Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and extractive industries: assessing challenges towards the Sustainable Development Goals

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The issue

Large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) are increasing both in frequency and size, leading to a «rush for land» (Deininger and Byerlee, 2011, Oxfam International 2011, Anseeuw et al., 2012).

Particular attention by scholars
- on international LSLAs, but domestic also (e.g. peri-urban areas)
- on main declared intentions: biofuels and food crops cultivation, but other reasons also (altough minor) such as nature conservation, tourism, economic and energy infrastractures, and **mining**.

Mining has heavily intensified in the last few years due to the increased world demand for raw materials. Extractive activities are often located in remote, ecologically sensitive and less-developed areas that include many indigenous lands and territories.

LSLAs and Mining industry towards SDGs

LSLAs are welcomed by host government since they are intended as drivers for **much-needed capital** for agricultural modernization and poverty alleviation schemes (Cotula, 2012; World Bank, 2011).

Private capital formation could help achieve import-substitution objectives and satisfy national food security requirements.
Rural job creation
Technology transfer to smallholder farmers
Infrastracture investments

Mining activities (exploration, development, extraction and closure) stand as major poductive investment.

Increase the opportunities for **decent employment**
Economic growth, business development and local spillover effects
Increase **fiscal revenues**
Infrastructure linkages, innovation
Expansion of access to **energy**

.... however

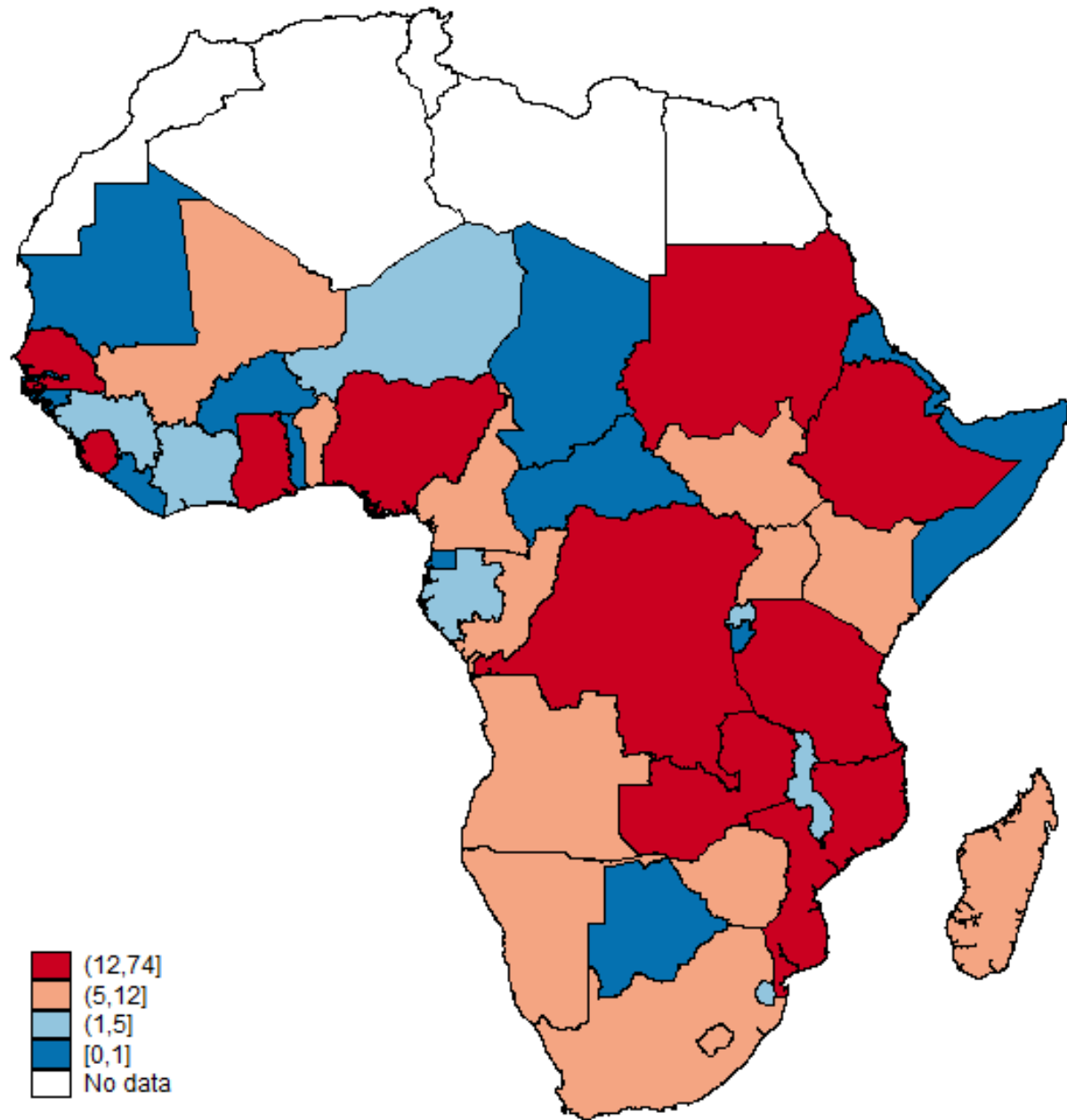LSLAs occurr as land-grabbing actions, contributing to the generation of large negative impacts:

- loss of access to housing, agricultural land and common resources
- highly competitive and asymetric local land markets, contributing to the rise of food and income insecurity
- widening of pre-existing inequalities
- environmental degradation
- social conflicts

historically, mining has contributed to many of the challenges that the SDGs are trying to address :

- environmental degradation
- displacement of populations
- worsening economic and social inequality
- armed conflicts
- institutional weakening
- gender-based violence
- tax evasion and corruption
- violation of human rights.

Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in SSA
2010-2015

Legend:
- (12,74]
- (5,12]
- (1,5]
- [0,1]
- No data

Descriptive statistics for most targeted LSLAs countries

Country	Egalitarian institutions (§)	NR dependent(*)	EDI(**)
Senegal	0.67353	YES	20.45
Sierra Leone	0.494431	YES	28.64
Ghana	0.704437	YES	29.11
Nigeria	0.469939	YES	81.5
Congo Dem.Rep.	0.29941	YES	56
Tanzania	0.618819	YES	19.81
Ethiopia	0.415098	-	-
Mozambique	0.505547	YES	16.4
Zambia	0.632675	YES	45
Sudan	0.217621	YES	53.86
SSA average	0.510		

(§) V-Dem Project (2016)

(*)McKinsey Global Institute: resource export (% total exports); resource revenue (% total government revenue); resource rents (%GDP)

(**) Extractive Dependence Index by Hailu and Kipgen (2017)

Aim and Relevance

This work provides an exploratory analysis of correlations between large acquisitions and extractive activities, and cast light on specific governance challenges posed by the interaction of these phenomena on local populations.

While there is a wide aknowledge about the role of mining companies in land deals (see for instance Borras et al. 2011; Anseeuw et al. 2012; Behrman et al. 2012; Franco and Borras, 2012), a comprehensive empirical analysis on the issue is missing.

- Considerable **lack of reliable statistics** on the existence and on territorial extensions actually involved in LSLAs, making it difficult to accurately understand how resources are being exploited, identify overlapping land uses, and monitor company activity.
- Among other projects of data collection, **Land Matrix** represents the most comprehensive dataset on land transactions, but does **not include** data on land deals explicitly referring to mining concessions.

Approach (I stage):
In-depth desk-review of case studies (about land deals including mining activities) to systematize evidence about governance challanges, from qualitative and process-based insights **(on-going process)**

- Australia (O'Faircheallaigh, 1995)
- Democratic Rep. of Congo (Hönke, 2013; Geenen and Claessens, 2013; Geenen and Hönke, 2015)
- Ghana (Aubynn, 2009; Bush, 2009; Hilson and Yakovleva, 2007)
- Guatemala (van de Sandt, 2009)
- Madagascar (Seagle, 2012; Burnod et al. 2013)
- Mozambique (Birras et al., 2011)
- Papua New Guinea (Banks and Ballard, 1997; Hilson, 2002; Menzies and Harley, 2015)
- Peru (Bury, 2004)
- South Africa (Hall, 2011)
- Tanzania (Lange, 2008; Carstens and Hilson, 2009)
- (…)

Preliminary findings

Beyond a common **lack of transparency** and **prior informed consent ,** I found some recurrent and specific challanges in terms of governance:

▪ Large asymetric negotiation power, if any

▪ Low involvement in monitoring and policy-making efforts towards prevention/mitigation of negative effects

▪ Lack of intergenerational timeframe (natural capital and social capital)

▪ There are tools for enhancing governance, in both land (e.g. Voluntary Guidelines) and extractive sector (e.g. EITI)

There is no consistent relationship between participation in voluntary partnerships or guidelines related to agriculture, logging and mining concessions transparency (CCSI, 2016; OECD, 2017)

«Leaving no one behind»

Bridging the gap: the integration of existing governance tools (for example, the compulsory inclusion of how land deals have been negotiated into the EITI standard) would benefit our capability to enforce **transparency** and **accountability**, and scale up the effects.

A unique and normative paradigm of development can't be applied in every context.

Instead, endowing people with adequate instruments to participate to policy-making process (disclosure and engagement around land contracts), and provide them opportunities to be actors of change, substantiate the idea of «no one left behind».