



LANDac ANNUAL  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
**4-5 July 2019**

## LAND GOVERNANCE IN TRANSITION

How to support transformations that work for  
people and nature?

## CONFERENCE SESSIONS

**Theme 4: Realities of Dispossession, Displacement and  
Resettlement**

## PANEL

### **Accumulation by dispossession. Dynamics of large-scale land acquisition, agro-industrial crops and Especial Economic Zones**

*Anh Nguyen Quoc, National University of Vietnam & Álvaro Germán Torres Mora, University of Helsinki-National University of Colombia.*

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Currently, land grabbing is happening in the most remote zones of the world, as far as capitalism expands its models of production. This phenomenon is strongly linked to the increased need of biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, extracted mainly from Sugarcane, Oil palm and Soy. These crops often are cultivated by investors who have resources for carrying out large scale projects.

Small land holders are often portrayed as incapable of profitable production, given their backwardness and lack of resources. Such argument has been widely used for grabbing their lands and converting them into salaried workers.

In some places of the world Especial Economic Zones or equivalent strategies have been implemented. The model entails the liberalization of local economies, benefiting companies with lower or no taxes and other incentives for production and exportation. The expansions of such zones has forced the displacement of traditional populations, which have received compensations (such as money and jobs). The model has facilitated the dispossession of ancestral lands through completely legal mechanisms, which have been fostered by local governments, often more interested in backing large scale agriculture, tourism and residential projects.

Unlike violent strategies that have been used for grabbing land in Latin America and Africa, legal strategies have been implemented in other regions of the world, especially in those where no current armed conflicts occur. Accumulation by dispossession has, therefore, succeeded in places such as India, Laos or Philippines, where Especial Economic Zones and similar strategies have taken large extension of lands, making large profits though displacing peoples unable to compete Potential speakers:

- Markus Kröger. Professor of Development Studies at the University of Helsinki
- Anh Nguyen Quoc. Lecturer of Economics at National University of Vietnam
- Álvaro Germán Torres Mora. Expert on land law. Currently working for the National University of Colombia

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## PANEL / ROUNDTABLE

### Increasing Farmland Concentration in Central and Eastern Europe - Causes, Challenges, Consequences

*German-Ukrainian Agropolicy Dialogue, BVVG German AgriForest Privatisation Agency, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine.*

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In many post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, land reforms are coming to an end. Large-scale privatization or redistribution of agricultural land has led to new ownership structures. However, in recent years, small and medium-sized farms are rapidly losing their viability, especially in non-EU countries. Significant areas of farmland are controlled by large agricultural holdings and non-agricultural investors. The agricultural land market is turning into a market for corporate rights of companies that control the land, as a result of which traditional methods of regulating the market turnover of land quickly lose their effectiveness. "Portfolio investors" show great interest into buying agricultural land, which leads to a rise in prices and crowding out small and medium-sized farmers from the land market. Industrialization of agricultural holdings also leads to a further decline in employment in rural areas and mass migration to cities. This especially concerns young people living in rural areas.

The proposed session shall serve as platform to discuss the main problems of current agricultural land tenure systems in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to consider possible ways to minimize the negative effects of agricultural industrialization and excessive land concentration against the background that land is a limited resource. Special attention should be paid to identifying and measuring the level of concentration of agricultural land and to discuss possible solutions for regulating the access to land in order to prevent an unhealthy land distribution.

Conference theme: Land governance, access to land, land tenure security, investments

Potential speakers/presenters:

- Andrii Martyn, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine
- Oleksandr Krasnolutskyj, State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre
- Christoph Konrad Gilgen, German AgriForest Privatisation Agency
- N.N., National Center for Agricultural Support, Poland
- N.N., Belarusian State Academy of Agriculture
- N.N., State Institute for Land Management of the Republic of Belarus "Belgiprozem"
- N.N., Agricultural State University of Moldova

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## PANEL

### Beyond the 'conflict-fetish' – land disputes and structural agrarian questions

*Mathijs van Leeuwen, Centre for International Conflict Analysis & Management (CICAM), Radboud University Nijmegen; An Ansoms & Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka & Rene-Claude Niyonkuru, Centre for Development Studies, Université catholique de Louvain; Gemma van der Haar, Sociology of Development and Change, Wageningen University and Research*

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In sub-Saharan Africa, advocacy work and academic writing has effectively put land disputes on the peacebuilding and development agenda. Notably in conflict affected settings, many policy makers and development practitioners now promote mediation, transitional justice, intensification and land certification to prevent such disputes from threatening rural livelihoods and security. While preventing land-related insecurity is a legitimate concern, we are worried about the dangers of a 'conflict-fetish' (Goodhand 2000): the tendency to interpret everything occurring in conflict-affected areas as part of conflict dynamics. All too easily, land-related peacebuilding interventions overlook the more structural dimensions of conflicts around land. But also in more stable environments, interveners tend to focus on the visible, interpersonal violence around land rather than on the structural nature of land conflict. Yet, academic work on agrarian change has for long explored structural tensions around land access and distribution, exploring the embeddedness of land ownership in relations of patronage and political exclusion, the competition between tenure systems, or the tensions inevitably accompanying agrarian change and reform. To our mind, a focus on conflict mediation of land disputes risks ignoring or even normalising injustices, exclusion and problematic (large-scale) land-transfers from both the past and the presence.

In this panel, we want to build bridges between conflict and peace researchers interested in land, and political economic research on land matters, and so push thinking about land disputes beyond the 'conflict fetish'. By bringing in a critical perspective on agrarian change, we may highlight continuities between land issues in conflict-affected settings and those in more 'regular' settings of development, and explore what these imply for processes of agrarian change in both. We particularly invite contributions that:

- problematize the more structural dimensions of land issues in conflict-affected settings, and how they resonate with ongoing contention around land and labour relationships in settings that are not labelled as 'conflict-affected';
- explore the challenges to policy makers and development practitioners to combine strengthening dispute-resolving capacity in the short run with agrarian reform in the long run;
- explore the lessons to be learned from earlier efforts and experiences elsewhere in countering unjust labour relationships, marginalization, or large-scale enclosure, in a time when redistributive reform is not considered as a viable option any more.

Potential speakers:

Will be drawn from our joint projects + others interested to join.

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## **PANEL**

### **Displacement, dispossession and defence strategies around land**

*Maaïke Matelski & Selma Zijlstra, Radboud University Nijmegen*

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Displacement and dispossession for development, investment or conservation come in many different forms. Instigators such as governments or private actors are usually required to conduct impact assessments and develop resettlement action plans, yet some actors prefer to operate under the radar in informal negotiations, or engage in illegal practices. The different types of investment (conservation, mining or agriculture) result in various alliances between communities, environmentalists, human rights organisations, governments and businesses. Displacement might be planned or ad-hoc, beneficial or harmful, and on an individual or community basis. Dispossession can be in the form of losing land, but also losing fishing grounds, agricultural crops or livestock, and community cohesion. The impact of these processes and the way they are shaped are products of defence and counter-defence strategies of communities in various partnerships, which in turn are highly influenced by contextual factors such as political interest and historical dynamics.

In this panel, we will explore the different dimensions of displacement and dispossession in various contexts, and map the realms of agency and defence strategies of affected populations. What are the main contemporary drivers of displacement and dispossession in each region? In what different shapes do displacement and dispossession occur? How do authorities and private actors interact with affected populations? How do affected populations seek to defend their interests, individually or in partnership or coalition with others such as civil society organizations?

#### Potential presenters

- Marja Spierenburg, Radboud University Nijmegen (case study South Africa)
- Maaïke Matelski, Radboud University Nijmegen (case study Kenya)
- Selma Zijlstra, Radboud University Nijmegen (case study Kenya)
- TBC (relevant paper proposals welcome)

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## PANEL

### **When do displacement and resettlement end? The temporalities of dislocation, socio-political engagement, and sustainable development**

*Kei Otsuki, Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University & Nikkie Wiegink, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Utrecht University*

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One of the most direct implications of large-scale land investments is displacement of people who are considered to be “in the way” of the investment projects (Oliver-Smith, 2009). Recently, the World Bank estimates that 20 million people are displaced due to the investment projects each year (Cernea and Maldonado, 2018). The displaced people are usually clustered and relocated in new forms of settlements in both rural and urban areas. These new settlements profoundly transform landscapes and people’s socioeconomic conditions. While much attention has been paid to adequate compensation and livelihood restoration in the planning for and immediate aftermath of resettlement, the protracted processes toward sustainable place-making have attracted little scholarly and policy attention. How do actors involved in resettlement, such as governments, investors, affected populations, civil society organizations, and academics, understand this process in terms of temporality? When does their commitment start and when and how does it end? When is resettlement considered to be “over”? And what does sustainable development mean in such a context?

In this panel we aim to address these questions (and others) by approaching resettlement as a process and agent of transformation. In addition to investment-induced displacement and resettlement, we wish to discuss cases of protracted refugee camps, or resettlement projects created due to natural disasters. More specifically, we welcome papers that address questions such as:

- What are the long-term effects of resettlement projects on their destinations’ natural and socioeconomic landscapes?
- How do implementing actors of resettlement projects deal with the positive and negative effects of the resettlement experience? And how do such engagements change over time?
- How do different actors involved in resettlement envision the potential and effective time period for the political and social engagement?
- How can we study dislocation as a process of transformation?

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## PANEL

### **Land rights; expropriation and compensation. Recent advances, insights and implementation tools**

*Leon Verstappen & Björn Hoops, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen; Jean du Plessis, UN-Habitat, GLTN; Richard Sliuzas, ITC Twente*

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Land for use in the public interest is an essential ingredient for successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the process of defining and establishing the boundaries of public interest and acquiring such land can be fraught with difficulties which, if not well managed, may well undermine the success of well-meant projects and produce counter-productive and fundamentally unjust results. Mechanisms and instruments are available for governments to acquire land in fair and equitable ways. For example, in many countries land readjustment has been successfully used to provide access to land for public use and development, in ways that respects the rights of and materially benefits all concerned. Despite the existence of such options, many governments do resort to expropriation (or the use of eminent domain) to achieve their development plans. It has to be clearly understood that the option of land expropriation should be entertained "only as a measure of last resort [...] in light of its numerous potentially negative attributes, which may include delays, legal expense, conflict, and the proven inadequacy in many contexts of financial compensation as fair or full remedy for loss of land." (Hoops, Marais et.al. 2018). In this panel we shall consider how governments can best approach such "last resort" cases, instances where the land acquisition in question has been proven to be in the public interest; and expropriation is in fact the only available option. We shall also report on recent conceptual and practical advances, insights and implementation tools available to assist in this process. We seek contributions that consider what fair compensation entails, how it can be established and achieved through transparent and just procedures.

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*

## PANEL

### **Everyday experiences of 'development' and 'dispossession': understanding longer-term impacts of megaprojects**

*Gemma van der Haar & Stephanie Hobbis, Sociology of Development and Change, Wageningen University and Research, in collaboration with Both Ends (tbc)*

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Large scale projects for hydropower, infrastructure, or extractivism are under scrutiny for their negative impacts on affected populations and the failure to produce positive development outcomes at the local level. It has become clear that people affected by such projects suffer various forms of dispossession, both material (loss of land, water, livelihood assets) and immaterial, although the latter are far less understood and often not immediately evident. In this session we look at megaprojects that have been initiated some years back in order to understand how, over time, they have impacted local societies and how, in turn, local societies have made sense of, and adapted their lives to the megaproject. We especially seek to understand multiple forms of dispossession, people's attachment to their surroundings, and changes in local social relations. In the session—which will have an interactive format—we will share insights from recent field research on the region affected by the Bujagali dam in Uganda and hope to attract presentations on other settings.

We welcome contributions that explore questions relating to:

- multiple forms of dispossession and, potentially, re-appropriation
- changes in people's attachment to place
- political identities that develop around such projects
- changing social relations, including gender relations

In the session we aim to develop a joint reflection on issues such as:

- the role of local and regional state authorities
- the role of advocacy of local or international NGOs
- how experiences with such projects inform the way new or follow-up projects are received (and managed)
- what lessons can or should be drawn for social and economic impact assessments

Potential contributors: We count on the presentation of three WUR students (whose field research in Uganda was facilitated through Both Ends), possibly someone from Both Ends (depending on availability), and are open to other presenters.

*This session welcomes abstract submissions.*