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## Transnational Agrarian Movements Struggling for Land and Citizenship Rights

Saturnino M. Borras Jr. and Jennifer C. Franco  
April 2009



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## Transnational Agrarian Movements Struggling for Land and Citizenship Rights

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### Summary

Rural citizens have increasingly begun to invoke perceived citizenship rights at transnational level, such that rural citizen engagements today have the potential to generate new meanings of global citizenship. La Vía Campesina has advocated for, created and occupied a new citizenship space that did not exist before at the global governance terrain – a public space distinct for poor peasants and small farmers from the global South and North. La Vía Campesina’s transnational campaign in protest against neoliberal land policies is a good illustration of this in the sense that rural citizens of different countries collectively invoke their rights to define what land and land reform mean to them, struggle for their rights to have rights in reframing the terms of the global land policymaking, and demand accountability from international development institutions. It has been inherently linked with campaigns for land and citizenship rights. One of the outcomes of this initiative is that the public space created and occupied by various civil society groups got expanded. Such space has also been rendered much more complex, with the subsequent creation of various layers of sub-spaces of interactions.

**Keywords:** Vía Campesina, IPC for Food Sovereignty, transnational agrarian movements, peasant movements, citizenship, global civil society.

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# Local Global Working Group

## preface

### **Working paper series on Citizen Engagements in a Globalising World**

Around the world, globalisation, changes in governance and emerging transnational social movements are creating new spaces and opportunities for citizen engagement. Indeed, some would argue that citizenship itself is being de-linked from territorial boundaries, as power is becoming more multi-layered and multi-scaled, and governance increasingly involves both state and non-state actors, which often are transnational.

One of the research programmes of the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, the Working Group on Citizen Engagements in a Globalising World explores the significance of these changes to poor and disenfranchised citizens. In particular, the group's work explores how the diffusion of power and governance resulting from globalisation gives rise to new meanings and identities of citizenship and new forms and formations of citizen action. The research programme is asking questions across local-national-regional scales related to

- The dynamics of mobilisation, paying particular attention to new forms and tensions of alliance-building and claim-making;
- The politics of intermediation around representation, legitimacy, accountability;
- The politics of knowledge around framing issues, the power to frame, dynamics of contestation across forms of expertise and ways of knowing; and
- The dynamics and processes of inclusion and exclusion to examine who gains and who loses.

The group's work is a unique contribution to a vast literature on transnational citizen action in the way in which each project examines the vertical links from the local to the global from a citizen's perspective, looking up and out from the site of everyday struggles. And while much normative and conceptual literature examines the concept of global citizenship, few studies of the theme are actually grounded in empirical study of concrete cases that illustrate how global reconfigurations of power affect citizens' own perceptions of their rights and how to claim them.

The group is made up of 15 researchers carrying out field projects in India, South Africa, Nigeria, Philippines, Kenya, The Gambia, Brazil and South Africa, as well as other cross-national projects in Latin America and Africa. The projects examine new forms of citizen engagement across a number of sectors, including the environment, trade, education, livelihoods, health and HIV/AIDS work and occupational disease, agriculture and land – and across different types of engagement, ranging from transnational campaigns and social movements, to participation of citizens in new institutionally designed fora.

The working papers in this series on Citizen Engagements in a Globalising World will be available on the Citizenship DRC website [www.drc-citizenship.org](http://www.drc-citizenship.org), as they are completed. The Citizenship DRC is funded by the UK's Department for International Development.

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## Selected acronyms used

ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition
COCOCH	Honduran Coordinating Council of Peasant Organizations
CONTAG	Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura
DKMP	Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas
FAO	Food and Agricultura Organization of the United Nations
FETRAF	Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura Familiar
FFF	Federation of Free Farmers
FIAN	Foodfirst Information and Action Network
ICARRD	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ICC	International Coordinating Committee – of Via Campesina
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
ILC	International Land Coalition
IPC	International Planning Committee (for Food Sovereignty)
KMP	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas
LRAN	Land Research and Action Network
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra
PAKISAMA	National Federation of Farmer's Associations
TFM	Task Force Mapalad
UNORCA	Union Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autonomas
UNORKA	National Coordination of Autonomous Local Rural People's Organizations

# 1 Changing institutional terrain for rural development policies

The changing nature of decision-making processes and institutional architecture around rural policies follow broad patterns of institutional change affecting nation-states. During the past two decades and in the context of developing countries, nation-states have been greatly transformed by a triple 'squeeze', namely: 'from above' through globalisation where some regulatory powers have been increasingly ceded to international regulatory institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; 'from below' through the partial decentralisation of central political, fiscal and administrative powers to local counterparts; and 'from the sides' through the privatisation of some functions (Fox 2001).

Yet the nation-state remains a key actor in national-local development processes (Keohane and Nye 2000: 12). Central states remain important, albeit profoundly transformed players in local, national and international politics and economy. Meanwhile, the scope, pace, direction and extent of this transformation is contested by different actors who ally with and/or compete against each other at different levels of politics and economy. The contested nature of this transformation is, arguably, largely responsible for the highly uneven and varied outcomes of globalisation, decentralisation and privatisation policies, with various impacts on different social classes and groups from one society to another.

The rural sector, host to three-fourths of the world's poor (World Bank 2007), is profoundly affected by these processes. The neoliberal world market orientation of trade and its corresponding technological and fiscal policies have had far-reaching impacts, mostly adverse, on the lives and livelihoods of poor peasants, small farmers, and rural labourers. The state's partial withdrawal from its traditional obligations to the rural poor and the waves of privatisation that affect poor people's control over natural resources and access to basic utilities have also left many poor peasants and small farmers exposed to the harshness of market forces dominated by global corporate giants. Partial decentralisation of state power in most developing countries has also profoundly altered the institutional terrain within which the rural poor engage the state and the elite.

The changing international-national-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 (Bernstein 2006; Byres 2003; McMichael 2008). The co-existence of both threats and opportunities has encouraged and provoked national rural social movements to further localise (in response to state decentralisation), and at the same time to internationalise (in response to globalisation) their movements, advocacy and lobby works, and collective actions, while holding on to their national characters. One result of this adjustment is the emergence of more horizontal, 'polycentric' rural social movements that at the same time struggle to construct coherent coordinative structures for greater vertical integration. Seemingly contradictory political directions of of globalisation versus decentralisation, which are having such an impact on the state, are thus also

transforming the political-organisational processes of rural social movements. These latter processes are highly dynamic and contingent, resulting in varied and uneven outcomes institutionally, geographically, and temporally.

It is from this perspective that recently emerged transnational rural social movements and their political and organisational trajectories are best seen. Transnational networks and/or social movements are not new. There are several transnational agrarian movements, organisations, networks or coalitions that existed in the past. They were of varying size, sectoral focus, ideological provenance and political orientation. Many of these still exist today (see, e.g., Holt-Gimenez 2006; Yashar 2007; Borras, Edelman and Kay 2008). Among the oldest groups that remain an important actor in the global governance scene is the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). Founded in 1946 by associations of small to big farmers mainly from developed countries, IFAP has become the mainstream sector organisation for agriculture that has claimed and made official representation to (inter)governmental agencies and in agribusiness circuits. Since the 1990s, however, IFAP has also recruited or allowed entry of some organisations of poor peasants from developing countries, perhaps partly in reaction to the emergence of *Vía Campesina* which has a significant base among poor peasants. While not a homogeneous network economically, its politics do tend to be dominated by its economically and financially powerful members. Moreover, as Edelman (2003) explains, despite certain ambivalence about market liberalism, groups linked to IFAP often backed centre-right political parties. On most, but not all, occasions it has thus seen neoliberalism as an opportunity, and so essentially supports such policies, while advocating some operational and administrative revisions (Desmarais 2007).

By contrast, *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 neoliberal globalisation, which was perceived by many other rural groups as a grave threat to their livelihoods. Today, this movement unites more than 100 national and sub-national organisations from Latin America, North America, Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe opposed to neoliberalism and advocating a pro-poor, sustainable, 'rights-based' rural development and greater democratisation. An ideologically autonomous and pluralist coalition, it is both an *actor* and an *arena of action* (Borras 2004).<sup>1</sup> Claiming global and popular representation, although the American and European groups were the most numerous and influential within it at least during the first ten years or so, *Vía Campesina* has lately emerged as a major *actor* in the current popular transnational struggles against neoliberalism, demanding accountability from (inter)governmental agencies, rejecting neoliberal land policies, resisting and opposing corporate control over natural resources and technology, and advocating 'food sovereignty', among other issues. It has figured prominently in politically

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1 While this is different from the framing by Appadurai (2006) about transnational civil society being simultaneously a project, a process, and a space, it has at the same time some significant analytical overlaps with the latter. Moreover, this is a similar framing by Keck and Sikkink (1998: 7) about 'network-as-actor' and 'network-as-structure' (see related discussions in Guidry, Kennedy and Zald 2000: 3; Batiwala and Brown 2006).

contentious campaigns such as those against the WTO, global corporate giants such as McDonalds, and genetically modified crops (GM crops) along with the transnational companies that promote them such as Monsanto (see, e.g. Scoones 2008; Newell 2008).

Vía Campesina's main agenda is to defeat the forces of neoliberalism *and* to develop an alternative. This explains the coalition's confrontational stance towards international financial institutions seen as the tools of neoliberalism. For Vía Campesina, the goal is to delegitimise these institutions and decrease their influence, and so it does not engage in dialogue or consultative processes with these institutions. On most occasions, Vía Campesina's positions on key issues and its forms of collective action have differed fundamentally from its mainstream counterpart IFAP. Vía Campesina has thus emerged as an important alternative voice of poor peasants and small farmers, largely but not yet completely, eroding the traditional hegemonic claim of IFAP. It was, for example, a leading force in the anti-WTO struggles during the past decade. At the same time, Vía Campesina has emerged as an important *arena* of action, debate and exchange between different national and sub-national peasant and farmers' groups. Put differently, Vía Campesina is an 'institutional space' itself. 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 national and local peasant movements, and an interesting but complex entity for other transnational social movements, NGO networks and international agencies to comprehend and deal with.

Rural social movements engaged in land policy issues tend to follow the broad patterns of institutional change outlined earlier. Some movements have crossed national boundaries and joined forces with other national movements to engage (inter)governmental institutions that have influence on their national land policies. Others have localised their actions, following the mainstream shift towards the local, embracing decentralised approaches to land policymaking. Still others have abandoned state-directed collective actions and advocacies and started to get involved in privatised, market-led land policy transactions that have gotten so much attention and logistical support from mainstream (inter)national institutions. A few have attempted to combine initiatives on these various levels or fields of action. More generally, two broad types of groups 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 and democratisation processes.

As (inter)governmental institutions (multilateral and bilateral agencies) have been increasingly involved in actually framing, funding and pursuing land policy frameworks, agendas and strategies that have direct influence on national and local land policies, these agencies in turn become a target by what has become transnational campaigns by poor peasants in the global south. With the institutional changes brought by neoliberal globalisation, the citizenship dynamics in 'rights holders' (poor peasants) trying to hold the 'duty bearers' (national governments) accountable to land policies that eventually got carried out in the local communities have necessarily been *extended* to the global terrain. Poor peasants crossed community and national borders, linked up with poor peasants

from other countries with similar predicaments, forged new identities including a global community of landless poor peasants, of 'peoples of the land', actively engaged in global policy and political processes. Vía Campesina's has reframed the dominant free market-oriented land policy discourse by bringing in the notion of 'rights-based land reform' (the 'right to land'; the 'right to food'). It is a politically sophisticated effort to bring the discourse on land to a citizenship arena as they perceived that (inter)governmental institutions have increasingly brought the land discourse in the domain of the free market.

Vía Campesina's reframing of this particular issue and campaign is new in at least two ways: (i) It avoids the problem of getting stuck within the narrow parameters on land policies set by mainstream agencies which are fundamentally free market-oriented, as what happened to other global policy advocacy groups as will be explained later. It then necessarily reframes the very content and parameters of the land discourse globally by invoking 'rights', as in 'rights of peoples of the land'. Vía Campesina's discourse can be re-phrased as 'land rights are citizenship rights'. These two sets of rights, for Vía Campesina, are inseparable: one set of rights cannot be fully achieved without the other. Citizenship rights, in this context, have tangible meanings: land rights; and these are realisable rights as actual policy and political battles are simultaneously fought at the village and national levels while global advocacy is being pushed. Vía Campesina has positioned their land rights campaign within the universal human rights framework, embedding it within their global campaign for a 'Peasants' Charter' that they are addressing to the UN Commission on Human Rights; (ii) By (re)framing their land campaign within a 'rights framework' and pursue it as such, Vía Campesina have to necessarily engage with the 'duty bearers', the various (inter)governmental institutions operating at the global arena, e.g. UN agencies and international financial institutions. In academic research terms, this means that 'society-centered' or 'social movements-centered' analytic frameworks that have been dominant in (trans)national agrarian movements studies will be rendered significantly weak as an analytic tool. An interactive 'state-society relations' perspective examined at the local, national *and* international level (and the dynamics between these levels) has become a relevant analytic handle, with far-reaching implications both for academic research and political actions.

Moreover, as will be explained in the paper, Vía Campesina's global campaign for agrarian reform has contributed to the creation of a 'new citizenship space'. Here, 'space' is broadly defined as an institutional process or venue or arena through or within which (sub)national agrarian movements affiliated with Vía Campesina have created and occupied a distinct space for poor peasants. Within and through this space, Vía Campesina processes and aggregates the various perspectives and positions of its affiliate members, engage with other non-state actors working around global land issues, and interact with (inter)governmental institutions linked to international land policymaking dynamics. It is a 'citizenship space' because when using such a venue, Vía Campesina activists are politically conscious of their 'rights' as global citizens, they use this space to hold accountable institutions they perceived to be 'duty bearers'. It is 'new' because it did not exist before. What existed before were institutional spaces used by NGOs and rich farmers – often claiming they were acting on behalf of poor peasants. It is 'distinct' because this space has been created, occupied and used by and for poor peasants,

different and separate from other spaces like those controlled by NGOs or rich farmers' associations. For example: before, the only chance that leaders of movements of poor peasants were able to participate in global governance processes was when NGOs or rich farmers' associations would invite them or allow their entry; Vía Campesina today is able to organise its own distinct participation in such processes usually based on their own terms. This distinct space and the assertion for the autonomy of this space which is, admirably, generally respected by a wide range of state and non-state global actors did not exist and was completely unthinkable until the mid-1990s.

It is in the context of the discussion above that one can see better Vía Campesina's transnational campaign for agrarian reform conceived and launched in 1999. Aspiring to neither 'sink' nor 'float' this campaign involves verticalising action (in the manner described by Fox 2001; and Edwards and Gaventa 2001) by connecting local, national and international groups. Among all the regions where Vía Campesina has significant presence, it is mainly the Latin American groups, groups in a few countries in Asia, and South Africa that have pushed and carried out the global campaign for agrarian reform. The main campaign issue is Vía Campesina's opposition to the neoliberal market-led approaches in land policies promoted by (inter)governmental institutions (see Borras, Kay and Lahiff 2008). The campaign uses a combination of tactics: 'expose and oppose' tactic for the neoliberal land policies (i.e. market-led agrarian reform) and the institutions that promote these, i.e. principally the World Bank; 'tactical alliance' strategy for friendly institutions or groups within these institutions, i.e. the land tenure block within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the policy division at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The venues are international conferences, workshops, meetings as well as electronic discussions. The campaign platform is a combination of demands to drop neoliberal land policies and to adopt their alternative vision. The main forms of action in the campaign include protests in international venues, participation in some official conferences, and non-participation in others, combined with continuing land-related actions 'from below' in national and local settings. From the outset, the initiative has had an ally in the human rights activist network, Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN). Later, another global network of activist research think tanks, the Land Research and Action Network (LRAN), also joined. The campaign itself has been dubbed the 'Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform'.

What has been achieved by Vía Campesina's global land campaign so far? Similar to the key contribution of Vía Campesina more generally, the impact of the transnational land reform campaign can be seen mainly in reframing the terms of contemporary debates around land and land reform (see McMichael 2008 and Borras 2008, respectively). No doubt it is a major and profoundly important accomplishment. Moreover, tactical victories can also be noted. The campaign can be partly credited for the defensive position taken by market-led agrarian reform promoters after the latter's aggressive promotion of the scheme beginning in the early 1990s. The campaign can also be partly credited for preventing other international development institutions, or more precisely, important groups therein, particularly FAO and IFAD, from jumping completely onto the neoliberal land policies bandwagon. However, as noted in Borras (2008), the global land reform

campaign failed to deliver any other major outcomes desirable for the (trans)national agrarian movements. In Brazil, for example, the protested market-led agrarian reform even got expanded after a few years of the global campaign and despite the fact that the Brazilian movement, MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) has been a key actor in the international campaign.

In short, Vía Campesina's transnational land reform campaign has become an important political process through which various groups representing rural citizens from different local and national settings in the world have tried to resist neoliberal land policies imposed in their local and national settings, demanded accountability in (inter)governmental land policymaking processes, defined and accorded their own interpretation of the meaning of land and land reform, as well as begun forging an alternative vision. Reframing the terms of the global land debates represents a process whereby rural poor people, or rather, organisations representing them have consistently asserted the inclusion of their own perspectives framed within 'citizen's rights' into the global land debates. For this reason, the campaign deserves closer examination. For the purpose of the research initiative around citizenship for which this paper is being prepared, we now turn to do just this.

Our analysis of Vía Campesina's global land reform campaign revolves around four broadly distinct but interrelated areas of inquiry, namely, the nature of the state, the politics of mobilisation, the politics of intermediation, and knowledge politics. A view from the Philippines on every theme discussed below will be made in order to give a concrete illustration of the vertical alignment of movements involved in this campaign.

## 2 Nature of the state

Land reform as a critical component of national development processes had its golden era between the Mexican revolution of 1910 and perhaps around the time WCARRD (World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development) was convened by the FAO in 1979 (Kay 1998). When neoliberalism gained momentum in the early 1980s, and due to its being a conventionally state-centered type of public policy, land reform was quickly dislodged from official agendas of (inter)national governmental institutions. Only a very few national land reform efforts were initiated during the 1980s, while most existing land reform laws were kept dormant by national governments. However, the failure of Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s to address growth and poverty helped to reignite the issue of land reform, although largely in the context now of invigorating property rights as an important institutional factor for economic growth. It has been the search for the 'most economically efficient' use of natural resources, particularly land that has prompted mainstream development thinkers and practitioners to revive the land question. The kind of land policy favoured today is significantly different from the conventional concept of redistributive land reform, which traditionally had been sponsored from the commanding heights of the central state (Borras 2007). Land policy discourse beginning the 1990s has differed from the past in at least three ways.

First, while international institutions played varying roles in national land reforms in the past, in general such roles were framed and performed within the context of the immediate post-WWII political condition and the subsequent Cold War era (e.g. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, El Salvador, and so on). It was the US government, USAID and the World Bank that were the main global actors in the land reform scene during this era. Then the Cold War era ended, and the communist threat in most developing countries disappeared, or at least faded considerably. By contrast, the contemporary global terrain on land policymaking is far more plural and diverse. Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, as well as several UN agencies have recently taken up the land issue. A few examples of recent initiatives include:

- (i) the FAO-sponsored International Conference on Agrarian and Rural Development (ICARRD) held in March 2006 in Brazil and attended by more than 1,000 officials from around 120 countries and some 500 civil society organisations,
- (ii) the release of the now influential and controversial World Bank Policy Research Report on Pro-Poor Land Policies in 2003 (World Bank 2003),
- (iii) the European Union land policy guidelines signed in late 2004,
- (iv) the launch of British Department for International Development's land policy in July 2007,
- (v) the release of the Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) land policy in December 2007,
- (vi) the ongoing formulation of a global land policy of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),
- (vii) the formation of the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP) that is otherwise known, informally, as the 'Hernando de Soto Commission' with its global secretariat at the New York headquarters of the UNDP,
- (viii) the initiative by the UNDP-Oslo Governance Centre to systematise inter-agency work around 'democratic land governance',
- (ix) and the (earlier) formation of the International Land Coalition (ILC) which is a coalition of international financial institutions particularly the World Bank and IFAD, intergovernmental institutions particularly FAO and the European Union, and several big NGOs.

Other sectoral reforms advocated by some of these agencies are somehow linked to the land question, such is the case of the 'access to justice' reform, as examined by Franco (2008a), as well as on the 'governance reform' sector, as explained by Borras and Franco (2008). Civil society, meanwhile, has its own long list of land-related transnational activities around land policies, some of which are in collaboration with a few global institutions, while others are more autonomous.

Motivations behind the revival of land policy in official development agendas and the emergence of numerous and diverse (inter)governmental and nongovernmental institutions have been varied and diverse as well. But despite the fantastic

diversity of reasons and motivations behind the recent land policy revival (that includes economic, social, political, environmental, cultural, and gender considerations), the dominant thinking within the mainstream institutions has revolved around the continuing search for the most economically efficient use and allocation of land resources (World Bank 2003; Deininger 1999). As a result, one finds a much greater degree of influence of these global actors in (re)shaping the nature, content, pace, direction and perspective of national land policies. The dominant economic thinking, meanwhile, has been transmitted into national land policy dynamics. While national governments are officially given the 'power' to formulate their own national land policies, the global institutions that control large funding tend to fund only those projects that conform to their own policy biases. Thus, land property rights formalisation projects, land registration and titling, land administration, and market-led land reforms clearly predominate.

Second, while an important degree of power in land policymaking has been assumed by international (inter)governmental institutions, a complementary advocacy by these institutions involves the push for localised and decentralised approaches to land policymaking. This bias is based on the assumption that land policies tied to national governments are bound to fail due to the inherently corrupt and removed character of the latter, which hinders their understanding of the real dynamics of land policymaking. Thus, land registration, formalisation of land rights, land administration, natural resource management, land sales transactions, are all joined by a common policy implementation strategy feature: localised and decentralised (see, Ribot and Larsen 2005 for a background).

Third, the push by international institutions to 'go local' is linked to the third advocacy of the dominant development institutions, i.e. for non-state, privatised transactions around land resources. As Binswanger (1996), one of the chief architects of the market-led agrarian reform policy model, said, 'It privatizes and thereby decentralizes the land reform process'. Again, the assumption here is that the most efficient (re)allocation of land resources is best achieved through private transactions. And so, the key policies advocated include eliminating restrictions on dynamic private sales and rental transactions in land (such as land size ceiling laws), and promoting share tenancy arrangements, willing seller-willing buyer land sales transactions, and so on. Civil society groups are encouraged to take part in these privatised transactions by becoming private service providers, together with commercial banks, to local peasant groups involved in the process.

The Philippine experience fits perfectly the classic case of a nation-state pressed in this triple squeeze. Recent years have seen the promotion of market-friendly land transfer schemes, including the textbook market-led agrarian reform, formalisation of land property rights, localised land titling and administration, and 'territorial restructuring' amidst intensified promotion of extractive industries, especially mining, and preparations for large scale cultivation of 'energy and food crops' mainly for China. These policies are matched by pressures to eliminate legal prohibitions in land sales and rental activities as well as the existing land size ceiling law which is the spirit of existing redistributive land reform as embodied in the legal text of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP (Franco 2008b). Such developments reveal the strong orientation of global institutions to eschew any engagement with the national state, except on the

particular policy processes that attempt to limit, if not altogether liquidate the role of the latter, while pushing localised actions and more privatised transactions.

However, it is crucial to point out that there is a huge gap between what has been advocated by mainstream institutions and what has actually transpired in reality. In reality, nation-states remain key actors in national-local governance in most parts of the world today. As Keohane and Nye (2000: 12) note, 'Contrary to prophetic views, the nation-state is not about to be replaced as the primary instrument of domestic and global governance.' Studying the rise of indigenous peoples' movements in Latin America and the role of nation-states, Yashar (2007) argues that the latter has in fact gained more prominence and significance. In the Philippines, neoliberal advocacy for downsizing the central state partly means the promotion of land policies that privatise and decentralise the land policy process, and the passage of laws geared towards substantially limiting the role of the central state, e.g. the 'Farm Land as Collateral' Bill; or the non-passage of laws that promote the central state's role, e.g. lobbying for the non-continuity of the CARP law beyond June 2008 (Borras, Carranza and Franco 2007). Until now though, the Philippine central state still remains a key actor in land policies (Franco 2008b).

Meanwhile, the institutional spaces available for landless and land-poor rural citizen's engagement in inter-civil society and civil society-state interactions in the Philippines, as well as those interactions themselves, have become much more complex as a result of this changing context and terrain around land issues. Fox's (2001: 2) explanation using the metaphor of squeezing a balloon is very useful to describe the situation:

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. When a civil society organization questions World Bank officials, they generally duck the criticism and say that whatever problem it is, is the responsibility of the borrowing government. Similarly, when a national government makes a socially or environmentally costly decision, it may be very convenient for them to have the World Bank *look* like it forced them to do it, so that the direct political cost to them is reduced ... 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.

Similarly, Edwards and Gaventa (2001: 281) have argued that, 'Global citizen action implies action at multiple levels – local, national and international – which must be linked through effective vertical alliances. The most effective and sustainable forms of global citizen action are linked to constituency building and action at the local, national and regional levels. It is equally important that such action be vertically aligned so that each level re-enforces the other.' What all three scholars emphasise is clearly illustrated in the Philippines. When questioned why the land reform process in state lands is not working, the national government

blames local government; when one criticises a local agrarian reform community development project, local government officials point to the central government; when one protests against a World Bank-instigated and funded project, the latter will simply blame the national government. This phenomenon is also observable elsewhere, especially in countries where land reform remains a major and controversial public policy, such as in Brazil, Colombia, and South Africa (Rosset *et al.* 2006; Akram Lodhi *et al.* 2007). Campaigns that are more 'vertically integrated', as Fox puts it, have thus become a necessity.

Yet connecting with other campaigners outside one's own local community has always been difficult for rural citizens for a combination of reasons, including geographic isolation, high costs of communication and transportation, lack of alternative information, and so on. One can imagine how these factors become even more problematic when crossing national borders. With globalisation, however, the challenges in this regard have lessened dramatically for most people and groups, including those in the rural areas. In many instances, previously inaccessible and inhospitable 'spaces' have been opening up, enabling interested groups to undertake *vertical* networking and advocacy.

Such changes have contributed to the emergence of new collective identities (e.g. 'global/land') among rural citizens, in addition to existing ones ('national/land'). Rural citizens have increasingly begun to invoke perceived citizenship rights at multiple levels (local, national and global). Via Campesina's transnational campaign in protest against the market-led agrarian reform is a good illustration of this in the sense that rural citizens of different countries invoke their rights to define what land and land reform mean to them, struggle for their rights to have rights in reframing the global land policy making dynamics, and demand accountability from international development institutions whose policies impact on their everyday lives and livelihoods. The process of claiming and exercising citizenship in this changed multi-level terrain, and the emergence of new identities and channels of solidarity, can be seen from a number of broadly distinct but interrelated perspectives, namely, the politics of mobilisation, the politics of intermediation, and knowledge politics.

### 3 The politics of mobilisation

The existence of grievances among poor people, the existence of legitimate and 'just' issues, by themselves do not automatically lead to poor people to use their resources to mobilise. The social movement literature offers multiple analytic handles in understanding this issue. Tarrow's discussion of the 'political opportunity structure' is useful for the purposes of this paper. Tarrow (1994: 54) 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'. He has also identified four important political opportunities: access to power, shifting alignments, availability of influential elites and cleavages within and among elites. Refer also to his later explanation about the need to bring in the notion of 'threats' (Tarrow 2005: 240). Earlier discussions about nation-state actors and trends in

global policymaking processes are key aspects of changing political opportunity structure. Moreover, such political opportunities do not exist in isolation from the existing social relations within which claim-makers are embedded. Therefore, while it is critical to look at the (re)alignments of various relevant actors in looking at the politics of mobilisation, it is also relevant to look at the location actors in relevant social relations. In this section, we will focus our discussion on some dimensions of political opportunity structure, namely, *Vía Campesina* and rival networks, various organisations and movements within *Vía Campesina*, *Vía Campesina* with fraternal organisations and networks, and (competition for) funding assistance.

### 3.1 *Vía Campesina* and rival networks

As mentioned earlier, the institutional space for rural citizen engagement at the global level was previously dominated by IFAP. The main base of IFAP then, as today, was small, medium to large farmers' organisations based in developed countries, particularly (Western) Europe, North America and Australia. Many of IFAP's members in developing countries are organisations that, while perhaps claiming to represent 'poor farmers' in reality are based mainly among middle and rich farmers and led by middle class and agribusiness-minded entrepreneurs. It is perhaps for this reason that IFAP, since its formation in 1946 until recently, never really pushed and advocated for redistributive land reform despite its claim of representing the interest of the world's 'rural poor'. Because of the class base of this global network, its politics has tended to be relatively conservative.

In the Philippines, historically, two organisations held membership in IFAP, namely, Sanduguan and the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF). Sanduguan, a national coalition of middle and rich farmers primarily based in the rice sector, was founded by well-off middle class professionals and agribusiness and rural banking executives. Its main agenda has been to gain more state support services for production and trading activities, to push the state to provide a better playing field for them in the rice trade, and to lobby the national government to enable them to participate directly in import and export transactions involving farm input and output markets. For its part, FFF, founded by a lawyer from a wealthy landowning family (the Montemayors), emerged out of a national campaign for a liberal redistributive land reform in order to prevent a more radical reform in the 1950s (Putzel 1992). FFF is widely believed to have been tied to the CIA at a time when a communist rebellion was raging in the 1950s. But while it began as a conservative organisation, FFF split in the early 1970s, with the radicalised section leaving. What remained of the FFF in the 1980s–1990s (and up to today) was the more politically conservative leaders and pockets of community organisations comprised mainly of middle and rich farmers in the rice sector, and its main concerns are similar to those of Sanduguan. Perhaps for historical reasons, though, the FFF's leadership at times still pays lip service to land reform issues. In the Philippine context, it has always occupied a liberal-conservative position on the political spectrum, and it has always been run by the same family that founded it in 1953.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps with *Vía Campesina*'s growing challenge to IFAP in the 1990s, the latter

started to actively recruit more members in developing countries, including the Philippines. In the Philippines, IFAP recruited a moderate farmers' association, coming from a broad social- and Christian-democratic tradition, called PAKISAMA (National Council of Farmer's Associations). PAKISAMA was founded in the mid-1980s to engage the government on the land reform issue using moderate forms of action and shying away from more militant actions (for general background discussion, see, e.g. Putzel 1998; Lara and Morales 1990; Borras 2007, Chapter 6). After a major land reform campaign in 1996 which was focused on one particular farm, PAKISAMA shifted their focus to lobby work on agricultural productivity issues, and eventually formalised its membership in IFAP. Internally, among the social-democrats, it was agreed that the land reform campaign that used to be pursued by PAKISAMA would then be taken up by a new group called 'Task Force Mapalad'; the latter employs relatively more radical forms of actions as compared to PAKISAMA and is more consistent in its advocacy, but its geographic base is mainly limited to one province (Negros Occidental) out of more than 80 provinces in the country, but that this particular province is also a key sugarcane producing province with strong landlord opposition to land reform (Borras 2007, Chapter 6).

In the meantime, and perhaps partly in reaction to the challenge posed by *Vía Campesina*, IFAP started to at least formally and nominally get involved in land reform and land policy issues. This started in the 1990s, around the same time when a separate global initiative around land policy advocacy got started: the International Land Coalition (ILC). ILC is a global alliance of international financial institutions (e.g. World Bank and IFAD), intergovernmental institutions (European Union, FAO) and several NGOs in different countries. It is led by middle class professionals based in a global secretariat that is housed at the IFAD headquarters in Rome. The ILC's politics has been erratic. For example, the ILC director once praised the 'democratic' process and outcome of the World Bank's new land policy inaugurated in 2003 (World Bank 2003), in contrast to *Vía Campesina*'s strident criticism of the same policy. More recently, it has started to become a more open venue for policy discussion by various groups. But despite relatively positive changes in ILC politics recently, and despite linkages built with some important land-oriented national alliances in southern and eastern Africa, its institutional composition remains the same: international financial institutions, intergovernmental bodies, and NGOs. It does not represent any significant movements of landless peasants and rural labourers. These two international groups (ILC and IFAP) have become important networks working around land issues, but with perspectives and orientation significantly different from that of *Vía Campesina*'s.

In the Philippines, ILC's member is also a key pillar in the global coalition, the Asian NGO network called ANGO (Asian NGO Coalition), which is historically

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2 The founding chairman was Jeremias Montemayor who led FFF from 1953 until his death a few years ago. The secretary general was his son, Leonardo Montemayor (a lawyer) who became the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture under the neoliberal administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The head of the FFF's cooperative arm is Raul Montemayor, Leonardo's brother. See Patayan (1998) for an interesting insider's account and analysis.

led by Filipinos and headquartered in the Philippines. It is the main social-democratic coalition of rural NGOs in the Philippines, and PAKISAMA is its peasant base. Consequently, ANGO has not had any actual land-related campaign in the Philippines since 1996–7, when PAKISAMA shifted focus to productivity issues. As a result, and like IFAP, ILC is likewise left without any connection to actual land-related campaigns in the Philippines.

In short, IFAP and ILC are high profile, important and overlapping groups that claim global representation of the rural poor today. Yet the reality is more complicated. The dominant social classes in IFAP are middle and rich farmers primarily based in the global North. Given their mass base's location in the social relations of production, the latter simply do not have any direct or inherent interest in mobilising for redistributive land reform. Meanwhile, worldwide the ILC does not have any significant base among agrarian movements. In the Philippines, none of the organisations historically linked to ILC are involved in any serious and consistent contemporary land-related campaigns. Hence, neither global network can be said to directly represent to any significant degree or extent the landless peasantry and rural labourers in the Philippines, the social classes that have the keenest material interest in redistributive policies like land reform.

### **3.2 Various movements within Vía Campesina**

By contrast, Vía Campesina is a highly heterogeneous movement in terms of the class composition of its mass base. The four most influential mass base groups within Vía Campesina are as follows:

- (i) landless peasants 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) a small but influential group of emerging small family farms created through successful partial land reforms, such as those associated in Brazil and Mexico; and
- (iv) the middle to rich farmers' movement in Karnataka, India (KRRS).

The organisation's African membership is growing but, still relatively small and highly heterogeneous in itself, ranging from the mainly rural labourers in South Africa to small family farmers in Mozambique.

The landless peasants and rural labourers from the Latin American and Asian sections are perhaps among the most vocal groups within Vía Campesina. These groups can easily claim to be represent the most economically vulnerable and exploited groups among Vía Campesina's mass base, and indeed they cultivate the image of severe exploitation and make loud calls for social justice as such. In Latin America, among the most recognised voices are those of the MST in Brazil and COCOCH (Honduran Coordinating Council of Peasant Organizations) in Honduras, whose representatives within Vía Campesina have continued to hold critical leadership positions and exercised great influence within the global movement. In Asia, movements from the Philippines and Indonesia, and recently

from South Asia, while important in their own right are not as cohesive or powerful as the solid Latin American continental block, perhaps for a combination of reasons, including extreme linguistic diversity and serious ideological differences. Nonetheless, together, the Latin American and Asian landless peasant and rural workers' movements, plus perhaps the Landless People's Movement (LPM) between 2001–2004 were the main force behind the push for *Vía Campesina* to identify redistributive land reform as a strategic issue demanding tactical global campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

In the Philippines, three movements are connected to *Vía Campesina*, but in varying ways. All of these have a mass base, or at least formal claims of mass base, among the landless peasants and rural labourers. The first is the KMP (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas; Peasant Movement of the Philippines), a Maoist-inspired legal peasant organisation whose ideological position on land reform follows a more orthodox Leninist-cum-Maoist position by giving premium to workers and campaigning for nationalisation of land, advocating for state farms, although allowing for a transitional individual ownership (see Putzel 1995; Lara and Morales 1990). KMP's call for 'genuine agrarian reform' means land confiscation without compensation to large landlords and free land distribution to peasants. It was one of the founding members of *Vía Campesina* and represented Asia in the influential International Coordinating Commission (ICC) of the global movement during the latter's formative years in 1993–1996.

The second group in the Philippines that is linked to *Vía Campesina* is DKMP (Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas; Democratic KMP), a group that broke away from KMP in 1993 due to ideological and political differences. It took a more 'populist' position in terms of land reform, advocating for the cause of small family farms. But largely because of personality differences among its key leaders, DKMP ultimately failed to rally up and consolidate its forces, which comprised the overwhelming majority of the mass base that had broken away from KMP in the early 1990s. By the second half of the 1990s, DKMP had shrunk to a handful of peasant leaders and pockets of rice farmers in Central Luzon. With a few land reform cases and modest support from a few 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 due to ideological reasons, KMP has fallen from grace within *Vía Campesina* (see Borras 2008). As a result, one finds an ironic situation where one member-organisation with a relatively significant mass base (KMP) has been marginalised within *Vía Campesina*, while another member-organisation without any significant mass base (DKMP) has been mainstreamed within the global movement.

Even more ironic is when we consider a third group. A large chunk of the peasant movement that broke away from the Maoist-inspired movement did not find it conducive to rally up under the banner of DKMP. Instead, they eventually

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3 For various reasons, the South African LPM's land reform campaign did not make any significant impact in the country, despite direct assistance extended to it by *Vía Campesina* and the Brazilian movement MST (see Greenberg 2004; Balleti, Johnson and Wolford 2008).

regrouped under an umbrella organisation called UNORKA (Pambansang Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Lokal na mga Samahang Mamamayan sa Kanayunan; National Coordination of Autonomous Local Rural People's Organizations). Formalised only in 2000, UNORKA quickly became the largest group directly engaged in land reform in the Philippines, with its roots in nearly 800 agrarian disputes across the country (Franco and Borrás 2005). Its mass base is mainly among the landless peasants and rural labourers. And like the MST in Brazil, UNORKA is using the state land reform law as the institutional context for their campaigns (Franco 2008b). UNORKA also suffers tremendous violence committed against their members by landlords' private armies, state paramilitary and police, and by the armed wing of the sectarian and violent Communist Party of the Philippines. UNORKA tends to be more eclectic in terms of ideological position on land: while taking a generally populist stance advocating for small family farms, it also has significant base among and advocacy for rural workers. Ironically, UNORKA would like to join Vía Campesina and the latter would like to take UNORKA in. KMP, however, objects. And because of an organisational rule that essentially allows existing members to reject any applicant from its own country, UNORKA's entry remains blocked. Recently, however, and despite KMP's objections, Vía Campesina has begun inviting UNORKA to important global gatherings – as an observer.<sup>4</sup>

In short, among the largest and most influential groups within Vía Campesina are the ranks of landless peasants and rural labourers. They come from the property-less classes, they employ militant forms of actions in their land reform campaigns, and most of them are associated with radical politics. This partly helps to explain why Vía Campesina has framed its demands and global campaign for redistributive land reform the way it has. Before Vía Campesina came into existence, poor peasants and small farmers were used to being 'represented' by rich farmers' organisations and NGOs in key (inter)governmental international consultative spaces. This practice was put to an abrupt halt in the mid-1990s with the entry of Vía Campesina, that created its own distinct space for engagement between rural poor citizens on the one hand and state and non-state actors in global arenas on the other.

### 3.3 Vía Campesina and other fraternal movements

Vía Campesina has framed its global campaign for agrarian reform based on the concrete conditions of its numerous and influential members in Latin America, Asia and South Africa – that is, being 'landless people', economically poor, politically marginalised and culturally and socially excluded. This is undoubtedly Vía Campesina's main strength. Fraternal relations will be defined by Vía Campesina primarily along agrarian populist lines: 'peasant community' versus 'outsiders', 'them' versus 'us' – and so, solidarity channels have been quickly forged between poor peasants, small farmers, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples.

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4 Note from the authors: this working paper was finalised by the authors around middle of 2008. In October 2008, during the Fifth World Congress of Vía Campesina held in Mozambique, UNORKA was finally admitted as a 'candidate member'.

Class distinctions within these communities are not always clearly defined by Vía Campesina (Borras, Edelman and Kay 2008), although Paul Nicholson (from the Basque), one of Vía Campesina's most influential leaders, has at one point identified the alliance between small farmers and rural labourers as the most fundamental alliance.<sup>5</sup>

The global agrarian reform campaign was based on the call for conventional redistributive land reform, as influenced by the location in the social relations of production of its dominant mass base. But in recent years, a global call and advocacy for a broader interpretation of 'land' and 'land policies' has emerged, involving both neoliberal mainstream and anti-neoliberal alternative groups. The mainstream groups gravitate around so-called 'pro-poor land policies', meaning a broader menu of land policy options ranging from land property rights formalisation, land titling and administration, and willing seller-willing buyer land sales transactions, among others (see, e.g. De Soto 2000; World Bank 2003; Deininger 1999). The conventional redistributive land reform policy has been marginalised, if not altogether dropped from this mainstream discourse.

Meanwhile, partly in reaction to this resurgence in land policy interests and partly due to the emergence of other land-related issues (such as indigenous peoples' rights and territory, widespread privatisation of lands, and more recently, food and energy crises), discussions about land policy among alternative civil society groups got broadened. By 2006, the ranks of rural grassroots groups calling for progressive and pro-poor land policies have become far broader than Vía Campesina. And partly because of this, the previously latent issue of land among other groups in Vía Campesina outside the Latin Americas, Asian and South African circles has surfaced. More recently, key leaders in Vía Campesina talk about appropriate calls around the fate of communal and/or public lands, land restitution, land and tourism such as those marked by intense conflicts over land for farms and land for golf courses, competing lands claims in post-natural disaster settings such as what happened in Aceh, the land question in the global North, and so on.<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that Vía Campesina did not recognise these issues before; in fact they did with principled statements appearing in all their key documents. But such efforts, more in the form of 'agit-prop' (agitation-propaganda) than any serious struggle for concrete reforms, tended to lack real effect in the actual global campaign. If the discussions continue and gain further momentum, this means that the global campaign for 'land reform' will have to be reconfigured quite significantly. Groups that were previously not actively engaged in the land campaign – not because they did not have urgent land issues, but because the original framing of the campaign did not fit their concrete conditions – will have to be drawn in. These groups include numerous African movements and farmers' groups from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North America, South Korea and Japan.

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5 This was during a press briefing in Sao Paolo on 11 June 2004 on the occasion of the IV global assembly of Vía Campesina held in Brazil. [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org); downloaded 30 October 2007.

6 Partly based on personal conversations of S. Borras with Vía Campesina leaders Paul Nicholson who is from the Basque (in 2007) and Diamantino Nhampossa who is from Mozambique (in 2007).

Perhaps the emergence of a broader fraternal global network of movements also helped instigate greater rethinking within Vía Campesina. This broader network, where Vía Campesina is a member, is the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (or IPC). It is an ideologically, politically and organisationally broad network composed of some 500 rural-oriented organisations worldwide, including rural social movements and NGOs, and was formed during the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996. Vía Campesina is a key pillar of the IPC, but the latter also includes groups like IFAP (although the latter is generally in an inactive status) and numerous ILC members. The IPC recently became more actively involved in land issues during the build up for and during the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) organised by FAO and held in Brazil in March 2006. During the ICARRD, the IPC served as the official anchor of the NGO parallel forum attended by more or less 500 civil society representatives from different regions of the world. It was during this process that the issues of other grassroots sectors linked to land were loudly and systematically brought to the surface, by pastoralists, nomads, indigenous peoples, and subsistence fisherfolk, among others. The activation of the IPC in land issues also meant the ideological diversification of this political space, of this process.<sup>7</sup> For example, from Brazil, in addition to the MST (and the broader and bigger Vía Campesina-Brazil), the farmworker-based CONTAG (Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura) as well as the small family-based FETRAF (Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura Familiar) – both of which do not always have smooth political relationships with MST – also became actively involved in the IPC network.

With regard to the Philippines, however, the events related to the activities of the IPC have had no significant impact. This may be because Vía Campesina members there tend to relate directly with Vía Campesina as a global partner, not with the IPC. Moreover, many of the movements and NGOs that are active in the IPC are those that are not formally members of Vía Campesina. Perhaps the only development here was the incorporation into the IPC of a small NGO and peasant organisation.<sup>8</sup>

In short, the emergence of the IPC for Food Sovereignty as an important global network of movements for land is likely to contribute to enriching advocacy on land reform by incorporating broader land issue framing and demands such as those by pastoralists, farmworkers, and indigenous peoples. The community of 'peoples of the land' got far broadened and diversified as compared to the Vía Campesina community. At the same time, the IPC's rise has marked the beginning of a far broader and more comprehensive interpretation of land issues, one that is based on the actual diversity of concrete conditions and the location of various groups in existing agrarian structures. However, whether IPC would take the more militant orientation of Vía Campesina, or 'sink' to its lowest common denominator

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7 Borrás' interview with Antonio Onorati, global focal person of the IPC for Food Sovereignty, June 2007, Berlin.

8 The NGO is the Integrated Rural Development Foundation (IRDF); the peasant movement is the PKMP (National Council of Peasants in the Philippines).

politically, remains to be seen. But one thing is certain: Vía Campesina's inclusion and participation in the IPC significantly politicises this particular space in an interactive way – perhaps transforming both the IPC and Vía Campesina in some important ways.

### 3.4 Funding assistance

The politics of mobilisation can also be viewed from the ways through which transnational agrarian movements or networks get funding support. Of all the various transnational rural-oriented groups mentioned so far, it can be assumed that it is IFAP that has the greatest capacity to self-finance its work largely because its mass base is among the relatively well-off section of the farming sector in the global North. Essentially, ILC has also a very significant self-financing capacity as it gets its main funds from its members such as the World Bank, IFAD and the European Union, although it also taps non-members for additional funding. Vía Campesina and IPC are all dependent on external funding assistance for their institutional maintenance needs and for their major activities. Of the three latter groups, ILC is the most generously funded network, with well-salaried international staff some of whom are reportedly at UN rates. This is in stark contrast to the one-person salaried international staff of the IPC and the skeletal global secretariat of Vía Campesina – usually at 'subsistence, social movement rates'.

As mentioned above, the main funders of the ILC are international financial institutions (e.g. World Bank and IFAD), intergovernmental bodies (e.g. European Union), and other multilateral and bilateral development agencies (e.g. Canadian International Development Assistance). In a number of projects, the ILC acts like a 'retailer' of grants they got in bulk from these (inter)governmental sources and distribute these to their members and partners or groups they would want to invite to their network. Meanwhile, as a fundamental principle and as a rule, Vía Campesina does not want to secure funding support from (inter)governmental bodies, and most especially not from international financial institutions. For Vía Campesina, getting funds from these institutions is tantamount to compromising their political autonomy, principles and campaigns. Vía Campesina limits its source of funding from nongovernmental donor agencies. However, the global movement has been quite selective of agencies to approach or from which agencies to receive funding from. One of the criteria of Vía Campesina is that the agency should share most, if not all, of their ideals and should politically support their struggles – or at least, do not take positions on issues that are contrary to those of Vía Campesina's. Therefore, unlike a typical NGO that tends to actively look for funding opportunities from as many agencies as possible that are willing to support its work, Vía Campesina chose to approach only a very select few agencies, including the Dutch Inter-Church Organization for Development and Cooperation (ICCO) and Oxfam-Novib, as well as the Norwegian Development Fund and ActionAid, for their strategic institutional core funding. They expand the ranks of funders when it is a case of financing a specific activity. For the latter type, they could even be open to have funding partnership with FAO and IFAD. Meanwhile, the IPC is the least funded of the four networks, with its intermittent funds coming mainly from IFAD and FAO, and one paid staff member at its global

secretariat. It is the specific historical circumstance of IPC's birth that has influenced its funding assistance trajectory: it was formed in preparation for the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, an event organised by FAO and supported by IFAD.

Therefore, as far as the four major transnational networks being examined here are concerned, there are no major competitions for funds between them. Their own mass base, institutional community, and ideological and political orientation have naturally constructed their own channels towards their preferred funders. The character of mass base, ideology, and political strategy tend to influence a group's choice of funders (and vice versa). Competition over the same sources of funding does occur however among rural-oriented NGOs and peasant organisations that are members of any of these global networks. (Trans)national NGOs used to raise funds by claiming to represent and speak on behalf of poor peasants. *Vía Campesina* challenged this claim, and claimed their own space for direct representation of poor peasants and argued that funds should be channeled directly to peasant movements and not through intermediary NGOs. The competition for funds aggravates the already tension-filled relationship between NGOs and peasant movements. But overall, it can be safely assumed that funds for land-related global campaigns by different civil society groups have increased with the expanding demands from various groups that have emerged over time. Most nongovernmental funding agencies have established worldwide or global programmes (they used to be solely based on country or regional programmes) to specifically meet the demand from such a newly emerged constituency.

## 4 Politics of intermediation

The politics of intermediation related to *Vía Campesina* can be seen from two broad perspectives: intra-civil society interaction and (inter)governmental institutions-civil society interaction. We now turn our discussion to these two dimensions.

### 4.1 Intra-civil society interaction

As noted, IFAP's historical dominance of space in global rural-oriented policy-making contributed to the lack of significant global advocacy for redistributive land reform. It was also during this time that intermediary NGOs cornered this space. The NGO community is of course highly differentiated. For the progressive circles, intermediary NGOs represented, and spoke on behalf of, the rural poor in global development and land policy venues. As a result, historically, the space reserved for civil society in global land and development policymaking was occupied on the one hand by IFAP, which, as explained earlier, represented middle and rich farmers, and on the other hand by NGOs, a section of which represented some landless peasants and rural labourers. Predictably, *Vía Campesina* started to question this situation, and not without basis. As Batliwala (2002: 397) explains, 'Global NGOs and civil society networks, while representing the issues and concerns of poor or marginalized people in global policy realms, often have few

formal or structural links with direct stakeholder constituencies. Their “take” on issues and strategic priorities is rarely subject to debate within the communities whose concerns they represent.’ Yet it was these broad sets of actors that mediated the representation and engagement of rural populations around the world in global governance institutions and processes.

When Vía Campesina was formed, it quickly discovered the extent of the problem. Not only were the spaces for participation and representation at the global level already occupied by IFAP and by NGOs, some of these even claimed to represent the interests of landless peasants and rural labourers – the same base that it claimed to represent. Vía Campesina thus was obliged to respond, arguing that only the movements of the landless peasants and rural labourers can (and should) represent these social classes and groups in international fora. Drawing this line was not then, and still is not, an easy task. The opening salvo was at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996 when Vía Campesina refused to sign a joint declaration prepared by the NGOs and demanded a distinct representation and voice in international community. In the aftermath of this confrontation, Vía Campesina has been able to carve out its own space internationally and occupy it.

The emergence of Vía Campesina as a distinct voice and direct representative of landless peasants and small farmers has profoundly transformed the field of transnational civil society arena and global development and democratisation agendas. Vía Campesina advocated for, created and occupied a distinct ‘space’, a ‘citizenship space’, for poor peasants and small farmers – a space that did not exist before. As mentioned earlier, by ‘space’ here we mean process or venue through or within which (sub)national agrarian movements engage each other within their ‘global community’ and between their global community and the ‘outsiders’; or in ‘rights talk’ terms: process or venue through or within which various rights holders engage with each other and with the perceived ‘duty bearers’ which is the various (inter)governmental institutions. The transnational agrarian movement *has become the main intermediary* between various local-national movements of the landless peasants and small farmers, replacing IFAP and NGOs. This in turn has provoked a mixed reaction from NGOs and IFAP that previously occupied a wider space in international fora. Some NGOs resent the entry of Vía Campesina and have refused to back down. Other NGOs have since then tried to redefine themselves. But the entry of Vía Campesina in the global governance scene did not necessarily completely dislodge pre-existing groups that used to claim representation of the farming sector worldwide, particularly IFAP and NGOs. These groups simply persisted in their own spaces that are often completely outside the newly created space by Vía Campesina, but at times in spaces that overlap with the latter’s. IFAD’s Farmer’s Forum is an example of such a space where Vía Campesina succeeded to insert itself within, but not dislodging the earlier occupants, namely, the rich farmers-based IFAP and NGOs. The relative share of each key civil society actor in the global governance terrain did not shrink as a result. It was not a zero-sum, but rather, a positive sum, process: the space created and occupied by various civil society groups was expanded. Moreover, not only was the space expanded with the entry of Vía Campesina, it was also rendered much more complex in an enriching way, with the subsequent creation of various ‘layers of sub-spaces’ of interactions between

various civil society groups: between movements of poor peasants and small farmers and NGOs, movements of poor peasants and intergovernmental institutions, movements of poor peasants and funding agencies, movements of poor peasants and research think tanks, and so on. Much of these sub-spaces of dynamic interactions did not exist before the entry of Vía Campesina. These sub-spaces are important democratic blocks because these help facilitate multiple processes of issue-framing, demand-making, and representation dynamics.

Vía Campesina has been quite conscious of the space it has created and occupied, and always treat it in relation to other actors in the global governance sphere. Vía Campesina's overarching framework for alliances and autonomy is clarified in some of its policy statements: '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' (Vía Campesina 2000a: 9). Further, 'Our efforts to defend peasant agriculture/culture and rural areas cannot succeed without cooperation with others. Where we share objectives and can join forces over particular issues with another organization Vía Campesina should enter into ... alliances. Such alliances must be politically useful, carefully articulated in a formal agreement with a specified timeline and mutually agreeable ... 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: 10).

Vía Campesina puts a premium on alliances with politically like-minded social movements. At the moment, the extent of inter-movement or inter-network networking remains highly uneven, preliminary and tentative, although Vía Campesina intends to explore collaboration in the future with other rural-based international social movements (indigenous peoples, rural women, fisherfolk), most of which are associated with the IPC (Vía Campesina 2000a: 10–11).

But it is surely on the land struggle front that the transnational coalition's most solid alliance with an NGO network has been achieved. Over the past five years, Vía Campesina has built an alliance with the Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN), a human rights NGO network whose international secretariat is in Germany. FIAN is organised into country sections, with individual members coming from activist and human rights NGOs, people's organisations, and the academe, to struggle for the promotion of the right to food, a right which in turn requires the right to control over productive assets, especially land. In 1999, FIAN and Vía Campesina agreed to undertake a joint international campaign on land reform, the Global Campaign for Agrarian 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. As mentioned earlier, a global network of researchers, the Land Research and Action Network (LRAN), also later joined the initiative and the three networks now formally constitute the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform or GCAR (Vía Campesina 2000b).

In the Philippines, the institutional space for land reform advocacy remains contested by NGOs and peasant organisations. Despite a widespread

understanding that the key role in land reform campaigns must be played by peasant organisations and peasant leaders, a significant number of NGOs appear unable to step aside. Complicating this situation are long-standing and complex ideological differences between different NGOs and peasant organisations as well. But in general, the three groups associated with Vía Campesina, to varying degrees and extents, have been able to claim their distinct spaces nationally and locally. The global intra-civil society alliance forged by Vía Campesina was also partly reflected in the Philippines, with the formation of a FIAN-Philippines section, although it chose to work more closely with UNORKA, and with the LRAN local-national link concretised via the Philippine section of the Focus on the Global South working with DKMP and UNORKA. But unlike in the global arena, at least two Vía Campesina linked groups, KMP and UNORKA, remain among the key actors in the national land reform struggle broadly speaking, and so do not have to challenge IFAP and ILC national affiliates because the latter were in the margins of contemporary land reform struggles in the Philippines anyway.

#### **4.2 Civil society-(inter)governmental institutions interaction**

In dealing with (inter)governmental institutions, Vía Campesina has been quite skilful in combining ‘expose and oppose’ mobilisations, negotiation, and critical collaboration tactics. As it explains: ‘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). When and how to use mobilisation, and in the service of what broader political strategy, is a question that seems to be addressed in rather open-ended, flexible and tentative manner within Vía Campesina. According to them:

there are a multitude of ways of engaging with others to defend our interests. The two ends of the spectrum are: (i) to mobilize and demonstrate in opposition to the policies and institutions that are hostile to our interests in order to prevent or change them, and (ii) to negotiate and collaborate in order to influence policy changes. Many variations on these methods are possible – and necessary. The history, political context, culture are issues all have to be taken into account. Mass demonstrations, boycotts and direct action have been and continue to be very effective strategies in certain contexts and at specific political moments. In other venues, where there is space to negotiate, cooperation and collaboration are the most effective ways of creating positive changes.

(Vía Campesina 2004: 22)

Internationalising collective actions is not easy to carry out. La Vía Campesina asks itself the following difficult questions: ‘What is the best way to carry out coordinated mobilization at the international level? Organizational styles differ in Bolivia, Mexico, India, and Brazil. Should we find a common form or style of mobilisation or should each organisation make its own decisions? ... Are there other possible forms of coordinating action and mobilization at the international level?’ (Vía Campesina 2004: 49).

Answering these questions is an ongoing process. But the search for the most appropriate and effective tactics and forms of actions is inherently linked to their inevitable interaction with global (inter)governmental institutions. And the final choice of what type of tactic and action partly depends on what type of global institution they relate with. The nature of a particular global institution does matter for the political calculation of *Vía Campesina*. In general, they tend to favour the UN system that adheres to one country–one vote kind of representation mechanism; they tend to be open to relating constructively with some of the institutions with this kind of institutional representation, such as the FAO and IFAD. *Vía Campesina* explained that it has been engaging FAO to ‘struggle for positive change in an institution that could become a counter reference to WTO’ (*Vía Campesina* 2000a: 11). Furthermore, as the group has clarified: ‘*Vía Campesina*’s position differs from the general focus of the FAO. We have a dialogue with the FAO as a body of the United Nations and work with the FAO in a regional and international process to obtain positive results. The FAO’s doors are open to civil society and we feel that it is important to occupy this space, at this time. However, we must be constantly alert to the possibility of manipulation and instrumentalization by the institution and we should develop means to avoid this’ (*Vía Campesina* 2004: 47). It has maintained a degree of openness in working with some UN system organisations, but has yet to actually develop this front. Keen to preserve its autonomy, while facing limitations in logistical and human resources, *Vía Campesina* tends to resist interacting with these international institutions, although it has also made serious efforts to forge and consolidate an alliance with progressive and supportive top officials at the Policy Division of IFAD, thereby partly directly challenging the traditional hegemony of ILC in this institution. This emerging alliance is partly responsible for the subsequent formation of the Farmers’ Forum at IFAD, which is an official interface mechanism that brings together the official representatives from all member countries on the one hand and the farmers’ representatives on the other, partially but not yet totally eroding the traditional monopoly control by IFAD and intermediary NGOs over this space. Meanwhile, they necessarily take a confrontational, ‘expose and oppose’ stance against international financial institutions, including the World Bank, that are controlled by major capitalist countries, especially the US, viewing these institutions as the cause of, not the solution to, the problems of peasants and farmers.

Slightly outside the realm of ‘expose and oppose’, some national movements have experimented with engaging the World Bank, but in the broader context of demanding accountability (see, e.g. Scholte 2002 for a general background discussion). This was what happened, for example, when the National Forum for Agrarian Reform, a politically and organisationally broad coalition of rural social movement organisations in Brazil, twice filed for the World Bank Inspection Panel to investigate the market-assisted land reform experiment there (see, for background, Sauer 2003; Navarro 1998; Fox 2003; Vianna 2003). While the request was turned down twice due to technicality, 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.’

While the strong stance of *Vía Campesina* against international financial

institutions on the one hand, and its decision to engage FAO and IFAD on the other, has been understandable, the implicit underlying assumptions and fundamental framework are somewhat problematic. It tends to treat international governmental institutions as homogeneous entities. This position is, in general, less problematic when the institutions concerned are those that almost always act as tools of neoliberalism and against the interests and demands of poor peasants and small farmers, as in the case, for example, of the IMF and WTO. Problems arise, however, when the same approach is used in its relations with other agencies that demonstrate fragmented positions, conflicting policies and erratic actions, revealing an underlying heterogeneous character and contested institution. Vía Campesina has difficulty dealing with the erratic, or even internally conflicted, positions and actions of and/or within these agencies over time. Thus, one can imagine the frustration and disappointment of Vía Campesina members when the FAO came out openly endorsing GMOs in May 2004. The FAO incident reveals that these institutions, like states, are arenas of political contestation; they rarely act as single actor entities. These institutions are (re)shaped by actors within and actors without in politically dynamic processes, with highly uneven and varied outcomes across time and from one geographic space to another. Some institutions, and programmes within them, are doubtless more dominated by neoliberals. As such, Vía Campesina's decision to launch campaigns aimed at de-legitimising these institutions may be the best option. Others, however, such as the FAO, are perhaps less dominated by anti-reform actors, allowing or tolerating pro-reform actors, broadly defined here as those tolerant or even supportive of transnational social mobilisations from below and their demands.

What has been shown so far is that 'duty bearers' react differently to challenges mounted by 'right holders'. The World Bank has turned down the Brazilian movements' request at the Inspection Panel against the market-led agrarian reform project. Later, the World Bank did not only not heed the demand from the social movements to halt its market-led agrarian reform, but pushed for and supported the expansion of the contested programme, now covering 15 states (from the original five states). But the World Bank would also distance itself from the bankrupt market-led agrarian reform programme in Colombia and would blame the Colombian government officials for its failure. What the discussion in this section partly shows however is that many of the large global (inter)governmental institutions, like FAO and IFAD, are themselves contested arenas, made up of heterogeneous actors. The challenge, then, for transnational social movements such as La Vía Campesina is to find ways to continue engaging with pro-reform actors *within* these institutions rather than the institution as a whole. This is so as to create cleavages within these agencies, isolating the anti-reform actors, while winning over, expanding and consolidating the ranks of pro-reform actors, and supporting the latter in their struggle against the anti-reform forces within their agencies and in other intergovernmental entities.

Finally, while the engagement of Vía Campesina with some groups within FAO and IFAD has been quite notable, the absence of interaction with other multilateral and bilateral agencies working around land policies have been especially noticeable. As noted earlier in this paper, land policies have become an important policy issue among multilateral and bilateral agencies in recent years. In fact, important land policy frameworks and significant funds come from these agencies,

**Table 4.1 Institutions with land policies and Vía Campesina’s global engagement**

	<b>Land policy</b>	<b>Engagement by Vía Campesina and allies</b>
WB	Yes	Yes, oppositional
FAO	Yes	Yes, constructive engagement
IFAD	Yes, being finalised	Yes, constructive engagement
EU	Yes	Yes, but very minimal
DFID	Yes	No
BMZ-GTZ	Yes	No**
UNDP	Emerging	No
SIDA	Yes	No
AusAid	Yes (land titling)	No
USAID	Yes (land titling, formalisation)	No
JICA/JBIC	No, but tends to follow the World Bank	No
CIDA	No, but has some ‘natural resources’ items	No
CLEP	Yes, De Soto formula	No**

Notes: \* FIAN-German section, a Vía Campesina ally, has an intermittent engagement with BMZ-GTZ on land issues. \*\* Some Vía Campesina allies among Norwegian NGOs have ‘critical engagement’ with CLEP and the Norwegian government that supports the latter. WB = World Bank; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization; IFAD = International Fund for Agricultural Development; EU = European Union; DFID = UK Department for International Development; BMZ-GTZ = German international development aid agency; UNDP = United National Development Programme; SIDA = Swedish International Development Assistance; AusAid = Australian Aid; USAID = United States Assistance for International Development; JICA/JBIC = Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan Bank for International Cooperation; CIDA = Canadian International Development Assistance; CLEP = Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor.

most especially from the bilateral agencies. And while ILC has been quick to move within and around these agencies, Vía Campesina has generally defaulted in this terrain (see Table 4.1). The bilateral agencies of the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Sweden, Australia and Japan, and USAID are among the best funded and aggressive in the land policy front – and Vía Campesina has never engaged – combative or otherwise – with any of these agencies. This default does not work well in favour of Vía Campesina’s advocacy for two reasons: (i) because on balance, the bilateral agencies control the bulk of funds that support land policies that get implemented in developing countries’ local communities, and (ii) because a significant portion of funds controlled by multilateral agencies come from the

bilateral agencies. Most of the land policies by multilateral and bilateral agencies are friendly to the neoliberal land policy framework. For these two reasons, bilateral agencies are key actors in the global land policymaking process.

One most possible reason of why Vía Campesina has never engaged with the bilateral agencies is the less concrete lines of accountability relationship between citizens in the South and a particular North-based country. For example, it is not immediately concrete and easily comprehensible why citizens from Mozambique as rights holders can and should hold accountable as 'duty bearers' the government of the United Kingdom on issues pertaining to a land policy framed for and implemented in Mozambique. But as a North-South movement, Vía Campesina should be able to address this problem, with perhaps its counterpart in the North demanding accountability. This is theoretically possible, although politically difficult. An example from the Philippines illustrates this difficulty. The German technical assistance agency, GTZ, supported campaigns for land reform in one region in the Philippines leading to the partial erosion of the political and economic clout of despotic local authoritarian elites. But due to technical timeline, the GTZ had to pull out from its support. The local villagers warned the GTZ that if they pull out, the landlords and other armed groups would come back and strike against the fledgling agrarian reform movement. The villagers appealed that the GTZ at least provide them some modest financial assistance so that they could hire lawyers. The GTZ refused to heed the appeal from the villagers. They made a complete pull-out. Thereafter, the landlords and other armed groups started to harass leaders of the agrarian reform movements, assassinating a number of them. The German NGO, FIAN, brought the issue to the German government and public, demanding that the GTZ be held accountable in this case. Nothing significant happened in FIAN's initiative.

More generally in the Philippines, the global pattern of civil society-(inter)governmental interaction has been replicated, but only partially. The three Vía Campesina-linked peasant movements have maintained an 'expose and oppose' stance to international financial institutions, and have particularly campaigned against the World Bank and its market-led agrarian reform and its lobby for the lifting of state sanctioned land size ceiling laws (Borras, Carranza and Franco 2007; UNORKA 2000). There has been no significant campaign, for or against the World Bank's land policies, coming from the IFAP and ILC members in the Philippines. However, the progressive alliance between Vía Campesina members and the FAO and IFAD has not been replicated at the local and national level. The Philippine connection of IFAD has historically been brokered by a social-democratic NGO network (ANGOC) which is a key pillar of ILC, and by implication, by its peasant movement base, PAKISAMA, which is in turn a member of IFAP – effectively prevented the replication at the national level of the global alliance between Vía Campesina and some influential officials at the Policy Division of IFAD. Just like the situation at the global level, Vía Campesina members in the Philippines do not interact in any significant manner at the policy level with any other multilateral and bilateral agencies around land policies, despite the latter's importance in this policy area in the country.

## 5 Knowledge politics

The experience of Vía Campesina's global campaign on land reform is illustrative of the dynamics of knowledge politics. This can be seen in at least two ways. On the one hand, the construction of alternative visions about land and land policies by key actors in the global governance scene is primarily based on competing knowledge about these issues. And so, it is a struggle over which knowledge about land and land policies count. For example, while the World Bank, using sophisticated econometric method, would typically show how private, individual land property rights or land rentals leads to greater inflow of financial resources into the countryside, Vía Campesina, using its knowledge about particular rural communities would invoke community land rights that work for the poor. The battle over whose knowledge is more sensible and truly pro-poor goes on and on covering various aspects of the land policy debate, as shown in Table 5.1. Thus, knowledge politics is an important arena through which Vía Campesina challenges the mainstream neoliberal thinking and constructs an alternative vision (McMichael 2008; Patel 2006). As mentioned earlier, it is perhaps on this arena that Vía Campesina has so far made so much impact internationally (McMichael 2008; Borras 2008).

On the other hand, knowledge politics can also be seen in terms of the struggle over access to key information and in the ways such information are used. Most concretely, the transnational nature of the land reform campaign has partially eroded the traditional monopoly of the World Bank and other international institutions on access to and control over key information related to land and peasantry in different national and international locations. The exchange of information and experiences among different national Vía Campesina members has equipped them with the information necessary to directly challenge and confront the World Bank and other international institutions on several controversial issues. For example, the World Bank used to boast about the success of its market-led agrarian reform in Colombia, Brazil and South Africa – until Vía Campesina and ally groups in these countries and internationally, armed with empirical data, challenged the World Bank's claims. This was what happened for instance in April 2002 in Washington DC, in an event that was crucial in pushing the World Bank into a defensive position, and in making many generally supportive academics and policy experts more cautious in their support to the neoliberal land policy package being promoted by the Bank.

Notably, two books were published as part of the evidence-based policy advocacy and campaign by Vía Campesina: the first was made available in Portuguese and English (Barros, Sauer and Schwartzman 2003); the second only in English, the *Promised Land* (Rosset, Patel and Courville 2006). These two books have contributed significantly to the campaign in a variety of ways, including by depicting the campaigners as 'reasonable' and 'scientific' and not just a bunch of activists engaged in 'agit-prop' (agitation-propaganda) write ups. These books provided greater access to alternative knowledge for land reform campaigners inside and outside Vía Campesina.

**Table 5.1 Competing knowledge and advocacy positions in agrarian reform advocacy**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Neoliberal</b>	<b>Vía Campesina's global official discourse</b>
Land	Land for those who can afford to buy	Land to the community
Private property in land	Individual private property	Preference to stewardship or community land rights
Land market	The mechanism for land use (re)allocation, and so must be promoted	Land market is a capitalist tool for forming or consolidating land monopoly; it must be avoided
Who should get a piece of land	Efficient producers	All those who want land; it is a human right
Location of land in broader economy	For capital accumulation within capitalist development	Not for capital accumulation but mainly for self-provision; rejects capitalism and conventional socialism
Role of peasants	Efficient producers; property owners	Producers for self-provision and local market; guardians of land
Role for corporations/ TNCs	Yes; key to scaling up	No role for TNCs
Perceptions on the role of the World Bank	Key role in promoting the policy model	Absolutely oppositional to the World Bank

Furthermore, the timing of changes in transportation and communication technology over the past decade was auspicious for Vía Campesina's internal consolidation and global campaigns. When Vía Campesina started ground-working for its eventual formation in early 1990s, new transportation and communication technologies were just beginning to gain ground. During those early years, transnational communication within Vía Campesina was slow and expensive, relying on fax machines rather than electronic mail and regular telephones rather than text messaging or Skype, for example. This situation radically changed beginning in the second half of the 1990s, with the emergence of faster and cheaper communication technologies and transportation facilities. As

a result, more information and knowledge is being exchanged at a much faster pace, both within and between national-local movements. For instance, documents produced by mainstream agencies can now be shared much faster and at almost no cost, enabling peasant leaders in remote rural areas across the globe to respond quite rapidly and in a more coordinated manner, especially on urgent issues.

Such changes have affected knowledge politics in the Philippines as well. The reframing of land and land policies, as shown in Table 5.1, has been used by Vía Campesina-linked peasant movements in their protest against the World Bank's land policies being introduced into the country. Moreover, what started as scattered and intermittent 'international solidarity work among emerging rural civil society groups in the Philippines in the 1970s–80s gained momentum in the 1990s, and became even more systematic and efficient in recent years. Even the World Bank was caught by surprise when in 1999 rural civil society groups, armed with freshly printed critical evaluations of the Bank's not-so-well-known land reform experiments in Colombia, Brazil and Guatemala, and led by the national coalition Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services or PARRDS confronted the World Bank for trying to bring the market-led agrarian reform agenda to the country. The Philippine groups used their connections with other transnational advocacy groups in the United States and in Latin America to secure information that was damaging to the Bank, leading to a key tactical, albeit temporary, defeat of the scheme in the Philippines.<sup>9</sup>

## 6 Concluding remarks

In closing, this paper comes back to the set of key themes it aims to explore, namely, how citizens understand their rights and who they see as duty holders with respect to those rights, strategies and processes or rights-claiming in reference to the changing context, how the perceived duty holders respond to these rights claims, and what identities and solidarities emerge from above especially beyond the place/territory.

Rural citizens involved in the global campaign for agrarian reform led by Vía Campesina have understood their rights in the context of two broadly distinct but inseparable rights: land rights and citizenship rights, or more aptly, land rights as citizenship rights, and the two sets of rights cannot be separated from each other. In fact Vía Campesina is partly anchoring its land reform campaign on its parallel campaign for a 'Peasants' Charter' before the UN Commission on Human Rights. The framing of their campaign ('right to land') directly confronts the free market framework on land by the mainstream development currents. Vía Campesina's

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9 At this time, the global campaign by Vía Campesina has not taken off yet. But key contacts at the Food First Policy Institute based in Oakland and the Bank Information Center (BIC) based in Washington DC, both of which have serious interest in land reform and have good contact among Latin American rural social movements, facilitated the flow of information to the Philippine civil society groups.

notion of citizenship rights, as shown in this paper, is taken in a critical perspective: they did not simply accept the existing institutional spaces for citizen engagement at the global level, they created one; they did not simply accept the existing rules of engagement, they demanded new ones (i.e. 'not about us without us' kind of general rule); they rejected a corporate-oriented governance structure of some institutions such as the 'one share—one vote' system in the World Bank but endorsed the 'one member—one vote' system of the UN; they do not consider the World Bank as a legitimate representative institution, and thus their attitude towards this institution is to delegitimise it. At the global terrain, the perceived duty holders are a variety of (inter)governmental institutions that have gotten increasingly involved in land policymaking that have direct impact on what is or what is not carried out at the local and national level. In its land reform campaign, Vía Campesina would constantly straddle the local, national and international arenas in trying to hold accountable, separately and collectively, various (inter)governmental institutions (e.g. World Bank, FAO, IFAD, national governments, and local bureaucracies) engaged in land policies.

Moreover, as demonstrated in this paper, Vía Campesina represents both direct and mediated expressions of citizenships. In many ways it is direct expression of citizenship because they pushed out the conventional mediators: rich farmer's associations and NGOs, and creating their own space and occupied it. But in other ways, Vía Campesina's experience shows a mediated form of citizenship: Vía Campesina's elite leadership bodies have replaced the previous conventional mediators (NGOs, etc.), but it does not always mean that the problems of not achieving full and real representation of the local villages and national groups at the global governance terrain has been completely resolved with the takeover. The politics of intermediation between the movement's global leadership on the one hand, and (sub)national movements have been just become more dynamic and complex but also problematic at times.

Vía Campesina has advocated for, created and occupied a new citizenship space that did not exist before at the global governance terrain – a space distinct for poor peasants and small farmers from the global South and North. Through Vía Campesina, peasant movements from various (sub)national settings collectively invoke their rights to define what land and land reform mean to them, struggle for their rights to have rights in reframing the terms of the global land policymaking, and demand accountability from international development institutions whose policies impact on peasants' everyday lives and livelihoods. The global citizenship space created and occupied by various civil society groups got expanded with the entry of Vía Campesina in the global political stage. Such space has also been rendered much more complex, with the subsequent creation of various layers of sub-spaces of interactions between civil society groups: between movements of poor peasants/small farmers and NGOs, movements of poor peasants and intergovernmental institutions, movements of poor peasants and funding agencies, and so on.

Furthermore, there are concrete ways through which Vía Campesina have shown how citizenship claims are made and practices changed in relation to the land campaign. The most concrete manifestation of this citizenship claim is when Vía Campesina in the late 1990s barged into the global land policymaking scene and

questioned the way citizenship claims have been traditionally claimed and exercised there – that is, by representatives of rich peasants and big farmers represented by IFAP and by NGOs. Vía Campesina's arrival in this scene brought with it a new, distinct citizenship claim: for and by poor peasants and their representative movements. This has changed not only how citizenship claims are made, but how practices are done. Yet, the actual 'claim' and representation is never complete, smooth and static: it is always incomplete, uneven and dynamically changing. For example, Vía Campesina's land reform campaign at the global level is rejected by one of its most important members in Karnataka (India) because it has a middle/rich peasant mass base (Borras 2008). Its call for creative land claim making offensives is rejected in the Philippines by its once politically influential member (KMP) whose framework is 'a revolutionary, confiscatory land reform or nothing' which contradicts the very same policy framework within which Brazil's MST make their land claims (*ibid.*). These examples show that discourses aggregated at the global level do not always reflect completely and evenly the discourse and practice at the (sub)national levels by its members. The same can be said between national and local/ individual participants in national peasant movements.

Meanwhile, Vía Campesina is well-known for its autonomy and capacity to develop innovative and effective strategies in its campaigns. With the increasing involvement of global institutions in land policymaking, Vía Campesina has provided both an arena and an actor in itself for (sub)national rural social movements to cross national borders and engage with global institutions linked to land policymaking. Moreover, Vía Campesina has employed its classic, time-tested strategy of combining agitation-propaganda/expose-and-oppose tactics with critical collaborative stance *vis-à-vis* (inter)governmental institutions. There remains several important challenges though, including a sharper perception of and engagement with potential and actual groups of reform-oriented actors *within* global institutions, as well as the difficult challenge of engaging bilateral agencies.

As demonstrated in the paper, the emergence of Vía Campesina in the global scene since the mid-1990s has resulted in the emergence of new identities and channels of solidarity. One of these identities is the broad and vague, but influential and powerful notion of 'peoples of the land', that is very much along the tradition of agrarian populism's 'them' versus 'us', 'community' versus 'outsiders', and so on. In itself, this is not new. However, having brought it so prominently at the *global* level, arguably, is something new. Moreover, cross-class and cross-sectoral identities have also emerged in the form of alliances between Vía Campesina and other organisations and movements with different class and sectoral origins, as in the case of the much diversified IPC for Sovereignty of which Vía Campesina is a member. The 'global agrarian community' – the 'global us' – is significantly broader today, and this is something new.

In some ways the global campaign launched by Vía Campesina has contributed to 'new' meanings of global citizenship. For one, (inter)governmental institutions operating at the global level and framing policies that ended up getting implemented in national and local settings can, and should be, held accountable. As in the case of Brazilian movement filing a request in the Inspection Panel against the World Bank's market assisted land reform, Fox (2003: xi) neatly

summarised the key lesson in this experience. Another contribution made by *Vía Campesina* to 'new meanings' of global citizenship is that poor peasants and their movements have broken through the enormous structural and institutional barriers and have become active and reasonable global citizens, interpreting – and changing – their own conditions, giving concrete expression to the popular civil society saying of 'not about us without us'.

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