

Rural Land Security Systems and Farm Management in the Commune of Djougou (Republic Of Benin)

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Abstract

In Benin, land, the main factor of agricultural production, is subject to various human pressures, leading to a situation of insecurity that currently characterizes rural land in the commune of Djougou. This study aims to understand the current rural land tenure security systems and identify their effects on agriculture. To collect the data, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative method consisted, using an interview guide, in individual interviews with customary authorities, traditional chiefs, political and administrative authorities, community leaders and religious authorities. A focus group was conducted with the village assemblies. As for the quantitative approach, it consisted in administering questionnaires to farmers (30), local government officials (07) and decentralized government services (05). At the end of the investigations, it appears that customary systems predominate over other systems and remain the most common forms of rural land tenure security. However, by their position, some actors influence land managers and take advantage of their ignorance to take over the domains. This attitude has serious consequences: disengagement and destruction of farmers, earlier than expected takeovers of plots, land conflicts, etc. This situation calls on all stakeholders in rural land tenure to become aware of the growing phenomenon.

Keywords - System, Security, Rural land, Djougou, Benin.

Résumé

Au Bénin, la terre, principal facteur de production agricole, fait objet de pressions diverses de la part de l'homme entraînant une situation d'insécurité qui caractérise actuellement le foncier rural dans la commune de Djougou. Cette étude vise à appréhender les systèmes de sécurisation du foncier rural en vigueur et identifier leurs effets sur l'agriculture. Pour collecter les données, les méthodes qualitative et quantitative ont été utilisées. La méthode qualitative a consisté, à l'aide d'un guide d'entretien, à réaliser des entretiens individuels avec les Autorités coutumières, les Chefs traditionnels, les Autorités politico-administratives, les Chefs de collectivités et les Autorités religieuses. Un focus groupa été réalisé

avec les assemblées villageoises. Quant à la démarche quantitative, elle a consisté en l'administration de questionnaires aux exploitants agricoles (30), aux agents de l'administration locale (07) et aux services déconcentrés de l'Etat (05). Au terme des investigations, il ressort que les systèmes coutumiers prédominent sur les autres systèmes et restent les formes les plus courantes de sécurisation du foncier rural. Cependant, de par leur position, certains acteurs influencent les gestionnaires de la terre et profitent de l'ignorance de ces derniers, pour s'accaparer des domaines. Cette attitude entraîne de lourdes conséquences : déguerpissement et destruction des exploitants agricoles, reprises des parcelles plus tôt que prévus, conflits fonciers, etc. Cette situation interpelle tous les acteurs du foncier rural à une prise de conscience du phénomène qui se développe.

Mots clés : Système, Sécurisation, Foncier rural, Djougou, Bénin.

I. INTRODUCTION

Land, a key factor in agricultural production, is becoming increasingly important in rural areas. Faure quoted by Kpété (2012) will say that: « land, by gradually becoming a rare factor of production, appears today as one of the major challenges for peasant communities ». Until the 19th century, land in West Africa was not a concern in the sense that indigenous people integrated foreigners by giving the "first migrant" the latitude to settle others without worrying about the exhaustion of the resource. This practice known as "tutoring" has shown its limitations when indigenous people have found that land that was an almost inexhaustible resource is no longer an inexhaustible one due to demographic pressure. Indigenous people will make the decision to settle their hosts for better control (Colin, 2009). Faced with this situation, voluntarily or unconsciously, systems are created to control rural land. Thus, both traditional society and public administration define their land management methods in their own way. According to customary law, in the same area, several actors reserve their own uses without claiming exclusive ownership. As land resources become scarcer, they

create frequent antagonisms due to the complexity of enforcing these rights. For the administration, it is necessary to create favourable conditions for the rural population by securing their land in order to limit these rivalries. This explains its intervention to establish standards on rural land. Benin, where more than 60% of men and 35.9% of women work in agriculture (MAEP, 2011), is not on the fringes of this phenomenon. In order to reduce inequalities in the land system, measures have been taken, including Act No. 2013-01 of 14 January 2013 on the land and domain code in the Republic of Benin. For the security and management of land, it is planned to "popularize texts on rural land, clarify land ownership rights through the extension of Rural Land Plans (RLPs) and generalize the use by all stakeholders of tools for formalizing land transactions" (MAEP, 2011). Land laws have also been passed in succession. For example, article 264 of Act No. 2013-01 of 14 January 2013 on the land and domainial code in the Republic of Benin provides in its last paragraph that "lands and areas that can be flooded, swampy or moving naturally belong to the natural public domain" (Republic of Benin, 2013, art. 264). Better still: "the rural land system is marked by a dualism in which modern land tenure and customary law (more predominant) coexist for agricultural intensification" (Republic of Benin, 2012). However, it should be noted that these provisions seem to be ignored by the population with regard to the results of the diagnosis on rural land. The diagnosis of the agricultural sector, as part of the elaboration of the Djougou Municipal Development Plan, confirms the existence of major land problems, including those relating to land tenure security. One may therefore wonder why the systems for securing rural land still pose a problem despite the measures taken by the Beninese State to better secure land management? What are the influences of rural land security systems on agricultural holdings in the commune of Djougou?

The study aims to understand the current rural land tenure security systems and identify their effects on agriculture, the main activity of the rural population.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Survey site

Information on the existence of conflicts over rural land and the settlement of migrants mobilized the choice of the Djougou commune as the main area of investigation. A total of four (04) of the twelve (12) districts are included in this research, i.e. one third of the districts in the commune of Djougou, where land issues between indigenous and non-native people are more perceptible. The following boroughs have been selected: Bariénuou, Onklou, Partago and Djougou3. 12 villages are chosen in the four districts because of the high population of non-natives and information related to land conflicts. (See Figure 1)



Fig 1: Land use in the commune of Djougou
Source: Djougou Municipal Development Plan 2

B. Data collection

The data collection method is qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative approach, with an interview guide, involved village assemblies (focus groups), as well as resource persons such as customary authorities, traditional chiefs, political and administrative authorities, community leaders and religious authorities. As for the quantitative approach, it consisted in administering questionnaires to farmers (30), local government officials (07) and decentralized government services. (05). The information collected focused on the role of the different actors in the land system according to the context, the mode of access to land, the collection of general and specific information related to land, the land security process. They made it possible to detect possible correlations between the modalities studied and individuals, identify the influence and role of the various actors in the land tenure system, identify the motive that the respondent believed determines agricultural investment, and collect information on land in the field of intervention of local and administrative actors in charge of land.

C. Data processing and analysis

The SPSS version 16.0 software was used to identify correlations between the modalities collected on a sample of 30 farmers in the population. In addition, the influence and importance matrix was used to position the respondents in a matrix according to their importance and influence in access to land. This matrix made it possible to identify collaboration between actors and the possible risks of interaction between these actors, knowing that those who hold significant power and are influential can easily take up the available resource to the detriment of those considered important but without power or influence. Using the Pearson correlation coefficient formula or simple linear correlation coefficient, known as Bravais-Pearson (or Pearson), this was used to analyze the normalization of covariance by the product of the standard deviations of the variables:

$$R = \frac{COV(X;Y)}{\delta x \times \delta y}$$

Covariance is equal to the expected product of the centred variables. Pearson's R, also called the coefficient of determination, is a number that measures the intensity of the linear link between two quantitative measurement level variables.

III. RESULTS

A. Land security in the commune of Djougou

1. Land tenure security systems

In the village of Gaounga, Barién district or, a twelve (12) hectare site has been identified where several land security systems have been implemented. This village was created in 1960 by a number of evangelical Christians, following an exploration by a missionary of the International Missionary Society (IMS). This missionary, having noted the fertility of the soil in this part of the district, negotiated it for the benefit of his followers with the political and administrative authorities of the time. Most of these first occupants came from Ouaké, a neighbouring commune to the west. History has it that the first Muslim to come to this village in 1980 was welcomed by the village's evangelical pastor. Today in this village, there are also Catholics and followers of traditional cults. Land tenure security systems originate from the actions carried out by the various actors.

a. Customary security system

The first security system applied on this site is the customary system. Eight (08) years after the creation of the village, in 1968, Christians chose an area for agricultural production activities for the benefit of the local church. The security system applied at that time for the management of this site was the customary system based on the principle of "the land belongs to the first occupant who cleared it". The 12 hectare site was cleared for the first time by four (04) evangelical Christians. This portion of land was the exclusive property of these first four occupants until their religious community expressed their request for community use. The donation was made to the Evangelical Church without any written deed. In 1984, the new purchaser, the evangelical Christian community, set up a small plantation of *Khayasenegalensis* (caïlcédrat) on part of the site. Over the years, the extension of the village has reached the Muslim place of prayer during the Ramadan and Tabaski holidays; whereas this place should normally be located outside the village. In addition, the construction of an agricultural input storage warehouse next to this place no longer provided a suitable location for Muslim prayer. Thus, a rural development agent took the initiative to approach the Christian faithful to negotiate a portion of their site not far from the small plantation of *Khayasenegalensis* (caïlcédrat) for the benefit of

Muslims for festive prayers. The intention of both parties was that this Muslim place of prayer could be moved at any time.

Orality, the first clearing, the use by several actors, are so many clues that have characterized this customary system of land security on this site. The cohabitation was therefore perfect between the two parties until the moment when another land security system was introduced.

b. Hybrid security system

In 2001, a new evangelical pastor was assigned to lead the local church in Gaounga. During the completion of the inventories of the church's land assets, he realizes that there is no deed to prove this ownership. He therefore suggested the establishment of a private deed of donation from the first pioneers, which he obtained on 07 March 2002.

In 2004, a missionary supported the new pastor in training adults for evangelization. The latter delimited the site with the help of bare electrical wires in order to create an enclosure to graze freely the draught oxen within this area without necessarily leading them. For Muslims this act is provocative in the sense that it deprives them of their place of prayer. And as it is a question of limits, they will carve out a place for themselves of about one hectare taking a good part of the domain reforested by the Christians. The village authorities were seized and calm returned between the two protagonists. A new deed of donation was drawn up, but this time signed by the village chief, the traditional chief, wise and countersigned by the district chief of Bariénou on January 14, 2009 to confirm the ownership of the local evangelical church of Gaounga.

Muslims approach the village authorities and the Chief of District to request that part of the estate be granted to them. They summon both parties to raise the issue. What the first occupants did not accept. But to satisfy the Muslims, the traditional chief and the district chief decided to establish a deed of donation of one (01) hectare of the estate. This was on October 20, 2009, two days after the documents of the site's topographic survey commissioned by Christians were obtained.

The establishment of three deeds of donation without seeking compliance with the laws in force has characterized this hybrid system of land tenure security. In addition, another land tenure security system is applied in the same area.

c. Formal security system

Faced with this situation of uncertainty where the estate is coveted by another community, the evangelical church has taken other measures to secure it. She carried out the topographical survey of the estate and obtained the documents on October 18, 2009. It is continuing the process of formalizing its land ownership at the level of the competent services of the Djougou City Hall and obtains an administrative certificate of recognition of ownership

on 04/07/2013. Thanks to these two documents, the Evangelical Church applied for the land title that appeared in the Official Gazette on 27 May 2014. Obtaining this title definitively confers the title of ownership to the evangelical church. The notification was therefore made to the Muslim party by the Court of First Instance of Djougou on Friday, February 6, 2015.

2. Level of land security

Although the commune has planned the implementation of 12 rural land plans (RLPs) in its current development plan, Djougou does not have any RLPs that can be used to date. Indeed, during the implementation of the Land and Natural Resource Management Programme (LNRMP) in 2004, four (04) villages in the Barei district, notably Gondéssar, Bandéssar, Dangoussar and Anoum, benefited from a pilot LRMP that did not produce any legal documents or boundaries. Clearly this plan did not work.

In addition, there is a growing trend towards a form of land acquisition that is similar to land grabbing in favour of a wealthier social layer made up of politicians, economic operators or traders and civil servants. Indeed, nearly 2,000 hectares have been transferred as a donation to this category of people above in rural areas throughout the municipal territory. In addition, some expatriates have acquired land in Baku in Onklou district and Wassa in Pelebina district for 200 hectares each. In order to secure their land acquired almost free of charge from generous donors, these purchasers are issued deeds of donation in order to continue the operations for obtaining all legal deeds of land ownership. This donation strategy used by these purchasers, who are smarter and better informed than the landowners themselves, aims to circumvent the lesionary price provision that the rights holders could claim.

B. Influence of rural land security systems on agricultural holdings

1. Modes of access to rural land in the commune of djougou

Today in the commune of Djougou, the land is owned by the villages and their management is in the hands of the traditional chiefs. The land in principle is not intended for sale even if some slippages are seen. The most common methods of access are interest-free loans, inheritance and donations. In particular, non-natives benefit from large areas of land, in the form of an interest-free loan from the first occupants¹ for exploitation purposes. As the leaders of the peasant synergy union testify, the loan is the main channel through which the land transaction is carried out with traditional leaders. This has encouraged the massive settlement of these non-native populations, which

¹Landlords.

have also formed entire villages. The children of the first pioneers inherited these lands. The royal lineage as chief of land also inherits the land because it is a de facto landowner.

Les modes d'accès au foncier rural à Djougou ayant été identifiés, il sera utile de comprendre l'influence de chaque acteur dans le système foncier rural.

2. Influence of the actors of the rural land in the commune

The following matrix allows an objective analysis of the influence and importance of the actors in the land system of the commune of Djougou. It was carried out on the basis of the informations collected in the field.

Influence ↑	Mayor of the municipality Municipal Council Communal agricultural development sector Conciliation Tribunal Court of First Instance 2. Influential + not very important	King, Traditional Chief and Prince Village chief Village Council Landowner First occupant Politician Economic operator Union: Peasantsynergy 1. Influential + important
	4. Not very influential + not very important Gendarmerie Transhumant Committee	3. Not very influential + important Land claimant Host from abroad Abroad "Peulh" breeder
	Importance →	

Table I: Matrix of influence and importance analysis of rural land actors

Source: Field survey results,

The analysis of the matrix of influence and importance of actors reveals that there are four (4) categories of actors:

The first category includes the most influential and important actors. This category includes the king, traditional chief, prince, village chief, village council, landowner, first occupant, politician, economic operator and peasant union (peasant synergy). These actors are generally decision-makers who strongly influence the land management system through their social position, intellectual or financial capacity. These actors take initiatives without taking into account the views of other categories of actors. Their actions of influence are directed at land seekers, foreigners, in short those in a weak position who only receive instructions to execute.

The second category includes influential and less important actors. It includes the Mayor of the municipality and his Council, the Municipal Agricultural Development Sector, the Conciliation Court and the Court of First Instance. They give their opinions and support the security system. The Mayor and his Communal Council, although guarantors of

land tenure security, seem to have little concern for this noble responsibility in rural areas.

The third category is made up of actors such as the land applicant, the host and the Peuhl-breeder. They are passive actors in land management. Because of their weak position, they are only subject to the decisions of others. They are voiceless actors; what sometimes drives them to go against the instruction of decision-makers: not planting trees is constantly a source of conflict.

The fourth category includes stakeholders who may be consulted from time to time on land issues. We can mention the gendarmerie and the transhumant committee. The gendarmerie is very often seized when there are assaults during a fight over land. The transhumant committee deals with issues of uncontrolled occupation of livestock farmers or crop destruction.

The following table details the role of the actors involved.

An analysis of the data with the SPSS software version 16.0 leads us to the following conclusion:

Terms and conditions		Social status	Teak plantation	Access to land	Gender
Social status	Pearson Correlation	1	-,513**	-,395*	-,066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	,031	,730
	N	30	30	30	30
Teak plantation	Pearson Correlation	-,513**	1	,376*	,155
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		,040	,414
	N	30	30	30	30
Access to land	Pearson Correlation	-,395*	,376*	1	,261
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,031	,040		,163
	N	30	30	30	30
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-,066	,155	,261	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,730	,414	,163	
	N	30	30	30	30

Table II: Correlation analysis of the modalities of 30 farmers

Source: Field survey results

The frequency analysis gives a value of 70 to the percentage of access to land by modality 2 (loan); 13.3% by modalities 1 (grant) and 3 (inheritance) for 30 farmers studied. As a result, it can be seen that in

the area, the most frequent mode of access is that of "loan (borrowing)" followed by either that of "inheritance" or that of "donation".

However, by looking at the relationships that may exist between "access to land" and the "social status of the farmer" on the one hand and "access to land" and the "gender" of the farmer on the other hand, the following results are obtained: R1= -0.395, p=0.031 and R2=0.261, p=-0.163. The interpretation of these results leads us to say in the:

1st case

That there is a statistically significant (p<.05) and perfectly inversely proportional (since the sign of the coefficient is negative) relationship between the social status of the farmer and access to land.

Thus, the operator is non-indigenous, the less access he has to land. This is confirmed by a Pearson correlation coefficient R of -395 (p =0.031) indicating a fairly strong negative significance between the two variables.

2nd case

That there is a statistically significant (p<.2) and perfectly directly proportional (since the sign of the coefficient is not negative) relationship between access to land and gender. This is confirmed by a Pearson correlation coefficient R of 261 (p =0.163) indicating a low positive significance between the two variables.

In addition, it can also be seen that the less non-indigenous the operator, the less entitled he is to plant teak (Tecktoniagrandis). This is confirmed by a Pearson correlation coefficient R of -.513 (p=0.004<0.01), indicating a fairly strong negative significance between the two variables.

Finally, it can be seen that the higher the social status of the farmer, the more fertilizer they provide for production: Pearson's correlation coefficient R gives .45 with (p =0.013<0.05) indicating a fairly strong positive significance between the two variables.

The influence of rural land tenure security can be observed at several levels.

Kings, traditional chiefs and princes implement their power over the lands they manage. They are responsible for protecting farmers working in the area under their responsibility and settling land disputes. Through this prerogative, some deliver domains to force the eviction of farmers. This is the case in Baku in the Onklou district, where the King, under the influence of his son, gave 200 ha of land to an Arab expatriate who started by planting cashew trees. In Vanhoui, in the Partago District, as in Gnori, in the Bariénouun District, economic operators have acquired large areas. Indeed, these land speculators grant gifts to traditional leaders and kings in order to maintain good relations without which they could question their own decisions. During the investigations, it was noted that there was a case of a

contribution of 10,000 CFA francs per household in Nanongou. This sum is intended for the King of Dabogou as a token of gratitude. It is not excluded that the King and traditional chiefs may requisition farmers to accompany them during ceremonies and rituals. Threats of eviction of a large number of farmers and loss of investment are recurrent in some villages.

Farmers, who are seeking land, are regularly obliged to make donations and provide good services to break the bad intentions of their owners of cultivated plots. But this is not a guarantee because the mere lust of the owners calls into question any good deed. A young modern farmer in the village of Monmongou expresses his desolation in these terms: *« I have just completed ten years after my training as a young modern farmer in Tempégré, in the commune of Toucountouna, but I cannot really settle in Monmongou because I do not have my own plots. Every year, you have to start all over again. Every time a plot of land is despised and I grubbed up, the following year, I am not sure I will use that plot to exploit it. The owners take back their plots. They think they enjoy the fertilizer I put on the plot. It is a perpetual restart, you have to resume the basic investment every year and you can't make a profit in such a situation. The phenomenon I am experiencing is not only a matter of seeking interest, but it is also associated with jealousy. If I hadn't lost my laptop, I would have shown you how jealous the evil individuals burned my rice for the seed that SCDA entrusted to me ».*

The phenomenon of the influence of the land tenure system on agricultural holdings is experienced within the family. Even if during our investigation the testimonies are not made with supporting examples, the populations recognize the existence of this phenomenon in families. An operator in Abitanga, Partago district, points out that she is obliged to clean up each year very early before the start of the agricultural season so that her husband or someone else from the family does not come to take away her land. The pity of taking away a cleaned field from the woman allows her to keep the field for a long time.

3. Consequences of rural land tenure security systems on farms

The consequences of rural land security systems on farms are enormous. Farmers who lend the land to produce seasonal speculation limit their investments for fear that their farms will be taken away. This results in low production efficiency. Populations in all the boroughs visited testified that cashew nut orchards are regularly uprooted from farmers when landowners discover the plantations made on their estates.

A workshop on the identification of problems related to access to hoarded land in the communes was held in the locality of Bohicon on 28 and 29 January 2015. The results of the workshop are as follows:

The refusal of migrants to plant trees is another obstacle to the development of the producer. It is estimated that 20,000 farms are excluded from cashew tree planting. For an average yield of 900 Kg/ha of cashew nuts, and an average area of 2ha/farm, the potential production is 36,000,000 Kg. In Ananiga in the district of Bariéno, the population confirms that half a hectare of mango orchard, already productive, was cut last year following a State dispute. The worst would have been if the water and forest service had not intervened to resolve the situation.

The site of Gaounga presented above, the subject of a dispute between evangelical Christians and Muslims in this village, was ransacked and burned. Indeed, on Sunday, February 15, 2015, at around 7:00 am, Muslims dissatisfied with the decision of the court of first instance, went to the scene to ransack and burn the apiary and the caïlcédrats plantation (see picture below).



Picture 1: Overview of a destroyed and burned apiary and plantation

Source: Field survey

The figure above shows an apiary and a plantation of caïlcédrats, ransacked and burned on 15 February 2015 in Gaounga by Muslims to express their dissatisfaction with the decision of the Jugu Court of First Instance of 6 February 2015, which was against them.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study showed that in the local arena of Djougou three types of land security systems are developing: customary, hybrid and formal systems. The customary system based on orality, the first clearing, the use by several actors remains the most dominant among these systems. These three systems, which coexist in the social arena, have not been able to solve the problem of land security. The cunning of the actors of the land tenure system and the importance of the customary system are all elements that influence the security of land, including land disputes. Similar cases have been observed in Côte d'Ivoire, by Crooket *al.* (2007) and Vanga (2010). This is also revealed by SNV (2014) which points out that 10 out of 12 land transfers are made by land

chiefs or customary chiefs. SNV argues that in practice, "populations are often excluded from these transactions and therefore only have to see them once they are concluded and notified of their exit". The SNV study presents an example that reveals the situation of land tenure security in the commune. Indeed, this is the case of a French expatriate who passes from the Kpebouko area in the kolokonde district to the wassa area in the Pelebina district to fraudulently acquire the land and prohibits people from enjoying the harvest of *nééré*, even on the unexploited part. The intervention of the administrative authority to protect the weakest in land security through standards on rural land is a desirable solution. However, this must be done in a fair and transparent manner with the real involvement of local actors based on the principles of the customary system. In general, the administrative authority establishes laws that are subject to everyone, without necessarily taking into account all the specificities of customary rights (lavigne de lville, 1998; Crook *et al.*, 2007).

In addition, with the feminization of agriculture, land tenure security must take gender into account to guarantee food security, especially since we know that 67 percent of rural women work for food production (African Lead cited by Affessi, 2017). This will correct the omnipresence of men on the land and the dispossession of land to women. Those who generally work on the less fertile land offered by their husbands. The latter have the power of decision in the management of their cultivable areas and may at any time, without the consent of the latter, remove the parcels from them. The study by Charlier *et al.* (2014) also confirms that individual customary systems are less conducive to women's security of access to land, who argue that in most West African countries, customary rights are the basis of land governance, and that they are rarely in favour of women (Vanga, 2012). This is the example of Bolivia where, rural women are present in the agricultural sector (Charlier *et al.*, 2014), but do not know their right to own land and do not apply them to those who do. Women's lack of knowledge or non-compliance with customary systems, the role of local actors as guarantors of rural land management, the inferiority complex of women linked to tradition, are all issues that contribute to the lack of knowledge of women's rights of access to land. Awareness-raising and even capacity building on the practices and application of customary systems in the vernacular language of all key actors, in relation to land and gender equity in rural areas, would be an asset for the knowledge and implementation of customary systems. Political will must be translated into the establishment of institutional mechanisms to promote gender equity and equality and, in a more concrete way, technical and financial support for women to support them in their entrepreneurial initiatives, says Clavel (2018), which could correct the gender problem in access to

land, as all regions of the world clearly show that a woman has fewer opportunities to hold land rights than a man (FAO, 2011). In reality, among the various means of land accessibility, women have less access to and control over resources, including land (Zoomers, 1998; Yépez *et al.*, 2001; Behrman *et al.*, 2012). Another fact that explains the dispossession of land to a large category of the social class, particularly women, is corruption, which could be understood as an urban phenomenon that is increasingly developing in rural areas. Land speculators give gifts to traditional leaders and kings in order to maintain good relations without which they could question their own decisions. In this way, both legitimate beneficiaries and women are excluded. This gift, which is crowned by a counter-gift, is nothing more than a means of corrupting the village authorities to perpetuate a property right on the land. They are pacts to force them to integrate them into the social system. Secket *et al.* (2013) address this in their study by discussing the growing informal and even illegal practices in a context of high levels of corruption in the land sector.

V. CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, it appears that customary systems remain dominant and coexist with other hybrid and formal systems in the commune of Djougou. These systems, whatever their aspects, inevitably contribute to slowing down investment in agricultural holdings. In all systems, actors in a position of strength make decisions to the detriment of others. Landowners prohibit the planting of trees by the first pioneers who act in the same way towards land seekers. Economic operators, traders and politicians use their financial and social power to seize land. Each actor strategically sets its security standards to the detriment of others who see, without being able to react, their interests at stake. The weak, for whom these norms are established, find solutions in breaking them and develop sometimes conflicting behaviours. All this limits farmers' investments and leads to low production.

To maintain the exploitation of their field, the passive actors of land security systems in the commune of Djougou develop individually or collectively resilience to the problems they face. Applicants must make gifts that generally amount to a portion of the harvest, beverage or money. They must also provide services to the landowner. In addition, kinship ties, created by marriage with landowners, generally facilitate access to land for children born from it. Civil society has organized itself to take action to reduce the penalties for land claimants. Synergie Paysanne has conducted advocacy actions with local elected officials. It is currently carrying out awareness-raising activities to introduce land leasing to landless farmers. The municipal council issued a

decree to reduce the sale of land, which led to the eviction of farmers.

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