One of the modes through which international institutions and states are seeking to transform and modernize agriculture in Africa is through contract farming (CF) or “outgrower schemes”. African states rely on large-scale private sector actors to invest in the agricultural sector--thereby solving the problem of where investment is going to come from--and because it can incorporate smallholder farmers (SHFs) as outgrowers--thereby addressing the problems of rural poverty and hunger. However, scholars differ in their assessment about whether CF can and does benefit SHFs. While the neoclassical and institutional economists who focus on the economic impacts and are largely proponents of this mode of production see CF in a positive light, the social scientists are much more dubious about CF's benefits and more vocal about its problems. Within the existing literature on CF, however, a number of questions have also been neglected. Specifically, there is paucity of literature that examines how gender relations are affected by smallholder farmers' (SHFs) incorporation into contract farming schemes. In this paper I examine how contract farming affects gender relations through an in-depth study of a recent contract farming scheme organized around rice farming in Tanzania.

Figure 1: Photo of contract farming scheme, gender empowerment training and rice local market in Mngeta taken in 2019 by the Researcher

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