



RSC
RESEARCH IN SOCIAL CHANGE

Number 8, Issue 1

January 2016

RSC
RESEARCH IN SOCIAL CHANGE**EDITOR**

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PRINT Ulčakar & JK Grafika

PUBLISHER Založba Vega

ISSN 1855 – 4202

RSC is included in Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) and CSA Sociological Abstracts.

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LARGE SCALE LAND DEALS AND WOMEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA: PARADOX OF A DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM

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Abstract: *The study examines large scale land deals and investment in Nigeria with a focus on women in rural communities. Large scale land deals as a development paradigm is recommended within the context of globalisation. Hence, promoters of globalisation argue that land deals and investment is a tool for poverty reduction and promotes sustainable agricultural and rural development. In the light of this assumption, development paradigm which emphasises privatisation and liberalisation of land adopted by the Nigerian government is seen as the solution to economic development. The paper thus examines this theoretical assumption and made comparison with empirical evidence from case studies of large scale land deals and its impact on rural women. The study involves exploratory analysis based on the perception of rural women drawn from six purposively selected rural communities. Findings reveal that argument in favour of large scale land deals and investments do not support the lived realities of rural women in Nigeria. In reality, it reinforces differential access to economic opportunities thereby exacerbating further inequalities. The study advocates that the Nigerian government should develop an inclusive policy model based on affirmative mechanism that would provide incentives that favour large scale land deal, at the same time conditionality should be attached for women in rural areas, to have some measures of control over land resources.*

Keywords: *globalisation, large scale land deals, liberalisation, Nigeria, privatisation, rural women.*

1. Introduction

Large scale land deal is a developmental paradigm that explains the liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation of land and natural resources.

It explains global acceleration of large scale annexation of arable and marginal land as well as natural resources in the rural areas for food, agro-fuel production and investments in agro-business. In Nigeria it further explains the application of Land Use Act of 1978 to acquire large expanse of land resulting in significant land grab in the rural areas. The premise upon which this policy is advocated is that large scale land deal is a tool for poverty reduction and promotion of sustainable agricultural and rural development (Deininger and Byereee 2011). Arguments in favour of this assumption emphasise five major channels through which large scale land deal can be beneficial. The channels are; supports and opportunities for small scale farmers through contract farming which is also known as out-growers scheme, generation of massive employment in the host community, payment of compensation leading to human and infrastructural development, providing access to markets and technologies for local producers and creation of wealth through investment facilitation, increase in local and national tax revenue (Deininger and Byereee 2011).

This assumption is rather too sweeping as it generalises the profoundly diverse positive impact of large scale land deals while ignoring the plethora of circumstances, culture, nature and situations of the different countries, regions and segments of rural societies the world over. By implication the policy will present different opportunities and risks to the different segments of the world societies. Nigeria society is largely made up of rural communities. Agriculture account for 45 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the main source of rural livelihood. About 90 percent of Nigeria's food is produced by small scale farmers with 44 percent of male and 72 percent of female per household respectively and they cultivate less than one hectare of land (IFAD 2009, 5-7). In 2011, it was estimated that 80.2 million (49%) of Nigeria's 162.5 million people are females and 54 million of Nigeria's 80.2 million women live and work in the rural area, where they provide 60-79% of the rural labour force (Gender in Nigeria Report 2012, 6-9). From the above, rural women represent a high percentage of the rural population and play essential roles in a wide range of activities in the rural economy.

However, it is pertinent to note that despite the unique position occupied by rural women in terms of their participations, numerical strength, roles and contributions to the rural economy, their plights are often insufficiently addressed by national development strategies and western development paradigm. It is trite that all too often their contributions to rural development and the economy is poorly understood and underestimated. Consequently, their challenges receive little or no attention. This happens to

be the lot and predicament facing rural women in Nigeria in relation to the so-called new opportunities supposedly offered by development paradigm that encourage large scale land deals. Land and natural resources are crucial to the livelihood activities of rural women in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that questions concerning women's land right as well as the power dynamics relating to access and control of land and resources are yet to be resolved in most rural societies in Nigeria. In spite of the above government is allocating arable land in rural areas without putting in place measures to strengthen women control over land and natural resources. It is pertinent to ask, how then will women in rural communities benefit from large scale land deals and investments.

Attempts to analyse the dominant trend in large scale land deal by foreign and domestic investors in developing countries has generated a vast amount of literature. Oxfam (2011), Visser and Spoor (2011), Borrás and Franco (2011), Anseeuw (2012), Sommerville (2011), Cotula (2012), McMichael (2012) in their various studies reported diversities in the range of deals which took place in various continents or states where the studies focused on. Cotula (2012), Zommers (2010) associated land grab with globalisation and issues relating to food and biofuel production and rent extractions. Other literatures such as Attah (2013), Pedlowski (2012) Adnan (2013) examined responses and protests from land grabbing. Attah (2013) examined land grabbing in Nigeria and responses. He noted that resistances and protests have been the response to land grabbing activities in most states in Africa. However, the Nigerian case is mixed, as it presents unsuccessful resistance in some instance and in others there is no resistance as land grab is celebrated because of the promised benefits articulated by the government in response to the World Bank Agenda.

The World Bank Report carried out by Deininger and Byerlee (2011) gave a historical context of land deals using 30 countries as case studies. The study, while acknowledging similarities to historical trends, noted that the current large scale land acquisition is undeniably peculiar. The finding of the report is in line with findings from other studies that observed enormous large scale land acquisition going on around the world. In agreement with GRAIN's (2010) view, the findings of the study collaborate with other findings that arrived at the conclusion that large scale land deals present opportunities and risks. Case studies confirmed that in most cases benefits from land deals and investments do not live up to expectation as anticipated while in some other cases land deals and investments make the local people worse off because investors are taking advantage of weak governance and legal protection, failure to articulate, implement and enforce environmental

laws (GRAIN 2010). Unfortunately, the report which provides new and solid evidence about large scale land deal failed to acknowledge the differential impact land deals and investment will have on rural women. Although Few case studies and a few larger empirical studies such as Mutopo and Chiweshe 2014; Behrman et al. 2011; Amanor 2012; Kachika 2010; Dzodzi and Golah 2010 addressed gender dimension of land deals. Their studies present evidence using several recent case studies on the impact of large scale deals on women. However, most of these case studies did not address the issue of rural women in Nigeria. Given that rural women and the region they live in are not homogeneous, it is crucial to examine the impact of large scale land deal on rural women in Nigeria.

The rationale for paying attention to the issue of rural women in Nigeria is derived from the fact that evidence based on rural women's perception is critical to understanding the impacts which large scale land acquisition have on rural women. Given the critical role rural women play within the rural economy, and in national development, a closer investigation of what they do and how development policies aimed at large scale land deals might affect them could serve as a useful indicator for understanding the sustainability of their livelihood and to explain the paradox of the current western model developmental paradigm in Nigeria in particular. The study therefore through theoretical and empirical analysis examined the impact of large scale land deals on women in rural communities in Nigeria. The theoretical analysis involved using documentary sources in reporting trends of large scale land deals in Nigeria from 2004 until 2014. The empirical analysis was based on the application of the theoretical assumption to evidence from case studies. The last section took a theoretical discourse on the paradox of the western model developmental paradigm.

2. Methodology

Given the nature of the study and the need to gain insights into the perspectives of rural women, the study was carried out through a descriptive qualitative survey design. States in Nigeria were clustered into two Regions i.e., Northern and Southern Regions. The purposive sampling technique was used to select one state from each of the regions. The states selected are Delta and Kwara. Delta State is located in the Southern part of Nigeria and lays approximately between Longitude 5000 and 60.45' East and Latitude 5000 and 60.30' North with 80% of the population living in rural areas (Delta State Fact File 2012). Delta state was selected due to

intensification of large scale acquisition of land in the rural communities for the establishment of Free Trade Zone and Export Processing Zones, large scale commercial farms, and acquisition of land for oil and export related activities. Kwara state is located in Northern region of Nigeria and lay between Latitude 7, 45 N and 9, 30 N Longitude 2, 30E and 6 25 E with 70 percent of the population living in rural areas. Kwara state was selected due to significant appropriation of Farm sites and farmlands of the local people by the state government in order to provide large tract of arable land required for commercial farming.

Six communities were selected by purposive sampling according to areas where significant large scale land deals had occurred. The communities selected are Abraka, Ogidiben, and Okpai in Delta State and Shonga, Iwo and Iponrin in Kwara State. A sample size of 30 women was selected, 18 women were interviewed while two Focus Group Discussions was held comprising of 6 women each. In addition to the use of secondary data, primary data was collected directly from the affected population through in- depth interview and Focus Group Discussion. Triangulation method was used for cross checking account from the in-depth-interview, Focus Group Discussion and secondary data. Using the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) all interviews were transcribed and descriptively analysed.

3. Trends of large scale land deals in Nigeria: 2004-2014

The intensification of large-scale land acquisition pursued by the Nigerian state under the rubric of the Land Use Act of 1978 has become more pronounced in the rural areas reinforced by privatization and liberalization policies of globalisation. The acceleration of large scale annexation of arable land in the rural areas for commercial agriculture, establishment of Agro businesses, creation of Export Processing Zones and oil exploration activities such as pipeline constructions, access roads, flow stations and camp sites for oil workers were as a result of the following factors; First is the liberalization and opening up the economy to private foreign investment in line with World Bank, IMF, and WTO development strategy. Second is the need for Nigerian government to revitalize their agriculture for economic growth under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and thirdly, the declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa adopted by Heads of State of the African Union in July 2003 (Kachika 2010, 16).

Although large scale acquisition of arable land for investment is not new in Nigeria, the intensification of globalisation process has brought change in

the trend, scale and character of land use competition. Under contemporary globalisation, local land use is changing and is increasingly driven by demands for products that are part of commodity chain in response to global foreign direct investment in agriculture and natural resources extraction. Before global acceleration, local human needs and local capital are the determinants for land use. However with the demand from the international system resulting to intensification of global interconnections, Foreign Direct Investment and foreign capital are now important determinant of land use (Friis and Reenberg 2010, 2). What is new and different from the previous acquisition of land is that first, the major players are private sector such as transnational cooperations, states, and international institutions. Secondly, it has resulted in large scale commercial development in which cash and food crops are produced for the world market with most of the imports directed to investing countries. Thirdly, there is shift from food crops to high value crops such as basic cash crops and agro fuel crops.

In the World Bank report by Deininger and Byerlee (2011), from 1990-2006, there had been 115 projects involving 793 Areas (1,000ha) and 1,500 medium size (ha). This compilation according to the report relied on data collected from 26 out of 36 states in Nigeria (Deininger and Byerlee 2011, xxxiii). Following the return to democratic rule in 1999, the Nigerian government adopted the policies of privatization and liberalization of land as a developmental strategy for rural development. The recent tide of privatization of land and resources began in 2004 with large scale acquisition of land by foreign and local investors for food, cash crop and high value crops for agro fuel production. According to Attah (2013), the Kwara state government in 2004 invited commercial farmers from South Africa and Zimbabwe for a feasibility mission which culminated in the appropriation of 200,000 hectares of land for agricultural investment. In related cases other lands deals have been reported across Nigeria (see Table 1 for trends and scale of land deals in Nigeria from 2004-2014). Common features of large scale acquisition of land in Nigeria involves (a) the use of the Nigeria Land Use Act of 1978 to appropriate large expanse of land. (b) Scale of land deal ranges from 50 to 400,000 hectares of farmland with a minimum of 25 years lease term. (c) Although foreign and local investors are involved in large scale land deal, there is the increasing involvement of foreign investors than local investors. (d) There is the increasing use of private-public partnership model arrangement between state government and private investors. (e) Memoranda of understanding of land deals between government and investors are often based more on the interest and needs of the investors rather than on the state's strategic consideration for investment. As such

government are committed to provide choice land to investors which in some cases results to eviction of local people from their ancestral homes. For instance, due to acquisition of farmlands 1,289 local farmers were evicted from Shonga district of kwara state (Attah 2013, 6). Similarly, 30,000 small holder farmers were evicted from their farmlands in Ogoni area of Rivers state (Social Development 2013, 1-2) while the case of Kebbi state involved the eviction of 5,000 local farmers from the farmland (Farmland.org 2014).

Table 1: Trend and Scale of Land Deals in Nigeria

Name /Company	Project details	Size of land allocated (ha)	Location/local government area	Source
New Nigeria farm	Crops, dairy and poultry	13,000	Shonga, Edu LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
OLAM Nigeria Limited	Rice processing and out Growere scheme	20	Patigi, Patigi LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Coga Farm Limited	Cultivation of cassava, maize and jatropa plantation	6,000	Fallah, Moro LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Grill flour Mills Limited	I rice processing factory ii paddy rice production	50	1 Tsaragi, Edu L.G.A 2Echi-Wada, Patigi LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Africa Chicken Farm limited	Integrated poultry production	615	Iponrin, Ilorin East LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)

Lix-konti Ranch & Industries Ltd	Cultivation of crops such as maize, soybeans seeds, groundnut and to build vegetable oil mill	756	Ejidonagri, Moro LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Kwara Greens Limited	Production of vegetable and flowers	50	Oro -gbangba, Asa LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Jan-Kasal Company	Industrial starch, ethanol and glucose syrup.	5,000	Ndanaku, Patigi LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
ZJS International Company Ltd	Cultivation of arable crops such as maize, rice, soybean	5,000	Ehchi-Wada, Patigi LGA II Akunyun/Faje, Asa LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Dawacorn International Ltd	Cashew processing plantation	3,000	Oke-Ola Oro Irepodun LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Tunslaq Nigeria Ltd	Production and processing of cassava, maize and establishment of feed mill	500	Agbeyangi, Ilorin East L.G.A	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Dana Foods LTD	Rice farming and growers scheme	11,000		Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Full valve farms	Integrated farming	5,000	Alasoro, Ifelodu LGA	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)

Green country Ltd	Crop production, livestock/ animal husbandry and agro-forestry	1,000		Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Integrated energy project Tenoil petroleum and energy service		150.44	Efurum_Ugheli road Delta state	Vanguard Nigeria Newspaper 2013, 60
Chinese firm	High quality cassava flour nucleus farm	6,000	Abraka, Delta state	Daily trust newspaper, August 2013, 29
TRANS4mation Agritech (T4M)	Rice	10,000		Otive, (2012)
Delta state government	Establishment of free trade zone	2,3337	Koko L.G.A Delta state	www.nepza.gov.na/free.asp
`NEPZA	Establishment of free trade zone	2,506	Ogidigbe, Delta State	www.nepza.gov.na/free.asp
ARC petroleum	Industrial business park	329	Delta state	www.nepza.gov.na/free.asp
Shell B.P	Otorogu gas plant	500	Iwherekan, Utorogu, Delta state	Field report 289
TRANS4mation	Mechanised rice, cassava and fish farming	10,000	Abia state	Otive (2012)
TRANS4mation	Mechanised rice, cassava	30,000	Nine Nigera Delta States	Otive (2012)

	and fish farming			
Dominion farms limited. Okalahomon U.S.A	Rice farming	30,000	Gassol L.G.A, Taraba State	farmlandgra b.org
Ollam international, Asian agribusiness	Rice	6,000	Nasarawa	farmlandgra b.org
South Africa investors	Mass agricultural production	5,000	Edo, Enugu and Benue	farmgrab.or g
Dangote Groups of Companies	Sugarcane plantation	33,000	Sokoto state	farmlandgra b.org
Dangote groups of companies	130,000 for sugarcane/ 120 for rice and horticulture crops	250,00	Six states in Northern Nigeria with most of the projects in Kano state	farmlandgra b.org
Chinese firm	Mass agricultural production	Undisclosed	Kebbi state	farmlandgra b.org
Union De Iniciativa S.A de C.V Mexican company	Banana plantation	2,000	Ogoni communities, Rivers State	Social develop- ment integrated centre (2013)
South korea and united Arab Emirates commercial farmers	Food production	400,00	Nigeria	Friis and Reenberg (2010)

Source: compiled by author from sources cited in the table

Apart from large scale land deals for food production, there have been acquisition of lands for agro fuel crops and production in Nigeria (see, Table 2 for list of land acquired for bio-fuel and diesel investments in Nigeria). Adopting the agro-fuel regime, The Nigerian government through its National Petroleum Corporation has launched four large scale ventures covering 900,000 hectares of land in some selected states (NNPC 2007, cited in Attah 2013). Also, foreign and local investors have also embraced the agro fuel regime and acquired land for the production of high value crops (see Efanodor 2015, 65).

Table 2: Land allocated for Bio-fuel and Bio-diesel Investments in Nigeria

Company	Country	Land acquired	Crop type	Source
NNPC	Nigeria	200 square kilometres	Sugarcane	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
NNPC	Benue, Gombe, Jigawa and Kebbi	20,000ha	Sugarcane	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
NNPC	Edo, Anambra and Ondo	20,000 ha	Cassava and sugarcane	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
NNPC		20,000	Palm oil plantation	NNPC (2007) cited in Attah 2013
NNPC	Ebenebe and Ugbenu communities in Akwa	15,000	Integrated cassava plantation and Ethanol plant	Odogwu (2012) cited in Attah 2013
NNPC / Kogi state government	Okulese in Ose L.G.A Ondo state	500	Caasava ethanol project	Ebenezer (2008) cited in Attah (2013)

NNPC/Kogi state government/ International Trans oil corporation of U.S.A	Odogwu, Ibaji L.G.A Kogi state	31,000	Ultra modern sugar factory for the production of ethanol agro fuel	Aruwa (2011) cited in Attah (2013)
Viscount Energy China	Nigeria		Sugarcane plantation	Friis and Reenberg (2010)
Kwara Casplex Limited	Nigeria	30,000 ha	Cassava	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
NNPC	Nigeria	11,000 ha	Cassava	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
Global Biofuels Limited	Nigeria	11,000 ha	Sweet Sorghum	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
NNPC	Nigeria	10,000ha	Cassava	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
Global Biofeuls Limited	Nigeria	30,000ha	Sweet Sorghum farm	Friends of the Earth and Europe Report 2010, 32
Jatropha Farmers development foundation	Nigeria	5,000ha	Jatropha	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Future Energy LTD	Nigeria	9,369	Jatropha	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
EnviroFriend -ly Energy LTD	Nigeria	10,000	Jatropha	Ariyo and Mortimre (2011)
Wilmar Nigeria Limited	Nigeria	5,561	Oil palm	farmlandgrab.org

Source: Friend of the Earth and Europe Report (2010, 32) with update by author.

4. Argument in favour of large scale land deals and women in rural communities in Nigeria

Large scale acquisition of land is associated with globalisation of resources that is taking place within the context of accelerated globalisation process. Globalisation policies as a paradigm of development emphasise liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation. Proponents of globalisation assert that the integration of all countries into the global economy is seen as a veritable solution to their economic growth and development. As such, the implementation of the policies of globalisation is seen as the best policy option to world prosperity. In line with this development paradigm, according to Okonjo -Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako (2007, 7) in 2003 a National Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was put in place in Nigeria. NEEDS is seen as a reform programme in response to the development challenges of Nigeria. It is said to be based on home grown strategies. However, NEEDS corresponds with the policies and theories promulgated by IMF/World Bank and WTO, promoters of globalisation

(NEEDS, 2004). NEEDS therefore seeks to foster Nigeria's integration into the world economy. According to Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako (2007, 7) the key element of achieving the above include privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation programme. It is expected that the private sector investment will supply sustainable poverty reduction, wealth creation and employment generation (NEEDS 2004). Privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation form the core of the market base economy and private sector driven economic system which the Nigerian government has adopted since 1986.

Similarly, the World Bank Report by Deininger and Byerless (2011) argued that large scale land deal is a tool to promote sustainable agricultural and rural development as it can support small holder farmers through contract farming which is also known as out grower scheme. At the same time large scale land deals can be beneficial through four channels; payment of compensation that can lead to social infrastructural development, generating employment, providing access to markets and technology for local producers and increase in local and national tax revenue (Deininger and Byerless 2011, xxxiii). As such large scale land deal is seen as a vehicle for sustainable poverty reduction. Consequently, the World Bank developed an Agenda that was tilted towards encouraging and contributing to large scale land deals and investments that will yield result that are sustainable and equitable (Deininger and Byerless 2011). In the Report, the core of the World Bank Agenda is assisting countries reduce poverty and hunger through increasing agricultural activities and productivity. The execution of

the World Bank Agenda lies in its contributions through; the provision of information, assisting countries in building strong institutional capacity, and supporting investments with fund (Deininger and Byerless 2011). Base on these arguments the paper examined the impact of large scale land deals on rural women in Nigeria using evidence from Delta and Kwara States where significant land grab occurred.

4.1. Evidence from Delta and Kwara States, Nigeria

4.1.1. Generation of employment

Evidence from field report indicates that rural communities in Delta state where most forest and farmland appropriation for large scale land Investment which made way for oil and gas gathering in terms of employment, pipeline and construction projects are mainly masculine in nature and needed expertise, and skilled workers as such women in the communities where these projects are on-going lack the expertise and skills needed for the project. Therefore, they are not visible beneficiaries of opportunities created by project execution by multinationals in terms of employment, technological and human resources development. Similarly, in Kwara state where rural women gained employment from investment in large scale commercial farms they often work long hour under unhealthy environment with a low income wage. In the communities studied, employment from large scale land deals are often few, temporary and seasonal. As such it comes with uncertainty about income generation. At the end of the seasonal job, women return to their homes to contend with their traditional source of livelihood during the remaining part of the year. Due to the seasonal character of the employment opportunities, it is difficult to bring about lasting change in the status of rural women. Meanwhile in rural communities some investors rely on mechanised production while few investors rely on mixed labour and mechanised system. Some of the women stated that most wage labour opportunities associated with land deals went to men. Where employment is given to women, they are assigned tasks that exclude them from activities that may involve better payment, less strenuous and less dangerous. Were investors rely on mechanisation and agricultural technology for production, local evidence suggests that women where yet to move with this trend because most of the rural women do not have the necessary skills, access to social network and information. They also lack capacity and asset for technological advancement. Hence opportunities brought about by commercialisation did not favour women. The implication of the above for rural women is that as the nature of

specialisation is shifting from relatively unskilled activities, to skill intense activities they might lose out as many of them are not educated and do not have the necessary skills.

4.1.2. Opportunity from contract farming

As regard new opportunities for contract farmers, in some cases women in rural communities do benefit from contract farming. However, local evidence indicates that most contract farming is predicated on existing power relations in households which are often controlled by male household heads. In most cases, investment model adopted by investors involves collaboration with local farmers. Due to lack of recognition as potential farmers rural women usually lose out. Contract farmers for many crops are predominately male, due to their predominance in land ownership. Investors base their contract model on the unified system of household headed by a male household. Women contribute substantial amount of labour but they are not recognised by contract model. This model ignores the reality that household is made up of male and female members, with diverse responsibilities, needs and interest. Contract farming does not take into consideration these intra household gender dimensions. Local evidence indicates that women are often not compensated by male household contract holders for providing labour. For instance in all the communities studied in Kwara State, contract farmers are predominately male because of men's predominance in land ownership. In this case, wives of male contract farmers contribute to labour on the contract farms, leaving women with little or no benefits. In Delta state some rural women in farming community of Abraka were engaged in contract farming in their own right while others posited that their engagement in contract farming led to dispute between them and their husbands who when the contract farming was becoming profitable began to lay claim to land allocated to them, and income derived from the production of crops, thereby challenging women's traditional sphere of control. In reality, since women have limited access to productive resources such as land, they tend to benefit less as few of them are contract farmers in their own right.

4.1.3. Payment of compensation

With regards to benefits from payment or lease of land, local evidence shows that women bear a disproportionate share of the negative impacts of large

scale land deals. In the study area women are excluded and not consulted in any consultation processes on land deals. This is because women are not typically included in local governance structure in most rural societies because of the lower status ascribed to women in most communities. Available evidence indicates that where compensation is paid for land acquisition, since land is managed by men, the main beneficiaries are male household head rather than women. In some instances, communities are promised to be allocated smallholder plots in return; however most communities are yet to receive such plots as promised. It was only in Shonga a community in Kwara state that smallholder plots were allocated but this was done through existing patriarchal norms by relying solely on male community leaders to help get smallholder farmers. Women in this community posited that they were not listed individually rather allocation was based on the model of unified households controlled by a male household heads.

5. Paradox of a developmental paradigm

Development entails using productive resources of the society to improve the living standard of the people. Contrary to the arguments in favour of large scale land deals, local evidence from the study communities in Nigeria reveals that from 2004-2013 there was little evidence of positive benefit and change among rural women in relation to large scale lands and investments. The promised benefits that have been well articulated by investors and the government in compliance with the World Bank agenda have not been able to generate sustainable benefits. Large scale land deals have resulted to loss of land and resources which rural women are depended upon but also it is gradually leading to loss of land tenure use right formerly enjoyed by rural women. Findings from local evidence shows that developmental policies aimed at privatisation and liberalisation of land and its market leading to large scale acquisition of land will not promote sustainable development as it concerns rural women livelihood.

This is because, first, the developmental paradigm in favour of large scale land deals ignores the diversity of rural women, their lived realities and livelihood activities. Consequently, no sufficient attention and serious attempt was put in place by promoters of large scale land deals to clearly identify the plight and core agenda of rural women and shape policy formulation around that agenda. Rural women's access to land resources is necessary for ensuring sustainable livelihoods and is a key to poverty

reduction in rural areas. Unequal access to critical resources limits the potential of rural women to benefit from large scale land deals and to ensure sustainable livelihood. The positive impacts which large scale land deal would have had on rural women are circumscribed by other factors because the Nigerian government failed to domesticate development policies within the lived realities of the various groups in the communities. Although rural women experienced new opportunities and relationships with large scale land deals, it is increasingly difficult for them to support themselves and their households with such opportunities as these opportunities still depend on factors such as access to productive resources and asset including skills, capital, land and education. According Gender in Nigeria Report (2012, 20), data from the National Bureau of statistics, Core Welfare Indicator Survey of (CWIQ) 2003 shows that about 13% of rural women owned land compared to 7.2% in its 2006 study (see table 3 for details of the 2006 survey). It is pertinent to note that rural women provide 60%-79% of Nigeria's rural labour force but from CWIQ 2006 survey, men own land five times more than women.

Table 3: Distribution of land ownership by gender in Nigeria.

Sector	Female %	Male%
Total	7.2	38.1
Rural	8.5	46.1
Rural poor	10.1	49.5
Urban	4.5	22.4
Urban poor	5.9	28
Zone		
North-East	4	52.2
North-West	4.7	50.1
North-Central	7.9	41.2
South-East	10.6	38.1
South-West	5.9	22.5
South-South	10.9	28.3

Source: CWIQ (2006) cited in Gender in Nigeria Report (2012, 20)

Over the years, according to GRAIN (2010) the World Bank through its lending, policy advocacy and recently, its agenda towards contributing to large scale land deals has been promoting market-based approaches to land management. The market-based approach entails the conversion of land customary rights into marketable titles including the disengagement of the

state, and legal reforms for land markets to function (GRAIN 2010). It is pertinent to note that the Nigeria government embraced liberalisation policies without its corresponding obligations. For instance, it is expected that liberalisation of land tenure will increase women's access to land and resources. However, local evidence from the field work points to the fact that rural women have not been able to benefit from the promise of changing tenure system because privatisation and liberalisation of land is still based on patriarchal system and interact with existing power relations and gender inequality in which rural women are the most vulnerable group. Nigerian government embarked on liberalisation of land tenure without reforming the existing land use Act.

Under contemporary globalization, approach to liberalisation of land ought to be based on the market system in order to guarantee equal access to land. However, this is not the case in Nigeria, where liberalisation of land is being pursued by the state under the rubrics of the Land Use Act of 1978 whose approach is based on administrative system rather than market based system. According to Nnadi et al. (2012, 98) section 1 of the Land Use Act of 1978 vests ownership of land within the territory of each state in the federation on the state governor. In accordance with the provision of the Act such land is to be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians (Nnadi et al. 2012, 98). Furthermore, under section 6 and 36 of the Act, customary right of occupancy was granted to the local government in respect of rural lands and should be administered in line with existing custom and native law. Existing customary and native laws discriminate against women in land matters such as land right and administrative rights. The expansion and liberalisation of land market through privatisation based on the administrative based system of the customary land tenure system still put men on hegemonic advantage as family and community heads who administer customary land right. They will continue to dominate the control and management of land resources in rural areas. As such the much desired hope of ensuring equality of access to land resources for women under liberalisation of land tenure is utopia for rural women in Nigeria.

Promoters of large scale land deal fail to monitor the performance and adherence to institutional policy framework which is needed to yield positive results. The World Bank in its Agenda policy institutional framework listed five areas that are relevant towards investment that will yield results which are sustainable and equitable for rural development. These are: 1. rights to land and natural resources. 2. Transfer of land rights should be based on user's voluntary and informed agreement. 3. Acquisition

process should be transparent; involving all stakeholders. 4. Mechanism should be put in place to ensure technical and economic viability. 5. Environmental and social sustainability should be protected. (Deininger and Byerless 2011, xi-xii). Similarly, according to the Social Development Integrated Centre (2013, 10), in 2012 the committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed set of global guidelines that are intended to help government protect the land tenure rights of local people. According to Social Development Integrated Centre (2013) the guidelines process started with the United Nations under the auspices of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in 2009 and the process was finalised by World Food Security led intergovernmental negotiations. According to CFS cited in Social Development Integrated Centre (2013, 10), the guidelines recognise that investment by private and public sectors are essential for food security and rural development, but it recommends that government at the same time should protect land tenure rights of local people from risk that large scale land deal might generate.

Field reports showed that in most cases transfer of land rights is not based on the holder's voluntary and informed agreement. In four out of the six communities studied, rural women explained that their communities were not consulted before the forceful appropriation of their farmland while in the other two communities, land title holders were coerced into surrendering their customary holdings with the explanation that investments from land deals will bring development to their communities. Furthermore, payment of compensation has always been untimely and in most cases compensation is not paid at all. The Human Right Watch (1997, 77) noted that the Nigeria land Use Act, onshore and off /on shore laws allow the government to expropriate land for the oil industries, local and foreign investors with no due process protections for those whose livelihood may be destroyed. The petroleum Act of 1969 and the Land use act of 1978 of Nigeria did not stipulate clear benchmarks as to what should be paid as compensation. Section 77 of the petroleum Act stipulate:

»that an oil operator pay to landowners, such sum as may be fair and reasonable compensation for any disturbance of the surface right and for any damage done to the surface of the land upon which mining is being or has been carried on and shall in addition pay to the owner of any crops, economic trees, buildings or works damaged.«

Since there is no specified method of assessing compensation for buildings or farmland, structure and crops, compensation payment is usually not based on market value. As such both oil multinationals and state government traditionally pay for land value and physical structure base on

what they did fit and not market value which ought to be the basis of valuation. Appropriate mechanism was not put in place to ensure that investments from land deals benefit the local population and generate the needed employment. In Kwara state out of 2,771 local people that were displaced, only 120 persons were provided with farmland in the 3,540 hectares in Shonga community that was set aside for farmers whose land were acquired. On the issue of social corporate responsibility, the result has been mixed. In Kwara, the state government, as part of its obligations to the commercial farmers, provided infrastructure such as borehole water, electricity, access roads, upgrading of schools and the establishment of training centres. However, the situation in Delta state was different as communities where land was appropriated for expansion of gas facilities lamented that the gas plant located in their community is strategic in electricity supply, yet the community is in total darkness while there is constant light in camp site and housing unit of the company.

In summation, both the promoters of large scale land deals and the government policies of privatisation and liberalisation of land, lack gender sensitivism as they did not take into account the challenges rural women face in access to productive resources. Policies put in place by the Nigerian government to regulate investment promotion and control overland and natural resources tend to consolidate male dominion over women. Consequently, in reality, development paradigm such as privatisation and liberalisation policies leading to large scale land deals in relation to rural women's lived realities and livelihood sustainability is a paradox as the policy framework reinforced differentiated access to economic opportunities thereby exacerbating further inequalities.

6. Conclusion

Despite the argument in favour of large scale land deals with features of employment, opportunities for contract farming as well as income from paid compensation, prevailing development paradigm framework are skewed against rural women. Evidence from the lived realities of rural women in the communities studied showed that women bear the disproportionate share of negative impact of large scale land deals. Instead of generating sustainable benefits, large scale land deals contribute to further loss of land and resources and left rural women who have limited access to these resources worse off. Findings from the fieldwork can be summarised as follows; first, traditional customary land tenure use rights formerly enjoyed by rural women on land allocated to them is being eroded by large scale land deals.

Secondly, large scale land deals have been accompanied by concentration of land in favour of men and those who assert ownership such as family heads and community leaders at the expense of women who have no access and use rights. Thirdly, employment opportunities from large scale land deals for rural women are often few, temporary or seasonal, as such; it comes with uncertainty about income generation for sustainable livelihood. Fourthly, contract farming is often mediated through existing power relations of household controlled by a male household head as such women benefit less than men from contract farming as few women are contract farmers on their own right because most rural women lack access to productive resources. Lastly, the positive impacts large scale land deals would have had on rural women is being circumscribed by other factors. Inability of women to benefit from large scale land deals and investment was as a result of inequalities in access to land and resources. The root causes of these inequalities lies in the socio-cultural norms, perpetuated in government policies in relation to the above proactive efforts need to be made to address gender imbalance

The study therefore recommends the following; the Nigerian government should develop inclusive policy model that while it provides incentives favouring large scale land acquisition, conditionality should be attach to investments that provide for rural women in order to ensure wider economic benefits from large scale land deals. Secondly, policies should incorporate objectives and targets that address rural women's access to resources and should be supported by implementation system that include affirmative measures for rural women. Thirdly, the realities of women situation should be incorporated within the framework of national development policies in a comprehensive manner. Fourthly, land reforms leading to more equitable patterns of ownership are indispensable for increasing women participation in productive development. Finally, mobilization of women as equal partners in all developmental process needs the priority attention of policy makers. It needs to be recognised that development policies designed to ensure equity and full participation in society should give priority to raising social and economic status of women in rural communities.

Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible by support from the Social Science Research Council's Next Generation of Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship, with fund provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

This article is part of my Ph.D thesis entitled »Impact of Contemporary Globalisation Policies on Women in Rural Communities of Delta, Kano and Kwara states, Nigeria«. It was presented at International Postgraduate conference organized by History Departments of the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Warwick on Changing Land Use, Resource Conflicts and Environmental Implications on African Landscapes. August 10th to 11th 2015 held at the University of Dar es Salaam.

I also acknowledge my supervisors Dr E.V Clark and Prof Etemike Laz. My gratitude to all who responded to the interview and participated in the Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant, research assistants and the various scholars whose work were most useful for the study.

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