure 12), in order to support our scheduling of interviews, in Ocúa I decided to use the opportunity to gather a number of villagers and use the map as the starting point for a wider discussion. Whereas in Malema I had had fewer interviews, and the community discussions were a means of identifying justice issues raised by different groups over a wider territory, in Ocúa the situation was different. The research on this site benefited from a longer planning period and from the start of the dry season (from April 2015), which allowed me to conduct more interviews. Therefore, I decided to combine the purposes of the focus groups with a participatory mapping activity.

For the participatory mapping in Ocúa (figure 5), I invited each person according to their knowledge of the village history, the concession and experience with agricultural activities. The group included several members from the peasants

association and the village chief. The objective of the exercise was to use the map to foster discussion, and specifically to identify areas under stronger competition, as well as the more productive lands and the former areas of colonial plantations. This served the purpose of identifying overlaps and understanding to what extent the current land concession corresponded to previous tenure arrangements. It also allowed me to clarify specific locations and names, especially those Macua toponyms that were more difficult to identify during the interviews.

Figure 5 - Participatory mapping in Ocúa, June 2015

3.2.3. Direct observation and informal conversations

I think that in most cases observation carried out in a research of this kind can neither be non-participant nor entirely participant. As much independent as researchers seek to keep themselves, there will always be a degree of interference in the research environment. On the other hand, one's position and presence will always constrain the degree of involvement in the activities of the research participants. Therefore the diverse degrees of participant observation distinguished by some authors, such as DeWalt and DeWalt (2002).

In my case, the limitations imposed by my own image soon became clear. As a female *mukunia*[13], travelling on her own, I was not expected to enrol in every

[13] "Mukunia" is the Macua word for "European white", meaning also "those who have more money than us".

kind of activity in the rural villages. Everyone was polite to me, but generally within the accepted rules for dealing with foreigners. As time went by and I came to know people better, I became able to explore my possibilities, within the limits of my social role. The fact that I did use the passenger vans and walked to the farm plot, just as a local, probably shaped my image within the community as a strange kind of *mukunia*. Driven in times by necessity, others by inquisitiveness, I used public transportation and participated in household and farm activities. My host family and their friends, and especially the children, were amazed, and fairly amused, whenever I offered to pestle (*othita*) cassava, or sat with the family shelling peanuts for the traditional *matapa*[14], or threshing corn. Just as I remember doing with my grandmother, though she used a rather more sophisticated piece of Azorean basalt.

I would seize every opportunity to attend meetings of farmer associations and other groups, in order to complement my field observations (Mahurunga, Ocúa, and Nholo, Malema). I also attended several social gatherings, religious, political and social events that came up during my time in the field. In Mozambique, it is fundamental that everyone understands who the foreigner is, and what the purposes of their visit are. Public introductions of any outsider, including Mozambicans from other regions, are commonplace in such events as Christian masses, as I first realised during a short visit to Mutuali, in Malema. Otherwise, people "get suspicious", as I would be recurrently, however kindly, informed.

I was reminded of this "suspicion" issue, rather uncomfortably, at a particularly important public event that took place in Ocúa, not long before I finished fieldwork there: an official visit of the Provincial Governor. In contrast to the common practice, I was not officially invited to sit at the public stand, nor did the Governor staff seem to be have been informed of my presence. There could be dozens of unexpected foreigners at the event on that day – and there probably were – but I was the only *mukunia* on sight, watching the performances and speeches from the ground, amongst the locals. As soon as the Governor staff landed sight on me, they cast me aside to inquire about who I was and for what purpose I was attending the event. They also forbid me to take any pictures. Not satisfied with my

[14] Traditional Mozambican dish consisting on a stew with cassava leaves, coconut and peanuts (or cashew nuts). It is usually vegetarian in the rural villages, but in "richer" versions fish, shrimps or crab can be added.

answers – namely, that I was carrying authorised research and happened to be in that exact village at the time of the visit - they called aside the other foreigner who seemed most likely to be connected to me, the Zimbabwean manager of EcoEnergia, and proceeded to interrogate him about my presence there. Besides preventing me of approaching the Governor herself, this situation did not have direct and significant impacts on the research. Still, it was a reminder of the political context in which I was undertaking my research.

Direct observation supplemented the interviews and group discussions, providing rich contextual information, including about farming and other economic activities, political and religious issues, and land conflicts. My daily experience was different between Malema and Ocúa. In the first case, I was living in a Catholic mission in the district town, two kilometres from my main study location, Namele village. In Ocúa, I lived with a family in Mahurunga village, so I spent every day, 24 hours, at the centre of my field research. These experiences allowed me to gain complementary perspectives, and they both have advantages and shortcomings. In Ocúa, I gained in cultural immersion and opportunities for observation and interaction with the social actors most relevant for the research. On the other hand, I had less independence and there were more expectations towards me. In Malema, I have got a sense of how it is to live in a small rural town, of the dynamic relationship with the surrounding villages and, last but not least, I had the opportunity to better understand the role of a crucial actor in rural Mozambique, before and after independence, and to the present day - church missionaries.

Whilst in Malema, besides the interviews and group discussions, I arranged to visit other surrounding locations that were relevant to gain a better sense of the research context. This included a visit and informal discussion with a group of community members in Nholo village. This is where Mozaco was planning to expand their activities, and where the company had held a rather unsuccessful meeting with the residents in October 2014. At the time of my visit, in early February 2015, the company had already given up these plans; however, the villagers expressed uncertainty about their future, and stressed they had not been officially informed of this outcome – they insisted they had to see a *written* document to be sure they would not be evicted from the area. Also in early February, I visited Mutuali village (Malema district), where I met other key

informants who were important for the first stage of the fieldwork in Malema, including the vice-president of the provincial Peasants Union.

Later on the field research, before leaving Malema district, I also arranged to spend some days in Cuamba (Niassa province), where the main headquarters of JFS group are located (Sociedade Algodoeira do Niassa – SAN), as well as their cotton outgrow plantations. Here, I had the opportunity to visit the JFS cotton factory and one of the plantations, where I met a group of smallholder farmers engaged in contract farming. This visit allowed me to gain a better understanding of the context of JFS activity in the region, the historical importance of cotton as a cash crop (*cultura de rendimento*) in Mozambique, since the colonial period, and get to know how contract farming works in practice.

In Ocúa, besides visiting the Ouro Verde plantation, I also travelled to a nearby village (30km of distance), Samora Machel, to visit other important, and recent, farmland investment. Jacaranda is a banana plantation (dimension) mostly focused on exports and had been recurrently mentioned by my interviewees in Ocúa as a successful agribusiness venture, in contrast with EcoEnergia/Ouro Verde sugarcane concession. Here, I had the opportunity to talk to the local manager, who showed me around the plantation.

3.2.4. Data analysis and codification

The perspectives of interviewees and research participants in general informed subsequent steps and the research instruments, while contributing to generate themes and codes that I later transferred to the NVivo project. The fact that I was taking complete notes and writing a research journal was very useful in this context. Also the preliminary interviews during the scoping trip (June 2014) had provided a first approach to these topics and enabled me to test my analysis and codification strategies.

At the more structured stage of analysis, once back from the field, I organised the codification of the collected data around the key elements emerging from the interviews. I also referred to recent empirical research on environmental

justice (Martin *et al.*, 2014; Sikor, 2013b) and property studies (Sikor and Lund, 2009, Berry 1997, Fortmann 1995).

As I transcribed the interviews and focus group discussions, I alternated this task with coding the data, through CAQDAS software (NVivo11). At a first stage, I produced a list of codes (nodes in NVivo terminology) from the interview guides and the research questions. As codification progressed, I complemented the list with other themes that occurred during the analysis. As the nodes structure became denser, I progressed to refine the codification of the transcribed material, in order to apply the new codes that have been emerging. The nodes structure came to integrate multiple levels of interpretation and additional information, besides the topics directly related to the environmental justice dimensions.

After a first round of thematic codification, I developed a more analytical stance, seeking to identify patterns and feelings associated with specific topics, which enabled me to analyse the material for its narrative contents. From here I re-established links with the theoretical and empirical literature (Gibbs, 2013).When going back to my Endnote library, I chose to label the material according to my NVivo categories. In this way, it became easier to retrieve related findings from other studies for use in the writing up of the data analysis. In addition, I resorted to NVivo link memos to register pieces of analysis as they came up, along with interrogations and aspects needing further clarification. As the name states, these memos are linked to specific quotes and passages of the material, thus facilitating retrieval, connections and further analysis (Gibbs, 2013; Richards, 2005).

In the NVivo project, the interviewees are designated *cases*, each of them included in a *set* (company managers, government officers, local peasants). For each peasant interviewed in the villages, there is a complete list of attributes, which enable the emergence of patterns and help to "bring together the threads of the argument" (Richards, 2005, p. 172) p. 172. These includes profile information - such as age group, sex, marital status and level of education - but also other key data relevant to understand patterns of land occupation, social integration and mobility, such as number of land plots and respective areas, region of origin, type of house and occupations.

3.3. Ethics and reflexivity

3.3.1. Personal reflections and challenges of the fieldwork

During the whole fieldwork, I kept a journal where I would jot down any reflections raised by social interactions, dilemmas and challenges that I would come across. I will recover and discuss some of them over this and the following sections.

Dividing the fieldwork in stages helped me to adapt gradually to increasingly challenging environments. The first stay in Maputo, over a 6-week period, allowed me to contact key informants, including government officers, NGOs and academic researchers. In practice, it served as a further stage of preparation for the more demanding part of the fieldwork in the rural areas of Northern Mozambique. Just after the 2015 New Year celebrations, I started travelling towards the North, settling first in Nampula, the capital of the province with the same name. The environment here was already much different from the cosmopolitan life of Maputo, and security even more guarded, but it was still an intermediate urban environment.

In Nampula, I was lodged with an NGO while conducting interviews at the provincial level, making contacts in the research sites and refining the research instruments. Living conditions only became somewhat rough when, due to the heavy rains, there was a prolonged and unexpected power cut, for more than a month. We were left without running water (electrical pump), and had to adapt our food habits, for lack of refrigeration (in our own kitchen and elsewhere). In addition to the power cut, rains damaged roads and disrupted food transportation, affecting the quantity and quality of food available in markets. The most complicated, however, was losing access to my laptop and cell phone overnight, when I still had to print the materials for the field research (e.g. interview guides). For the first few days, even if I managed to charge the cell phone, in some of the few places with fuel generators, some cell networks were not operational, affecting contacts and interview schedules.

Faced with multiple difficulties on the ground, I soon realised how it is important to keep a flexible approach to fieldwork plans, as the circumstances in the field – meteorological events, transportation arrangements, access to contacts

and information – evolve rapidly and often in unexpected ways. The situation in the first research site, Malema, had also become rougher than I expected. My visit to Mutuali village, where I was stranded for a few days in early February, is a perfect example of the challenges of doing fieldwork in rural Mozambique during the rainy season. In this case, the situation was such that the government had declared a "state of emergency". This was an excellent opportunity, though, to gain a direct experience of the daily difficulties of going through the rain season with intermittent transportation, no electricity and nearly no food available on market stalls. Despite the difficulties of doing fieldwork during this season, it allowed me, undoubtedly, to gain a deeper understanding of the social context of the research.

3.3.2. Positionality

I have already discussed some challenges related to my positionality in the sections on interviews and observation. Some aspects of my personal image predictably had a significant impact on the social environment and the research participants. This fieldwork was a learning experience in multiple aspects, amongst them making me much more aware of - and sometimes less comfortable about – my "race", gender and age. My own analysis reflects the fact that this was, to date, my most complete and challenging experience of fieldwork in developing countries. Although I had done independent fieldwork in Cape Verde before, the social environment there was completely different from the one I found in Mozambique[15].

Firstly, I appeared to have aged a lot, overnight, on the first day I set foot in the rural country. In Mozambique, where life expectancy is 55 years old, I realised that most people did not perceive me as a young woman exactly. People would generally call me "titia" or, more often, "mamã" (diminutive terms for aunt and mother in Portuguese). Sometimes people would also call me "mana" ("sis"), which I honestly preferred. Even if I could ignore my other singular traits, the fact that I was a woman in her late 30s, travelling alone, was already bizarre enough for most

[15] The United Nations graduated Cape Verde to the category of medium development country in the same year I was there in fieldwork, 2007.

people. Confronted with already enough evidence of my exceptionality, I would usually avoid mentioning that I was also unmarried and childless.

Secondly, gender. I soon became aware that people would perceive me very differently when I was accompanied by a man, as he would be regarded as an authority. To some extent, the presence of a man also granted additional safety. All my assistants were male. One of the reasons was the lack of qualified women in the rural areas. However, this fact also balanced the eventual weaker authority of my own presence, which I had to measure carefully, as it might influence the results of interviews and discussions. At a more formal level, though, I do not feel that my gender had an impact on my access to research participants.

Last but not least, for the whole time of the research, especially when in the most remote rural areas (Namele, Mutuali, Ocúa), I could never escape my status of *mukunia*. This Macua word, which children would effusively shout whenever they caught sight of me, has a double meaning. In the Macua-Portuguese dictionary, compiled by church missionaries, it refers to anyone that looks like a "white European". In reality, there is other attached meaning to it, as I came to learn: "someone who earns more money than us", who is perceived as foreign, white or not. This inescapable identity tag would earn me constant requests for gifts and support. Often I would respond by resorting to another identity tag as a protection shield, whenever these requests became too overwhelming: I was, after all, "just a student", and as such certainly not a rich person.

The colour of my skin has never had such a weight before. But I will never regret the lesson of feeling "different" or a member of a cultural minority. Still, I was somewhat surprised by this cultural shock. Although it was not very frequent, I certainly did not expect that children would come and touch my skin, then laugh with embarrassment. Even less that they would be afraid or run away from me. The two baby twins of my host family, in the second site, were particularly emphatic. They would both start crying, very loud and desperate, every time I walked through the gate. One day someone dropped a likely cause for such strong reaction: when children did not behave, adults threatened that white people would kidnap them.

Furthermore, I was not just a *mukunia*. I was born in Portugal, the former colonial metropole. For this reason, some people could have resented my presence.

With rare exceptions, that was not apparent in my social interactions though. On the contrary, most of the time there was a feeling of familiarity and proximity, due to the fact that I shared the Portuguese language with many of the research participants.

Still, I did not feel that being specifically Portuguese made a significant difference for most people. The racial categorisation appeared as far more important in everyday contacts. There were occasions when I was mistaken by a representative of the agribusiness company, especially in the villages. One of the implications of being regarded as a company member was the expectation that the interviews would influence compensation processes. I would start the interviews with some informal conversation, and seek opportunity to clarify my position from the very beginning. I sought to carefully explain my position as a research or a student (depending on the appropriate concepts for each interviewee), as well as describe the objectives of my work, with the help of the assistant. These situations cannot be completely avoided, as typically white foreigners are associated with investors, or at most workers of aid organisations.

Having said this, it is also important to reflect on the influence of previous contacts with researchers and NGOs. In Malema, the local residents had previous experience of interacting with researchers, NGO members and even journalists. The Mozaco case was often targeted in NGOs 'land grabbing' reports, and had come to receive some media attention. People becoming used to, or even bothered of, being interviewed, was a potential risk in researching this case. In addition, the NGO Grain launched one of their most controversial reports, which mentioned the Mozaco case, whilst I was in the field, in March 2015. This caused uneasiness amongst the managers of the company, who had not been contacted for the report. At first, they were unwilling to expose themselves in such a context, but after some conversations I managed to approach them and eventually obtained multiple and successive interviews from different members of the JFS group.

One aspect that should be discussed in this context, as well, concerns my social integration while in the rural areas. While in Nampula or Maputo, I had more logistic options, but once in the rural areas I had to be pragmatic and innovate in my accommodation options. I sought to maintain the possible neutrality, especially

in relation to the key actors targeted in my research. For this reason, I avoided direct dependence, or association with, peasants NGOs and agribusiness companies.

In my first visit to Malema, I first stayed in a guesthouse, but I soon realised this option was not affordable for more than a few days. When I returned to stay for a longer period, I had to resort to the local Catholic mission, whose Sisters generously welcomed me in their house for around two months. Although I had been christened into the Catholic Church, as a new-born, I do not consider myself a religious person, not even remotely. However, my religious background did not affect the warm welcome of the Sisters. Staying with them conferred me a protection net and daily camaraderie, and came to be a very positive experience. I was still an exotic presence in this remote rural town, but was understood to be under the protection of the Mission, and as such benefited of a certain social respect. Especially after being publicly introduced at a Sunday mass, as is current practice in Mozambique, Malema's people felt fairly at ease with my presence.

These relationships might have implied, however, some risks for the research. In order to mitigate those risks, I would not share any conclusions or information with my host "family", and the truth is that I was never questioned about details of my work, either. Compared to other social actors and institutions in town, the Church seemed after all one of the least correlated with the specific topic of my research. I never felt this connection affected my interactions with members of other faiths, for instance, starting with my Muslim research assistant. I attribute this to the tradition of religious tolerance in Mozambique, one of the aspects I came to admire most in the country.

In Ocúa, the logistic arrangements were different. I made contact with the peasants association there, and ended up staying with a local family for the duration of my fieldwork. This was the only practical solution at the time, and it had some clear advantages, allowing me to live in the village and have more flexibility to walk around, scheduling more visits and interviews. Also in this case, I would still refrain from discussing details of the research with the family, especially as my hosts were members of the local peasants' association.

3.3.3. Ethical considerations

This research went through a full ethics and risk assessment, before each of the field trips to Mozambique, according to the regulations in place at the School of International Development (DEV-UEA). I have followed the principle of informed and prior consent on every contact with key informants and research participants. I provided a full information sheet (in Portuguese or English) for informants and interviewees such as NGO representatives, government officers, local authorities and company managers (international, national, provincial and local levels). In such cases where the interviewees were illiterate or fluency in Portuguese was not sufficient for fully understanding the terms of the present research, I resorted to the interpreters, who verbally explained the nature and objectives of the research, and we recorded the verbal consent of the interviewee.

Consent is far from a straightforward matter, however. In the political context of Mozambique, it was unavoidable to start each field visit by contacting the local authorities, both at the district and village levels. Also, community leaders would introduce me and give an overall idea of the purpose of my presence in several occasions (e.g. at social gatherings, such after a Church mass). The agreed purpose of the introduction was only to make local villagers at ease with my presence, and did not necessarily imply an enforcement of participation. However, given the social and political context, and the importance attributed to authority, there is the risk that at least some people interpreted this "blessing" from the authorities as a coercion to engage in the research. I sought to mitigate this risk by repeatedly stressing the voluntary character of the research, and also, during individual interviews, that I was completely independent from any private companies or the government.

The protection of the research participants, especially the most vulnerable in the villages, was a strong priority for me during the whole fieldwork in the rural areas. I assumed from the very beginning that we would be discussing potentially sensitive issues, and sought to avoid all presence from third parties, apart from the interpreter when the interviews had to be conducted in Macua.

For the most part, there was little risk of exposure of individual interviewees. However, some aspects deserve mention here. During my first

contacts in each site, the village chief suggested names of possible interviewees. For the first days, at least, they were aware that I would be visiting these people, and that most likely they would concede me an interview. This was unavoidable, as I had to balance political protocol with the independence of the research, and ignore local authorities would condemn my work mission altogether. Their help was also fundamental for me to gain an understanding of the geographical and social context of the site. However, I was careful to never discuss the content of any conversations, and started to go around on my own and schedule interviews based on "snowballing" as soon as possible. I also sought to intermingle suggested interviewees with other random contacts, maximising the independence of the research within possible.

As agreed in my UEA ethical clearance, I was the only one with access to both the recordings and the full list of research participants. During the analysis and writing-up stages, I proceeded to anonymise interview excerpts and replace all names by pseudonyms, as I had committed to do during the interviews. I have specifically selected fictitious names that, although they are in wide use in Mozambique, do not correspond to any of the interviewees, in any of the research sites. There are specific cases where the author of the declarations might be identifiable by their content or context; however, this was unavoidable, and only applies to authorities, company managers and anyone with a key institutional role. In these cases, I did not commit to full anonymity, and made the interviewees in question aware of this. None of the interviewees from government institutions or companies required anonymity, but even in these cases I preserved it to the extent possible, as long as it allows a clear reading of the empirical chapters.

3.3.4. Limitations

Although Portuguese is the official language in Mozambique, there are multiple local languages currently spoken throughout the country. Only around half of the population speaks Portuguese, and fluency levels are particularly low amongst women and in the rural areas. Whilst I sought to learn some basic Macua whenever possible, it was unavoidable to resort to interpreters who were fluent in both the local language and Portuguese. At a first stage, I made attempts at recruiting

students from the university (Lúrio) or the secondary schools, without results. The rural locations were distant from the closest universities, and the logistics, responsibility and legalities of bringing a student with me revealed incompatible with the timeline of the fieldwork.

The political sensitivity of the topic and my own positionality, along with the cross-cultural, cross-linguistic nature of the study, require that I acknowledge the limitations of this research. They mostly related to access to information and the influence of third parties in data collection.

Having followed the political protocol to carry out research in Mozambique, access to information was not a major constraint. Most of the government officers, researchers, company managers and local villagers were approachable and friendly, or at least polite. However rare, there were some situations where access to information revealed less straightforward. This pertains to access to documentation from consultation meetings, such as minutes and reports. Despite multiple attempts, it was not possible to get access to the minutes of all the meetings held in the past, so I had to rely partially on accounts such as interviews, in order to analyse the consultation procedures carried out prior to the approval of the concessions.

For instance in Malema, I repeatedly requested access to Mozaco's minutes from the company administration, but they directed me to the district government office. I had had access to one minute at the Land Registry office in Malema (from May 2012), which was included in the land concession file. However, when I asked for the rest of the documents, from the meetings I had heard of, the district officials were unable to locate them in due time. This does not mean, necessarily, that the officials were trying to conceal the information. Still, it may imply that the participation process had not been properly organised and documented. In Ocúa, both the local government (Administrative Post) and the district office ensured they did not have copies of the minutes, and that all the documentation had to be consulted at the provincial government.

Other investors in Mozambique, with more visibility – such as the concessions for extraction of natural gas in Palma, Cabo Delgado - have made the minutes available on the internet, which demonstrates the lack of coherent practices concerning processes of community consultation, and information sharing.

In line with the strategies described over the previous sections, I sought to minimise any losses of information, due to translations and any intervention by third parties. The triangulation of different sources of data and methods, as well as adequate preparation of fieldtrips and the training of the assistants - with detailed discussions on the research objectives, requirements for neutrality and confidentiality – were the main strategies employed for that purpose.

My limited knowledge of Macua implied that, in some circumstances, I had to rely on community leaders and research assistants for communication. This is a limitation for this kind of cross-cultural, cross language study, as it reduces my own control over the research process and its results. I was aware that the answers of the interviewees might be influenced, to some extent, by the presence of the research assistant, and the image they had of his political status and social role. Feeling coerced to participate, and to answer in a way they thought would be the most appropriate, were some of the risks I had to manage from the start. On the other hand, in the political context of Mozambique, having a complete stranger for assistant was not a good option either. It could worsen the uneasiness of the interviewees and arise suspicions that he was a government official seeking to collect sensitive information. Having someone culturally more familiar, especially a man, to some extent mitigated the possible negative impacts of my own presence, as a foreign, female stranger. For these reasons, I intently balanced the criteria of familiarity and neutrality when selecting the research assistants.

Language and cultural protocols constrained my access to women in particular. Most women in rural villages do not speak Portuguese, so for their interviews, and their accounts in group discussions, I relied on the interpreter. Moreover, the cultural protocols of the Macua limited communication with female participants, in some instances. Gender issues were especially noticeable at the “19 de Outubro” meeting, in Malema, and at the time constrained communication to some extent. Men and women sat in separate groups, and even after I asked women to approach they still maintained a great distance. They did not appear to be at ease to approach me, or sit amongst the men. It was also more difficult to foster their engagement in the debate.

Regarding the research methods applied in the field, there is some

imbalance between the case studies. Due to fieldwork in the first site (Malema) having started later than expected, as I explained earlier in section 3.2., I decided to resort to community meetings to compensate for a lower number of semi-structured interviews. I used these focus group discussions as a means of triangulating the information collected from interviews, as well as covering a wider diversity of populations and circumstances. In Ocúa, I conducted a higher number of semi-structured interviews, and therefore opted for a slightly different methodological approach. The community meeting organised in this research site had fewer participants than in Malema, and had the specific purpose of drawing a map of the main village (Mahurunga). These differences between the fieldwork in the two sites have implications to the comparative analysis carried out in the empirical chapters. The personal perspectives of the research participants, namely their perceptions of justice regarding the land concessions under study, might be underrepresented in Malema when compared to Ocúa. This is a limitation of the thesis, which I plan to correct in future research in Northern Mozambique.

Other limitation of this doctoral research pertains the selection of participants, and more specifically how different age groups are represented in community meetings and interviews. Although I stress the importance of considering younger generations in land deals research, the fact is that older age groups are overrepresented in the above-mentioned instances. The main implication of the reduced number of younger participants (in their 20s and 30s) is that future impacts of land concessions might be underestimated. Still, I have sought to cover a wider range of age groups in the semi-structured interviews, to the extent possible. The number of interviews conducted in each site was mostly constrained by the available time.

It was most determinant to involve younger people at the stage of the interviews, where I covered topics related to future climate risks, land scarcity and alternative livelihoods. The importance of distinguishing younger peasants amongst the interviewees is clear when I discuss the memories of floods in chapter 7, for instance. The fact that younger peasants have more recent memories of climatic events might affect their resilience strategies, namely the location of their plots and their choice to give up a given land plot in exchange for monetary compensation. I intend to explore further the topics covered in chapter 7 in future research on

agriculture and adaptation, as anticipated in chapter 8. I will therefore have the opportunity to adopt new strategies for sampling and methodology, taking advantage of what I learnt from the doctoral fieldwork.

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological approach adopted in this thesis, as well as the criteria for the selection of the research sites. In addition, I provided a detailed account of how I applied each research method in the field. Finally, I discussed the ethical implications, risks and limitations of researching land deals in rural Mozambique.

With all that in mind, along with the conceptual framework presented in chapter 2, I will now proceed to describe in some detail the geographical and socio-economic context of this research (chapter 4). Then I will proceed to the analysis of the field data, over three empirical chapters. Each of them offers different and complementary perspectives on the dynamics around Malema and Ocúa's land concessions. The first (chapter 5) discusses the approval and consultation processes in each research site. The second empirical chapter (6 – "Owner's land") focuses on the influence of the colonial heritage in the reciprocal recognition of ownership. Finally, chapter 7 discusses the implications of land deals to the recognition of local practices and cultural values. In addition, it reflects on the long-term effects of the concessions, especially over local strategies for mitigating climate risks.

4. GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter sets the geographical context of the research at the national, provincial and local levels. Firstly (4.1), it provides a brief account of the political, economic and historical circumstances of Mozambique. Secondly (4.2), it introduces the current policies for land and agriculture in the country, and then (4.3) explains the overall process that leads to the approval of any new land concession in Mozambique. It includes a brief account of the main customary practices concerning land amongst the Macua, the dominant ethnic group in the geographical area under study (section 4.4.). Finally, it offers a cultural description of the two research sites, located in the Northern provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado (section 4.5.).

4.1. Mozambique

4.1.1. Historical context

A complex legacy of rapid and profound political changes is reflected in current land occupation patterns in rural Mozambique. A former Portuguese colony, the country became officially independent in 1975, in consequence of the 'Carnation Revolution (25th April 1974), which overthrew the authoritarian New State regime. This section outlines the main political stages that influenced land allocation in the country over the past century.

The enforcement of colonial rule was one of the pillars of the New State political regime, which dominated Portugal between 1933 and 1974. The regime held onto its 'overseas provinces', including five African territories[16], at a time where most of the continent was becoming independent (1950s-1960s), having intensified white settlement, especially in urban areas. During the 1940s, the Portuguese government established *colonatos*, areas reserved for European settlers, from which most original inhabitants were evicted. Part of the local population have remained in these colonial farms as tenants or labourers (Virtanen, 2005). In

[16] Besides Mozambique, other African territories were under the Portuguese colonial rule: Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe, Angola and Guinea Bissau.

parallel, the regime established specific areas for occupation by the native population, named *indigenatos* (Obarrio, 2010).

A strong hold on agricultural production in the colonies, with the goal of achieving self-subsistence for the metropole, as well as a surplus for exports, was one of the pillars of the nationalist regime, especially after the Second World War. Tobacco, cotton and sisal were the priority agricultural commodities at the time, and large plantations were created in order to increase cultivation of these crops.

In order to comply with the export-led goals for agricultural commodities, and in response to the increased demand for raw materials during the Second World War, the colonial regime instituted a system of forced labour in the plantations (Newitt, 1995). One of the objectives was, in theory, to ensure that peasants had sufficient income to pay 'hut taxes' to the colonial government, but not much more than that (Hedges *et al.*, 1993). At some point, the government established physical punishment for those who were not able to comply with production goals. The rural populations resisted forced labour through various means, including open revolt and seeking refuge in remote areas in the mountains. Customary authorities were instrumental during this period, as a means for reinforcing the presence of the colonial state in the rural areas. *Régulos*, *cabos de terra* and *sipaios* were in charge of recruiting those they considered, for some reason, to be 'sluggards' (*vadios* or *malandros*) for the forced labour in the plantations (Hedges *et al.*, 1993). This system was officially in force until 1961.

In parallel, the colonial administration also implemented a policy of coerced production, first for cotton, and then for rice. During the 1940s, most of the cotton exported came from the Nampula province. Cotton production was predominant on both sides of the Lúrio River, in Erati (Nampula) and Ocúa (Cabo Delgado). In Ocúa, the colonial administration created "*concentrações*" and "*blocos*" for massive production. These organised 'villages' had their own schools and water wells, but the peasants bore the costs, through free labour and extra taxes (Hedges *et al.*, 1993).

In 1964, Frelimo – the left-wing Mozambican Liberation Front - initiated military confrontations that would last for a decade. The Carnation Revolution, in 25th April 1974, resulted in the overthrown of the colonial regime in Portugal,

leading to a ceasefire (September 1974), and then the official independence of the country in June 1975. Following independence, Frelimo instituted a Marxist-Leninist system, inspired by the Soviet Union, which involved a series of collectivist policies. The socialist government organised rural labour around agricultural cooperatives and state farms (including in Malema, my first case study), a program that included the organisation of rural populations into communal villages (Walker, 2012). The socialist project implied an 'africanisation' of the state, the creation of a one-party system and the elimination of religious educational institutions, along with the rejection of traditional authorities and their rituals, deemed as obscurantists and supporters of the old colonial regime (Obarrio, 2010).

The 'villagisation' process was not compatible with traditional ways of life and cultivation patterns (Casal, 1996), and was met by a strong opposition in northern rural areas. The creation of state farms often led to the loss of previously owned land, as well as reducing time for cultivation. Becoming labourers meant access to an income, but still, for rural populations, retaining their own plots was paramount (Filho, 1998). Resistance was again widespread, and took diverse forms, including absenteeism. This persistent tension ultimately contributed to the demise of Frelimo's rural development policies (Castel-Branco, 1994).

The alienation of customary authorities, which had a strong hold in rural areas, contributed to the weakening of Frelimo's influence in central and Northern Mozambique, increasing popular support for the opposition movement Renamo[17] (Bowen, 2000; Pitcher, 2006). A prolonged civil war (1977-1992) between Renamo and Frelimo shortly followed independence. During the war, the Mozambican population massively abandoned the rural countryside, concentrating in urban and coastal areas. Besides labour reserves, communal villages increasingly became centres for political and military control, especially after the 1980s, as the civil war intensified (Pitcher, 2006).

As will be examined especially in chapter 6, rural populations in both research sites hold vivid memories of these successive periods of imposed policies and resistance. The acknowledgement of this permanent tension between the state

[17] Military movement created with the support of Ian Smith's regime in South Rhodesia in 1975, with the objective of containing Frelimo's power in Mozambique.

and the peasantry across rural Mozambique (Bowen, 2000), through the colonial and post-independence periods, is crucial for understanding contemporary notions of justice towards agricultural investments.

Mozambique was unable to restore the levels of industrialisation and agricultural production of the pre-independence period. Political and economic conditions deteriorated gradually with the worsening of the civil war and massive population displacements. The civil war disrupted rural livelihoods, preventing many families from cultivating their staple crops altogether. Most of the territory was covered with landmines (the country was only declared officially free of landmines in 2015). In the mid-1980s, in face of increasing debt, Mozambique applied for a structural adjustment program, as a consequence of which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) required the implementation of economic liberalisation policies (Hanlon, 2004).

Under strong international pressure, Frelimo and Renamo finally signed the Rome Peace Accords in 1992, which led to the end of the one party regime. The first multiparty elections were held in 1994. Frelimo have managed to keep political power since then, but in exchange of adopting a more liberal approach. The party officially renounced Marxism-Leninism and embraced foreign investment as the best option to promote economic growth in the country (Hanlon, 2011).

The end of the civil war has driven what was, at the time, the largest return and re-integration of refugees and displaced persons in the history of Sub-Saharan Africa. This involved nearly six million people, a process that was supported by the United Nations (Crisp & Mayne, 1996). The restitution of property held by these people was amongst the terms of the 1992 Peace Accord. They were given the option of either settling permanently, or else returning to their areas of origin (*antigas moradas*). However, many of the returned, who amounted to nearly half of the total Mozambican population did not find the same conditions they had left. Some of the land had already been occupied by other peasants (Unruh, 1998). Social services and roads were largely absent or damaged, and agricultural areas covered with land mines.

These massive population displacements, within such a short period, created multiple and overlapping land claims. In addition to the people who had escaped

during the war, others who had been evicted during the colonial period were also claiming the right for a parcel. The war, having started shortly after independence, added to the already complicated mix of social identities and place attachments (Unruh, 1998). As generations followed, it became less and less clear for households as to where they should return: to the land from where they had been evicted in colonial times, to their ethnic homeland, or to the land they had left during the war.

In the 1990s, after the civil war, it became evident that customary institutions, and their respective solidarity networks, were still the most well equipped to address land conflicts, and processes of land allocation in general (Hoekema, 2012).

The reintegration process was at first largely focused on the most desirable areas, with fertile land, access to health and education facilities, perennial water sources and larger markets. In the meantime, the favourable conditions created by the peace process and liberalisation policies attracted land investors to apply for concessions from the Mozambican State. This started in the 1990s, but with little coordination between state institutions, which aggravated land conflicts in the rural areas (Unruh 1998). The need for a comprehensive land reform became evident, a process that would start with the landmark law of 1997 (see section 4.3.).

4.1.2. Socio-economic situation

Mozambique has been amongst the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase over the last decade. The GDP had been growing consistently since the end of the 16-year civil war (1992), but dropped abruptly in 2014-2015. The annual GDP growth dropped from 6.6% to 3.4% between 2015 and 2016 (IMF, 2017). Whilst this follows recent economic trends for Sub-Saharan Africa, in the case of Mozambique a recent sequence of events exacerbated the financial crisis. Frelimo, the ruling party since the independence in 1975, once again won the general elections of 2014 (presidential and parliamentary), but the opposition party Renamo contested the results and decided to return to armed guerrilla, generating fears of a return to civil war.

In addition to this unstable political environment, it was revealed in 2015 that the government had contracted multiple loans that they kept hidden from donor agencies and the IMF, a scandal that prompted development aid sanctions. In 2016, the GDP (11 billion US$) had retreated to the levels of six years before (10 billion US$ in 2010). The gross national income (GNI) per capita dropped, in the same period, to the levels of 2011 according to World Bank data.[18]

The fast growth of the period 2004-2014 had been mostly due to the booming extractive industry and the financial sector, and concentrated in urban areas. It had contributed to widen, even more, the gap between the South and the North, which relies strongly on smallholder agriculture. The agriculture sector - which employs approximately 80% of the active population (MINAG, 2011a) - has been growing at a slower rate than the rest of the economy. The share of agriculture in the GDP has been decreasing since 2009, and was of 24.7% in 2016[19]. Despite attention to training and agricultural extension in the post-independence period, direct public investment in smallholder agriculture has remained low (Cunguara *et al.*, 2012; Mosca, 2012).

Food security remains a critical issue in Mozambique. In 2008, 44% of the children under 5 years old were undernourished. The government set the goal of reducing this to 20% until 2020 (*Plano de Acção Multisectorial para a Redução da Desnutrição Crónica em Moçambique 2011-2014 (2020)*, 2010). One of the last countries in the Human Development Index - 181 out of 188[20] - it had in 2016 a population of approximately 29 million people[21]. Life expectancy is 55 years, for which one of the main causes is the high incidence of HIV infection (11.5%), mostly affecting the active population.

Poverty in Mozambique remains a largely rural phenomenon, and the economic growth contributed to widen the gap with the urban areas. The 2014/15 household budget survey data, carried out by the National Statistics Institute,

[18] The World Bank data (2017); http://data.worldbank.org/country/mozambique (as of 23rd July 2017).
[19] The World Bank data (2017); http://data.worldbank.org/country/mozambique (as of 16th September 2017).
[20] United Nations Development Program (2017); http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries (as of 16th September 2017).
[21] The World Bank data (2017); http://data.worldbank.org/country/mozambique (as of 16th September 2017).

revealed substantial poverty reductions, compared to the 1990s (survey 1995/1996). Yet, rural poverty persisted, especially in the North and Central regions. In fact, and contrary to the trend in the rest of the country, poverty incidence increased in the Northern provinces of Nampula, Niassa and Cabo Delgado, compared to the previous survey of 2008. Since the Mozambican population has doubled over the last two decades, in practice, the absolute number of people in poverty has remained the same (approximately 12 Million) (MEF, 2016). Low productivity - at nearly the same level for the last 50 years (MINAG, 2011b) - lack of access to markets and climate shocks are amongst the main drivers for these persistent trends of rural poverty (World Bank , 2016).

Mozambique is also very vulnerable to climate change. Agriculture is expected to be one of the sectors most impacted by climate extremes over the next decades. Episodes of heavy rains, alternating with prolonged droughts, are expected to become more frequent. The area suitable for rain fed agriculture, on which the vast majority of farmers rely, will likely face a substantial decrease (Niang *et al.*, 2014). This raises concerns that food security will be even more threatened in the near future.

4.2. Policies for agriculture and rural development

Mozambique has played a central role in African policies for tackling food insecurity and rural poverty, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), signed in Maputo in 2003. The nation has notably been at the policy forefront. Whilst there is dispute over the government approach to supporting rural populations, there are a number of policies in place which, at least formally, aim at tackling that challenge.

The Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agrarian Sector (PEDSA, 2011-2020) aims at a 25% increase in the cultivated area for staple crops, while ensuring sustainable management of natural resources (MINAG, 2011a). In parallel with improved direct support for smallholders – machinery and access to markets, for instance - the plan aims at creating a propitious environment for private investment. The objective is to foster the development of partnerships between investors and the government, as well as investors and rural communities.

In addition to promoting access to machinery and markets, the plan sets out to improve nutritional education in the rural areas. Other measures address the gender issues constraining food security and the influence of women in polices for agricultural production. These take into consideration the higher vulnerability of women to illness (especially the higher incidence of HIV/AIDS) and asymmetries of participation, due, amongst other factors, to lower literacy levels.

One of the main pillars of rural development policies in Mozambique is the "Strategy for the Green Revolution" (MINAG, 2008; Mosca, 2012), which is focused on supporting smallholders and medium-scale farmers through investment in machinery, irrigation infrastructures, fertilisers and improved seeds. This implies a reinforcement of the agrarian extension services that have been in place since independence. The strategy also points out the need to address the lacunae of agricultural markets, especially the lack of access to infrastructures, such as roads, and the development of processing facilities, in order to add value to agricultural output. The strategy encourages private investors to support local farmers to increase their productivity and cultivated areas, through technical assistance and mechanisms such as contract farming.

The country is a net importer of food products, due in part to a lack of facilities for agricultural processing. Although Mozambique is a producer of rice, costly imports of this staple crops have been increasing sharply. In 2011, the Government approved a Plan for the Development of Agribusiness, which sets to foster agricultural production in especially designated 'development corridors' across the country (MINAG, 2011b).

The Agribusiness Plan establishes a list of priority products, which includes traditional commercial crops - tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, cashew nuts, – along with the main staple crops - maize, rice, sweet sorghum, cassava, legumes (beans), oleaginous crops (coconut, sunflower, soya, sesame seeds), biofuels (bioethanol, biodiesel), citrus fruits (banana, citrines, mango, pineapple), and vegetables (potatoes, tomatoes, and others). In terms of livestock, aviculture is the strongest development (associated with soya cultivation for poultry feeding) and is identified as the priority activity, along with milk production.

Recent studies, from scholars with vast experience of Mozambique politics and social reality, such as Smart and Hanlon (2014), have pointed out the advantages of contract farming for sharing the risks of production between large investors and smallholders. Smallholder farmers gain access to means of production and are then able to expand their production areas. Conversely, investors grant access to labour, reducing the impacts of weak economic results (due to price fluctuation or climatic events, for instance). Hanlon argues that contract farming remains the best option for agricultural development in the country, having contributed to the creation of a new class of medium-scale agricultural producers, whilst the model of large-scale agricultural investments is doomed to fail (Hanlon, personal communication, London, 2014). This resonates with the views of some land consultants interviewed for this thesis. However, contract farming can also have negative social and environmental impacts, for instance due to the use of chemical inputs (Mosca, 2012).

The land concessions phenomenon brings about a clash between two narratives regarding agricultural and economic growth in Mozambique. On one side, are Government officials who believe foreign investment is the best way to develop the country and address food security issues; on the other hand is a growing movement which defends the best option is to support the smallholder farmers and follow models such as conservation agriculture, promoted by national and international NGOs and the Peasants Unions. The peasant movement in Mozambique has been a strident critic over agricultural development programs, but also over environmental policies linked to land ownership and natural resources management, such and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).

There are major agricultural development programs being launched in the North of the country, such as the Lúrio River Development Program and Prosavana. The Lúrio Program encompasses the margins of the river in the provinces of Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa. It envisages the development of multiple agricultural investments along the river margins, and possibly the construction of a dam in Niassa. This program is still at a preliminary stage, though, and even government officers interviewed during fieldwork assumed they did not have much information about it at the time (2015).

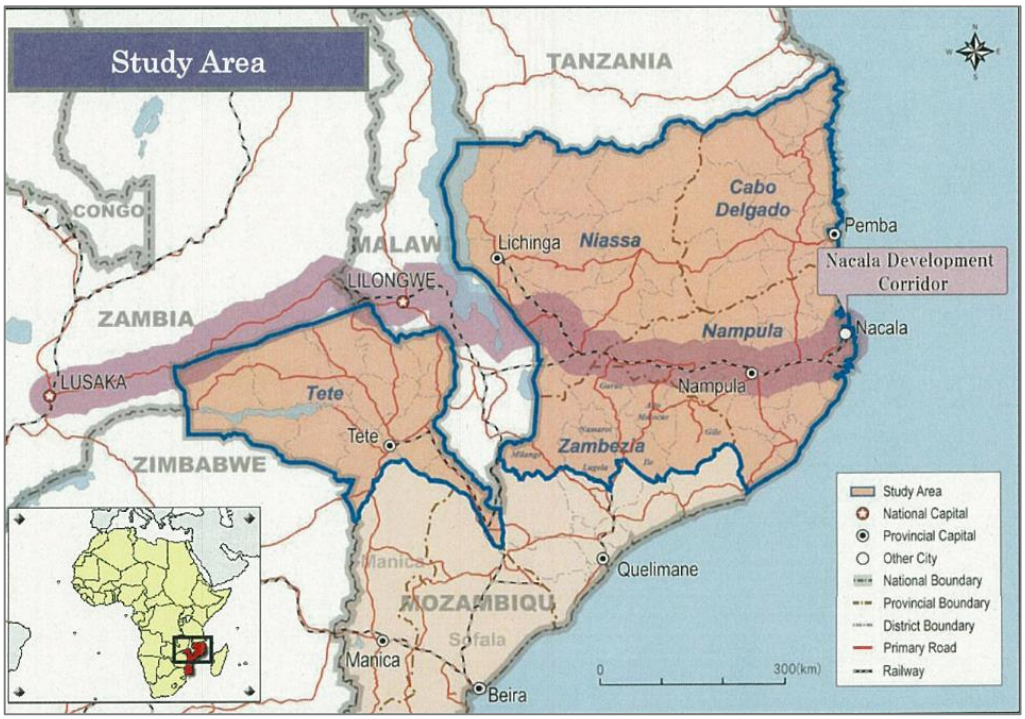
Prosavana has undoubtedly captured the most attention from the media and NGOs. The Triangular Cooperation Program for Agricultural Development of the Mozambican Savannah (ProSAVANA) is coordinated by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Minister of Agriculture of Mozambique (MINAG). The program, of which a preliminary version was publicly discussed in 2015, is focused on the 'Nacala development corridor' (figure 6) - which roughly encompasses the provinces of Nacala, Nampula and Niassa, between the Indian coast and the border with Malawi. It is inspired on Prodecer, a rural development program implemented in the 1970s in the Brazilian Cerrado with the participation of Japan.

The construction of a railroad to transport coal from the mines in Tete province (explored by Brazilian company Vale, in operation since 2015) and further investment in the deep-water port of Nacala, are two key investments that are expected to foster economic growth in this 'development corridor'. The discovery of natural gas and oil fields along the Mozambican coast is another factor attracting foreign investment to this area.

The Mozambican government has heralded Prosavana as the 'silver bullet' for economic growth in the historically alienated North. However, Prosavana has been persistently disputed by local farmers and national NGOs, most notably the National Peasants Union (UNAC), as a threat to land access and food security in the region. The fear is that Prosavana will lead to multiple large-scale concessions and require massive evictions of rural populations. Mozambican academics have also pointed out the contradictions of what they call a "technocratic" plan, which proposes to support smallholders to increase their productivity, but in practice lacks practical dispositions to pursue this, such as direct subsidies (Mosca & Bruna, 2015, p. 33).

Figure 6 - Nacala development corridor

Source: MASA (2015)



Recent developments suggest that civic movements have been gaining ground and have contributed to shaping public policy (Fairbairn, 2013). Prosavana has been under revision following a series of public consultations, and in 2016 a group of civic movements and organisations formed the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism for the Nacala Corridor Development (MCSC). The vigilance of civil society on land concessions has also led to provisions to make these more transparent over the last few years. I will now give an account of land concessions operating under the 1997 Land Law, the landmark of land reform in Mozambique.

4.3. Land concessions under the 1997 Law

Land tenure in Mozambique has gone through successive rapid changes since the country's independence in 1975. All land and property were nationalised under the socialist regime of Frelimo, but structural adjustment programs led the Government to reopen land markets and allow concessions to private corporations, in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The prolonged Renamo-Frelimo civil war limited

attractiveness for corporate investors, but after 1992, there were more peaceful conditions for exploring business opportunities in a range of sectors, from agriculture to mining and gas extraction.

As agriculture started reawakening in the wake of the civil war, the pressing need to clarify the boundaries between customary and official tenure systems became evident, as well as to formalise land access to private users, local communities and investors (Unruh, 1998). The Land Law of 1997, the key piece of land reform in Mozambique, replaced the previous legislation approved in 1979 and established a system of concessions. Although all land remains property of the state, individuals and corporations can apply for a land use title (DUAT - *Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra*, meaning "the right to use and develop the land"), valid up to 50 years and renewable for another 50.

As happened in other Sub-Saharan countries, land legislation in Mozambique has progressively incorporated provisions to protect community and customary land rights (Cotula, 2012b). The Mozambican land tenure legislation has been praised as the most progressive, and even unique in the world, for the way it positions formal recognition of customary land rights at its core, regardless of formal registries (Hoekema, 2012). Legislators came to recognise that customary institutions had remained central for land allocation in rural areas, before and after independence, and through civil war. Therefore, the legislators decided to create "an open-ended, flexible legislation, that would allow adaptation to economic and social circumstances" (former Minister of Agriculture, personal communication, Maputo, 2014). Through different political and economic shifts, customary leaders remained, on the ground, the institutions best positioned to help solve the overlapping claims that resulted from massive displacements during the conflict (Norfolk & Tanner, 2007).

The 1997 law recognises the rights of groups or families that have occupied an area for more than 10 years in "good faith" . In order to gain assurance of this right, communities can seek the demarcation of their land as "community land". In the cases where land is already being used by local communities, investors are expected to negotiate directly with them, as well as to provide compensation for any losses. This can take the form of monetary payments or in-kind compensation

(Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010), usually investment in social infrastructures - such as irrigation systems, schools and health centres – as well as agricultural employment. Even so, rural populations are mostly unaware of their rights and of which procedures to follow in order to claim their rights. This ultimately limits their influence in processes of land concession (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010).

According to the 1997 Land Law, individuals or companies can submit an application to the SPGC (*Serviço Provincial de Geografia e Cadastro* – Provincial Mapping and Land Registry Service), that will then organise a first consultation with the local community to ensure that the targeted area is free and has no occupants. In the cases where there are already occupants, which is the most common, the investor may start a negotiation with local populations. In any case, a formal definitive land use title will only be issued after a provisional period of two years (foreign investors) or five years (Mozambican companies). During this first stage, the company has to implement a development plan. Only after confirming that the investment has adequate progress will the authorities issue the final DUAT.

Depending on the requested area, the concession process climbs different steps of the Government ladder. If under 1,000 hectares, the Provincial governors can approve the concession. Between 1,000 and 10,000 ha, the process has to be submitted for consideration by the Minister of Agriculture. If above 10,000 ha, only the Council of Ministers is entitled to approve the requested concession. When one reads the list of approved concessions over the last decade, it is interesting to note the frequent entries just under 10,000 hectares, a work-around to avoid consideration by the Council of Ministers. There are even cases where the same investment is split into parcels of 9 thousand something hectares - usually in forestry concessions (generally involving wider tracts of land when compared to other sectors).

4.3.1. Community consultations: who is involved, when and how

The 1997 Land Law followed a broad process of public participation, involving civil society and peasant movements, and it has been praised by international organisations for the way it protects community land rights and articulates official land tenure with customary rules (Hanlon, 2011). The broad process of public

consultation that preceded the approval of this landmark legislation contributed to affirm this 'third road' option (state-owned land and customary tenure), instead of outright establishing a regime of private property, which would force rural communities to take on an even more exhaustive process of land titling and demarcation (Hoekema, 2012).

Whilst still focused on attracting capital for economic growth, the Mozambican government has approved dispositions to make private concessions more transparent and inclusive. This process of adjustment appears to be driving the Mozambican tenure system towards a stronger focus on community-led strategies (Sikor & Müller, 2009). Bruce and Knox (2009) consider that the Mozambican process is one of high interest for those conducting research on land governance, as it shows how "creative institutional amalgams" are progressively constructed in an attempt to mitigate disputes generated by "top-down" land reform.

Initially the legislation required one community consultation only, in order for a land concession to be analysed by the Government. In 2010, the Council of Ministers approved new provisions, requiring that at least two community consultations are held. One of the objectives is that local populations have the opportunity to reflect on the proposals of the investors, instead of having to make a decision in a single moment in time. One of the land experts consulted in Maputo, in December 2014, still considered that two meetings did not necessarily guarantee sufficient transparency and fair outcomes for local communities. This is because at the second meeting, a contract has to be signed already, and only representatives from the community are usually involved (TJ, consultant on land issues, Maputo, December 2014).

It is not common that local villagers sign the final minute of the meetings (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010). On the other hand, local NGOs have reported cases of minutes with signatures by people who do not recall having signed any documents. The fact that less than half of the rural population in the villages is literate and fluent in Portuguese makes it all the more difficult to conduct such consultations in a transparent way. Government officials, NGO members and key personalities at the local level will assume a crucial mediating role in conveying the message to the villagers, as I will discuss further in chapter 5.

Although the conditions inscribed in the law are apparently thoughtful of community rights, the problem is oftentimes the distance between written rules and practices on the ground. Consultation procedures are complex and it is difficult to ensure they take into consideration all aspects of representation (of specific social groups, women, minorities), and that they involve individuals or villages that may be only indirectly affected by the concession. Nhantumbo and Salomão (2010) have carried out multiple case studies of biofuels concessions throughout Mozambique. They highlight the lack of advance information and binding contracts as some of the main weaknesses of consultation procedures. As a land expert interviewed for this research put it, "there is not enough information and sometimes one more hostile community is simply ignored as if it was not affected by the project" (NR, consultant on land issues, Maputo, December 2014).

Beyond this, any process of public participation is mediated by networks of influence (from the international to the local level). Local government officers (Posto Administrativo, equivalent to parish) and village chiefs are invited to the first meetings with the investors, where in practice they negotiate how the message is to be conveyed to the wider community (Nhantumbo and Salomão, 2010). As I will further discuss on section 3, *régulos* (customary leaders) and elected village chiefs assume a key role on land negotiations and may significantly influence the outcomes of consultations, depending on their interests and relationship with the investor. The district administrators, direct representatives of the national government, typically act as the first gatekeepers in negotiations with land investors. There have been reports of influent political and economic elites pressuring district administrators to find them land, rushing through consultation procedures (Hanlon, 2011).

While on the surface a participation process may seem adequately inclusive and effective, the socio-political context of each moment of public participation determines the outcomes in great part (Borras *et al.*, 2011). Dominant discourses and power relations are propagated through the communication techniques employed, which usually presuppose, in the community consultation context of the Global South, attributing predominance to technical language, unidirectional flows of information, and controlling the very definition of concepts and issues (Martin, 2007). These aspects will define the boundaries within which land investments are

discussed and local populations give their consent. To some extent, the terms of discussion are pre-established.

Other factors, in the case of rural Mozambique, will permeate any consultation process that takes place. As roughly half of the population in rural areas in Mozambique is not fluent in the official language, speaking a myriad of local languages instead of Portuguese, they can only access the information provided through interpretation and translation. Communication devices may not be entirely effective as well. Generally maps are employed to discuss the boundaries of the concession or the areas for resettlement. Government officials responsible for land consultations have observed that the use of maps has been problematic, as many people have difficulties interpreting them (interview with Land Registry officer, Malema, March 2015). The inclusiveness of participation procedures will be further developed in chapter 5 ("Consent and Participation").

4.3.2. Protection of community land rights

Whilst the use of 'local' or 'rural community' is widespread in the literature dealing with land concessions and land access issues in general, the concept may encompass a diversity of social groups and realities, depending on the geographical, social and political contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to determine, first of all, what constitutes a *local community* under the terms of the Land Law in Mozambique ("Lei de Terras, n.º 19/97," 1997):

> *"A group of families and individuals living in a defined area, smaller than a locality that wants to safeguard its common interests by protecting its living area, farming areas whether cultivated or fallow, forests, sites of socio-cultural importance, pasture, water sources and areas of expansion."*

The first complication is that this definition is rather vague, leaving room for interpretation. It may include traditional clans with chiefs, extended families, or even a group of neighbours. Generally, the delimitation of a "community land" involves a thorough socio-economic assessment carried out by a NGO, but its definition may remain problematic in the field.

In order to prevent conflicts with other parties interested in land areas, rural communities have been formally encouraged to register their land rights. The first

step is a delimitation of boundaries (delimitação). The team in charge of the process, usually a NGO contracted by the government, carries out a participatory analysis, where the community talks about their history in the area, local uses of land and natural resources. These debates include the acknowledgement of spatial limits and possible conflicts, as well as suggested methods to resolve them. The team then delineates a sketch, with the help of the community members, which represents the agreed boundaries of the community area, signalled by elements such as trees and water sources. This map is submitted to the Provincial Land Registry Department, which then issues a certificate in name of the community. A formal DUAT title requires a more precise and costlier mapping exercise, called a demarcation (demarcação), which includes the placing of physical landmarks around the perimeter (Hanlon, 2011).

International donors have pressed for a swift delimitation of community lands, having included an annual goal of 50 concluded delimitation processes amongst their development indicators. In parallel, some NGOs in Mozambique have been directly undertaking delimitation initiatives across the country, including ORAM, Kulima and ITC, the Initiative for Community Lands (Iniciativa de Terras Comunitárias).

Nonetheless, delimitation and demarcation of community lands remain a complex process, especially as official land tenure systems overlap with customary ones. Customary rules of land access are intricate, and it is very common that peasants grow their crops in neighbour villages. Boundaries of land uses are not always constrained into a specific community that can be formally delimitated on a map, or easily devised through satellite imagery, as I observed in both research sites.

There are other constraints affecting delimitation procedures. Although the process has been considered as giving advantage to local population in negotiations with possible project proponents, it does not guarantee total and permanent holding of the land. The spirit of the Land Law is that all land belongs to the State and land access requires effective and continuous use. Within the process of delimitation, a community can take into account future expansion needs, for instance. However, they have to leave the land vacant. Leases, subleases and sharecropping are not

officially permitted. In practice, this means the remaining lands will be under pressure of possible external investors (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010). A community with delimited land is free to negotiate with investors and sign contracts, without direct intervention from the Government. However the cases of these contracts – or community-investor partnerships – are not common.

4.4. The Macua and their land management practices

The vast majority of participants involved in this research identify themselves with the Macua ethnicity, and speak the Macua language, with some regional variants. The dominant ethnic group in Northern Mozambique (40% of the country's population), the Macua are descendants of the bantu peoples that migrated to this region between the I and IV centuries. They forged a reputation as an indomitable people, and actively resisted the Portuguese occupation (Pélissier, 2000). In pre-colonial times, they were known as those who come from the forest, "the people who keep secrets". In the 19th century, at a time where the Portuguese had not ventured long from the coast, Macua meant 'savage people'. In mid-20th century, during the New State regime, they have also actively resisted forced labour in the plantations, and for that reason have been called a 'lazy' people. They would escape to remote regions, or fail to show up for work, and sometimes even destroyed crops.

One can still learn the myth of the creation from any Macua, in urban or rural areas. They believe God (*Muluku*) generated them from the roots of a Baobab tree (*mulapa*), in the Namuli Mountains, by the Zambezi River. The baobab – known as the tree of "thousand years" - is still today sacred for the Macua, and is amongst the preferred for prayers and traditional rituals (Feraudy, 2002). Protection from the ancestors is central to the Macua cosmogony, and trees mediate communication with them. To appeal for a fruitful growing season, good rains or protection, the traditional chief summons people to gather around a tree, along with the traditional queen (*rainha*), who makes a symbolic offer to the spirits of the ancestors, usually in the form of some cereal flour. This ceremony is called a *maqueia* in the region where I conducted the fieldwork.

In addition to formal use rights, rural populations in Mozambique can obtain access to land and natural resources through customary tenure practices, which

encompass a myriad of social arrangements. In the Macua regions, it is possible to acquire land use rights through inheritance, loans, and in some cases even to purchase or rent a land plot.

The main channel of land access is inheritance through the family's clan. In these cases, people frequently move to pursue this right in their clan's land of origin - or commute to use these lands, in case they are located in a neighbouring area. Amongst the Macua, inheritance practices follow a matrilineal lineage, one of few in practice in the world. This means that land is inherited from the mother side. Traditionally, though, the woman's maternal uncle retains control over the family resources. Even in this system, matrilocal marriages – the husband settles in the land of his wife's family - are not mandatory. They can also be patrilocal – when the woman moves to her husband's land of origin – or else the couple moves to a neutral territory (Negrão, 2000).

Customary tenure is not a static system. Practices have been changing over time, reflecting changes in land tenure and agricultural policies, such as the industrial production of tobacco and cotton during colonialism (1940s). The increase in population density and the impact of Islam are other factors that Negrão (2000) considers to have driven the growing influence of patrilocal marriage. In the patrilocal marriage, the man holds the rights to the land, and in event of his death, or a divorce, the woman often loses access to the land, having to return to the territory of her clan. This is most common when there is no children, or after they are grown up. The family can decide to continue hosting the widow, but are free to change their minds. If men already retained control of land use in these matrilineal communities, the generalisation of the patrilineal marriage increases the vulnerability of women (Mandamule, 2015).

Another common social arrangement is the loan, but this is usually negotiated as an exceptional, "emergency" situation, most often for a single agricultural season, and is non-renewable. The occupant is prohibited of planting any trees during this period. The objective is solely to grow staple crops to help sustain their household.

Finally, despite the fact that property of all land remains with the State, it is still possible to rent a 'dispersed' plot, or even, in some circumstances, 'sell' it

permanently. Originally, customary rule did not allow lands transfers, but nowadays this is possible in some circumstances. According to the Mozambican law, although there is no private property, land use rights are transferrable under some circumstances. Officially, though, only 'improvements' – such as construction or planted trees – are subject to transfer ("Lei de Terras, n.º 19/97," 1997). In practice, from the perspective of rural populations, this is equivalent to land transactions. As I will show in the empirical chapters, interviewees recurrently talk about the need to have financial resources, in order to *buy* a farm plot. The value of the land – represented by planted trees – may increase if this is near a river, or with soil fertility.

Trees are, according to customary practices across the whole country, subject to individual property. They are therefore crucial to claim and maintain access to productive land. As cashew nuts became an important product for agro-processing, and therefore an alternative source of income, access to trees tends gradually to be converted to ownership of the land where they are planted.

Customary tenure systems in Mozambique have proven to be adaptable to changing political and economic circumstances. However, land scarcity has the potential to cause a rupture in these practices (Negrão, 2000). In the villages I visited in Mozambique, where population density has been increasing, land *purchases* and leases have become commonplace. Depending on their economic means, families can negotiate access to the most productive areas. If mobility is not an issue, often they will search for lands in neighbouring villages. Nevertheless, increased demand for land, coupled with climate change and other environmental risks, may expose the most vulnerable individuals in the community (elderly, newcomers, widowers, women), as I will discuss in relation to my case studies in chapter 7.

In practice, whilst all the land is state property, there is a delicate balance between formal and customary tenure systems, which allows for considerable flexibility and negotiability. Monetary resources – in the form of land leases or purchases - therefore still play a fundamental mediating role in land access and management within local communities. Although in principle any citizen can obtain a formal land use title (DUAT) – formal recognition - belonging to a 'solidarity'

community (Honneth, 1995) - will ultimately prove crucial for securing access to land and natural resources, especially for the poorest social groups.

4.5. The research sites

Both research sites are located in Northern Mozambique, a region that has been attracting attention of investors across such sectors as forestry, mining, gas extraction and agribusiness. National strategic plans for rural development are in place encompassing both areas. In the case of Nampula, it is Prosavana, mentioned above. The second research site lies near the Lúrio, one of the main rivers in Mozambique, which marks the border between Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces. The Mozambican government is also preparing a rural development program for this area – the Lúrio Development Program. This involves settling multiple agribusiness projects all along the riverbanks (from inland Niassa to the coast) and possibly the construction of a dam.

Figure 7 - Location of research sites in Northern Mozambique

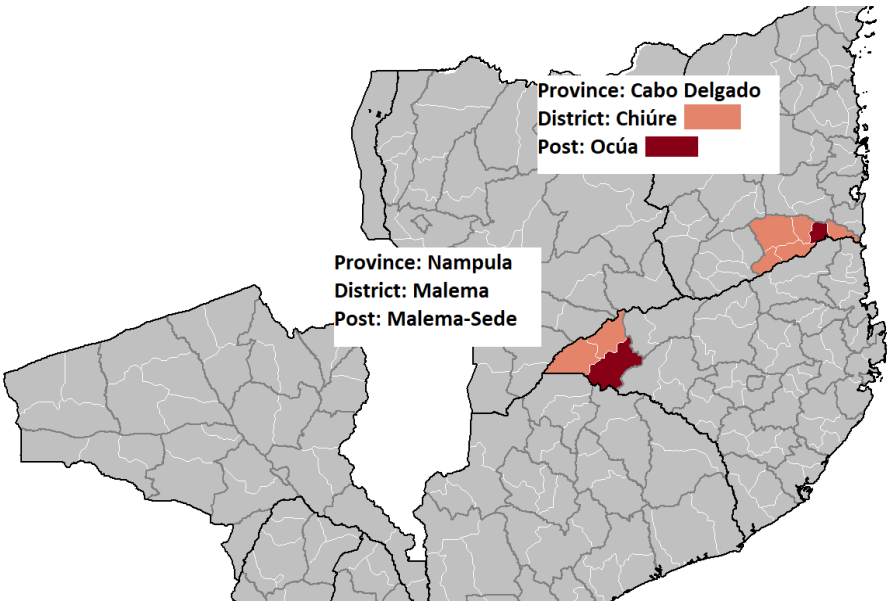


Table 3 specifies the four administrative levels involved in this research, for each study site.

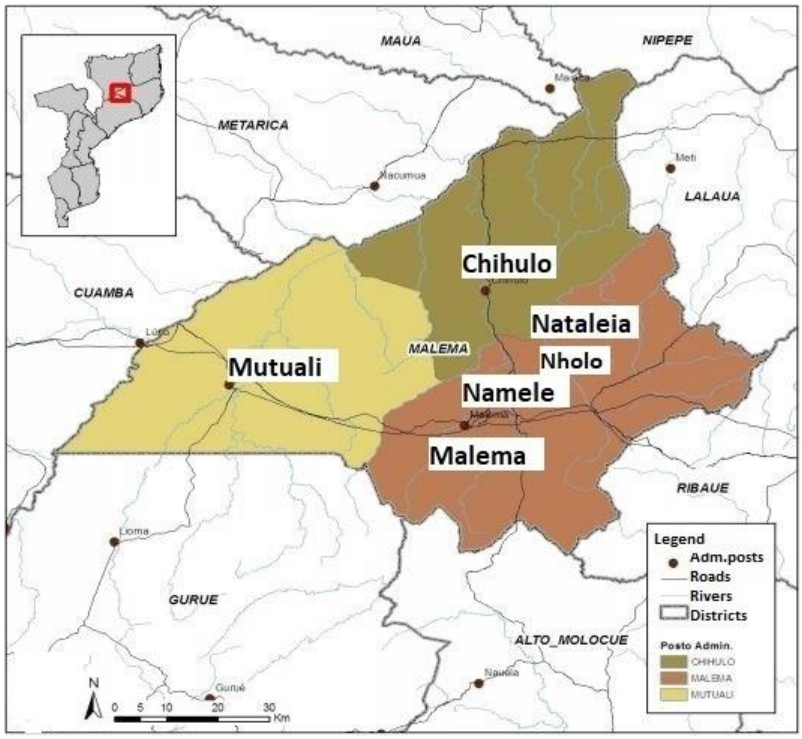
Table 3 - Administrative levels per case study

Administrative level (regional to local)	**Study site Malema**	**Study site Ocúa**
Province	Nampula	Cabo Delgado
District	Malema	Chiúre
Administrative post	Malema-Sede	Ocúa
Village (main field site)	Namele	Mahurunga
Others villages visited	Nholo Mutuali	Samora Machel

4.5.1. Malema-Sede (Malema district, Nampula province)

The first study site is located in Malema, a hinterland district that lies approximately 250 kilometres to the West of the provincial capital, Nampula (figure 8). Malema is located approximately 260 kilometres from the Malawian border and along the only passenger railroad in the country. It is the district town and was recently designated a municipality. Namele, where the plantation under study is located, is a village around two kilometres northeast of the town.

Figure 8 - Malema District



According to the last available Population Census (2007)[22], the Administrative Post of Malema-Sede, where Namele is located, had 92,324 inhabitants, 45,653 men and 46,671 women. In the most recent projections from the National Institute of Statistics, in 2015, the population has more than doubled to 195,077 residents, of which 95,669 were men and 99,408 were women. According to the same estimates, 68% lived in rural areas.

The dominant language is Macua (bantu language, with some variations in Nampula and other parts of the province). Although Portuguese is the official language in Mozambique, fluency in rural areas is generally low. The 2007 Census indicates that Portuguese fluent speakers are only 37% of the population, with even lower rates amongst women (24%). 71% of the district population is considered illiterate, 84% in the case of women. The main religions professed are Islam (42%) and Christianity, including Catholics (25%) and various Protestant creeds (18%).

[22] Nationwide Population Census are carried out each 10 years. The 2017 Census was still underway at time of the thesis submission (September 2017). For this reason, unfortunately I had to rely on projections for more recent statistical data.

Malema district is widely known as the 'granary' of Nampula province, thanks to its fertile lands and productive agriculture. It is key for providing Nampula city with fresh produce, as well as a strategical hub to export food produce to Malawi. However, the district still struggles with food insecurity and child malnutrition. According to surveys carried out by University Lúrio on a representative sample of the district population in 2012, 6% of children under the age of two suffered from chronic malnutrition (measured by weight/age) and another 15% had signs of severe malnutrition (height/weight) (Ganhão *et al.*, 2012).

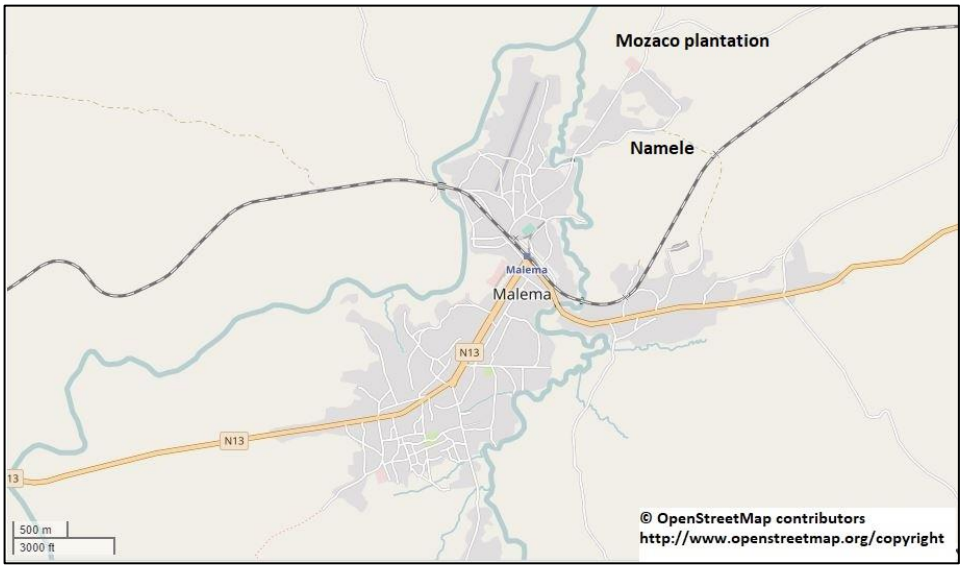
Regarding land uses, 62% of farm plots have less than one hectare and are explored by rural households, yet they only cover 34% of the farmed area. While women work in half of them, in 85% of the cases the landholder is a man. Two zones (Nataleia, Nioce) have already been delimited as community lands in Malema district. The Catholic Church led the process of delimitating 20 communities, while in other cases NGOs assumed that responsibility. Namele, the central village in this study, has not been delimited, but the neighbour village of Nholo concluded the process in 2013.

Historically, the main commercial crops have been cotton and tobacco. The main plantation estate was founded in 1923 by a Portuguese family, the Morgados. After the independence, in 1975, the socialist Frelimo government nationalised the property, creating a state farm (Empresa Estatal de Tabacos – Cabrona) near the district town, in Namele (currently part of Malema-Sede, administrative post). The State farm employed approximately 4500 people, including many workers from other districts and provinces. In order to accommodate the labourers, and attract new populations, a communal village was created, including neighbourhoods for the labourers around the plantation estate. In consequence, the local population increased significantly in the 1980s. When the civil war broke out, this area came under Frelimo's military control. With the intensification of the war and increasing debt, the plantation eventually ceased operation in 1989, as happened to most state farms across the whole country (Norfolk & Tanner, 2007).

Under the implementation of a structural adjustment program, João Ferreira Santos (JFS), a Portuguese business group, acquired multiple farm estates across the country, including the tobacco factory and plantation in Namele. In October

1992, just after the end of the war, JFS formally applied for a concession of the area and resumed tobacco production, involving the local population through an outgrow scheme.

Figure 9 - Namele and the Mozaco estate



JFS has been one of the main agricultural investors across Mozambique for more than a century, focusing mostly on cotton production. In Malema, the group decided to maintain the tobacco plantation under a rotating farming system, attributing alternate land plots to the villagers. During this period, the Mozambican government never issued the formal land title (DUAT 1170), and in the meantime a new Land Act entered into force (1997).

Due to financial constraints, the plantation eventually became inactive between 2006 and 2011. During this period, the local population started using the area, with informal permission from JFS, mostly to grow staple food crops such as maize, sorghum and cassava, as well as rice on the riverbanks. In parallel, the district government decided to install a penitentiary in the plantation estate, and drafted an agreement for the prisoners to use JFS lands. However, the agreement did not come into effect, and they eventually left the area (Mozaco DUAT file, consulted at the district land registry office, April 2015). There had been complaints of conflicts with local population, more willing to welcome a return of JFS, and the associated labour opportunities.

In 2011, the Ministry of Agriculture formally requested a justification for this period of inactivity, and started to consider claiming back the land. JFS submitted a new plan and formed a consortium, Mozaco - with Mozambican and Brazilian business partners. The new project, projected to start in the 2011/2012 season, essentially focused on soya production, alongside a small cotton production. The peasants who had been using land plots there had to give them up without compensation, as this area was still under concession. Of the 39 families who had been living in the plantation area, 17 were resettled and received monetary compensation.

Although the new business consortium held a land title for 2,389 hectares, the same as the former colonial plantation, only around 1,000 hectares were under effective exploration. This area comprised two different blocs, separated by the Malema River. As the district agriculture officer acknowledged, "when Mozaco came, there was only 400 hectares left to explore" (interview in March 2015). The population had progressively settled in the area, especially the lands west of the river. These were completely occupied with land plots, houses and even a school when JFS resumed activity. In fact, part of the old concession lies now inside the urban perimeter of the municipality. According to estimates from the municipality, the population of Namele village amounted to 3890 people in 2015. Following a local consultation, the Agriculture district department recommended, in July 2011, a reduction of the concession area to 1,000 hectares.

Despite this process, when the Ministry of Agriculture sent their approval from the Maputo headquarters, it was issued for the original 2,389 hectares. However, every attempt to expand the area of production, initially to 700 hectares, faced strong local opposition (local officer, Agriculture district directorate, February 2015). As an alternative to the original plan, Mozaco proposed to expand the plantation towards the east. They assessed the area, identified the population living within it and organised a community consultation in the nearest village – Nholo – in October 2014.

The expansion area was to cover an additional 2,000 hectares, reaching the limits of the neighbour community Nataleia, where the Catholic church runs a farm and agricultural training school (Escola Familiar Rural) since 2006. This

encompassed areas already delimited as community lands, such as Nholo village itself. At the community meeting, villagers reacted with anger and, according to the company managers and local authorities, they were not allowed to challenge. To overcome the impasse, the District Administrator later suggested two (more remote) alternative locations – Nioce (Namapaca) and Chihulo (Intete) –,reportedly sparsely populated with available lands, though covered with woodlands and not easily accessible by road. Although in 2015 the district administration had only consulted the village leaders, local activists were already warning that these locations were more populated than has been assumed (200 families), and anticipated difficult negotiations and opposition (NGO local member, interview, March 2015).

In 2015, when I visited the area, the Brazilian partner (Rio Forte) had abandoned the project, and Mozaco was revising their production plans. In 2016, they decided to focus on consolidating the investment already made, rather than expanding production, and requested a revision of the concession area. At the time, the company was working on only 500 hectares, most of it soya beans, plus a small parcel for cotton (50 ha). At the time of fieldwork, Mozaco employed 37 farm labourers on a seasonal basis, and 14 permanent (company manager, interview February 2015)[23]. Women had access to mostly seasonal labour during the harvests. In other parts of the district the company implemented outgrow schemes (Cuamba, Niassa; Morralero – 180 producers) involving thousands of smallholder farmers. However, in Namele, the investment consists, for the most part, in the direct plantation of soybeans for the national and export markets (poultry feed). In 2015, the company had 40,000 hectares under outgrow schemes across Mozambique, with only 1,000 hectares under direct plantation.

The fertile lands, the presence of several rivers, Malema, Mutivaze, Nataleia and the strategic location have attracted land investors to Malema district over the last few years. In addition to Mozaco, other concessions were approved, involving thousands of hectares. However, two projects involving larger areas – Malema Orgânica (sugarcane, 10,000 ha) and the Japanese investment Nitori (intended

[23] As of August 2017, 8 permanent employees and 100 to 300 seasonal labourers, depending on the stage of the agricultural season. 150 families were involved in outgrow schemes of soya and maize, comprising 200 hectares in Malema district. In face of market shifts, Mozaco had made some changes in the plantation, reducing focus on soybeans (100 hectares planted) and increasing cotton production (220 ha) (personal communication, company manager).

20,000 ha, obtained initial concession for 1,000 ha for experimentation), involving a cotton plantation and factory in Chihulo, North of the district – had already been abandoned at the time of fieldwork in 2015. The difficulty in obtaining accessible land near the town, roads and related infrastructure may be a reason for this, as the costs end up being higher than shareholders initially expected (interview, local officer, March 2015). Furthermore, financial constraints have contributed to the abandonment of projects. After an initial rush of interest, the 2008 financial crisis stalled many land investments. In the above-mentioned cases, resettlement did not come into effect and local peasants remained in their areas.

Malema is one of the districts included in the Nacala Development Corridor, in which the government is to implement the Prosavana. The program aims at fostering commercial agriculture in the region, and the government included Malema in one of the key agricultural clusters for Northern Mozambique. The priority crops include the traditional agricultural commodities (cotton, tobacco, cashew nuts), staple crops such as maize and legumes, but also sunflower, fruit, sesame seeds and soya.

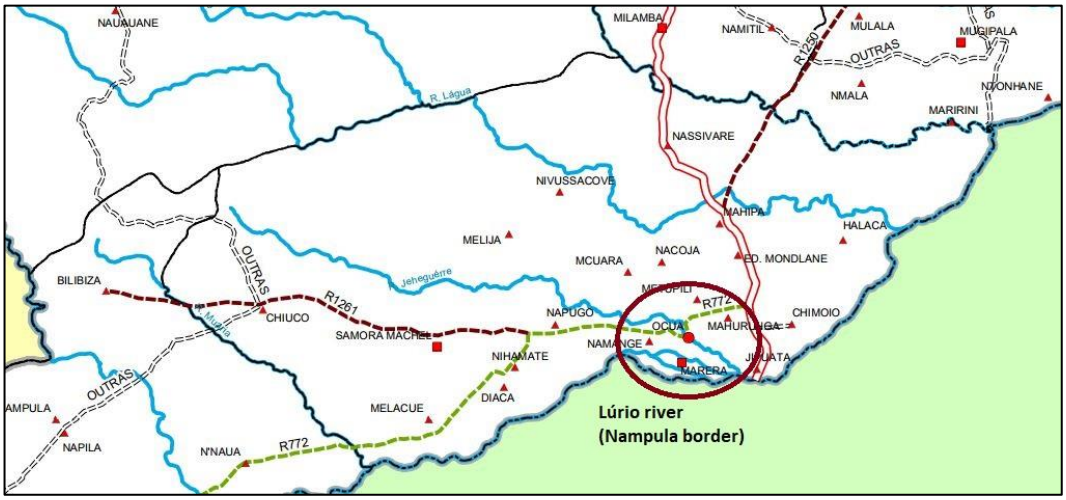
4.5.2. Ocúa (Chiúre district, Cabo Delgado province)

The second study site, Ocúa, is located in Cabo Delgado province. It lies 12 km south of the district town, Chiúre, and by the Lúrio River, which borders the province of Nampula. The Administrative Post of Ocúa has 42,616 inhabitants, according to the Population Census, 48% men and 52% women. The main religions in Ocúa are Islam (59%) and Catholicism (24.5%). The main language is Macua and 82% of the population do not speak Portuguese fluently. 85% of the population are considered illiterate, rate that ascends to 95% amongst women.

As in Malema, the majority of the population in Ocúa relies on subsistence agriculture. In Chiúre district, more than half of the farm plots are less than one hectare in area, and more than 70% are controlled by men (MAE, 2005). The crops preferred amongst local peasants are maize, cassava, *nhemba* beans, and peanuts. Cashew nut and fruit trees are also widespread in the entire district.

Cabo Delgado was under the administration of the Nyassa Company (British and French interests) from 1890 to 1929, when the Portuguese government declined to renew the concession and claimed back direct administration. As I explained in section 4.4.1, this was one of the areas where the colonial administration implemented 'blocks' for coerced cotton production. Cotton has remained an important agricultural product through contract farming. However, over the last decade, corporate investors have shown interest in developing direct plantations (maize, soybeans, sugarcane, and banana).

Figure 10 - Map of Chiúre district, province of Cabo Delgado



Ocúa is located by Lúrio river and Nampula provincial border
(source: Land Registry District Office, Chiúre.
http://www.turismocd.gov.mz/cabo/chiure/admtvo-chiure.pdf)

Cotton production was extensively developed here during the colonial period, through imposed and even forced labour. Several colonial plantations coexisted until independence, including livestock farms, which still constitute an important activity today, due to the proximity of the river. Cotton production has since lost importance. However, Ocúa's strategic position led several agribusiness investors to settle here over the last few years. This is the case of Jacaranda, a banana plantation located near the village of Samora Machel (30 km West of Ocúa, see map), which mostly exports to Dubai. There are some livestock farms near the Lúrio River and, since 2009, the Ouro Verde sugarcane plantation (originally

EcoEnergia), which is the focus of this study. Other companies have shown interest on this part of the district. In 2011, another business consortium, DDI, was granted a concession to explore 1,000 hectares in Eduardo Mondlane village. More investors are expected over the coming years, as the Lúrio River Development Plan is implemented. Yet, little was known about this program when I visited Ocúa in 2015.

Ouro Verde, the concession under study, is a combined development between Agricane Commercial Holdings and EcoEnergia. The initial intention of the project, when it was launched in 2009 (concession approved in 2008), was to produce bioethanol from sugarcane. However, fluctuations in oil prices affected the biofuels market and, as in the rest of the country, led to the closing down or restructuration of agricultural investments. In this case, the consortium was reformed, integrating new business partners.

In June 2015, six years into the project, only 40 hectares – out of 1,000 hectares under concession – were planted with sugarcane. At that time, the plantation was due to expand to a further 100 hectares, with the aim of producing organic raw unrefined sugar (20% for local markets and the rest for exports). 30 hectares were reserved for other crops – including aloe vera, moringa, crotalaria, and legumes for green manure. In a second phase, the investor planned to increase the planted area to a further 400 hectares and undertake conservation and restoration on the remaining 500 (personal communication, former company manager, 2014). A sugar factory was under construction when I visited, and was due to start operation in July 2015.

In terms of local employment, in June 2015 Ouro Verde employed[24], besides the company manager and the factory manager both from Zimbabwe, 22 people from the local community, and only two women. With the factory under operation, for 9 to 10 months a year - the expectation was that staff could increase to 85 people in 2016, mostly women from the surrounding villages (interview local manager).

[24] As of September 2017, Ouro Verde employed 16 permanent and 20 seasonal workers (all men) in the fields, plus 14 workers at the factory (42 expected under full operation). The planted area was still 30 hectares. The company applied for funding from the World Bank to develop a community-based program on further 100 hectares, which corresponds to the mentioned outgrow scheme. This includes a holding dam for irrigation (personal communication, manager on site).

Just as in Malema, in Ocúa the company is planning to involve the local community as outgrowers (on 70 hectares), but only at a later stage of the project. The former manager justifies this with the lack of tradition of commercial farming in the area, which will require a prolonged process of adaptation for the local subsistence farmers. However, at time of fieldwork, the company was looking for new investors in order to proceed with this stage of the project, as well as fulfilling the promises of community benefits, namely the installation of a water electric pump.

4.6. Geographical context: summary

The brief historical account of this chapter raised some points that deserve highlighting, as they will be relevant for the empirical analysis of the thesis. Rural populations in Mozambique faced successive, and often sudden, political and economic shifts that resulted in massive displacements. In these processes, cultural identities, their connection to specific territories and traditional practices were largely ignored and disrupted. Rural populations reacted to colonial policies of rural resettlement, and later post-independence 'villagisation' (1970s), with intense opposition, having resorted to various forms of open or veiled resistance (Scott, 1987), such as fleeing to remote areas in the mountains (Hedges *et al.*, 1993).

Policies for the rural areas, before and after independence, as well as successive military conflicts, with massive destruction of communication and social infrastructure, contributed, over decades, to alienate the North of the country and widen the gap with the 'developed' South. Travelling across the Northern provinces, one realises that, still today, this dissociation is palpable. There are frequent complaints of lack of funding to the North, and some people point out how the most qualified employment goes to Southern newcomers. This narrative of a depressed North is central for the government efforts of capturing foreign investment, through land concessions, and more specifically through the large-scale development programs announced in the last few years, such as Prosavana (Malema) and the Lúrio River Development Plan (Ocúa).

I have shown how political and economic changes have reflected on both research sites, in Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, over the last century. Both are "critical resource" areas (Unruh, 1998), deeply rural, but with strategic

locations, near rivers and main roads, typically those that have attracted interest from investors. Population density has increased over the last few decades, already raising concerns about land scarcity. The majority of the population in these areas belongs to the Macua people and rely on subsistence farming as their main livelihood.

I will now proceed to analyse the data collected in each research site, in three empirical chapters (5, 6 and 7). Chapter 5 will explore the processes of consultation that preceded the implementation of the land concessions under study. It will analyse the processes to achieve consent from the local communities, as mechanisms of formal recognition. In doing so, I will acknowledge the asymmetries of information and power that influence these processes, as well as the importance of intersubjective relations of trust and influence between the social actors involved. Chapter 6 will explore how a land concession, in this case an agricultural investment, emerges as a 'contract' of reciprocal recognition, and how this is expressed in land uses and the relations between plantation managers, local officers and populations. Finally, chapter 7 reflects on the long-term impacts of the investments, analysing to what extent processes of resettlement and material compensation may be reinforcing vulnerabilities within the local communities.

5. CONSENT AND PARTICIPATION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the processes of approval of the land concessions under study in Nampula and Cabo Delgado. It addresses how consent has been sought and negotiated between political actors across the national, provincial, district and local levels. Drawing upon legislation and other official documents, consultation minutes, observation notes, focus groups discussions and interviews, I will examine how specific issues related to participation mechanisms – representativeness, influence, social relations – played out within land consultation processes in each of the study sites.

It addresses the first research sub-question:

How do recognition dynamics affect processes of public consultation and consent around a new land concession?

I will seek to understand how notions of *consent* differ between these actors, and to what extent local peasants believe they have given prior and informed consent to these projects. Drawing on previous analyses of land consultation processes as well as my own field research, I identify which factors are most influential for constructing consent around a concession. These elements will inform progressive degrees of influence and inclusion that lead to varying distributive outcomes.

Processes of community consultation raise transversal issues, which pervade the dimensions of procedural justice, distribution (of benefits and future risks) and recognition. The whole process of introducing a new actor into the field – the land investor, the plantation managers – together with the communication about the project, the means of sharing information and managing disagreement, can also be framed as recognition issues. In this context, the recognition of local populations is essentially based on the formal land rights inscribed in the legislation (Land Law, 1997), as well as their participation rights as citizens. In that sense, it can be considered that participation processes are, first and foremost, processes in

which legal recognition is at stake. However, as I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, intersubjective relationships play a crucial role in shaping the development of consultation processes, and ultimately also their distributive outcomes. These relate to dynamics of influence, trust, social relations and identities that will determine how the local villagers will benefit, or else support the burden, of the new project. These effects will extend far beyond the consultation meetings, along the implementation and operation of the farmland investment. Within fuzzy boundaries of ownership, the ability of local actors to secure access to resources will depend, in great part, on their membership of local social networks, their relations with the company and their capacity to mobilise specific material and non-material devices.

There are two distinct spheres of recognition dynamics in this context. The first relates to the 'top-down' formal recognition of local populations, their land rights and uses by government officers, district officials and corporate investors. Prior understandings of the local reality will frame the whole communication process, how the information is conveyed, which type of promises the investor will make at the beginning, and at what are level local voices considered. Formal recognition of land rights, under the land tenure system and legislation, takes primacy at this stage, and shapes how the rights of the community will be measured (importance of land uses, place attachment, compensation schemes). This sphere of analysis, in which procedure and recognition issues are deeply interwoven, I will designate as 'formal recognition'.

Following Honneth (1995, 2004), there is another level of recognition I intend to address, the intersubjective dimension. Processes of consultation encompass legitimising processes that go beyond the formal, or legal, framework. They include the visibility (Honneth & Margalit, 2001) of particular land uses and social groups, which in turn affects their ability to influence processes of decision making even when they are formally represented in them.

Another key resource for legitimation are the benefits included in initial concession agreements, in order to confer legitimacy and gain consent for the project, and the management of expectations towards the investor. It is within this formal sphere that we should be able to analyse recognition as a deontological issue,

in the perspective of Nancy Fraser's theoretical work. However, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, a more intersubjective perspective, grounded on ethical understandings of recognition (Honneth, 1995), will prove more crucial for a deeper understanding of land concession processes, including the community approval stages where consultation mechanisms take primacy.

The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) (IPFRI, Word Bank) is the basis for most guidelines than can be applied to land concession processes (De Schutter, 2011b). Nevertheless, consent is a complex concept *per se*, open to divergent interpretations between social actors on the ground. Not only there are different degrees to information and consent, as there are various more subtle and subjective factors that interfere with the approval of a given proposal, including information asymmetries and local relations of power and influence. Here I focus specifically on the ingredients that are determinant for the acceptance of the community, as well as the limitations that consultation processes reveal on the ground, and over time. These limitations have been highlighted by the literature and have been studied across some cases in countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique and Mali, with varying degrees of depth (Moreda, 2015; Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010; Nolte & Voget-Kleschin, 2014).

This chapter shows how the spheres of formal and intersubjective recognition interweave, dialectically influencing processes of consultation and public participation. This distinction between formal and intersubjective recognition will ultimately help us to understand how - in spite of a progressive, praised, legislation – agricultural investments still raise multiple justice issues once they are on the ground.

Distribution issues are present in prospective terms, as community future benefits are a key legitimising resource for any land concession. The evaluation that local actors make of these future benefits constitute, at the outset of a land concession, the basis for a contract of reciprocal recognition. The terms of the contract are not set in stone. They are under constant appraisal during implementation. Notions of consent, legitimacy and fairness will evolve over time.

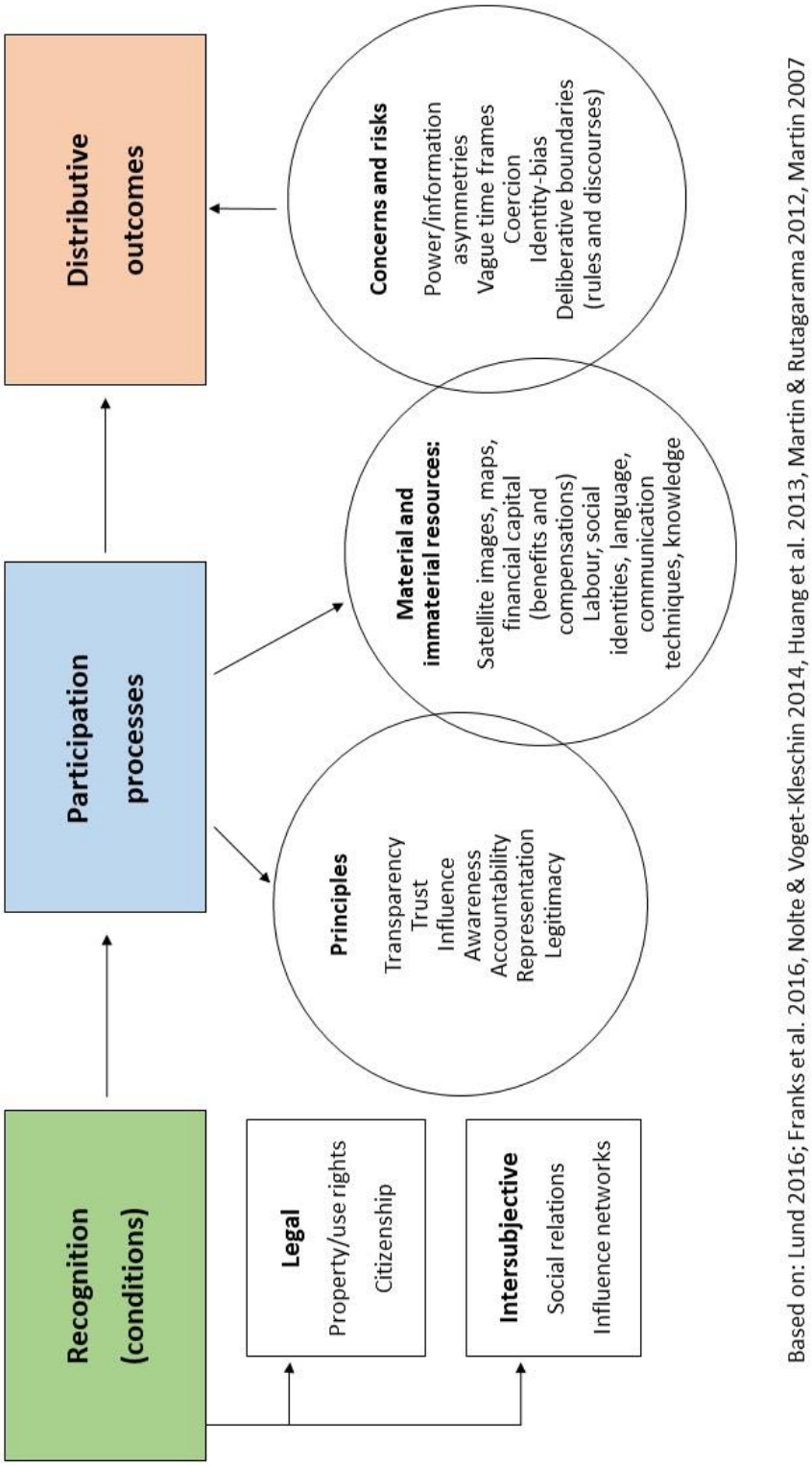
For Nolte and Voget-Kleschin (2014), who proposed a framework to analyse land consultations, as I introduced in chapter 2 (section 2.2.3), the degree

of influence in a consultation process will be higher if the local population is able to shape, or even veto, the project. This can range from a situation where information is merely a one-way process (before or during implementation), through two-way dynamics of negotiation, where local voices are heard. The degree of inclusion increases depending on the type of local actors involved, from local elites and those with formal property rights, to all those affected by the project. The most inclusive approach would be to assume consultations as a means of empowering the most vulnerable groups within the community.

Drawing on the literature discussed in chapter 2, complemented by empirical studies of land consultations in Mozambique (chapter 4), in this chapter I outline the key elements I take into consideration for the analysis of consultation processes in the two study sites. The diagram in figure 11 summarises the analytical framework employed in this first empirical chapter. This diagram proceeds from the main conceptual framework introduced in chapter 2, but gives stronger emphasis to the legitimising resources that I consider especially relevant for procedural justice, in the context of land concessions in Mozambique.

While graphically representing the three environmental justice dimensions as separate, the diagram highlights the connections between them, with emphasis to links between recognition and participation processes. Drawing on recent studies of environmental justice, especially Franks *et al.* (2016) and Huang *et al.* (2013), it summarises the ideal principles for transparent and fair consultation processes – applicable to public participation in general – such as trust, influence, and accountability (e.g. specific time frames for fulfilment of the investor's promises).

Figure 11 - Recognition and participation processes



Based on: Lund 2016; Franks et al. 2016, Nolte & Voget-Kleschin 2014, Huang et al. 2013, Martin & Rutagarama 2012, Martin 2007

A number of conditions - which I consider that mostly relate to recognition issues - will constrain the implementation of these principles, resulting in concerns and risks that may impair consultation processes, and ultimately their distributive outcomes (selection of individuals to resettle, or those eligible to receive compensation, for instance). In the case of land consultations, recognition will reflect both in its formal and intersubjective nature. First of all, the involvement of local actors in the decision-making process – approval of a land concession – primarily depends upon the legal recognition of property rights, or land use rights in the case of Mozambique, as well as the recognition of participants as national citizens, 'directly affected' local residents or land users. Only people who are acknowledged by the political system as having a right to be represented will be involved in the process.

Currently Mozambique has a progressive, and fairly inclusive, land legislation, which recognises rights to customary and *de facto* land uses, as I have discussed previously. Nonetheless, some of the most critical concerns and risks for consultation processes go beyond legal procedures. There is yet another sphere of recognition that will play a crucial role in informing consultation meetings, intersubjective relationships. These pertain the less measurable levels of the local recognition dynamics, such as the integration of social actors in networks of influence, their role in the community and the extent to which they are visible in processes of consultation, and thus able to make their voices heard.

Even when a participation process is apparently transparent and inclusive, it is organised within the boundaries of the dominant political discourse (Martin & Rutagarama, 2012), and generally follows western principles of representative democracy, establishing the terms of reasoned debate. On the other hand, the debate between the participants will always be mediated by their own identity biases, subjective interests and inclinations "that foreclose on potentially valid alternatives" (p. 189). External and internal impediments always constrain our forms of expression in deliberative spaces (Kompridis, 2008).

The diagram also adapts the set of legitimising resources introduced in the conceptual framework (chapter 2), highlighting those most relevant for negotiating a land concession. These include material considerations such as financial capital,

which automatically gives leverage to land investors in getting a project approved (in the form of land taxes, for instance, but especially as promises to invest in the community and to pay immediate monetary compensations), and visual devices (e.g. satellite images, maps). The latter may render more or less visible certain land uses, for the purposes of state planning and attracting investors to rural areas. Interwoven with these material resources, in consultation processes, social actors also mobilise their immaterial resources. These may include historical legacy and memories, language (numbers, hectares), communication techniques and, last but not least, labour (in the form of promises to generate local employment). In the analysis that follows, I will discuss how social actors involved in the two concessions, particularly company managers and government officials, have mobilised this type of devices during consultation procedures. And, in consequence, how local villagers perceive the legitimacy of the consultation process as a whole.

5.2. Constructing consent for a land concession

The two research sites present significant differences in their concession processes. However, they may both be considered atypical, according to international guidelines and national legislation. And they demonstrate the limits of legal recognition in formal consultation procedures.

As I will further explain in section 5.3.1., in the case of Malema (Nampula province) there was an obvious contradiction between the project approval by the Ministry of Agriculture and the consultations carried out at the local level. The fact that the same company – Portuguese business group João Ferreira Santos - had been managing the concession area before the approval of the 1997 Land Law afforded them a clear advantage, when they eventually organised community consultations to formalise the new contract in 2012. This sense of continuity, and the associated memories, appears crucial for the acceptance of the concession request, by both the government and local population. Even when it became clear that attributing the original concession area to the company (2,389 hectares) was no longer a viable option, as it was already partially occupied by population, housing and social infrastructures.

In Mahurunga village (Administrative Post of Ocúa, Cabo Delgado province) - apart from some colonial farms that had only partially occupied the concession area until the 1970s – there was no recent experience of a private corporation using the lands between the Lúrio River and the village, where a Brazilian-Swedish consortium, EcoEnergia (later "Ouro Verde"), installed a sugarcane plantation in 2009. This is why all the population living and growing crops in this area was eligible for monetary compensation, contrary to villagers of Malema. Despite that, the colonial past of the area was conjured as an argument during contacts with the local population and peasants associations. Even in this case, most interviewees, including local chiefs, argue that there was no proper consultation with the wider community, and that negotiations were monopolised by the former village chief. They argue that contacts with the local population were limited to identifying land users eligible for compensation, with no possibility of vetoing the project. At least most of them, at the time, did not understand that would be a viable option.

5.2.1. "Who ordered an *empresa*?": capital and labour

As Nhantumbo and Salomão (2010) point out, local stakeholders in rural Mozambique, including local government authorities and community leaders, have been encouraged to focus on the potential of land investments to reduce local poverty and bring socio-economic benefits to the community (social infrastructures such as health centres, schools, irrigation schemes). In practice, this overshadows and tends to minimise possible negative impacts of the concession. The bargaining power for rural villagers and peasants is low, and most often consultation processes culminate in the approval of the project, in exchange for a vague vision of a future 'good life' for the local populations. While land taxes are extremely low for investors in the country – less than one pound per hectare, per year[25] – the key currency in negotiations with private investors is the expected 'trickling' effect of future economic growth in rural areas.

[25] Usually between 60 and 80 cents of US dollars.

One of the most evident insights from my field observation, documentation consulted and interviews, is that expectation of future employment, as well as promises to invest in social infrastructure, are typically the most determinant factors for obtaining consent to an agricultural investment. My findings corroborate previous reports on land concessions throughout different African countries (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010) and different regions in Mozambique (Hanlon, 2011; Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010). These have concluded that promises made at consultation meetings are not normally converted into a written contract, and even when they are written, the terms are vague and there are no precise timelines for compliance. This affects one of the main principles for a fair process of participation, the accountability of those involved, in this case agribusiness investors. Most of the villagers and peasants interviewed are not aware of the existence of an experimental stage in these projects – after which they are awarded the definitive DUAT – and wonder when they will finally have to look for new farm plots, or will receive any compensation.

To have or not to have an *empresa* (company or business in Portuguese) in the village is articulated by government officers, local authorities, and local peasants themselves, as a 'silver bullet' for economic development and better quality of life (Hall *et al.*, 2015). The proclaimed benefit is twofold: it translates in direct investments, as well as in labour opportunities, particularly welcomed in areas with a strong tradition of plantation or contract farming, such as Malema. Whilst in most cases local peasants are growing crops for the household on their own land plots, securing employment - or outgrow contracts – the presence of an agribusiness corporation is highly valued, as a means of diversifying rural livelihoods and ensuring additional sources of income.

The low capacity of the Government to invest in public services and infrastructures in more remote rural areas (McCarthy, 2010), as well as the high levels of rural poverty (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010) transfer responsibility and expectations towards corporate investors. Besides the promise of jobs, community benefits such as restoration of the local primary school, or improvement of water access and storage (irrigation schemes, for instance), are typically proposed at the outset of a new land concession. In the case of an agricultural deal, it is expected that the company will be in condition to extend their infrastructures and services to

the wider community, such as access to irrigation schemes, water pumps or some form of access to farming machinery. "You know, we don't have anything", observes a young resettled peasant in Ocúa, emphasising the lack of bargaining power to negotiate with agricultural companies.

Villagers interviewed in both Malema and Ocúa recognise they hold high expectations towards any private investor, in face of local poverty and lack of economic opportunities. The first reaction, when confronted with this possibility, was to welcome the new *empresa*, as a sign of future economic possibilities. Doubts on how exactly this would be implemented on the ground only later started to surface.

> *This was the decision of the community: they needed a company for jobs. When this company arrived, everybody who was working on those lands went there. They learnt that the lands would be occupied. We could no longer protest, for we had wished for a company to come to our village. (Ana Maria, Ocúa)*

> *They accepted, they were saying "this company will help us, it seems João Ferreira Santos, João Ferreira helped us, the women would work there, as well as the men, and they would also leave lands for us to weed. (Maria Quaresma, Malema)*

Even though most of the villagers interviewed assume they were eager to have a private investor - an *empresa* - in the village, the exact terms of the negotiation and the trade-offs involved were not entirely clear to them. In Ocúa, it was not widely understood that welcoming the sugarcane plantation would mean giving up their land plots, and in some cases having to resettle altogether, leaving their homes behind and moving farther from the Lúrio River. One of the neighbourhood officials sums up how villagers in Ocúa got confused with the delimitation of the concession boundaries.

> *We need the companies. (...) But later the population becomes confused, because they hadn't understood that the company would be using their lands, the same lands from those who said yes to the project. They thought the company would be only using the lands nearer the river, not all this area up to the village. The company managers say: we bring industry, technology, but we don't own any area, you are the ones who have lands we can use.* (Francisco Pimentel, Ocúa)

Previous case studies on land concessions have concluded that documentation from the meetings, namely minutes and contracts, is usually written in vague terms and does not include a specific timeline or quantification for community benefits, such as number of jobs to be created (Hanlon, 2011; Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010; Nolte & Voget-Kleschin, 2014). Some of the interviewees in Malema and Ocúa recall the terms under which community benefits were negotiated. The level of commitment to invest in infrastructures for the local community is usually low, and subject to economic results.

> *There was no minute. They mentioned that [restoration of a local school and water well] but only through the air. "We will see how we can help", they said. It was not something confirmed.* (village head, Namele, Malema)

> *The failure was that it was not written down. I heard they would build new rooms for the local school, but I don't know of any official document stating that.* (village head, Ocúa)

> *There were recommendations to invest in some infrastructures for the community: a school – but we had no school until just yesterday – a water well – no water until just yesterday. They were to bring water from the river, but it did not happen after all.*
> (NGO local member, Ocúa)

Even where specific commitments had been included in the concession documents, they are not necessarily fulfilled as described. In the cases analysed in this study, community benefits were either delayed or reframed under different terms. During the first few years investors are focused in production and raising profits, and only after a period of two years (for foreign investors, five for national companies) will they receive the final DUAT, contingent on the operation results. In both companies assessed for this study, there was a list of community benefits waiting for implementation. The companies had not necessarily abandoned these ideas, but managers assumed the investments had not yet achieved a financial situation that allowed to move on to that stage of implementation. Most critically still, this affects the prospects for generating local employment.

"There may be direct benefits, but in practice they are hardly visible", argues a local NGO member in Nampula. "Local people do not have this notion that

investments in the local community can take some time, and corporations take advantage of that. They should in principle be aware of the information levels amongst local communities".

The approach to compensation and community investment appears to be rather flexible. One of the minutes from the Mozaco file, issued in September 2013 and consulted in the Land Registry Office in Malema, mentions the restoration of a local school and a water well as investments to be made by the company after settling in Namele's plantation. Two years later, when I spoke to the company manager, the local school was still in the plans for 2016, but the priority was to secure the financial health of the company. The reduction to 500 hectares in 2016 affects the economic prospects of the company, and may ultimately limit their ability to fulfil community benefits in the near future.

Regarding compensation to the resettled population, Mozaco manager vaguely recalled having given some zinc sheets to the villagers and offering a water deposit to the Catholic Mission, which should apparently work as an alternative to replacing an 'informal' church (not officially recognised) that Mozaco had demolished. The manager had asked the villagers to estimate a budget for building a new church in the resettlement area. When they presented him with the estimate, he dismissed it as too costly – "this would be enough to build a cathedral!" were his actual words at the time. He eventually decided to consult the Catholic priest in the district town, also a Portuguese, and ask him what items would the Church need most. The priest told him that the Mission needed a water deposit. In this case, the compensation ended up at the Mission in the town centre, instead of Namele village, directly affected by the project. However, in practice, what the company provided were old bricks that had been part of the plantation buildings, which the Mission used to build the water storage tank (personal communication, church member).

The above episode demonstrates how unclear agreements lead to a weaker commitment on part of the investor, affecting their accountability over the longer term. It also demonstrates how communication flows more easily within familiar social networks, which in the end determines how agricultural companies will invest their capital in the community. This is an example of how recognition asymmetries may impair the compensation process, once projects are under operation. With time,

memories of promises made progressively erode amongst the local villagers, and so does accountability. Independently of what has been established in the consultation reports or in concession contracts, intersubjective dynamics around the agricultural investment continue to unfold over the following years, ultimately reframing its distributive outcomes. Benefits for the local community are under constant negotiation, but different individuals and social groups have different degrees of visibility in this ongoing discussion. The fact that some individuals share a language, a cultural framework of reference and economic status will facilitate communication, building relations of trust and influence amongst them. However, in turn, it will reinforce existent information asymmetries and the exclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

Regarding labour opportunities, the conditions of the project implementation also change over time. In Malema, Mozaco also made changes to the plantation plans, and, in response to shifts in agricultural markets, decided to grow soybeans instead of tobacco. The district officer responsible for Land Registry in Malema assured me that this kind of modification is allowed for agricultural concessions, even at the implementation stage. However, the type of crops planted has direct implications in terms of the machinery required and the generation of local employment. These decisions will though have repercussions on the local impacts of an investment.

5.2.2. "We have nothing": asymmetries of power and information

In Ocúa's case, the district administrator, the head of the local administrative post and the village chief (Mahurunga) centred the negotiations at an early stage. The village chief was a key figure in making the project accepted, but many interviewees go so far as to say he accepted the project on behalf of the population, without adequate consultation. They recurrently state that the former village chief, who passed away in 2014, in fact summoned the peasants who were using those lands, but always presented the concession as *fait accompli*. The contacts with peasants who were farming the area to be transferred to the sugarcane project were only meant to identify those eligible for compensation, measure the plots and determinate the number of planted trees (privately owned, and therefore a basis for compensation). This account is shared by resettled and non-resettled villagers, and

corroborated by current village leaders (village chief and neighbourhood elected officials).

> *"People were not happy with leaving those lands, but it was a superior order. The structure communicated to the people working there: you have to get organised, because a* mukunia *is coming to work these lands. When he arrived, there was no further negotiation. He just negotiated with the local authorities and said all those working there would get paid compensation. Which did not happen. Not everyone was paid."* (Vitória José, Ocúa, not resettled)

> *"The only meeting held was for the assessment of people growing crops in the area, so they could attribute compensations. There was no meeting with the entire population of the village."* (Ocúa, resettled land plot, awaiting compensation)

> *"I am still trying to understand what type of authorisation does this company have, what made them come to explore this area. I'm still not clear about that."* (Neighbourhood official, Ocúa, both land plots affected, not yet compensated as of June 2015)

> *As we are on the "tail" here, nobody fears us. When a business man comes to make a "machamba"* [farm plot], *he won't be asking for permission. He comes and determines: "this land is now taken over".* (Ezequiel, Ocúa, one land plot affected, abandoned despite not having received compensation yet)

There are contradictory accounts of the meetings held with the wider community in Ocúa (Mahurunga village). Some interviewees deny there was a meeting at all; others argue they did not feel adequately represented. The common thread is that most villagers interviewed did not feel they had all the necessary information that would allow them to give a genuine consent to the project, or else reject it. Recurrently they respond they had to say "yes" to the project, as it was backed by the government and there was no room for further negotiation. It was "mandatory", in the words of a young peasant.

There was no negotiation, the government came and said: this area belongs to the government. You can go to the village, because from now on EcoEnergia will be using these lands. You go and find somewhere else to work on. (Eduardina Pinto, Ocúa)

It was mandatory, not because you wished, of your free will. (Catarina Miguel, peasant, Ocúa)

In Malema there was widespread acknowledgement that the concession area had had an 'owner' for decades, even before the independence. Here, consent gains different contours. Historical legacy, as well as personal memories, plays the key role in legitimising the concession process, as I will discuss in more detail in chapter 6 ("Owner's Land"). Still, at the community meetings in Ocúa, the argument that the concession area had been always 'owner's land' was also present.

There was a meeting, but just a few people went. The message was: as you know this area is "owner's land", it has been used since [very long], so it is going to be taken over again, as before. (...) "You get prepared, because there are already people [investors] *to occupy this area".* (local NGO member, Ocúa)

For Namele residents (Malema), a transparent and inclusive consultation process would have meant giving continuity to previous arrangements that allowed to share these lands between local population and the investors. Furthermore, integrating former labourers and recognising their agricultural expertise would have made the process even more inclusive.

None of the different groups engaged in interviews and discussions – those resettled, those who had to give up the farm plots and those who would only have been affected under an expansion plan to a neighbourhood village (cancelled in 2016) - considered these conditions satisfactorily fulfilled. For most interviewees, consent was given in the absence of any alternative option.

When they arrived they already had the intention of just moving the people. "This is our area, you aren't due anything here". (...) We talked, but they couldn't agree, they did not care. They would simply say: "we are here to take our area back". (Manuel Fonseca, Namele, Malema)

"People accepted the project… but they did not come to ask our opinion, after all. (Arnaldo José, Malema)

We have talked to the company, and the municipal council. At the municipal council they told us: "we go and talk to the company, then you let us know what they said". The agreement is closed, the people have no word in it." (Focus group discussion in Namele - Malema, 15th March, 2015)

Some considered to have been coerced to accept the project just as it was, without margin for shaping, let alone vetoing, the new project.

The chiefs said: if you refuse this compensation, and instead insist on keeping the land, you will simply be evicted with no payment whatsoever. (Paulo Valente, Ocúa)

People did not accept the project, we were forced to. In one of the meetings they brought the police. They did not ask, but we said: "if you had come without the police, we would have our free expression to ask: you want the lands, where are we going then? But as you brought the police along we cannot express ourselves freely, we are afraid." (Sofia Pereira, Namele)

"The district official intervened in a threatening tone, to threat the people, and Mr. Roberto raised and asked him to let us express how we felt about this issue. (Arnaldo José, recalling a consultation meeting in Malema, in 2013)

Even if they were present at community consultations, many of the villagers do not consider to have been exactly consulted, and perceive themselves as generally unable to influence decision processes that are "backed" by the national and provincial governments. Others, entirely absent from consultations, recount the arrival of the company as being enforced through farm machinery. Here, the asymmetry of power is manifest, and the influence to shape negotiations only goes as far as their silence. The family of a former warden, living in the middle of the soya plantation, insists they were not consulted about the new project.

We just saw the tractors. Only when we saw them ploughing the fields have we realised our plots had already been taken over. (Isabel Agostinho, Malema)

Technology assumes here a persuasive role, a symbolic coercion on the view of some of the villagers interviewed, which extends to the employment of chemical inputs. Mozaco manager assumes that, ultimately, he conveyed the following message to the families who were living inside the plantation, and were eventually resettled. "You can stay, if you want, but I should warn you that we are going to make an intensive agriculture, with herbicides". This confrontation reinforces views of corporate investment as incompatible with the respect for local land uses, contrasting, in the case of Malema, with previous experiences of coexistence and shared ownership.

With time, the notion of the concession as a *fait accompli* gradually settles. Criticisms remain, but open contestation gives way to conformism. "There haven't been many complaints of the company. But we can´t say there is a *relationship* between them and the people. The population is just silent, that's all", acknowledges a local leader in Malema. In Ocúa, the fact that EcoEnergia was the first private agribusiness corporation to have applied for a concession in Mahurunga village may have limited the ability of the population to react, for lack of experience. Some interviewees acknowledge this, and note that the population will be alert for future situations and more prepared to raise their voice:

> *"This was the first company to settle here, and people still lacked experience with these processes. But now we have opened our eyes. In case any other company shows up in the village, we will have a word in it."* (Mário Jardim, Ocúa)

The fact that representatives from the Government – the district administrator and the head of the administrative post – are present at the community consultations is interpreted by the villagers as meaning that they are "backing up" the investors, and therefore they assume they would not be expected to refuse the concession. The question whether the investor asked the community for "permission" to use the land comes as a surprise for most interviewees. They do not expect the matter to be articulated in such terms. For them, the negotiation with the land investor generally means that the government came to introduce the new investors and to announce the changes to occur, not to ask their permission or opinion.

This meeting was just meant to evict those people, they was no other purpose. They had to accept. The government was also present, on their side. (Luís Guimarães, former tobacco labourer, Namele - Malema)

The government? They were the ones who brought the company men, who handed over lands that already had owners. This government has no word. (Maria Quaresma, local peasant, lost one land plot, Namele - Malema)

Government officers and company managers often portray local villagers as either too voluble or too "hard to convince". An officer from the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture in Nampula states that the exact number of consultations held for each land concession will ultimately depend on the "complexity of the situation at hand", as well as "the resistance from the community". The process of consultation is ultimately regarded as a process of *convincing* and *insisting*.

"It was very difficult to convince the people to leave that area [to DDI, another recent land investment]. *In the first consultation meeting the villagers agreed to leave, but when we had a second consultation they were already complaining they had nowhere else to go. (...) They eventually accepted to move."*
(district officer, Chiúre)

"They agree at the meetings, but then they change their minds."
(local officer, Ocúa)

They decide they will reject something, and they join the choir. If the idea is to say "no", everybody will say "no". If it is going to be confusion, let's all join the confusion. And that's what happened."
(company manager, Malema)

In the case of Malema, it is interesting to note how interactions between residents of neighbouring villages, as well as interventions from international NGOs and the Peasants Union, interfered in Mozaco's expansion plan and the respective consultations. This plan was meant to compensate Mozaco for the concession area that had already been occupied by the local population. The company manager recalls the meeting organised with the affected populations in Nholo village in 2014, where people from Namele and the neighbouring

communities also showed up. The meeting ended abruptly, with threats towards the company representatives and the local authorities. The police had to intervene to avoid further violence. As a sign of protest, one of the villagers snatched a a company landmark and threw it into Mozaco's van. The gesture intended to emphasise that the company were expanding beyond the old plantation boundaries, which was deemed unacceptable.

> *When I went to the local school I was thinking I would be meeting the 17 people directly affected by the expansion plan, maybe the nearest village too. But everyone was there!*
> (company manager)

> *All the process of compensation was already completed, for those areas that required it. Then I don't know what happened, in the meantime someone explained things in a different way, on a more negative light. Agitation started and the community got influenced.*
> (district officer, Malema)

> *Those people who were not affected* [by the expansion plan] *advised the others to refuse to leave* (plantation manager, Malema)

Government officials in Malema, as well as the company manager, acknowledged that the consultation process for the Namele concession infirmed of a "lack of dialogue", as well as lack of experience with the subtleties of communicating with local communities in processes like this.

5.3. Networks of trust and influence

5.3.1. Dissonance between scales of government

The tortuous process of the Malema concession constitutes an expressive example of a discrepancy between multiple governance levels, as well as its consequences at the local scale. The formalisation of the land deal did not follow a conventional route. João Ferreira Santos held a provisional land title, indirectly inherited from the old colonial estate. The Portuguese business group had 'acquired' the concession area in the 1980s to a highly-indebted Mozambican State, under structural adjustment programs and strong pressure for the liberalisation of land

property ownership. However, due to the civil war, the company did not start operation right away. After the end of the war, in 1992, JFS submitted a formal concession request directly to the Ministry of Agriculture in Maputo.

With the approval of the Land Law, in 1997, which stipulated mandatory public consultations prior to any land concession, a JFS tobacco plantation had already been in operation for five years, though the Ministry had not formalised the concession. The request was for planting tobacco and cotton in 2,389 hectares, the same area as the former colonial plantation. In the meantime, the company decided to start growing soya.

In order for the new process to comply with the 1997 Land Law, the District Agriculture Directorate organised a consultation with the local population. This discovered that the 'formal' area of 2,389 hectares no longer existed. It had never been effectively used by the plantation owner, even during colonial times, and was in practice occupied by housing and land plots. Recognising the situation on the ground, local authorities concluded that the area they could grant to the company would be less than half, 1,000 hectares at most. Given the proximity of Malema town, part of the former plantation was already within the municipality boundaries. This posed a serious challenge as population had been growing over the last decades – propelled amongst other factors by civil war and the security threat - and was expected to continue increasing. However, in obvious contradiction with the outcomes of local consultations, the central government ended up granting JFS the concession area originally requested.

> *When the file came with the approval from Maputo, after coming and going for a while, the area was not the one we approved here, it was the same initial area, more than 2,800 hectares (sic). There is one of the reasons the community started to protest. They don't forget. We had our meetings here, we decided that the company could retake 1,000 hectares. But then comes a request from down there [Maputo] for 2,800 hectares, the same area the plantation had back in the colonial time.* (district officer, Malema)

5.3.2. Social relations: key mediators

In both case studies, the crucial importance of influence networks and social relations is evident. The approval and implementation of a land lease is a dynamic process that articulates different levels of government, from the national government to the village chieftaincies. Even when it is kept fairly along the same party lines, this process is not exempt from ambiguities and contradictions. In this sense, the dissonances between different administrative levels are particularly telling. Local leaders - including the customary chiefs (*régulos*), the village heads and the local government representative (*chefe do posto*) – play a crucial role as mediators in processes of land concession. They typically support the position of the provincial, or district government, and assume a passive attitude. They do not hold enough power in face of foreign investors, backed by the national government, as observed by Zoomers (2010) both in Mozambique and in other African countries.

The ambivalent role of the customary leaders – who are awarded responsibilities for land allocation according to customary rule – has been controversial and deserves some reflection. There are frequent accounts of a régulo who "sold the lands" to investors on behalf of the population, without prior consultation with the community, generating new land conflicts (NGO member, Nampula). This raises concerns of representation and legitimacy. One of the case studies, Ocúa, is especially suited as an example of this ambivalence.

The former village head was a key mediator in the allocation of EcoEnergia area. He is already dead, which allows the local villagers to attribute responsibility and show their disappointment, without risking confrontation with any chief in charge. After all, the project is a *fait accompli*. This nuance is especially relevant in a political context where freedom of expression is not entirely realised (Meneses & Santos, 2009). Direct accountability and accusations to leaders in charge is usually avoided.

> *The former village chief, the one who passed away, he would not consider our opinion. When the company managers came, they would always meet with him first, and they would say what they wanted. The chief was the one concealing the agreements made with the white men.*
> (Paulo Valente, Ocúa, resettled villager, house and land plot)

The Malema concession is an especially interesting case for evaluating the role of local mediators in building up consent for a new land deal. During the process, the local populations cultivated an increasing distrust for the district administrator, which culminated at the Nholo meeting in October 2014 (expansion plan), after which the government representative swore never to go back to that community.

The president of the municipality, known to gather more sympathy amongst the local populations, assumed the key mediating role and finally proposed a solution to the impasse: to find an alternative location to accommodate Mozaco's expansion plans. "The local villagers were saying they did not want to deal with the administrator, that he was selling out their lands", the mayor recalls. "I was the one asking Mozaco to hold back. Whenever I see an injustice I have to speak out. Those areas are already too occupied, for Namele is now an urban area. The DUAT (land use title) has to be implemented somewhere else, in a non-urban area".

These episodes reveal how different actors dispute the trust of the community. Another key individual, besides the mayor, is the director of the geographical services, in charge of land delimitations and demarcations. These local government officials play a particularly sensitive role between the villagers and local chiefs on one side, and the agribusiness company on the other. Whilst the Malema officer praised himself on his ability to communicate with the rural communities, multiple conversations in the study area revealed that the relationship with the district authorities is affected by failures in communication and widespread distrust.

5.3.3. The role of non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental actors and organisations, generally supported by international donors, have increasingly assumed a key role in rural development and land policy in Mozambique, since 1992. They intervene at different levels and with different approaches.

Firstly, there are national NGOs mandated by the government to carry out the delimitation of community lands, such as Initiative for Community Lands (ITC),

ORAM and Kulima. As I noted in chapter 4, the delimitation policy relies on the strong presence of these NGOs in the field, in rural areas. In accordance with governmental policies, these NGOs assume the goal of raising awareness amongst rural communities about their land rights, and fostering the creation of local peasants associations, thus "giving them leverage in processes of negotiation with private companies" (interviews with Kulima and ORAM). The assumption is that corporate investment in agriculture can benefit local peasants, if they are prepared to negotiate the terms of the contracts, and also are aware of the value of their natural resources. Ultimately, the aim is to create the conditions for community-corporation partnerships, which are still at an early stage in Mozambique. Even if the objective is not outright rejection of private investors, "communities tend to show more resistance after the intervention of NGOs", commented an NGO member in Malema (interview, March 2015).

The influence of social activism in the management of the land issue in Mozambique, especially over the last decade, cannot be underestimated. Even if the political atmosphere represents some challenges to the expression of voices 'from below', the connection to transnational civic movements – including environmental justice and peasant organisations – has given further strength and visibility to the struggles of civil society in Mozambique. However, positions are divided, regarding the benefits of corporate farmland investment and programs for commercial agriculture. If national NGOs involved in the delimitation processes look to the middle term, for agrarian movements supported by international NGOs, their negotiating position has more frequently that of rejection.

The process of contestation of Prosavana, under public discussion since 2012, is paradigmatic of this trend. The Mozambican Peasants Union (UNAC), articulated with Via Campesina and NGOs such as Grain, closely followed the government plans for this region and organised a nationwide protest with international repercussions. The main argument against Prosavana was that it supported large-scale concessions to corporate investors associated with forced resettlement of thousands of smallholders. One of the provinces involved, Nampula, is one of the most densely populated in the country, where more than 70% of the population is smallholder farmers. The installation of multiple corporate land investors would, according to these NGOs, replicate in Mozambique the social

justice issues that surfaced in Brazilian *cerrado* (the main model for Prosavana), leaving thousands of peasants landless. While the government stresses its objective is to support smallholder and medium scale producers, in order to raise their productivity, NGOs are virtually unanimous in pointing that the Prosavana process has not been clear enough. A critical issue is whether the program will result in resettlements, and to what extent (interview NGO ORAM, Nampula).

The Prosavana case is a very interesting example of how NGOs and civil society movements are able to influence rural development in Mozambique in the current political conditions. As I reported in chapter 4, in 2016 a civil society commission was formed to monitor the plan, which is under revision and expected to incorporate more explicit measures to directly support smallholders. Other national organisations have been contesting and following the Government plans for rural development and agricultural modernisation. Center for the Live Earth (CTV - Centro Terra Viva) and Justiça Ambiental ("Environmental Justice") are the main ones, operating from Maputo but organising research and civic action across the whole country.

As for UNAC, the national peasants union, it has a well organised network of members and representatives across the provincial, district and village levels. These members are in permanent contact between them and with international organisations, and frequently host short visits of foreign activists. Example of this is the British NGO representative who visited in February 2015, whilst I was in fieldwork in the first research site, and was accompanied by members of UNAC's Nampula office in her visit to Nholo village, to where Mozaco planned to expand their operation. The initiative of local activists, but also the presence of international organisations, was determinant for the rejection of Mozaco's expansion plans in late 2014. In early 2015 the district administration had already proposed alternative locations for the new plantation areas – which would require new community consultations – but the company eventually gave up these plans in 2016.

The presence of international organisations highlights the visibility of peasant struggles at the local level, and has had a strong influence in the protracted implementation of Prosavana. Nevertheless, their presence on the ground is usually short-term and often does not involve any contact with other social actors, such as

land investors themselves. It has the effect of amplifying local voices, and is mostly focused on the objective of outright opposition, previously or at the first stages of a plan or project. While some NGO representatives reject this idea, the tone is usually of outright rejection of any farmland investment out of principle, based on the idea that modern agriculture – with its use of chemical inputs and low human labour – is incompatible with a just rural development for the local populations. One of the key messages conveyed by recent NGO reports – such as the report published by Grain in February 2015 – is that corporate land concessions represent a new form of colonialism. This idea gains particular resonance where most of the foreign land investors are European, and especially in cases, such as in Malema, where they are of Portuguese origin.

During processes of consultation, the intervention of NGOs is more focused on the first stages of the discussion, where the issues at stake also have more visibility, such as negotiating the conditions of implementation and the benefits for the community. It is determinant for leveraging the negotiation space for the local population, and plays a fundamental role in mediating information and communication during and after the public meetings. Even with the required presence of translators, there is a wide gap of language and interpretation between government officers, company managers and the local villagers. In this context, the way NGOs frame the messages conveyed and the aftermath of the discussions are critical for the outcomes of the negotiation. The role of the NGOs, especially international ones, is less evident during the *fait accompli* stages of operation and monitoring, which however are critical for the justice outcomes of these investments. The co-existence with the concession enters, after some years, a stage of quasi-dormant normality. However, it is during this period that one can observe to what extent the concession will benefit, or at least compensate, the local community. This reflects in terms of created jobs, investments in the village, conditions of resettlements and effects of the compensation schemes in local livelihoods and wellbeing.

5.4. Degree of inclusion and representation

One of the issues that have been raised by researchers on land deals, regarding the consultation procedures, is to what extent they represent the community at large, including those indirectly affected. Whilst the consultation meetings are generally free access to the public, in Mozambique, there is always a selection process. The government officers in charge of Land Registry in the district are those who generally invite the village head, the customary leaders, and the members of the "consulting council" of the village to the meetings. These are the people who "approve the projects", explains one of this district officers.

Then, through a 'snowballing' process, the village leaders summon other people they consider to be most influent and knowledgeable in the community. The residents and land users of the affected area, as well as people using the neighbouring parcels, are also invited to participate. In practice, these intermediaries control who has voice in the consultations. Intersubjective relations within the community are, ultimately, decisive for the outcomes of the participation process.

5.4.1. Representation of women

According to customary rules, in Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, women have often their land access constrained, especially if they are childless and widows. This occurs even within a traditionally matrilineal system (Mandamule, 2015), despite the fact that the Mozambican Constitution determines, and the 1997 Land Law reinforces, that no gender discrimination in land attribution can occur in the country.

Gender equality is also a basic principle in legislation related to public participation, and women are in principle equally represented in consultation meetings. However, amongst the Macua the tradition is for the woman to be represented by her husband in discussions about public affairs. Recent legislation introduced the obligation to have women directly represented in consultation meetings. "The objective is to break the myths held by the community", explains a

member the NGO Kulima. “Women generally have a lower public engagement, but it has been increasing over recent years”.

There are still limitations to their influence and voice, in practice. One of the peasants who lost a land plot for the plantation, in Namele, directly expresses her notion of lack of influence, despite being a member of the local Frelimo council, therefore holding a formal title that apparently could grant her a prominant position. Other recalls as community members tried to prevent her from speaking out in an official public event.

> *I attended the meetings, but just listened to the others. I haven’t spoken. (...) Being a woman, I feel limited in these situations. I haven’t been able to speak to anyone.* (Augusta Macedo, Namele)

> *Many people are afraid, but I express myself freely. On that day [Governor’s visit in 2013] people grabbed me, trying to prevent me from speaking out. But I did speak.* (Sofia Pereira, Namele)

5.4.2. Representation of groups indirectly affected

On focusing on groups directly affected by the land deal – namely those to resettle or to cede their land plots – the consultation processes risk foregoing other groups indirectly affected and a discussion with the whole of the local community on development and job opportunities. It is very frequent that interviewees deny there were any consultation meetings at all. I cannot assume that this means they were not summoned to participate. It may occur that they did not join for lack of interest, or for not being entirely clear about the purposes of the meeting, and some years later many do not event recall the event, at least to detail.

Both in Malema and Ocúa, consultation processes were mostly directed at groups who were to be resettled. Discussion was minimised in cases where only land plots, and not houses, were at stake. Particularly in Malema, the message came across as JFS getting hold of what already rightfully belonged to them, which minimised the perceived effects on those peasants who had been using those lands for decades, under consecutive arrangements. These same peasants and former farm labourers might as well have built houses in the plantation – like the 17 resettled

families – but instead they had been "respecting" the plantation area and were limited to growing seasonal crops. In a way, this created a sense of shared ownership that, most interviewed peasants felt, has not been honoured at the outset of the new Mozaco's project (see chapter 6).

These half-displaced peasants were in fact the majority of those affected by the new concession contract. However, having recognised the concession area as 'owner's land', they had a mostly passive reaction to the arrival of a (re) new 'owner', in hopes he would retake his place as a 'boss'. As the villagers recall in interviews and focus group discussions, "it was like a party", "the women were dancing, shouting: we have our boss back again, we will work as before". As Smalley and Corbera (2012) observe, "aware that they do not have perfect information, informants assess the proposals against past experience with the owners and with previous development projects, through the lens of their own social status and land-use related interests" (p. 1058).

The effectively resettled – who in practice are those who did not "respect" the plantation – are a minority, but their grievances are much more visible, from the demolished church (although not official) to their huts, although mostly precarious and seasonal. The majority who kept their houses in the former labourer neighbourhoods had to look for new *machambas*[26] in other communities, as arable land became scarce near the village. The fact that population density has been growing in the area only aggravates competition for accessible and productive lands. The view of the Macuas as highly flexible and mobile, shared by both company managers and government officers – appears to overshadow the disruptions to their lives over the short and medium term, even when a process of urbanisation is underway, as in Malema.

5.4.3. Representation of younger and future generations

Often precluded in processes of land concession are the future needs of the local community, especially areas for expansion and for an increasing population, in case

[26] The common term for a farm plot in Mozambique, which I will use throughout the thesis. For most smallholders in the research sites, the area is around one hectare.

the future generations are willing to pursue agriculture or land-related livelihoods (Li, 2015). Consultations focus on the present, mostly on short-term arrangements and compensations. Although there are some cases of land investors reserving land for future expansion of the community, such as in the case of Procana, a sugarcane plantation in Central Mozambique (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010) – abandoned in 2015 – in most cases this is not referred to in concession contracts or discussed in community consultations.

Population in rural areas is increasing and is very young, but it is also increasingly qualified. The younger generations are those with stronger expectations towards jobs, ideally more permanent and qualified jobs, with agribusiness companies. The alternative is migrate to urban areas, but their capacity to absorb rural workers is also limited. The matter is frequently invoked by older interviewees, as they have the expectation that the arrival of a corporate land investor may grant employment for their successors and retain them in the village, instead of migrating to the urban centres. However, unless they are directly affected and have to be resettled, these groups are largely absent from the public debate emerging with a new farmland investment.

5.5. Discussion and conclusions

My observations in the field, in both research sites, allow the identification of multiple issues of procedural justice, regarding the elements of an inclusive participatory process. For the purposes of the empirical analysis, I associated each of these ingredients with legitimising resources that government officers and company managers mobilise, in order to gain consent to a new farmland investment, however superficial. Financial capital, in the form of community investments and monetary compensations, and labour, in the form of job opportunities, constitute the prevalent immaterial resources that company managers mobilise in order to obtain consent from local communities, usually backed by the national government and their representatives at the provincial, district and village levels.

The degree to which local actors are able to influence the outcomes of land consultations is constrained by multiple elements, including the communication

techniques and devices employed (Martin, 2007) and historically informed identity-bias (Martin & Rutagarama, 2012). In the case of the above discussed land concessions, local peasants attribute foreign investors (*mukunia*) with power, technology and knowledge, which in their eyes limits their capacity to influence the outcomes of a land negotiation. Especially when the government backs investors and conveys the message that corporate investment is the only alternative for improving local economy and social infrastructure (Hall *et al.*, 2015). Amongst the interviewees in both research sites, a sense of backwardness and hopelessness facilitates acceptance of agricultural investments, on the one hand, and in the other contributes to silence claims and contestation.

In my case studies, asymmetries in access to information and language are also amongst the main limitations for procedural justice. Despite provisions for the legal recognition of local voices and land rights, intersubjective relations of mutual (mis) recognition are determinant in constructing consent at the local level. Company managers, local chiefs and government officials have privileged access to information, or a key mediating role in networks of influence. Customary chiefs and district officers are most often instrumental in gaining consent for agricultural investments. Local populations are often dismissed as voluble and belligerent.

Even in the face of a progressive legislation that establishes inclusive processes of deliberation, in practice freedom of expression is often problematic (Hanlon, 2004; Meneses & Santos, 2009). Starting with the approval of the project, local populations were never aware they had a veto prerogative in Ocúa, where formally this was a possibility. Avoiding a direct confrontation with the authorities is the norm, and any criticism is usually covert. More recently, the support of transnational organisations has been leading to an increasing confrontational approach on the part of local organisations and peasant movements. The result of these recent trends is evident in the 2014 consultation in Malema, where the local community plainly rejected Mozaco's expansion plan. Although interaction with NGOs confers more leverage and bargaining power to local peasants, their intervention is mostly focused on the first stages of approval of land concessions.

Regarding representation of specific social groups, my observations in the field, in both research sites, allow to identify a range of 'grey' areas, social groups

and issues that are less acknowledged within consultation processes, at the outset of a new farmland project. Although national legislation endorses gender equality, in practice there are still limitations to the representation of women in public participation processes. As Walker (2009) points out, defining those "most affected" is often problematic, giving raise to "spatially orientated dilemmas". In both Malema and Ocúa, the social groups indirectly affected are less represented and acknowledged within these processes, which affects their degree of inclusion.

Whilst fairness of participation will always be a fundamental pre-condition for distributional justice (Martin *et al.*, 2014), Nancy Fraser's (2001) idea of participatory parity seems problematic to envisage in a postcolonial setting such as the one in Northern Mozambique. Independently of formal procedures for recognition of land rights – to companies as well as local residents – these cases express how intersubjective relations of influence and trust are determinant for the distributive and procedural outcomes of a land concession.

In light of the concerns and risks identified in these land consultations, I see consent as a multifaceted concept, subject to different interpretations according to the actors involved and to a process of gradual construction. Most of the time, there will be a superficial consent, which formally attributes a limited degree of legitimacy to a land concession consent (Otsuki *et al.*, 2017). This is the case of both concessions analysed in the thesis.

In effect, local populations do not necessarily regard the participation procedures as genuine and inclusive. If one is to acknowledge the existence of multiple degrees of influence and inclusion (Nolte & Voget-Kleschin, 2014) in participatory processes, one should assume that there are diverse degrees of consent. Although the consultation happens at a given moment at the outset of the project, the expectations raised during that stage will be determinant for maintaining a sense of fairness and legitimacy amongst the local populations. Maybe we should understand consent as a one-off agreement, or otherwise assume it is contingent on temporal boundaries, such as the investment in the community and the payment of adequate compensation within a reasonable time frame.

The successive waves of migration and shifts in tenure policy that followed Mozambique's independence have added multiple layers of identity and power.

These need to be acknowledged when analysing participative processes around land distribution and access to natural resources. Honneth's conception of reciprocal recognition (2004) and Lund's notion of social 'contracts' of recognition (2016) are particularly useful in this sense. They help to illuminate how historical legacy, subjective experiences and memories mediate consent-building processes. I will develop further this discussion of historical legacy and social identities in the following chapter.

6. OWNER'S LAND: HISTORY AND IDENTITIES

6.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the importance of historical legacy and social identity as legitimising devices in processes of land concession. More specifically, it considers how the history of a particular concession area, along with its social networks and identities, reflect on the willingness to accept the presence of a new land *owner*. On one hand, the land investor mobilises the resource of historical legacy to affirm ownership of the area, on the other this facilitates acceptance on the part of local villagers, especially former farm labourers. However, this acceptance comes with conditions. Local people also hold expectations that they can be incorporated into the project, especially as, in many cases, their social identities came to be strongly attached to the history of the concession.

Moreover, the peaceful coexistence with a farm estate is conditional on the respect of physical boundaries, in this case the spatial limits of the former colonial plantation. Notions of place attachment, identity and ownership are different outside of these boundaries, as manifest by the violent reaction of neighbouring villagers when presented with plans for the expansion of Mozaco project in Malema. Ancient trees and landmarks are crucial physical devices in contesting the company's ownership claims.

The most relevant case, in this context, is Malema. An area with a complicated history, made of successive shifts in land property regimes and successive waves of migration. This resulted in a mix of fluid social identities and ambiguous relations of ownership (Unruh, 1998). I will now demonstrate how the analysis of these intersubjective recognition dynamics - historical processes, social identities and relations – is crucial to understand how rural populations manage their relations with particular land investors on the ground. Once again, formal recognition of land rights – be it to corporate investors or local populations – is just a (short) part of the story.

This chapter seeks to clarify how social 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition interfere in the implementation of formal land concessions, on the ground. Either

by facilitating their initial acceptance, or by constraining the terms of their application. The following research sub-question informs the analytical approach in this part of the thesis.

How do investments constitute 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition, and which resources do social actors mobilise, in order to confer legitimacy to their ownership claims, or otherwise seek incorporation into the projects?

I will therefore identify diverse legitimising resources mobilised by social actors in the context of a pre-existent land concession. The following table outlines the key legitimising resources included in the analysis of this chapter:

Table 4 - Social actors and their legitimising resources

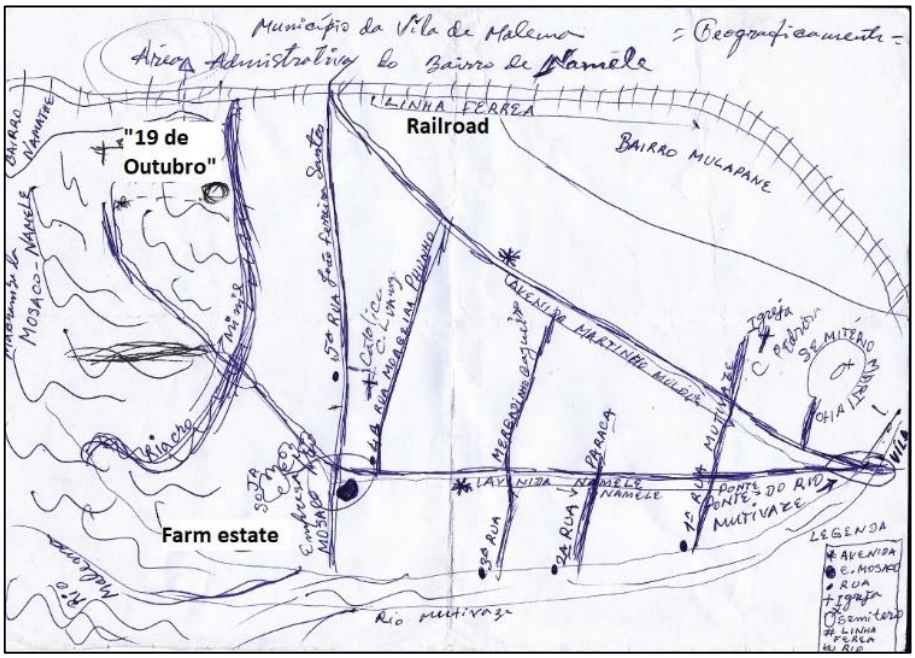
Social actors	Material resources	Immaterial resources
Government officers and officials	Financial capital	Law and regulations Social relations
Company managers	Machinery and inputs Maps Satellite images Financial capital	Historical legacy Technology Technical language
Former land users **Resettled villagers**	Trees Houses Cemeteries Landmarks	Knowledge Memories Subjective experiences Social identities

6.2. Living with the farm: contracts of "reciprocal recognition"

Despite the widespread assumption that there is plenty of available arable land in Mozambique, the interest of farmland investors centred on the most productive and accessible areas, located near infrastructures, rivers, and often in the proximity of urban centres. This becomes problematic when we acknowledge that typically these are also the most densely populated areas. The presence of a farm estate raises expectations of employment and income, contributing to further increases of population density in these areas (Myers, 1994).

Namele village, on the first research site (Malema), is an example of how successive layers of migration complicate patterns of ownership, identity and senses of belonging. Contrary to the second research site, Ocúa, the area of the Malema colonial plantation received successive waves of population since independence, especially after the creation of communal villages by the Frelimo government (early 1980s) and the tobacco state farm of Namele.

Figure 12 - A sketch of Namele, drawn by the village head



From the perspective of farmland investors, to develop remote woodland areas, inaccessible by road, involves excessive costs, when compared to (re)

investing in an old colonial farm estate, near to the village and infrastructures, and often even with buildings and pre-prepared arable lands (Cotula, 2012a). These are already strategically located and most often land has been permanently used by local populations. The impacts of the global financial crisis on agribusiness investments are clear in Mozambique, in the delayed implementation of certain projects, and even abandonment. These make it even less probable that these corporations are willing to invest in remote lands. The Malema Agriculture district officer recalls a number of visits from foreign investors who ended up cancelling their plans, in some cases because shareholders considered the investment was not cost-effective. Agriculture officers and local authorities in both study sites corroborate this tendency.

> *"They are seeking the same exact areas as the local peasants: that is the issue. We need these companies to be willing to invest in more remote areas, to develop them. That's how Malema was born after all."* (local officer, Malema)

> *"Farmland investors want the old farms with clean arable land."* (local officer, agriculture department, Malema)

> *"The problem is that the areas sought by the companies are also those most attractive for the local population".* (agriculture district officer, Chiúre)

> *"The agribusiness projects that have been coming up more recently intend to use former colonial plantations. Many companies are not interested in clearing new areas".* (Government officer, Agriculture Provincial Directorate, Nampula)

The colonial past still carries a lot of weight and continues to influence land distribution. The discourse of government officers frame these areas as somehow "reserved". These have always been "concessions", in the words of an officer from the Agriculture Provincial Directorate in Nampula. "These areas belong to the Government, they were never completely abandoned. People are informed that these areas are in a transitory situation. It is not a land that local people can securely use".

Whereas international NGOs view the resurging interest of foreign investors as a renewed form of colonialism (Grain & UNAC, 2015), local populations are far from holding a uniform perspective of this phenomenon. Peasants interviewed in both research sites regard the resurgence of corporate investments in agriculture as a continuation of previous plantations, however they see it both in negative and in positive terms.

The older generations still have vivid memories of forced labour and the harsh treatment of the colonial settlers. Nevertheless, they sometimes recall, with a somewhat nostalgic tone, a time where farm labour was more organised and the rural economy was thriving. This is more apparent in the case of Ocúa, for in Malema other post-independence memories – of the state farm and JFS – assume greater relevance. The crucial point is that, for rural villagers in both sites, to have some kind of employment and additional sources of income is important for their own self-worth and social identities.

6.2.1. History and memories legitimise ownership

The case of Malema is expressive of how a rapid succession of political and economic shifts generates ambiguity in land ownership, at the local level. In truth, the plantation area was transferred to JFS in the 1980s, under the pressure of debt and structural adjustment programs, when the Mozambican government started liberalising access to land markets. This concession preceded the 1990s' land reform, and attempts to upgrade it under the 1997 Land Law – which required a participatory process - proved complicated.

The ambiguous status of the plantation reflected on the way the national government handled this deal in particular – the fact that the national government approved the concession in disregard to the reality on the ground, as I described in the previous chapter. Yet the history of this business group, with a century long tradition of investing in agriculture in Mozambique, most likely conferred them a special status with the national government.

The fact that the main investors are Portuguese understandably generates some uneasiness around the colonial topic. The report by the NGO Grain, which

termed land investors of "new colonisers", created strong controversy when it was published in February 2015, while I was in Malema. The legitimacy of the 'Green Revolution' surge of investments requires a rupture with the colonial imaginary. This is a particularly sensitive point for companies with such a long history in Mozambique, tracing back to the colonial period.

In the case of Mozaco, the historical legacy that supports the legitimacy of their concession is, above all, the post-independence experience of JFS. With a focus on the development of contract farming, especially cotton, the Portuguese business group has granted a positive image amongst rural populations. Malema is not an exception.

Soon it became evident that the project would not succeed if the managers only considered formal recognition of their land use rights through the law and by national administration. The history of the plantation, and its patterns of occupation, gave the local population a sense of shared ownership and entitlement to this territory. The 2,389 hectares were no longer available to be privately 'owned' as a farm estate.

In Malema many of the interviewees use the same expression to refer to this area - "*terra do dono*" (literally "owner's land" in Portuguese). It is "owner's land", even if was left idle for successive periods, the most recent between 2006 and 2011. This may be expressed by an increased willingness to welcome new investment to the area, but also through more palpable signs, such as avoiding the construction of houses or planting trees, which would be assertions of a more permanent ownership.

Nobody would go build their house there, or clear a new farm plot,
without asking permission first.

Vítor, local NGO member, Malema

In Namele JFS informally allowed the local peasants to farm the area while the plantation was inactive. At any time they could be asked to leave. The verbal 'contract' for access to land in Namele's plantation allowed the population to grow seasonal crops, such as rice and maize, as long as they refrained from planting trees or building houses.

"There were no orders for us to leave the land plots. If one found a good place to grow their crops, they would stay there. But they did say that no one should build houses in that area. Or any kind of structure. To respect. Keep working the land, but always aware that it was owner's thing." (village chief, Namele)

The statements from the interviews are clear on this matter, and reflect a wide acknowledgement of the 'owner's land' and its access rules, as well as their transitory status.

"What can we do? What belongs to the owner belongs to him. The machambas belonged to the company. When they left we occupied the land, each would work on a plot. When Mozaco came they said they would distribute plots for us to work on. They haven't. What are we supposed to do?" (Augusta Macedo, local peasant, Namele)

Still, this acceptance is not unconditional. It is contingent on the continuing role of the plantation's owner as a 'boss' and a patron for the village, both by creating employment and by managing the farm in a way that allows neighbouring villagers to continue using part of the area for their own *machambas*.

"The people were just taking advantage of the land, what should they ask for? They just have to go somewhere else. (...) I'm living in someone else's place, in someone else's land, and I build my house there. The owner comes back and yet he compensates me for the investment in the house. I wouldn't mind at all."

(Luís Guimarães, former JFS worker, Malema)

For the investor, they are only resuming their activity, as they belong to the same business group as the former tobacco producer. They expect to build upon the long tradition in the region, and the trust accumulated by previous companies that worked closely with the local population.

A boss shows up, and he comes to invest in a cash crop, which will bring money. And, above all, because it is João, a company with a good reputation, people have trust and are happy with it. (company manager, Malema)

Originally, stresses the Mozaco manager, Namele's population never owned those lands, as they came to the village to work at the plantation. These quotes, from the company manager and the district authorities, express the transitory nature of the access arrangements on clear terms.

> *"When the company left, the people asked if they could use the land. We said yes, in the condition that they would leave when we resumed activity. They were aware of this all the time."*
> (company manager)

> *Some people were already willing to leave, because they already recognised the ownership of that area, otherwise they would have occupied it all. In this part here [showing on the map], near the mango trees, only a few built houses.* (local officer, Malema)

In the case of Ocúa, the situation is rather different. Colonial farms only partially occupied the area later included within the Ouro Verde concession (2008). While previous occupation was still used as an argument in community consultations, the influence on people's sense of ownership, and fairness, appears to be less expressive. There was a period of four decades between independence and the approval of the new concession. Contrary to Malema, and even to other areas in Ocúa, peasants who were living in the area attributed to Ouro Verde had assumed a more permanent ownership, which is manifest in their patterns of occupation. "These people had already understood the law, and for that reason they had been planting trees in the area", explains an NGO member, Gabriela Patrício.

As the former manager of the company recognises, there is no experience of commercial farming post-independence in this area. Most companies that have worked in the region, including JFS group (cotton), adopted the outgrow model instead of direct plantation. This means that 'owner's land' here is more of a distant memory, amongst the older generations – most often recalled through testimonies of forced labour in cotton and sisal plantations.

Although the influence of the colonial past may differ according to economic and social circumstances, one aspect is common to both study locations. There is a high expectation that a company will come along, providing paid work (*muteko*) and development opportunities to the local community. The appearance

of some wealthy *mukunia* is still widely regarded as the best opportunity for escaping poverty, finding alternative livelihoods and filling in the gaps of struggling public investment (e.g. water wells, schools, health centres). The following quotes are express these expectations.

> *We are crying out for a boss who would come here and rise the tobacco company. So that our children would be able to go to school (...). Not just João Ferreira Santos, even another company, as long as it would produce tobacco, and we would have jobs. Then we would celebrate, we could even make the traditional beer! Like it is now, the plantation is dead. (Filomena Santos, Malema)*

> *We are quite miserable here. The lands are good, but we have no luck, no company has shown up until now.* – But there is EcoEnergia. – *Oh, that one. Oh yes, I see. I have heard of that. It is starting up slowly, right? (Xavier Ferreira, Ocúa)*

From the interviews and discussions, this seems to be the dominant view, it does not differ significantly between men and women, or between older and younger generations, either. There is a nuance, though. For the older generations, the presence of an investor is all the more important as a way to create opportunities to the young populations, and thus confine migration to the urban areas.

As I observed in the previous chapter, to have or not to have an *empresa* (company or business in Portuguese) is paramount to any perspectives of local development and has been the key argument at community consultations on land deals. Once again, I identify an element of coloniality in the ingrained sense of backwardness expressed by local peasants (Fanon, 1952).

The influence of the previous relationship between farm owners and the villagers in their acceptance of new investments is particularly clear in Malema. However, the new project is expected to measure up to the former company, which was considered to have a good relationship with the locals, having often provided material and technical support to their labourers. The posture of the previous investor set the standards, and keeping those is determinant for the sense of fairness amongst local peasants. They insist that the “old” JFS would share the lands with

them, through a rotating scheme, in addition to offering income jobs and technical support.

> *João Ferreira dos Santos came here and found all these people growing their crops in the company area. But there was no problem, he would even help the people. He would select a parcel for the tobacco, and would let us know what was left for our plots. After three years, he would shift the tobacco, and we would go to the other parcel.* (focus group discussion, Malema, March 2015)

> *JFS would lend money to hire workers for the tobacco plots, and give us the chemical inputs. Those expenses would be discounted when we sold them the tobacco.*
>
> (Filomena Santos, Malema)

The interviewees are referring to the outgrow scheme JFS had in place in Namele in the 1990s, just as they still have in other areas of the district, and other parts of the country. Example of this investment in contract farming - which is the main model of production for JFS in Mozambique - is the cotton factory and plantation blocks in Cuamba, in the neighbouring Niassa province. As I have discussed in chapter 4, outgrow schemes have been considered central for the development of agriculture in Mozambique (Smart & Hanlon, 2014), a mostly positive image that is corroborated by the interviews in both research sites, as well as other informal conversations across several provinces.

The distinction of JFS amongst other landowners, past and present, is a salient aspect in the analysis. Former JFS labourers, who had also worked for the predecessor state farm, made frequent complaints of the latter, for leaving several months of wages unpaid when they ceased activity. State farms were a pillar of the Frelimo socialist policies for the rural areas, aimed at organising rural labour and supporting the industrialisation of the agricultural sector. However, due to economic constraints, government policy and the civil war, in the early 1980s they were already failing to deliver (Norfolk & Tanner, 2007).

The situation of the state farm affects hundreds of labourers and their families. One of the interviewees, having mistaken me at first for a government representative, showed me his old payment and tax sheets. But the villagers I

interviewed wanted to be clear that I had understood they were not referring to JFS, and did not hold any such grievances towards the Portuguese investor. “The state company is the one with debts. We have even resorted to courts, but haven’t seen our money until today. João Ferreira dos Santos has no debt” (Filomena Santos, former JFS labourer, Malema).

The tobacco plantation not only was more labour intensive. The employment of contract farming, as well as the rotating scheme, allowed it to raise income for the rural populations whilst leaving aside an area for the local peasants to grow their own crops. There were some rules regarding land use, namely some crops which were forbidden (such as cassava), as they were harmful to tobacco plants. However, most interviewees agree that there was enough land to grow tobacco and their household crops. Furthermore, interviewees in Namele comment that JFS also provided material support, as they prepared the fields for cultivation with their tractors, including the family *machambas*.

Historical legacy, and the associated personal memories, is an important immaterial resource for agribusiness investors, in legitimising their access to land in Mozambique. However, in order to benefit from an accumulated capital of trust, investors have to manage those memories carefully. Sudden shifts in business plans may have a direct impact on local expectations for incorporation into the project, and erode the perceived legitimacy of the new land ‘owner’. Mozaco’s case in Malema demonstrates how these changes in direction generate widespread disappointment and affect the “social contract” of recognition with the company. The financial crisis of 2008, coupled with changes in agricultural markets, led JFS group to abandon the production of tobacco. Mozaco eventually decided that it would be more profitable to produce soya. This move reduced the labour intensity of the project, and therefore affected the expectations, long held by the local community especially former plantation workers, and the incorporation of their labour, skills and knowledge.

> “*In fact we celebrated with joy, when Mozaco arrived. We thought. “Our boss is back!” We are going to live as before.* (…) *But like this we will just starve. They only work with machinery. There are no chances of getting any jobs there.*”
>
> (Filomena Santos, elderly villager, Malema)

"JFS helped the people here, but not this new company".

(local peasant, Namele)

At first, local populations considered the new investment as a continuation of the previous concession. The overwhelming majority of interviewees refer to JFS group in positive, nostalgic terms, and even reveal a certain familiarity when recalling their experiences with "João Ferreira", naming the company as it was a close friend. Very often, interviewees refer to the company as if they were talking about an individual, "João", "he", "him". Their imaginary and memories are somewhat personalised in the image of the founder, who symbolically represents the whole project, as well as their past experiences with it. They are, however, aware, of this symbolic representation, and that they have never known the founder himself. "No, João Ferreira Santos himself, we only knew him from history, nobody has actually seen him in person. Only nephews, sons and sons-in-law would come here", clarifies a local leader. He even recalls, jokingly, one who "could not even take some fresh air, would not even step outside the car".

More than an appreciation of special personal traits, the widespread appreciation for JFS legacy in Malema appears to derive, above all, from how the company valued the labour and skills of the villagers. Whilst farm labourers, they were reciprocally recognised as members of a collective project, taking into account their previous training and experience accumulated from the state tobacco company. It is important to note that Mozambique was just emerging from a prolonged civil war, agricultural production and infrastructures had been devastated, and that the Northern provinces were, at the time, amongst the most impoverished regions in the world (Bruck & Schindler, 2009). The arrival of an investor to reactivate the plantation was therefore highly praised, or so it appears from the memories of those times, more than two decades later.

"When João Ferreira settled here, he made people evolve."

(Village head, Namele)

However, the positive association, between the former and the current investor, soon gave way to disappointment and constant comparison. Instead of "the same", now Mozaco is *another* company. This distinction emerged as it became clear that the former 'recognition contract' was no longer adequate as a measure for

expectations and for the relationship with the company managers. In the previous 'contract', there was a better symmetry in the relations between the company and the local population,that seems to have been lost in the new project. Central for maintaining this more symmetric relation was to recognise the value of local labour and skills.

Following their attempt at expanding the concession area (see section 4.3.1), local and neighbouring villagers adopted a more negative stance towards Mozaco. The relationship between Mozaco and the villagers is, for the most part, quite ambivalent. Both populations and leaders criticise the company and their perceived lack of support to the local community. Yet most people seem keen on maintaining a good relation with the company. After a local leader's meeting that had taken place right in front of Mozaco's main gate, I questioned a local leader on the nature of their relation with the company, which at times appeared to be amicable enough. "They are our friends, of course, it is our *empresa*", he replied.

Villagers in Namele, in interviews and focus groups, repeatedly evaluate Mozaco's performance per direct comparison to the previous investor. Despite Mozaco belonging to the same business group as João Ferreira Santos, they stress how different is the companies' approach to land management and to dealing with local populations.

> *"This new company does not help people, João Ferreira dos Santos was the one who actually helped. They would share the land with the locals. They planted maize, peanut, anything. They even ploughed our lands! Not this one, there is no way!"* (Maria Quaresma, Namele)

6.2.2. Social identities: labourers, stewards and experts

Opposition and rejection are not the only responses in face of a new land deal. In fact, the villagers internalise the new order and seek to claim spaces of recognition within it, special roles that ought to be considered. Stories and personal testimonies hold a crucial importance here (Berry, 1997; Fortmann, 1995; Honneth, 2004; Li, 2014b). This applies to the population in Namele, closer to the town and where the plantation estate is located. Local villagers were ready to give up the *machambas*

they have been using – and are aware they were in 'owner's land' – in exchange for rekindling their long held relationship with the life of the plantation.

As mayor of Malema recalls, "the town was born thanks to the investment in agriculture". The history of the area is indissociably linked to the history of the plantation estate, through its different stages (colonial, state farm, private concession). Villagers interviewed often stress that they were "brought here by the company", in some cases to work in the state farm, but also, later on, hired by the Portuguese business group JFS. This means that, for many people here, their sense of belonging, as well as their social identities, is now interwoven with the existence of a plantation. "We were aware the land belonged to a company, but when you have been for such a long time in an area you can't be removed just like that". Arnaldo José started working in the plantation just after independence, when the State farm started, in 1977. He has had a farm plot in the plantation for 20 years, until 2013. The new soya plantation disrupted old routines. He was able to get access to a new *machamba*, but it is some 30 kilometres away from Namele.

Some families had come to live here before the independence, when Morgado was still the landowner. They recall as the former 'boss' had attributed them their plots and spaces to build their houses. The younger generations were already born, yet some have already lost track of their region of origin. They wonder whether they should be returning to their past homelands, since the most recent landowners do not recognise their entitlement to the land.

> *We have been weak. When our father was ill, we should have asked: where did we come from. Now my mother says her family was originally from the Niassa province. I don't know where we would live. If our death comes, I guess we will die here. We have nowhere else. (Isabel Agostinho, Namele)*

Part of this population are skilled farm workers, trained at technical schools during the Socialist period. The importance of this history to their sense of self, as well as to their attachment to this landscape, is evident from the interviews.

> *I had a land plot, and I was considered as his labourer. (...) It was the company that brought me here."* (former plantation foreman, Namele)

> *I know the history of this plantation very well. There was female and male technicians working here. There was much work, with Cabrona*

[State company] and then João Ferreira. (Filomena Santos, elderly villager, Namele)

Some interviewees stand for the expertise accumulated in the old times, as well as their former roles at the tobacco plantation, as basis for claiming recognition in the present day. The fact that tobacco, along with cotton, was the crop of choice for more than a century settled a strong tradition in Malema. Generations worked in the plantation or in the factory, in the nearby town, and specialised in tobacco production. Following independence and nationalisation of farm estates (1970s), the Frelimo government created neighbourhoods for the workers surrounding the plantation. The population in this area increased, fleeing the civil war and attracted by job opportunities. JFS eventually benefited from this accumulated local expertise. Namele was the only place in the region where the company had a direct plantation, whereas in other areas they employed the system of contract farming. Approximately 500 people were working at Namele's plantation in the 1990s. For the former labourers, the roles assumed in the plantation, either with JFS or the state company, remained a fundamental part of their social identities. Some of them had even assumed key roles at the plantation, such as foremen.

"I was one of the experts. They would charge us with controlling the farmers, in the family sector." (Felizardo Chimane, Namele)

"I was a chief at the plantation. When I first came here I was an overseer. I would visit each labourer and his machamba." (Gustavo Andrade, Namele)

Other interviewees consider themselves unemployed agricultural experts, specialized in tobacco production, highlighting the importance of labour experience to the social identities of local villagers. They had to give away the land plots they were using in the concession area. In exchange, they expected to resume work at the plantation. Now they are basically "surplus" skilled labourers; neither peasants nor employees.

These men who just left are agrarian technicians. But now they are jobless. (Augusta Macedo, peasant, 67, Namele)

I worked across all stages in tobacco production, from planting to packaging, with JFS. (Felismino Duarte, former JFS employee, Namele)

After independence (1975), the Mozambican government developed state training programmes inspired on the soviet model. Some interviewees, particularly in Malema, recall having received training through these schemes.

I would assist my "brothers" at learning that technology. As my brothers, as producers, for my training was meant to help each and everyone according to their capacities, and their strengths. That training came from Cuba, OTS - Organização de Trabalho e Salários (Organisation for Labour and Wages). According to one's capacity, according to one's will. (Fernando Lisboa, ex-tobacco farm labourer and neighbourhood officer, Namele)

The farm estate itself represented a space of learning and development for many people in Malema. Many interviewees refer to this past with a sense of self-worth, that they work and capacities were valued. Organised labour around the tobacco plantation left an indelible mark in the history of Malema. It contributed, in a way, for creating a common sense of place, many of which have come from other parts of the province, or even the country, to live here.

Many young people would attend the agrarian schools. They were trained there and became technicians. The older people, we could also call them technicians, in a way, not those who attended schools, but those who got the expertise from the elders. They had memorised everything in their heads. They knew every tobacco disease and every treatment. Because they were studying with their bosses. (Luís Guimarães, former tobacco factory worker, Namele)

There were technicians who taught us agricultural techniques, for every crop. Onions, tomatoes. Here where we are now there was no machambas, for João Ferreira dos Santos had provided farm plots for us. Other people would come from Lalaua, for instance. These were the experts, who came from Cabrona [State tobacco company] to João Ferreira. They would teach how to grow maize, peas… (Filomena Santos, Namele)

Faustino Mariano shows me, with pride, his well-arranged plots around the house, and his storage spaces for crops. “Some people are just playing around, and then they run out of food. Not me!”. He is one of those going back to the colonial plantation. Before and after independence, through nationalisation, until recently, when JFS ceased the production of tobacco, he assumed different functions, such as blacksmith and mason, in the various companies that came to Namele. He was fortunate, he says, to have passed the torch to his son, who was at the time one of the few permanent workers in Mozaco.

Although there are still some opportunities, most of the work currently available at the soya plantation is seasonal. Some 50 people were employed in hoeing the fields while I was in fieldwork in Malema, in February-April 2015 – roughly 10% of the workforce in JFS. Even so, they anticipated they could soon be replaced by technology and chemical products.

> *We are willing to work there. But, after two or three years, they are already saying they only need 15 people to weed the fields. At the next stage they will be using chemicals to burn the weed. That way, there aren’t many days left for me to work with my hoe.”*
> (Roberto Machado, Namele)

> *We thought we would work there, have jobs. But those few who work there are using machinery.”* (Gustavo Andrade, Namele)

Women generally work during the harvest season, in lighter tasks such as sifting and selecting soya beans. Although the company manager says “there is a lot of work”, for both men and women, women feel more neglected for lack of opportunities. They are less likely to get a permanent job in the soya plantation, and typically can only find seasonal employment for short periods during the harvest season.

> *There is no place for people to work there, it is all machines. Now the people are saying “where are we going? We have no land and no jobs.*
> *(focus group Namele, March 2015)*

Certain interviewees claim differentiated treatment, taking into consideration their past relationship to the plantation and the former ‘bosses’. The family of a late warden have their house inside the plantation, on top of a hill

surrounded by soy plants. We cross the fields and a small creek to reach their place. There are still some plots with maize around, but most of the *machambas* are now covered with soya plants. We are told that the plots left is where the tractors cannot reach, for this soil is too rocky. The widow assures they were brought here by the tobacco company and that her husband held an important role in the plantation over all these years. She even goes as far as claiming that her husband was an 'owner' at the plantation estate.

> *"My husband kept that company there for a long time, since Morgado [colonial owner]. Several companies came, and my husband always worked for them. They gave us that area for us to build our house, because they wanted him to be close to the plantation. I had my children there. When independence came and the white bosses were leaving, they left the estate for him to take care of. Now he is gone. Which kind of treatment will I be granted? The same as the others, who just used to went there to use the land? My husband was the owner there!"* (Widow of a former employee)

In addition to the recurrent argument that "the company brought me here", Namele villagers recall the crucial role they had in protecting the farm estate during particularly difficult times, especially during the civil war (1977-1992). In addition to a sense of entitlement, there is a notion that, while farm managers come and go, due to political turmoil or economic troubles, local populations are the legitimate stewards of the plantation estate.

> *"When the enemy came, we would get together to protect the estate. We would not let anyone take anything from the plantation or the houses there, during the war." (Filomena Santos, Namele)*

> *"They did not take into account, nor did they think, that these people they found working the land were the ones that took care of the farm. They simply told us to let go." (Manuel Fonseca, Namele)*

> *"They are not helping us at all. During the war, there was confusion here. The workers ourselves protected the plantation estate, even the houses. There was war… but we are not being acknowledged. They just came with the tractors and started chopping down trees". (Felismino Duarte, Namele)*

On the other hand, interviewees point out that they have maintained the land in good condition, by cultivating it. From some of the testimonies, it becomes evident that labour and efforts invested, through different historical periods, confer a sense of entitlement to local villagers, the majority of whom are former workers of the plantation.

6.2.3. Landmarks and trees as boundaries of ownership

The respect for norms of use, even if verbal and informal, is a clear expression that a social 'contract' of reciprocal recognition (Lund, 2016) had been in place in Malema. This 'contract', however, did not hold the same validity in the entire area of the concession. Formally, the concession comprised a parcel west of the Malema River. However, these lands had not been used since the colonial period. The population became accustomed to planting their crops here, and eventually they started building houses, then schools and churches. In this case, even though the formal property rested with JFS group, the ownership of the local community had been informally legitimised through permanent and strong 'inscription devices' (Li, 2014). In face of the reality on the ground, the district administration proposed the reduction of the concession area to 1,000 hectares. In a way, local authorities attempted to formalise – more according to the spirit of the 1997 law, after all – a *fait accompli* of community ownership. To no avail, at the time, as the national government still approved a concession for the original area of 2,389 hectares.

In consequence, Mozaco proposed an expansion plan to compensate for the loss of the Western parcel of the plantation. They summoned the involved communities to a consultation meeting, with the intention of presenting this plan, in October 2014. However, the meeting ended in threats and violence. The population snatched one of the plantation landmarks and threw it onto the van of a district government official, as a sign of protest against what was perceived as an attempt of the company to extend their reach beyond their legitimate spatial boundaries.

The local *régulo*, customary leader in charge of land attribution in Malema area, insists that the old boundaries of the colonial farm should have been respected. The local community in the Eastern part of the river would not accept a concession

that is not based on historical boundaries. The fact that the expansion plan was a compensation for the lost land on the West side is not acknowledged by local communities as a fair trade-off, as the Eastern populations have deeper roots in the area now claimed by the company.

> *"They reached the old landmarks, then they thought of setting new ones. The consent was over at that moment. (...)They were saying: you must stop at those landmarks, it was as far as your old company went. You can grow your crops as you wish, but not evict people from where they have been living. And the argument stopped there."*
> (Malema customary leader)

> *"Mozaco has already occupied a larger area than Morgado [colonial owner] and João Ferreira dos Santos. They even cut off roads."*
> (focus group discussion, Namele, March 2015)

> *"When this Mozaco arrived here, they wanted to expand the area, where neither Morgado nor Cabrona had reached before."*
> (Faustino Mariano, former labourer at state tobacco company)

The police eventually intervened and the company manager fled the scene, having failed to complete his presentation. This was the last public meeting on the subject and eventually the death sentence of the expansion plan. Several factors would have played a role on this mood shift, including intervention from national and international NGOs. With the increased controversy around Prosavana, the rural development program for the region, NGOs had been in contact with transnational civic movements, such as Via Campesina, and were also in permanent contact with local communities. Also, Nholo was in a recently delimitated area. The process of working with NGOs to demarcate this land as community territory raised awareness, and probably suspicion towards land investors. Pressure from Namele villagers, unhappy with the arrangements and performance of Mozaco in their area, also contributed to the failure of this consultation attempt. There had been a lapse of around three years since the setup of Mozaco project in Namele.

> *"We always counted on a deep trust among the population, there is no uneasiness or distrust here. But something is changing, for sure. They would not even let us explain our plans!"* (company manager)

"There wasn't violence thanks to God… They wanted to cross over all this, going even beyond the mountains. Then the people there refused it, even the police had to rush there to help. They were saying: we built our houses here a long time ago, where are we going now?"
(Maria Quaresma, Namele)

This episode reveals how the attribution of formal land use rights was insufficient for the company to ensure its land holding, let alone obtain the consent and peaceful coexistence with the local community. The fact that the new concession required an area larger than their predecessors set the project for failure. In fact, in the words of the previously cited local officer, the 2,389 hectares of the concession "did not exist anymore". Parts of the area officially under concession (however in terms not perfectly clear) had even been occupied by a growing population. Over decades, local populations eventually constructed the effective boundaries of the plantation as the legitimate ones.

Before the soya came, the entire town would grow their crops there, in the area of João Ferreira dos Santos. (…) Even in the colonial times, even during the time of the State company, even through João Ferreira dos Santos, this area was not entirely used, only part of it. On the other side, the local population would be working their machambas. (Luís Guimarães, former plantation labourer, Namele)

Although there is no continuous tradition history of farmland investment in the Ocúa concession, and thus the most recent memories go back to the colonial period, the 'owner's land' was still used as a key argument in community consultations. The fact that a longer period has passed means local peasants have already claimed ownership of the land where the EcoEnergia project was set up. They had planted fruit trees and built houses, and some families had been living for generations in the area, which is located along an important national road (linking provincial capitals Nampula and Pemba) and the Lúrio River.

In Ocúa, memories of the *mukunias* are centred either on the current relationship with the EcoEnergia company, either on a more distant past, going back to the colonial period. There is no in-between. The older interviewees in Mahurunga, when questioned about the history of the village, swiftly invoke memories of the forced labour in plantations, in force during the Portuguese

colonies until 1961, as well as the coerced production of cotton. Still, in Ocúa, the fact that the new project surpasses the old limits of the former colonial plantation also interferes with the general sense of fairness.

> *This is happening because this area was first occupied by a farm during colonial times. (...) But what we think is: they occupied these lands, they left, it means now this belongs to us. And each one of us started working there. Then came this company saying they need the area, that they are just following the steps of those who were here before. (...) Ouro Verde has already expanded beyond the limits of the former plantation, further towards the river and the village.*
>
> (local NGO member, Ocúa)

Along plantation landmarks, there is another resource, which we may consider both material and immaterial: trees. In Mozambique, trees assume a key role in affirming and sustaining ownership claims. They represent a stronger and older attachment to a territory. It is important to clarify that, where all land belongs to the state and most people do not hold any formal land use title, planted trees, particularly fruit trees, are one of the few resources that local peasants can mobilise in claiming recognition of ownership. These hybrid resources, both material and spiritual, represent one of the few links to the formal recognition of land rights. Especially as they are, according to both legal norms and customary practices, the only thing subject to individual property, that in practice is managed by rural populations as an expression of land property. “We buy those plants, and then we can start working on that land right away”, explains a local peasant in Ocúa.

Nevertheless, their roots extend farther into the subjective layers of recognition, social networks through which people ensure their access to productive areas. Trees are a crucial expression of land ownership in Mozambique, as they are in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. They are the expression of a long-term investment in land, particularly fruit trees, planted to be enjoyed by current and future generations of a household. In my interactions with villagers, they recurrently point at surrounding trees, or describe them, to affirm belonging to a land. In some cases, they resort to them to estimate their own age.

These mango trees that I have planted here show that I have been living here for a very long time now. I don't know for how many years exactly. (Filomena Santos, Namele)

These bigger trees were planted by my father. When they started to give fruit we planted some more. (Isabel Agostinho, Namele)

Mozaco, in Malema, is frequently accused of having felled ancient mango and orange trees when clearing an area "that had never been explored by a company before". Removal of long lived trees, especially fruit trees, appears as a serious offence, both in symbolic and material terms. In 2014, the Mozaco manager intended to fell trees in order to expand the production area, but local populations gathered to stop him.

Along the same lines, interviewees in Namele recurrently invoke the image of their crops being destroyed by the company's tractors, when Mozaco reactivated the plantation in 2012. They emphasise the antiquity of the trees at stake.

Our ancestors had tall trees, right there. Mango trees, cashew and orange trees. They felled them, when the company was trying to expand their area. But this people had been there for I don't know how long! (Vítor Serafim, local NGO member, Malema)

There was mango trees, very tall trees! They destroyed them with their machines. This company did not came just to play around… (Maria Quaresma, Namele)

Some trees here are more than 50 years old. Our permanent DUAT is our plants, which our grandparents and great-grandparents planted. (villager in community meeting, Nholo, 18 February 2015)

Woodlands in Northern Mozambique are mostly Miombos, which provide a series of environmental services to rural populations, including the production of charcoal. They also have an important cultural and symbolic value (Campbell, 1996). Woodlands that have been untouched for decades typically signal the existence of ancient cemeteries and sacred places, where the Macua people, in this case, hold their traditional ceremonies. When Mozaco started operation in Malema, they intended to remove one of this ancient cemeteries, but the opposition from the

local community was so strong they eventually gave up. It is the only physical reminder of the community, standing in the middle of the plantation.

In other situations, it is not the longevity of trees, but rather their recent history, which forms the basis for ownership claims. A single mango tree in Namele, next to the cemetery, was at the centre of a dispute between Mozaco and a group of local residents. They argued they had planted it, but the manager insists that is not possible: "it is a centenary tree, it had been there for generations". In the absence of legal property rights over the land itself, fruit trees planted by land users are instrumental in obtaining compensation for lost land, in case of displacement. As I have discussed before, they are also the main currency for land transactions within the local community. I will expand further on these social arrangements for land access in the next chapter.

Houses, however precarious, constitute clear expressions of ownership, as well. As a local leader assumes, the local population in Namele was aware that their use of the concession area was temporary, and therefore local people, apart from some exceptions, had refrained from planting trees or building huts, anything that was more permanent, within its boundaries.

6.3. Discussion and conclusions

Over this chapter, I discussed the importance of historical legacy as a crucial legitimising resource, and one of the key elements of social 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition (Lund, 2016) that ensures the peaceful coexistence of a farmland investor with the local communities. I have shown the advantages, but also the risks involved, for land investors settling in a "reserved" territory with a strong legacy of plantation estates. Whereas Malema is a telling example for this, in Ocúa historical legacy and memories are invoked under rather different contours by the local populations involved in this research.

Outright rejection and contestation of large-scale agricultural investments is the most common approach taken by NGOs in Mozambique (national and foreign), such as the Peasants Union and Grain. However, amongst the local communities

directly influenced by the project the approach is far less homogenous. There is a range of claims and expectations around a new farmland investment, often conflicting, depending on how different social groups are affected, or included, in the project (Hall *et al.*, 2015; McCarthy, 2010). Rejection and dispute co-exist with other possible responses, and are sometimes adopted by those who feel neglected or mistreated in the concession process, particularly those resettled. Nonetheless, in both Malema and Ocúa, claims for recognition and incorporation assume greater importance, particularly over the short term.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the expectation of employment, better incomes and opportunity for diversifying local livelihoods are determinant factors for building consent around a new farmland investment. To have or not to have an *empresa* helps to determine when the government itself presents corporate investment as the better chance for local development and investment in social infrastructure (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012; Hall *et al.*, 2015; Mamonova, 2015).

Under a legal system that formally recognises community land rights – and is even considered progressive at the global level - the legitimation of a new land 'ownership' is based upon processes of reciprocal recognition between the new corporate actors (investors, company managers) and the local populations. These constitute, as Lund (2016) characterises them, informal and dynamic social 'contracts', in which the intersubjective dimension is crucial.

Plantations with a previous history in the same area, colonial or post-independence, are regarded as 'reserved' territory – 'owner's land' - and in a way as an expectant concession. Local populations refrain from planting trees and asserting strong ownership claims. However, when the local peasants used to be involved in agricultural production in former plantations, a sense of shared ownership and stewardship develops around the plantation estate. In the case of the former labourers, they place strong emphasis on their past roles as 'experts' and 'stewards' of the farm estate. These categories of social identity (Lund, 2016) exist in relation to others – 'boss', 'land owner' – and require mutual re-confirmation. The failure to obtain such confirmation relegates local people to a (not officially assumed) category of 'surplus' populations to the current configuration of land

property and models of rural development. Their land (the most productive and accessible) is needed, but their labour (or knowledge) is not (Li, 2014a).

Not all the land concessions are the same. Depending on the geographical, social and political context, different legitimising resources will assume a key role in securing this reciprocal recognition. In the Malema case, where the social and economic life has revolved around a large farm estate, almost without interruption, historical memory plays a determinant role in legitimising a new farmland investment. The local villagers perceive this land deal as a continuation of a past trend, which favours the acceptance of the investor. Conversely, this consent raises expectations that the project will allow for their incorporation, within the same logic of the old times. Historical legacy is a crucial resource for both investors and the local population. However, legitimacy is though not carved in stone, as these recognition contracts are subject to constant negotiation. Company managers have to manage this resource in order to maintain the 'social order' of the concession. Otherwise, dispute emerges and threatens the investments.

Historical legacy may have initially facilitated the legitimation of the project in Malema, but also condemned its continuation. In Malema, Mozaco's managers were unable to portray the expansion plan as a legitimate continuity of the same farmland investment. There was an implicit contract of reciprocal recognition, whereby the local population regarded a specific territory as "owner's land". What fed the outright contestation of the project, and ultimately impeded its expansion, was a widespread perception that the company was trying to play against the rules, by expanding their operation beyond the old landmarks of the plantation.

The sense of fairness towards the new project is contingent on not only keeping the models of production, but also containing its presence within the spatial boundaries that local people came to recognise as legitimate, over almost a century. It is not accepted that the company expands their activity beyond the perceived boundaries of the colonial farm. The old landmarks have become the focus of litigation, as well as a symbol of resistance. In this context, trees and landmarks constitute material legitimising (and de-legitimising) resources playing a fundamental symbolic role. In the absence of formal property rights, they are key sources of evidence for claiming ownership. This is particularly relevant as in

Mozambique, according to both legal and customary norms, they are subject to individual property, contrary to the land where they are planted.

Attention to past policies is crucial to understand how current investments unfold on the ground (Zoomers, 2013). As a postcolonial and post-socialist country, in Mozambique multiple layers of land property and ownership developed since the independence in 1975. Yet community rights are mostly kept in the sphere of ownership, through processes of delimitation, whilst private corporations operate at the property level. The tension between ownership and rule, between the framing of space as territory (of a community) and property (Lund, 2016) is particularly evident in such a political landscape.

Agricultural investments trigger new recognition dynamics on the ground, where interactions between company managers and local peasants are constantly changing. "Property and citizenship, on the one hand, and authority, on the other, are mutually constitutive" (Lund, 2016, p. 1200). In this sense, following Honneth's reasoning (1995), recognition amounts, in great part, to how the specific contribution of each individual "predicts a better realisation of social and culturally defined goals". Processes of mutual recognition are present, whereby local land users express an internalised sense of "backwardness" (Li, 2014), which will reinforce the existent asymmetry of power in land negotiations.

I find that the concept of coloniality (Fanon, 1952) helps explain how local populations come to regard an investor as a legitimate land owner, who also seems to convey notions of low self-worth, that the local people are backward, ignorant or helpless, especially among older generations (+70) with strong memories of the pre-independence period. Not acknowledging the ingrained coloniality in predominantly rural societies in Mozambique will eventually only reinforce the asymmetries of power in processes of land concession.

Malema emerges as a telling example of how land tenure security, legitimacy, and identity are intertwined (Unruh, 1998). Being recognised as member of a local community - or as part of a shared territory, even a plantation - is crucial to securing either land or labour opportunities. Yet, identity and its associated territorialities are under constant revision (Berry, 1993). Having somewhat replaced their peasant identity for their role as labourers, villagers in

Malema appear to have fallen into a limbo between both. Most of them migrated to Malema decades ago, and came to see this region as their own. Younger generations do not have any other homeland for reference. However, their entitlement to these lands had been dependent on their relation with the plantation estate. As this relation came to be disrupted in 2012, they lost access to the former land plots, and labour opportunities were reduced. The recognition of individual land rights would have required 10 years of continuous holding, according to the law. That is not the case, for the majority of them. Their land was 'owner's land', after all. Which means that, in the end, they lost both access to land and labour.

In Ocúa, the process of legitimising the new land owner is focused more towards the future than the past. These populations were entitled to financial compensation for their resettlement. The prospect of community benefits, jobs, and immediate monetary compensation assumed the most important role here, which resulted in different outcomes for the community - in terms of distributive justice. As I will explain in chapter 7, this in turn will affect the recognition of local land uses and risk mitigation practices, ultimately causing investors and authorities to overlook some of the longer-term impacts of the concessions.

7. COMPENSATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Elapo kir'othuma ni mphonyoka w'ekhala.

Literally meaning "we have already bought this land with the crab's claw", this Macua saying stresses the importance of getting secure access to a land (*elapo* can be used to mean land plot, or the whole planet). In this chapter, I will analyse how intersubjective recognition is important for access to land and resources within a rural community, and how this helps mitigate the impacts of a land concession amongst displaced peasants.

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I showed how local identities, in a case like Malema, have come to be interwoven with the existence of a plantation estate. The existence of a farm was the very reason many people chose to live in Malema in the first place, with new waves of migration occurring in the 1980s, due to civil war and the creation of a state farm. In sum, in the case of Malema there is an old plantation and recent populations, with particular implications to the (mis) recognition of landholding rights to the local inhabitants. By contrast, in Ocúa, a new corporate investor comes to grow sugarcane in lands that have been continuously inhabited, and cultivated, for decades, in some cases for 40 years, since independence. Instead of historical legacy, the main legitimising device for the land concession is monetary compensation.

Material compensation translates a recognition of landholding rights, however limited. Still, the terms of the negotiation are not always clear from the beginning. In Ocúa, the displacement of 277 people was generally understood as *fait accompli*. Moreover, the compensation amounts were decided by the government and the investor, not negotiated with the community. The whole process raises doubts about the degree of consent achieved, and in consequence raises concerns over its distributive effects over the longer term. The implications of these (mis) recognition dynamics are threefold.

1) Firstly, in a process where the local community has little influence, it is the misrecognition of land uses - and users - what ultimately allows their replacement for an agribusiness investor.

2) Secondly, the compensation procedures, especially when protracted, may create fuzzy boundaries of ownership, generate new land conflicts, and erode the legitimacy of the new corporate "owner".

3) Finally, compensation processes propel multiple effects on local practices, existent inequalities and the vulnerability of the local populations. These effects are difficult to measure over the short-term, but raise issues of distributive fairness over the medium and long term. These include (direct and indirect) effects on local strategies of environmental management – such as plot location, shifting cultivation systems – that may reinforce existent inequalities, as well as increase the vulnerability of local populations to environmental risks.

This chapter comprises three sections, each addressing one of the above-mentioned issues. The research sub-questions guiding the analysis that follows are the following:

How do notions of fairness evolve over the first years of a farmland investment, amongst the resettled populations?

How do recognition dynamics influence the distributive outcomes of compensation schemes, in terms of equity and vulnerability of the local populations?

In order to respond to these questions, I seek to understand the multiple outcomes of resettlement and compensation processes in both case studies. I will identify how eligible individuals and households managed their compensations, in order to maximise their benefits, either by acquiring access to alternative plots, or by investing in other improvements (such as housing, etc.). Or, in the cases where they still wait for compensation, how they maintain access to land and resources (such as the river and planted fruit trees) by remaining in the "interstices" of the plantation (Chouquer, 2013). Taking into account that both areas are under increasing competition for productive land, I will explore how local peasants resort

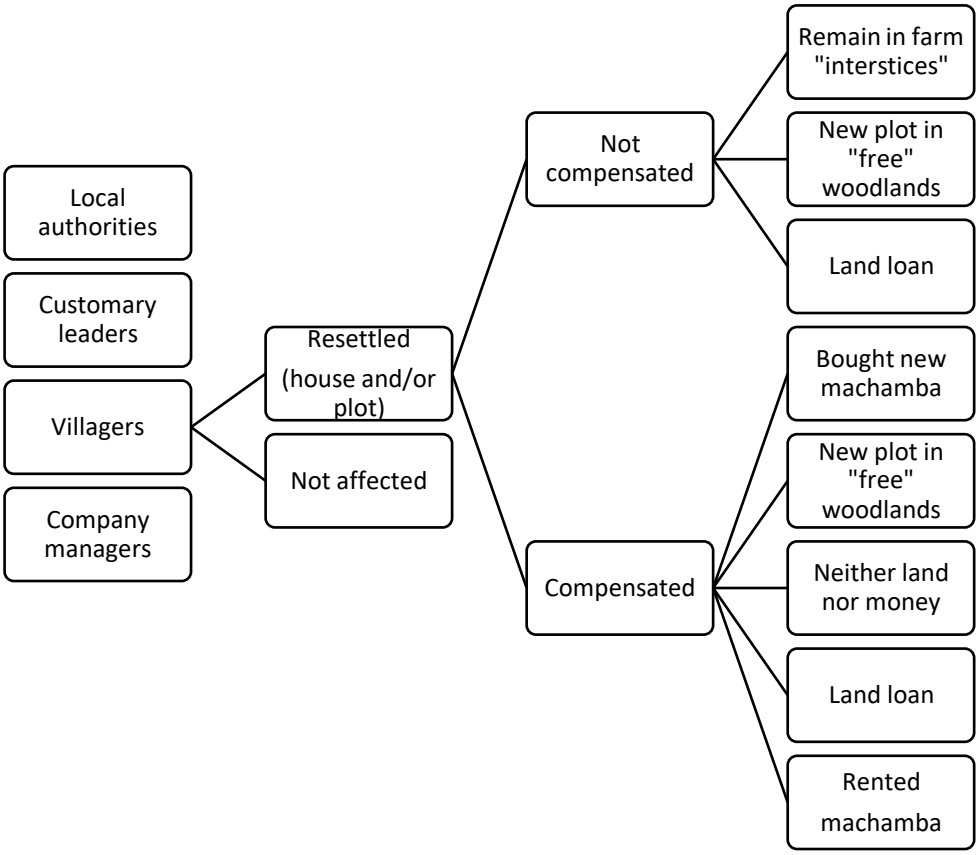
to social relations and community networks to find new land. And how these social dynamics shape the social and physical landscape, pushing the most vulnerable groups to the periphery of the village, or else to hold onto precarious arrangements in the interstices of the plantations.

As already noted, intersubjective dynamics are crucial for understanding the effects of a land concession on the ground, beyond the recognition of formal landholding rights. In the case of resettlement processes, such as those analysed in this chapter, solidarity networks, to employ Honneth's (1995) term (see diagram in section 2.4.), may mitigate the distributive effects of a land concession, granting alternative means of access to land and natural resources. Many people will resort to family networks, in the search for additional farm plots, returning or 'commuting' to their lands of origin. Other social arrangements are also available for those who gave up their lands. Amongst the Macua (see chapter 4), one can 'purchase' landholding rights, rent them, or even obtain a land loan from other members within the community.

Depending on whether they were resettled or they gave up their farm plots, on whether they received monetary compensation or not, villagers will adopt different strategies, generally looking to maximise the benefits of the process for their households. Those waiting for the compensation may keep using their former lands in the concession area, but for them it will be more difficult to plan for the longer term. Those who have already received their compensation can purchase access to a new land plot. However, the costs for an accessible land, near the village and social infrastructures, has become higher with increasing land demand and population growth. For some people, the solution may require clearing a new *machamba* in the peripheral woodlands, outside the village.

Even in the cases where displaced people received a material compensation, the short-term benefit may obscure longer-term strategies. Many people decided to invest the compensation in improving their houses, or buying some basic goods. The implication of this option, over the longer term, is that they were not able to resort to this money once they started looking for a new land. The following diagram sums up the main actors involved in this analysis, as well as the diverse strategies that local peasants adopt in consequence of a concession.

Figure 13 - Local peasants and their resettlement trajectories



7.2. "The problem is culture": invisible and disputed land uses

One cannot just measure land in rough percentages of cultivated and free areas. The discourse that portrays the 'Green Revolution' as a win-win situation for both corporate investors and rural populations – and, in a way, also its opposition on the part of transnational civic movements – mostly relies upon a broad spectrum vision of the territory as an amalgam of hectares (Edelman, 2013). However, *not all the land is the same*, as the rural villagers, even the government authorities at the most local level, will recurrently remember in their testimonies for this research. The proximity to urban centres, social services and infrastructures, such as roads, as well

as natural resources, such as rivers and woodlands, drive both populations and land investors to the same, already densely populated, areas.

The critical issue here is not to acknowledge that corporate land deals in Mozambique have involved, since 2008, three million hectares of land, or roughly 10% of the arable land in the country[27]. It is to consider the cumulative effects of multiple investments in the same disputed territories. Despite the widely spread assumption that there is plenty of unused land in Mozambique, local government officers acknowledge that, in practice, corporate investors and local peasants are competing for the same fertile and accessible areas. Both Malema and Ocúa are representative cases of these trends.

Previous studies have demonstrated how agricultural modernisation has driven local peasants to abandon or significantly to alter their agricultural practices. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Dawson *et al.* (2016) analysed how imposed Green Revolution policies restricted local agricultural practices and reduced tenure security, exaerbating rural poverty. In the Brazilian savanna, which has been heralded as model for rural development in Northern Mozambique[28], agricultural modernisation led smallholder farmers to intensify production and abandon shifting cultivation based on local knowledge (Gutberlet, 1999).

The Strategical Plan for the Development of the Agrarian Sector (PEDSA, 2011-2020) is focused on supporting smallholder farmers, but considers the lack of technical knowledge amongst rural populations as one of the main factors contributing to the ecological problems of rural areas, such as deforestation and soil degradation. Slash and burn practices are especially targeted, as this often result in uncontrolled fires.

However, whilst not mentioned directly as a problem in official plans, shifting cultivation schemes (fallow) - a widespread land management practice across Sub-Saharan Africa - may be the practice most at stake in face of the land

[27] Data directly provided by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2015.

[28] The highly controversial programme Prosavana (Brazil, Japan, Mozambique) sparked strong opposition from civic movements and NGOs that fear it will propel the same kind of negative social impacts (displacements, landlessness) it had in Brazil. See chapter 5 (Geographical context – Mozambique) for more detailed information on this programme.

‘rush’ in Mozambique. Most interviewees explain that they work on a land for two to three years before moving on to a new *machamba* (farm plot) elsewhere. In the words of a woman from Ocúa (Eduardina Pinto, June 2015), “we move on to a new land to make the first one young again”.

If directly inquired about how land concessions interfered with traditional practices, most peasants interviewed, in both study sites, give inconclusive answers. They do not appear to be aware of a direct clash between ‘modern’ and their traditional land uses. However, when questioned whether they employ shifting cultivation practices, many interviewees, especially in Ocúa, declared they had abandoned it, due to “lack of space”. The presence of a farmland investment adds to the pressure already felt, in areas affected by an increasing demand for productive land. They also demonstrate a concern that their land, now that they are using it continually, will eventually ‘wear off’, affecting their food security.

“Some people are able to shift to other land plot and leave the first one to rest. But some others do not have that, and then they just work in the same plot year after year.” (Ana Maria, young peasant, Ocúa)

“The land gets tired, but we keep working on it, because we have no chance of going elsewhere. The crops are even smaller now.” (Catarina Miguel, elderly peasant, Ocúa)

“There’s many people and less available areas. The only option left is to use the same land and employ some fertilisation technique [weeds]”. (Faustino Mariano, former farm employee, Malema)

The most fortunate generally have access to two or three farm plots, and are able to rotate between them according to need or climatic circumstances. Others will resort to loans (ranging from one season to several years), or will buy access rights or clear a new area. Multiple forms of access coexist, but these generally require some bargaining power, in terms of capital or social relations. The degree of access a given peasant can secure will vary according to their social and economic status, age, family situation and gender, as previous studies on land access in Mozambique have demonstrated (Bruck & Schindler, 2009).

One of the land consultants I interviewed in Maputo underlines that abandonment of practices such as fallow is a hidden assumption in official

discourse on rural development. Government officers and land investors tend to regard 'resting' areas as free or idle lands, a misrecognition of traditional uses that ultimately has implications for processes of land allocation. This is an apparent contradiction with the formal recognition of this specific land use, as it is included in the notion of 'community lands' under the 1997 Land Law.

> *"It is convenient to forget that these resting tracts of land are integral to the community land, despite the fact that they are specified as such in the 1997 Land Act…"*
>
> *(land consultant, Maputo, interview December 2014)*

In principle, both authorities and corporate investors praise local methods. In practice, when confronted with the possibility of industrialised, large-scale investments, so-called traditional land uses do not confer much bargaining power to local populations. "Even if the community has a DUAT, if there is a really big project, people will eventually be removed", contends another land expert interviewed in Maputo.

My interview with an officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, at the department responsible for evaluating agribusiness projects, illustrates this tendency. "An investor arrives here, travels across our country, and sees all this idle land. He will think: what a waste! Even for us it is difficult to accept that we have all these woodlands, and yet we have hungry people in this country. I think it is just a matter of time until that practice [fallow] is abandoned. We have to intensify cultivation". Even a local officer well-known for his good relations with the local community in Malema, refers to 'traditional' practices in rather depreciative terms: "they don't want to evolve. In those lands they have, it is only bush. They say "this is mine", but they don't do anything, they occupy these areas just to keep hold of them".

The following observations are also particularly clear in this context. The first one, interestingly, attributes the 'problem' to Macua beliefs around the spirits of ancestors:

"The problem is culture, the traditional attitude of doing everything like their grandparents and the spirits want. Changing practices is perceived as dangerous." (agribusiness consultant, Nampula)

"Keeping their practices is inciting laziness." (local officer, Malema)

"The climate itself has changed, why should agriculture stay the same? They are not going anywhere with their small hoe."

(company manager, Malema)

A district officer from the Provincial Agriculture Directorate in Cabo Delgado addresses the issue of incompatible land uses straightforwardly. He argues that climate change and the need to improve food security require the abandonment of what he calls "nomad agriculture". He considers that conservation agriculture[29] - promoted by the government extension services as well as by NGOs across Mozambique - is the alternative model that, with time and appropriate adoption by traditional peasants, will allow for a gradual abandonment of fallow practices.

7.3. Marginal lands and interstices

"Companies can make their machambas *outside. What is not acceptable is that farm estates get to stay near the district town, while local residents are squeezed out."*

(villager of Nholo, Malema, community discussion, February 2015)

The invisibility of specific land uses appears to be a key aspect of current rural development programs for Mozambique. The underlying logic is that available land is to be productively used. Independently of the formal recognition of community land rights, in practice it is crucial to ensure that one uses land in a way that is deemed productive enough, that is to say *legitimate*. Local peasants are more

[29] Conservation agriculture (CA) has been promoted in Mozambique since 1996 in order to increase smallholder productivity, reduce erosion, increase soil fertility and improve the drought tolerance of rainfed agriculture (IIAM 2013).

likely to give away their land in favour of an agribusiness project. However, they also have their notions of what is a legitimate and fair land use. With time, they will observe the performance of agribusiness companies and their concerns will emerge more clearly.

The Ocúa and Malema cases are interesting in this regard. In both cases, the conditions of the global market, as well as the financial crisis, drove changes to business plans that affected the entire nature of the projects, which occured very early into the concession. In Ocúa, the first concession granted to EcoEnergia in 2008 started as a bioethanol project, but later new shareholders joined the project and decided to invest instead in a sugar production. In Malema, what started as a tobacco plantation later converted into soya production. These management shifts delayed the implementation of the projects and have implications for the local populations. In practice, they change the terms of the agreement on the ground, causing delays in the effective use of the land and the payment of compensations.

Six years into their project, Ouro Verde (Ocúa) had planted sugarcane on only 30 hectares, out of 1,000 hectares under concession, and only half of the compensations due had been paid as of June 2015. When asked about this delayed implementation, government officers find it justifiable, as companies need to experiment with different crops and to evaluate economic results before expanding to new areas (District Agriculture Officer, Chiúre, April 2015). Local populations, though, do not seem to understand this notion of a probation period (two years for foreign investors), which in any case has long passed in both research sites.

Many interviewees in Ocúa have criticised the scheme put in place to pay the resettlement compensations. Once they had identified all eligible land users, EcoEnergia proceeded to pay compensation for plots scattered throughout the concession area. The result is that ‘paid’ *machambas* were interwoven with ‘unpaid’ plots, creating a patchwork of contrasting land uses and fuzzy ownership boundaries. In the midst of the sugarcane plantation there were idle ‘paid’ *machambas* lying on a ‘limbo’, intermixed with ‘unpaid’ plots where the former land users remained. There were also reports of partial payments (only a parcel of the same plot). Sitting on a limbo between corporate and community ownership, fruit plants in these unpaid parcels ended up being freely used by the local

population, to the consternation of their owners, now resettled miles away, and thus unable to control these random harvests.

Figure 14 - The 'alternated' scheme for compensations

(Drawing of an interviewed peasant, in Ocúa)

Some resettled people reported that they were no longer using the land even though they had not received any compensation to that date. This happened because their *machambas* lay in between those that had already been paid and were under exploration.

> *"We can't! We are afraid! The land is already occupied and there is no compensation."* (Ezequiel, resettled plot, Ocúa)

In Ocúa, Ouro Verde had allowed the resettled peasants to keep using their old plots, while waiting for compensations. Even so, whereas some villagers welcomed the arrangement, others noted its precarious nature. Never knowing when they would finally have to give up the *machambas*, they could not plan the farming seasons as before. However, they have been holding onto their land plots for as long as possible. Both the village head and the plantation manager recognise that in some cases there is even opportunism, people who use the land, having already received compensation, or newcomers who just take advantage of the plots, even though they are under concession.

"It is true that some people were compensated and others not yet, but they asked permission to continue working in their plots, while the plantation does not reach that area. Those who are a little mischievous will still work there, even when they already have another land somewhere else." (village head, Ocúa)

"People start showing up, they see the woods growing… the company does not have capacity to enforce" (plantation manager)

In 2015, six years after the resettlement, some interviewees were already wondering whether the company would really ever use these 'limbo' plots. They questioned the fairness of taking over their *machambas* just to leave them idle. This appears to be the very same ineffective and unproductive land use for which rural populations are often criticised. The following quotes express those feelings well.

"If he is not coming anymore, he should better let us know. We had made peace with the fact that this land did not belong to us anymore. But now they won't pay. If they are not to use that area, they should just let us know, because we did not enjoy selling those lands."
(Rodolfo David, young villager, Ocúa)

"The plantation covers all that area, as far as the river. (…) They can't seem to reach a consensus to occupy the entire area. That is why we don't know whether it finishes there, or they will use the rest of the land. Or if they will ever evict the rest of the farmers.
(Francisco Pimentel, neighbourhood official, Ocúa)

Although under different circumstances, in Malema multiple layers of ownership and access coexist around the plantation estate. The recurrent time lapses between successive 'owners' leave room for new claims. In each of these intervals, local populations wonder whether any company is coming to invest in the area again, and get accustomed to working the plantation lands, strategically located. Even when owners return to reclaim the land, they hold onto any remaining spaces within the plantation, or marginal areas, for as long as possible.

In some cases, this is justified by memories of past relations with the former 'bosses'. The family of a former warden in Namele (Malema) still had their house inside the JFS plantation in 2015, when I was in fieldwork there. They were the sole

family persisting in the middle of the plantation. The house, where the widow, her children and grandchildren lived, stood on top of a hill, surrounded by soya, regardless of the warnings of the farm managers that had been spraying chemical pesticides. When I visited this family with one of my assistants in March 2015, it was not easy to get to the house. We had to cross soya and maize fields, as well as a creek, to reach the place. There were still some plots with maize, but most of the *machambas* were already covered with soya plants. Later we are told that the plots left is where the tractors cannot reach, for this soil is too rocky.

> *The two-hectare* machamba *was taken over, the only thing left is the house, because this is a rocky soil and they can't work here. Otherwise they would take everything. They don't need this land, or they would have already sent us away.* (Isabel Agostinho, Malema)

In both research sites, peasants seek to maintain use of marginal areas, especially the riverbanks. However, these are often the most vulnerable to floods, as it became evident during the 2015 rain season. The next section, reveals that land concessions have the potential to make populations more vulnerable to climatic risks, by affecting their strategies for location of farm plots.

7.4. Long term implications: equity and vulnerability

According to the Mozambican legislation on land deals, any resettlement should take into account the future needs of the community involved, such as population growth. However, there are trends difficult to predict over the longer term and at a local level, such as the evolution of climatic risks. Land concessions may have effects, however indirect, in local resilience strategies (Gausset & Whyte, 2012). Here I highlight some possible links between land concessions and climate vulnerability that I consider worth exploring in future studies on land deals. The invisibility of these impacts derives from, and feeds into, long-standing misrecognition tendencies.

7.4.1. "Good rains": exposure to climate risks

We ask which soils are best, and farmers answer: it depends, if it rains a lot it is one, if not it is another, and they have many different terms in their own language to classify these areas.

(Land consultant, Dec 2014, Maputo)

There are many words to describe "rain" in Macua. "Epula", and its variants – *Ekasi kasi, mirupi* – were amongst the first words I learned in the language. "Epula" was certainly a key character in every conversation. My interviewees would elaborate on the different kinds of rains, weather signs and the more adequate rains for specific periods during the growing season.

> Mirupi *has to come for one day more. Before the rains would not even flood the river, but this year it was constantly filling up, with that water that came in March. We have signs from our ancestors, when the younger weeds ["capim infante"] are blooming. Then we know the rain is coming. But it had never happened like this year.*
> *(Gustavo Andrade, Namele)*

> ***- Which is the good rain, Ekasi kasi? That gentle rain? –*** *It is a good rain, when it goes until March or April, it is good to make the beans grow. Beans, sweet sorghum… (Mário Jardim, Ocúa)*

> *A good harvest year is when the rain come and goes. If it is constantly raining it will be a bad year. There will be hunger. (Faustino Mariano, former labourer at State Tobacco company, Namele)*

> *According to our tradition, the first seeds are planted later November, or until 20-25th December. After that you just have to deal with the weeding. But if the 1st of January comes and we don't have any rain, the harvest is at risk. (customary leader, Ocúa)*

Rain may be the best of friends or the worst of enemies for a farmer. Peasants across both my study sites are virtually unanimous about how nature has been becoming more unpredictable over the last few years. However, there is not a general sense of a gradual climatic change. The majority of the interviewees frame

climate and weather issues in terms of variability, rather than gradual changes over a longer period. They discuss how temperatures and rains vary from one year to the other. There are however noticeable changes in temperature and rain patterns. Regarding temperature, some of the interviewees point out that it is warmer until later in the year now. The colder season would usually start around April, but now it is warm until May or June.

It is changing. When I was a boy the cold would start in April. Nowadays in April and May is still hot. And the rain is also changing, it is starting earlier and stopping earlier as well.
(Mário Jardim, Mahurunga, Ocúa)

I think it is warmer, there is a lot of difference. Usually we would be wearing jackets during this time of the year, May, June… But now it is still very warm. (Village head, Ocúa)

The most widely acknowledged trend is for rains to come later each year, and stop earlier, than before. Rain season tends to be shorter, and rains are more concentrated in time and often heavier, with direct consequences in devastating crop losses. This is the perception of local peasants across both study locations in Nampula and Cabo Delgado.

I carried out fieldwork, over the rain season 2014/2015, during one of the worst floods ever recalled in Mozambique. The entire country North of the Zambezi River was out of electricity for more than one month (January-February 2015). These floods were said to be worse than those of 1971[30]. People in Ocúa recall one of the worst floods affecting Lúrio River during this period, that destroyed farm plots. In general, maize harvests, the main staple crop in the country, were half of the previous year. The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that at least 65,000 hectares of farm land were affected, especially crops such as rice, maize, beans, vegetables and cassava. Some families lost the harvest entirely.

[30] This is the historic reference for Ocúa, in the North. Historic devastating floods have occurred recurrently in Mozambique, as in 2000, but those have affected mostly the Central and Southern part of the country, especially the Zambezi valley.

There was always floods in the river [Lúrio], but there was little damage. This year there was lot of damage, all the fields were devastated and covered with sand.
(Paulo Valente, young resettled farmer, Ocúa)

I had a plot, with maize. Almost all the machambas by the river were destroyed. (Eduardina Pinto, Mahurunga, Ocúa)

Before we only had this kind of floods once a year, but this year is like… three times a month!
(Focus group Namele, March 2015)

It was Nature, a natural phenomenon. Our elders, the first to be born here, say this is happening for the second time.
(Village head, Ocúa)

This year, with this rain, we won't have any maize. Even the sweet sorghum, I'm not sure. The river [Mutivaze] invaded the machamba, and stayed for four days. The rains were really heavy.
(Felismino Duarte, Malema)

Climatic events have been affecting food production for long, and it is expected that productive lands will become scarcer (aridity, groundwater depletion, rainfall and temperate patterns) (Niang *et al.*, 2014). On one hand, climate change was one of the factors driving the increase in agricultural investments – biofuels production for instance – however they may decrease the resilience of local people to climatic events, such as floods and droughts (Gausset & Whyte, 2012).

The peasants interviewed express a sense of helplessness towards the future climate risks. Climate is regarded as unpredictable and any science or solution to prevent food insecurity are attributed to the sphere of the government, scientific experts, nature or God. Even if there are local strategies that mitigate the impact of climate events, local knowledge does not seem to provide enough answers, at least how it is perceived by the local populations. If for those who have received technical training:

What we technically know about the periodical weather is no longer valid, there is no worth in it anymore. (Fernando Lisboa, ex-farm labourer, agricultural technician and neighbourhood official, Malema)

We know nothing, we just lay here with our arms crossed. Those who know about the weather are those who have studied. For us it is all the same, one year the weather is one way, the following year is another way. (Celeste Vidal, Mahurunga, Ocúa)

There are plenty of studies on climate vulnerability and climate change in Mozambique (Artur & Hilhorst, 2014; Eriksen & Silva, 2009; Figueiredo & Perkins, 2013), and agriculture is widely regarded as being one of the sectors expected to suffer the worst impacts of climate events in Sub-Saharan Africa (Niang *et al.*, 2014). However, the links between land concessions and climate vulnerability are yet to be thoroughly assessed. Climate change is one of the main drivers for land deals across the world. Yet research on their impacts, in terms of local climate resilience, is still scarce, as is research on the physical impacts of large-scale agricultural investments on environmental change (Lazarus, 2014). Examples closer to these concerns are the field research of Eriksen and Silva (2009) on two villages in Southern Mozambique, where they concluded that smallholder farmers were the most vulnerable to climate variability. They also demonstrated that "lack of access to ecologically diverse natural resources", pressed by increasing competition with commercial interests, constrained their response capacity." (p. 47).

7.4.2. Plots location and resilience strategies

The criteria for the selection of a specific farm plot in places such as Ocúa and Malema will vary according to household composition, age groups, or gender. There might be land available at greater distances, for example, and the social and economic effects of these options will affect diverse social groups, households and individuals in different ways. Distance is a strong constraining factor for resettled peasants in both research sites. The lands they gave up were strategically located near the food markets, schools and water sources, but alternative plots are often several miles apart from the village.

The ability to resort to alternative social arrangements is determinant in securing income, food security along with access to land and resources. In the case of Mozambique, family networks, community ownership and monetary resources are diverse means through which people can secure access to land and resources,

independently of State ownership. Families and individuals who come from neighbour villages have an advantage in case of resettlements, or losing their plots for a company. Therefore, social relations and identities will mitigate the impacts of these changes, and differentiate social groups within a given community.

Eugénia and Alberto had to give up their plot in the Namele plantation, as the others. None of them had yet managed to find a job with the company, when I met them in March 2015. However, as Eugénia comes from the neighbour village Nataleia (approximately 8 km from Namele), she and her husband already had access to a farm plot there, according to matrilineal inheritance practices. The couple had already settled in Namele, but they are young, in their 20s. For the time being, moving around should not be a major problem, and Nataleia is actually known for having some of the best lands in the district. Not everyone was that fortunate, Alberto concedes:

> *Those who did not have a plot outside the village are suffering now.*
> *In our case, as we always had lands outside, we just went there.*

On the ground, land scarcity shows different nuances, which may not be fully captured when evaluating the impacts of a land concession. Increasing pressure over land and natural resources leads to a myriad of displacements and adjustments. Some of these processes are quite subtle, and it would be difficult to link them straightforwardly to a specific land deal. Nevertheless, a land concession may aggravate the vulnerability of local populations in multiple ways, and in varying degrees for different social groups and individuals. Disrupting their livelihoods, access to local markets, and even strategies for climate risk mitigation.

In locales such as Ocúa, the intermediate spaces between the village and the Lúrio River are of strategic importance. Not surprisingly, this is where larger plantations used to be located in the colonial period, and is nowadays the target territory for corporate land investors. Many of the peasants interviewed in this village used to have a farm plot on the riverbank and another somewhere between the river and Mahurunga village. Whilst being near the river allows to water the crops, these areas are prone to constant flooding.

Figure 15 - The Lúrio River in Ocúa

Over the short-term, in face of a new farmland investment, the importance of keeping multiple *machambas* at work may be underplayed. There is a predictable asymmetry in every negotiation involving a monetary compensation.

> *If you give two million [2,000 meticais, approximately 50 pounds] to someone who has never seen that kind of money, he will accept it and give away his land!* [laughs] (Guilherme Santiago, Ocúa)

Eduardina is one of such cases. She and her husband had to leave their plot when the sugarcane plantation started in 2009. Although they received a monetary compensation in 2011, they have swiftly spent the amount on a new mattress and other small household needs. When I visited them in June 2015, they were using a small borrowed *machamba*, of less than one hectare. The one they had left at EcoEnergia was 3 hectares wide, from which they received a compensation of 7,000 meticais (approximately 140 pounds, at the exchange rate of June 2015). Some 5,000 or 6,000 meticais, she explains, would in theory be enough to acquire access to a new *machamba*. However, she points out that these amounts are only enough for the "least productive fields", which are already "tired".

There are in fact available lands, but they tend be scarcer near the village, the road and social services. Peasants are confronted with two choices: whether to acquire land rights for an already occupied plot, or as an alternative to look for a new plot in the woodlands, farther away from the village. Land transactions are

ultimately the safer route to secure a land holding. Although the land officially is property of the state, both systems coexist. The government officials responsible for land and agriculture at the local level actually have a role in confirming such transactions within the community. Local residents go to the 'structure' – as they call the government authorities – with two witnesses and request an official certificate. Whilst this is not exactly a DUAT, it is held as proof of the transaction, in order to prevent disputes later on. In practice, having financial resources remains crucial for those who may not benefit from local 'solidarity' networks.

"Every plot I would find, I eventually had to give it up.
So I decided to gather some money to buy one." (Bernardo João, Ocúa)

Either you have some money, or you borrow a plot. But I want my
own, so that tomorrow I won't end up having some trouble. So I know
I can plant mango and cashew trees. (Mateus Fonseca, Ocúa)

Whereas in Ocúa there are "free" peripheral woodlands, in Malema the solution is most often to borrow a plot in a neighbour village (such as Nataleia) on a temporary basis (even for one year only, in some cases). These marginal lands are less accessible and hide additional costs over time: transportation (including of harvested crops), seasonal movements, building new shelters, or even migration.

Many of the resettled people did not stay in the village. When they got
the money, they searched for a new land in Namogelia, or Bilibiza.
More than 50 kilometres away from here. So they live there during the
first farming season, and they return to the village for the rest of year.
(Guilherme Santiago, Ocúa)

Eventually the heavier burden falls on women with children, older peasants and those who for some reason are less able to afford such a long distance. The following quotes illustrate how different social groups are affected.

For us, it was an advantage to have machambas here [in the village,
near the plantation estate]. They were close by, whereas now they are
farther away, and we have to carry our children. Before, when we
grew our crops here, it was easier to assist, in case something came
up in the house.
(Sofia Pereira, Namele, Malema)

I have got access to a plot 9 kilometres from here [Nataleia], but it is not possible for me to go there and return on the same day. I have to stay there working for a week or two. (Fernando, widower, Malema)

I cannot go away from the village to work on a new land. I have no strengths and it is too far. (Filomena Santos, Namele)

The most common adaptation strategy is to build a hut near the new *machamba*, a basic shelter where to spend a few days, while working on the land, and return to the village every week or every two weeks. In Malema, for instance, it is common to have a house in the district town, where people stay during the harvest season (May-September), and spend the growing season (October-April) in the villages of origin. This generates new seasonal movements and migration fluxes. As the chief of the Administrative Post in Ocúa recognises, this has rapid and profound implications for social services (such as health centres and elementary schools).

Smallholder farmers are well aware of the trade-offs and risks implied in growing crops in each specific area across the local landscape. To keep several plots at once has been a common strategy in Ocúa. The number and location of farm plots are not arbitrary, it follows a logic that points to specific resilience strategies. It has apparent advantages for mitigating the impacts of droughts, heavy rains and floods. While having a *machamba* on the river margin is a clear advantage. This allows access to water throughout the year, but there is a risk of losing crops to floods. The strategy that allows for a balance between water access and safety is to have a second plot, usually the main one, in the fields surrounding the village. As a young resettled peasant from Ocúa puts it, "to have a *machamba* by the river is a good thing, but our trust relies inland" (Paulo Valente).

The resettlements following EcoEnergia land concession significantly narrowed the geographical options available for local peasants. Some people actually had all their plots in the concession area, especially families that were living there permanently. One of the neighbourhood officials in Mahurunga recognises that "some people ended up constrained in their choices". Even if they received compensation, land is increasingly scarce in the region, making it difficult to re-establish livelihoods and land tenure security on equivalent terms. Besides,

when the plantation was created local populations were not as aware of flood risks as they are now. While the plantation boundaries leave a 1km margin to the river – assuring water access, but also safety – the peasants who were working near the Lúrio ended up squeezed into a narrower area. It might not seem so serious when the project first started, but recent climatic events make local populations more aware of the risks. This quote, from a young resettled farmer, whose family had lived in the concession area for generations, is well expressive of this change in perceptions.

> *I used to have two hectares, but this year one of them was affected by the floods on the Lúrio banks. (...) When there is little rain we take advantage of the river banks. But not with such heavy rains, as we had this year. Only with those floods have we realised that working on the river bank can get "ugly".*
>
> (Paulo Valente, resettled peasant, Mahurunga)

Most interviewees, when asked where the "best lands" lie, point to this area, between the river and the village. It is deemed to be one of the most productive surrounding Ocúa, besides being easily accessible by road and at a strategic crossroads between Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces. As it typically happens across the country, this corresponds (partially in this case) to the location of former colonial plantations (Abrãao Pereira, Portuguese owner). Contrary to what happens in Malema, where there is a long tradition of foreign-owned plantations, in this particular area of Ocúa, by the Lúrio River, there is no history of corporate farm estates settling in this area after independence (1975).

Whilst in Ocúa testimonies the importance of this location strategy appears stronger, the same logic of risk mitigation is followed by rural populations in Malema, as the region traditional leader – responsible for applying customary tenure – elaborates.

> *"The problem is that you need to be near the water, Malema river in this case, in order to grow food gardens [eg. onions]. However, you will also need some place in the woodlands, because this is where you are going to get a bigger harvest, for instance maize and kute beans."*
>
> (Malema "régulo", customary chief)

"If one is clever enough he will settle near the river, because there he can get harvests all year round. (Gustavo Andrade, Malema)

Splitting small farm plots – that most often are less than one hectare - is not necessarily compatible with the vision the Government has for rural development. Whether it is a direct plantation, controlled by the investor, or an outgrow scheme, modern agricultural projects generally require a continuous area. Each form of agriculture devises the rural landscape and manages natural resources in its own way. This is, however, evidence that only emerges in interviews with government officers through direct conversation. Usually it is subtly imbricated in their discourse.

The only way we can assure a sustainable assistance scheme to these smallholder farmers is to have the fields organised in continuous blocks. (District officer, Chiúre)

The 1997 Land Law states that all resettlement areas should at least grant the same living and farming conditions, or better if possible. However, in practice, this may prove difficult to implement, especially as it is not so straightforward to measure. This holds especially true for densely populated areas, with stronger competition for productive lands and multiple corporate investments. A land consultant interviewed in Maputo acknowledges that frequently resettled peasants return to their former plots, regardless of their new "owner", "especially when new lands do not have the same farming conditions" (land consultant, December 2014, Maputo).

7.5. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter has mainly focused on the medium and long-term consequences of land concessions in Ocúa and Malema in terms of distributive justice. It illustrates how the misrecognition of traditional land uses is at the basis of the 'Green Revolution' land deals, reducing the bargaining power of local communities. It has also reflected on how a farmland investment can disrupt local practices and resilience strategies, even if those effects are indirect and difficult to access. Over

the years, the projects may also reinforce local inequalities and increase the vulnerability of local households to environmental risks, such as climate events.

The case of Ocúa demonstrates how the recognition of land use rights to local populations is not sufficient to prevent negative outcomes, in terms of distribution of benefits and exposure to risks. As local populations had been living in the area for decades, and thus according to the Land Law retained land use rights (continuous use for more than 10 years), historical legacy was not such an important legitimising resource as in Malema. In Ocúa, material compensation was the key resource at the disposal of the land investor to achieve consent for their project – EcoEnergia/Ouro Verde. However, also in this case, the intersubjective dynamics that unfolded over the first years of implementation have proved crucial for the justice outcomes of the project.

Formal legal dispositions are in practice obscured by practices and social relations at the local level. Even if an area is considered to be "community land" or a given plot has been used by a particular individual, when there is a high interest by land investors the Government representatives and the local leaders will make all efforts to "convince" the land users they should be giving the land away to more productive users. Central for recognition of land access rights, across these multiple layers – whichever law comes along – is the understanding of a particular land management (or natural resources) practice as sufficiently productive.

Being perceived as basically a "waste of land", the abandonment of fallow systems is, in the words of a government officer from the Economy Ministry in Maputo, "just a matter of time". Both the Government and land investors generally consider these practices are not compatible with present strategies for rural development and economic growth. As such, they are rendered invisible in the maps and satellite images where the government and investors represent their vision for the rural landscape. There does not seem to be a great distance between the current vision on traditional land use practices in Mozambique – or elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa - and the view of colonial officers that fallow systems are "just moving around" (Li, 2014b).

Both peasants and investors regard land as something to be used and improved. An effective use and visible outcomes are crucial for social "contracts"

of “reciprocal recognition” (Lund, 2016). The irony is that, by not being able to effectively use all land over the first years of the project, the agricultural companies end up leaving idle areas, some of them under temporary and unclear arrangements with the previous users. This seems objectionable to the peasant eye, especially when the benefits, in terms of jobs or investments in the community, are also delayed. In the meantime, resettled populations are gradually driven to more marginal areas, such as remote woodlands.

The terms of exclusion are certainly not set in stone. They are subject to constant negotiation and redefinition. People have to recognise the authority of a certain land investor as legitimate, as well as to government representatives, to exclude or incorporate them (Li, 2015; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Sikor & Lund, 2009). The lack of clarity in the process of appropriation, at least from the perspective of local populations, generates a sense of unfairness, and even more so amongst the former users of those same lands. This perceived “waste of land” will therefore erode the legitimacy of the land concession over the first years of its implementation.

In a context where customary tenure overlaps with official systems - and therefore there are multiple means of access to land and natural resources (Berry, 1993) – financial capital remains an important asset to ensure the hold of a productive farm plot. But it is not the only one. Social relations, through family ties, land loans or sharing arrangements, can help mitigate the distributive effects of resettlements. However, these processes will not necessarily avoid the consequence that the most vulnerable groups still carry the heavier burden, if they are forced to look for land farther away from the village. Bruck and Schindler (2009) concluded, from the analysis of household surveys in Nampula and Cabo Delgado in the post-war period (mid 1990s) that female-headed (frequently widowed or divorced) households had lower, and less flexible, access to land. Illness and position of authority within the village community were other key factors constraining ability to access and cultivate land.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews and observation in both research sites suggest that this kind of longer term impacts is often dismissed by the peasants themselves, and that individual agency plays a crucial role in the

distributive effects of a land concession. Two factors seem to be determinant here: on the one hand, the expectation of an immediate monetary compensation is a short-term decision that obscures the consideration of longer-term problems. In some cases, the rare opportunity is seized to invest in other basic needs, such as housing and transportation. However, in the longer-term, these households may be left with no compensation money and no productive land. On the other hand, an ingrained sense of backwardness, which resonates with Fanon's notion of coloniality, facilitates the acceptance of eviction and resettlement as *fait accompli*.

The relevance of the issues raised here will vary between different social groups. Specific effects of a land concession, for example the restriction of land plots available in Ocúa, will particularly affect the livelihoods of women and older peasants. At another level, the future implications of a farmland investment, namely the increased exposure to climate risks and loss of crops, especially concern the younger generations. However, the lack of acknowledgement of the disruption of local practices is transversal to diverse social groups, gender and generational aspects.

In both research sites, the companies involved in this research are not the only investors showing interest in acquiring land. One of the concerns revealed by NGOs and in recent studies (Nhamtumbo and Salomão 2010) is that populations end up successively displaced, in consequence of multiple projects. In Ocúa, for instance, new agricultural investments had just been approved for neighbouring villages, requiring the resettlement of hundreds of families over the next few years. The cumulative effects of these investments, in addition to those already on the ground, are yet to be known.

I have also raised here the issue of climate change and future risks. There has been little literature, until now, exploring the links between the current surge of land concessions and climate change (Gausset & Whyte, 2012). The possible impacts of land concessions over the long term are mostly unexplored and deserve greater consideration (De Schutter, 2011b). The insights from my fieldwork suggest that local impacts of land concessions, in terms of climate risks, may have been overlooked. The local populations may be more exposed to climate risks in the

future, due to stronger competition for not only the most productive lands, but also the safest lands for agriculture.

Generally local peasants frame climate risks in terms of variability and unpredictability, rather than as phenomena that gradually change over the years. Coupled with a general detachment from knowledge and technology, perceived as essentially external entities, this contributes to a widespread sense of helplessness towards the future. Those problems entirely belong to the sphere of "God", or "scientific experts", but are not acknowledged and owned by the most affected social groups. In this sense, there does not appear to be significant differences in terms of gender, generation, or current socio-economic situation.

Resettled peasants, even those who only had to give up their farm plots, are those most affected by increased climate risk. The range of possible locations for their *machambas* is constrained after the settlement of a large-scale plantation. This is especially evident in the case of Ocúa, as I have previously demonstrated. Resettled peasants end up being "pushed" to the periphery of the territory. In Ocúa's case, this includes peripheral woodlands that require additional social and economic costs to be explored. It also includes the Lúrio River flood plain, a narrow strip (less than 1km wide) that was left aside by the company (EcoEnergia) and still farmed by local populations. Working on these marginal lands comes at the constant (and increasing) risks of losing all crops to floods. Still, water access will predictably be a pressing challenge in the near future, as just after the 2015 floods Mozambique was hit by a severe drought. Other studies on agricultural investments pointed to their high demand in terms of water consumption (Johansson *et al.*, 2016), especially crops such as sugarcane. It is no accident that the Lúrio River has been attracting the attention of other farmland investors beyond EcoEnergia (such as DDI, due to start operation in a neighbouring village in 2015).

This chapter has further elucidated how a justice approach can convey a more transversal perspective on the local effects of agricultural investments, by eliciting the interactions between spatial and temporal scales, as anticipated by Walker (2009). Recognition reveals to be a fruitful lens to look at these local dynamics, as specific misrecognition mechanisms mutually interact to constrain distributive and procedural outcomes. The invisibility of local practices – be the

dismissal of fallow systems or lack of acknowledgement of a local “expertise” – shapes processes of communication and decision-making, and ultimately reflects how people are able to settle in a landscape.

Agrarian studies on land concessions have mostly focused on land tenure and access, or on the other hand on labour. There is a need for more local-based studies that interrogate the links between agricultural modernisation and environmental change. My insights from the field highlight the importance of taking into account the full range of outcomes of land concessions, across spatial and temporal scales, as well as the interactions between them.

The insights from this chapter are relevant for environmental justice scholarship, as well, as they elicit the importance of intersubjective relations and subjective experiences to form local notions of justice. One of the most salient aspects is how environmental change – such as sudden episodes, the river floods - can affect how people perceive the impacts of an intervention, in this case a land concession and resettlement. This may point to future directions in research across distributive and procedural justice, and justice-as-recognition as well.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Since beginning this doctoral journey, I came across thrilling epistemological, political and theoretical debates, which made me grow as a social researcher. My ongoing learning process shaped the research focus and the framework choices I made along the way. Some concepts, such as recognitional justice, came to assume a central role that I had not anticipated from the outset.

This last chapter summarises the findings of the research and discusses how they address the key research gaps identified. It outlines the main contributions to knowledge on land deals, and environmental justice scholarship, and concludes by proposing future lines of research, for the study of land deals and environmental justice scholarship, as well as for recognition theory.

8.1. Summary of research findings

This thesis is an empirical study of justice, grounded on the local effects of the 'Green Revolution' deals in Mozambique, through a qualitative in-depth analysis of two agricultural investments. It has investigated the ways in which different actors form and evolve their ideas of fairness around land concessions, particularly within the local community. This includes attention to intersubjective relations of mutual recognition between company managers, local government officers and villagers. Drawing upon the work developed by property and justice scholars, I have employed a new angle of analysis for studying these recognition dynamics, taking account of their material, spatial and temporal dimensions.

This section recalls the main research findings discussed in each of the empirical chapters, concerning: consent and participation procedures; the importance of historical legacy and social 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition; and finally the effects of displacements on social inequality and vulnerability.

In analysing the field data, I have adopted the point of view of recognition (intersubjective and formal) as the underlying dimension that connects the other two: distribution (of material benefits and environmental risks) and participation

(procedure). The following table summarises the main differences and similarities between the two case studies.

Table 5 - History of settlement and resources in the research sites

	Malema	**Ocúa**
Historical legacy	Pre-existence of a farm estate (since 1923)	No landowner since independence (1975)
History of settlement	Many recent residents, settled in the 1980s to escape civil war and work at the plantation; 17 resettled, the rest lost land access	Land users had been living in the area for generations (30+ years), 277 people identified as eligible for compensation and resettled
Labour opportunities	Outgrow scheme in neighbour communities, but does not reach all	Outgrow scheme planned for later stage, not in operation yet
Social identities	Peasants, but also, in most cases, farm labourers. Identities linked to functions assumed over the years (warden, foreseer, blacksmith); many received technical training	Essentially peasants, most with 1-2 hectares of land, low experience of commercial agriculture
Landmarks (spatial boundaries)	Material devices inforce legitimate spatial boundaries – landmarks of the former plantations	No former landmarks, last land owner in the colonial period
Trees (material and symbolic role)	Assume a key role in claiming antiquity and entitlement	Planted fruit trees recurrently mentioned as basis for land ownership and compensation

A key argument of this thesis is that, whilst acknowledging the political and economic structures that shape change in land policy and agricultural development, academics should investigate further the intersubjective relationships that evolve differently in each social and historical context. Local peasants are also social agents with the capacity to mobilise resources in their own favour, either to mitigate the impacts of large-scale investments, or to seek spaces of incorporation within them. There are institutionalised principles for obtaining an informed consent from

local communities, in international recommendations and the national legislation, as I have detailed in chapters 1 and 4. Nonetheless, in practice, there is no 'one size fits all' recipe and it is necessary to take due consideration of the particular dynamics of recognition in place in each rural community. Throughout this thesis, I have sought to explore these dynamics and relations, distinguishing their formal and intersubjective dimensions, following Honneth (1995, 2004) and Lund (2016).

Following Honneth (2004), I consider the legal recognition of customary rights as a moral progress for the Mozambican society. It entails, to some extent, a formal equality to Mozambican citizens, including subsistence smallholders. In a context where most of the population directly depends on them, land and natural resources are strongly attached to food and economic security, but also to social identity, notions of self-worth, and social esteem. Notwithstanding the importance of legal recognition of rights, or citizenship, it is ultimately not sufficient to guarantee a secure land holding and avoid increased vulnerability over the longer term. It is crucial that one's management strategies, knowledge, or labour skills, be mutually recognised as worthy, effective, and useful within a community – or a shared space of belonging (contract of reciprocal recognition).

All this may apparently be ensured in the letter of the law, and even supported by the official political discourse. However, in practice it will be downplayed at the intersubjective level of social relations and communication. When government officers or company managers downplay the social worth of traditional land uses, for instance, this will affect the ability of local peasants to secure access to land and resources, as I have discussed in chapter 7. An ingrained sense of backwardness, through comparison with investors who practice 'modern' agriculture will reflect on people's ability to engage in processes of public participation, and thus affect the outcomes of land consultations, as I have shown in chapter 5. In turn, chapter 6 has shown how the dismissal of the accumulated knowledge, experience and labour skills of rural villagers can ultimately impair their bargaining power. Conversely, local 'solidarity' networks of support – kinship and family, clans, local community – are contingent on shared cultural values, but they can help mitigate, at least temporarily, the risks posed by political shifts or environmental changes (Berry, 1993), in this case the 'Green Revolution' land deals.

One of the problems with the 'Green Revolution' for Africa is that it does not account sufficiently for the problems of agrarian labour – and does not acknowledge, or address, the social impacts of the shift from a labour-intensive (recent) past (colonial and state farms) to the low-labour reality of new models for rural development. Labour is a critical element for recognitional justice, in the context of land concessions (Li 2014, Honneth 2016). Current government plans for agriculture imply that the 'Green Revolution' will foster development in rural areas, generating more employment and new sources of income. In practice, the national government expects that much of this will happen indirectly, through a 'trickling down' effect. There is though widespread scepticism amongst social researchers, including in Mozambique, about the inclusiveness of this development model (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012; Mosca, 2012). As Tania Li (2011) points out in her review of the landmark World Bank report of 2011 – Rising interest in Farmland (Deininger *et al.*, 2011), livelihoods substitution will most likely not compensate for lost land ownership. "In much of the Global South, the anticipated transition from the farm to factory has not taken place, and it is nowhere on the horizon." (p. 281), Li argues. The risk is that the new models of agricultural production generate "surplus people".

Amongst local populations directly or indirectly affected by a land concession, fairness perceptions do not evolve in a homogeneous fashion. They allow for different degrees of legitimacy, depending on the material (such as landmarks and trees) and immaterial resources mobilised (historical legacy, for instance). As I have shown over the empirical chapters, the most relevant resources vary depending on the local social and political context. Historical legacy plays a key role in legitimising a new investment when there is a previous experience with corporate land ownership in the concession area (case of Malema). Conversely, monetary compensations play the decisive mediating role in legitimising the presence of a new land 'owner' in places such as Ocúa, where there is no such tradition.

Immediate monetary compensations may obscure, however, future opportunity costs, especially with the expectation of increased environmental risks. In chapter 7, I have shown how short-term benefits (however limited) conflict with long-term perspectives. The majority of the resettled peasants in Ocúa is very poor,

and many decided to invest their compensation in basic household needs, rather than in a new *machamba*. These decisions may ultimately make them more vulnerable in the future, as land concessions multiply in the surrounding areas and productive land becomes scarcer.

The materiality of different land use and resilience practices is also central for understanding the effects of a land concession (Li, 2014). The diverse elements of the landscape, such as the Lúrio River in Ocúa, or the ancient mango trees in Malema, are determinant for local practices of environmental management, people's livelihoods and notions of ownership. These elements will therefore play a critical role, both material and symbolic, as legitimising resources in land negotiations.

The temporal dimension is also key to analyse social dynamics in both research sites. Whereas in Malema past experiences assume the higher relevance in processes of mutual recognition, in Ocúa future expectations are the main currency in land negotiations. Furthermore, legitimacy and fairness are contingent on a temporal dimension, as well. These notions of justice may erode gradually – when peasants perceive the company to be 'wasting' their former lands, by living them idle – or else shift suddenly, for instance when the river floods changed the perception of fairness amongst some resettled peasants.

8.1.1. Key factors for determining justice in land deals

From the fieldwork in both study sites, it emerged that there were a multiplicity of variables intervening in the perceptions of fairness around each land deal. These factors – which relate to procedural justice (participation), distribution and recognition (table 6) - had different importance in each geographical context, and their respective relevance changed over time as well. Yet, there are commonalities that allow for a generalisation of the key issues surrounding agricultural land deals over the medium term. These concern the delay of community benefits, local employment and other economic opportunities, as well as the limited reach of consultation procedures and monetary compensations. Furthermore, the misrecognition of local histories and environmental practices – supported by the

‘Green Revolution’ dominant narrative - facilitates the approval of corporate investments, overshadowing the indirect impacts on the vulnerability and well-being of local communities.

Table 6 - Variables influencing notions of justice

Dimension / Stage	Participation	Distribution	Recognition
First stage, consultation and approval	Whether consultations were held, and in what terms (written contract, timeframe for benefits and resettlement, veto rights, legitimacy of representatives, individuals and groups included)	Monetary compensation Other investments in the community On-farm and off-farm opportunities	Historical legacy, status and image of the investor Government support for corporate investors Cultural preconceptions towards the Macua; notions of self-worth
Under operation (+5 years on)	Follow-up meetings, involvement of the community	Business model: whether outgrow schemes are implemented; job opportunities; technical support	Acknowledgement of past relationship, roles and social identities; proximity, social relations, shared language and culture (managers + government, church); trust and communication
	Influence from neighbour villages; information sharing; intervention of ‘mediating’ actors (e.g. NGOs)	Effective use of land Access to resources Type of crop	Integration of local knowledge
Particular events		Impacts of floods; perception of increased vulnerability amongst resettled	

Analysing how each set of variables evolves over time, I conclude that at the initial stages of the land deals there is a strong emphasis on monetary compensation and the commitment to invest in much needed physical and social infrastructure in the local community. The legitimacy of the new land deal is essentially supported on these aspects, especially in the case of Ocúa. In Malema, monetary compensations played a secondary role, for there was a legal and historical precedent for the land concession.

Another aspect that is determinant for the sense of fairness around a land deal is whether a consultation was held, and how inclusive that was. In both cases, the population in general has the perception that a consultation is held, and consent formally achieved. The problem resides in the nature of the consultation meetings, as many interviewees regard them as skewed, and as merely a formal procedure to grant the company access to their lands. There are a number of ingredients that are determinants for a fair consultation process, which include the existence of a written binding contract, a clear time frame for the community benefits, whether the leaders representing the community, and their decisions, are perceived as legitimate, and whether there is the option of vetoing the project. As I have demonstrated previously, especially in chapter 5, generally local populations consider their bargaining power to be very low, and land deal processes to be presented to them as *fait accompli*.

With time, depending on whether benefits of the project arise – particularly job opportunities – the fact that a consultation was held at the first stage eventually loses relevance. Furthermore, the memories of having been consulted erode with time, giving way to a sense that these processes lack an inclusive follow-up process. Whereas for outsiders, such as national government officers or investment shareholders, participation procedures may represent a point in time, for the local population it is more of a permanent issue.

At the initial consultation stage, the image and status of the investor, generally perceived to be backed by the government, feeds into recurrent asymmetries of power and information. The low self-worth of the local populations, and the sense that 'development' and technology can only come from the outside, reinforces these asymmetries, and reduces the bargaining power of the local

communities. However, I have demonstrated how the external intervention of 'mediating' actors, notably transnational and national NGOs, has changed the reaction of the local populations in Malema. Mozaco's attempted process of expansion was faced with rejection and negative expectations from the very beginning. The fact that neighbour communities had perceived Namele peasants to be unfairly treated fed into these negative perceptions, as well as the exchange of information with the resettled populations from that village.

Initial consent is therefore far from being sufficient for a concession to be perceived as fair. At the operation stage, more than five years into the agricultural project, there are a myriad of material aspects intervening in the perceptions of justice, which have to be taken into account when analysing the outcomes of formal procedures of Free Prior and Informed Consent. Whether the company makes an effective and timely use of the lands assumes particular relevance in the case of Ocúa, where the concession required a complete process of resettlement (houses and land plots). The arrangements for temporary access to the *machambas*, in the cases where the plantation has not reached them yet, to some extent mitigate the 'unfairness' of leaving the plots idle. However, the peasants are well aware of the precarious nature of these arrangements.

At the operation stage, as local populations observe the performance of the project, one aspect emerges as determinant for the perception of the new land user as a legitimate 'owner': their specific land uses. The fact that the expansion of cultivation has been protracted in Ocúa, leaving part of the *machambas* idle, was perceived as an unacceptable waste, and a disrespect of former land users who had to be resettled. On one hand, the company came to invest in the village in the name of a more efficient use of the most productive lands (replacing the less productive local peasants). On the other hand, in the 'interstices' of the sugarcane plantation, the remaining fruit trees are now randomly harvested by any passer-by, which gives to those who planted them a sense of profaned ownership.

The type of crop planted influences the local impacts of a land concession as well. In Malema it was clear how shifting from tobacco to soya implied that the accumulated knowledge of local-based 'experts' was not so relevant anymore, affecting the recognition of social identities and past relationships with the

plantation estate. Moreover, it reduced the human labour required in the farm. The business model implemented will be therefore determinant for the justice of a land deal. The promotion of outgrow schemes somehow compensates for the reduced opportunities of human labour. However, in the case of Malema, this compensation was only partial, as many peasants in Namele village had lost their land plots, but had not joined the outgrow scheme for soya production. In Ocúa, the crop remained, as the company only changed its final product, from bioethanol to organic sugar. In this case, the main effect in distributional benefits related to whether local peasants were able to grow sugarcane for the company. Still, this component of the project has been delayed to a later phase.

Related to the type of crop planted are the job opportunities that the project will create. In Ocúa, this is contingent on the capacity of the farmland investor to scale up production, expanding to 1,000 hectares and having the sugar factory in full operation. In Malema, prospects of expansion were condemned by the evidence that the concession area was not available anymore, and by the consequent conflicts with neighbouring communities (Nholo).

I will now draw more detailed conclusions on the procedural, distributional and recognitional aspects that emerged from the field research, for each study site.

8.1.2. Participation: superficial and limited consent

The evolution in both research sites illustrates how the local dynamics of mutual recognition reflect differently on consultation procedures. Both case studies are good examples of how formal (legal) and intersubjective spheres (Honneth, 1995) of recognition interact to elicit divergent notions of consent and legitimacy around a land concession. They allow us to understand how key legitimising resources – such as labour, social relations and financial capital – play different roles within specific spatial and temporal boundaries. Following Nolte and Voget-Kleschin (2014), I have identified the diverse degrees of influence and inclusion in the consultation procedures carried out in Malema and Ocúa.

The legal and institutional recognition of Mozambican as citizens entails an acknowledgment that they are entitled to participate in decisions about land

allocation in their respective areas, through community consultations. Under this sphere of formal recognition, it is possible to address concerns of inclusiveness and political representation, which have been extensively debated by development (Chambers, 1983) and justice scholars (Fraser, 2001). Regarding inclusion, the representation of the social groups indirectly affected by land concessions is the most concerning issue identified in both sites. The representation of women is formally ensured, and, although constrained by local cultural practices, will likely improve in the future, especially with the increasing accompaniment and visibility provided by NGOs.

However, regardless of a progressive legislation and the formal recognition of customary land rights, the intersubjective sphere of recognition remains crucial in processes of land concession. What I observe in the two study sites, is that consent has been typically superficial, due to asymmetries of power and information, and to different understandings of what the agricultural investments under discussion actually entail on the ground. The practice of public engagement in decision-making is still in its infancy in Mozambique, and especially for the rural populations, with the lowest levels of literacy, even the understanding of how a consultation process should work is difficult.

The local peasants affected by the land concessions studies in Malema and Ocúa are in different situations, regarding entitlement to land rights in the concession area. In Ocúa, EcoEnergia was effectively a new project, and therefore it could only be implemented with the agreement of the local populations, who, under the 1997 Law, held the use rights for this territory. This could lead us to think that consultation processes would have different outcomes, and a different nature, in each research site. In practice, both Malema and Ocúa populations regard consultations as processes of coercion, rather than a full informed consent. They explicitly attribute the outcomes of the participation processes (approval of the projects) to their lack of bargaining power, and acknowledge a sense of hopelessness that has driven them to welcome immediate monetary compensations, whilst hoping for future benefits. Identity-biases, asymmetries of information and power – such as privileged relations between government officers and corporate investors - facilitate, on the ground, the acceptance of these projects, as I demonstrated in chapter 5.

We may say that the state has generally assumed a mediating role in the 'Green Revolution' process in Mozambique. It has generally backed corporate investors, as the best option to create jobs, attract capital and technology to the rural country, and close the agricultural yield gap (Cunguara & Hanlon, 2012; Hall *et al.*, 2015). Both government officials and corporate investors dismiss traditional agricultural practices, such as shifting cultivation, as mostly a waste of productive land. This vision resonates well with the dominant narrative behind the recent surge of interest for a new 'Green Revolution' for Africa (Galaty, 2012; Makki, 2014; White *et al.*, 2012).

However, governments are not omnipotent in controlling land and resources. There are multiple forms of resistance, from covert actions to more open confrontation (Scott, 1986), which has become possible through the increasing exposure of the Mozambique political system to international standards of participatory democracy. The intervention of international and national NGOs and agrarian movements contributed to raise the visibility and leverage of the rural populations in Mozambique, especially over the last decade. The direct intervention of NGOs clearly influenced popular reactions to investment plans in Malema, the first site of this research (chapters 5 and 6). Social contestation has been widespread towards rural development programs such as Prosavana and specific land deals. The National Peasants Union, which has gained notoriety in the contestation to Prosavana, is a well connected organisation, from the international to the local scale, through a cascade of provincial, district and village representatives.

The presence of international and national NGOs on the ground played an evident role in raising awareness amongst rural populations. It is possible to observe changes in the approach of local populations to consultation meetings, when we compare the evolution of Malema and Ocúa cases. Whereas in Ocúa the first consultations were held in 2008 – when the law was less demanding, and there was scarce experience in dealing with investors – in Malema the main consultation meetings were held in 2012 and 2014. They represent each a very different process of gaining consent, reflected on the reaction of the local villagers. In the first case, local populations assumed as inevitable that an investor was coming to claim back their lands. This area was within the boundaries of the former plantation, although the new project had different characteristics (crop, labour and land requirements).

In 2014, the failed consultation in a neighbour village (Nholo) – where any communication became impossible - reflected an evolution in local perceptions of fairness. Four factors were determinant for this: a widespread perception that neighbouring villagers in Namele were suffering the consequences of a "bad deal"; the fact that this area had been recently delimited as "community land"; the influence of NGOs, due to the delimitation process but also direct contact from the Peasants Union and international NGOs; and the notion that resettlements of long inhabited areas are not legitimate.

Other social actors, the district and local authorities, both customary chiefs and government officials, play a key mediating role between the national administration – where land investors hold much of their influence – and the local community. They are generally expected to not only back land investors, but also to facilitate their access to productive land and natural resources, by finding available land and "convincing" local populations in the consultation meetings. The discourse of district and local officers conveys the notion that peasants are voluble and "don't know what they want", and they often regard community consultations as a process of 'convincing' (through multiple successive meetings, if need be).

To sum up, land concessions for agricultural purposes in Mozambique have generally gained consent from local communities, in processes of public consultation that have been formally inclusive. Although initially some shortcomings of these participation procedures became evident – such as the reduced time frames for completion, and the number of mandatory meetings – these have been addressed in more recent legislation. Even while acknowledging the limitations to freedom of expression in Mozambique (Hanlon, 2004; Meneses & Santos, 2009), it is reasonable to expect that the formal aspects of 'participatory recognition' will improve in the future. Still, the intersubjective dynamics of (mis) recognition will continue to influence participation processes. An attention to these aspects is crucial to support the development of more genuine consultations in rural Mozambique.

8.1.3. Reciprocal recognition: historical legacy and social identities

One of the key insights of this thesis is the analysis of land concessions as 'contracts' of reciprocal recognition (Lund, 2016). This means that, regardless of formal processes of approval, the maintenance of a land concession is contingent, on the ground, on the mutual acceptance of its terms, between government officials, company managers and local villagers. In the Malema case, in addition to an ingrained coloniality (Fanon, 1952), there is a whole imaginary around the plantation estate, associated with past experiences with *mukunia* land 'owners', which paves the way for the acceptance of new projects. Subjective experiences and memories play a determinant role in this context, as the plantation came to be, amongst local populations, the basis for a common sense of place.

To understand this, it is crucial to take into account the history of settlement, and the fact that much of Namele's population is fairly recent (settled since the 1980s). This reality results in contrasting perceptions of entitlement, between company managers and government officials, on one side, and the local populations, on the other. Company managers and government officials contend that this land "does not belong to the people, for they only came here to work in the plantation". The villagers claim for a space of recognition in what Honneth (2004) would call a 'social order', in this case the plantation area. They have constructed a sense of entitlement over decades, based on personal experiences with former land 'owners', as well as on their own place attachment and effective use of the land.

As I observed in chapter 6, the plantation estate is now part of the social identities of local villagers. These are strongly attached to previous patterns of recognition, namely the division of labour that was in force in the plantation - since the colonial period, but especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Some people maintained access to a plot in the plantation area continuously, for three decades or more, whilst working as tobacco labourers. My discussions with the community reveal that the peasant identity came to assume, with time, a secondary role. The implication of this shift from peasant to labourer is that, by dismissing their work and claiming back the lands, the current agricultural investment had deeper social effects than anticipated, generating 'surplus' populations. The land they use is under demand, but their labour is not (Li, 2014). Even if they do not articulate that explicitly, it is

to avoid that risk that local villagers invoke their past roles as tobacco experts and stewards of the land.

A manifest evidence of the social 'contract' of reciprocal recognition, in the case of Malema, is the fact that local villagers have refrained from building houses and planting trees in the area. The latter would have been explicit expressions of more permanent ownership claims, especially as trees are subject to private property in Mozambique (both under legal and customary norms). The fact that this did not happen in the case of Ocúa is well expressive of the different 'contract' in place, or absence of it, in this case. Still, the 'contract' is under constant negotiation, and is contingent on the respect of specific spatial boundaries, in this case the former landmarks of the plantation.

When we look at Ocúa, it is evident that the absence of this kind of past experience reflects in how corporate land 'owners' have been acknowledged by the local population. In this case, as there is not a 'reserved' territory as such, other legitimising resources assume a stronger relevance in the process of approval, namely financial capital, in the form of local investment and monetary compensation for the resettled land users.

The expectation of future labour opportunities is determinant for the acceptance of both land concessions. However, the historical circumstances of the Malema case have attributed a particular relevance to this legitimising resource. For Namele villagers, their role in the plantation, along with the valorisation of their knowledge, accumulated experience and skills, came to play a central role in their sense of self-realisation. Many of them came to Malema in the 1980s and always inhabited this area as labourers of the plantation. In their words, they are nowadays "unemployed tobacco experts".

Previous experiences with the Portuguese company JFS have nurtured expectations that the plantation would continue to integrate these labourers. However the appearance of a new project, Mozaco, disrupted the terms of the 'reciprocal contract'. The company managers invoke their historical legacy, which is mostly regarded as positive amongst the Malema population, to support their ownership of the plantation area. For them, contrary to the local populations, the fact that these former labourers "just came to Malema to work at the plantation"

implies that they do not have an attachment to the land. In chapter 6, in sum, we could observe how the terms of the recognition 'contract' are mutually acknowledged, and how changes in the organisation of labour, or spatial boundaries, ultimately constitute a breach of a previous understanding, and thus deemed less legitimate.

8.1.4. Processes of resettlement: misrecognition of local practices

I have sought to identify how processes of misrecognition have featured in the approval of land concessions and how this ultimately influenced the distributive outcomes of population resettlements. These processes of misrecognition pertain to how local land uses and practices are devalued throughout the different stages of a land concession. Firstly, the prevalence of scientific and industrial approaches to agriculture – shared by investors, government officers and, to some extent, rural populations themselves - has facilitated the approval of projects. However, with time, local peasants start to question the validity of their previous consent, in light of a perceived ineffectiveness of the company´s uses of land. If traditional shifting systems, for instance, are often criticised as a 'waste of land', resettled peasants also question the fact that their land plots are left idle after several years. Disputes over land uses and environmental management practices ultimately erode the initial legitimacy of an agricultural investment.

Secondly, resettlement leads to diverse trajectories within the displaced communities, with some looking for land outside the village, others resorting to their family networks, and even others purchasing land access rights. The ability to resort to local 'solidarity' networks (Honneth, 1995) can help mitigate the impacts of resettlements, by opening alternative channels of land access (such as loans). These factors will help understand whether a land concession, and specifically a resettlement, has the potential to reinforce existent inequalities and vulnerabilities, regardless of immediate monetary compensations. Widowers, particularly women, newcomers, women with children and the older generations will be the most vulnerable groups, and compensation processes do not appear to contradict those patterns. The temporal element is determinant here, for the added value of

compensation money erodes with time, per comparison with the value of the abandoned land.

In post-colonial contexts, populations make their rational economic decisions in a (political, economic) plural environment. They juggle the trade-offs between holding formal ownership or securing access through alternative means (Berry, 1993), or nurturing labour relationships that, however tenuous or precarious, may result in future benefits for themselves or their families. In any case, securing an adequate level of recognition both on the access and labour domains is paramount for livelihood strategies.

Ultimately, resettlement and compensation processes rearrange the social and physical landscape, with the potential to push already vulnerable groups to peripheral areas (which require extra work and long distances), or instead to the interstices of the plantations (Chouquer, 2013), under precarious and temporary arrangements.

An aspect that has not deserved enough attention in the land deals literature is the exposure to environmental risks, especially of resettled populations. There is a pressing need for more empirical evidence that helps us understand how land concessions interfere with local resilience practices, and how these trends might evolve with climate change, as droughts and floods become more frequent and severe (Bunce *et al.*, 2010; Niang *et al.*, 2014). In my cases, I was able to observe as sudden climate events – the 2015 floods – change perceptions of fairness amongst resettled populations. This was especially evident in the Lúrio valley, in Ocúa. Moreover, it became evident how local strategies for risk mitigation – spreading farm plots between the river and the village – were determinant for the resilience of local populations, and how the resettlement process impaired them (especially when monetary compensation was involved).

Notions of justice - fairness, consent, legitimacy – are not static. They will evolve over time, depending for instance on the performance of agricultural projects, the social relations that evolve around the concession, and whether or not promises are fulfilled within a reasonable time frame. The new land uses are not indifferent to this legitimation processes either. They are subject to constant

evaluation and possibly contestation, either by the former, evicted, land users, or by the local population at large.

People take into account the trade-offs between current and future benefits (short-term *versus* longer term), as well as between the individual, household and community levels when evaluating the impacts of a land concession on their lives. This evaluation informs their sense of a landowner as legitimate, but also frames this legitimacy within spatial and temporal boundaries. This recognition "dispositive" represents a fragile balance that maintains the concession "social order", but is however under constant negotiation.

8.2. Contribution to knowledge

8.2.1. Research implications

With this thesis, I have sought to address some key research gaps of the land deals literature, as outlined in chapter 1, whilst also making an original contribution to environmental justice and recognition scholarships.

First, research on land deals has been dominated by the perspective of agrarian political economy, which has focused mostly on global processes of accumulation and dispossession (Zoomers *et al.*, 2016). It has been widely recognised that there is scope to go beyond the 'form' of land concessions to explore the 'substance' of local social dynamics around them (Borras & Franco, 2012; Smalley & Corbera, 2012; White *et al.*, 2012). This requires us to take into account historical legacies that inform processes of land concession (Zoomers, 2013), as well as the diversity of attitudes and perspectives of rural populations towards them (Hall *et al.*, 2015). At the beginning of this research, recent reviews had also identified a need to analyse interactions between land deals and processes of environmental change. Moreover, they have observed how it was pressing to analyse the effects of resettlements on the exposure of local populations to climate risks (Gausset & Whyte, 2012; Zoomers, 2013).

In addition to gaps identified on the land deals literature, this thesis has sought to contribute to the emerging literatures on recognition and environmental justice. There have been scarce attempts, to date, to apply recognition theory to

environmental and agrarian contexts. Although the most recent protagonists of the debate on recognition, Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser, have practically ignored those fields, there is an emerging literature strand applying Honneth's theories to them (Fraser, 2017; Brincat, 2015).

Finally, there is a recent body of empirical research on recognition in the Global South, within the environmental justice scholarship, to which this thesis has also sought to contribute. I have drawn on Honneth's distinction between formal and intersubjective recognition to analyse how local ideas about justice have evolved around the two concessions studied. I have departed from the notion that a progressive recognition of land rights (formal and institutional spheres) is not sufficient to prevent the injustices of the 'Green Revolution'. I have argued that a deeper attention to how justice notions are intersubjectively constructed is essential to understand how participation processes unfold, and ultimately how the distributive outcomes of these projects reinforce inequalities and vulnerabilities in each community. These reflect both in negative and positive terms. Intersubjective relations can mitigate the social impacts of land concessions – e.g. alternative land access provided by local social networks – or else exacerbate them – through the denigration of specific ways of being in the territory (e.g. shifting cultivation schemes).

More specifically, the thesis has contributed to clarify the social dynamics around land concessions in two of the regions under stronger demand in Mozambique. The Nacala Corridor and Lúrio Valley are under increasing pressure from land investors, and there is a need for more empirical research on these territories, particularly long-term field research that involves a diversity of actors within the local communities.

Therefore, the research implications of this thesis are threefold.

Firstly, it contributes to the study of the recent land 'rush', by combining the approaches of environmental justice and property scholarship. It therefore ties up the approaches of schools of thought that have been more centred, respectively, on issues of the Global North and Global South. I sought to provide an alternative framework of analysis for the 'land rush' phenomena in the case of Mozambique, by combining the conceptual models of Hegelian recognition theory (Honneth,

1995; 2004) with recent property scholarship (Lund, 2016; Li, 2014). In doing so, I have attributed a central relevance to intersubjective dynamics of recognition, including social relations, networks, subjective experiences and memories, as well as social identities. Resorting to property scholarship, I have sought to shed some light on how diverse actors mobilise (material and immaterial) resources in their interactions, and how these legitimising resources reflect their notions of fairness and legitimacy.

Secondly, it (re) conceptualises this research topic as an environmental justice issue, offering insights into the influence of material and temporal dimensions. In doing so, the thesis offers a more nuanced perspective on the 'Green Revolution rush' in Sub-Saharan Africa, by showing how the outcomes and notions around these projects evolve differently in each geographical, political and social context. The way in which the customary dynamics of land tenure and access interact with the market logic of the land deals process – made possible by the 1997 land reform - is different for each research site, and the perspective of environmental justice helps to take due account of their spatial, temporal and material dimensions (Walker, 2009).

Finally, it contributes to the emergent strand of empirical research on recognition, a dimension that has been under-explored and under-theorised to these days. This emergent strand has been expanding to a growing diversity of topics, including nature conservation (Martin, 2017), agrarian change (Fraser, 2017) and climate justice (Brincat, 2015). This thesis seeks to contribute to these emerging literature strands, expanding the scope of Honneth's theory, as some scholars have called for (Zurn, 2015). In doing so, I hope to contribute to developing a recognition-based paradigm for environmental justice (Whyte, 2018).

8.2.2. Policy implications

By unveiling how the effects of land concessions play out in different geographical and social contexts, this thesis can be useful for future policies of rural development. Private investment and technology will likely continue to play a critical role in responding to future challenges, such as climate threats to food

security. Context-specific attention to the history of each area, and to the mixed identities of the populations that came to live there (Unruh, 1998), can help to remedy problems with current land deals. Or else to inform balanced rural development strategies in the future.

Furthermore, the temporal dimension of local access to resources ought to be more effectively integrated into decisions about land allocation. It is essential to define a time frame for re-evaluating whether the project is fulfilling the promised benefits for the local community. By clarifying how the justice outcomes of land concessions evolve over time, this research can also contribute to improve the legitimacy and fairness of these processes. The most relevant implications relate to four fundamental aspects.

First of all, recognition dynamics. This research contributes to uncover how it is crucial to acknowledge multiple social arrangements for land access and ownership in each specific local context, as well as their limitations. These play a determinant role in the justice outcomes of a specific agricultural investment. Rather than considering that an initial series of consultation meetings will suffice to ensure the social legitimacy of a land deal, government authorities should take into account how local land markets, social networks and arrangements mediate the impacts of the concession for different social groups and individuals. Especially how processes of resettlement may reinforce existing inequalities within the local community.

Secondly, the thesis identifies how different resources come to legitimise concession processes, and how they vary between local contexts. Meaning that material resources such as monetary compensation, or else immaterial resources such as historical legacy, do play a significantly different role in legitimising a new land concession, depending on the social context where it is located. The key implication for current land policy is that monetary compensation offers a rather limited reach as a mechanism of distributional justice. Even more so when community benefits have been delayed or reframed, and in the absence of vigorous investment in social infrastructure (e.g. irrigation schemes). What remains as the stronger expectation amongst rural communities is that agricultural investments bring about new labour opportunities, whether directly at the plantations, or through

engagement in outgrow schemes. The latter benefit of a positive opinion in Mozambique, confirmed by the interviews for this research, across government, NGOs and rural populations. Nevertheless, there are also environmental and social risks to contract farming, which have to be carefully addressed and monitored.

Thirdly, another fundamental aspect that I have highlighted with this research is the importance of materiality for analyses of land deals. In direct connection with the point above, the approach followed in this thesis allows to account for the material and spatial dimensions of land justice, at the local level. The field research highlights the importance of specific factors in how local peasants distribute across the landscape, namely the criteria they follow in choosing specific land plots to grow their crops (proximity to river or woodlands, access to necessary natural resources, type of soils, proximity to social infrastructures). In addition, it shows how such geographical distribution strategies are affected by the implementation of a land concession, directly and indirectly, by 'squeezing out' populations into marginal areas, such as flood-prone riverbanks and remote woodlands. This has implications for evaluating the impacts of land deals over the longer term (including in terms of gender and customary tenure). Recent studies carried out in Mozambique have already shown how external interventions can, indirectly, exacerbate the exposure of the most vulnerable social groups to climate risks (Bunce *et al.*, 2010). As these become ever more pressing over the next few decades, the importance of taking indirect impacts into account reveals ever more crucial for any intervention that may require a land concession and displacements.

Finally, having analysed the evolution of agricultural investments that have been under operation for some years, this research also elicits the temporal dimension of land concessions. This helps to further interrogate current practices of community consultation, at the core of legal processes of land allocation. Namely, it enables us to understand how the notion of consent assumes multiple forms for different individuals and social groups. On one hand, notions of consent, and therefore of legitimate ownership, can gradually change over time (depending on the fulfilment of material compensation and investment in community benefits, such as social infrastructure), as livelihoods and subjective preferences evolve (Otsuki *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand, environmental change, and even sudden

episodes such as river floods, can rapidly change how local people reason about the impacts of a land concession in their lives.

The analysis of intersubjective dynamics of recognition is especially relevant for communication and deliberation processes, which are central to any process of land concession. Recent studies in Mozambique highlighted how processes of public participation have faced problems of implementation in rural areas (Hanlon, 2011; Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010). By taking into account the intersubjective factor, this research may therefore contribute to improve current and new processes of community consultation, not limited to land allocation processes. The procedural implications of this research may extend to other fields where public participation plays a central role, such as forest management and nature conservation.

Furthermore, by uncovering the elements of coloniality (Fanon, 1952) in land allocation processes, this research may contribute to give development practitioners and policy-makers a more in-depth perspective of the social and cultural factors that constrain processes of deliberation in rural communities, and therefore also play a determinant influence in the justice outcomes of any land deal. Resettlement and compensation mechanisms, in particular, deserve a careful attention, as to their unintended or underplayed effects, over the shorter and longer term.

Summing up, a research that unfolds in this way raises an increased awareness of the social dynamics involved in land concession processes. Present threats, such as climate change, make it all the more pressing to find balanced approaches that neither romanticise agrarian societies, nor obfuscate the justice issues brought about by modern agricultural markets and technology.

An attention to processes of mutual recognition, as well as subjective experiences and memories, is determinant for understanding how global processes reflect on people's everyday lives, and identities, at the local level. Eliciting how these intersubjective dynamics of recognition play out on the ground can ultimately find application in other fields of interest to environmental policy, where global policies interact with local values and cultures. Empirical research on 'justice-as-recognition' is determinant to ensure the fairness of conservation programmes, or

else of climate mitigation policies, such as REDD+, and the Clean Development Mechanism. This is particularly relevant as new development policies are setting on the ground, especially the new Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 and the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change, approved in 2015.

8.3. Further research

While this thesis sought to shed some light on the social dynamics around the management of land and natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa, it also raised new issues and interrogations that could inform future research projects.

One of the key concerns deserving further attention relates to the impacts of resettlements on local livelihoods and wellbeing. This thesis has only started to unveil how resettlements may affect local resilience strategies, exposing local populations to increased risks from climate extremes such as floods and droughts. There is a need to identify the effects of land concessions on local management strategies, and clarify how this may ultimately lead to increased vulnerability. This research is ever more urgent, as the impacts of climate change on African agriculture are expected to be severe, posing a direct threat to food security in countries such as Mozambique. Food production will have to be adapted to these challenges. I am sceptical that the solution lies either with traditional smallholder farming, or with agribusiness companies on their own. There is a need to overcome misrecognition obstacles that have prevented the development of integrated strategies.

On the other hand, there is the need to address the environmental impacts of resettlement. In particular, the risks of depletion of natural resources and the effects on biodiversity. The field research in Ocúa raised concerns over new patterns of migration to remote woodlands in other villages, which are being cleared to give way to new farm plots. Furthermore, the cumulative effects of multiple concessions, and subsequent displacements, in the already “critical resource areas”, has raised concern amongst civic movements, NGOs and local academics, and deserves further attention in the near future. These research strands would benefit from a

closer collaboration between natural and social scientists, including agronomists, biologists, climatologists, sociologists, anthropologists and geographers.

Furthermore, it is necessary to better understand how land concessions are affecting particular social groups, older and younger generations, and women in particular. Even when the legislation confers equal land rights to women, the division of labour in the household, and the customary tenure systems, means they will still be affected in a different way by processes of land concession, compensation and resettlement. The location of alternative plots at a greater distance from the village, for instance, has a direct effect in children raising. The location of the new plots is ever more crucial for older peasants or those suffering from illness or disability. If access to the market is already a challenge for so many peasants, it is even more so when they have to resettle or look for a new farm plot. Not everyone can equally afford the transportation of their harvested crops, for instance, which may penalise those already worst-off. There is generally a risk that resettlement processes will reinforce existent inequalities at the local level.

There is a strong trend of population growth and urbanisation in the most accessible areas in rural Mozambique, especially under the implementation of new development programs (Lúrio River, Prosavana, Nacada Development Corridor). Both populations and agricultural investments are looking for accessible and productive lands, which are frequently the most densely populated. Agricultural investments attract newcomers from surrounding regions, who compete for scarce labour opportunities in the farm estates. There was no evidence, from this study, of land concessions raising new inter-ethnic conflicts, probably because the Macua hold a clearly dominant presence in the chosen research sites (more than 80% of the population), and other ethnic groups have adapted to prevalent customary norms. Nevertheless, there is a need for longitudinal studies that can capture possible conflicts emerging after the implementation of land concessions.

Finally, there are other theoretical directions that I have not pursued in this thesis, and have potential for future exploration. The links with the capabilities framework have only recently started to be explored by environmental justice scholars (Edwards *et al.*, 2016; Martin, Rodriguez, *et al.*, 2016; Schlosberg, 2012), and point towards alternative ways of framing some of the justice issues discussed

throughout this thesis, such as the impacts of resettlements on the vulnerability of particular social groups. Or else, conceptual understandings of cognitive justice: having one's knowledge recognised and being able to influence processes of decision-making (Coolsaet, 2016; Rodriguez, 2017).

Current trends for climate risks, soil erosion, population growth and increasing land scarcity, in Africa and across the Global South, will make it all the more pressing, in the near future, to pay attention to local impacts of external policy interventions, along with corporate investments in sectors such as forestry and agriculture. The cumulative effects of multiple projects, as well as multiple demands from different sectors (forestry, tourism, conservation, mining, in addition to agriculture) has to be assessed in detail, as in many cases local populations have been subject to multiple, consecutive displacement.

The food and climate crises were determinant in propelling the current 'land rush', and there is reason to expect an increasing pressure for arable land and natural resources in the future in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially as population growth and climate change intensify. In this context, we ought to keep a special attention to the agenda of emerging powers that have been gaining dominance in foreign investment in Mozambique, such as China and Brazil (Ian Scoones, 2013; Lagerkvist, 2014) and Japan (Mosca & Bruna, 2015).

Furthermore, there are emerging trends in African agriculture that will deserve detailed inquiries in the near future. The use of genetic modified organisms (GMOs), for instance, is incipient in Sub-Saharan Africa, but, despite wide contestation from peasants' organisations, is already being tested in Mozambique[31] as part of the 'Green Revolution' approach to rural development. In addition, the rural development programs that I mentioned in this thesis (Prosavana and Lúrio Development Program) were also at a preliminary stage, at the time of submission. Despite the heated debate around them, until now, it is over the next few years that we will be able to observe their impacts on the ground.

Another topic deserving attention in future research, although it was not the main focus of this thesis, is the evolution of global justice movements. Continuing

[31] The Mozambican Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM) started a trial maize plantation in Chokwé, Gaza province, in February 2017.

the recent trends, environmental justice movements are likely to converge around common agendas, struggling for land, food and climate justice (Schlosberg, 2013; Sikor & Newell, 2014). Struggles for justice as recognition - of identities, views and knowledges - will likely assume an increasing relevance, interwoven with concerns for a just distribution of material resources and environmental risks.

8.4. Concluding remarks

We are at the beginning of a new cycle, in terms of global policies for sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, as well as the Paris climate agreement, came into force in 2016. It is an opportune moment to develop a comprehensive research agenda for 'justice as recognition'. Attention to recognition has been increasing within the environmental justice field (Coolsaet, 2016; Dawson et al., 2016; Martin, 2017), and there are signs of an emergent interest for the development of a recognition-based paradigm (Whyte, 2018).

Mozambique is a paradigmatic case for analysing the confrontation between global processes (economic and political), on one side, and local cultural contexts, on the other. As a postcolonial and post-socialist country, and historically one of the least developed in the world, it has gone through successive and rapid shifts over the last few decades. Despite a progressive legislation and a 25-year trend of rapid economic growth, since the end of the civil war in 1992, the gap between urban and rural populations has been widening. Rural poverty has proven persistent, and Northern Mozambique is still, today, like a whole different country. The narrative of a deprived rural North has supported the implementation of large-scale land deals and development programs, such as Prosavana and the Nacala Development Corridor, which effects remain to be seen.

Furthermore, population growth and climate change are worsening food insecurity in Mozambique and across Sub-Saharan Africa, year after year. There is an urgent need for more research that addresses, at the local level, the social and cultural factors that influence the impacts of those phenomena. In addition, it is crucial to study the impacts of global policies aimed at tackling these challenges.

With this thesis, I have sought to articulate my concerns with global environmental challenges with issues of land allocation and rural poverty. Undertaking an independent research in the rural areas of Mozambique has been, without doubt, the most important learning stage of this journey. This thesis is not the end of that story. The perspective of environmental justice has allowed me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the most pressing challenges, at the global and local levels. The opportunity to interact with a multiplicity of individuals and organisations in Mozambique has helped to define my own research agenda, which will certainly have food security, climate change and human development as its core concerns in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Interview guide (company managers)

	Topics/questions
1 - General topics/background information	How and when has the concession started? Which is the current stage of the project? Main areas of interest – why investing in this sector? Area, nº employees (seasonal/permanent; origin; gender); main crops cultivated and their purposes; type of project (plantation, contract farming) Why investing in this country/region(s); characteristics (climate, soils, fertility, etc.); legislation and access to land; market conditions/prices Main characteristics of the landscape (natural resources, water availability) Future perspectives and threats – climate change?
2 - Participation – consultations	How were the different stakeholders and local population involved in the decision-making processes, at each stage? (meetings, etc.) How have the meetings worked? Do you remember the main issues discussed? Which solutions have you discussed and implemented in consequence? How much do these issues influence the implementation of the project? In these consultations/meetings which measures have you taken to guarantee the involvement of all the relevant social groups? Who represents the community in permanence, with whom do you keep more frequent contact? Are there any monitoring meetings during the implementation of the project? [ask for minutes/records]
3 - Distribution	Does the project include outgrowing schemes? How many producers/households are involved? Are any particular restrictions in place, concerning land and natural resources use? Which? (eg. conservation areas, wildlife, etc.) Which specific benefits and investments were agreed between the company and the local stakeholders? Financial or other? Are these already implemented (*depending on the time elapsed since then*)? Which are the outcomes up until now? (if delayed) Why? Which are the main constraints to the implementation of benefits? From your experience, which type of strategies work better? – financial compensation vs funds vs in-kind compensation; jobs? In which situations? Are any conflicts or concerns occurring regarding the (equitable) distribution of income/benefits? How have them been expressed? By whom and when?

	Which possible solutions have been discussed in consequence of that? Which social groups are concerned? (including ethnic and religious groups…) Have you learned from other investors/communities experiences or from your own? Have you made any changes in your strategy over time? How is local food security integrated in the project goals? How can the project contribute to it (directly through productions; indirectly through additional and alternative incomes)?
4 - Recognition	Were there any land uses and management practices that were deemed incompatible with the objectives of the project? Which and why? Are they related to particular spiritual beliefs or rituals (eg. protection of sacred trees or ancestors graves)? Are they associated with activities deemed important/essential for local livelihoods? Which and how? Which approach has been followed to solve these situations? Did the company change their plans or activities (land use, practices)? Why and how? Which traditional practices have been integrated in the management of the project? How is local knowledge combined with technologies brought with the project? Do you think the commercial agriculture development model is compatible with traditional smallholder agriculture (manual labour, fallow systems…)? How/why not?

Appendix B – Interview guide (local communities)

- **Three steps:**

1- The conversation will be broader at first, focusing on more general aspects of land use, farming practices, crops cultivated, soil and climatic conditions
2- From there I will gradually introduce indirect questions aiming at eliciting considerations on the management of land and natural resources in the area;
3- And then finally notions of justice, as well as the way they have been reflecting in negotiations between investors and communities.

	Topics/questions
Profile data (except for region of origin, most of these questions posed at the end of conversation)	• Age • Gender • **Education** – Have you gone to school? For how long/age when left? • Religion, ethnicity (macua, niangi, etc.) • **Location** (current and others) – Have you always lived in this area? (If not) Where do you come from? When did you move? Why have you chosen to live here? • **Assets** – farming plot (including area in hectares and distance to the house, km/hours walking); house – which type and how large (mud hut; bricks) [take note] • How many people do you have in your family (direct dependants)?
1 - General topics/background information	• How do you think this year/harvest is going to be? Were the rains always like this, do you think there were changes over the last few years? • What impact did these changes have in your activity/crops? • Who choses where people here can locate their *machambas*? How? Why did you chose to locate yours in [place mentioned]? • How do you get there? Where do you collect water?

	• What do you need to make a good *machamba*? Where are the best lands around here? Why? • From whom have you learned how to grow your crops? • Have you made any personal innovations over time? Examples? • Do you change farming plots or always use the same area? Do you rotate the crops? Why and when? • Do you use other techniques (e.g. fire) in the fields? • Are you able to grow or buy enough food the whole year? What else do you do during your day, besides working in the *machamba*? Do you sell your products in the market? • Do you have other activities (income sources)?
2 - Participation – consultations	• Main **concession** considered in this area: how and when has the company settled here? How have you first heard of it? • How many **meetings** were held with the leaders and/or the community, and when? Who organised them and who was invited to each of them? • How were these meetings? Do you remember the main issues raised? • Have all the affected people been involved in these consultations/meetings? • Have all of them given their opinion on the project? Who do you think has a stronger influence in the meetings and on their outcomes? • Do you feel your opinions have been listened to/taken into account? What was the result? • If you have a problem with the company/project, who do you talk to?

3 - Distribution	• What has changed in your life after the project started? • Who are the people most affected? Why? • Which benefits and investments were agreed with the company? Financial or other? • Were these implemented (*depending on the time elapsed since then*)? • How much have you received for giving up your land (if applicable)? • Do you think it is better to receive money or is there other better solutions to compensate people giving up lands/houses? • What does the village needs most? And you, what is more important to you (alternative area to farm, access to water, etc.)? • Do you think there are enough resources to meet all the needs of the community? Are they met? If not, what should be done about it?
4 - Recognition	• Did you have to change your life or activities in result of the project? How do you feel about that? • Do you feel the traditional values and culture are taken into account by the company? How? • Does the company provide any support to local farmers (seeds, information, access to machinery…)? And NGOs/extension services? • Do you think the farmers here can contribute in some way to improve agriculture in the region? • Have the company managers asked you for information/help about soils, the weather and crops?