Towards transparency in Global Land Deals and Land Governance

The experience of the Land Matrix and land governance in Cameroon

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SUMMARY

I. Introduction to the phenomenon, definition of the phenomenon

II. The Land Matrix
   I. The Land Matrix as a database
   II. The Land Matrix as a tool for transparency and public policy development

III. Some examples – Patterns of global land deals

IV. Concluding remarks, the future of the LM and beyond
Introduction to the phenomenon

- LSLA - Phenomenon « emerged » in 2008
  - Context of high food prices
  - Numerous cases of very large acquisitions (Daewoo case in Madagascar)
  - High implication of media and civil society and, subsequently, of research and international organisation

- Lack of transparency of these LSLA

- Lack of understanding on the nature of the actors, the size, the triggers and drivers of the phenomenon
A complex and inter-dependent environment ...

**Triggers**
- Food price crisis

**Drivers**
- **LT**
  - Demographic Change in diet and energy use
- **MT**
  - Food production
  - Biofuels
  - Industrial production
  - Forest/fibre production
  - Ecosystemic Services/Tourism
  - Speculation

**Facilitators**
- Land governance
- Democratic governance
- Economic governance and market regulations
- Crisis of family farming (the perception thereof)

A GOVERNANCE PROBLEM
(not an investor one only)
Introduction to the phenomenon

- LSLA fulfill the following criteria
  - Entail a transfer of rights to use, control or ownership of land through sale, lease or concession
  - Have been initiated since 2000
  - Cover an area of 200 hectares or more
  - Imply the potential conversion of land from smallholder production, local community use or important ecosystem service provision to commercial use
PROMOTING…

• Global data base - Making the data available and the phenomenon understandable

• Transparency in decision-making over land and investment, as a step towards greater accountability

• Public participation in building a constantly evolving database and in the debate on large-scale land deals

Launched in April 2012 – World Bank Land and Poverty Conference
DATABASE CHARACTERISTICS...

• 30+ variables - Information on
  – investor (origin, type),
  – deal (production intention, size),
  – target region (former land use)
  – Sector and production
  – Etc.

• Records intended, concluded or failed land acquisitions (land acquired by purchase, lease or concession)
  – For agricultural production, timber extraction, carbon trading, mineral extraction, industry, renewable energy production, conservation, and tourism
  – In low and middle income countries
CHARACTERISTICS and ADDED VALUE...

Crowd-sourcing instrument

Verified data – cross-check inputs
- Levels 0-1-2-3 – only 1 or higher are published
- 50% published
- Objective to verify everything

Huge uptake
- High degree of attention
- Some controversy - Valuable lessons on the challenges and successes of promoting open data
CHALLENGES…

1. Definition of the phenomenon – size/sector choice induce partialities (leading to important differences)

2. Quantification and assessment. What and how do we measure the large-scale land acquisition phenomenon?

3. Status of the land deals

4. Data availability and reliability remain problematic. LM - effort to reduce the reliance on media reports, issues regarding accuracy also appear in sources considered to be more reliable.

5. Communication
   • What the data is about and its limitation
   • Encouraging engagement
2nd PHASE: A dynamic and participatory tool

- No categorisation of deals according to level of verification, but according to source
  - Users to judge themselves of reliability
  - Much more data will be available

- Better categorization of the status / progress of the deals
  - Getting a more precise image
  - Allow tracking of changes of deals over time

- Exclude deals that do not fulfil our minimum information requirements

- Longer term –
  - Mechanism of following activities on land
  - Inclusion of land-based investments not involving transfer of land rights (outgrowing schemes)

- Better communication
2nd PHASE: A dynamic and participatory tool

Greater emphasis on first hand, primary information, continuously updated
Necessitates strategies for continuous data collection and checking

- Crowdsourcing and mechanism of continuous follow up of status of the projects/tracking of new projects
- Setting up long-term partnerships
  - Network of key informants
  - AU – UNECA – African portal, with LPI focal points
  - Private sector / governments????
- Collaboration with existing/new – often national initiatives
  - Decentralized land observatories
  - Cameroon
TOWARDS OPEN Source/Governance…

- LM Open Data …
  - Promotion of use/participation to data
  BUT ALSO
  - Adapt software and approach to support infra-global initiatives: All data AND software available for anyone to use, for any purpose, at no cost.

- LM Project …
  - Support the establishment of Land Observatories that concentrate on a specific area of interest (geographical/Thematic)

- Global Observatory (focusing on transnational data and visualizations)
- Regional Observatories (such as being developed with LPI for Africa),
- National Observatories (currently being developed in Peru, Tanzania, Madagascar, Cambodia and Laos),
- Thematic Observatories (currently being developed on rangelands).
TOWARDS OPEN Source/Governance…

- Development of a pyramid

Each Observatory
  - Relatively independent, managed by own interest group
  - Multi-stakeholder platform is a primary condition
  - LM partnership provides development support, linking to the global database
TOWARDS OPEN DATA/Governance...

- Contribution to broader objectives …Beyond data and assessment

- Twin goals:
  - Improving the quality and inclusiveness of international and national policy dialogue and decision-making on land resources
  - Combining a global database with information for decision-making AND promoting participative decision-making in specific national/thematic contexts
  - Participation
  - Ownership

- Towards new alliances:
  - National governments, civil society, …
  - Research, decision making spheres, …
  - G8 (UK, France), World Bank (OpenContracting), LPI - AU/UNECA/AfDB, VGs, RAIs,
Some examples - Patterns of large-scale land acquisitions
Africa is the most affected
African countries – in particular east African ones – are among the most affected.
A pattern of concentration
Very little effective production

- Known
- Project abandoned
- In operation (production)
- Project not started
- Startup phase (no production)

Central: 11%
East: 20%
North: 50%
South: 17%
West: 11%

1.7% Concluded, operational, producing
Investors in Africa
Investors in Africa

- **Traditional Western** food-producing, processing, and exporting companies seeking to “square the market”

- **Capital-rich / food insecure** Land and water scarce populous but capital-rich (Asian countries, Gulf States - China:20% of world pop / 9% of world arable land)

- **New actors** – Outside of agriculture (financial sector, ...)

**Expanding markets:**
- Private investors

**Avoiding markets:**
- Direct gov. involvement
- Sovereign wealth Funds
- State-owned enterprises

**Speculation (?):**
- Hedge funds
- Pension funds
- Invest banks
Investors in Africa

• Different investment types and production models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent farmer model</th>
<th>Associative farmer model</th>
<th>Cooperative farmer model</th>
<th>Speculative 1000-day model</th>
<th>Asset management and Investment funds model</th>
<th>Nucleus estate model</th>
<th>Agribusiness Estate model</th>
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• Different outcomes and strategies

• Diverse inclusiveness patterns
Drivers: Food crops are more important than agrofuels
Intra vs Extra-regional investments

29% Intra-regional
71% Extra-regional

57% Intra-regional
43% Extra-regional

20% Intra-regional
80% Extra-regional

31% Intra-regional
69% Extra-regional

9% Intra-regional
91% Extra-regional
Slowing down overall, but evidence of long-term trend of growing commercial interest in land
Conclusion and the future of the Land Matrix
The Land Matrix and decentralised observatories

• The need for more transparency, inclusiveness, better governance
• The Land Matrix
  – From a database...
  – ...To a tool/instrument for transparency
• The need to decentralise
  – Better information
  – Feeding the debate at the relevant levels
Related research

Longer term research on structural changes in agriculture/land policies/governance and the food/energy/climate/finance crises (Margulis, 2013) / Agro-food-energy nexus (Borras, 2013)
- Impact (land tenure, NR management, regulations/norms, local/national/global food security...)
- New types of actors (investment funds/role of domestic actors) and changing investment patterns
- Changing production models, linking smallholders to large-scale investments, inclusive business models
- Food regimes/systems
- REDD+, biofuels
- Etc.
Related research

Research on OpenSource and renewal of public policy
- Transparent, multistakeholder governance,
- OpenGovernance,
- Global norm development/governance,
- Food sovereignty…)}
Cameroon?

• « Land is not a problem in cameroon, its governance is »

• Commercial Pressure on NR
  – Land (agricultural, urban)
  – Minerals
  – ...

• International vs domestic land acquisitions
Cameroon?

- Information remains sketchy, not precise, not transparent
- Processes not clear, inclusive?
- Governance needs
  - Cadaster
  - Observatory (ies)
- Broader debate of which development trajectory to follow
http://www.landmatrix.org