

IPAF 4900: Research Experience Opportunity

Project Title: Land Grabbing (or large-scale land acquisitions) in Ethiopia: Who, Where, When and Why

Term: Winter 2020

Supervisor: Logan Cochrane

Unit: BGInS

Description of project:

This research is one part of a larger projects that seeks to look at the legal, regulatory and policy aspect related to land grabbing or large-scale land acquisitions. More than 800 million people face food insecurity around the world, a figure that has risen in recent years. The private sector - from smallholder farmers to multinational corporations - are critical in ensuring all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Understanding the enabling legal, policy and regulatory environment to do this is critical. Over the last decade, tens of millions of hectares of land in the Global South have been sold or leased to foreign investors, with Africa playing a central role. Many governments are optimistic about how this may contribute to improved livelihoods and food security. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations are pessimistic and suggest these changes foster inequalities and harm livelihoods. This research compares the experiences of Ethiopia and Ghana; and this research project will contribute to the Ethiopia component of that.

Number of students required: 1

Research duties:

- 5 hours per week of research and/or writing
- Conduct research on specific land acquisitions and their status
- Map the locations of these investments by status
 - Student will produce an interactive map
 - The map may be displayed publicly and promoted as a resource for others
- Write a report critically analyzing how the status distribution connects with inequalities
 - Student will produce a ~8 page report

Learning and reflection activities:

- Background reading on land grabbing / large scale land acquisitions
 - Annotated bibliography (10-12 publications)
- Reflection on methods to know the status of a land acquisition
 - ~2 page write-up
- Short reflection (~2 page write-up) on experience at end of INAF 4900 experience
 - What was valuable? What you would liked to have done? What was missing?
 - Did you meet your goals? Was the project as outlined?

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge and capabilities the research experience will build.

- In-depth understanding of an issue of high importance in the Global South, Ethiopia specifically
- Apply research methods and data collection approaches for a specific research question
- Assess the role of policy, regulation and law in relation to the research topic
- Critically engage with how issues are connected
- Gain experience synthesizing data and with academic writing

Evaluation Criteria:

Course component, submission deadline, weight, brief description. At least 50 percent of the course grade should be based on written work.

- Annotated bibliography (15%) by Jan 31
- Reflection on methods (15%) March 1
- Check-in for report and map progress (completion) Feb 17
- Report (30%) March 15
- Interactive map (25%) March 31
- Summary reflection (15%) April 7

Note: We will have weekly check-in to assess progress and provide points for the student to ensure they are on track with the expectations of the course and the assignments. The date/time will be determined with the student, as per the schedules of the student and faculty member.

Skills or knowledge required:

For example, software or language skills; pre-requisite courses.

- Familiarity with the topic is useful – interest in learning about it, critical
- Familiarity with conducting research is useful
- Experience using and creating digital maps, or willingness to learn
- Experience using Excel
- Willingness to learn how to use data sets

Any required health and safety training: n/a

Application instructions:

Participants are selected on the basis of merit and fit with the research project. Please submit a CV, transcript, and cover letter indicating why you are interested in and qualified for this research experience to the undergraduate administrator of the unit listed above. The application deadline is normally April 30th (for IPAF 4900 opportunities in the summer or fall term), August 15th (for fall and winter term opportunities) and November 15th (to take IPAF 4900 in the winter or summer term). Only students with a GPA of 9.5 or higher and at least third year honours standing will be considered.