LAND MARKET LIBERALIZATION AND TRANS-NATIONAL COMMERCIAL LAND DEALS IN GHANA SINCE THE 1990S.

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Research Questions

• Is the nature of particular transnational commercial land transactions a factor in how local communities respond to them?
  • Structure, business model, the role of different actors and mitigation measures

• Are environmental characteristics and local rules of land tenure factors in how communities and their members are affected by transnational land transactions?
  • The sustainability of livelihoods and land tenure arrangements

• Are there differences in impacts and responses within communities?
  • Social differentiation- land users; land interests; gender; poverty and migrant
The study areas and Methods

• 3 Case studies
  – Prairie Volta Rice Ltd Project (Lower Volta, Volta Region)
  – Biofuel Africa Ltd., Now Solar Harvest Ltd, Projects (Kpachaa Area, Northern Region)
  – Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (Dipaale Area, Northern Region)

• Methods- qualitative
  – Interviews with project officials and chiefs
  – One male and one female focus group discussion
  – Individual interviews with 4 men and 4 women
Findings so far-Prairie Volta Rice Ltd Project

• Long standing depression of Lower Volta; Area of outmigration

• Company owned by American Texans, Ghana Government and Ghana commercial bank

• Land holding system family based; however, Project land the subject of compulsory land acquisition, and now court dispute.

• 1250 hectares acquired to cultivate rice largely for local market; Only 300 hectares under cultivation; additional 2,000 hectares in process of acquisition elsewhere in the area
Prairie continued

• Much more land cleared but not in use- resulted in losses of usufruct in land; inconvenience of farming across a stream; and the loss of commons and bio-diversity.
• Project business model does not involve communities except as employees (100 permanent staff); Community expectations centred on employment
• 3 kinds of affected communities- land owning community- Mafi Dove; resettled pastoralists; and Bakpa Tademe- community with no land left.
• Responses have included re-migration
• Differences among the community- chiefs; members from land owning group- men/women; those not from land owning group; loss of commons have gendered impacts
Findings so Far- Kpachaa

• Area of intensive farming and in migration
• Land holding system chieftaincy based; acquisition from Dagbon overlord although sub-chiefs involved
• 10,600 hectares acquired- majority Kpachaa village lands. 400 hectares- jatropha; 220 hectares maize. Another 500 hectares cleared for next season
• Company began with jatropha; now shifting to maize
• Business model involved farmers in the acquisition and gave options
Kpachaa-2

- Corporate social responsibility measures
- Company employed community members until crisis
- Disruption of local farming systems
- Destruction of commons
- Impacts gendered- shea nut; fuel wood losses
- Responses have included out-migration;
- Anti-project demonstration
Key issues and themes in the case studies

• Nature of deals/contractual arrangements and Implications for Customary Systems of Land Tenure
• Role of the state and local elite
• Responses of Transnational companies to local conditions and changing global trends
• The disappearing ‘commons’
• Food security
Some early conclusions

• There are variations in the land transactions of transnational corporations in different land holding systems in Ghana.
• Outcomes have been remarkably similar for both food crops or non-food crops.
• Unfulfilled or partially fulfilled expectations and promises.
• Benefits have been meagre, while their disadvantages have been significant from the point of view of local communities.
• For the companies, returns have also been disappointing - unfavourable local conditions, but more importantly, the changing global trends.
• The State as a player has compounded negative outcomes.
• Institutional failures have occurred alongside conflicts of interest.
• Land deals impacts are not only economic, but are changing traditional dynamics and arrangements of power and resource systems.
• All these raise questions of agribusiness’s role in agrarian transformation.