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**The Governance of Food System in sub-Saharan Africa:**

*A preliminary outlook of the G8 New Alliance for Food Security*

*and Nutrition* (Part 1)

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# The Governance of Food System in sub-Saharan Africa:

# A preliminary outlook of the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (Part 1)

This paper is the first part of the exploratory research about the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. Official documents of the G8 were systematically analysed reviews to determine the position of the G8 towards agriculture and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. Our findings suggest two major discourses used by the G8 notably on food security and agricultural development. The discussions in this paper underline that food security evolves in the lexical fields of politics whereas agricultural development falls under the policy sphere.

Keywords: G8, NFASN; food security; agricultural development, Africa, discourse

## Introduction

On May 2012, the eight member states of the G8 Forum along with the representatives of the European Union held their annual summit at Camp David, a holiday resort of the American administration located in the State of Maryland. Since its creation in the early 1970s, the event is considered as the annual rendezvous for the discussion of global governance issues. The 2012 summit stood out from the previous ones due to the initiative the forum adopted towards African agriculture. As a matter of fact, the G8 announced that a New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN, hereafter New Alliance) would be created in Africa to bring private investment into the continent with the intention to lift 50 million small farmers out of poverty by 2022 (The White House, 2012a). But more importantly, the New Alliance was also intended to reaffirm the commitments of the donor community to reduce poverty and hunger with the idea of creating a sustained and inclusive agriculture-led growth in accordance with the pan-

African framework known as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

With no major surprise, this announcement was received with enthusiasm and acrimony. On the one hand, optimists saw a new set of positive circumstances for the African agriculture after being ignored by the donors and governments for more than two decades (Timmer, 2009; World Bank, 2007). Sceptics, on the other hand, were wary about the involvement of the agro-food transnational corporations (TNCs) in the African agriculture, particularly their implications for the environment, democracy and social justice (Kennedy and Liljeblad, 2016; McKeon, 2014). It should be recalled that the TNCs part of the New Alliance are among the private interest which controls a considerable share of the global market for the so-called proprietary seed and agrochemical business – an industry, generating every year, hundreds of billions of US$ (ETC Group, 2008; Fraser, 2017: 30-35; ONE, 2012; ONE, 2013)[1]. These companies have sought to integrate the African agro-food market for the last two decades, but with limited success due to the hesitancy of the governments and national policy makers across the continent (Paarlberg, 2009: 1-20; Paul and Steinbrecher, 2003: 2-4; Vercillo et al., 2015). According to a survey conducted by Chambers et al. (2014: 5), genetically engineered plant (GM) related activities are effectively present in only three countries in sub-Saharan Africa mainly in South Africa, Burkina Faso and Sudan.

Despite the profound changes and the risk of disruptions carried by the New Alliance on the entire African agro-food system, academic research informing this subject still remains very limited. To date, what is known about the NAFSN is largely

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[1] The top 11 companies market capitalisation worth $US414.17 billion as of May 2017. Data retrieved from Google Finance.

derived from the few primary official sources, media reports and studies conducted by NGOs (see for example: ONE, 2012; ONE, 2013; OXFAM, 2013; The Guardian, 2013). Aside from this strand of grey literature, the academic research remains very fragmented. Robinson and Humphrey (2013), for instance, focused more on the relations of the New Alliance projects to nutrition. The two authors found that, of the 111 projects they reviewed, 57 are concentrated on non-food crops for exports such as cocoa or cotton, 12 for nutritious food for exports, 4 specific food products, 22 staple crops such as rice and maize and finally 16 projects for nutritious food for domestic markets. De Schutter (2015) reported the danger of the New Alliance for smallholders, notably on the basis of the emergence of land markets, regulations on contract farming and finally on the weakness of projects related to nutrition and the minimisation of the women's rights and gender empowerment. Patel et al. (2015) highlighted the adverse effects of the initiative in the life of small farmers in Northern Malawi, and highlighted the disconnection of the New Alliance's projects to nutrition. Dalgleish (2015: 107-110), explored how the New Alliance is creating conditions of impoverishment for African smallholders while opening the continent to TNCs. Vercillo et al. (2015) critically examined the introduction of biotechnology into smallholder agriculture under the New Alliance. These researchers concluded that without the inclusion and authority of smallholder farmers the adoption rates of the proposed technology supposed to help will remain low. Additionally, they added that the TNCs control of the production base is potentially a risk factor that may exacerbate more inequality. Another analysis by Brooks (2016) surveyed the how the G8 model is gradually pushing smallholder farmers to integrate the global value chain with the active role of public organisations and private companies. And finally, Hakizimana (2016) points out that 'the New Alliance must avoid large-scale land investments and facilitate the development process

of young people as independent farmers and producers capable of establishing their own livelihoods'. Collectively, these studies show that the New Alliance is not the way forward to fight against hunger and poverty in Africa.

Together, these studies are based on a common thread inspired by the pioneering literature of McKeon (2014) entitled 'the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition a Coup for Corporate Capital'. McKeon was the first to study the structure of the New Alliance and its key players. However, the document was based upon information from a time when the New Alliance was at its early stage in 2014. Since then, what is known about the New Alliance has not been updated and deepened to inspire new research. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, no existing research has systematically examined the G8 stance towards hunger, malnutrition, food security and agriculture in Africa.

This paper is an exploratory research seeking to provide conceptual and empirically-driven information on the New Alliance. More precisely, it retraces the footsteps of food security governance seen by the G8 through a systematic analysis of the official documents it issued from the 1975 Rambouillet summit to the 2016 Ise-Shima summit held in Japan. Alceste methodology developed by Reinert (1983; 1990; 2003) is used for the analysis. Data on the G8 official documents were retrieved from "the World and Japan" database (Tanaka, 2016).

Before getting into the heart of the matter, some caveats need to be mentioned for the readers. Our enterprise aims at a better understanding of the New Alliance through an exploratory research. Although meticulous and systematic methods were respected while examining the data about the G8, the works remain a human initiative and therefore, the interpretation we offer here is not devoid of subjectivity. Nonetheless,

we hope this paper will trigger new debates and inspire other research on the New Alliance considering its importance for the future of the African agro-food system.

**The G8, agriculture and food security in sub-Saharan Africa:** *then and now*

The amalgam of crises that occurred by the late 2007 – early 2008 has revealed the Achilles heel of a global food system that had hitherto relied on international trade mechanism. Bad meteorological conditions caused important crop losses, either due to floods in the case of Pakistan or India (major rice exporting countries), or drought in the case of Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia (Wheat-producing countries). On the Latin American continent, maize which so far has been used as animal feed has been derived into bio-fuel – an alternative to the rising price of oil (Mueller et al., 2011; Zilberman et al., 2013). At the heart of these events, grain producer countries were faced with an alarming situation with regard to their own needs (Jeffries, 2011: 736-737; FAO, 2014).

Looked from a broader perspective, market mechanisms gave way to domestic security. The dependency on international markets under a climate uncertainty was translated as a threat to national security particularly when grain producing countries such as Russia or Argentina adopted in the same period, restrictions measure on their exports to meet their national demand. Numerous studies explained that the food crisis of 2007-2008 was a result of a market and government failures (Díaz-Bonilla, 2015: 13-17), but what can be retained here is that the shock due to the export bans have been more severe for countries dependent on imports and especially for poor countries. For poor people living on less than a dollar a day, soaring prices of foodstuffs have had a serious impact on their daily budgets. Subsequent studies by the World Bank have revealed that this crisis has pulled back between 40 and 60 million people in a state of extreme poverty (World Bank, 2014). The extent of these consequences is all the more

serious for African countries that have been dependent on imports since the 1980s (Rakotoarisoa et al., 2011). This decadence has led to widespread riots against hunger as in the case of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mozambique or Senegal, which extreme form has triggered regime changes (Barrett, 2013; Naylor, 2014).

Another side revealed by the recent crises is land grabbing. Vulnerable countries endowed with important financial resources, such as the oil-rich countries in the Gulf, as well as institutional investors from the US, Europe, and Asia, were seeking for opportunities to diversify their investment portfolios in the aftermath of the global financial shock. In this process, Millions of hectares of farmlands were taken away from the African and Asian small peasants through state-owned enterprises, sovereign wealth fund, or hedge fund companies often with the support of governments, local elites and international institutions (Amanor, 2017; Anseeuw et al., 2013; Borras and Franco, 2012; Brautigam, 2013; Cotula, 2009; Daniel, 2012; Daniel, 2011; Hall, 2013). It is within this context that new challenges of food security and intentions have arisen prompting the intervention of actors in global governance.

During the 2008 Hokkaido summit, the G8 has recognised that hunger has become a serious issue that can influence political and social order. In the *Leaders Statement on Global Food Security* it is underlined:

> "We are deeply concerned that the steep rise in global food prices coupled with availability problems in a number of developing countries is threatening global food security. The negative impacts of this recent trend could push millions more back into poverty, rolling back progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals." (MOFAJ, 2008)

The G8 'New' Food Security of 2008 is singularly different from the "Old" one of the past. Historically, 'hunger and malnutrition' for instance, appeared for the first

time in the official declaration of Tokyo summit in 1979 then to reappear two decades later in 2001 Genoa summit. However, between these two periods, according to FAO statistics (FAO, 2010), the number of people suffering from hunger has always been above the threshold of 750 million. The difference is that, in 1979, the G8 encouraged international financial institutions to support developing countries suffering from hunger and that aid would be directed to agricultural research. In contrast to this first picture, the 2001 *Genoa Action Plan for Africa* reoriented the G8 actions to help Africa through a multilateral fora partnership that includes the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Peace, stability and the eradication of poverty in Africa are among the most important challenges that the G8 countries wanted to implement at the dawn of the new millennium. The measures to achieve these objectives focused on democracy and governance; Prevention and reduction of conflicts; Human Development; Information and communication technologies; Economic and corporate governance; Action against corruption; Stimulating private investment; Increase trade in Africa and between African countries and the world; Fight hunger and increase food security[2]. The trajectory of these major transformations in the approach to African problems is projected in what is today the NAFSN. Nonetheless, if the number of people who suffer from hunger is placed at the centre of the debates, the ups and downs in the orientation between these two aforementioned periods raise questions about the driving forces that led the G8 to change course and the ordering conditions they deem necessary to ensure

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[2] Information extracted from Tanaka A. (2016) G8 Summit-related documents. *Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations*. Tokyo: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies.

world peace and stability. The meaning of these changes may not be apparent at first sight justifying the need for a systematic method of analysis.

### *Content and Textual analysis based on Alceste method*

Much of the available literature on the New Alliance is grounded on analytical reading of documents or facts to draw a storyline or a conclusion. This approach is described by Fairclough (2003: 7) as a *textual analysis* which is an implicit but central tool in discourse analysis. Fairclough (2003: 8-9) argued that texts produce social effects such as changes in ideology which can alter the attitude and behaviour of the reader. Bauer et al. (2014) explained that reading carries the researcher into an imagination that stirs his/her empathy and understanding of the universe of others. Additionally, Bauer et al. (2014) suggested that: "Reading celebrates the possibility of transformative experiences: the reader is changing themselves through an 'aesthetic' encounter with the other." Consequently, the disadvantage of the analytical reading of a set of documents is that the reader might be cognitively or culturally biased in the interpretation of the texts. The second limitation of the analytical reading of a series of documents is the ability of the human brain to track patterns. Advances in computer science of the past years, however, makes it possible to break the limits of the human capabilities to analyse a large amount of information.

To date, a variety of methods has been developed to go beyond simple textual analysis giving way to a processing of large volume of texts, especially in text mining. Each has its advantages and drawbacks. Content analysis (CA) is a method used in different disciplines of social sciences, notably in journalism, political science, marketing, management, and in the fields of psychology. Many accounts discussing approaches and methodology of CA have been well-established and theoretically informed. Among the notorious ones are Weber (1990), Krippendorff (2004), and

Neuendorf (2016). A review of various characterisations of major work on CA conducted by Neuendorf (2016: 10) proposes the following definition:

> "Content analysis is a summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented."

Through the rich experimentation across various disciplines, CA has gained a reputable notoriety as a method that complements the work of social scientists to support or reject a particular theory or knowledge. Similar to textual analysis, CA has some limitation with regard to the meaning-making. Fairclough (2003) pointed out that in order to evaluate the causes and ideological effects of a text, the researcher needs to frame the textual analysis and analogously CA and bridges the knowledge from the texts to the macro analyses of power relations through networks of practices and structures.

*Logometry* is a method that proposes to overcome these limitations by combining qualitative and quantitative reading of a corpus. According to Mayaffre (2005), logometric treatment combines the apprehension of graphic material and its complex linguistic meaning without dissociating them. For this study, Alceste methodology is used to explore the G8 summits official documents.

The Alceste method is described by the IMAGE Company, developer of the software Alceste as follows:

> "Alceste, from a corpus, makes a first detailed analysis of its vocabulary, and constitutes the dictionary of the words as well as their root, with their frequency. Then, by successive fractionations, it divides the text into homogeneous segments containing a sufficient number of words and then proceeds to a classification of these segments by locating the strongest oppositions. This method makes it

possible to extract classes of meaning, constituted by the most significant words and sentences, the obtained classes represent the dominant ideas and themes of the corpus."

Reinert (1986; 1993) explained that the 'Alceste method, unlike CA, is not intended to compare the statistical distribution of words in different corpus but to study the formal structure of their occurrences in the "statements" of a given corpus'. The in-depth examination of the official documents issued by the G8 makes it possible to identify similar "lexical world" which in turn, as stated by Schonhardt-Bailey (2013), "contributes to the understanding of the semantic territories behind the construction of the observed discourse". One the advantages of the Alceste method is the Descending Hierarchical Classification developed by Reinert (1987) which, in comparison with other methods of CA, is more rigorous and robust (Schonhardt-Bailey, 2013; Kronberger and Wagner, 2000; Schonhardt-Bailey, 2008; Illia et al., 2014; Bara et al., 2007).

### *Data and preparation of the corpus*

The data on the official documents concerning the forum of G8 were collected on "The World and Japan" database compiled by Tanaka (2016). The data covers the period of 1975 up to 2016.

- The study combines text-driven and problem-driven approaches (Krippendorff, 2004: 340-356). Here, the purpose is to draw unbiased information from the text and, at the same time, to focus research on the units of analysis used as criteria of selection: hunger, malnutrition, food, agriculture and Africa. For that, we have to carry out the reading of all the documents to decide the relevance of each text. A total of 68 of the 407 documents met the selection criteria.

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- Then a summative method (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) is used to search for occurrences in texts with the help of the Antconc software (Anthony, 2004; Anthony, 2011).

- After some standardisation work, the segmentations are carried out followed by coding. We use the QDAMiner (Lewis and Maas, 2007) to carry out the segmentation and the coding of each text to prepare a lexical table. These treatments hold 917 segments with 33,141 words.

- The corpus was then analysed with IRaMuTeQ software an open source alternative developed by Ratinaud and Déjean (2009) to perform the Alceste analysis.

Three tools of representation of the results will be used in this paper: the wordcloud, similarity measures and finally, Descending Hierarchical Clustering. The wordcloud is a primary tool of CA that makes it possible to have a global view of the most frequent words in the corpus. The representation of wordcloud in this paper is based on the procedures developed by Fellows (2012) incremented in R software. The similarity measure is a method for defining the semantic universe of a social representation. It can be obtained by using the technique of association of words or from the information on words that are known for the image of the object of representation. The method of similarities measure used in this article is based on Meyer and Buchta (2009). The Descending Hierarchical Clustering is a method developed by Reinert (1987) to organise the "classes" of discourse and to propose a lexical map for a possible underlying structure that must be interpreted, linked to the reality of the statements or a situation. The method reduces the multitude of data to some dimensions (factors) which can make (partially) account of it.

*Results*

To understand the G8's positions on agriculture and food security in Africa, the results of our first analyses are presented in a wordcloud visualisation. The wordcloud highlights the most common and important terms in the corpus, including: "*food, agriculture, security, country, agriculture, development, supports, Africa, Africa, nutrition, improved, global, G8, include, Investment.*"

Figure 1 Wordcloud of G8 summit official documents related to agriculture and food security in sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Author's elaboration

The second result obtained from our analysis is that of similarities measures. The analysis of similarity groups the major themes from the associations of words. It also shows the links between a dominant theme and the words associated with it. The stronger the association, the closer the words come to the main theme. The similarities measure also make it possible to see the differences or the distance between the themes

(discourses). If two or more themes are close then, it suggests that the associations between the themes are distinctive. On the other hand, if the distance is large, it implies the existence of different discourses.

Figure 2 Similarities measures among the analysed corpus



Source: Authors elaboration

Three domains of discourse are distinguished on the figure of similarities measures. The first is directly related to food security, which includes: *hunger and malnutrition, G8 member, health and education, international institution, long-term, sustainable biodiversity* and the *World Bank*. The second domain is related to: *Africa,*

*support, country* and *agriculture* which is still close to the "food" theme but in a second order. The third theme shows a clear demarcation in relation to the two themes, that of agricultural development. The latter is related to the "food" theme but its distance is wider to suggest the existence of two different discourses. The existence of similar or different discourses is clarified by the Descending Hierarchical Clustering below.

**Figure 3 Classification by class using Descending Hierarchical Clustering of the G8 corpus**
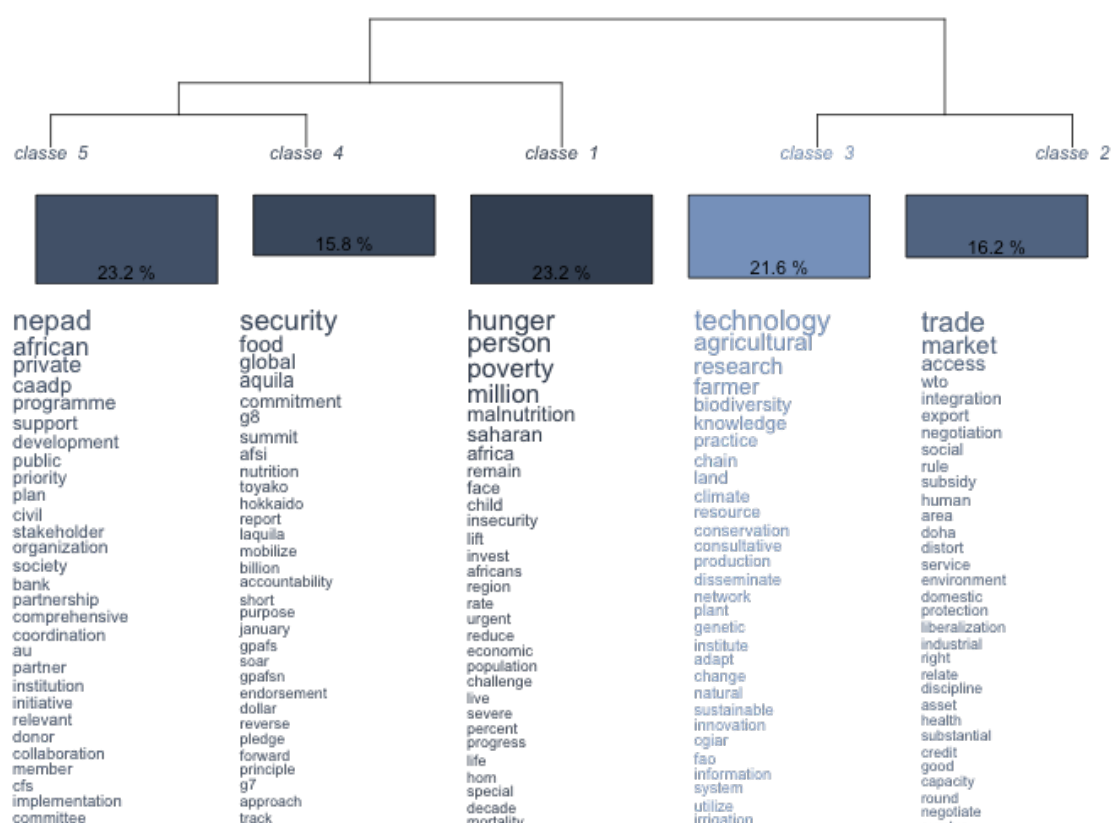


Source: Author's elaboration

The obtained dendrogram highlights five classes summarised in Table 1. The results of the Descending Hierarchical Clustering also make it possible to distinguish two grouping of themes first: class 1, 4 and 5 and the second: class 2 and 3.

Table 1 Classes and themes from Descending Hierarchical Clustering

| Class | Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hunger, people, poor, million, | 23.2% |
| 2 | Technology, agricultural, research, farmer, biodiversity | 21.6% |

| 3 | Trade, market, access, WTO, integration | 16.2% |
| 4 | Security, food, global, Aquila, commitment, G8 | 15.8% |
| 5 | NEPAD, African, private, CAADP, programme | 23.2% |

Source: Authors' calculation, notes: terms with Chi square with p< 0.0001***

As discussed above, the key challenge in this type of exploratory analysis is the meaning-making of the results. The footsteps we have taken have enabled us to pinpoint two noteworthy discourses. The ensuing section will give an interpretation of these results.

**The G8, agriculture and food security in sub-Saharan Africa:** *politics and policies*

To understand the results presented above, it is essential to propose a reading framework. Two perspectives are suggested for this purpose. The first is to consider the map of the discourses as a strategy of the G8 forum. This strategy includes the diagnosis, the guiding policy and the plan of action (Rumelt, 2012). Under this scheme, the classes 1, 4 and 5 represents the diagnosis and the classes 2 and 3 the plan of actions. The second framework is related to politics and policies. Under this framework the "food security" theme will fall under the domain of politics and "agricultural development" within the policies. Typical text segments rendered by IRaMuTeQ enable us to pay more attention to the discourse. Typical text segments are ranked according to the sum of Chi2 of marked forms within the segments. Typical text segments go across corpus and give details passages that support the broad lines of the class.

*Diagnosis and plan of actions*

**Class 1: millions of people affected by hunger and poverty (23.1% of the text segments)**

The G8 takes stock of 'food security' in Africa and the world by focusing on the number of people suffering from hunger and poverty. The G8 explains this status quo as the cause of the long-term underinvestment in agriculture and food security and propose that the way forward should be more investment in African agriculture. Two typical text segments are reflecting this diagnosis:

> "The combined effect of longstanding underinvestment in agriculture and food security, price trends and the economic crisis have led to increased hunger and poverty in developing countries, plunging more than a further 100 million people into extreme poverty and jeopardising the progress achieved so far in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The number of people suffering from hunger and poverty now exceeds 1 billion." L'Aquila declaration 2009 retrieved from Tanaka (2016)

> "G8 and African leaders will launch a major New Alliance with private sector partners to reduce hunger and lift 50 million people out of poverty by investing in Africa's agricultural economy". The White House (2012b)

Class 4 and 5 are the representation of the guiding policy underlying the importance to deliver on the commitments of the past years and the ideas of putting Africans as the key actor of their own destiny.

**Class 4: Commitments to combat food security (15.76%)**

The concordances of the segments in class 4 points out the commitment of the G8 to combat food insecurity through the raising of financial assistances to the Africa. The post-L'Aquila summits are reinforcing these commitments:

> "Food security in 2008 soaring food prices threatened progress on achieving global food security at the Hokkaido Toyako summit the G8 made a number of commitments aimed at reversing the decline in agricultural investments." (Government of Canada, 2010: 7)

> "G8 members reaffirm their commitment to respond with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food and nutrition security, and note that we

have met our financial pledges made at L'Aquila in 2009 and will work to complete disbursements.*" (MOFAJ, 2013)

**Class 5: The African Union's NEPAD as a major player in G8 actions (23.21%)**

The implementation of the G8 project is not recent. During the Gleneagles summit in 2005, official statements pointed out that wave of consultations with African stakeholders already took place to implement the CAADP vision. Furthermore, a year later, at the St. Petersburg summit, the G8 statement underscored the importance of helping African countries to better participate and benefit from the multilateral trading system. The typical text segments underlined that:

> "NEPAD has articulated its vision for Africa through the CAADP and, in 2005, G8 members have supported and attended a series of regional consultations at which African stakeholders elaborated plans for implementation of this vision". (Gleneagles Summit Official Site, 2005b)
> "…Support a comprehensive set of actions to raise agricultural productivity, strengthen urban-rural linkages and empower the poor, based on national initiatives and in cooperation with the AU/NEPAD CAADP and other African initiatives."(Gleneagles Summit Official Site, 2005a)

The lexical fields of classes 2 and 3 are dissimilar from the previous ones. For the G8 strategy to work, it must be accompanied by action plans, which includes specific elements to be accomplished.

**Class 2 Trade and access to the market as a modality of implementation (16.25%)**

The first element in the action plan of the G8 is to promote 'trade' and eliminate all the obstacles which do not make it possible. The typical segment of the analysed corpus shows that:

> "Trade is at the heart of achieving NEPAD's third primary objective of enhancing Africa's full and beneficial integration into the global economy. At Evian, the G8

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committed to completing the Doha round of trade talks by 1 January 2005. Unfortunately such progress was not possible in these multilateral negotiations. However, the WTO framework agreements reached in Geneva in July 2004 offer a good basis to move forward and achieve progress for the poorest developing countries. WTO members have agreed to negotiate an end date for the elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies as well as to achieve substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support and substantial improvements in market access."

**Class 3 the reform of African agriculture should be based on the modernisation (21.57%)**

Technology is the second element in the plan of action of the G8. The introduction of technology has been emphasised during the Sea Island summit of 2004:

"…we will explore ways of improving farming techniques and raising yields through improving investment climates disseminating appropriate and practically usable agricultural technology identifying research needs infrastructure and knowledge bottlenecks and trade capacity gaps".  [Sea Island Summit 2004, retrieved from Tanaka (2016)]

Promoting research and the training of African researchers that will be the agent of the modernisation project is also part of the G8 vision. The typical segments from the summit held in Japan in 2008 highlighted this focus on training:

"…promote agricultural research and development and the training of a new generation of developing country scientists and experts focusing on the dissemination of improved locally adapted and sustainable farming technologies in particular via the consultative group on international agricultural research CGIAR" [Japan Summit 2008, retrieved from Tanaka (2016)]

Finally, this emphasis on technology is also reflected in the New Alliance in the Camp David statement with specific recommendations:

"…determine 10 year in partner countries for sustainable agricultural yield targets improvements adoption of improved production technologies including improved seed varieties as well as post-harvest management practices as part of a value chain approach and measures to ensure ecological sustainability and safeguard agro-biodiversity" (The White House, 2012a).

The two lexical fields that have been presented above suggest that two G8's discourses tend to stand out from each other although it appears to be mutually-reinforcing. The G8 is using two discourses, on the one hand, often vague and ideational, food security is mainly composed of the diagnosis of the situation and is followed by the guiding policy. In other words, finding what are the cause of the food crisis and what should be done about it. The guiding policy of the G8 is however akin to palinode and rest on the good will of the donor countries to disburse the aid they promised. As mentioned earlier, although the G8 committed to combat hunger and malnutrition since 1979, the proportion of people going to bed hungry did not change in a substantial way over the past decades. On the other hand, its discourse on agricultural development is very precise and rests on well-established rationale and ideology resting on modernisation and market mechanisms. The G8 action plans are concretely identifiable, defined in time but also budgeted, translated through the New Alliance. Moreover, the strategy to make Africa a master of its own destiny is accompanied by a fabrication of an intellectual and technocratic subjugation. On the appearance, the initiative to transform agriculture in Africa through the NEPAD programme appears to be originating from African leaders' decisions while on the substance, the technical knowledge is still administered by the G8's technostructure like the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR).

The making-meaning of the two discourses seen from the perspective of strategy is not the only possible interpretation of the results presented in the section above. Food

security and agricultural development can also be interpreted through the lens of politics and policies.

### *Agricultural development and food security in sub-Saharan Africa: Politics and policies*

A dozen of definition has been given regarding 'politics'. It is defined in the dictionary as "the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power." (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). A passage in Weber et al. (2009: 78) on *essay in sociology*, added the relations among states: "politics for us means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state."  But power is not the only way to look at the issue, it is also to ask what type of political action is being done and what importance the one who exercises the power granted to his/her actions. Beyond this demarcation lays the sphere of policy.

With the rise of cross-border problems of the recent decades, the need for global governance has become more evident despite the presence of longstanding international organisations like the United Nations and its branches (Weiss, 2009). Issues such as poverty, hunger or climate change along with the rising risk of global terrorism have now fully integrated the global governance agenda. Although the recent research has underlined that issues of global governance of food security are in a state of complete confusion and disorder (Candel, 2014; Von Braun and Birner, 2016), the fact remains that in the quest of order, system or hierarchy of governance are more ostensible than others on the basis of power. Anthony Payne (2008) in this regard stated that:

> "We have to come to realise that the new global political economy is not operating
> totally anarchically, it is actually being governed, however unsatisfactory that
> process may be from various normative points of view."

International politics is characterised by a hierarchy of power which Hocking and Smith (2014: 59) define as 'stratification of power'. Such stratification gives rise to various degrees of structure categorised into *great, medium* and *small power* (Adler, 2005: 65-68). In an evolving world political context, a clear distinction between what a wealthy and powerful country endowed with an important military capability – can represent within the international system compared to other countries which do not have such privilege is apparent (Barnett and Duvall, 2004: 53-55). And when this group of powerful countries comes together under an intergovernmental political system to exchange ideas to address global issues, such particular posture also demonstrates the existence of hierarchy in relations with other countries. Bailin (2001; 2005), described this type of relationship as 'institutionalised hegemony' – a model that allows the great powers to collectively manage global crises and maintain the liberal economic order (Volgy and Bailin, 2003; Clark, 2011). Norms come to complement this form of organisation as mechanisms of coordination accepted and shared by the members of the hegemonic group. Additionally, norms are also translated into strategies which clearly defines diagnosis and action plans (Rumelt, 2012) as we explained above. In this paper, the institutionalised hegemonic group is the G8 and the strategy is the NAFSN viewed as the conditions of the order. However, the sphere of politics is gradually disappearing when it comes to the implementation of actions, Politics of food security gives way to policy for agricultural development.

The New Alliance is targeting 10 African countries namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania. The rationale behind the initiative is that agriculture has a huge potential to reduce poverty following the recommendations of the World Bank World Development Report 2008 (World Bank, 2007) and other series of reports particularly stressing on the

fact that 'Africa can help feed Africa' (World Bank, 2013) and the necessity to link smallholder to global value chains, bringing innovations, building competitiveness and unlocking the continent's potential for agribusiness (Henson, 2008; Binswanger-Mkhize, 2009; Larsen, 2009; Webber and Labaste, 2010; Aksoy, 2012; Losch et al., 2012; Byamugisha, 2013; Byerlee et al., 2013a; Byerlee et al., 2013b; Townsend et al., 2013). The programme in this regard aims to lift 50 million people out of poverty by 2022. The New Alliance rests on the assumption that food security in Africa can only be achieved with an increase of the agricultural productivity, an approach implying major structural transformation all along the process of food production. A large amount of investment is required for this transformation, which justifies the importance of getting private companies involved in the initiative (New Alliance, 2017).

Many discussions and debates can be used to interpret the discourse of the G8 on food security in Africa. What we can retain however is that the food security proposed by the G8 remains a diagnosis which remains a very political and influenced by decisions of its members.

**Conclusion**

The main goal of this current study was to systematically investigate the position of the G8 with regards to agriculture and food security in sub-Saharan Africa as part of the first attempt to understand the New Alliance for food security and Nutrition. Our enterprise was aiming at extending the knowledge on the G8 discourses vis-à-vis Africa. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the G8 uses two discourses one regarding food security and the another one related to agricultural development. The study has shown that food security is political and uncertain while agricultural development is clearly defined and well-established on theories of

modernization and market mechanisms. This research has thrown up many questions in

need of further investigation notably about the framing of food governance in Africa

and to untangle the complexity it encompasses. The second part of this paper, will focus

on this framing and methodological approach. Building on this first exercise, the second

part of this paper is to illustrate the complex trajectory of the G8 New Alliance since its

launch in 2012 to study how it is structurally organised, who are the actors involved in it

and what the extent of its network is.  If the debate is to be moved forward, a better

understanding of new political economy of agricultural development in sub-Saharan

Africa needs to be developed.

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