
The Politics of Transnational Agrarian Movements

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ABSTRACT

The transnational agrarian movements (TAMs) which have emerged in recent decades have been actively engaged in the politics and policies of international (rural) development. Intergovernmental and non-governmental development agencies have welcomed and supported TAMs in the context of promoting international 'partnerships for development'. The analysis in this article revolves around the politics of TAM representation, intermediation and mobilization around the issue of land. It focuses on La Vía Campesina in relation to three other coalitions: the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, IPC for Food Sovereignty and International Land Coalition. It is argued here that 'people linked to the land' are socially differentiated and thus have varied experiences of neoliberal globalization. Their social movements and organizations are just as differentiated, ideologically, politically and institutionally. This differentiation is internalized within and between TAMs, and partly shapes TAMs' political agendas and strategies in their interaction with international development institutions.

INTRODUCTION

During the past three decades and especially in the context of developing countries, nation states have been subject to a triple squeeze, namely: 'from above' through globalization, with some regulatory powers being increasingly ceded to international regulatory institutions; 'from below' through the partial decentralization of central political, fiscal and administrative powers to local counterparts; and 'from the sides' through the privatization of some functions (Fox, 2001). Central states remain important, albeit transformed, players in global–local politics and economy (Keohane and Nye, 2000: 12). This transformation is contested by different social actors at various levels

This article is based partly on a joint paper with Jennifer C. Franco of the Transnational Institute (TNI) (Borrás and Franco, 2009). For their comments on the earlier co-authored piece, I would like to thank the participants in the workshop, Global Citizen Engagements, held at IDS, University of Sussex, in 2008, especially John Gaventa, Peter Newell and Rajesh Tandon. I am grateful to Jennifer Franco for her input, and would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions. Any remaining errors are mine. Disclosure: the author was a founding member of Via Campesina and was a member of its International Coordinating Commission from 1993 to 1996.

(Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2009; Bello, 2003; McMichael, 2008; van der Ploeg, 2010), and it is the contested nature of this transformation that is, at least partly, responsible for the uneven and varied outcomes of globalization, decentralization and privatization policies. The rural poor¹ is profoundly affected by these processes. The state's partial withdrawal from its traditional obligations to the rural poor, and the waves of privatization that affect poor people's control over natural resources and access to basic utilities, have left many exposed to the harshness of market forces and are partly responsible for the recent global food crisis (Bello, 2009; Chang, 2009; Holt-Gimenez et al., 2009; McMichael, 2009). The changing global–local institutions that structure the rules under which poor people assimilate into or resist the corporate-controlled global politics and economy, have presented both threats and opportunities to the world's rural population.

These threats and opportunities have provoked and encouraged national rural social movements to further localize (in response to state decentralization), and at the same time to internationalize their movements, advocacy works and actions (in response to globalization), while holding on to their national characters. One result of this complex adjustment is the emergence of more horizontal, 'polycentric' rural social movements (Chalmers et al., 1997) which simultaneously struggle to construct coordinative structures for 'vertical integration' (Fox, 2001). The apparently contradictory political directions of globalization versus decentralization, which are having such an impact on the state, are thus also transforming the political organizational processes of agrarian movements. These latter processes are dynamic and contingent, resulting in varied and uneven outcomes institutionally, geographically and temporally. It is from this conjuncture that current transnational agrarian movements (TAMs) have emerged.² The more politically radical section of TAMs is part of what Evans calls 'counter-hegemonic globalization', which he defines as 'a globally organized project of transformation aimed at replacing the dominant (hegemonic) global regime with one that maximizes democratic political control and makes the equitable development of human capabilities and environmental stewardship its priorities' (Evans, 2008: 272).

International development agencies were quick to seize upon the emergence of TAMs as an opportunity for 'partnerships for development' — a

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1. The term 'rural poor' is used here in a broad sense to mean the socially, economically and politically marginalized sections of the rural population. In many settings in developing countries, these include landless rural labourers, small-scale cultivators, poor and middle peasants, sharecroppers, indigenous peoples, subsistence fishers, pastoralists and forest dwellers (male and female).
 2. On the differences between movements, networks and coalitions, and between a 'movement' and an 'organization', see Fox (2009). The author is also aware of the contentious nature of the term '(transnational or global) civil society' as discussed in critical literature, including Hearn (2001). The term 'TAMs' is used loosely to refer to transnational movements, networks and coalitions.

recent phenomenon that has helped define the terrain of contemporary development practice. It began in the early 1990s with the UN summit on the environment in Rio de Janeiro, followed in the mid-1990s by a reform in the procedures of accrediting civil society groups in the UN, which allowed civil society groups to make considerable inroads during this period (McKeon, 2009). Steets and Thomsen (2009: 8) provide a good summary of the extent to which such broad partnerships have multiplied in recent years:

Although there is no global overview of the number of existing partnerships, evidence based on reports of individual agencies, the rising number of entries to the database of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) — now [in 2009] listing 344 partnerships compared to 319 in 2006 — and the increased number of bilateral partnership programs (from 6 to 10 of 22 DAC donors) suggests an increase in overall partnership numbers. The [FAO], for example, counts more than 830 collaborative arrangements. . . There is also a trend towards more global multi-stakeholder initiatives. About 400 global partnerships worldwide were identified in 2005. . . compared with 50 in the 1980s. The World Bank currently engages in 125 Global Partnership Programs and 50 Regional Partnership Programs. . . the United Nations Development Programme engaged in more than 40. . . and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). . . 30.

For international institutions, forging alliances with civil society is not new. What is new is forging alliances with *transnational* groups. Sauvinet-Bedouin et al. (2005: 11) explain that ‘the new phenomenon affecting the relations between FAO and the NGOs and CSOs [civil society organizations] is the coalescence of NGO/CSOs into transnational social movements and networks, think tanks and global policy networks’. For the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, forging partnership with TAMs is part of their mandate in carrying out the Millennium Development Goals, of which the eighth goal is ‘building a global partnership for development’. But the FAO is also cautious, noting that, ‘these are evolving [groups] and include a very broad range of organizations, representing diverse groups and views in society’. The agency therefore calls for attention to be given to ‘the genuine ability of individual CSOs/NGOs to represent specific constituencies’, and stresses that ‘when entering into partnership with CSOs/NGOs, FAO needs to be more open and inclusive. This is all the more important in that FAO is particularly appreciated by this category in its role as an honest broker’ (FAO, 2006: 2–3). The FAO has raised some issues here about differences among TAMs, although it stops short of naming those differences and explaining why they matter.

I would argue that it is not helpful to claim that TAMs are heterogeneous without specifying the structural and institutional bases and implications of such differences. The differences among TAMs are underpinned by the social class origin and base, the ideology and politics, and the organizational/institutional make-up of the TAMs. These three categories do not cover everything — other critical social relations such as gender, caste and ethnicity are also important. For the purposes of this article, however, the discussion will be limited to these three factors. Structural and institutional

differences between TAMs influence the degree of their power when they enter the terrain of international development policy making, which is not a neutral political arena. This terrain is occupied by actors with competing national, class, ideological, professional and corporate interests, as noted by O'Brien et al. (2000: Ch. 1).

The various TAMs which are active in the international land policy making terrain are far more differentiated *internally* in terms of their structural location and institutional make-up than is usually assumed. This is partly addressed in Borrás et al. (2008) and Edelman (2008). The focus here will be on political dynamics and differentiation *between* TAMs engaged in land issues, and the implications of these for the politics of representation, intermediation and mobilization. *Vía Campesina* is the key reference point in this article, but it is examined in relation to three other TAMs: the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty. While TAMs have become one of the most vibrant civil society groups during the past two decades, there are surprisingly few critical scholarly studies about them, compared to other transnational civil society groups such as advocacy networks for human rights, migrants and the environment (see, e.g., Fox, 2005; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Smith and Johnston, 2002; Tarrow, 2005).³

Most of the existing TAM-centred studies have not taken a systematic look at the political dynamics and differentiation between major TAMs working on land issues. Edelman (2003) and Desmarais (2003, 2007) were among the first to offer insightful analyses of the differences between IFAP and *Vía Campesina* in general terms, with Desmarais (2003: 119) warning against 'conflating IFAP and the *Vía Campesina* into just one space'. Building on the work of Edelman and Desmarais, this article aims to: (i) *broaden* the discussion by bringing in two other global coalitions; (ii) *deepen* the analysis by systematically interrogating these coalitions on their national profile, looking at the Philippine case; (iii) *focus* the analysis by examining these TAMs from the perspective of a specific campaign issue (land); and (iv) *systematize* the analysis of the structural and institutional bases of differences between *Vía Campesina* and the three other coalitions by utilizing a class analytical lens.

A better understanding of the structural and institutional bases of the differences between major TAMs requires a political economy analysis. Here,

3. Although scholarly work on this is growing: among the current literature on TAMs, see Biekart and Jelsma (1994); Deere and Royce (2009); Desmarais (2003, 2007); Holt-Gimenez (2006); Martínez-Torres and Rosset (2010); MacDonald (1994); McMichael (2008); as well as the various contributions in Borrás et al. (2008). The most theoretically nuanced and carefully researched studies on TAMs consist of the body of work by the American anthropologist Marc Edelman (1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009a, 2009b and 2009c). This article borrows several analytical insights from Edelman's work.

we follow the four key questions in agrarian political economy as elaborated by Henry Bernstein (2010: Ch. 2): who owns what? who does what? who gets what? what do they do with the created surplus wealth? The rural poor is comprised of various ‘classes of labour’ (Bernstein, 2010), which experience the impact of neoliberal globalization differently: a landless labourer’s interests differ from those of a small-scale farmer; a poor tenant-farmer has interests that may conflict with those of a seasonally hired farm labourer; the interests of a labourer hired full-time may compete with those of a seasonal farm worker; a poor pastoralist has different interests from a subsistence farmer; and so on.

These are all working poor people, all linked to the land; they are all part of the ‘local community’, but they have different, even conflicting, social positions within it. Some among these groups may be ‘exploiters’: a landlord and a moneylender are the exploiters for a poor tenant-farmer, for example, while a medium-scale farmer may exploit a landless labourer. Moreover, it is quite common to see individuals (or households) assume multiple working class categories as they juggle different sources of livelihoods over time and space. Development policies are not politically neutral institutional instruments. When carried out in rural poor communities, they impact differently on these various groups of people. In a setting where there are more potential claimants than available land, a land reform policy will include some but will exclude others; a credit programme aimed at developing agricultural productivity may benefit farmers, but not landless labourers.

This picture of a differentiated rural poor becomes even more complicated when we include other social classes that are also linked to the land: middle and rich farmers. The latter also work on the land, but they accumulate wealth through their own farm production, trade and money-lending, among other activities. They were the masters of Lenin’s Russian countryside more than a hundred years ago; they remain the masters in most of the world’s countryside today.⁴ A neoliberal land policy anchored on liberalized land markets may benefit the relatively capital-rich strata of middle and rich farmers, at the expense of small-scale farmers or those who rely on open access or common property land resources. A policy of low prices for farm inputs may benefit the middle and rich farmers, but not landless and farmless labourers. A policy of low prices for food will be welcomed by the net food buyers among the landless labourers but may hurt the interests of food surplus-producing rural classes.

While these are all ‘people of the land’, the defining feature of each group’s link to the land is its relations to the means of production (usually land, labour and capital). Not only are the impacts of development policies within and between these groups differentiated; the ways in which the groups frame their issues and demands and engage in politics also differ from each

4. For example, see Oya (2007) for a relevant study in Western Africa.

other. Surplus-producing middle and rich farmers may be fiercely opposed to global trade liberalization, while landless rural labourers with no farm products to sell will be unmoved by it. They, in turn, are likely to support a radical redistributive land reform, which would be less relevant to medium farmers and is likely to be opposed by rich farmers.

The four key political economy questions posed by Bernstein (2009: 74–7; 2010) help us unpack vague categories such as ‘rural poor’ or ‘people of the land’, in order to see the actual impact of development policies — because, as Herring and Agarwala (2006) rightly ask, how else can we disaggregate the process and impact of development? Discourses by TAMs are replete with references to ‘local people’, ‘people of the land’, ‘local community’, ‘affected local community’, and so on. But a local community, while it includes the rural poor (landless labourers, small farmers, poor pastoralists), also usually includes *kulaks* (rich farmers), traditional chiefs, lumpen elements, *cacique*, corrupt petty state bureaucrats and officials, and other elite social groups whose interests may be contradictory to those of the working classes. The ‘people of the land’ formulation builds on a ‘people–land’ relationship which then becomes the defining feature of the identity politics that emerges among some movements. While this is relevant, it tends to neglect other equally if not more important relationships, i.e., ‘people–people’ relations — ‘social relations’ among the differentiated social classes and groups of people who may all be linked to the land.⁵ By putting the two dimensions (people–land, people–people) together in one analysis, it is possible to see that a single movement with a single identity (a movement of ‘people of the land’) is likely to have plural class interests internally, and that while some of these interests may be complementary, others may be contradictory.

That large TAMs are also ‘arenas of action’ is largely due to the existing plural class interests as well as ideologies and politics within and between (sub-)national movements linked to these TAMs. As different (sub-)national movements enter the TAM arena, there will inevitably be variation in their degrees of power, in the political circumstances and timing of their entries (see, e.g., Baletti et al., 2008), in their institutional and political (and even key leaders’ personal) motivations and agendas — which may include needing to reposition their movements in the context of weak or waning influence on the home-front (Edelman, 2008). The way these movements try to mediate or aggregate issues and demands of their local–national constituencies may be

5. There is a current trend in academic thinking about ‘new rurality’ which finds common ground with many of the radical TAMs. But Kay (2008: 934) has observed that in the so-called ‘new rurality approach’ in rural development studies, there is an absence of ‘class analysis and of the political forces which shape the State’. He concludes that ‘this inability to analyse the class dynamics in society and above all to appreciate the relevance of the process of peasant differentiation leads the new ruralists astray in their policy proposals’ (ibid.: 935).

more or less effective at different times. The local–national–global *links* in TAMs therefore should not be assumed to be unproblematic, as insights from Boyer (2010), Newell (2008) and Scoones (2008), among others, remind us.

Class analysis is key to understanding the differences and similarities in the ideological and political standpoints of different TAMs, and to understanding the issues that unite or divide agrarian movements, as demonstrated for example in the contributions to Brass (1994). A movement with a significant mass base among, and/or a political leadership captured by, rich farmers will not call for redistributive land reform or labour reforms, as illustrated by the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (KRRS) in India (a member of *Vía Campesina*). This contrasts with movements such as Brazil's Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) (another member of *Vía Campesina*) that has a mass base among the landless whose key demand is the redistribution of land property. Class, of course, cannot be the only relevant factor: other identities, including gender, ethnicity, race and caste, intersect with it.

'Identity politics' has been a popular lens through which to study TAMs; it has underscored several relevant identities beyond class, and helped to explain some important aspects of TAMs. For example, environmental issues unite cross-class coalitions across the rural–urban and South–North divides (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010; McMichael, 2008; Peluso et al., 2008; Wittman, 2009). This article builds on that existing knowledge, and attempts to add to it by highlighting class, whilst being aware that a study that looks *solely* into class dynamics will be unable to uncover all key dimensions of TAM dynamics. A political economy framework will allow us to better understand dynamic linkages between structural transformation and rural politics, as demonstrated by Edelman (2008) for Central America. This framework appropriately captures the nature, scope, pace and direction of a process of social differentiation of the peasantry which is key to understanding agrarian *change* — 'change' being the key context for and object of TAMs' politics.⁶ This framework will facilitate a nuanced analysis of the dynamic local–national mass base of TAMs. Some movements have a relatively stable class character, such as those rooted in rural trade unions which are based among permanently hired plantation workers. In other cases, the class character of a movement's base may shift; for instance a landless movement starts with landless rural poor, with their distinct class interest and politics, but once they get their lands and convert them into individual family farms, their class character and politics are transformed — despite having remained in the same ('landless') movement. A movement internalizes dynamic changes such as these, which are fraught with contradictions. It also internalizes the class character of members, many of whom belong

6. For a theoretical and historical background, see Byres (2009) and Bernstein (2009); for a methodological insight, see White (1989).

to multiple class categories as they combine multiple sources of livelihoods. These dynamics are in turn internalized within TAMs. A political economy perspective can help capture these political dynamics.

With that in mind, the remainder of this article will examine the contexts and conditions of the emergence of TAMs during the past two decades or so and analyse the politics of representation, intermediation and mobilization; it will present a view from the Philippines to give a more concrete illustration of the vertical alignment of TAMs.

THE EMERGENCE OF TAMs

As Edelman (2003) has explained, TAMs are not new. Among the oldest groups that remain important on the global governance scene is the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). Officially, IFAP claims that it is 'the world farmers' organization representing over 600 million farm families grouped in 120 national organizations in 79 countries'. It further claims to have been advocating for 'farmers' interests at the international level since 1946' and to have 'General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations'.⁷ Founded in 1946 by associations of commercially oriented small- to large-scale farmers mainly from industrialized countries, IFAP has become the main sector organization for agriculture that has made official representation at (inter)governmental institutions. Not a homogeneous network, its politics tend to be dominated by its economically and financially powerful members (Edelman, 2003). Moreover, as Edelman (*ibid.*) explains, despite a certain ambivalence about market liberalism, groups linked to IFAP often back centre-right political parties. IFAP's leadership has always been dominated by farm leaders from industrialized countries. From 1946 to 2008, all of IFAP's presidents and secretaries general were white men (see the profile of IFAP in the Appendix). It was only in 2008, after more than sixty years in existence, that it elected a president from a developing country, Zambia (IFAP, 2008: 2). On many occasions IFAP has seen neoliberalism as an opportunity, and so essentially supports neoliberal policies while advocating some operational and administrative revisions (Desmarais, 2007). A good insight into IFAP's position on key issues of agricultural production and consumption, as well as on agrofood and agroenergy systems, can be seen from its official position as reported by the FAO:

The production of food and feed remains paramount for the farmers of IFAP; however, biofuels represent a new market opportunity, help diversify risk and promote rural development. Biofuels are the best option currently available to bring down greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector and thus to help mitigate climate change. . . . Recently, biofuels have been blamed for soaring prices. There are many factors behind the rise in food prices, including

7. Taken from the official website of IFAP, <http://www.ifap.org/en/about/aboutifap.html> (accessed 2 July 2009).

supply shortages due to poor weather conditions, and changes in eating habits which are generating strong demand. The proportion of agricultural land given over to producing bio-fuels in the world is very small: 1 percent in Brazil, 1 percent in Europe, 4 percent in the United States of America, and so biofuel production is a marginal factor in the rise of food prices.

The misconceptions about biofuels are important to overcome for a farming community that has long suffered from low incomes. Bioenergy represents a good opportunity to boost rural economies and reduce poverty, provided this production complies with sustainability criteria. Sustainable biofuel production by family farmers is not a threat to food production. It is an opportunity to achieve profitability and to revive rural communities. (FAO, 2008: 97)

By contrast, La Vía Campesina, an international movement of poor peasants and small farmers from the global South and North, was formally established in 1993 as a critical response to the neoliberal globalization threat. Today, this movement unites close to 200 (sub-)national organizations from 56 countries in Latin America, North America, Asia, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe (see Vía Campesina's profile in the Appendix). An ideologically autonomous and pluralist coalition, it is both an *actor* and an *arena of action*. Claiming global and popular representation, Vía Campesina has lately emerged as a major *actor* in the current popular transnational struggles against neoliberalism: its main agenda is to defeat the forces of neoliberalism and to develop an alternative (Vía Campesina, 2004). This explains the coalition's confrontational stance towards international financial institutions (IFIs) which are seen as the tools of neoliberalism. For Vía Campesina, the goal is to delegitimize IFIs and decrease their influence; it therefore does not engage in dialogue or consultative processes with these institutions (although it does engage with some UN agencies). At the same time, Vía Campesina has emerged as an important *arena* of action, debate and exchange between different (sub-)national peasant and farmers' groups. Vía Campesina is itself an 'institutional space'. It is this dual character — as both a single actor and an arena of action — that has made Vía Campesina an important institution of and for (sub-)national peasant and farmers' movements, and an interesting but complex entity for other social movements, NGOs and international agencies to comprehend and deal with.⁸ Vía Campesina's position on the food and energy crisis stands in stark contrast to IFAP's as it opposes corporate-driven agrofuels.

As (inter)governmental institutions have been increasingly involved in framing, funding and pursuing land policies, these agencies in turn have become a target of transnational campaigns by poor peasants in the global South. Poor peasants have crossed community and national borders, linked up with poor peasants from other countries in similar predicaments, and

8. For further analysis of Vía Campesina, see Borras (2008a), Desmarais (2003, 2007), Edelman (2003, 2005, 2008), and Martínez-Torres and Rosset (2010), among others.

forged new identities including a global community of landless poor peasants and small farmers, of ‘people of the land’. *Vía Campesina* has reframed the dominant free market-oriented land policy discourse by bringing in the notion of ‘rights-based agrarian reform’ (‘right to land’, ‘right to food’) in the context of ‘food sovereignty’ (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010).⁹ By (re)framing their land campaign within a ‘human rights framework’ and pursuing it as such, *Vía Campesina* has necessarily to engage with the ‘duty bearers’, the various (inter)governmental institutions operating at the global arena.

Vía Campesina’s global campaign for agrarian reform has contributed to the creation of a distinct new space for citizen participation in international land policy making (Borrás and Franco, 2009; McKeon, 2009).¹⁰ Within and through this space, *Vía Campesina* processes and aggregates the various perspectives and positions of its affiliate members, engages with other non-state actors working around global land issues, and interacts with (inter)governmental institutions. This space can be described as ‘new’ because previously there had only been institutional spaces used by NGOs and by middle and rich farmers, often claiming they were acting on behalf of poor peasants and small farmers. It is ‘distinct’ because it has been created, occupied and used by and for poor peasants and small farmers.

Nation States and (Land) Policy Making

When neoliberalism gained momentum in the early 1980s, land reform was quickly dislodged from the official agendas of (inter)national governmental institutions. Only a small number of significant land reforms were carried out in the 1980s–90s, including those in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Brazil, the Philippines and Zimbabwe. This fall from grace can partly be explained by the mixed outcomes in many past land reform initiatives, especially in Latin America (Dorner, 1992; Thiesenhusen, 1989).

More recently, there has been a resurgence of activity around land policy making. The kind of land policy favoured today differs from the earlier concept of state-led redistributive land reform in at least three ways. First, in the post-Cold War period, the set of actors involved in international land policy making has become far more plural and diverse than during the previous period, with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and a number

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9. While the (human) rights-based approach to development has gained currency recently, it is not taken as unproblematic by some critical scholars. Relevant discussions can be found in Cousins (2009), De Feyter (2005) and Gledhill (2002).
 10. Here, ‘space’ is broadly defined as an institutional process or venue or arena through or within which (sub-)national agrarian movements have created and occupied a distinct institutional place for poor peasants and small farmers.

of UN agencies taking up the land issue. Second, (inter)governmental institutions now strongly advocate localized and decentralized approaches to land policy making, based on the assumption that land policies tied to national governments are bound to fail due to the inherently corrupt and remote character of the latter. Third, the push by international institutions to 'go local' is linked to their advocacy for non-state, privatized transactions around land resources. The assumption here is that the most efficient (re)allocation of land resources is achieved through private transactions.

A key feature in current land policy making is thus the avoidance of the central states. In reality, however, central states remain key actors in national–local governance in most parts of the world. But central states have been transformed (Gwynne and Kay, 2004), and this transformation of the central state in the context of policy making has in turn reshaped state–civil society relations. Fox's explanation using the metaphor of a squeezed balloon is very apt:

In this context of power shared between local, state, federal governments, as well as international actors, civil society organizations face the problem of the balloon — when you squeeze it over here, it pops out over there. That is, when an advocacy initiative focuses on a particular branch or level of government, one can pass the ball to another. When one criticizes a state government agency, it is very easy for them to pass the buck, by blaming the federal government above, or the municipal governments below them. . . So who's got the ball here? This dilemma for civil society organizations is deepened by the lack of transparency at *all* levels of 'public' decision-making and policy implementation. (Fox, 2001: 2, emphasis in original)

In general, rural social movements engaged in land policy issues tend to follow the broad patterns of institutional change outlined here. Some have crossed national boundaries and joined forces with other national movements to engage (inter)governmental institutions. Others have localized their actions, following the mainstream shift towards the local, embracing decentralized approaches to land policy making. Still others have abandoned state-directed collective actions and advocacies and become involved in the privatized, market-led land policy transactions that have received so much attention and logistical support from mainstream (inter)national development institutions. A few have attempted to combine initiatives on these various levels. Amidst this transformation, two broad types can be detected: those that 'float' in international venues, detached from any local or national setting, and those that 'sink' into local settings, bereft of any (trans)national links. Alone, neither type is strong enough to make a significant difference in contemporary multi-level development processes (Borras and Franco, 2009).

Aspiring to neither 'sink' nor 'float', *Vía Campesina* engages in verticalizing actions by connecting local, national and international groups, in the manner described by Fox (2001) and Edwards and Gaventa (2001).

In this process, weak and strong, small and large (sub-)national agrarian movements connect transnationally, and are thus strengthened, while *Vía Campesina* in turn gains strength even in geographic areas which have not previously had strong national movements, such as Africa. However, unlike some movements which make claims about the ‘global’ nature of their campaigns, the *Vía Campesina* initiative has been large but partial and uneven in its geographic coverage.¹¹ Among all the regional groups in *Vía Campesina*, it is mainly the groups from Latin American, Asia and South Africa that have pushed and implemented the global campaign for agrarian reform. The main campaign issue is opposition to neoliberal land policies. The campaign combines two strategies: ‘expose and oppose’ for neoliberal land policies and the institutions that promote them (such as the World Bank); and a ‘tactical alliance’ strategy for friendly institutions or groups within institutions, such as the FAO and the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The campaign venues are international conferences, workshops and meetings as well as electronic discussions. The campaign platform is a combination of demands to drop neoliberal land policies and to adopt an alternative vision, such as ‘food sovereignty’. Actions may take a militant form but also include lobbying and negotiation (see Appendix).

In its global land campaigns, the impact of *Vía Campesina*’s advocacy work can be seen mainly in reframing the terms of contemporary debates around land and land reform (Borras, 2008b; McMichael, 2008). The campaign is partly responsible for the defensive position now taken by market-led agrarian reform promoters; it can also take some credit for preventing other international development institutions such as the FAO and IFAD — or more precisely, important groups therein — from jumping completely onto the neoliberal land policy bandwagon. However, the campaign has failed to deliver any other major outcomes which could be deemed desirable for radical TAMs at the national level. In Brazil, for example, market-led agrarian reform was actually expanded in spite of several years of protests from the global campaign and despite the fact that the Brazilian movement, MST, has been a key actor in the international campaign.

11. *Vía Campesina* does not have any presence in China, the former USSR and Central and Eastern Europe; to date, it is relatively thinly spread in sub-Saharan Africa and almost completely absent in the Middle East and North African region. The point here is not simply to make a quantitative geographic accounting; it is more important to understand the kinds of structural and institutional conditions that TAMs miss because of their absence in such settings. There is also the challenge of how to link the organized struggles of TAMs with the more widespread form of agrarian struggles — the ‘everyday peasant politics’ of Kerkvliet (2009), Malseed (2008) and Scott (1985, 1990).

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION, INTERMEDIATION AND MOBILIZATION

This section will focus on how the politics of representation, intermediation and mobilization have played out within and between *Vía Campesina* and the other TAMs around the issue of land. It will use the Philippine case to illustrate what transpires at the national level.

Movements within *Vía Campesina*

As ‘arenas of action’, TAMs are not conflict-free spaces internally; they are themselves politically contested. One of the underlying assumptions here is that the mass base of *Vía Campesina* is socially differentiated along, among others, class divides: (i) poor peasants, small-scale farmers and rural labourers, mainly in Latin America and Asia; (ii) small and part-time farmers located in (western) Europe, North America, Japan and South Korea; (iii) small-scale farmers in Africa, (iv) a relatively small but influential group of emerging small family farms created through successful partial land reforms, such as those in Brazil and Mexico; and (v) the middle to rich farmers’ movement in Karnataka, India. These various groups have their (sub-)national movements represented in *Vía Campesina*. This variegated class base is also largely responsible for the diverse ideological and political positions within and between national members, although movements of the same stratum of the rural poor may also have competing ideological positions. That all members of *Vía Campesina* are united on a platform of alternative political strategies has been assumed (or wished for) rather than empirically demonstrated. For example: orthodox Marxist groups in *Vía Campesina* do not embrace — in fact they (silently) loathe — the neopopulist dream of small family farming that dominates the movement’s vision; KRRS of India, a rich farmers’ movement within *Vía Campesina*, did not, and will never, support the demand and struggle for redistributive land reform. Insights from the Philippine case are illustrative here.

In the Philippines, three movements are connected to *Vía Campesina*, but in varying ways.¹² All of them have a mass base among poor peasants and landless rural labourers. The first is the KMP (Peasant Movement of the Philippines), a legal peasant organization whose ideological position on land reform follows a more or less orthodox Marxist position by prioritizing workers and campaigning for state farms and the nationalization of land, although allowing for a transitional individual ownership (Putzel, 1995).

12. This paragraph draws on Borras (2008b).

The second group is DKMP (Democratic KMP), a group that broke away from KMP in 1993 for ideological and political reasons. It took a more 'populist' position in terms of land reform, advocating small family farms. However, largely because of personality differences among its key leaders, DKMP ultimately failed to rally and consolidate its forces. By the second half of the 1990s, its membership base had shrunk to a handful of peasant leaders and rice farmers in Central Luzon. With a few land reform cases and modest support from some NGOs, DKMP has been able to maintain only a very weak presence.

Both KMP and DKMP remain official members of *Vía Campesina*, although in recent years, and partly for ideological reasons, KMP has fallen from grace within *Vía Campesina* (Borrás, 2008b). The result is a somewhat ironic situation in which one member organization with a relatively significant mass base (KMP) has been politically marginalized within *Vía Campesina*, while another member organization without a significant mass base (DKMP) has been mainstreamed within the international movement.¹³ The irony increases when we consider a third group. A large chunk of the peasant movement that broke away from KMP did not find it conducive to rally under the banner of DKMP. Instead, they eventually regrouped under an umbrella organization called the National Coordination of Autonomous Local Rural People's Organizations (UNORKA). Formalized in 2000, UNORKA quickly became the largest group directly engaged in land reform struggle in the Philippines; by 2005 it was involved in nearly 800 agrarian disputes across the country. Its mass base is mainly among the landless peasants and rural labourers. Like the MST in Brazil, UNORKA is using the state land reform law both as the institutional context for and object of its campaigns (Franco, 2008). However, UNORKA tends to be more eclectic in terms of its ideological position on land: while taking a populist stance advocating small family farms, it also has a significant base among rural workers in the context of trade union/agrarian struggles for labour reforms. The irony is that, for many years, UNORKA wanted to join *Vía Campesina* and the latter wanted to accept UNORKA, but KMP objected. Because of an organizational rule that essentially allows existing members to reject any applicant from their own country, UNORKA's entry was effectively blocked. However, *Vía Campesina* began inviting UNORKA to important global gatherings as an observer and in October 2008, during the Fifth World Congress of *Vía Campesina* held in Mozambique, UNORKA was finally admitted to the global movement as a 'candidate member'.

13. Information has been gathered over the past fifteen years through participant observation and informal discussions with *Vía Campesina* leaders. For details, see Borrás (2007: Ch. 6).

Given that among the largest and most influential groups within *Vía Campesina* are the ranks of poor peasants, small-scale farmers and rural labourers (in contrast to IFAP's membership), it is no surprise that *Vía Campesina* tends to employ more militant forms of action in its land reform campaigns, and that it targets neoliberal globalization — after all, these groups are among the most adversely affected. This partly explains why *Vía Campesina* has framed its demands and global campaign for redistributive land reform in the way it has (see Appendix). Yet, the organizations which make up *Vía Campesina* are highly differentiated. The dynamics of the Philippines are not unique: similar cases are found in several other countries, including Mexico, Indonesia and India.

***Vía Campesina* and NGOs**

The space for representation and intermediation at the level of international rural-oriented development policy making has been traditionally dominated by IFAP and NGOs. Predictably, *Vía Campesina* has challenged this domination. *Vía Campesina*'s discourse on NGOs has been influenced by the former Central American Peasant Coalition, ASOCODE; ASOCODE was a pillar in the founding of *Vía Campesina*, famous for articulating what was perhaps the first systematic TAM critique of NGOs. In fact, ASOCODE built its platform on the self-appointed task of taking back the 'voice' of peasant movements from the NGOs and asserting that peasants could represent themselves. Wilson Campos, a Costa Rican activist who was the leader of ASOCODE in the 1990s and a founding leader of *Vía Campesina*, argued that: 'There are simply too many NGOs in Central America acting on behalf of the peasants. . . . Besides, too much money is being wasted on setting up all these organisations and paying salaries' (quoted in Biekart and Jelsma, 1994: 20). He elaborated further: 'We farmers can speak up for ourselves. Already too many people have been taking advantage of us, without us getting any the wiser of it' (ibid.: 215). Ironically, ASOCODE became what it rejected: a bureaucratized organization, with lots of salaried staff and officials, and by the end of the 1990s, it had dissolved (Edelman, 1998, 2008; see also MacDonald, 1994). *Vía Campesina* forcefully argued that only the 'movements' of the poor peasants and small farmers can (and should) represent these social classes and groups in international fora, firmly — and quite effectively — anchoring itself to a popular civil society slogan: 'not about us without us'.

The emergence of *Vía Campesina* has transformed the transnational civil society arena and agendas in international (rural) development. *Vía Campesina* advocated, created and occupied a distinct space for poor peasants and small farmers. It has become the main intermediary between various local-national movements of poor peasants and small farmers, largely but not totally replacing IFAP and NGOs. This in turn has provoked a mixed

reaction from NGOs. Some NGOs seem to resent the entry of *Vía Campesina* and have refused to give ground; other NGOs have tried to redefine themselves and some have collaborated well with *Vía Campesina* (for a detailed discussion on this theme, see Borrás, 2008a).

Vía Campesina's Competing Networks

As already noted, the institutional space for rural citizen engagement at the global level was previously dominated by IFAP. IFAP's main base is small, medium and large farmers' organizations in the global South and North, but it is dominated by organizations from industrialized countries. Many of its members in developing countries are organizations of middle and rich farmers, led, in many instances, by middle class and agribusiness-minded entrepreneurs. This may explain why IFAP never really pushed or mobilized for redistributive land reform. A close reading of key documents available on its official website (<http://www.ifap.org/>) reveals that land reform is not part of its main agenda, which is dominated by issues concerning commodities and trade. This is in contrast to *Vía Campesina's* key documents that are almost all linked to political contestations around land property. IFAP's preferred forms of action are also very different to those of *Vía Campesina*, being limited to negotiation, collaboration and partnership mainly with official inter-governmental bodies (see Appendix).

The entry of *Vía Campesina* onto the global governance scene did not completely dislodge pre-existing groups. These groups have persisted, occupying terrain which is often outside the new space created by *Vía Campesina*, but which at times overlaps with the latter. The Farmers' Forum established by the IFAD (IFAD, 2006) is an example of such an overlapping space; another is the FAO where, despite inroads by *Vía Campesina*, IFAP remains entrenched. Direct and indirect competition for political influence between *Vía Campesina* and IFAP continues.

Hence, we have two different global networks rooted in different social classes — but both claim to represent 'family farmers of the world', both have legitimate roots in 'local communities' and amongst 'local people'. The following phrase seems to capture the vision of 'people of the land' as advanced by *Vía Campesina* and its allies: 'to promote the well-being of all who obtain their livelihood from the land and to assure to them the maintenance of adequate and stable remuneration'. Yet this phrase is actually the first clause in IFAP's Constitution. The political dynamics that have emerged between *Vía Campesina* and IFAP are likely to have far-reaching implications for global development policy making. But without explicit class analysis, it is not possible to appropriately differentiate *Vía Campesina* from IFAP, or to explain why and how such distinction matters. In this context, formulations like 'people of the land', 'local people', and 'local community' inadvertently

mask important differences (class-based, ideological, political, institutional) between movements, and so are not always analytically useful.

The profiles of two movement leaders from the Philippines are illuminating: Evangeline Mendoza, key leader of UNORKA (linked to *Vía Campesina*) owns half a hectare of land won through a direct land occupation campaign via the state land reform and devoted to subsistence crops; this is her main livelihood. Her group engages in militant actions and campaigns against neoliberal policies and globalization more broadly. Leonardo Montemayor is the Secretary General of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), a member of IFAP. He comes from the wealthy family of the Montemayors; he is a lawyer, and has served as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture under the Macapagal-Arroyo presidency which pursues neoliberal agricultural policies. His group has never engaged in militant actions against neoliberal policies and globalization. Mendoza and Montemayor are both ‘people of the land’, but in very different ways.

In the Philippines, two organizations historically held membership in IFAP, namely, Sanduguan¹⁴ and the Federation of Free Farmers.¹⁵ Sanduguan, a national coalition of middle and rich farmers based in the rice sector, was founded by well-off middle class professionals and agribusiness and rural banking executives. Its main agenda is to gain more state support services for production and trading activities, to push the state to provide a more level playing field for them in the rice trade, and to lobby the national government to enable them to participate directly in import and export businesses involving farm input and output markets. For its part, the FFF, founded in 1953 by the Montemayors, emerged out of a national campaign for a liberal redistributive land reform (Putzel, 1992). While it began as a conservative organization, it became radicalized in the 1960s with the involvement of young leftist activist intellectuals. The FFF split in the early 1970s; the radicalized section left, and what remained of the FFF were the more politically conservative leaders and groups of community organizations comprised mainly of middle and rich farmers in the rice sector. Their main concerns are similar to those of Sanduguan’s. Perhaps for historical reasons, the FFF’s leadership does intermittently engage in land reform issues. In the Philippine context, it has always occupied a liberal-conservative position on the political spectrum, even supporting the hated Marcos dictatorship from the 1970s to the mid-1980s. It has always been run by the family that founded it. The profiles of these two organizations are very different from the *Vía Campesina*-linked groups in the country (KMP, DKMP, UNORKA) in terms of class base, ideology, politics and institutional make-up.

14. In the 2009 list of members, Sanduguan was no longer included.

15. In the early 1990s, there was a politically broad coalition of agrarian movements in the Philippines that included FFF and Sanduguan. This was the ‘Peasants’ Forum’. The author was part of the secretariat of this coalition, allowing him a rare close look at the character of the mass base of these two peasant associations.

Relatively recently, IFAP recruited an additional member from the Philippines, the politically moderate National Council of Farmer's Associations (PAKISAMA). PAKISAMA was founded in the mid-1980s to engage the government on the land reform issue using moderation and shying away from more militant actions (Borrás, 2007: Ch. 6). After a major land reform campaign in 1996, PAKISAMA shifted its focus to lobby work on agricultural productivity issues, and later formalized its membership in IFAP. By 2005, counting both the lands that it was struggling over and those that had already been successfully redistributed to its members, PAKISAMA had been engaged in struggles over a total of some 15,000 hectares; this compared to UNORKA's direct struggles involving approximately 400,000 hectares of land (Borrás, 2007: Ch. 6).¹⁶

In the meantime and at the global level, a separate initiative around land policy advocacy started to gain some momentum: the International Land Coalition (ILC). Founded in 1996, it was originally known as the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty; it was renamed in 2003. ILC is a global alliance of IFIs (such as the World Bank and IFAD), intergovernmental institutions (European Commission, FAO), and several NGOs. By 2006, it comprised twenty-seven NGOs, a farmer's federation and nine intergovernmental organizations. IFAP is a member of ILC, and is part of its governing Council. ILC is led by middle class professionals based in a global secretariat that is housed at and funded by IFAD in Rome. In an evaluation of ILC in 2006 (Universalia, 2006: ii), it was noted that:

While most of ILC's current members and partners... see ILC objectives as highly relevant, ILC has not yet included important and increasingly powerful social movements in its global alliance — which could undermine the Coalition's relevance in the future. The distance between ILC and social movements seems to be due to ILC's current membership structure... and also to the World Bank's membership in ILC (which is problematic for some social movements).

It is this institutional composition of ILC that makes it an interesting and relevant entity for many actors in global land policy making, but problematic to others. ILC often claims to be a 'civil society organization', despite counting IFIs and intergovernmental entities among its members. It is a formal and institutionalized 'bridge' between IFIs, intergovernmental agencies and NGOs, although its institutional make-up means that ILC is close to the IFIs — chief targets of *Vía Campesina's* 'expose and oppose' campaigns. The former ILC director once praised the 'democratic' process and outcome of the World Bank's new land policy inaugurated in 2003 (World Bank, 2003). For its part, the World Bank celebrates its level of

16. At an average of 3 ha for a peasant family.

influence on ILC, as the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group reported: ‘More specifically... there is evidence from other observers that Bank staff have played an important role in pushing for sound analysis as a basis for [ILC] knowledge. They have contributed substantial input through the Bank Land Thematic Group and Bank papers on land issues’ (WB-IEG, 2008: xx). But some ILC members are opposed to the World Bank’s land policies, and *Vía Campesina* is strident in its criticism. In addition, and despite its claim of horizontal relationships among its members, a 2006 evaluative study of ILC found that ‘ILC has been a centralized organization, driven more by the ILC Secretariat and IFAD than by its members’ (Universalia, 2006: iii). Its preferred forms of action are negotiation, collaboration and partnership with various governmental and non-governmental entities (see Appendix). ILC could become an important actor in the international land policy making arena, but with politics very different from that of *Vía Campesina*.

In the Philippines, ILC’s founding member is an NGO network called Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), and its Philippine members include PAKISAMA. ANGOC has not been engaged in any significant and sustained ground level land campaigns in the Philippines since 1996–97; its activities have been confined to occasional conferences and consultations at the (inter)national level. As a result, ILC — like IFAP — is left without any connection to significant land campaigns in the Philippines. Beginning in 2007–08, ILC recruited several new members from the Philippines, all coming from the politically moderate social-democratic group — the peasant associations PAKISAMA (an IFAP member) and Task Force Mapalad, and the NGOs Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID), Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD), and Agrarian Reform Now (AR Now). Task Force Mapalad is an important land reform actor, although its geographic reach is limited to a handful of provinces. The extent to which the entry of these groups will result in ILC being linked to actual land reform struggles in the Philippines remains to be seen.

***Vía Campesina* and Ally Networks**

The structural and institutional location and make-up of a TAM influence its choices of ally networks, and these choices in turn influence the TAM’s degree of power. The IFAP tends to form alliances with similar minded entities that are committed to the same issues of productivity, agribusiness, trade and the like. For example, IFAP works closely with agencies within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) network, while *Vía Campesina* stays away from CGIAR and works with independent alternative research institutions such as those promoting

agroecology.¹⁷ Unlike the IFAP, *Vía Campesina* has allies among the independent non-governmental donor agencies and radical agrarian justice networks such as Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) and Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, and environmental justice movements like Friends of the Earth and GRAIN. None of these groups will work strategically with IFAP or ILC for ideological and political reasons.

Perhaps the emergence of a broader network of movements also helped instigate greater rethinking within *Vía Campesina* about its perspectives on land. *Vía Campesina* is a member of a broader network, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty ('IPC' for short). This is an ideologically, politically and organizationally broad network composed of some 500 rural-oriented organizations worldwide, including rural social movements, agricultural trade unions and NGOs; it was formed during the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996.¹⁸ While *Vía Campesina* is a key pillar of the IPC, the latter also includes IFAP (although it is generally not active) and some ILC-linked NGOs. The IPC became more actively involved in land issues in the build up to, and during, the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) organized by FAO and held in Brazil in March 2006. During the ICARRD, the IPC served as the official anchor of the NGO parallel forum. During this forum, many issues were raised by other grassroots sectors linked to land including pastoralists, indigenous peoples, agricultural trade unions and subsistence fishers.

Inevitably, such a broad network brings together disparate groups. For example, an important actor within IPC is the Brazilian rural trade union *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura* (CONTAG) which, after initially opposing it, eventually supported market-led agrarian reform in Brazil. MST has had a historically tense relationship with CONTAG, not least because of their different positions in the struggles that dominate the Brazilian countryside today: while MST advocates land reform to build family farms, CONTAG promotes labour reform. There are of course overlaps, but in general the different emphases of the two movements has resulted in two parallel, less connected, struggles in the countryside. The involvement of the IPC in land issues has thus meant the ideological diversification of this political space.¹⁹ The process of interfacing with indigenous peoples' groups has also brought to the surface tensions between the peasant movement and some indigenous peoples' organizations — even those that are formally members of *Vía Campesina* — with some saying that *Vía*

17. The CGIAR network generally supports, through research, the mainstream (industrial) agrofood food system agenda, while agroecology promotes alternatives through applied research that directly challenges the dominant agrofood complex.

18. For more background on IPC for Food Sovereignty, see their official website: <http://www.foodsovereignty.org>

19. Interview with Antonio Onorati, global focal person, IPC (Berlin, June 2007).

Campesina ‘feels like a peasant space, not an indigenous peoples’ space’ (Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2005: 16, fn. 9). This situation can be partly traced to the inherent tensions between support for the implementation of conventional land reform and advocacy for reclaiming indigenous territory. This tension within *Vía Campesina* is likely to remain one of the most difficult challenges within the global movement.

Meanwhile, it is on the land struggle front that *Vía Campesina*’s most solid alliance with an NGO network has been achieved. During the past decade, *Vía Campesina* has built an alliance with FIAN, a human rights NGO global network. FIAN is organized into country sections, with individual members coming from activist and human rights NGOs, social movements, and academia, to struggle for the promotion of the right to food, a right which in turn requires the right to land. In 1999, FIAN and *Vía Campesina* agreed to undertake a joint international campaign on land reform. Since then, FIAN has steadily emerged as an important player in the global policy debate over neoliberal land policies and the promotion of a rights-based approach to land reform. A relatively high degree of mutual trust has been established between the two networks, notwithstanding some ‘birth pains’ and persistent tensions.²⁰ Later, in 2001, a global network of researchers, the Land Research and Action Network (LRAN), also joined the initiative and the three networks now formally constitute the global campaign coordination (Rosset et al., 2006; *Vía Campesina*, 2000b).

This resurgence in land policy interests and the emergence of other land-related issues (such as indigenous peoples’ rights, and food and energy crises) have led to a broadening of discussions about land policy among TAMs. The previously latent differences in perspective on land within *Vía Campesina* have become apparent, with leaders of *Vía Campesina* talking about communal and/or public lands, land restitution, the land question in the North, and so on. Reflecting on *Vía Campesina*’s global land reform campaign, Diamantino Nhamossa of Mozambique explained:

[W]e already had a thorough agrarian reform. In order for the Global Campaign to help us, it must focus more on the challenges we are facing: ‘counter-agrarian reform’ under neoliberalism. If the campaign keeps focusing on just being ‘against *latifundio*’ [large estates], then it is less relevant to us. But, if they take up the issue of counter-reforms, which are not unique just to Mozambique, then it will become very relevant. . . In fact, the World Bank is promoting a new wave of land privatization here, and that needs to be denounced. We think the Global Campaign needs to broaden its mandate, it needs to also be a campaign ‘in defense of land’. In defense of the land that peasants already have, and against the privatization of land. (Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2005: Appendix, p. 22)

20. Data and information on this are partly based on a series of discussions between the authors and Sofia Monsalve of FIAN during the past six years.

This does not mean that *Vía Campesina* did not recognize these issues before; in fact relevant statements of principle have appeared in all its key documents. But its efforts, which took the form of agitation/propaganda rather than a serious struggle for concrete reforms, tended to lack impact in the global campaign.²¹

The emergence of the IPC for Food Sovereignty as an important global network of movements for land may contribute to reframing land reform advocacy and incorporating broader land issues and demands such as those of pastoralists, farmworkers, agricultural trade unions and indigenous peoples. At the same time, the IPC's rise may have marked the beginning of a far broader and more comprehensive interpretation of land issues, which is based on the diversity of actual conditions and the location of various social classes and groups in existing agrarian structures. Whether IPC will adopt the more militant orientation of *Vía Campesina*, or be reduced to its lowest common denominator politically, remains to be seen. *Vía Campesina*'s inclusion and participation in the IPC significantly politicizes this particular space and may transform both the IPC and *Vía Campesina* in some important ways. The relationship between the two seems to fall somewhere between what Jordan and van Tuijl call 'cooperative' and 'competitive' relationships between transnational advocacy networks, which 'may very well help to open up space to articulate strategically a plurality of development aspirations, at peoples' own conditions and risks, using their own time frames, speaking their own language and applying their own design of political expression or association' (Jordan and van Tuijl, 2000: 2064).

Sources of Funding

The politics of representation, intermediation and mobilization can also be viewed through the lens of funding support. Of the four TAMs and networks examined here, IFAP and ILC have the greatest capacity for self-financing — IFAP's mass base is among the relatively well-off section of the farming sector in the North, while ILC gets its main funds from its members such as the World Bank, IFAD and the European Commission, in addition to tapping funds from non-members (Universalia, 2006). According to an independent evaluation of the World Bank, from its inception through to the end of 2006, the ILC mobilized US\$ 18.6 million from donors. In addition, in 2006, donors committed to providing substantial new funding of more than US\$ 7 million (WB-IEG, 2006: xvi).

Vía Campesina and IPC, on the other hand, are dependent on external funding assistance for their institutional maintenance needs and for their major activities. Although it is difficult to find exact figures, it seems certain

21. Discussion with Rafael Alegria (Berlin, June 2007); Skype interview with Diamantino Nhampossa (10 October 2007).

that the amount of funding received by these two represents a fraction of what ILC receives.²² As a fundamental principle, *Vía Campesina* does not seek funding support from (inter)governmental bodies or IFIs. For *Vía Campesina*, accepting funds from IFIs would be tantamount to compromising its political autonomy, principles and campaigns. It also limits its source of funding from non-governmental donor agencies,²³ selecting the agencies it approaches or from which it receives funding. One of the criteria of *Vía Campesina* is that an agency should share most, if not all, of its ideals and should politically support its struggles; at the very least, it should not take positions on issues that are contrary to those of *Vía Campesina*.²⁴ The ranks of funders are expanded when a specific activity needs to be financed. At such times, *Vía Campesina* is open to funding partnership with the FAO and IFAD. The IPC is the least funded of the four networks, with its intermittent funds coming mainly from IFAD and the FAO.²⁵ Thus, as far as the four TAMs examined here are concerned, there is no serious competition for funds between them. Their own mass bases and institutional composition, as well as their ideology and politics, lead naturally towards their preferred channels of funding.

Mobilization

The existence of grievances, of legitimate and just issues, do not by themselves lead automatically to poor people using their resources to mobilize. Tarrow's discussion of the 'political opportunity structure' is useful here: he has defined political opportunities as 'the consistent (but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national) signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form a social movement' (Tarrow, 1994: 54). He has also identified four important political opportunities: access to power, shifting alignments, availability of influential elites, and cleavages within and among elites (Tarrow, 1994).²⁶ Nation state actors and trends in global policy making processes are key aspects of a changing political opportunity structure; the politics of mobilization can be seen from the dynamics of interactions between (inter)governmental institutions and civil society.

In dealing with (inter)governmental institutions, *Vía Campesina* has been quite skilful in combining 'expose and oppose' and militant actions with

22. This is based on the author's informal discussions with some of *Vía Campesina*'s donors and his own familiarity with the non-governmental donor community.

23. It is of course true that most of these non-governmental donor agencies receive the majority of their funds from their own governments. Nevertheless, *Vía Campesina*'s dealings are only with the non-governmental agency and not directly with governmental ministries.

24. Skype interview, Diamantino Nhampossa (10 October 2007).

25. Interview, Antonio Onorati, IPC global 'focal person' (Berlin, June 2007).

26. See also his later explanation about the need to bring in the notion of 'threats' (Tarrow, 2005: 240).

negotiation and critical collaboration tactics. It recognizes that: ‘to create a significant impact, we should. . . carry out our coordinated actions and mobilizations at the global level. . . Mobilization is still our principal strategy’ (Vía Campesina, 2004: 48). However, when and how to use mobilization, and in the service of what broader political strategy, are questions that seem to be addressed rather tentatively within Vía Campesina.

Internationalizing collective actions is not easy. The search for the most appropriate and effective tactics and forms of action is directly linked to the type of (inter)governmental institutions with which Vía Campesina interacts. In general, it tends to relate most constructively with institutions which use the ‘one country, one vote’ representational mechanism, such as the FAO and IFAD.²⁷ It has been open to working with some UN organizations and other bilateral institutions, but has yet to develop this front more fully.

Although Vía Campesina takes a confrontational, ‘expose and oppose’ stance against IFIs, especially the World Bank, some national movements have experimented with engaging the World Bank in the broader context of demanding accountability (see, e.g., Fox and Brown, 1998; Scholte, 2002). For example, the National Forum for Agrarian Reform, a broad coalition of rural social movements in Brazil, twice filed for the World Bank Inspection Panel to investigate the market-assisted land reform experiment there (for background, see Fox, 2003). While the request was turned down on both occasions due to technicalities, the Brazilian land reform movements were able to deliver a powerful message that is captured in the words of Fox (2003: xi): ‘For leaders of the dominant international institutions, the idea that they should be transparent and held publicly accountable was once unthinkable’.

It should also be noted that many of the large global (inter)governmental institutions, even those favoured by Vía Campesina, like the FAO and IFAD, are themselves contested arenas, made up of heterogeneous actors. Social movement allies can find themselves in politically difficult situations within the agency, as implied in this interview with an anonymous FAO official:

The [Vía Campesina] is seen in FAO as an important, well organized institution, advocating very strongly in favour of agrarian reform. . . However, it should also be said that there are sectors of FAO who simply prefer to ignore the [Vía Campesina] because of their ‘strong’ advocacy role. However, if a [Vía Campesina] ‘partnership’ with FAO is considered, with acceptable common objectives, there is still good room to maneuver and work together. . . [But] it is a bit too borderline when considering possible ‘convergences’ between FAO and them. . . Frankly speaking, the impression is that the [Vía Campesina] more than being a lobby in favour of agrarian reform, it has been a lobby against the World Bank. . . [B]ut for institutional reasons, we can hardly criticize a sister agency, and the stronger the critique [by Vía Campesina of the World Bank], the less the ‘options’ we have to maneuver. So, redirecting the Campaign a little bit in order to identify a series of other potentially very strong issues, more in the pro-active sense, rather than only in the negative way, could be useful. (Rosset and Martínez-Torres, 2005: Appendix, p. 45)

27. See McKeon (2009) and Menser (2008) for related discussions.

Vía Campesina has been actively lobbying for a UN adoption of a Peasants' Charter at the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and later the UN Council for Human Rights (UNHRC); this is viewed within Vía Campesina as an encompassing framework for mobilization. This initiative may present an opportunity to deal with some ongoing contentious issues confronting Vía Campesina, including the dilemmas of implementing a human rights framework that includes not just civil and political rights, but economic, social and cultural rights as well. It may also have the potential to address the lingering tensions of 'peasants-indigenous peoples' mentioned earlier. These issues can be seen in what we can call the 'master declaration' of Vía Campesina, entitled 'Declaration of Rights of Peasants — Women and Men', ratified by its International Coordinating Commission during a meeting in 2009 (Vía Campesina, 2009).

Whether and how Vía Campesina will be able to recruit a critical mass of strategic allies within the UNHRC and beyond for the official adoption of their Declaration remains to be seen. Whether such a declaration, if passed, will become an effective tool to advance the interest of the rural poor is a separate issue. Framing such a demand requires Vía Campesina to interact with intergovernmental institutions, in ways which might range from collaboration through to confrontation.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This article has examined Vía Campesina in relation to three other TAMs: IFAP, ILC and IPC for Food Sovereignty. The analysis has focused on the politics of representation, intermediation and mobilization between TAMs and other networks. It has shown that large TAMs like Vía Campesina are both actors and arenas of actions for (sub-)national agrarian movements. This dual character is largely shaped by the structural location and institutional make-up of TAMs. The four TAMs examined here differ from each other in terms of social class origin and base, ideology and politics, and organizational and institutional make-up. These differences in turn shape the degree of autonomy and capacity of the TAMs, influencing the characters, extents and orientations of their interventions in the politics and policies of international (rural) development. Clearly, TAMs such as Vía Campesina are also heterogeneous, given the structural and institutional locations of their members.

The relative share of each key civil society actor in the global governance terrain has not shrunk as a result of the entry of more actors into this institutional space. It is not a zero-sum but rather a positive sum process: the space created and occupied by various civil society groups has expanded, broadening the democratizing impact on global policy making processes. With the entry of Vía Campesina, the space was not only expanded; it was also rendered much richer and more complex by the subsequent

interactions between various civil society groups. *Vía Campesina's* overarching framework for alliances and autonomy is clarified in its policy statement:

We live in a complex, integrated world where there are many players and agendas. We do not have a choice as to whether we interact with others who are engaged in our arena — but we have a choice on how we work to effect the changes we desire. . . . Where we share objectives and can join forces over particular issues with another organization. . . . *Vía Campesina* must have autonomy to determine the space it will occupy with the objective of securing a large enough space to effectively influence the event. (*Vía Campesina*, 2000a: 9–10)

The terrain of international development policy making is not a politically neutral arena. It is occupied and (re)shaped by actors with competing interests based on, among other things, national, class, professional, ideological and corporate agendas. The various actors who engage with each other in this arena do so with different degrees of political power (O'Brien et al., 2000: Ch. 1). Political tensions between local and national movements that existed at the national level were brought to and internalized within TAMs and networks. The Philippine case exemplifies this point. However, this is not a one-way trajectory: some of these tensions originate from, or have been aggravated by, dynamics at the transnational level, as discussed by Edelman (2008) in the case of Central America. Some transnational institutional spaces are arenas where TAMs and networks with pre-existing tensions do overlap.²⁸ This is, for example, the case of the IPC for Food Sovereignty. These political tensions are largely rooted in the class origins and base, ideology, politics, and institutional make-up of various TAMs and networks.

If we look at TAMs through a purely technical lens we will be blind to these political-economic dynamics. Risking simplistic generalization — and building on John Harriss's (2002) notion of 'depoliticizing development' — we can observe that one section of TAMs tends to be engaged in 'depoliticized partnership' with international development institutions. Their efforts are unlikely to contribute significantly to radically altering the status quo, partly because they do not question the mainstream development framework and strategy that are being promoted. By contrast, another section of TAMs, including *Vía Campesina* and the IPC for Food Sovereignty, has been radically politicizing the spaces for international engagement with intergovernmental institutions. They do so by questioning the structural and institutional roots of poverty and exclusion of the rural poor, and by struggling to reform the rules of engagement of partnership, even the agendas of such partnerships. They question the very notion of development that others accept, and work to construct an alternative. This, surely, is the more promising face of TAMs.

28. Another area where similar tensions occur is that between movements and professional researchers, on the often contested issue of 'research'. See Edelman (2009a) for an elaboration on this.

Appendix: Key Features of TAMs in the Context of Land Issues and Struggles

Issues	Via Campesina	IPC (International Planning Committee) for Food Sovereignty	IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers)	ILC (International Land Coalition)
CLASS ORIGIN & BASE Class origin and base	Generally among poor and small/medium-scale farmers, indigenous peoples and landless labourers; some rich farmers. Based in the global South and North.	Generally among poor peasants and small/medium-scale farmers (with some rich farmers), landless labourers, rural-based workers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, subsistence fishers. Based in global South and North.	Rich, middle, and small commercial oriented farmers; farmers' associations are based in the global South and North.	Not clear and not direct, but institutional base includes international financial institutions (IFIs), multilateral agencies and NGOs
Political leadership	Shared leadership between the global South and North, though until now the General Coordinators have always been from the global South (Honduran and Indonesian). Parity between male and female in the leadership body. Key leaders are ('organic') intellectuals, 'rooted cosmopolitans' (Tarrow, 2005). Leaders from industrialized world minority in global leadership.	Shared leadership between the global South and North, social movements and NGOs.	From 1946–2008, political leadership (specifically, president and secretary general) was monopolized by white male leaders from the industrialized world.	Not very clear, though some pre-2008 evaluations pointed out that the Rome-based secretariat and IFAD have been the key drivers of the coalition.

continued

Appendix: Continued

Issues	Via Campesina	IPC (International Planning Committee) for Food Sovereignty	IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers)	ILC (International Land Coalition)
Key land-oriented demands	Redistributive land reform to establish family farms.	Redistributive land reform to establish family farms; control of territory for indigenous peoples; labour reforms.	Agricultural policy reforms and package of support/subsidy to support commercial-oriented family farms.	Land rights to establish family farms.
IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS				
General ideological discourse	Anti-neoliberal/anti-capitalist global discourse; trying to develop an alternative to the current global capitalist system.	Anti-neoliberal discourse; trying to develop an alternative model.	Implicitly for operational and administrative improvements of prevailing capitalist development model.	Implicitly for operational and administrative improvements of prevailing capitalist development model.
View on market-oriented land policies (including market-assisted land reform, formalization/privatization of land rights)	Context: imperatives of capitalist expansion; accumulation by dispossession; should be developed and opposed. Develop and advance community-based and stewardship alternatives.	Relatively close to the position; 'Context: imperatives of capitalist expansion; accumulation by dispossession; should be exposed and opposed'. Develop and advance community-based and stewardship alternatives.	Silent; no clear position.	Mixed: some members are leading advocates of market-oriented land policies (e.g. WB), while a handful of member NGOs are wary of such types of reforms (e.g. Indonesia's KPA).
Preferred forms of actions	Militant collective actions — e.g., land occupation, destruction of GM field sites, confrontation, other disruptive actions — combined with negotiation and dialogue.	Dialogue and negotiation, leaning towards combining militant collective actions with negotiation and dialogue.	Dialogue, negotiation, collaboration & partnership; staying away from militant forms of actions.	Dialogue, negotiation, collaboration & partnership; staying away from militant forms of actions, at least at the international level (individual members may engage in militant forms of actions).

continued

Appendix: Continued

Issues	Via Campesina	IPC (International Planning Committee) for Food Sovereignty	IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers)	ILC (International Land Coalition)
Overarching campaign framework	'Land rights as human rights'; 'food sovereignty' as master-frame of land campaigns.	'Land rights as human rights'; 'food sovereignty' as master-frame of land campaigns.	Silent, not clear.	Not clear and consistent (sometimes conflicting: WB's land markets framework, rights-based framework by some NGO members).
Position on the role of UN system	Selectively ally with some reformist groups <i>within</i> some agencies, and develop these as counter-points against neoliberalism, focused on the FAO, IFAD and UNCHR/UNHRC.	Selectively ally with some reformist groups <i>within</i> some agencies, and develop these as counter-points against neoliberalism, focused on the FAO and IFAD.	Dialogue and forge collaboration and partnership with any intergovernmental agencies, UN system and beyond.	Dialogue and forge collaboration and partnership with intergovernmental and bilateral aid agencies, UN system and beyond.
Perspective on international financial institutions (IFIs)	Key institutions of neoliberal globalization; should be 'exposed and opposed'; no space for dialogue and negotiation; should be 'de-legitimized'.	Close to the position of: 'expose and oppose; no space for dialogue and negotiation'.	Dialogue and forge collaboration and partnership.	Dialogue and forge collaboration and partnership.
ORGANIZATIONAL & INSTITUTIONAL MAKE-UP				
Organizational/institutional character	Autonomous social movements of poor peasants, small/medium-scale farmers, landless labourers.	Autonomous coalition of agrarian movements and NGOs.	Association of small, middle and rich commercial oriented farmers.	Coalition of international financial institutions, multilateral agencies and NGOs.
Funds and Sources of fund	Modest external funds. A few donor agencies sympathetic to Via Campesina: e.g., the Dutch ICCO and Oxfam-Novib, Norwegian Development Fund, ActionAid.	Modest external funds, mainly from the FAO and IFAD.	Significant funds; self-financed. Mainly from members, but also from partnership with international official development agencies.	Significant funds; self-financed. Mainly from member international financial institutions (IFIs), bilateral and multilateral agencies.

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