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Introduction — The Contexts & Consequences of Africa's Land Rush

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Africa is at the centre of a 'global land grab'. This is what critics have named the rapid growth in land-based investments or land deals since 2007, a phenomenon unmatched since colonial times. By some estimates, 70 per cent of the land transacted in large-scale transnational deals in recent years has been in Africa, often considered the world's last reserve of unused and under-utilised fertile and irrigable farmland (Deininger et al. 2011; World Bank 2009). It is this potential that has lured investors motivated by projections of rising food prices, by growing demand for 'green' energy, and by the allure of cheap land and water rights. But governments have often allocated to investors land that is occupied, used, or claimed through custom by local people, resulting in disrupted livelihoods and even conflict.

The case studies presented in this book depict the striking diversity of such deals: white Zimbabwean farmers in northern Nigeria, Dutch and American joint ventures in Ghana, an Indian agricultural company in Ethiopia's hinterland, European investors in Kenya's drylands and a Canadian biofuel company on its coast, South African sugar agribusiness in Tanzania's southern growth corridor, in Malawi's 'Greenbelt' and in southern Mozambique, and white South African farmers venturing on to former state farms in Congo. In all cases, acquiring land is intimately linked to gaining access to water: land and water 'grabbing' are thus inseparable (Mehta et al. 2012; Woodhouse 2012).

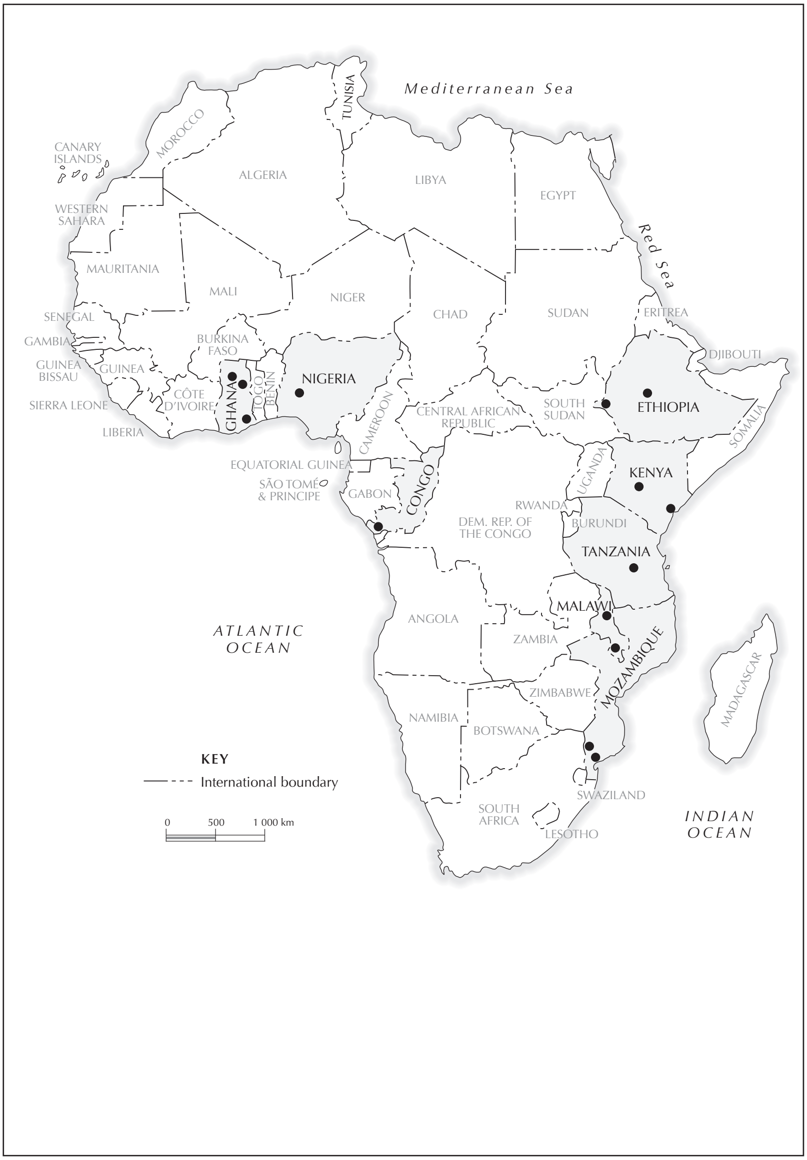
The book explores the investors and their interests, the processes through which these land deals were concluded, and analyses their outcomes for changing agrarian structure, rural livelihoods and food security. Analysis of emerging patterns of social differentiation focuses attention on who wins, who loses out, and what new dynamics of accumulation and marginalisation result, both within directly affected communities and the broader society. The case studies also investigate the political and policy narratives through which these deals are justified and understood, the contested views of land and property that underpin them, and the degree to which new agrarian struggles are emerging in response.

Table 1.1 Land deal case studies

	Nigeria	Ghana	Ghana	Ghana	Ethiopia (Oromiya)	Ethiopia (Gambela)	Kenya (Laikipia)	Kenya (Tana Delta)	Tanzania	Malawi	Mozambique (Maragra)	Mozambique (Massingir)	Congo
Location and ownership	New Nigeria Farms, Zimbabwe/ South Africa	Integrated Tamale Fruit Company, Dutch & Ghanaian	Solar Harvest Limited, Norway	Prairie Rice Company, USA & Government of Ghana	Karuturi, India	Karuturi, India	Private owners, multinational companies	TARDA, Mumias Sugar, Kenya, Canada	Kilombero Sugar Company, Illovo, South Africa	Illovo, South Africa	Illovo, South Africa	TSB, South Africa and Mozambican investors	Congo Agriculture, Agri-SA, South Africa
Business model and labour regime	Family-run, large-scale farms, Seasonal employment peak of 3000, mostly women	Nucleus farm, with outgrower scheme	Plantation	Plantation, with processing plant and plans for outgrowers	Plantation; 200-300 part-time workers 75% women. 50 permanent staff, 22 expatriates	Plantation; 313 permanent and 735 casual workers, mostly men	Large-scale farms and ranches, run by families and companies	Estate, possible outgrowers. Projection of 20,000 jobs, currently none	Estate and outgrowers	Estate	Estate employing 4,857 workers, plus 1,625 outgrowers	Estate. Projection of 7,000 permanent workers and up to 45,000 jobs in total	Family-run, large-scale farms. 100 male casual employees during start-up
Size	13,000ha, in 1,000ha	552ha	13,800ha	1,250ha acquired; further 6,000ha possible	11,700ha	100,000ha (additional 100,000 ha possible)	Laikipia county is 9,462 square km	40,000ha; 16,000ha additional proposed, plus 4000 ha outgrowers	8,022ha (2 estates); outgrowers on 12,000ha	19,800ha (13,800ha at Nchalo and 6,000ha at Dwangwa)	6,500ha	31,000ha	80,000ha; possibly up to 200,000ha in future
Terms and investment	25 year lease (renewable); no rental; land set aside and compensation paid. State government loans offered	99 year lease; one-off payment. US$1m initial investment	25 year lease (renewable); land rental. US$2m initial investment	50 year lease, but no documentation; one-off payment held. US$2.25m initial investment	45 year lease; rental	50 year lease; rental	99 year lease; rental paid to government	45 year lease; payment to government. US$332.4m total investments	99 year lease; fees paid to ministry	99 year lease; compensation to villagers	50 year lease; annual fee	50 year lease; annual fee. US$740m total investment	30 years (renewable); annual rental to government

Table 1.1 cont.

	Nigeria	Ghana	Ghana	Ghana	Ethiopia (Oromiya)	Ethiopia (Gambela)	Kenya (Laikipia)	Kenya (Tana Delta)	Tanzania	Malawi	Mozambique (Maragra)	Mozambique (Massingir)	Congo
Prior tenure regime and land allocation authority	Customary land tenure. Kwara State Government under Land Use Decree	Customary land tenure. Yende chief	Customary land tenure. Tijo chief	Customary land tenure with individual usufructory rights. Government land, state land authority	Customary land tenure under Oromiya Regional State	Customary land tenure, under Itang district, and Federal Government of Ethiopia	Customary tenure. Government of Kenya (GoK)	Customary land tenure on Trust land, and state land. GoK Land Commission for title deeds.	Core state farm, later privatised, plus customary land. GoT Commissioner of Land, and village assembly	Customary land tenure. Government of Malawi	Customary land tenure; estate holds DUAT. Government of Mozambique	Unregistered and registered community DUATs. Government of Mozambique	State land, some occupied. Government, Ministry of Lands
Numbers displaced and affected	No settlements displaced, but 33 villages / farming settlements affected through lost land	15 households displaced; several villages affected	35 households displaced; several villages affected	Several small villages affected	No displacement; 3,317 households in five kebeles affected	No displacement; 1,239 households in five kebeles affected	Pastoralists displaced	Potential displacement of 25,000 people in 32 villages, but investor estimates 14 families	No displacement, several villages affected	Over 500 households displaced	Several families who had re-occupied the unused estate land after the war were evicted after Illovo's acquisition of the land	Displacements unknown; 13 villages affected	Several families displaced; four villages affected
Post investment land use, and prior use	Dairy and cassava, replacing bush fallow, mixed cropping and pastoralism	Mango, replacing bush fallow, mixed cropping	Biofuel then maize, replacing mixed cropping, fishing	Rice, replacing livestock production, and teff/ niger seed production	Planned for palm oil but currently maize, replacing mixed crop-livestock farming system	Maize, sugarcane, palm oil, replacing mixed farming system	Game ranching, tourism, replacing pastoralism	Sugarcane and some maize, replacing crop production (Pokomo), pastoralism (Orma/ Wardei)	Sugarcane and food crops on outgrowers' farms, replacing rice, maize and millet	Sugarcane and maize, replacing mixed crop-livestock farming system	Sugarcane, replacing mixed farming	Sugarcane planned, but no investment yet, would replace mixed farming	Maize and soyabean, replacing mixed farming
Water access	Close to River Niger, but no irrigation infrastructure. Rainfall, 1000-1500 mm/yr	Close to the White Volta River	Rainfed agriculture – no potential for irrigation as it is far from rivers	Volta River close but agriculture is largely rain-fed; poor bimodal rainfall	Adjacent to Akobo River and near Ghibe River. Some irrigation; rainfall 1400 mm/yr	Near to Baro River. Irrigation of cane. Rainfall 1200 mm/yr	Limited water sources. Dryland area: 500-900 mm/yr	Tana River for irrigation. Some pans and boreholes	Ruaha Mkuu River part of Rufiji River basin. Irrigation and rainfed (1200-1600 mm/year rainfall)	Lake Malawi, Rainfall 770 mm/yr	Nkomati River for irrigation. Low rainfall (500mm/ year)	Olifamts River and dam	Small dams, old boreholes and some streams. Rainfall, 1500 mm/ yr



Map 1.1 Africa, showing the case study sites

While dramatic changes in landholding and land use are occurring, these case studies from West, East and Southern Africa suggest that some of the dynamics are not entirely new, but resonate with and even resurrect forms of production associated with colonial estates in the first half of the twentieth century and state farms in the early independence era. Complex directions of change are evident, with diverse implications for agrarian transitions (cf. Moyo et al. 2013; Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009; Bernstein 2004; Byres 1991). As the chapters show, the patterns of change are varied, suggesting no simple resolution of the agrarian question, but a need to look in depth at both contexts and consequences. The land investments too have diverse implications for poverty and inequality in rural societies through the concentration of landholdings, growth of wage labour, new classes of accumulating elites, and rising landlessness.

The methods and logic of our investigations over several years starting from 2010 were shaped by a belief that to understand the textured variations in what is often contracted into the term 'land grab', multi-scalar research is needed. We therefore have conducted detailed local case studies, animated by local farmers, government agents and investors as the main protagonists. The case studies are embedded within specific localities, themselves shaped by sectoral, class, gender, race and ethnic dynamics, as well as regional contexts and national determinations (cf. Moyo et al. 2012). Table 1.1 offers a brief overview of the thirteen case studies we investigated across eight countries, in relation to a number of criteria.

The chapters pick apart the roles played by various interest groups, facilitators and intermediaries: local chiefs, district commissioners, agriculture ministries, national investment authorities and top-level government officials. In turn, our focus on the local dynamics of change can only be understood within the context of national and regional political economies, shaped by national, regional and wider geopolitical interests. It is these wider 'assemblages', beyond the 'grab', that become important in understanding the process, which is why one must go beyond a simple territorial focus (Sassen 2013). This recent phase of land enclosure and appropriation also has to be understood in historical context, with precedents being seen in earlier periods, notably the restructuring of economies and power through neoliberal structural adjustment, and the emergence of political and business elites (Moyo 2008; Amanor 2005, 2012), alongside long-term patterns of regional marginalisation and underdevelopment (cf. Amin 1972).

Africa's long-standing need for investment

Several factors have driven recent large-scale transnational land deals. The literature is replete with discussions of these, most notably the increasing financialisation of capital and its need for speculative acquisitions (Fairbairn 2014), combined with the global food, energy and financial crises of 2007 and 2008 (Cotula et al. 2014; Zoomers and Kaag 2014; Arezki et al. 2011; Cotula 2013; Anseeuw et al. 2012; White et al. 2012; Hall 2011; Borras et al. 2010; Cotula et al. 2009; among many others). Tied as it is to global processes of change in food, fuel and financial systems, the recent rush for land in Africa should be understood in a global, as well as an historical context. While Africa is often singled out as being at the centre of this global dynamic, data sources may be subject to various selection biases including better media attention in Africa, with the result that the extent to which this is a specifically African phenomenon may have been over-stated (Oya 2013b). While much commentary focuses on the scale and location of land grabs, in this book we focus rather on the underlying processes of land and agricultural commercialisation under way and their implications for livelihoods and agrarian systems through an in-depth case study approach.

Several important questions arise. In what directions is agriculture being commercialised? What institutional arrangements are becoming dominant? Are there good business models that could address some of the observed problems of large-scale land acquisitions? What roles are states playing? What is the significance of land becoming concentrated in the hands of transnational corporations and local capitalist classes? What new inclusions, exclusions and social differentiations are being created within countries experiencing land concentration? It is these questions that have animated our research, along with attention to the interests and considerations within Africa itself that are shaping governments' and citizens' responses to the land rush.

The long-term crisis in African agriculture and the failure of agrarian transitions have fuelled food insecurity, a large food import bill, rampant rural-urban migration and unemployment. The decline in state revenues has resulted in basic rural infrastructure being neglected, and in several countries state farms, irrigation systems and road networks are in varying states of disrepair. These have been serious long-standing concerns, exacerbated by the ravages of structural adjustment. In this context, many African states have welcomed investors and given, on preferential terms and sometimes for free, vast tracts of land to foreign governments, corporations and individuals. The idea that foreign direct investment in large-scale commercial agriculture would result in technology transfer – which benefits small farmers, provides much-needed food for local markets, creates decent employment for the youth, earns foreign exchange and forms the basis of industrialisation – has proven irresistible. Many governments have argued that they have large areas of empty, marginal, uncultivated or inefficiently-used lands that can be used more profitably for commercial agriculture (Nalepa and Bauer 2012). Such territories include customary lands as well as 'state' land in the form of abandoned, though sometimes occupied, state farms. Justifications for land acquisitions are thus frequently framed by narratives of scarcity and abundance at both local and global scales (Scoones et al. 2014).

African governments have, since the structural adjustment era from the early 1980s, adopted a range of investment, agricultural and land policies to create favourable conditions for the importation of private capital to drive agrarian transformation. For instance, policy and strategy documents such as Kenya's Vision 2030, Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, Ghana's Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy, Ethiopia's Agriculture Development Led Industrialisation and Nigeria's Kwara State Back to the Land Programme have been put in place. There have also been major land reforms since the 1990s to promote land markets, titling and registration in several African countries, some of which are discussed in the case studies we present (such as Ghana, Tanzania and Ethiopia). Specific measures and institutional reforms such as federal land banks have sought to identify land that can be leased for foreign direct investment in Ethiopia (see Chapter 4), and investment promotion centres and special land courts have been established to improve the efficiency of administrative and legal processes in Ghana (see Chapter 3). These developments marked a shift in focus from smallholder agriculture to medium- and large-scale agriculture (such as in Tanzania and Mozambique – see Chapters 7 and 9) or the refinement of long-standing policies privileging large-scale agriculture (such as in Kenya – see Chapters 5 and 6).

The drive for foreign direct investment in agriculture has in some cases been related to sub-regional priorities, an example being the emergence of sugar as one of the most significant commodities in Southern Africa, where the crop is having profound economic, environmental, political and social effects (Chapters 7, 8 and 9). Tanzania's bid to benefit from this through sugar estates and outgrower schemes echoes and builds on South African agribusiness efforts to establish sugar plantations in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. While governments may have national goals in mind, the regional context matters – not least to the investors who are seeking to disperse risk by distributing their operations across multiple countries in order to take advantage of different conditions conducive to profitable production.

The dynamics of enclosure and agricultural commercialisation

The chapters in this book seek to examine the extent to which large-scale commercial agriculture and its land acquisitions have benefited local communities and their own farming – whether in the form of technology transfer, employment, food security, new opportunities for smallholders or the transformation of rural economies. This builds on an increasingly influential literature that is raising questions about the strategy of agricultural commercialisation as it unfolds through extensive land acquisitions and enclosures in Africa (Ansoms and Hilhorst 2014;

Cotula 2013; Peters 2013; Wolford et al. 2013; Anseeuw et al. 2012; White et al. 2012).

Several chapters also seek to analyse the inter-linkages of land, state and politics through a *longue durée* approach, demonstrating that it is not only proximate developmental considerations that are driving the pace of land commercialisation and concentration in Africa, but rather that the current land rush is the latest instalment, distinct without being unique, in a long history of enclosures, acquisitions and dispossessions (Alden Wily 2012). Both past and contemporary enclosures have provoked struggles over resources by people who currently control political, social and economic power at national level, and their counterparts in the countryside (see Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 10).

To what degree are experiences of land investments and agricultural commercialisation similar across the continent? Our studies suggest that, despite enormous differences in systems of land holdings, levels of land concentration, contributions of agriculture to employment and to gross domestic product and levels of food imports, there are remarkable similarities in experiences of agricultural commercialisation across African countries. The implications for the direction of rural change are strikingly similar. In all our case studies, even where the land acquired is not community land or held under customary tenure, the process is towards privatisation of land rights, commodification of land and natural resources and towards social differentiation. Almost all investments have faltered, with some halting entirely while others have restrategised, regrouped and continued on a new path (see Chapters 2 and 10 in particular). The best laid plans have come apart, and some of the plans were not that robust in the first place.

There is an emerging consensus on the need to define more rigorously what is meant by land grabbing, and to be careful when interpreting data on land investments (Oya 2013b; Scoones et al. 2013; Anseeuw et al. 2012). This should not be restricted only to large-scale acquisitions, or to transnational deals. Several of our chapters shed light on a range of processes of land concentration occurring in rural localities across Africa, into which larger and transnational deals are inserted and which compound land scarcities and land conflicts. In the study of the Laikipia area of Kenya, where much of the concentration is driven by local elites, but exacerbated by the growth of foreign-owned ranching, four different processes are identified: the consolidation of smallholder farms for sale; the selling off of sections within large ranches; the consolidation of smaller ranches and the conversion of farms for horticulture. Each of these processes has particular implications for local farmers and pastoralists, but their cumulative effects are the observed changes in land ownership and land use patterns, and an overall intensification of land concentration (see Chapter 5).

Various chapters also speak to the debate about business or institutional models of land acquisitions, particularly the suggestion that contract farming or nucleus outgrowing models are to be preferred over large plantations, as a 'win-win' solution that could provide the missing link between smallholders and agribusiness investors (Cotula et al. 2009; von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009; World Bank 2008). Three chapters broach this issue directly (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9), while others compare outgrowing with other models of commercialisation (see Chapter 3). This is clearly an issue in need of more consideration in future studies of agricultural commercialisation.

Most of the chapters are about land transactions that are mature enough for discussion of their impacts. However, a few chapters are devoted to planned acquisitions, deals in progress and acquired lands not yet in use, but enclosed or not yet enclosed (see Chapter 6); or deals which have collapsed or been restructured or taken over by new companies (see Chapters 3 and 10). As well as documenting the impacts of large-scale land acquisition, our work also draws attention to the real impacts of deals that do *not* happen: those where production gets under way and soon stops, those where only a small fraction of the land acquired is ever used and those where land is acquired but investors never take occupation of it. In each case, enormous impacts and losses might be felt by the 'host' communities. As the experiences in Kenya's Tana Delta show, what might be worse than a land grab to enable commercial farming is a land grab in which land is enclosed for investments that fail to materialise (see Chapter 6). While planned, new and failed deals do not yield much detail on the question of investment impact, they are important for mapping developing processes, the key actors and their positioning, resistance and other responses to deals.

While the international response to 'land grabs' has taken the form of varied attempts to regulate the processes through which they take place (Margulis et al. 2013), we focus not only on processes but also, more substantively, on the terms of the deals, their early outcomes and the processes of social change that they instigate. We draw a distinction between corporate social responsibility initiatives for self-regulation by corporate investors and multilateral agreements such as the Food and Agriculture Organization's Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (FAO VGs). While the former entail unaccountable forms of self-regulation by corporate investors, the latter were negotiated by states with extensive civil society participation. The former are less likely to find purchase due to a lack of enforcement mechanisms, while the latter, 'anchored in existing international human rights obligations' (Seufert 2013) constitute a new tool in struggles by rural social movements – even though they are 'voluntary' (McKeon 2013). Civil society perspectives are divided between those seeing 'transparency' and governance reforms as having some merit, while others emphasise the danger of these deflecting from the direction of agrarian change being promoted. As the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter (2011), observed, governance frameworks that aim to make large-scale private investment in agriculture more responsible can be seen as a manifesto to dispossess the global peasantry 'responsibly'.

Whatever the governance frameworks, the outcomes of 'land grabs' are as diverse as the contexts into which they are inserted. We highlight how land deals articulate with pre-existing politics, populations and economies, rather than presuming that they involve the creation of entirely new production systems in an environment that is economically and politically inert. Thus the chapters that follow are all concerned with explaining the outcomes of large-scale land acquisitions, and how and why they have often received mixed or dismal reviews, setting these insights into local, national and regional contexts. The themes emerging from the chapters include the role of the state; institutional arrangements and changing land relations; livelihood effects and their implications for rural differentiation and class, gender and kinship relations; responses and conflicts arising and, last but not least, implications for agrarian transformation in the long term. These themes are discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

The state as actor and referee in land deals

A recurring theme in our and others' research is the pivotal role of African states in large-scale land transactions and how this is influencing change in local agrarian systems. Debates about land grabs and land deals inherently involve profound questions about state authority and governance (Wolford et al. 2013). And as Boone (2014) observes, property relations are not only acted on by states, but property relations are constitutive of politics and state authority at local and national levels. Regimes in Africa involved in land deals differ in their antecedents, democratic credentials, strategies for attracting foreign direct investment and the level of land concentration they preside over. Yet these post-colonial states display some common characteristics in how they have managed foreign direct investment and what they are prepared to do to keep investors coming; how they exercise their powers of eminent domain in situations of legal pluralism, institutional weaknesses and capacities, and their close relationships with particular interest groups in society.

While foreign investors may be seen to be 'grabbing' African land, the growth of domestic capital means that local elites, too, are acquiring land with state support for a variety of purposes. This can be understood in terms of state-capital alliances (Harvey 2003). Our cases show that the national state, while often pivotal in conceding to deals, is joined by a spectrum of local state authorities, national and local business elites – what Peters (2013: 537) terms the 'accelerating process of appropriation by national agents'. Thus both 'state' and 'capital' are heterogeneous and differently situated in relation to processes of enclosure, commercialisation and accumulation. There has been in many cases a convergence of externallyand locally-led commercialisation, with the latter ranging from micro-level 'bottom-up' land grabs within communities to national business interests, often in partnership with the state (Wolford et al. 2013). Various chapters in this book show that strong support from state officials and traditional leaders for large-scale commercial farming represents another instalment of the elite consensus to privatise communal and state property for its own benefit, creating new struggles over scarce resources, inclusions and exclusions and changes in class, gender and kinship relations (see Chapters 3 and 5; also see Doss et al. 2014; Englert and Daley 2008; Tsikata and Yaro 2014; Verma 2014).

Not all the states discussed in this book were champions of free land markets. Most had nationalised all land after independence, with some reintroducing private forms of title or other formalised land rights in the 1980s and 1990s. At the very least, there have been contestations about whether state or private ownership is the better approach to land management. Mozambique, for example, is widely held to have the most progressive land law in Africa, recognising customary and informal tenure as constituting a property right, whether registered or not, and yet it promotes large-scale land investments that involve land enclosure and commodification (see Chapter 9). The Ethiopian government has been concerned that encouraging the flourishing of land markets would result in land concentration through the dispossession of poor farmers (see Chapter 4). Other states have evidently been less ambivalent about creating land markets and encouraging private ownership, and have actively pursued these through their land reform programmes.

Some regimes (Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania) actively sought foreign direct investment, offering land, bank loans, infrastructural support and favourable terms of investment (see Chapters 2, 4, 7 and 10). Specific strategies include targeting particular groups of farmers from other African countries (Zimbabwean farmers in Nigeria and South African farmers in the Congo) or targeting capitalists from 'emerging' economies (such as Indian and Middle Eastern businesses in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia) (see Chapters 2, 4, 6 and 10). Strategies for promoting foreign direct investment include so-called 'public-private partnerships', centred on local capitalists and states elites, while making some provision for the inclusion of local communities, but on vastly different terms from the foreign investors (see Chapters 2, 6 and 7).

Although national sovereignty has been invoked by governments to defend their plans to transform agriculture and protect food security, our studies add to the evidence that state sovereignty is regularly undermined by the demands of commercial agriculture projects and the conditions they have secured in contracts. Demands for policy reforms on genetically modified organisms to accommodate commercial farmers; demands for changes in investment laws to protect the repatriation of profits and demands for special tax status are all examples of this challenge to state sovereignty (see Chapters 2 and 10).

What if these commercial deals had not emerged, or if alternative investments had focused on existing farmers instead? Several authors have posed the counterfactual question and explored the outcomes of similar investments in Nigeria or Ethiopia; for instance, those that were directed at smallholders (see Chapters 2 and 4), or how commercial agriculture would fare without the strong state support afforded to it, which smallholders do not receive in any consistent fashion. In this context of chronic under-investment in farming, state officials in Ethiopia either ignored or intimidated local communities into submitting to terms unfavourable to them (see Chapter 4) and, in Tanzania and Kenya, consistently took sides with foreign investors in disputes with local communities (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

State participation in land transactions has been further complicated by federalism and the decentralisation of land administration systems. In some countries, arrangements have been made to devolve certain powers from the federal to the state or provincial level. Similar processes of power devolution have involved decentralised authorities and traditional leaders. For example, in Nigeria and Ethiopia, the power of state governments to shape land acquisitions and land policy is under constant negotiation. The federal state in Ethiopia has stronger control over land transactions than the regional states (see Chapter 4), while in Nigeria, federal laws enabled the governor of Kwara State to commandeer large tracts of land already used by citizens, for the use of Zimbabwean farmers (see Chapter 2). In Kenya, the devolution of power and financial resources to counties produced an important shift in power to the local level, enabling county authorities to negotiate with investors (see Chapters 5 and 6). Within federal systems, the division of landholding power between federal and state authorities has created ambiguities about who has the power to deal with which aspects of land management. These shifts in power and control have ambiguous implications for local people and their land rights. While the principle of subsidiarity might suggest that these levels are closer to people and therefore their influence, it is also at the local level that resource contests between the local elite and small farmers are most intense. Do more centralised or decentralised systems enable greater accountability of states to existing landholders? Our studies point in different directions on this question.

Institutional weaknesses also account for some of the confusion about powers and responsibilities and the failure of state institutions to regulate land deals effectively. This is evident in cases where land has been nationalised, implying a strong state with clarity about its land interests, but state ownership of land has not extinguished the claims of those who live on and work the land. In Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Congo and Nigeria, the claims of land users, who depend on the land for growing food and grazing animals, have been mishandled by state officials under the guise of state ownership. In many cases, land users are considered squatters and are either denied compensation for their losses or have claims ignored on the grounds that they lack titles (see Chapters 4, 6 and 9). In other situations, there is confusion (and buck-passing) over who should pay them compensation: the state or investors (see Chapter 10). In several of our cases, large tracts of land have been allocated in ways which flouted laid-down procedures for land alienation (see Chapters 2 and 4). The situation in systems dominated by customary law and communal lands is not much better, as land users have been dispossessed by traditional rulers, with the state acting as a referee, and often the same people working within the state also hold traditional office or have strong connections within these structures (see Chapters 3 and 6).

The establishment of legal modalities for large-scale acquisitions appears to lag behind policies and other measures. The land tenure reforms of the 1990s did not anticipate the acquisition of large areas of land or make specific provisions to regulate this. Thus questions about the nature of customary land interests – who has the power to negotiate land deals and to grant title; who should be paid for ownership and compensated for the loss of land use; what amounts would constitute reasonable payments for land and what length of lease would be uniformly given – are all left to the negotiators of deals to address on a case-by-case basis. The result has been wide divergences in the deals even within any one country (see Chapter 3). An outcome of these large land investments is that unregistered customary land interests are in a state of flux and insecurity, with enduring questions about whether they can be recognised as property rights (Peters 2013). Processes of privatisation and individualisation of such interests are in full gear, and the outcomes nearly always undermine the tenure security of smallholders. On the other hand, we see a strengthening of the power of traditional land authorities as landowners rather than trustees for people who occupy and use the land through custom.

One outcome of the renewed intensity of land acquisitions is that many transactions are not recorded in official statistics. In the case of Kenya, which has had a long tradition of land registration, one study found that, although several large ranches have been consolidated and fenced as single units, this is not reflected in the database of the Ministry of Local Government. While this may be a deliberate strategy by land owners to enable them to pay lower property rates, it keeps the state out of new land transactions, with the result that the extent of land concentration is not known (see Chapter 5).

Land deals are often either done in secret or without consultation of local communities and even, in some cases, local leaders. In the Congo case, opposition Members of Parliament and local councillors were not aware of a significant land deal involving 80,000ha in their constituencies until after it was concluded (see Chapter 10). Some have attributed such ignorance among local actors to the technicality of deals, low levels of literacy and the absence of technical support for land-holding communities (see Chapter 5), while others have attributed this to a lack of transparency, accountability and participation (see Chapters

3, 4 and 10). The failure to involve local communities in negotiations has meant that communities only respond to deals when their effects become real, and the window of opportunity to negotiate terms when transacting community land is long gone.

Livelihood impacts and their implications

The policy turn to large-scale commercial farming is creating conditions that develop or deepen the dualism of agrarian structures. In many respects, the land rush has revived the large- versus small-farm debate, and proponents and critics of land deals rely heavily on old, established discourses to support their arguments (Baglioni and Gibbon 2013). These distinct perspectives shape our understandings of the impacts of Africa's land rush. Oya (2013c) urges those researching land grabs to engage with the long-standing debates in agrarian political economy. Specifically, does the land rush herald the return of the agrarian question of capital, and the potential development of capitalist agriculture at scale in Africa? Or does it foreground the agrarian question of labour, the crisis of rural reproduction and the creation or absorption of 'surplus labour'?

With regard to impacts, Cotula et al. (2014) note the difficulty of assessing socio-economic outcomes in the absence of baseline studies, while Oya (2013c) explores the reasons 'why we do not know very much' about the impacts of the land rush, despite all that has been written about it. Where large plantations are established, Cotula et al. (2014) found in their comparative study that the promised benefits were not realised largely due to the limited number of permanent and even temporary jobs created, and the poor and insecure forms of employment that emerge. Both caution against the unrealistic projections on which land deals are usually premised. In the absence of longitudinal studies to grapple with changes in economies and society over time, and research that expands beyond case studies to demonstrate cumulative macroeconomic effects at national level, methodologies for investigating the impacts and implications of the land rush are constrained. Negative impacts at local level may enable benefits at other levels, although the available data prevent any rigorous assessment as to whether or not this is the case.

Our studies in this book show the lack of a well-defined approach to the smallholder sector, and a lack of measures to promote synergies between the small- and large-scale sectors. This issue is discussed in terms of the livelihood impacts of land transactions, focusing on three aspects: loss of resources; implications for livelihood activities and employment opportunities, and the distribution of social benefits. The studies provide valuable detail on these issues.

Investments have had variable success. For example, in the case of Zimbabwean farmers in Nigeria, efforts at chicken-rearing have been more successful than dairy, which in turn have been better than their efforts to cultivate crops (see Chapter 2). Interestingly, commercial farmers found themselves experiencing challenges similar to those faced by smallholders, though to a lesser degree, including chronic difficulties in securing adequate finance, energy and infrastructure (see Chapter 2). A common finding is that only a fraction of the land that smallholders and pastoralists lose to commercial investment is placed under cultivation, especially in the shorter term (see Chapters 3, 4 and 10). This finding echoes a shocking statistic presented in a study by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization: only 1.7 per cent of land that had been recently acquired through large-scale leasing for agriculture was under production (FAO 2013).

Farmland investments have produced some permanent employment in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique, although not enough jobs have been created directly – in all cases far below initial projections – and the majority of these jobs are casual and seasonal (see Chapters 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9). In general, the pay on offer has been poor, even when compared with similar jobs in the locality (see Chapter 10). In some cases, wages much lower than the local average have been introduced, thus creating employment that captures the most desperate in the area (see Chapter 4) or migrants (see Chapter 3). In some cases, full-time employees have lamented their loss of land to continue to engage in farming activities to supplement their low wages, while those in seasonal employment have noted the incompatibility of their wage work with their own farming activities and therefore food security (see Chapters 7 and 9). Last but not least are the immense challenges for the planning and execution of social and reproductive activities, particularly for migrant workers. This issue is particularly challenging for women who have tended to benefit least from employment opportunities (see Chapters 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10).

Projects have often led to the loss of water, farmlands, rangelands and the commons, which were used by landless people and especially people already marginalised in terms of resource access and resource tenure, such as women, young people and migrants, for farming and harvesting of natural resources (see Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 7). Some of our studies have made efforts to compute these losses through surveys (see Chapters 3 and 4). However, such losses are often incalculable and represent a ratcheting-down of livelihood assets for poor communities. After losing the resources on which they survive, they may simply not be able to recover. This is because livelihood strategies involve multiple activities dependent on social and economic relationships and ecosystems that, once disrupted by land deals, cannot be revived and are seldom if ever adequately compensated for (see Chapter 3).

In the case of contract farmers and outgrowers, several chapters provide a reality check for the generally positive attitude in policy circles toward such arrangements. In Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania, the outgrower model was found to have several weaknesses. These include the rigidities in the terms of contracts which favour companies over outgrowers; lack of transparency in the weighing and measuring of products; the fixing of prices of inputs and products, harvesting delays; broken guarantees of a ready market for products, and the loss of time for growing food. As a result, earnings have been generally disappointing in that they are lower than expected and are often delayed (see Chapters 3, 7 and 9). Even more fundamentally, the outgrower model exposes farmers to the vicissitudes of the global trading system, while tying them to the bottom of the value chain. These findings echo the critical discussions of contract farming in the literature (cf. Smalley 2013; Oya 2013a; Little and Watts 1994). The most successful outgrowers are those who have been able to maintain their own farming activities while participating in the outgrower schemes, but this is only feasible for larger landholders and excludes many smallholders, particularly women.

Failures of expected technology transfers also undermined envisaged livelihood improvements. In the case of the Nupe farmers in Nigeria, local smallholders adopted new crops along with better crop management following the arrival of the Zimbabwean farmers, but the effects on overall production were negligible (see Chapter 2). Local farmers thought real improvements would come if they could also secure credit, tractor hiring services and good prices for their crops. Compounding their frustrations were ongoing contestations around land tenure. When they lost land to the commercial investors, the land set aside for a community-model commercial farm had not been allocated to any local farmer. In the same vein, some pastoralists were learning new techniques from the Zimbabwean dairy farmers and had been rewarded with a steady market for their milk. However, there were contestations around grazing on uncultivated land allocated to commercial farmers, raising questions of the scale of technology transfer and its sustainability. In Tanzania, by contrast, a few farmers acquired title deeds and were putting their individually-owned farms together to form block farms to grow sugar on a larger scale, with the support – including the transfer of technology – of the sugar transnational Illovo. In some cases, they have been able to use these title deeds to secure loans from the bank (see Chapter 7).

These examples notwithstanding, the predominant message across the chapters is the failure of technology transfer, with few positive linkages between large-scale commercial agriculture and smallholder farming or pastoralism. The reasons include the character of the capital-intensive monoculture plantation business model itself, which is a production system incompatible with smallholder farming in that it uses technologies that cannot easily be adopted by local farmers because of costs and differences in the scale of operations. Also, the cash crops that are grown on commercial farms are often different from the staples grown by local farmers. In other cases, investors and locals are in different lines of business that conflict with one another; for example where investors take over land for crop production in areas used by pastoralists (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5). Investors' desire to grow a wide variety of commodities in order to determine what would be most profitable, with little of the infrastructure needed for successful commercial production, means that technology transfer is a secondary consideration (see Chapters 2 and 10). Even outgrowers often do not benefit much from technology transfer, and are not offered access to irrigation and other technologies used in the nucleus farms of investors growing the same crops (see Chapters 3, 7 and 9).

Our studies also expose some of the differences within groups of smallholders who are experiencing land concentration. One of the Kenya studies identifies three groups of smallholders – those who bought and settled on land as a result of land pressure in their regions of origin; those who bought land for speculative purposes and were mostly absent from the locality, and those who bought land to use as collateral to access bank loans (see Chapter 5). These contrasts are important because a process of consolidation of smallholdings is taking place, where land brokers in collaboration with state officials are consolidating small parcels and selling them to foreigners, who only later discover the contested nature of the land they have acquired. The Ghana study found differences between migrants and people living in their natal communities, and a group of medium-scale farmers who commuted from a nearby regional capital to farm who had lost their farmlands to a *Jatropha* plantation.[1] This resulted in losses of employment for women who had previously worked on the farms, who in turn became the main protagonists in protests against the project (see Chapter 3).

Several studies have focused on the situation of pastoralists, highlighting their neglect in agricultural policies that privilege sedentary farming and farmers. Studies from Kenya and Ethiopia found that their already-precarious livelihoods were under severe strain with the consolidation and enclosure of both ranches and smallholder farmlands (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Lands that are common property resources used regularly by pastoralists, or lands they migrate to in times of drought, are no longer readily available. In the cyclical droughts that have followed this recent period of enclosures, pastoralists have suffered heavy losses to their herds. This current instalment in long-term processes of dispossession is reshaping pastoralist livelihoods, entrenching vulnerability with uncertain outcomes in the long term (cf. Catley et al. 2013).

What are the long-term environmental effects of land pressures created by enclosures of community lands? In some situations, pastoralists are engaging in continuous rather than rotational grazing because of constraints on their mobility, or exploiting forests for fuelwood and other resources. In other situations, people have had to migrate to seek new farmlands, pasture and water. The result has been overcrowding, causing

[1] *Jatropha curcas* is a Latin American plant from whose seeds oil can be extracted and refined into bio-diesel.

soil degradation and a loss of biodiversity, making both productive and reproductive activities more difficult. Paradoxically, these degraded areas abut areas of plentiful resources that have been enclosed. This juxtaposition of plenty and scarcity side-by-side is an important factor in the resource conflicts identified in Laikipia in Kenya, for example (see Chapter 5, also cf. Scoones et al. 2013). But in Nigeria, synergies are evident, as the emergence of commercial dairy operations has enabled pastoralists to access new markets (see Chapter 2).

Land acquisitions have complicated effects in sensitive ecosystems that have multiple uses and support diverse and already-fragile livelihoods. The chapter on Kenya's Tana Delta (Chapter 6) explores this in relation to the thousands of hectares of land in this poverty-stricken and conflict-ridden region being leased out to investors for industrial-scale farming, including sugarcane cultivation and biofuel production, as well as for mining. These deals are expected to result in the eviction of thousands of smallholders from their villages. In addition, Orma pastoralists and their hundreds of thousands of cattle will potentially lose critical dry season pastures. Because of land-use competition between farmers and pastoralists, this was already an area of endemic dry season conflict. As the Tana acquisitions are still in progress, their effects are not yet fully felt, but they have already prompted violent protests that have cost lives.

Across the chapters, efforts are made to identify winners and losers in land transactions. In addition to the usual suspects – commercial ranchers, transnational agribusiness, foreign and local elites, politicians and senior civilian and military government officials – a few studies have found that within disadvantaged groups such as pastoralist communities, new elites are emerging as participants in and beneficiaries of large-scale land acquisitions. Often these groups are able to benefit from land acquisitions by controlling local branches of state land institutions, such as the District Land Boards in Kenya (see Chapter 5) or the Regional Land Commissions in Ghana (see Chapter 3), or by taking up the few business opportunities that come with these projects (see Chapter 7).

The burgeoning literature on large-scale land acquisitions has debated whether the nationality of those acquiring large tracts of land is important (cf. White et al. 2012; Zoomers 2010; Cotula et al. 2009). The dominant focus on foreign investors ignores the involvement of local interests in large-scale land acquisitions, an issue addressed in a number of chapters. These show that local interests can counteract the move towards privatisation. For example, the Tana Delta study observes that, while the private ranches owned by foreign investors were enclosed, those that had been acquired by pastoralist elites were not, implying that they could be used by land-hungry pastoralists. Some pastoralist elites worked with the poorer segments of pastoralist society to organise themselves to acquire group ranches (see Chapter 6). This difference in access to privatised grazing land could provide a safety valve in times of drought and crisis, and could be important for avoiding land-use conflicts in the future. In other cases, commercial farming by local elites has not been so land-intensive and has not created the kinds of tensions caused by larger foreign acquisitions (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5). Apart from smaller landholdings, where there are gradual endogenous processes of commercialisation there may be clearer opportunities for technology transfer and synergies with smallholder farming than in big transnational investments.

While these instances may suggest that foreign investors and their local commercial farming counterparts have contrasting sensibilities and behave differently, not all local acquisitions are in this cooperative tradition. Further, local elites and state officials have in some instances worked closely with foreign interests, pursuing the same purposes.

The dispossession and disruption of the lives of local communities arises in part because, in the rush to promote agribusiness, not enough policy and political support has been given to how countries might benefit from more of the value chain of the various commodities being promoted. In Tanzania, the promotion of sugar farming has not included local enterprises in sugar processing and distribution (see Chapter 7). In the same vein, the land rush has seen little being done to promote the processing of horticultural products, refining of biofuels and value addition to other commodities that have seen a boom in this period. This raises the spectre of the trajectory of commercialisation currently under way replicating the commodity dependence of many African states evident from colonial times through independence, rather than a route to capturing more of the gains across more lucrative value chains. Whether or not this will turn out to be the case depends on the decisiveness among policy makers in each country to leverage investment for the greater good.

Responses, resistance and land-related conflicts

Communities have responded to changes brought about by the expansion of large-scale commercial farming in different ways. Responses have varied from support to outright hostility and resistance. In some cases, initial support for investment and the promise of development has turned to hostility in the face of disappointments. Within communities, certain groups have found new opportunities for employment or for enterprises linked to new commercial operations. But across our studies, many have been locked out of these new opportunities, while also shouldering the costs of losing land, water and common property resources. This explains the widespread resort to various acts of resistance including theft, destruction and acts of vandalism. How communities respond depends on a number of factors: the pre-existing tenure system and local land interests; the intensity of existing land-use conflicts; the range and viability of alternative lands and economic activities; the transparency and smoothness of land acquisitions; what promises are made; the landholding practices and business models of investors; the extent of new livelihood opportunities created and how broadly these are shared, and state and investor attitudes and responses to community concerns.

Responses to new investments may be seen as a continuum, ranging from support to extreme hostility (Borras and Franco 2013). Many people who once welcomed a new investment later changed their minds as events unfolded. Investors, too, have in several instances had their initial optimism dashed by the complexities of conducting commercial operations, leading in some cases to the contraction of initial plans to less ambitious scales or methods of production (Hammar 2010). The Congo study is a case in point. Given the staggeringly high levels of food importation (95 per cent), the enthusiasm for the South African commercial farming interests on the part of government officials is to be expected. This does not preclude tensions in the future, given the differing expectations among parties and the evident collapse of much of the investment (see Chapter 10). The situation in Nigeria unfolded in a similar manner, with high expectations on all sides, which were soon tempered by realities on the ground (see Chapter 2).

Resistance has taken many forms. In Ethiopia, mutual aid groups were organised to send representatives to the President of the Regional State, and farmers signed petitions to the District Assembly. There have also been thefts, abductions and death threats directed at foreign employees of investing companies. That it has not been possible to prosecute anyone for these acts is an indication of the strength of community feeling and also distrust of the state (see Chapter 4). In Kenya, resistance to the loss of pastoral grazing lands has been quite comprehensive, involving court cases, demonstrations, illegal night grazing, open resistance and violence resulting in the loss of life and property. Here, the situation has been compounded by drought and the enclosure of lands that were used as emergency grazing grounds. The number of violent episodes in Laikipia is significant, with four private ranch invasions occurring between 2002 and 2009 (see Chapter 5). This conflict, which is not between land uses, but rather between ownership regimes, signals the deep divisions that are being created through processes of land and agricultural commercialisation.

The parties to conflicts arising from large-scale land acquisitions are quite well identified in the literature. Studies have identified conflicts between the state and local communities; between new land holders and local communities; between different groups within local communities; between local leaders and community members, and between communities – with all of these conflicts relating to losses, gains and the sharing of opportunities (Ansoms and Hilhorst 2014; Wolford et al. 2013; Cotula et al. 2009). The case studies in this book provide further insights into the complicated nature of these conflicts and the shifts in their contours over time. In Kenya, alliances within communities to respond to the loss of land were altered when the state and the political elite, using ethnicity to prosecute a national election dispute, played off pastoralists against smallholder farmers with devastating effects (see Chapters 5 and 6). Several of the studies point to how these current tensions around land acquisitions and the land scarcities they engender are creating conditions that could produce further tensions and violence in the future (see Chapter 2).

State strategies for managing complaints, violence and other forms of resistance have included ignoring claims and petitions by asserting the state ownership of land; the siting of police posts in the area; the creation of buffer zones around villages to avoid community land losses; agreements to allow communities to use portions of acquired land both for farming and for harvesting of natural resources until commercial farmers are ready to cultivate, and compensation and financial support for livelihood activities (see Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6). In other cases, community members have been detained and threatened by a coercive state apparatus. While some of these strategies have been effective, others have not succeeded in stemming resistance. In most cases, conflict is not directed at the companies themselves, but at state authorities or local elites, although the case of Illovo in Malawi is an exception (see Chapter 8).

Rural development and agrarian transformation

What are the new trajectories of agrarian transformation being established through large-scale land acquisitions and what does this mean for rural development? Processes of commercialisation arising from land-based investments, often coupled with changing market conditions for local producers, have varied pace and outcomes. But the direction of change is clear: towards commercial production by medium- to large-scale local farmers alongside larger estates, now owned not by colonial powers but by foreign companies or by multinational companies, often in partnership with domestic capital. As with previous moments of enclosure and commercialisation, Africa's recent land rush is already sparking resistance and counter-movements.

Our chapters show that activities related to commercial agriculture have in several instances created new employment and demand for services, improvements in infrastructure, improved incomes and new patterns of consumption, particularly in nearby urban areas where processing activities and sales take place. We have identified several new boom towns that have emerged as a result (see Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 9). While these improvements were welcomed in these locales, they were not necessarily the same people or areas that had suffered the biggest losses of land. Expanded economic opportunities were often not significant enough for setting in motion processes of rural development.

The introduction of large-scale commercial farming in regions where smallholder family farming predominates has the potential to create a dualist agrarian structure (see Chapters 2 and 10). However, commercial farming is still more of a small fragile enclave in the smallholder-dominated system than a fully-fledged system in its own right in most countries. One dimension of commercialisation initiatives that has not made much headway in the cases we studied is the creation of a successor generation of small- and medium-scale commercial farmers. This raises questions of whether accumulating farmers will be able to transfer their enterprises to the next generation – rather than lose these to big corporate investors – and what the new young farmers will need in order to flourish and to adapt to changing circumstances.

A central message of the book therefore is that the challenges facing commercial farmers and agribusinesses that have acquired large areas of land are dimming the vision of large-scale commercial farming as the best approach to agrarian transformation. At the same time, the political and policy narratives about pro-poor development and slogans about agriculture as a priority notwithstanding, smallholder farmers continue to face enormous challenges to their survival, while the rapid pace of land concentration is uncovering and reinforcing the social differentiation often masked by kinship systems in rural Africa (Peters 2013). The implications are acute for young people and their transition either into family farming or out of agriculture entirely, and therefore for the next generation of farmers in Africa (cf. Sumberg et al. 2014).

Debates on land and African agriculture: continuity and change

Not all this is new. Indeed, African agriculture has a long history of attempts at commercialisation, introducing large-scale farming alongside or in some value-chain relationship with small-scale farming (Oya 2013a; Smalley 2013; Little and Watts 1994). What is also not new is the way in which such processes underline existing contours of social differentiation in rural Africa (Berry 2002, 2009; Peters 2004). Agricultural policies are often presented as technical solutions to problems of food insecurity, fluctuating global markets and unpredictable weather, but at heart they are shaped by politics, both national party politics and the political significance of classes of farmers in regional and national economies (Poulton 2014; Bates 1981).

Our contribution builds on this literature by locating both existing farming classes and new agribusinesses within the national political economy. We identify four major debates in the existing literature from which our research draws inspiration, and to which we contribute insights from fieldwork and analysis.

First is the debate about the status of customary tenure: how robust local institutions are in the face of commercial interests, and how to secure tenure rights (Alden Wily 2011; Peters 2009; Okoth-Ogendo

2008). Among the varied approaches to resolving this problem have been formal private titling (Kenya), enabling low-cost certification of rights (Ethiopia), certification through devolved institutions (Madagascar), alternatives to titling through *de facto* recognition of rights (Mozambique) or vesting land in villages (Tanzania) and, most recently, innovations in 'community titling' through state-governed legal demarcations (Mozambique) and bottom-up certification processes driven by non-governmental organisations (Zambia). Pre-existing tenure systems, and attempts to recognise and formalise rights, are crucial factors shaping how land acquisitions are conducted, and the leverage that local people can exert to determine the forms and terms of investment on land they hold or claim. Formalising land rights is complex in tenure systems based on non-exclusive uses and 'nested' systems of rights to different land-based resources (Lund 2008; Cousins 1997; Bassett and Crummey 1993). Formalisation may not have a positive impact on agricultural productivity (Lawry et al. 2014), but can provide a basis for people to contest, refuse, or leverage improved terms from potential investors, and from their own state. Without this recognition of land rights, the principle of 'free, prior, and informed consent' is likely to be unrealisable (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010b). Serious investments in consultation and accountability mechanisms are needed to give effect to the array of guidelines and policy frameworks promoted by the UN (FAO 2012b) and the African Union (Land Policy Initiative 2014; AU/AfDB/UNECA 2009).

A second debate is the relationship between large-scale and small-scale producers, the factor and commodity market conditions that shape who wins and who loses, and the roles of state institutions in shaping these outcomes through regulation (Lipton 2009; Binswanger et al. 1995). This was of central importance during the years of 'developmentalism' in the early post-colonial era (Heyer et al. 1981). Agriculture in Africa has long been constrained by scarce capital and also labour, especially skilled labour. Large-scale estate farming is not the only possible answer to the long-standing challenge of intensifying agricultural production (Berry 1993). Smaller farms are often both more labour-intensive and more land-intensive, despite being capital-constrained. As Sara Berry (1993) found in four detailed studies in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia, rather than a linear process of 'development' or 'modernization', there have been cyclical moments of 'expansion and contraction' in agricultural commodity markets, each associated with the changing fortunes of particular rural classes. In recent years, the 'large versus small' debate has re-emerged (Balgioni and Gibbon 2013) as the search is on for the holy grail of a 'win-win' solution in the form of an 'inclusive business model'. Such a model, it is argued, could enable a synergistic relationship between private investors securing land for industrial agriculture – often monocropped landscapes producing for global markets – and smallholders producing food and, increasingly, cash crops on their own land (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010b; Cotula et al. 2009). This embeds contract farmers, or outgrowers, in processes that can be described as commercialisation *without* dispossession (Berry et al. 1988).

Can what appear to be contradictory interests be reconciled and harmonised in such a way? The studies included in this book have found few such synergies, despite several of them focusing on partnerships between agribusinesses and smallholders. Exploring the potentials for connecting large, intermediate and small-scale farms to generate prosperous and inclusive rural economies, requires further comparative research,[2] and should stimulate a debate about what configurations of land holding, what labour regimes and what economic linkages result. To date, this discussion has become mired in an unhelpful debate about the assumed relative pros and cons of large- versus small-scale farming, with often entrenched views dominating (cf. Deininger et al. 2014; Baglioni and Gibbon 2013; Collier and Dercon 2014; Deininger and Byerlee 2012; Deininger 2003), and without a broader analysis of how different configurations of capital and labour could be integrated in particular contexts.

A third and related debate is about the implications of big land-based investments for social differentiation and class relations. We address questions of class, but also look at what this means for kinship networks, families and homesteads, gender and generational differences in how people perceive opportunities and threats from large-scale land investments, how they are affected and how they respond. Much of the 'land grab' literature, notably from activist organisations, has focused on 'investors' and their impacts on 'local people', suggesting a dynamic in which the rich and powerful reshape and remake local environments in which local people feature either as passive beneficiaries of 'development' or victims of 'dispossession' (GRAIN 2008; ILC 2011; Oxfam 2011). However, in order to get to grips with processes of accumulation, dispossession, incorporation or exclusion, our understanding must emerge from a more sophisticated analysis of such processes, and a more rigorous definition of terms (Hall 2012a, 2013). Our case studies suggest that something more complex is under way than the simple narratives often relayed, as investors encounter enormous difficulties with initiating production, and various local people resist or collaborate, or move between the two, in ways that advance their diverse interests and that subvert investors' plans.

Almost everywhere, 'local communities' are divided and over time become more economically differentiated as a result of the articulation between local production systems and economies, and new production systems introduced by state-backed investors (Wolford et al. 2013). Further, we find patterns of accumulation, incorporation and new emerging class structures – all forms of differentiation among 'host' communities that are

[2] See the study, Land and Agricultural Commercialisation in Africa, conducted in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia by several of the authors in this book, and others (www.future-agricultures.org/laca).

shaped by pre-existing relations of class, gender, generation and ethnicity. These are refracted through the newly-created agrarian labour regimes that produce differentiated classes of labour, including casual, seasonal and temporary forms of employment, and those eking out a living on the margins of commercialising rural economies – what Bernstein (2002) calls 'fragmented classes of labour'. All this shows how, while some might experience losses and scarcity of land and other natural resources, in fact what we are seeing is the political redistribution of scarcities at multiple scales, within communities, at the national level, and in global circuits of capital (Scoones et al. 2014).

A fourth debate is the connection between the creation of large-scale commercial farms and the rural non-farm economy.[3] As Berry (1993: 74) observed, commercialisation involves the expansion of intermediaries and traders alongside farmers. These new actors might be able to sustain a livelihood and build a commercial enterprise out of brokering agreements, or buying and selling on, between farmer and buyer, on the basis of loan finance and market information. While this pattern, in previous moments of endogenous commercialisation, saw the emergence of farmers' marketing cooperatives, this is not the case in the most recent period. Far less influential in negotiating terms and prices are the outgrower associations now emerging to organise contracts and block farming to supply nucleus estates and processing facilities, such as in Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9). Positive spin-offs into the rural non-farm economy are the most common form of development observed across the chapters (cf. Haggblade et al. 1989), benefiting residents of rural towns and service centres, rather than smallholder farmers who might compete with incoming investors, lose their land or be unaffected. Cases from Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique show how growing small towns and satellite industries provide goods and services linked to agribusiness enterprises (see Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 9). However, the costs and benefits are distributed across different populations. Such processes create a pull of young people to urban centres and small towns, and produce remittance economies. Whether such income streams can be reinvested in production depends on whether some family members are able to retain access to land. If so, secured land tenure alongside small 'boom towns' could potentially see rising cash incomes and expenditure among rural populations.

Each of these four debates has been long-running and highly contested. The recent 'land rush', and associated processes of commercialisation that have emerged, add a new complexion to these debates. Yet the basic features remain very much the same. Agrarian economies are forever undergoing change, with new configurations of land ownership and use. As the chapters in this book show, the impacts and outcomes for different people very much depend on the context, which is why a detailed case

[3] See the study, Space Markets and Employment in Agricultural Development, conducted in Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe (www.future-agricultures.org/smead).

study approach looking in detail at what happens over time is needed. Moving beyond the simplistic caricatures of the 'land grab', as either catastrophe or opportunity, is essential.

Conclusion

Since its peak following 2007-08, Africa's 'land rush' seems to have slowed, as the real implications of investment and production have become more apparent, as opportunity costs in other investment destinations have changed and as drivers such as spiking food and oil prices have abated, even if temporarily. The 'revaluation of land' (Borras et al. 2011b) under way globally was rapid but it was not linear. Today, investors are far more cautious in their prognoses for profits: several 'bubbles' have burst, not least the hype surrounding biofuels. Since then, many *Jatropha* projects in Africa have been abandoned, some before production even started, and others after just a fraction of the expected land-clearing and planting had been achieved (Locke and Henley 2013; Sulle and Hall 2015). However, while the land rush may have slowed, it has not stopped. All indications are that global demand for food, fuel and feedstock will continue to drive demand for fertile land and water into the future. Growing African economies and consumer demand in urban centres compound this demand in conditions rendered ever more uncertain by extreme weather events and changes to the climate.

Large-scale land acquisitions are thus shaping profound change in African agriculture and in African rural societies and economies. Such annexation of territory and the changes it instigates are not without precedent. Indeed, historical cycles of commercialisation are evident and are associated, in different places and at different times, with processes of colonial dispossession, state nationalisation, villagisation or privatisation (Edelman et al. 2013). Most recently, commodification of land and natural resources through the growing influence of financial institutions and 'offset' schemes has altered the politics of natural resources significantly (Fairhead et al. 2012). The (re)creation of agrarian dualism through land deals is taking place in an age of globalised, corporatised and financialised agriculture (Fairbairn 2014; Clapp 2014). This may accelerate inequalities of class and other forms of differentiation already evident and growing in post-liberalised African agriculture (Moyo et al. 2012), and fundamentally shift the balance of interests in agrarian economies.

All this raises doubt concerning the claims made about the benefits of large-scale land deals, and the patterns of investment associated with, for example, the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition[4], state-supported development corridors across the continent, as well as the array of deals by private corporations, often with state and elite backing,

[4] http://new-alliance.org/

such as those documented in this book. The assumptions that large land-based investments will create an emerging, entrepreneurial, middle-farming class, hooked into commercial value chains and benefiting from infrastructure, technology and expertise from these large investments need to be questioned. The evidence for this is slim indeed. Rather, land deals appear to be short-circuiting existing farming systems and creating enclave investments, with limited employment and often requiring significant state subsidies to remain viable. Where local farmers are incorporated, as in the cases of contract farming, this is often on adverse terms that have profound implications for gender relations and women's access to and control of productive resources and cash incomes. With these links to large investments, such farming populations are now part of particular commodity chains – in the cases in this book, sugar is a major feature – within an increasingly globalised and financialised agro-food system (Fairbairn 2014). This system is undergoing major corporate restructuring, as firms seek profit in highly-constrained circumstances, fuelling commercial imperatives to grab cheap land and exploit labour (McMichael 2012).

So what is the fate of the small-scale African farmer within this scenario? Ultimately, this hinges on processes of negotiating with capital, and with allied political elites, on the terms of incorporation (cf. McCarthy 2010) into diverse forms of commercial agriculture and different value chains. This may be more significant for such farmers than the outright grab of land that has been the focus of the outcry over the past few years. As Peluso and Lund (2011: 668) observe: 'What is new is not only land grabbing or ownership, but also new crops with new labour processes and objectives for the growers, new actors and subjects, and new legal and practical instruments for possessing, expropriating, or challenging previous land controls.'

As our book shows, a range of processes of enclosure is occurring, located within diverse trajectories of agriculture commercialisation, driven by different dynamics. The role of labour and the terms of employment are crucial (Li 2011), as people are incorporated as labourers and out-growers and as suppliers in complex agribusiness arrangements. As the cases illustrate, there is no simple process of rural proletarianisation, but more the emergence of hybrid classes of labour engaging with new commercial endeavours. There are, however, clear winners and losers who become evident as processes of social differentiation unfold locally. How this will all pan out will depend heavily on local contexts, and particularly the political alliances that are forged between local elites and international capital. In some settings, a new form of dualism between corporate and family farming is emerging, replicating patterns not seen since the establishment of the settler economies of the colonial era. But this time, as then, the creation of a large-scale commercial farming sector is not straightforward, and will require massive state support and finance, which is very often absent in the cases we have examined. This explains the far-from-linear process of commercialisation with many setbacks and returns to the drawing board.

An alternative trajectory may be a move by external investors to integrate with aspects of local agrarian economies more firmly, realising that an enclave model is not feasible, economically or politically. Various forms of integration are possible, from outgrower arrangements to joint ventures to other value chain links, for example in trading, processing and so on. The chapters show how, as only some people will benefit, processes of inclusion and exclusion will inevitably fuel social differentiation. The terms of incorporation therefore become crucial. External investment may yet find better and safer returns through working with large- or medium-scale local farmers, potentially organised as blocks, where risks of land disputes are minimised, and other costs are transferred to local producers. While relatively small currently, such groups of medium-sized commercial farms may become an increasingly significant feature in many African contexts, as entrepreneurs and urban elites invest in acquiring and consolidating land, which once was part of the 'communal' smallholder sector (Jayne et al. 2014; Smart and Hanlon 2014). In time, this incremental process of land acquisition by local elites, backed by capital, may be cumulatively more significant than the more dramatic large-scale 'grabs' seen in the recent past.

What then is the future for the smallholder sector, the core of most of Africa's agrarian economies? Despite frequent declarations of the end of the peasantry, and the resolution of the agrarian question through urbanisation and industrialisation (Bryceson 2004), the peasantry – in now increasingly diverse forms – is remarkably persistent, with some scholars observing a resurgence of peasant styles of production (van der Ploeg 2009). The peasantry is far from being a single class, if ever it was, and is highly differentiated by age, gender, ethnicity, as well as occupation, with many relying for their livelihoods on various forms of labour, often highly uncertain and fragile (Bernstein 2010b). Poor infrastructure, high transport costs, poorly functioning markets, a lack of credit, growth in demand from local markets, and agroecological conditions have made skilled local labour essential. Yet smallholder farming has many advantages, as it is rooted in family labour, but also, as petty commodity production, involves various forms of hired labour (Peters 2013; Lipton 2009). Such family-based farming is unlikely to disappear any time soon. Indeed, when large-scale farm enterprises set up alongside such smallholder production systems, the smallholder areas are often more productive, entrepreneurial and vibrant, despite the massive financial and political support that prestige investment projects attract.

The key question, we argue, then becomes less about the land rush as a distinct phenomenon, but more how new forms of capital, crops, production systems, labour regimes and expertise become inserted into – or resisted by – existing political-economic configurations, and in turn how this affects agrarian structures and patterns of social differentiation, and with what distributional consequences. As we have emphasised in this chapter and is demonstrated throughout the book, the land rush is best seen as one of a number of processes of commercialisation of agriculture, involving particular forms of financialisation and commodification, not all of which result in the appropriation of land, although all result in various dynamics of social differentiation. Thus not all investments see a process of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2003), or a simple incorporation into globalised capitalism, involving 'a savage sorting of winners and losers' (Sassen 2010). The processes of change on the ground are more subtle, context-specific and variegated than such sweeping assessments permit.

For more effective understandings of the land rush, therefore, we argue for a switch of emphasis to understanding the multiple processes of enclosure and commercialisation and the terms of incorporation of different groups. This highlights the wider issues of labour, technology, expertise, markets, as well as land, and processes of incorporation into new forms of market economy. As the chapters that follow show, it is in this way and with these questions in mind, that the contexts and consequences of Africa's land rush can be better understood.