



# Gouvernance of Rural Land in Pissa in Lobaye in the Central African Republic

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**Abstract:** The Central African Republic is an agricultural country where almost 80% of the population lives from agriculture. In Pissa, land represents an inalienable wealth for farmers. This work consists in analyzing the governance of rural land in Pissa, a commune of the Prefecture of Lobaye in the Central African Republic. The participatory method was used to collect field data. It made it possible to bring together the actors and, with the help of an interview, to collect relevant information and process it within the framework of this study. It appears from the analysis that it is from the land that the peasants derive most of their subsistence. The economic, cultural and food utility has pushed the rural population of Pissa to develop "customary law" so as to ensure the good management of the land. It is clear that urbanization punctuated by state power eventually imposes multi-legalism, jeopardizing customary law. The city of Pissa begins to restructure. The actions of the cadaster services are multiplying through housing estates in a purely rural space. We are witnessing the diversification of actors in land governance. Distant less than 100 kilometers from the city of Bangui, Pissa suffers the perverse effects of the multiple military-political conflicts that the capital of the Central African Republic is experiencing. The consequences of this confrontation are legion. The creation of small-scale forest companies in the area has led to an increase in the number of conflicts between these actors. The urbanization of the municipality of Pissa ensures the dynamics of customary modes of governance of rural land. The multiplicity of actors is at the origin of the diversification of land conflicts in Pissa. The sustainable governance of rural land is a better indicator of the economic emergence of the countryside in the Central African Republic. The objective of this study is to determine the conditions for good agricultural land governance in Pissa to ensure sustainable management of land resources.

**Keywords:** Governance, Land, Rural, Communities, CAR

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## 1. Introduction

In all peasant cultures, whether in forest [21] or Sahelian zones, the relationship to the land is therefore of paramount importance [13]. It is from the earth that the forest communities of the commune of Pissa (Figure 1), in Lobaye, in the south-west of the Central African Republic, extract everything they need for their food (rice, cassava, banana, game, etc.) including Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) such as caterpillars, mushrooms, snails, honey, to name only these local products.

For all these reasons mentioned above, the land remains

the object of conquest and is sometimes the source of conflicts between the actors involved. Land rules have been developed taking into account the level of development of each society. Customary law varies from one society to another, from one culture to another and even within a society, from time to time.

In its simplest and least technical definition, customary law presents itself as a continuation of precolonial custom within the encompassing context of Western colonial and postcolonial state law. The problem is that this precolonial

referent is not directly accessible to knowledge, but only through distorted images drawn from oral tradition or the work of earlier ethnologists and administrators. The only method to demonstrate continuity is to reconstruct precolonial custom by observing contemporary resistance to land policies, and then cross-checking these observations with classical ethnographies [21].

These variations are a function of a set of factors including the availability of land, the type of economy, demographic pressure [4] and deforestation. All these elements combine in multiple ways, modifying the land in the municipality of Pissa as well as the different ways in which forest communities regulate its use [2].

Pissa is a historic and tourist town par excellence. Remembrance and remembrance tourism is one of its characteristics. The first three Heads of State of the CAR

originated there. The mausoleum of the Founding President, Barthélémy Boganda is located in Bobangui village. That of President David Dacko is in Mokinda. Emperor Bokassa I rests in his Imperial castle of Beringo, transformed into a Russian military camp. The diversity of natural resources in the study area allows the implementation of ecotourism and agrotourism against the backdrop of the domestication of wildlife and useful plants. The indigenous population, among which we find the pygmies, constitutes the base of the potentialities of economic development in Pissa.

This article attempts, on the one hand, to study the transformations and changes that affect the relationship to agricultural land in Pissa. On the other hand, to analyze the modern and traditional logic in the management of agricultural land in Pissa.

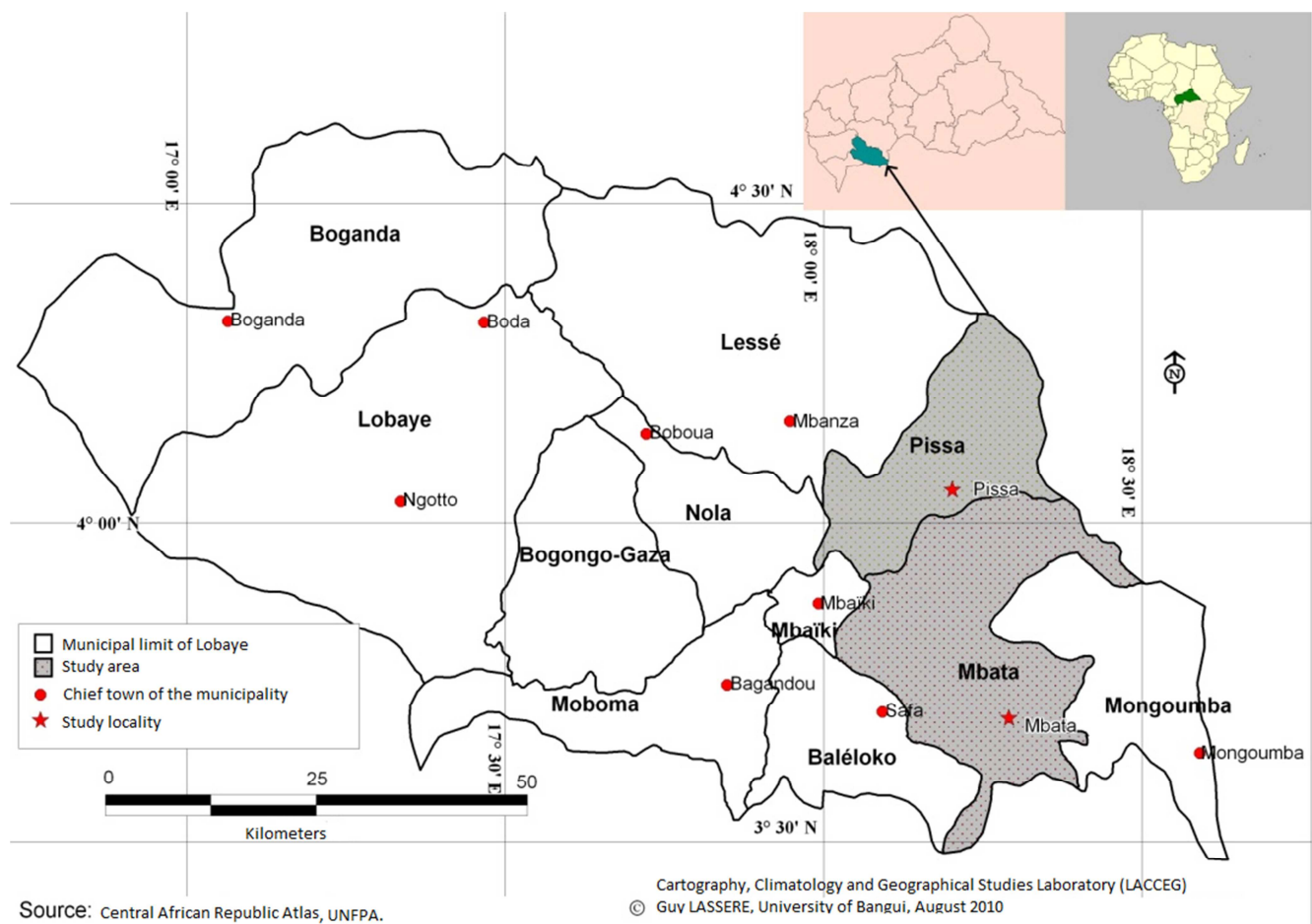


Figure 1. The municipality of Pissa.

## 2. Issue

The land issue becomes crucial, in the majority of African countries in general and particularly in the Central African Republic. Competition for access to resources is increasing under the combined effects of population growth, increased integration into market exchanges, and the extension of cultivated areas [42]. Mutations occur when

ownership traditions collide with “modern” norms. In the municipality of Pissa, access to agricultural land and forest areas is governed by customary law. The village and clan chief are automatically designated as the guarantors of these traditional norms [27]. This set of knowledge available to these peasants is bequeathed by the ancestors from generation to generation [53]. Today, we are witnessing an upsurge in conflicts between the various actors present, around agricultural land resources. In the uses of these

resources, there is often a discrepancy between the traditional rules and the legal rules [37] often at the origin of conflicts, hence a problem of regulation. These conflicts arise from competition for access to natural resources and seem to stem from population growth, migration, and land degradation and scarcity. According to Delville Lavigne [42], the multiplication of land disputes is not only linked to “macroscopic changes”, but is the result of “state intervention and existing legal plurality”. He points out, however, that local customary rules are not the opposite of modern laws. Rural people are aware of the existence of positive law, so they take it into account in their decision-making. The priority given to the agricultural development of the land is one of the factors in the multiplication of land conflicts as well as the adverse effects of climate change [18] which reduce the virtues of natural resources.

Conflicts are an integral part of resource management. They are normal social processes and the social order does not depend on their absence but on the ability of society to manage them well [33-38]. Conflict management is often a very important element of successful land and natural resource use. Thus, conflicts should be seen as essential aspects of complex property regimes rather than an anomaly. Consequently, conflicts become a vector of communication between various groups, the ultimate objective being to set up a framework intended to renegotiate the access to resources and to reaffirm the identity of the groups. Different customary or neo-customary authorities having the power, by law or in fact, to arbitrate on land or to affect rights, which poses de facto governance problems [30]. In this context, it is not so much the status that gives the power to arbitrate over land, as the power – real or supposed – to act in favor of the person who requests it, which creates legitimacy and therefore the authority [44]. To account for these configurations, and their diversity, Lavigne Delville [44] proposed the concept of “local land regulation system” by defining land tenure security as the process by which rights over land or natural resources, whatever their nature, are confirmed or protected. This implies appropriate and legitimate land management rules. “Moving from “security” to “securing” is to express the idea that security is not a stable state but the result of a set of factors falling within a space-time to be taken into consideration, per case” [37].

Indeed, for issues of land tenure security, experiences exist, from which we can draw inspiration: define the rules to organize the coexistence between the different uses of space, formalize land rights. Another avenue to explore is participatory mapping with experienced facilitators which has demonstrated its effectiveness in establishing local claims, although poor quality maps can accentuate conflicts rather than resolve them [57, 20]. It is above all a question of political will and know-how. Above all, these approaches need to be integrated into land policies. These challenges are more complex, because they pose real societal choices. This is indeed the fundamental issue for land policies: on the one hand, redefining the foundations of the social pact

between the State and the citizens, in a context where, forty years after independence, in democratic countries, the exclusion of rural people from full citizenship is no longer acceptable [41]. What are the different conflicts encountered in Pissa? How do these populations govern their land conflicts? These are the main questions or interrogation that will guide this study.

### 3. Terms and Definition

The key terms to define are governance and land.

#### 3.1. Governance

Governance is a concept that comes from the English “governance” and designates the implementation of a set of rules, standards, convention or contract (Le Petit Robert), to allow good coordination between different actors, with the aim to reach a consensual decision and to take concerted action. The opening of the world market is at the origin of the development of this concept in the 90s. It is justified to apply this notion to land issues in Pissa.

#### 3.2. Land

According to LE ROY [36], land is defined as “an immaterial representation of the social relations of appropriation of nature”. For Le Bris [31], land is “the particular set of social relations supported by land or territorial space”. The experts of the International Center for Agronomic Research for Development have defined land according to a formula which relates several components made up of the Social, the Economy, the Law, the Techniques of Development, the Politics, the International, National and Local. Land is therefore the whole consisting not only of the land, but also the resources directly attached to it and all the relationships between individuals, groups of individuals for the appropriation and use of these resources on the locally, nationally and internationally.

The governance of rural land is therefore the implementation of a set of rules, standards, conventions or contracts to allow good coordination between the different actors who intervene on land resources favorable to agriculture, to town planning, mining, water, forestry, livestock and others in the countryside, with the aim of reaching a consensual decision and carrying out concerted actions in these areas.

#### 3.3. The Concept of Land Governance

Land governance is the management of land and the multiple resources it comprises. This concept takes into account the modes of access, the procedures of acquisition, transfer, the reforms, the techniques of exploitation of the resources, the actors and the conflicts which oppose them in relation to the culture of the communities concerned. The involvement of certain actors in this field sometimes goes beyond the local and national framework and leads to

considerations on an international level. Good governance or good land management is a concept that is associated with democracy, equity, globalization, sustainable development, the fight against poverty and discrimination in all its forms [49].

The municipality of Pissa in the Central African Republic is an example where agricultural land is increasingly coveted. Logging and mining companies set up. The city is modernizing with the increase in population and the needs arising from urbanization. Their impact raises a problem of governance of agricultural land.

Support of all material and economic life, the earth and all that it comprises, allows local populations to survive [28, 22, 41, 36]. Land is the materialization of the relationship that the operator maintains with the physical support of his activity, the soil or the earth.

## 4. Materials and Method

The municipal scale of Pissa constitutes the level of diagnosis of the environment. The following data collection instruments are selected because of their heuristic relevance and their methodological usefulness: individual and collective interviews (focus group) with the various protagonists were carried out for the collection of data in the field, namely the local communities, local notables and customary chiefs. Ethnographic or participant observation made it possible to better observe the facts, the behaviors and attitudes of the actors, the unspoken and to collect the precise data for our object of study.

## 5. Results

Located on National Road No. 6, the town of Pissa is 69 km from the capital Bangui. It covers an area of 536 km<sup>2</sup> with a density of 37 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. There are two types of vegetation, the dense forest very favorable to crops under rain (coffee) and the wooded savannah. The soil is classified as ferrallitic and hydromorphic soils suitable for the production of agricultural commodities such as rice, cassava, banana, taro, etc. The precipitation is 1600 mm. The commune of Pissa has 36 villages and its population is estimated at 23,222 inhabitants according to the estimate of the Central African Bureau of General Population Census of 2003. In Pissa, peasant activities in these villages are distributed according to the seasons in a binary rhythm which alternates a period of nomadism during the rainy season with a period of sedentarization during the dry season. The first is devoted to the activities of hunting, fishing and collective and intensive gathering of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) such as caterpillars (Figures 2 and 3), mushrooms, gnetum africanum, game, etc. [27]. While the second is reserved for agricultural work, trapping, small-scale fishing and individual picking. Agriculture is subsistence type. Rice, cassava, groundnuts and maize are grown locally. Artistic activities and the manufacture of the local drink, in particular palm wine, are also part of life.



Source: Landry Kevis

**Figure 2.** Fresh caterpillars.



Source: Landry Kevis

**Figure 3.** Dried caterpillars.

### 5.1. Urbanization and Dynamics of Customary Modes of Governance of Agricultural Land in Pissa

The diachronic study of the transformations of the agricultural land management system in Pissa not only makes it possible to understand its historical evolution, but also to identify the conceptions underlying these rules. For the Ngbaka ethnic group, land is above all a collective, family and clan property. Food crops are much more practiced (Figures 4 and 5). Family and clan heads only have the role of administrator and cannot claim the title of owner. Access to land is governed by traditional legal norms (you cannot enter it without permission). According to the Ngbaka, the land belongs to the first occupants. As for the newcomer, he is required to comply with the rules in force, to avoid any dispute. Today, agricultural land is constantly undergoing transformations that influence its management. The causes of this dynamic of land use are, among others, population growth, the multiple military-political crises that the CAR has experienced in recent decades, the notion of "development", migration, urbanization [51] and logging companies, thus disrupting social structures. In addition, the massive influx of migrants who are mostly non-natives and the installation of forestry companies in the municipality have had consequences on the occupation of agricultural land [50].





Source: Landry Kevis

**Figure 4.** Cassava field in Pissa.



Source: Landry Kevis

**Figure 5.** Rice field in Pissa.

The forest communities consider the land not as a domain belonging to the State, but as their ancestral heritage, on which the neo-autochthones (allogens) have settled without compensation. They keep pointing accusing fingers at these migrants, for being able to illegally occupy their land. However, most authors agree that in their recent forms, “autochthonous” and “allogenuous” must be considered as post-ethnic or even post-national identities that rearrange and condition citizenship [12, 1]. Two types of conflicts are observed in the field. Inter-ethnic conflicts as well as conflicts between communities and timber logging companies. In fact, the appropriation of land leads to a process that leaves small farmers no other alternative than to be hired as laborers [14, 15]. The analysis of the evolution of the land problem in Pissa shows that the causes of land

conflicts are the large-scale land grabbing by logging companies, the difficulties of coexistence between modern law and customary law.

## **5.2. The Different Types of Land Conflicts Observed in Pissa**

The climate of contestation that has developed between the State and civil society is a fundamental reality of land tenure. Conflict constantly provokes change, evolution and sometimes revolution. In other words, it is a situation of confrontation in relation to specific issues, individual or collective. The conflict has an actualizing and adapting role. It is integrated into social dynamics, insofar as it will institutionalize certain social behaviors by transforming deviance into change. It also readjusts other types of conduct, with regard to the new functions that they will now have to fulfill at the level of the entire social organization [13].

### **5.2.1. Conflicts Between Farmers and Concessionaires**

Forest communities have been suffering since the eruption of logging companies in Pissa. Host trees of the caterpillars are felled, small mammals are becoming scarce, thus creating a food security problem. The machines used for logging destroy huge agricultural spaces where communities practice agriculture that can allow them to fight against unemployment during the “lean” period. As this farmer points out: “Exchanges often take place between us and the technicians of these logging companies who claim to act with the blessing (backing) of the State”. These actions stem from the fact that the Central African State enjoys the integrity of land ownership rights. He remains the only authority having the privilege of alienating land in the commune of Pissa and can claim the property which he considers to be “vacant and without a master” [31]. Whereas, forest communities only possess use rights based on genealogical use whose existence is corroborated by orally reported histories of origins and occupations. It is for this reason that significant spaces are allocated to a few concessionary companies. For the State, customary law is non-law. In the absence of any codification, this right proceeds from the simple declaration of the person who avails himself of it. Under these conditions, it is difficult to oppose others if good faith is not required.

The State can impose itself on a plot, with a view to its development, and to generate added value from it when it is full of organic species, as in Pissa. Since the State has the monopoly of legitimate violence and also has as much capacity to monitor or punish, to start war or to make peace as to enunciate positive law [31].

The land that was in the hands of the peasants became, by official decree, the property of the State or of a forestry company [16]. According to modern theory, the law is the work of a political and deliberative assembly composed of elected representatives. In this conception, the law, expression of the general will, is superior to case law, doctrine and custom because of the authority specific to parliament in a democratic regime [42, 43]. However, customary law applies to rules and derives its legitimacy

from their historical depth. This creates perpetual conflicts between the populations bordering the forest massif and the logging companies. However, a system should be put in place upstream, allowing the populations to become real actors in the modes of occupation of forest areas by these concessionaires. They manage to meet their food needs thanks to this customary right. State control renders the customary rights of populations anecdotal. Traditions of ownership and mutual aid come into conflict with the norms of capitalist exploitation.

Many endogenous factors also contribute to weakening and creating conflict in land management. The land dynamics in this municipality are indeed marked by a strong institutional pluralism [7, 11, 46, 52], bringing into confrontation, to varying degrees, customary or neo-customary norms, more or less varied and evolving, and public standards, which are also plural and contradictory. While the customary principle remains their legitimate reference [44]. Individual and collective interests underlie the conflicts. Research has made it possible to identify configurations carrying increased risks of conflict, due to the disjunctions between territorial and administrative frameworks [8]. These conflicts can also be provoked or aggravated by the participants, by their clumsiness or their ignorance of these issues [42, 43]. These various conflicts are partly at the origin of the reduction in cultivated areas.

### **5.2.2. Conflicts Between Herders and Farmers**

In the past, the municipality of Pissa did not know the conflict between herders and farmers. Livestock breeding is mastered by the Peuhls from Niger, Chad and North Cameroon. This conflict is more marked in the Central African savannah areas. Forest areas in the south of the country such as Pissa are spared. The reduction in grazing under the effects of climate change such as desertification, forces herders to lead their livestock on transhumance towards forest areas. They remain there throughout the season, thanks to the various phytogeographical potentialities offered by this space.

The conflict is characterized by the straying of herds of oxen into farmers' plantations. They devastate the cassava, corn and peanut fields in their path. Today, the military-political crisis in the Central African Republic means that herders graze their cattle heavily armed with Kalashnikovs. Farmers with bladed weapons are powerless against herders. In revenge, they poison the corridors where cattle walk.

### **5.2.3. Inter-Community Conflicts Related to Agricultural Areas**

Highly politicized, little or badly regulated "between peace and justice" [25], land disputes are often interpreted in "socio-ethnic" terms and instrumentalized politically. They have been the subject of numerous studies [5, 10, 24]. The forest populations of Pissa perceive the land as an asset, a resource because it is essential to their survival. For this

ethnic group, the land is likely to generate income through agricultural activities, although this agriculture is not mechanized. The land for the Ngbaka ethnic group is a common heritage bequeathed by the ancestors, it does not belong to foreigners. As such, it deserves to be preserved and managed rationally and sustainably. The appropriation of cultivable land, which is in a situation of scarcity, generates competition and conflict between natives and non-natives. Over the past two decades, the Central African Republic has experienced and continues to experience numerous military-political crises characterized by coups.

The population of the commune of Pissa claims to have witnessed a successive wave of displaced persons during these events and to have given a warm welcome to these displaced persons, of mixed ethnicities, from the capital Bangui. Plots have been allocated to them for various activities. Because in a general context where there is no lack of land, the migrant is not denied it. These displaced people, some of whom have gradually integrated into the community, refuse to leave, since they fear the insecurity and abuses that followed these events. For the Ngbaka, who are supposed to be the natives, since this period, the presence of these newcomers on their land represents a real danger for agricultural land. These displaced people sometimes occupy agricultural plots in an anarchic manner without prior consultation. But the land belongs to the first occupants, they stressed. As a result, migration poses two major problems here: that of land ownership and that of access to land.

In fact, when the Chinese arrived in Pissa, they introduced rice growing to the peasants. Their mission completed, these Chinese returned to their country. In the absence of the Chinese, the peasants wanted to practice this same culture. Unfortunately, they do not have the same technical means as the Chinese. To overcome this difficulty, the farmers carried out the sowing in the marshy areas, without technical support. During the rainy season, these lowlands are flooded by rain. This situation sows confusion among the farmers who are unable to distinguish between their respective areas. Identifying the limits of each person becomes difficult, creating de facto conflicts between operators. As rightly pointed out [44] drawing inspiration from the theory of land appropriation and land resources developed by Le Roy [37], lowlands are socialized and appropriated spaces.

They are part of "territorial control", are the subject of multiple uses (grazing, gathering, orchards, flooded rice cultivation, market gardening, fishing, brick making, etc.) by various actors. Consequently, developing is not only modifying physical flows: transforming space recomposes uses more or less strongly and has consequences upstream and downstream on other actors, other uses. The development frequently induces an opportunity to recompose access rights, at the local or micro-regional level, the development inducing a rupture of the pacts of access to a string of ponds [23].

**Table 1.** Estimate of an annual income of a farmer in the municipality of Pissa.

Speculation	Area (ha)	Production (tonne)	Production (bag)	Gain (FCA)
Rice	½ soit 50 sur 100m	1	15 à 17	15000=225.000FCF
Cassava	Idem			150.000
Plantin banana	Idem			75.000
Total				450.000 FCFA

Source: Landry Kevis, field investigation

Added to these factors is urbanization, the construction of school infrastructure, the quality of the soil favorable to agricultural activities, trade, the establishment of forestry companies, the rapprochement of the municipality with the capital, which pushes migrants and elites urbanites to settle there. This is the reason why we are witnessing a rapid increase in the population, resulting in a problem of food insecurity. This dynamic also creates conflicts related to agricultural areas. Tensions on land demand lead to a strong polarization of access to land. Because agriculture remains the main source of food and income for forest communities. In Pissa, agricultural land tenure insecurity is growing if associated with deforestation and forest degradation [9]. Excessive deforestation results from logging operations carried out by logging companies who compete with local populations for forest areas.

These competitions create disputes of which local communities are the main victims. In the majority of cases, the least influential plaintiffs such as indigenous peoples and marginalized non-natives are the losers as soon as these disputes are transferred to state courts. However, the forest represents a veritable food and pharmaceutical granary for forest peoples. Today, forest communities continue to claim customary rights despite the state's often dismissal of their claims to large swaths of forest. Notwithstanding many initiatives aimed at reconciling and/or harmonizing existing land tenure systems (customary and modern), in order to protect local populations from land disputes, we still witness inertia as soon as it is a question of resolving issues related to agricultural land [51]. Efforts to address agricultural land issues have been blocked by special interest groups and hampered by insufficient funding and a lack of technical capacity or even political will [27]. Indeed, rural populations are not opposed to land innovation.

Conversely, innovation transforms the rural world, shatters old traditional and centrifugal cultures that are unsuited to reality. It makes social relations more numerous and intense and therefore opens the way to socio-economic development [55]. But these peasants are rather opposed to the pedagogy of innovation [16]. This pedagogy should be done through approaches such as land management through dialogue, negotiation and participation [28, 38, 53, 54]. Given that the theories of development specific to developed countries transplanted into rural Africa, characterized by constraint, have experienced failures, underlined one of the Africanist sociologists Georges Balandier [3].

### 5.3. The Trilogical Dialectic, Agricultural Land Management, Environmental Protection and Economic Liberalization

The exclusion of forest communities in the modes of

regulation of agricultural land and environmental risks and the role of forests in the protection of the local, regional and global environment is not sufficiently documented today, especially in the local language. However, the forest contributes to the climatic balance thanks to the sequestration of carbon and the evapotranspiration of the trees. The sustainable protection of forests requires a change in the land tenure paradigm in rural areas. Sector policies for the use of land and "timber" forests are most often unsuited to the local context. Forest communities are generally excluded from the process, which creates conflicts of a trilogical nature, conflicts between ethnic groups, forest populations and societies.

Consequently, it is therefore necessary to take into account customary land tenure systems in any process of awarding Forest Exploitation and Development Permits (PEA). Attempts to do away with tenure systems and replace them with formal systems based on simple individual property rights have rarely been effective and have instead prompted a shift in approach from replacement to replacement. adaptation (Bruce, 1998). The land and forestry policies currently implemented and then developed by international cooperation remain doubly foreign to local societies both by their conceptual strangeness and by their ignorance of the real issues, which revolve around rural poverty [21].

## 6. Discussion

The denunciation of "legal madness" and the "economy of delinquency" in the forestry sector, whose colonial origins have been demonstrated by historians [6, 19], obscures the more abstract but no less relevant question of whether the Forest communities of Pissa would be able to pursue a social project if they applied the forestry legislation currently in force to the letter. Social justice advocates point out that loggers belong to a social category that has easier access to the state apparatus than local populations [21].

### 6.1. Prioritize Consensus and Negotiation in Agricultural Land Governance

Indeed, the problem is not only to change the legislations because to be effective, the law must as a whole correspond to what people consider as just and legitimate. It must not propose values that are too far removed from commonly accepted opinions and standards. Similarly, changes in laws and institutions presuppose that the resources necessary to put the new measures into practice are available [53]. Two institutions are supposed to have the power to control access to agricultural land. The first is the decentralized cadastral

administration and the second authority is customary. The cadastral administration is responsible for applying the regulations governing agricultural land in force, in particular the state policy of “development” and “ownership”. In such a system, the rights of local users are not always explicitly recognised.

This situation has led to a kind of status quo and a legal pluralism in the allocation of land which leads to a relative lack of land tenure security [41]. This means that written law no longer really regulates access to land, which is most often carried out illegally, without the possibility of effective control by the legal authority. Customary authority, often in competition with the administration, is generally the most respected, because it translates the aspirations of the peasants more than the state can [48]. In any case, the coexistence of different legal regimes in different spaces does not pose much of a problem if there is local consensus. But when they overlap and confront each other in the same space, legislation puts rural people in a situation of permanent illegality, making them subject to fines and abuse of power by agents [42].

### **6.2. The Thorny Issue of Recognition of Customary Law**

The peasants believe that they are within their natural rights when they use these spaces for agricultural purposes. The results of the surveys reveal a dualism of authority regarding the right to allocate land to the occupants of these environments. This rivalry between public authorities and traditional authorities complicates the governance of agricultural land in Pissa. However, in all modes of land appropriation, the decision of the customary chief acted as a law materialized by the issuance of a certificate duly signed by this customary authority, thus reinforcing the idea that tradition is an unwritten source. law. On the other hand, disputes of less importance are settled amicably and crimes are referred to the judicial authorities. In-depth debates are necessary, within the rural world and with the State, in a spirit of seeking fair and legitimate solutions. However, the solutions to land problems are not only land: coherent economic policies are also needed (land, structure, financing, training, awareness, organization of sectors, etc.), offering real support to family farming, enabling rural people to live in dignity on their land and to increase their productivity. And also alternatives outside agriculture, making it possible to absorb part of the population increase, to offer a future to young people, and to relieve the pressure on spaces [41].

The distribution of improved seeds grown on spaces *stricto sensu* could contribute to limiting conflicts and occupations of large plots. However, according to the Stern Review of 2006, at the national level, the definition of property rights over forest land (...) and the determination of rights are essential for the respect of landowners, communities and logging companies. They are the key to effective forest management. This process should include local communities, respect informal rights and social structures, consider development goals and strengthen the protection process. In this same perspective, Eliasch observes that it is only when property rights are assured, on paper and in practice, that

long-term investments to promote sustainable management pay off. However, there is a wide gap between what is said and reality. Indeed, the importance of agricultural land tenure in forest areas is obvious. This essentially consists of a wide range of policies aimed at preventing or slowing down deforestation and excessive degradation and the conflicts they could cause. To do this, it is therefore crucial to clarify the land issue, not only to create incentives for those responsible for managing forests, but also to protect local communities whose rights could be usurped.

### **6.3. Land Governance: A Real Political Issue**

The recognized need to remove the ambiguities of agricultural land tenure should be the subject of particular scientific curiosity. Added to this is the political will to resolve the issue of populations dependent on land tenure in order to be able to meet their needs. It is in this context that the process and strategies for clarifying agricultural land tenure in forest areas as proposed by Angelsen should be adapted according to the following steps: (i) Analyze the consequences of inaction: Specialists land issues could make a qualitative assessment and a quantitative analysis of the consequences of inaction in terms of land reform in the forest environment. (ii) Identify obstacles to progress: If the cost of inaction is deemed unacceptable, the next step will be to understand the obstacles to land reform in forest areas. A useful starting point will be to ask to what extent obstacles such as manipulation by interest groups, lack of funds and insufficient capacity apply or not to the national context. (iii) Create, update or improve planning for land tenure reform in forests: This process of assessing obstacles to progress will provide some keys to initiating reforms on agricultural land in the forest environment, updating or improving them with the possibility of social innovation [17] in all areas relating to land.

It would be necessary to go beyond a simple description of the existing constraints and to determine what could encourage and support a reform of forest tenure. This process would be bottom-up and consultative, to ensure that local communities have a say in defining constraints and opportunities for reform. (iv) Publish or improve national information on land ownership in forest areas [26, 32]: The publication of information as well as agricultural land maps in forest areas is essential at the national level. Efforts should also include the development of “counter maps” of claimed lands and land use by marginalized populations such as pygmies.

### **6.4. Towards Sustainable Governance of Agricultural Land in Pissa**

We observe, more and more, a growing interest in resolution techniques centered on the dispute as such. However, the extent of agricultural land disputes in Pissa requires the adoption of one of the methods that take into account the socio-economic realities and the culture of forest communities. The feasibility of land reforms will depend on



the solidarity of the underlying rights system and legal system. For agricultural reform to be viable, it is necessary to be able to establish clear titles of ownership over agricultural land resources, so that users are reassured, by the attribution of rights in line with obligations, a strategy for federating legitimacy to the land legality [29, 39, 40]. The rules governing agricultural land in forest areas must be taken through a participatory process and reflect local realities. This process should go hand in hand with measures that strengthen the judicial system to improve confidence in the legality of the system and the enforceability of agricultural tenure rights in forest areas.

## 7. Conclusion

All in all, the peoples of the commune of Pissa maintain an important socio-economic relationship with agricultural land. It is from the land that they extract most of their subsistence and the essential income, to meet social imperatives, among others, health, children's schooling, the acquisition of agricultural inputs, in short, the household maintenance. In Pissa, the natives claim to be the first occupants of the land they administer, with scrupulous regard to the legal and traditional norms bequeathed by the ancestors. However, the accession to independence, the state institutions [45, 47] that followed, urbanization, the demographic explosion, the military-political crises that the Central African Republic has experienced in the last decade and above all the sacrosanct principles of "vacant and ownerless land" and "property" have introduced new "dynamics" into the agricultural land tenure system in Pissa. This dynamic is incomprehensible by local communities and requires land reform in the direction of a lasting settlement of land disputes [54, 56]. It results from this dynamic, both diachronic and synchronic, a climate of conflictuality, we say, a situation of multi-legalism thus putting these populations at grips with the neo-indigenous and the forest societies. In fact, customary and clan chiefs play a preponderant role in the regulation of contraventions, that is to say less serious offences, falling within the jurisdiction of customary courts and simple police which oppose third parties.

In the majority of cases, this type of dispute is settled amicably, due to the cultural connections and matrimonial exchanges that bind litigants. On the other hand, we are witnessing a gradual weakening of customary law and the pre-eminence of statutory law in the event of a serious crime occurring between the populations bordering the forest massif and the concessionaires who represent the State. From the above, a reform of land legislation based on a bottom-up, negotiable, participatory pedagogy and involving all stakeholders is fundamental for the sustainable securing of agricultural land in Pissa. 75714399.

In a word, it will be a question of recognizing, through a bottom-up multidisciplinary approach, indigenous territories and ancestral domains. In addition, if necessary, obtain compensation for damages for local communities aggrieved and dispossessed of their plots of land, the majority of which live below the poverty line. To this end, an unshakable

political will is required, in order to help these marginal groups which are today in the greatest disarray, which we can qualify in the words of René Dumont as "peasantry at bay", left behind, period. However, the role of forest communities in the preservation of forest ecosystems, which contribute to climate regulation, has been sufficiently proven thanks to the local knowledge and know-how at their disposal.

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