

Preface

INTRODUCTION

Large-scale land deals/acquisitions have received considerable attention in recent times, especially after the 2007/2008 financial and economic crises when the perception of land regarding its values for growing food crops, feed-stocks, biofuels, and so on had a new and more profound identity. The scenario was amplified by the increasing oil price that resulted in the search for alternative sources, which led to the use of bio-based materials, the sale of certificates for reducing emissions, etc. (Cotula, Vermeulen, Leonard, & Keeley, 2009; Deininger, Byerlee, Lindsay, Norton, Selod, & Stickler, 2011). Hence, it was not surprising to see the rising global demand for land in countries where land was perceived to be abundant. Many of the recipient countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and East and South Asia (Deininger et al., 2011; Osabuohien, 2014). Such intensified trend may portend development opportunities but not without some adverse implications for the national economies in general and the host communities in particular.

A range of studies has investigated determinants of land acquisitions at the global level. However, zeroing in on within-country implications has not received that much attention. In addition, one of the main factors that could influence the decisions of investors to invest in a country is the nature of institutions that exist to protect property rights. Recent patterns of investments on land suggest a rather surprising paradigm shift whereby a greater proportion of global land deals occur in countries that are not only deemed to have available land but are also perceived as having weak institutions (Arezki, Deininger, & Selod, 2012; Osabuohien, 2014). The implications of this phenomenon on socio-economic transformation (including pro-poor and inclusive growth agenda of developing countries) are numerous. This requires further investigation drawing from country-specific standpoints. It is the need to fill this essential gap that has motivated the current research project.

The aforementioned is imperative for the reason that little is known regarding factors accounting for the variations of land acquisitions within the same country. This book deepens the understanding of how the features of the target localities of land acquisition can play a role in shaping the processes and the outcomes of such land deals. It provides evidence at the country-level on the determinants of large-scale land acquisitions, and it sharpens both the understanding and the attendant implications such transactions place on the households and communities in such localities. These could range from economic and sociological to environmental issues that vary within and across countries.

NEW TRENDS, NEW CHALLENGES, AND THE NEED FOR NEW SOLUTIONS

At the 2014 edition of the Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, some interesting pictures came out in a number of the sessions. In general, it was noted that there are new trends posing novel challenges requiring new solutions. A typical new issue is that there are cases of domestic investors that should not be overlooked in order to have a clearer picture. Hence, in one of the chapters of this book a comparison is made between land acquisitions from domestic and foreign investors, while another chapter deals exclusively with the domestic aspect of the land deals with a view to providing a balanced picture. Another great challenge is the possibility of some local authority being enticed into the web of corrupt practices. This could emanate by the glamour of money that can nicodemously be given by government representatives and potential investors (Timko, 2014). The above is a serious matter as the local councils (their names vary across different countries) are supposed to be the hope and key participants representing households within their communities in terms of collective representation and negotiation for their community members.

One of the possible solutions is the collective enlightenment of the community members themselves to push forward their interest and compel their local community leaders to represent their interest with honesty and sincerity. This kind of peaceful advocacy across a number of communities will have multiplier effects that will spillover to the greater section of the society and amplify civic engagement. This will enhance the institutional architecture in the country to reduce corruption associated with land acquisition. The role of non-state actors in this regard can be effective in many respects, but active engagement of the community members themselves will further ensure better results. This kind of enlightenment will also be helpful in resolving the issue of gender disparity surrounding the right to use land (Doss, Meitzen-Dick, & Bomuhangi, 2014). There is also the need to discourage once-off cash payment as compensations to land users. For instance, giving some hundreds or thousands of dollars to the head of a household in a rural community who has not handled 50 dollars in cash as lump-sum will naturally breed the consequence of money illusions and the Dutch disease. This can be solved by making the former land users own some shares (the size or extent can be mutually agreed upon or worked out) in the new ventures by the investors.

The above arrangement has some advantages: a) it will make the former land users see the venture as their own and help to avoid the acrimonious tendencies towards investors, particularly when they are foreigners; b) in cases where the business venture will not profitably perform as expected much will not be demanded from them—This is of interest as investors can face “financial troubles” when the venture does not receive the financial support (loans and so on) anticipated. It has been noted that the gestation period of investments in land that are related to agriculture can take many years (Tyler & Dixie, 2013). The agricultural sector houses up to 80% of such land investments in many of the recipient countries (Osabuohien, 2014).—; c) it will also encourage the processing of the products in the case of agricultural investments to create opportunities for employment through supply and value chains.

The need for national governments to implement the internationally recognized Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests is equally essential. This will help in minimizing the risks of displacement from large-scale agricultural investments and adherence to the corporate social responsibilities of the investors. The role of regional economic communities in this regard to woo their members in advancing the implementation is an additional possible step towards making land deals in the recipient countries more transparent.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is made up of 21 chapters distributed amongst 5 sections.

Section 1: Overview, Historical Issues, and the General State of Affairs

The first section provides an overview of the general issue by taking a look into the past with a view to providing contemporary interpretations of the multifaceted nature of land acquisitions from a broad perspective. In Chapter 1, Simplice Asongu and Christian Nguena give an account of important lessons in terms of policy implications of Foreign Land Acquisitions (FLAs) and how they relate to equitable and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. They take stock of what we know so far about the determinants of land grab, present a scenario of sustainable and equitable development of FLAs, and discuss the policy implications. In a related manner, Andrew Onwuemele in the 2nd chapter details recent thoughts on the implications of FLAs in Africa and argues that FLAs have both positive and negative consequences for African countries.

The 3rd chapter by Oluyomi Ola-David investigates the political economy of Chinese involvement in FLAs in Africa, emphasizing those that are related to the agricultural sector. Somewhat expressing pessimism based on the potential imperialist character of China in African development, the author draws from the historical perspective that large-scale land deals entail dispossession of land capital, legal aspects of property rights, gender concerns, and information asymmetries. The aforementioned, according to the author, can have implications for agrarian transformation in African countries. Renny Rueda in Chapter 4 demonstrates how the normative interventions of the Bretton Woods Institutions have historically shaped the way land and land acquisitions are perceived. He adds that the rising attention on land acquisitions can be linked to the structural framework at the Bretton Wood Institutions. Using the term *land grabbing*, Chapter 5 by Essien D. Essien brings on board some ethical arguments that are associated with land deals. According to the author, the purchase or lease of vast land in developing countries could lead to food insecurity and undermine rural development.

Section 2: Land Acquisitions and the Gender Nexus

The 2nd section, which happens to be the shortest but an important section, investigates how land acquisitions could have implications on gender relations based on two different country cases on two different continents. Gleaning from the theory of Development-Induced Displacement and based on the Indian scenario, Sheetal Agarwal in the 6th chapter advances the argument that gender issues do not receive the attention that they deserve in developmental policies. The author expresses, among others, how laws and customs exclude the majority of Indian women from owning and inheriting landed property, as the men usually determine the management, usage, and transfer of land. Chapter 7 pushes the gender-land acquisitions argument forward as Patience Mutopo, Manase Chiweshe, and Chipso Mubaya use the case of Zimbabwe, a country where about 70% of the rural women are the main producers of food. They show how land deals (both domestic and foreign) threaten the livelihoods of rural women and indicate how women are affected by land investments, especially in the chaotic program of land redistribution era.

Section 3: Country and Inter-Country Variations of Land Acquisitions

This section embarks on an exploration of the key factors that contribute to the disparities of land acquisitions in terms of the nature, extent, and implications, both at the national and cross-country levels. From the analyses in five different countries, the section deepens the reader's understanding of a number of interesting issues that are related to land acquisitions. Starting with the Nigerian scenario in the 8th chapter, Olanrewaju Ajiboye and Olabisi Yusuff examine how FLAs can exert impact on food security and the food supply chain. They underscore the association among FLAs, agricultural commercialization, food chains, and food security in Nigeria, and suggest the encouragement of interested local land investors in large-scale agriculture by the government with a view to increasing food production and enhancing the performance of the agricultural sector. Taking a swift journey to the Horn of Africa, Kassa Alemu writes on Ethiopia in Chapter 9 and investigates land deals and the impact on livelihoods. He argues on the possibility of a win-win argument on land deals and recommends that land deal governance should be improved through the active involvement of the main actors: the government, the investors, and the local communities in order to make large-scale land deals and agricultural investment beneficial to all the parties involved.

Falendra Sudan in the 10th chapter explores large-scale foreign direct investment in land in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India. The author points out that a number of large-scale land acquisitions in India used for SEZs purposes led to a series of conflicts. He details the determinants and impacts of FLAs and suggests policy options that could help to reduce adverse effects. In Chapter 11, Noah Yusuf, Olatunji Abdulganiy, and Issah Moshood explore the factors that could hinder the realization of FLAs promises and how that can play out on the sustainable development agenda of developing countries, focusing on Nigeria. The authors stress the socio-cultural aspect of FLAs while underscoring the relevance of other factors that could have physical, political, and economic undertones. From a comparative standpoint, James Conable writes in Chapter 12 on the interaction between FLAs and corruption, on one hand, and the implications of FLAs on sustainable livelihoods, on the other, drawing from the experiences of Mozambique and Tanzania. He establishes that FLAs could have some prospects for the development of both countries but fears the possible exploitation of local communities, which threatens their livelihoods due to power dynamics, corruption, and failed promises.

Section 4: Households and Community Implications of Land Acquisitions

The 4th section of the book zeroes in on important factors that determine why some communities within the same country receive land deals (from foreign and domestic entities alike) while others do not. It also examines the possible implications that the existence of such land deals can have on the host communities as well as households in such communities. The 13th chapter by Evans Osabuohien, Ciliaka Gitau, Uchnna Efobi, and Michael Bruentrup provides empirical evidence on the factors that account for the variations of land deals across communities in the East African Community (EAC) bloc based on the case of Uganda. It also explores and details how the conclusion of land deals can have implications as regards the improvement or deterioration on the quality and services relating to education, road, water, and health facilities in the host communities in comparison with communities without such land deals. The following chapter by Ben Aigbokhan and Kehinde Ola explicates the impact of FLA on livelihood in Nigerian communities. Based on a typical case of FLA that has existed for over 20 years in Edo State,

Nigeria, the authors infer that the existence of the company (Presco Industries) in the communities has not impacted positively and significantly on the livelihood; thus, they suggest the need to incorporate the economic sustenance of the host communities in large-scale agricultural ventures during the process of negotiating land deals.

Similarly, John Gasu and Gideon Agleby in Chapter 15 investigate how communal lands tenureship security works and relate to the livelihood choices in Ghana. From the experience in northern Ghana, where there is interest in biofuel feed-stocks, the authors observe that the vulnerability of traditional leaders, resulting from weak institutional capacity and incidence of poverty, expose them to enter into agreements that they do not understand and that such agreements have huge social and economic burdens on the livelihood of the people. Chapter 16 by Felicia Olokoyo, Tayo George, Uchenna Efobi, and Ibukun Beecroft examine the level to which land deals by domestic buyers affect sustainable income using the case of a rural community in Nigeria. The interplay between these land deals and household characteristics, such as education, age, and in particular, income, are addressed by the authors.

Section 5: Land Reforms, Legal Framework, and Agricultural Transformation

This section centers on the issues relating to land reforms, legal framework, and the agrarian transformation that could be associated with large-scale land acquisitions. Taking a rather radical approach, Francis Matambirofa in the 17th chapter engages the readers on the Zimbabwean Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) that resulted in social, economic, and political tensions in the country. He goes on to argue that FTLRP was not land reform in the true sense of it but that the economic and political crisis that ensued emanated from self-seeking interests of the government of the day to retain political power at the sacrificial altar of the national economy. In Chapter 18, David Omole and Julius Ndambuki bring water resources to the narratives of land administration in Nigeria and document why the popular Land Use Act has not achieved the anticipated aims. They articulate the reasons why the numerous laws and institutions relating to the water sector in Nigeria have not been able to achieve national water demand despite huge water resources and then suggest the need for improvements in the administration of both land and water resources.

From a legal perspective, Godfrey Massay in the 19th chapter examines the lauded Tanzanian Land Laws of 1999 and observes some weaknesses that hampered the effective implementation of the said laws, despite the promise to decentralize land administration and protect customary tenure. The author calls for the need to have legislative amendments and change in practice as the current standards used in compensating landholders are scrawny and ambiguous. Chapter 20 by Itai Manyanhaike investigates the Zimbabwean land reform and relates it to tobacco production and wood resources from the angle of political ecology theory. He reveals that irrespective of the environmental agencies and departments in Zimbabwe the use of wood in the treatment of tobacco has persisted, which portends a long-term threat to ecological sustainability. The very last chapter by Abiodun Obayelu analyses the transformation (subsistence to commercial) of the agricultural sector in Nigeria as well as the effects of FLAs on small-scale farmers. The author shows that large-scale land acquisitions have in most cases been associated with conflicts between the land-owners and investors; hence, the author suggests the need for strong collective actions among the displaced land owners, government, and investors in order to effectively transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture.

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