

Call for papers for a special session at the IAMO Forum 2012: Large Scale Land Acquisition in Eastern Europe and Sub-Sahara Africa: How institutional contexts relate to ethical evaluation

By:

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The IAMO Forum 2012: Land Use in Transition: Potentials and Solutions Between Abandonment and Land Grabbing

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Cf. <http://www.iamo.de/forum0/forum2012/conference-call.html>

Land use is receiving increasing attention due to its manifold repercussions on human wellbeing and the environment. Land use changes are particularly pronounced in many transition economies, where the legacies of the rapid and drastic institutional and socioeconomic system changes sent land use systems on new trajectories.

The IAMO Forum 2012 will provide a platform for research that investigates the main trends and drivers of land use in transition economies of Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and East Asia. We welcome contributions that shed light on patterns, phenomena, and drivers of land-use changes. We aim to capture the prevalent changes and modification of land use including agricultural abandonment and recultivation, changes in farm size and farmland fragmentation, the emergence of large-scale agricultural production units, extensification and intensification of agriculture, logging and forest transitions. The conference contributions may exploit a wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches ranging from micro-level analysis of land management to institutional, socioeconomic and geographic investigations of land-use change at the local, regional and cross-national level. Interdisciplinary contributions are particularly welcome.

Large Scale Land Acquisition in Eastern Europe and Sub-Sahara Africa: How institutional contexts relate to ethical evaluation

In times of rising interest in agricultural land as valuable investment, the phenomenon of large-scale land acquisition (LaSLA) has lately attracted increasing attention. While proponents conceive of this phenomenon as urgently needed investment, opponents apprehend negative social and environmental consequences.

Current attention focuses nearly exclusively on LaSLA in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In contrast, one of the most comprehensive studies regarding availability of land points to the potential of Kazakhstan, Russia and the Ukraine (Worldbank 2010: Rising global interest in farmland) and there is evidence of on-going LaLSA in the Ukraine.

Critique on LaSLA in sub-Saharan Africa relates primarily to the fact that the affected countries are characterized by customary land use systems in which access to land constitutes the main source of livelihood for the local population. Combined with weak institutional regulation, opponents apprehend LaSLA to result in loss of access to land and thus loss of access to livelihood. This does not hold for LaSLA in post-soviet countries where the majority of the population is not - or at least not traditionally - land based and LaSLA seems to build on existing large-scale agriculture schemes. On the other hand, problems such as low or non-existing rents for land owners, an instable political situation and lack of infrastructure exist in both countries.

The session aims to present evidence regarding LaSLA in Africa and Eastern Europe, compare the institutional environment in which LaSLA takes place in these regions and relate this comparison to an ethical evaluation of the phenomenon. Specific topics include

- Case studies from Africa and Eastern Europe focusing on the respective institutional environment and how it relates to social and environmental consequences of LaSLA
- Comparative studies concerning cases from both regions
- Comparative studies concerning the different institutional environments
- Comparative ethical analysis of LaSLA in Africa and Eastern Europe
- Examination of links between institutional environment and ethical evaluation of the phenomenon of LaSLA

We invite **paper proposals of up to 1500 words with an additional abstract of 250 words** until **January 27th** 2012. For information regarding submission, please visit <http://www.iamo.de/forum0/forum2012/conference-call.html>