Consolidating land for food security
Antidote or anachronistic?

Rohan Bennett
ITC, University of Twente
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Food insecurity in rural Ethiopia

- 90% are rural smallholders
- 35% are undernourished
- Undernourishment rate increasing
Current responses have limitations

- Fertilizer programs don’t work for all crops
- Enforced production of specific crops compromises dietary intake
- Resettlement is deeply unpopular
- Technology investment requires long term stability
Land fragmentation is an underlying issue

- Rural population is growing
- Approach to land allocation promotes fragmentation
- Plots get smaller (e.g. < 2 Ha)
- Plots get more distributed (e.g. 4 per farmer)
Land fragmentation impedes food security

- Small plots cannot support family nutrition needs
- Disparate plots make farming less efficient
- Many plots are inaccessible to roads and other services
- Infrastructure provision not feasible
Land consolidation combats fragmentation

- Land consolidation reorganizes rural land tenure rights
- Involves swapping, reallocation, or comprehensive spatial redesign
- Widely and continuously applied across Europe
Could Ethiopia benefit from tailored consolidation?

- Already permitted, but, only occurs voluntarily
- Legal impediments already known
- What would be the social, environmental, and political impacts?
Mixed messages from a preliminary study

- Yimer (2014) – Fagta Lakoma Woreda
- Fragmentation is important for risk management and social cohesion
- Consolidation would improve production levels
- Showcase: travel time down, plot size up, plot holding concentration
Looking ahead: a plan for action?

- Does fragmentation need to be confronted?
- Does consolidation provide a longer term solution?
- Under what conditions consolidation can succeed?
- What a local form of consolidation looks like?
Thanks.

Questions.