

The Politics of Land Grabbing in Ethiopia

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Abstract : Within the last two decades in many sub-Saharan African countries, a large-scale acquisition (lease, concession, outright purchase) of extensive areas of farmland commonly labeled as 'idle' and 'under-utilized' has resulted in displacement and dispossession and dispossession without 'compensation.' This paper seeks to critically illustrate the processes and the consequences of the 'land grabbing project' in Ethiopia. Drawing on the theory of participatory development and empirical studies undertaken in Ethiopia, the paper elucidates the power dynamics that influence how and why dislocation and dispossession occur. The paper then demonstrates why the land-grabbing project, which was hugely supported by many international organizations, has largely failed in Ethiopia. Through a critical analysis of the process of 'land grabbing' in Ethiopia, the paper contributes to a more adequate and critical understanding of contemporary land deals and their social and environmental consequences.

Keywords : land grabbing, human rights, dispossession, resistance, governance

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