



## LAND GOVERNANCE AND (IM)MOBILITY

Exploring the nexus between land acquisition, displacement and migration

June 28 - 29 | Muntgebouw, Utrecht | The Netherlands  
[www.landgovernance.org](http://www.landgovernance.org)

## Conference Report

The LANDac Conference 2018 looked at land governance through the lens of mobility. Land acquisitions trigger migration and yield other types of mobility such as capital, goods and ideas. Ensuing land claims raise new questions for land governance. So far, the discussion has focused on respecting land rights, informing local residents and offering fair compensation. The conference explored the question: Given the variety of mobility, what are good ways forward in land governance?

## Guiding questions

- To what extent can land governance contribute to inclusive development, prevent eviction and displacement, and support vulnerable groups to safely settle and build secure and sustainable livelihoods?
- How do economic transformations – value chain integration, market liberalization or regulation – affect the ability of rural people to make a living on their lands?
- What do we know about the stability of ‘foreign’ investor communities – and what are the implications of their land investments for the (im)mobility of local communities?
- And what is the role of migrants and displaced people? Where some are primarily victims, they may also be powerful actors investing in land.
- The Sustainable Development Goals were central to the debate: what is the role of land governance in view of the ambition to ‘leave no one behind’?

## About LANDac

LANDac – the Netherlands Land Academy is a partnership between Dutch organizations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners who share a concern for land inequality and land-related conflicts to conduct research, distribute information and forge new partnerships. LANDac is hosted by Utrecht University and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[www.landgovernance.org](http://www.landgovernance.org)

## Reading guide

This report is an impression of the LANDac Conference 2018. It provides a summary of six plenary keynotes, the presentations and key insights from 32 parallel sessions, and the debates following from the plenary reflection panels. The report is based on and follows the structure of the Conference Programme, starting with Day 1. With contributions from panel chairs, speakers and participants.

*LANDac is grateful to several sponsors of the LANDac Annual International Conference 2018: Pathways to Sustainability / Utrecht University, Gemeente Utrecht, and the journal Land. LANDac also thanks Bambook for providing presents for the keynote speakers.*

## Conference Organising Committee 2018

Annelies Zoomers, Guus van Westen, Griet Steel, Vince Gebert, Marthe Derksen (LANDac and Utrecht University), Gemma van der Haar (Wageningen University), Christine Richter (ITC, University of Twente), Barbara Codispoti (Oxfam Novib), Gerard Baltissen (KIT Royal Tropical Institute), Lisette Mey (Land Portal).



Gemeente Utrecht



Universiteit Utrecht



## Day 1

### OPENING

**Annelies Zoomers**, Professor of International Development Studies at Utrecht University and Chair of LANDac, opened the conference by looking back at the history of LANDac conferences and transformation of the 'land community' into a more diverse group, including not only scholars, but also policy makers, practitioners and business people. The conference has increasingly become an open space for different type of actors and stakeholders to meet. The discussion widened its scope from a focus on primarily voluntary guidelines to the issue of making investments more productive and business models more inclusive. Also climate change became part of the debate. From a predominantly rural focus the conference made an urban turn, looking at large scale investments in urban areas. This year's focus on mobility is important as we live in an age of mobility. Migrants, expats and other mobile actors are driving land investments and capital flows. A more nuanced approach to land investments could solve problems, engage people and avoid forced resettlement.



*Annelies Zoomers, Chair of LANDac*

**Paul van de Logt**, Head Food and Nutrition Security at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, praises the way in which LANDac contributes to and stimulates dialogue for development. Van de Logt stresses the need to influence the political agenda, as the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Sigrid Kaag, seeks advice on policy priorities related to trade and development. The Ministry finances several programmes on land tenure and registration, among others in Benin, Bangladesh, Rwanda and Burundi. Land tenure acquired a central place in the Minister's new policy note, and interventions in this regard have been positively evaluated. Regarding migration, van de Logt emphasises the importance of understanding how migration can be turned into constructive migration.

### KEYNOTES

**VEENA SRINIVASAN** *Land, Labour, and Technology: Responses to Water Stress in an Urbanising Watershed in Southern India*

**Veena Srinivasan**, fellow at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in Bangalore, zooms in on the connection between land, water and mobility. In the Arkavathy sub basin in Southern India, a rapidly urbanizing landscape on the outskirts of Bangalore, water stress in agriculture is not driven by climate change but by land, labour, commodity markets and technology. As urban job opportunities become available, rural youth become less interested in agriculture. Farmers have two options: some switch to eucalyptus plantations leaving them free to pursue jobs in the city; others (usually wealthier and risk-taking) drill deep borewells, but can only justify the capital expenditure by

switching to cash crops to serve the urban market. The problem is that both eucalyptus and groundwater over extraction reduce sustainability of the resource, furthering farmer vulnerability in the medium term. Policy steps taken to reverse groundwater decline only end up exacerbating the situation. In the long term, urbanisation results in a complete shift to non-farm occupations and water tables begin to rise.

Srinivasan underlines the implications for mobility. Mobility is not only driven by government investments, but also by private capital investments resulting in gradual degradation of the natural resource base. Environmental drivers of rural-urban migration by mostly middle and lower class farmers are important to consider. Relationships are complex and mutually reinforcing: mobility influences crop choice and land use and this in turn influences mobility.

A question was raised about the politics of ground water regulation. Srinivasan replied that nothing happens in practice, only on paper. There is no political incentive to pass any regulation to prevent running out of water resources. Wealthier people are not charged. On the other hand, few communities join forces and establish their own regulation. Srinivasan stresses the need to make inequalities in water access more visible.



*Veena Srinivasan, fellow at ATREE*

### **SHEELA PATEL** Evictions and Imperfect Solutions by Urban Poor Social Movements: Experiences of Shack Dwellers

**Sheela Patel**, director of SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres) and SDI (Slum Dwellers International), explains the survival strategies of households residing in cities as squatters, surviving repeated evictions. These evictions do not have the intended effects: people know how to avoid evictions by squatting on vacant land. They defend themselves until the State accepts their presence. Their message is: give us a secure location and we will build our houses.

SDI is a transnational social movement of the urban poor that gathers data and supports women collectives. SDI provides a platform for slum dwellers and tries to find solutions for urban poverty, housing and infrastructure issues. SPARC is an NGO working since 1984 to support community organisations of the urban poor in their efforts to access secure housing and basic amenities. One of the approaches is to have communities design their own relocations. In India, women living on pavements developed a detailed method to manage relocation processes and explore locations. Over 75,000 households have been relocated this way. They are willing to share their experiences with others who risk to be relocated due to large infrastructure projects, conflicts or climate change. Also famines, religious rights abuses and extreme poverty are drivers for migration. SPARC and SDI collaborate on and coordinate projects with several communities in African cities.

A question was raised on the scale of the above issues and challenges in India, as well as the possibility of a comparative analysis between Kenya and India. Patel responded that the huge number of informal and not acknowledged people in cities is hardly visible to the global development community,



academic knowledge systems and national governments. Social movements are needed, as the State does not show the willingness to build capacity or provide for alternatives. People are forced to move into informal settlements. Development aid finances technical and large infrastructure projects, but lacks a standard procedure to map informality.



*Sheela Patel, director of SPARC and SDI*

### MICHAEL UWEMEDIMO Human City Project: Telling Stories, Taking Place, Building Movements

**Michael Uwemedimo**, director of the Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform (CMAP) and Senior Visiting Research Fellow at King's College London, uses film fragments to show how forced evictions have displaced hundreds of thousands of people over the past two decades in Nigeria's oil capital, Port Harcourt. The Nigerian state employs a militarized urban development strategy, subjecting the residents of the city's largely self-built waterfront settlements to an unsettling violence. Water pollution due to oil exploitation since 1965 further worsened the situation and an informal oil economy thrives. The people living here want to be engaged by the government. People have the right to be recognized and heard. In response, the Human City Project, a community-driven media, architecture, planning and human rights initiative in Nigeria, has established platforms

for community voicing. This is done with collaboratively designed and built broadcast facilities, music production studios, mobile cinemas and town halls. The project enables people to tell their stories on film, on air and in court, to chart their reality on maps, describe their visions in urban action plans and realize them in public space interventions.



*Michael Uwemedimo, director of CMAP*

### Discussion with the audience

A question was raised on communication between people and the government, and whether the Human City Project engages with the government. **Uwemedimo** responds that the purpose of the government is to privatize natural resources and distribute the revenues and benefits to patronage networks. The project intends to move from opposition to proposition and works hard to engage with the government, but faces a lack of capacity. As such, the project builds these platforms.

A participant mentions the importance of the media in relation to everyday politics and movement building. Uwemedimo responds that the use of media is a key strategy; radio is a key communication canal in Nigeria. Media allow people to represent themselves and therefore become political. **Patel** adds that the state of national media is depressive. The media have become a mouthpiece of the rich and the elite. Poor people should be seen as

key stakeholders in the political discourse instead of disempowered victims. A political process is needed to find solutions. **Srinivasan** stresses the importance for politics to become local as well as leaving enough space for engagement across spaces. **Uwemedimo** says it is important for the people they work with to create connections and make spaces political to improve access to decision makers.

**Guus van Westen**, co-chair of LANDac, leads the discussion and highlights the tension between the ‘fixed nature’ of land (rights) and highly mobile nature of society, people and investments. How to reconcile these two realities? How can land governance and laws be instrumental to facilitate investments, while giving communities a basis to claim their rights? Van Westen concludes the plenary session with the note that despite the many problems, hope exists. He expresses the wish to include different perspectives in the debate and to move on to solutions.



*Plenary discussion with keynote speakers Uwemedimo, Patel and Srinivasan*

## PARALLEL SESSIONS

### Shifting and Demarcating Boundaries: the Role of Digital Data Technologies

This session by **ITC – University of Twente** discussed the discourses and terminologies prevailing in land tenure documentation. Can the so-called ‘conventional’ and ‘traditional’ be ‘innovative’ as well? Tools for mapping and documentation become more bottom-up, as former and imported technologies proved unsuccessful in some contexts. At the same time, innovative technologies need to adjust to the institutional setting too, and may thrive on the features of conventional systems if links are established between them.

*“Conventional approaches can support responsible innovation” –  
Christine Richter (University of Twente)*

**Claudia Stöcker** (University of Twente) presented opportunities and limitations for land administration using UAV Technology. In an ongoing EU-funded project seven tools have been developed to make land rights mapping faster, cheaper, easier and more responsible ([www.its4land.com](http://www.its4land.com)). The project entails pilot training, drone flights planning and data acquisition and processing in Rwanda and Kenya. So far the UAV technology provides for highly accurate aerial images, fast and flexible data acquisition and low cost solutions. Limitations are regulatory and operational constraints, political willingness and (social) acceptance of disruptive technologies, as well as poor capacity and meteorological conditions.

**Anne Girardin** (Cadasta Foundation) presented on mobile applications and open platforms for land documentation. Worldwide, 70% to 80%

of the land remains undocumented due to lack of technology, incomplete digital data and expensive software and hardware. The tools of Cadasta Foundation provide data about water sources, minerals and mining occupancy, and forest and lumber concessions. Current projects are a participatory mapping project for securing tenure in Congo, a project mapping dwellers with satellite images in India and a documentation project on property rights of informal settlements in Zambia.

While UAV technology and mobile applications cases focused on opportunities for land data collection and boundary demarcation, **Jose Mari Daclan** (Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI)) focused on the need for and challenges of the integration and sharing of existing data holdings across different urban planning and administrative actors, as well as remotely sensed image data to adequately assess and manage environmental disaster risks in urban settings. The presentation described the progress made in the development of Geographic Information Systems in various southeastern Asian cities, but also discussed the continued challenges in data sharing and integration.

Two presentations tackled the relationship between local conditions and situation on the one hand, and large-scale, global datasets for understanding land tenure, environmental change and human mobility on the other. Based on a case from southern Bangladesh, **Ingrid Boas** (Wageningen University and Research) showed how important it is to rely not only on big data analysis, but to combine remotely sensed or big data analysis with qualitative, specifically ethnographic, inquiry in order to gain a full understanding and reliable interpretation of the causes for and factors influencing migration in the context of environmental change. **Christine Richter** (University of Twente) addressed challenges of translating local tenure conditions into global

land data and tenure indicators, and illustrated these with examples from India's current land tenure scene and related data collection efforts.

A question from the audience: to what level do people resist being photographed, viewed and mapped by brought in technologies, as they now begin to understand the implications? Indeed, some tensions are encountered and there is always a risk of data being misused.

*"Mapping can also increase people's vulnerability" – Sheela Patel  
(SPARC/SDI)*

One needs to be careful in using technologies, as information is power. It is important to produce bottom-up technologies with the potential to change power structures. The discussion with the audience also touched upon the role of actors from the 'global north' versus the 'global south' in innovation and technology transfer, the governance and ethics of global digital data flows, challenges of dealing with the politics involved in mapping land boundaries, and the agency of data itself – the imaginaries that it creates on the one hand, and on the other hand the problem of having to mostly quantify aspirations and concerns in order to bring them to decision making tables at supra-local levels.

#### *Key insights*

- Land governance needs to deal with the mobility of land itself due to natural processes, hazards and human induced change
- The mobility of data: ethical concerns relating to land data governance
- The reconciliation between a) community needs and aspirations and b) global aspirations and problem framings

- Mobile apps and UAVs help documentation but real success and impact depends on local embracing and national buy-in for real impact (which needs close monitoring)



### Inclusive and sustainable management of delta's in a changing world

Globally, deltas are fertile and densely populated areas, with a high concentration of economic activities. However, deltas are also low-lying and extremely prone to flooding, due to climate change and human interventions. Currently, many of the world's large deltas, especially in the developing world, are experiencing rapid change (e.g. subsidence, salt water intrusion, climate change, rapid urbanization and intensification of economic activities) in ways that negatively impact their environmental, economic and social sustainability. Securing food, livelihoods and water security in urbanizing, low-lying deltas requires anticipating changing conditions and facilitating adaptive management of the socio-

hydrological system to cope with ongoing and future changes. This calls for an understanding of both the biophysical processes in deltas as well as the socio-economic drivers of change. This session explored transition pathways towards a sustainable and inclusive delta management by bringing together social scientists and natural scientists, working in deltaic regions across the world. With academic presentations about Indonesia by **Bowo Susilo**, **Rika Harini** (Universitas Gadjah Mada) and **Erlis Saputra** (Utrecht University) and with a view from practice by **Raquel Hädrich Silva** from Deltares in the Netherlands. The discussion was led by **Jean du Plessis** from GLTN/UN-Habitat.

#### *Key insights*

- Land, water and people are connected and need to be dealt with as such
- How to use knowledge in collaboration with communities to achieve change?
- How to improve political engagement with science and data production?

### Land Rights Encroachment, Civic Resistance and Responses to (Trans)national Advocacy

Ten years after the start of the global land rush we are still trying to understand this phenomenon and possible ways to reverse its negative consequences. There are many examples of resistance, advocacy and other ways to mitigate the adverse impacts on displaced people and actors most affected by the appetite for land. As a result of the work of local advocacy groups, often in constellation with international NGOs, critical journalists, activist scholars, as well as multilateral institutions, some land deals have been successfully stopped and/or the position of affected residents has been somewhat improved. In other cases, resistance remains primarily confined to the local level, with



varying results. Yet at the same time, many concerns remain. By no means has the global land rush come to an end, while also the 'gains' remain very unequally divided depriving the poorest. Also, often operating below the radar, there are many cases of land appropriation by national elites and/or by powerful actors from within the communities. Attempts to address the inequalities emerging from the global land rush so far have not resulted in genuine social reform. In this session various forms of resistance, type of actors and their alliances as well as their advocacy targets and critiques were discussed. Organised by and with contributions from **Marja Spierenburg** (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen), **Tijo Salverda** (University of Cologne) and **Yunan Xu** (Erasmus University Rotterdam). **Malovika Pawar** was discussant.

### Involuntary Resettlement and Development-induced Displacement, Latest Data and Policy Evolutions

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 triggered unprecedented investments in 'development' projects across the world, from power plants to urban renovations. According to some estimates, the world needs to invest \$3.3 trillion per year in infrastructure until 2030. In 2017 the G20 agreed on the Hamburg Principles, also known as the Multilateral Development Banks principles, for crowding-in private sector finance for growth and sustainable development, aimed to mobilize the level of finance needed to achieve the SDGs. These initiatives, presented as positive advances for humanity, can also have devastating effects on people. The communities pushed aside to make way for these projects are often left impoverished and marginalized, in spite of social safeguards imposed by the international financial institutions that fund them.

This panel by **Christelle Cazabat** (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre) and **Shona Hawkes** (Oxfam International) shared latest findings on the scale and intensity of this phenomenon as well as information and recommendations on recent policy evolutions. The panel with **Ernest Uwayezu** (Technische Universität München) and **Jon Lindsay** (World Bank) also discussed the World Bank's new resettlement policy and its implications, including improvements from its previous version, but also concerns on new issues and recommendations to ensure that affected people are better protected.

#### *Key insights*

- The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre scaled up its research on displacement by development initiatives and investments in 2017. Many turn out to be affected
- World Bank improved safeguarding principles to better protect people. These are very much needed
- Even though these principles exist, there is a lot of room for increasing the bench marks and implementation is key

### Impacts of Oil Palm and Strategies for More Sustainable Production

The conference featured various sessions on palm oil production. Sustainability challenges of rapid oil palm expansion in Southeast Asia continue to be high on national and international policy agendas and public debates. There is a need to better understand how the local socio-economic and environmental context, as well as the implementation method of oil palm plantations (e.g. different business models, value chain set-ups and application of accountability schemes) affect the local community and environment.

The first session by **Birka Wicke** (Utrecht University) and **Ari Susanti** (Universitas Gadjah Mada) was organized to better understand the impacts and its underlying mechanisms of palm oil production, as well as responsibilities of the many actors involved. Also with presentations from **Harold Liversage** (IFAD), **Katie Minderhoud** (Solidaridad Europe), **Maja Slingerland** (Wageningen University and Research) and George Schoneveld (CIFOR). The discussion was led by **Heru Komarudin** (CIFOR).

Two sessions by **Rosa de Vos** (Wageningen University and Research) addressed the rural transformations induced by large-scale industrial crop production. These panels tried to understand the meaning of rural transformation in oil palm areas, and explored emergent initiatives to address negative consequences of such transformations. With presentations by **Dian Ekowati**, **Agus Andrianto** (CIFOR), **Lukas Wibowo** (Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry), **Bayu Eka Yulian** (Bogor Agricultural University) and **Ward Berenschot** (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies).

### *Key insights*

- There is a need to better understand the factors and conditions that could minimize burdens and reap more benefits. We do not comprehensively understand why some sustainable and inclusive production strategies work in one place, but not in another
- A main challenge is to implement these strategies – who is responsible for the implementation and who will finance it?
- Processes of large-scale land acquisition for oil palm plantations are too fragmented and complex, and the consequences of this are too unpredictable to be regulated by sustainability standards alone



## Scaling up women's land rights

A central conference topic was women's land rights. Women throughout the world still face many obstacles to land access and security, and two panels showcased a selection of efforts at scaling up women's land rights. **Paul van Asperen** (University of Twente) highlighted the potential of cooperatives in Rwanda and **Philip Kilonzo** (ActionAid) explained the transformative potential of a rural women's land rights charter in Kenya. **Mohammad Rezaul Karim** presented about IFAD's work in Bangladesh to strengthen women's land rights in a resettlement project by giving them legal recognition on title deeds. **Kwabena Obeng Asiama** (University of Twente) presented on the Ashanti women's access to land in Ghana.

A roundtable discussed concrete outcomes of the LANDac action research programme *Securing Women's Land Rights in Africa: Scaling Impact in Senegal, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique* (WLRA). To support the women's land rights agenda and to build on a growing momentum following the Women2Kilimanjaro initiative, LANDac cooperated with grassroots and development organisations to implement a year-long action research programme. The programme, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to identify, build upon and scale successful practices and experiences of grassroots organisations and movements that work to strengthen women's access and control over land and natural resources in Africa. Together with **Griet Steel** (LANDac/UU), **Fridah Githuku** chaired the roundtable and presented the work by GROOTS Kenya. **Nzira Deus** presented the tools and approach of Fórum Mulher in Mozambique, **El Hadji Faye** did so for ENDA Pronat in Senegal and **Philip Kilonzo** for ActionAid Kenya. Other partners are ADECRU in Mozambique and Oxfam in Malawi. The presentations were followed by a lively discussion involving, among others, representatives from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Land Coalition.



*WLRA programme partners Nzira Deus, Griet Steel and Fridah Githuku*

### *Key insights*

- Title plus: more needs to be done than just simply giving title deeds to women. Other aspects of land governance are also important to realize equal land rights for women and men
- Involve women in all aspects of project development, especially in monitoring and evaluation
- Assistance building is key across gender (women and men), scale (from grassroots to State and international) and across sectors (agriculture, housing, transport, etc.)

## Infrastructure and Mobilities

This panel aimed to deepen our understanding on the relationship between infrastructure projects and various modes of mobility, as there is a resurgence of investments in climate resilient, sustainable and inclusive infrastructures and related new industries and city development. In particular, the need for infrastructures to enhance resilience of people to be able to safely move around or to stay has been increasing in the developing world. However, little has been studied about implications of the new infrastructures for new mobilities of people, knowledge, goods and policies. With presentations by **Bernardo Almeida** (Van Vollenhoven Institute), **Rijanta** (Gadjah Mada University), **Janwillem Liebrand** (Wageningen University and Research) and **Shih-Jung Hsu** (National Chengchi University).

### *Key insights*

- Infrastructure development entails formalization of land and property rights
- Formalization can protect rights but also creates new problems
- Who is 'public' in the public investments and infrastructure as public work?

## CITYforum: Multi stakeholder approaches to urban inclusive development

In past years, we have seen that investments intended to help cities grow or become climate-resilient are often designed abroad. Moreover, they may come at the expense of local residents' needs and wishes. In Jakarta and Manila, an unprecedented surge in investments in infrastructure and land have severely impacted local people and communities. To raise attention and foster partnerships on this issue, LANDac initiated the CITYforum in September 2017.

The CITYforum is a multi-stakeholder platform on inclusive urban development and infrastructure. The initial focus on Jakarta, Indonesia and Manila, Philippines was widened in 2018 to include organisations working in Beira, Mozambique and Port Harcourt, Nigeria among others. Prior to the conference, LANDac facilitated a follow-up expert meeting with individuals from 16 organisations currently working on ways to make investments in urban development more inclusive and sustainable. With the CITYforum, LANDac aims to generate new ideas and new partnerships between those working in the Netherlands and on the ground in cities where investments are taking place.

A first presentation by **Esther Bosgra** detailed the approach of the Human Cities Coalition, an inclusive public-private sector collaboration. Esther explained about the role of businesses, government and communities. Next, **Romy Santpoort** (LANDac) presented the CITYforum approach. The discussion was led by **Marthe Derkzen** (LANDac). The presentations were followed by an interactive workshop. This workshop opened the floor to existing CITYforum participants and non-participants from all sectors (policy, research and practice) to share their experiences and lessons learnt related to land and urban development in their cities. Playing the imagination game 'The Thing From The Future' by the Situation Lab, that gives you prompts to collaboratively and competitively describe objects from a range of alternative futures, participants discussed in groups about a law related to land in a prosperous future.

### *Key insight*

- We need to break down the silos of development and shift from a sectoral approach to terrain development. Multi-stakeholder approaches should not only focus on water, slums, etc.



## Displacement in the Context of 'Urban Land Grabs': Advancing the Research Frontier

Land in the urban sphere has been insufficiently conceptualized. To further unpack urban land investments and their effects on social justice, we need to grasp and analyse the various emerging modalities of direct displacement and dispossession (e.g. eviction of slum dwellers) as well as more indirect processes of enclosure and exclusion (e.g. gentrification, enclosure of the urban commons, 'beautification' and urban revanchism, and 'voluntary' resettlement). With presentations by **Nikuze** about disaster induced displacement (University of Twente), **Jean du Plessis** (GLTN/UN-Habitat) about the role of responsible land administration, **Salah Eldin Hassan Ahmed Abukashawa** (Estidama) about relocation processes in Khartoum, Sudan and **Griet Steel** (Utrecht University) about inclusive urbanisation and "land grabs" in conditions of rapid urban growth.

### *Key insights*

- The pre-relocation process is important. We need to look at the long-term chain of effects of displacement
- Global knowledge and networks do not necessarily merge with national and local realities
- The peri-urban is the research frontier

## Titling in the Urban Periphery – Who wins, who loses?

Land reform is traditionally set in from a national level, though can only attribute to the improvement of the living conditions and perspectives of the population through its application on the ground. Local actors are therefore crucial to give meaning to the juridical framework and to make sure that land rights are inclusive, promote economic

development, reduce poverty, and contribute to an accessible financial system. Addressing tenure issues remains one of the most complex issues that society faces in our quest to achieve livable environments.

The fluidity and complexity of land tenure systems and how they are governed in Africa and Asia more often leaves many deprived of access to land, creates conflicts and increases insecurity amongst low-income communities. In developing countries, tenure systems exist in a continuum that ranges from statutory to customary to informal with many other forms in-between, all with varying connections with tenure security or the lack thereof. In many cases, it proves challenging to distinguish the tenure status and rights associated to it.

Three key-note speakers presented their views and experiences on the long-term impacts of land titling initiatives to stimulate social and economic development. The Mayor of Klouékanmè in Benin, **Gabriel Togbevi Honfin**, shared his views on the role of local governments to institutionally anchor sustainable and inclusive land administration. **Ore Fika** and **Paul Rabé** (IHS) presented the case of Lagos, Nigeria and Bangalore, India on the multifaceted debate on the long-term impacts of land titling in the urban periphery (peri-urban). The constant state of change in the urban periphery has enabled an increase in titling activities with varying social and economic outcomes for different groups, with impacts on adjacent urban areas.

### *Key insights*

- Inclusive tenure security should look beyond land titling
- Often the poor bear direct negative consequences of land titling: what do we do for them?

## Leveraging SDG Momentum: Challenges and Opportunities for Land Monitoring

With the inclusion of several land-related indicators in the SDGs, land data collection and monitoring has reached an unprecedented momentum. Now is a crucial moment for the land sector – civil society, academia and practitioners – to work together effectively and share knowledge about land rights issues with key and wider audiences, as well as with one another. However, the information landscape is fragmented, inaccessible and not at all democratized. This session brought together people working on monitoring land governance data, to take a step back and leverage this momentum into something that is not only about *monitoring* the SDGs, but also about how to *achieve* these. **Lisette Mey** (Land Portal), **Ward Anseeuw** (International Land Coalition) and **Astrid Zweynert** (Thomson Reuters (PLACE)) facilitated a talk show with contributions from **Paul van Asperen** (University of Twente), **Thea Hilhorst** (World Bank), **Barbara Codispoti** (Oxfam Novib) and **Laura Meggiolaro** (Land Portal).

### Key insights

- To leverage the data momentum, collaboration between countries, sectors and initiatives is key. It is important to recognize and be aware of other initiatives and overlaps, but also the differences between them. Every initiative brings its own perspective and that variety of perspectives is essential
- Data monitoring in the context of the SDGs should not become a goal in and of itself, but rather the means for transformative action and to be used as a basis for interventions
- The SDGs momentum requires the land sector to maintain a balance between being practical and being able to get comparable data for all countries (i.e. agreeing on a common set of indicators)



## Migration, Youth and Land in West Africa

This French-English session presented studies from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Ghana which are part of a LANDac research project on the relation between land investments and youth migration in West Africa.

Anthropologist **Elieth Eyebiyi** (LASDEL Parakou) explained how climate change, weak agricultural organization and youth and women's poor access to land ownership are drivers for migration in two communities in Benin. Migration happens mostly within the region to seek labour in coffee and cocoa plantations in Ghana, Nigeria and Ivory Coast, and more recently in construction and agriculture. Migrants invest in their village, others buy land elsewhere, and leave acquired land in their village to their parents. Land investment and subsequently the construction of houses and agriculture generates substantial income locally.

**Joost Nelen** of the Malian consultancy Groupe Odysee presented a study from Mali. About 15% of the people are migrating, mostly young people, and mainly to Nigeria, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Whereas local authorities do not feel engaged, and the land commission does not function well, communities are strongly organized to receive and distribute remittances. They are used for food, housing, health care, business services, social infrastructure and small rural lands (< 2 ha).

**Mayke Kaag** (African Studies Centre) presented the effects of migration by young people in Senegal. Migrants drive up land prices and become competitors for local youth, increasing land scarcity but also providing job opportunities through investment. International donors increasingly focus on infrastructure and environment, and less on income generation projects. Conclusion: opportunities for young people in terms of training, services and construction work. A representative of ENDA Pronat in Senegal adds that competition for land, land grabbing, low income from land and drought are all driving migration. Development and government policy should focus more on managing and developing the urban zones, where these youths end up.

In a presentation on migration between Burkina Faso and Italy, **Gerard Baltissen** (KIT) emphasized how insufficient agricultural work, a 'migration culture' and a gold mining boom in Burkina are key drivers for migration, resulting in less labourers for agriculture and less schooling, as youth migrate. Youth also can't compete with the means and speculations of the elites of Ouagadougou and mining corporations buying land (and/or investing in agriculture). As such, also limited access to land stimulates migration.

In the emerging land market of Ghana, large scale investments result in competition for rural lands, while investors offer limited job opportunities, stimulating migration too. The effects on local citizenship, customs and local mobility were explained by **Richmond Antwi-Bediako**.

### *Key insights*

- Migration happens predominantly within West Africa
- Insufficient access to land ownership and land use is one of the main drivers of youth migration

## Extractive (im)mobilities: Displacement and Land Governance in the Context of Extractive Projects

In the session about extractive (im)mobilities three researchers presented how mining-induced displacement and resettlement (MIDR) influence local power relations. **Robert Pijpers** (University of Oslo) explained how mining investments in Marampa, Sierra Leone more or less positively changed the landscape (houses and asphalted streets), but also resulted in frictions between old and new land owners and strangers.

**Nikkie Wiegink** (Utrecht University) en **Jeroen Cuvelier** (Ghent University) presented on the relocation of so-called ‘surplus populations’ in mining areas in Mozambique (coal) and DRC (copper and cobalt). MIDR is contested but also presented as an opportunity for development. Meanwhile, mining projects are unpredictable, due to the dependency on commodity markets and uncertain land requirements, and companies become proxy government actors. ‘Surplus populations’ are approached with ‘make live’ politics or ‘letting die’ scenarios. Different actors are competing for power. MIDR also induces resistance and sabotage. In DRC, state companies and two Chinese companies in former Katanga region created a so-called ‘protection belt’, including a number of projects to gain local acceptance.

## Land Reforms in Contexts of Fragility

**An Ansoms** (Université Catholique de Louvain) organised two panels dealing with the role of land reforms in contexts of fragility, including the African Great Lakes region. The first panel examined the impact of the adopted or envisaged land policy reforms in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC and their impact on local livelihoods, the reconfiguration of power relations between populations and political elites at various levels, the exacerbation of

identity and armed conflicts in region as well as cross-border movement of populations. With presentations from **René Claude Niyonkuru** (Université Catholique de Louvain), **Mathijs van Leeuwen** (Radboud University Nijmegen) and **Carmen Collado** (Nitlapan, Universidad Centroamericana).

The second panel included presentations on national spatial planning frameworks in South Africa by **Mark Oranje** (University of Pretoria Pretoria South Africa), land reform in Kerala, India by **Meenakshi Nair Ambujam** (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva) and **Edmond Totin** (Université Nationale d’Agriculture du Benin) discussed the implementation of Beninese land policy under complex customary tenure practices.

*Land governance is often presented as a technical discussion but it is a highly political one.*

## Key insights

- Give visibility to everyday politics in land; how people (diverse actors) play with policy
- Move the land governance discussion beyond possession and more towards access
- How to make local voices visible in policy processes (beyond specific cases)?

## Inclusive business, land governance and food security

Inclusive business (IB) models are presented as the most promising approach to enhancing food security among (rural) populations in the Global South. These business models have the double advantage of (1) linking smallholders to the mainstream of corporate business practices, giving them access to new markets, knowledge and capital, while also (2) retaining



control over vital natural resources in local/community hands. But less is known about the many unintended side-effects that may occur, such as ecological effects of the shift to commercial value chains or increasing food prices due to the shift to crops for non-local use. This panel looked at these side-effects, i.e. the consequences for local community members who are not included, but feel the impacts. Organised and chaired by **Guus van Westen** and **Ellen Mangnus** from LANDac and Utrecht University, with presentations by **Markus Dietrich** (Inclusive Business Action Network), **Mariska Bottema** (Wageningen University and Research), **Uwacu Alban Singirankabo** (Delft University of Technology), **Andreia Marques Postal** (University of Campinas) and **Maja Slingerland** (Wageningen).

#### *Key insights*

- The link between IB, land governance and food security is complicated, tenuous and under-investigated
- For IB to work, ‘ownership’ of community is necessary, as well as horizontal (landscape, local stakeholders) and vertical (value chain) cooperation
- Inclusiveness is always limited, there are always people that are not able or willing to take part. It’s not a panacea.

## PLENARY REFLECTIONS

Conference Day 1 was wrapped up by **Barbara Codispoti** (Oxfam Novib) and **Gerard Baltissen** (KIT) who guided the plenary reflections, and a discussion with the audience and panel of land experts: **An Ansoms** (Université Catholique de Louvain), keynote speaker **Veena Srinivasan** (ATREE), **Edmond Totin** (University of Benin) and **Harold Liversage** (IFAD).

**Ansoms** stresses the need for additional insight on the position of researchers and the effects of their work, as well as the legitimacy and responsibility of knowledge production. Researchers provide a podium for people to be heard, but knowledge can also be abused by the powerful.

**Liversage** feels the focus of the conference is still limited. We have to focus on bigger drivers shaping development today and the consequences for land governance and our vision on this. One of the biggest drivers is population growth, but population growth is left out of the discussion whereas this underpins issues of food security, urbanization and social inclusion. Land acquisition is not the biggest driver of mobility. Liversage misses issues around conflicts over land between pastoralists and farmers.

**Totin** wonders how research can better inform policy, and not only be intended for publication in papers or journals. How can researchers better engage with people?

**Srinivasan** says that a distinction should be made between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ knowledge. How can we reconcile academic knowledge with community knowledge? Academics should speak more to and learn from the community. And how can communities be engaged with the work of academics?

#### *Takeaways from the audience*

- There is much potential in linking social and environmental issues and this needs to be further explored within the land sector
- Land governance might be a driver of migration, but to what level is this connected? Development is very much framed in relation to migration



## Day 2

### KEYNOTES

#### TANIA LI Temporalities of Mobility and Land Transformation

**Tania Murray Li**, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, described the main trends of mobility in southeast Asian oil palm areas. Mobility is rural-urban, rural-rural and vice versa, within nations and across borders, as a result of urbanization and expansion of agriculture (oil palm). Crop booms draw in new people as workers or smallholders, making markets the main drivers of mobility. Plantations are governed by investment laws but it is mostly politicians and cronies benefitting, not smallholders. Worse: seizure of land is accompanied by violence and evictions. Villages that are not evicted are gradually 'enclaved' and taken into full dispossession by palm oil companies. As such, villagers cannot anticipate that their forest will be destroyed and that they are left without land. Plantation management generally prefers to hire male migrant workers instead of local workers, and they do not provide for families. Landless women are hired to do badly paid casual plantation work. As a consequence, local residents lose their land and at the same time are excluded from jobs. They become forced to migrate elsewhere. Young people from landless families are stuck in place due to lack of education and jobs.

To conclude, Li states that plantations install enduring poverty, which intensifies over time. Land governance does not anticipate the need for land and/or work for future generations. Certification does not address issues around gender, age, ethnic exclusion, fragmented families, entrenched impoverishment, and lost options for diverse farming futures.

**KLAAS VAN EGMOND** Global Financialization and Local Livelihoods; The Need for a Top-down Approach

Klaas van Egmond, emeritus Professor Geosciences at Utrecht University, explains how the increasing role of financial markets and actors threatens the commodification of global commons and foreign land acquisition. Everything is for sale. Van Egmond highlights that a lot of land is in foreign hands, of which about a quarter to a third is intended to produce biofuels, resulting in negative impacts such as land grabbing on local level. The Netherlands is number 10 on the global list of actors responsible for foreign acquisitions. Globalization, also of neoliberalist models and western values, is not a sustainable model and has resulted in an enormous concentration of power with big multinationals. It is a threat to sovereignty, often resulting in increased food prices. This is indirectly supported by loans of EU banks to companies involved in land grabbing and deforestation.

Van Egmond pleads for a top-down approach, as bottom-up approaches alone cannot offer a solution. First, restrictions have to be effectuated to reduce the scale of what van Egmond calls the process of financialization. Second, the principle of sovereignty of nations and local communities has to be restated. But, taking the current domination of neoliberal ideologies into account, expectations have to be modest.



*Klaas van Egmond and Tania Li*

**BERNHARD TRUFFER** Sustainability Transitions and the Global South: A Socio-technical Systems Perspective

Bernhard Truffer, head of the environmental social sciences department at the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (eawag) and full professor for geography of transitions at Utrecht University, introduced the core concepts of sustainability transitions. There has been increasing interest in fundamental changes in production and consumption systems among most OECD countries over the past decades, with a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energies as an emblematic case. He elaborated how specific contexts and phenomena in the Global South (i.e. disasters and droughts) challenge but also inspire thinking about sustainability transitions. Scholars have developed a rich set of frameworks to analyse these kind of transitions, and now these concepts start to also be applied to cases in the Global South. For development scholars, the socio-technical systems perspective provides a fresh view on some old challenges of basic service provision and economic prosperity. Truffer provides three key messages: research provides for an original lens, concepts develop at the same time and there is a risk of naive interpretation of sustainability transitions.



*Sustainable gifts for keynote speakers Klaas van Egmond, Tania Li and Bernhard Truffer: a Bambook – the rewritable notebook made from bamboo*



## Discussion with the audience

A question was posed about challenges in the South, and the responsibility of the elites in southern countries. Another person wondered how to deal with the efforts of so many people in a fragmented space. And how can we make sure that social aspects are considered?

**Li** shared her critical analysis of the risk of multi-stakeholder frameworks resulting in soft and polite consensus. She challenges the land community: How to correctly organize these dialogues, should multinationals be invited to the table? According to **Van Egmond** we should take a critical look at fundamental flaws of the system, as financial markets overrule governments, society and public interest.

We need to take the intelligence and capacity existing within local communities more seriously, says **Truffer**. Researchers should focus on mobilizing those assets instead of just 'helping'. The political and social dimensions need consideration in an economically and technically dominated discourse.

**Li** emphasizes the need for statistics to underpin evidence. Out of all available data, the so-called killer (or really useful) data need to be distilled.

**Van Egmond**: consensus building is needed, though we should not expect much change. Vested interests have overruled the importance of science. To fight these interests, scientists have to leave their ivory tower and reach out to the general public and political arena. **Truffer** adds: What is the evolution of the role of the scientist and how to take their role a step further? We need to distinguish what we are good at. This is not necessarily activism, but rather highlighting the patterns.

## PARALLEL SESSIONS

### Land-Based Financing: Challenges for Equity?

Land-based financing (LBF) tools have been developed as a way to promote sustainable cities, infrastructure provision and public services. LBF is a collective name given to a range of tools by which local governments could expand their revenue base and generate funds that will help them realize their service delivery, infrastructure development and maintenance goals. Such tools generate an increase in land values through planning regulations or investments in infrastructure via a process in which public sector investments are recovered from the private sector. Yet at the same time, such schemes raise challenges around equity, justice and the role of the market in this process. With presentations from **Adil Sait** (Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, London, UK) with interesting cases of LBF in India and China, **Jaap Zevenbergen** (University of Twente) about land readjustment in Nepal, and **Annelies Sewell** on using LBF for scaling up ecosystem restoration (PBL, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency).

#### *Key insights*

- Integrate public and private strategies in a way that contributes to sustainability
- Rethink LBF to contribute to equity for all
- What can the new urban agenda do to strengthen equitable LBF tools?

### Conflict-Induced Displacement: Hard Choices in Land Governance Interventions

Conflict-induced displacement poses hard choices for land governance. The session by **Gemma van der Haar** (Wageningen University and Research) and **Mathijs van Leeuwen** (Radboud University Nijmegen) focused on war-affected settings where great numbers of



people are displaced. Their right to return often clashes with the rights acquired by new settlers – some of whom might hold legal entitlements – posing challenges that land laws and governance institutions are not equipped to deal with. Any solution to these competing interests is likely to not just affect those immediately involved, but to resonate with broader political agendas around peace-building and development. This panel explored these problems by zooming in on (emerging) practices of NGOs and land governance institutions addressing this kind of issues: the types of solutions they propose, how NGOs navigate local and national politics surrounding completing claims in conflict-affected settings, experiences with evolving land tools. With contributions from **David Betge** (ZOA), **Mathilde Molendijk** (Kadaster International) and **Dimo Todorovski** (University of Twente).

#### *Key insights*

- It is complex for NGOs to engage with land in conflict-affected settings; “fair and feasible” is not easy to define. There is a clear demand for more openness and reflexivity on the decision making this involves at the level of NGOs
- The need to be aware of the politics around technical interventions. There are promising experiences with pro-poor, fit for purpose forms of land mapping and registrations but these invite further questions about whose demand is served and how well the solutions offered respond to the needs of the population
- In conflict-affected settings, we should be careful to not only see problems. Within a warscape there tends to be considerable variation in the intensity of violence and antagonism found on the ground. It may be productive to look for opportunities and room for improvement

### Exploring the Limits of the ‘Right to Remain’: the Role of FPIC and Early Consultation

The roundtable on free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and early consultation discussed the role of these processes in respecting the ‘right to remain’ as well as the limits of this right in contexts where local interests clash with international requirements. Involuntary resettlement happens in many situations where local law allows for and/or when national governments have high interest in implementing a particular project. This roundtable was organised by **Margriet Hartman** and **Philippe Hanna** from Royal HaskoningDHV who presented common dilemma’s in infrastructure projects, including land issues. They explained how site selection is often done and guided by political interests and speculation. The engaged community representatives do not always represent residents’ wishes. There is a discrepancy between international standards versus local legislations and practice.

**Deborah Bakker** (University of Groningen) explained about the challenges to FPIC, based on her research on land deals in Sierra Leone. The government seeks investments in various sectors (including oil palm, rice, organic ginger and sorghum for export), supported by the World Bank and other financial institutions. The power of (paramount) chiefs, MPs and land owning families can compromise the FPIC process, as companies are brought in via these actors. This leaves limited scope for communities to refuse the deal. Design and planning processes exclude women, youth and strangers. No independent lawyers are engaged, if not paid by the companies. No copies of the lease agreement prior to the signing were given to the communities to enable them to fully understand the content. Development rhetoric and promises (such as provision of roads, schools and mosques) were employed to convince people to sign the deal.

But none of the companies lived up to their promises. Benefits are merely distributed through patronage and lineage networks. Bakker concludes by stating that local systems make these land deals possible and that FPIC requirements are not met. She recommends investors to refrain from using development language nurturing unrealistic expectations, and the presence of independent lawyers.

A participant in the audience asked whether there is any role for civil society, to which Bakker replied there is none due to a lack of capacity. On a question about how to realize the recommendations Bakker answers that it is not in the interest of the powerful to change current practices, but she sees the potential of younger generations who are more literate and aware of their rights.

In her presentation on human rights in infrastructure projects, **Lidewij van der Ploeg** (Utrecht University) discussed replacement and resettlement in Mozambique and how companies organize community relations management. Van der Ploeg found that company staff often blame local customs, government or illiteracy for hindering the potential of working with the community. Staff have difficulties to implement process rights prior to and during project implementation. They are not skilled and experienced enough to work in conflict-prone projects. The use of external consultants means less control of field operations, whereas community processes should be monitored closely.

In a presentation on FPIC in practice in Lao, **Justine Sylvester** (Village Focus International) elaborated a Village and Company partnership agreement. The agreement pays attention to women participation, FPIC and provides trainings. Copies of the agreements were given and explained to the communities. Also a animation video (screened at the LANDac Conference) was produced that explains rights

to prepare communities to negotiate with a company entering the village. Sylvester notes that not all companies and CSOs have the capacity and willingness to engage in such partnerships. But when companies practice FPIC, they may have more influence than NGOs. Framing FPIC in corporate terms has a positive effect too. Some challenges remain, e.g. to develop a tool for communities to understand the message. And is there a right to refuse or remain?

*“When companies practice FPIC, they may have more influence than NGOs”*  
– Justine Sylvester (Village Focus International)

#### Key insights

- Funding. In case a company pays, consider how this might affect your independence as a mediator, and people’s perspective on that
- Document the process, e.g. photograph the signing of the agreement, to avoid accusations of not having consulted particular stakeholders
- What is more problematic: people not being consulted or the project in itself? How can an investment project eventually contribute to society? Were alternatives considered? If not, FPIC risks to be a tool to force an investment
- Follow up on projects impacts, including the social costs of resettlement versus the public benefits. CBAs generally do not take into account social and environmental aspects

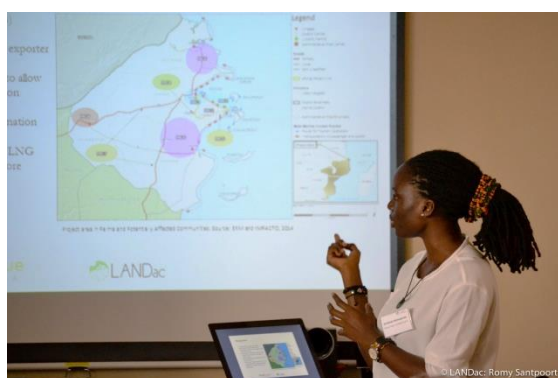
#### Resettlement Experiences in Mozambique

Two conference sessions were organized on resettlement in Mozambique – the country is currently experiencing over fifty resettlement projects. These resettlements are undertaken within the context of a relatively progressive national policy framework, with community

consultation and benefit sharing aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of involuntary project-induced displacement. At the same time, realizing project commitments and meeting expectations have proven to be particularly challenging due to a mixture of legal ambiguities, capacity limitations, political unwillingness, and the sheer diversity of local contexts. The panels were chaired by **Nikkie Wiegink**, **Murtah Shannon** and **Kei Otsuki** from Utrecht University who discussed issues such as the legal framework, livelihood security and recovery, remedy/grievance mechanisms, experiences of displacement and belonging, community dynamics, the political economy of resettlement and (land) governance dynamics. With presentations by **Nordine Ferrão**, **Dakcha Acha** and **Vivaldino Banze** (ASCUT (Alliance Against Land Grabbing); Lutheran World Federation), **Natacha Bruna** (International Institute of Social Studies), **Gediminas Lesutis** (University of Manchester), **Márcia Oliveira** (University of the Witwatersrand) and **Emilinah Namaganda** (Shared Value Foundation).

#### *Key insights*

- Displacement and resettlement are a part of everyday development practice and discourse in Mozambique
- Question of capacities and accountability, or the impossibility of holding government and companies accountable



*Emilinah Namaganda from Shared Value Foundation*

## **“Good Enough Tenure” in Sustainable Forest and Land Management**

Smallholders without formal tenure tend to be excluded from external funding streams, because banks, other private investors, governmental agencies and even some donors often require land titles as collateral to mitigate the risk of default from failed investment. Accordingly, policy makers, donors and NGOs have been emphasizing the importance of formal ownership as a precondition for creating stable rural livelihoods. In most cases, these initiatives and involved funders enforce standardized land tenure schemes widely disregarding eventually existing informal local arrangements. These are understood by scholars as ‘good enough tenure’ sufficient to provide enabling conditions for secure property rights and incentives for investment. Here, enforcement of tenure rights is achieved through customary institutions. To successfully substitute classic legal tenure schemes to land and resources, they need to be supported through practical measures that carefully consider the specific context, including arrangements on costs, risks and benefit sharing, and distribution of rights and obligations among parties. This session discussed the practical implications of the increasing evidence from research and experiences in different parts of the world on the value and scope of ‘good enough tenure’ arrangements for international and national policy makers and investors. With presentations by **Marieke van der Zon** (Wageningen University and Research), **Benno Pokorny** (University Freiburg), **Peter Cronkleton** (CIFOR) and **Bastiaan Reydon** (University of Campinas).

#### *Key insights*

- Land governance has not been able to deal with mobility and the complex realities in rural and forest areas of tropical countries

- Often, informal, traditional rights are good enough to play an important role in solving social, environmental and economic problems. They are widely accepted locally and have the flexibility to deal with mobility

- The current top down system focused on government issues formal land rights need to be altered significantly to make the use of good tenure possible. It needs to be bottom-up and focused on strengthening practical existing rights and making it possible to use these as a basis for government programs, etc.



*Peter Cronkleton, Marieke van der Zon, Bastiaan Reydon*

### Institutions, Natural Hazards and the Local Economy

Two sessions were organized on the increase of natural hazards due to climate change and demographic pressure rising in risky places, with already devastating effects and enhanced vulnerability of populations. The discussions focused on the role of institutions, the use of land, building practices and the geography of economic activity. The panels explored how institutions in general and land governance specifically play a role in the management of natural hazard risks. Key questions addressed were how do people and firms perceive natural hazard risks, how are they locally impacted by natural disasters, and how can institutions and governance help people and firms cope with these risks. The session was chaired by **Mark Sanders** (Utrecht University).

With contributions of **Vincent Schippers** (Utrecht University), **Fujin Zhou** (Institute for Environmental Studies, Vrije Universiteit), **Runliang Li** (Maastricht University), **Erda Rindrasih** (Utrecht University), and **Dries Heggers** (Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University). **Zbyszek Kundzewicz**, Professor of Earth Sciences and head of Laboratory of Climate and Water Resources in the Institute for Agricultural and Forest Environment in Poznań, discussed the presentations and overarching questions.

### Key insights

- It is important to geographically zoom in and zoom out to understand how very local versus regional conditions determine outcomes of extreme natural events

- We underestimate the potential role of residents in developing adaptation strategies and protection measures, at the very least in the context of flood risk

- Given the incentives for ensuring livelihoods and economic opportunities, we should carefully consider how people perceive and anticipate on future risks

- Bridging disciplines will help to develop further research on the intersection between natural hazards, risk perception, and governance strategies

### (Im)mobility in Contemporary Conservation

Historically, nature conservation entails a neoliberal, colonial-style ‘fences and fines’ approach, resulting in evictions of large populations. How do phenomena that currently dominate nature conservation, such as (eco)tourism, militarisation or wildlife crime affect (im)mobility and vice versa? And how do contemporary forms of nature conservation provide for displacement, if they do at all?



**Chantal Wieckardt** (Wageningen University and Research) presented the concept of everyday resistance in privatized nature conservation and the impacts of a private protected area (PPA) by a European environmental NGO on the lives of the Batu Katak community in Indonesia. People's main concern is not the privatization of land for conservation, but rather their reduced access to rivers and fishing areas – their source of livelihood. Everyday resistance entails subordinate or less hidden acts such as the continuation of fishing and (anonymous) threats, that undermine the power of the project. By recognizing these responses as political acts, rather than labelling them as 'bad behaviour' or a 'failure of regulation' may lead to solutions.

**Jampel Dell'Angelo** (Institute for Environmental Studies, VU Amsterdam) explored the impact of governing ecologically vulnerable and climate affected watersheds on Tibetan pastoralists' livelihoods. He explained how the Chinese government's narrative is driven by a discourse of pastoralists causing overgrazing and therefore being responsible for land degradation, erosion and desertification. As such the government is spearheading sedentarization politics and resettlement programs, also to integrate the pastoralists in the modern economic and formal education system. The government interferes in the most intimate part of people's lives, while land and labour are commodified and people lose their traditional knowledge.

**Stasja Koot** (Wageningen University and Research) presented about the on-going land dispossession of the fractured 'community' of Namibian Hai//om in Etosha National Park and Mangetti West in Namibia. These indigenous former mobile hunters and gatherers lost their land since the 19th century, due to settler farms. They became fragmented and landless labourers. Though the Etosha park created employment, tensions erupted between the

Hai//om and outsiders about these jobs. Conflicts were also the result of various land redistribution programs after independence, as the most marginalized would not benefit. Recent efforts of the Hai//om to file a collective action lawsuit over Etosha and Mangetti West against the government of Namibia, with legal assistance of an NGO, have stimulated a resurgence of Hai//om identity.

**Hanne Wiegel** (WUR) explored the relation between climate change and migration. Migration induced by policy interventions for climate change adaptation, or 'environmental migration', has received little attention in research while the negative impacts of adaptation interventions can directly or indirectly induce outmigration, mainly of already marginalized communities. Wiegel calls for a more nuanced analysis of this phenomenon to better understand the politics of physical movement, its representation and practices, and the agency and autonomy of actors to shape their own movements.

In her reflections on the four presentations **Marja Spierenburg** (Radboud University Nijmegen) highlighted the inevitable link between land and other resources; the different valuation of (im)mobility; the use of terminology such as 'encroaching communities' instead of encroaching private sector or actors and 'voluntary resettlement' (how voluntary is it really); the recurring theme of resettlement as development.

*"The recurring theme of resettlement as development" – Marja Spierenburg (Radboud University Nijmegen)*

From the audience questions were raised about the role of local elites in the resolutions, as well as about gender to be taken into account in the climate adaptation debate.

## Land Governance in the Global North: Pointing the Lens at the Developed World

Since the early 1970s, land claims, treaty negotiations and policy changes in countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States have directly impacted indigenous land governance in the Global South. At the same time, in post-socialist states of Eastern Europe, changes in land governance and land use have had a direct impact on incomes, cultural cohesion, health and social mobility. This session by **Lorne Holyoak** (World Council of Anthropological Associations) focused on changes in land governance in the Global North, to offer the same critique of sustainable development as is traditionally directed towards the Global South. With presentations by **Frank van Holst** (RVO), **Flora Lindsay-Herrera** (Catholic University of America) and **Torsten Menge** (Northwestern University).

### *Key insights*

- The Global North and South divide is an artificial distinction. We should pay attention to shared solutions
- Deciding who should participate in the decision making process is critical. Create opportunities to legitimize voices

## Methods for Faster Documentation of Land Titles

This session by **Peter Cronkleton** (CIFOR) focused on among others the Fit For Purpose approach for land regularization in rural areas of Mato Grosso, Brazil. Also participatory methods in Sudan to secure communal land and natural resource rights were discussed. With **Bastiaan Reydon** (Univ. of Campinas), **Simon Ulvund** (Meridia) and **Mohammed El Hassan** (Butana Integrated Rural Development Project).



### *Key insights*

- Technology and approaches for cost-effective and accessible land regularization exist and governments are increasingly considering these (provisionally)
- Involving local people in land regularization processes is crucial
- Experiences are still at a pilot level, so it is not clear yet how they work when scaled-up

## PLENARY REFLECTIONS

Day 2 ended with plenary reflections by a panel of land experts followed by a discussion with the audience, and closing notes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and LANDac. Based on the two conference days, panelists **Fridah Githuku** (GROOTS Kenya), **Shona Hawkes** (Oxfam), **Jildau Boerma** (Rabobank), **Mike Taylor** (International Land Coalition) and **Tania Li** (University of Toronto) gave their views on the lessons learnt and ways forward. The Q&A was moderated by LANDac partners **Gemma van der Haar** and **Guus van Westen**.

*How should land governance cope with the tension between the fixed nature of land resources and the mobility of life, people, and investments? Is there a risk that tenure security works as a trap for people?*

**Li** confirms this can be a risk and poses that people need to be protected against the commodification of land which can make them very vulnerable. They could be engaged in the market, but should not be settled in one place.

*How can land governance address inequality in access to land for women and youth?*

**Githuku** responds by referring to the situation in Kenya. Vested interests, bureaucratic requirements and cultural preferences make it hard for these groups to access land. Youth are less attracted to agriculture and explore other options, which calls for innovative ways and opportunities in agriculture or elsewhere.

*What can we expect from multi-stakeholder platforms and dialogue based solutions? Are these not 'too polite'?*

You do not know where space is opening up, says **Hawkes**. Dialogue is never a solution in itself, but should help understand each other. **Boerma** strongly believes in dialogue to understand and solve the complex aspects and problems in food systems in an integral manner. She admits these processes are not the most dynamic and often dominated by the slowest mover.

*Can or should land governance help build local sovereignties?*

Policy cannot make much difference, responds **Taylor**. The question is how land governance can be transformative, helping communities design their own future based on their dreams, needs and desires. How to build systems in partnership with governments. Preferably, these options are not too confrontational, but propositional. Taylor highlights the importance of engaging young people, as well as the role of partnerships in enabling community governance. This does not mean bringing in external expertise, but helping to reveal existing local expertise.

*"The question is how land governance can be transformative, helping communities design their own future based on their dreams, needs and desires" – Mike Taylor (ILC)*



## Discussion with the audience

*What about the potential of conflict to trigger social change?*

In response, **Li** states that land reform used to be revolutionary, but has become a matter of governance, dialogue and negotiated solutions. She questions the transformative potential of a stakeholder process.

*How can formal land rights be realised in fragile states and conflict areas?*

**Githuku**: Organize communities and document their views on what is right and how institutions should govern. **Taylor** underlines the power of collaboration. Every context is different and we need to work out how to create space for solutions, because there is a need for systemic change. Academics and practitioners should define the momentum, gather together and seek opportunities. In response to Taylor, **Gemma van der Haar** asks whether the transformational moment has arrived, whether we should be negative or positive, without congratulating ourselves.

*Is land governance instrumental in denying the right to move and migrate?*

A participant wonders what can be done to counter the negative narrative on mobility. A short but heated discussion starts after someone questions the reason why the debate focusses on problems instead of on positive developments. In reply, a participant states that this is out of concern and the need to consider conflict, to understand what works and what does not. Conflict is not always negative, but also an expression of different interests that need be addressed to find a proper solution.

*What inspired the audience and panel during the LANDac Conference 2018?*

- How could anthropological or ethnographic field work and methods support the analysis of big data, as it now sometimes contradicts?
- The (positive) role of a company in Laos being part of the solution, trying to realize change through partnerships with the community
- Seeing how scientists can help and inform practitioners by monitoring long term impacts of resettlements
- Different groups attach different values to mobility. What is mobile (capital and tourists) and what is not, and who is immobilized?





## Moving ahead

The LANDac Conference 2018 posed a central question: Given the variety of mobility, what are good ways forward in land governance? The panelists were asked to respond to this question, each from their own particular background.

**Boerma** (Rabobank) on private sector involvement. Companies should go beyond 'do no harm' and pro-actively 'do well', including due diligence. It is important to scale up and support such efforts so that these become the norm. Partnerships remain important.

**Githuku** (GROOTS Kenya) on the potential of land governance. Land governance validates all relationships on the ground: between users, tenants, occupants, etcetera. This creates a sense of security and might reduce opposition. At the same time, land governance will not solve everything. We also need to persistently address global inequalities.

**Li** (University of Toronto) on impunity and accountability. How should donors, banks, companies and states be held accountable, seeing the degree of impunity? The political histories and customary regimes of countries should be taken into account.

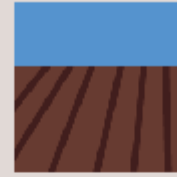
**Taylor** (International Land Coalition) on the importance of documentation and visibility, of good examples of accountability. Blueprints do not work. We have to learn to adapt to different contexts, and make efforts visible through personal stories and data. There is a need to come up with youth-led solutions.

**Hawkes** (Oxfam) on the fate of human rights defenders. How can we create a safer world for them to do their work? Threats to their work and personal lives not only affect them and their families, we also lose opportunities.

## CLOSING NOTES

**Frits van der Wal** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) referred to the coinciding political debate on the Dutch development policy note and the importance of land governance. The Minister was requested to investigate how women's land rights can be strengthened. She is committed to use the lessons learnt from the LANDac conference. Van der Wal further highlighted the polarized and confrontational political debate on aid and trade – the importance of finding a balance between the growing role of the private sector (through CSR) and other actors, the importance of data, impact evaluations and learning. We should realise that land goes beyond tenure issues, the link with the SDGs remains important.

**Annelies Zoomers** (LANDac, Utrecht University) brought the LANDac Conference 2018 to a close. She expressed the concern that investments often happen at the expense of local people. The central question for us now, is how to move forward. The land and anthropology community used to be a small community talking among themselves. These days, Zoomers notices, a broader consensus exists to improve the situation of marginalized groups. Revolution is not a solution anymore. We should be gearing toward more integrated and collaborative approaches instead. Organisations need to be supported to help 'informal' groups become visible. This calls for long-term in-depth and bottom-up research, engaging communities and academics, to determine whether a specific investment project is a wise decision, and for whom. Consensus is essential, as well as good preparations, a proper understanding of local contexts, and steering and monitoring of investment impacts.



# Land Governance and (Im) mobility: Exploring the Nexus between Land Acquisition, Displacement and Migration

## Guest Editors

Prof. Dr. Annelies Zoomers  
Dr. Marthe Derkzen  
Dr. Christine Richter

## Deadline

15 January 2019

# Special Issue

## Invitation to submit

### About LANDac

LANDac – the Netherlands Land Academy is a partnership between Dutch organizations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners who share a concern for land inequality and land-related conflicts to conduct research, distribute information and forge new partnerships.

LANDac is hosted by Utrecht University and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For more information about our work, please contact us at [landac.geo@uu.nl](mailto:landac.geo@uu.nl) or visit: [www.landgovernance.org](http://www.landgovernance.org)

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