

LAND GOVERNANCE IN TRANSITION

How to support transformations that work for people and nature?

July 4 - 5 | Muntgebouw | Utrecht | The Netherlands
www.landgovernance.org

Conference Report

The LANDac Conference 2019 looked at land governance through the lens of transformations. This year's conference built on nine years of LANDac Annual International Conferences, where rural land debates were connected to the urban agenda, where land governance from an SDG starting point was explored, and where its role in issues of mobility, migration and displacement was examined. The 2019 Conference built on these discussions to return to core questions about land governance and transformation.



Guiding questions

This year's central questions revolve around the long-term dynamics around land, water and food production. How is land governance itself transformed, as it seeks to respond to changing circumstances? And how is learning and knowledge building about these dynamics developing, what are promising concepts and tools? Particular questions relate to the different aspects of land governance, such as gender, food security, land tenure security, investments, conflict prevention and peace-building. In a fast-paced world of short-term projects and funding, how can we learn from past and current transitions, build sustainable partnerships and networks, and allow for seeds of innovation to bear fruit?

About LANDac



LANDac – the Netherlands Land Academy – is a partnership between Dutch organisations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners who share a concern for land inequality and land-related conflicts to conduct research, distribute information and forge new partnerships. LANDac is hosted by Utrecht University and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Conference Organising Committee 2019

Bianca de Souza Nagasawa (LANDac/Utrecht University), Chantal Wieckardt (LANDac), Christine Richter (ITC University of Twente), Gemma van der Haar (Wageningen University), Griet Steel (LANDac/Utrecht University), Guus van Westen (LANDac/Utrecht University), Imke Greven (Oxfam Novib), Marthe Derksen (LANDac/Utrecht University), and Niek Thijssen (Agriterra).

Reading guide

This report is an impression of the LANDac Conference 2019, which took place on the 4th and 5th of July 2019. It provides a summary of the six plenary keynotes, the debates following the plenary reflection panels, as well as details on how to access information on the 35 parallel sessions that took place during the two conference days. The report is based on the structure of the [Conference Programme 2019](#).

LANDac is grateful to the following sponsors of the LANDac Annual International Conference 2019: Pathways to Sustainability (Utrecht University), Gemeente Utrecht, the journal Land, the International Land Coalition (ILC), the Land & Accountability Research Centre (LARC), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and Bambook.



DAY 1 THURSDAY 4th JULY 2019

OPENING

Opening the ninth LANDac Annual International Conference, **Annelies Zoomers**, Professor International Development Studies (Utrecht University) and chair of LANDac, reminds the audience of LANDac's 10-year anniversary in 2020 – a good opportunity to reflect on the past and the future. LANDac is a success, according to Zoomers, and this year's conference attendance of over 290 individuals from all over the world shows that.

In the past nine years, researchers have been collecting empirical evidence on land governance; mapping, looking for solutions for the negative effects of land grabbing and other large-scale investments in land. During these years, the LANDac agenda has evolved as well. For example, the realisation that land grabbing also occurs in urban situations, has shifted LANDac's attention to include urban land issues as well. As researchers engaged in increasingly in-depth analyses, the issue of land governance became increasingly complex, or 'wicked', according to Zoomers. She warns that this may lead to less confidence that processes on the ground can be transformed.

Looking back on nine years of LANDac, modesty is also called for. Land grabbing is still ongoing, and local communities hardly have any influence on the developments. Issues of land investments and land grabbing are closely linked to the process of globalisation. It is important to continue to get a better understanding of how these processes take place and how they shape local realities.

"We cannot stop such global processes, but maybe we can find ways to make them more beneficial to people and the planet"

In this context, LANDac has launched its fellowship programme on the 26th of June 2019. This year, eight professionals from six African countries have been brought together. LANDac will engage with them for the next years; together identifying ways to make land-based investments more inclusive and sustainable by bringing different stakeholders in the field together. With this programme, the LANDac fellows exchange experiences and best practices, creating a community of practice in order to stimulate mutual learning and South-to-South exchange.



Annelies Zoomers, Chair of LANDac

The conference co-host **Maarten Hajer**, Scientific Director of Pathways to Sustainability (Utrecht University), also emphasises the importance of stakeholder involvement. Working with outside shareholders is not something that most universities are accustomed to, according to Hajer. This takes them out of their peer-reviewed comfort zone. According to Hajer, partnerships like LANDac have huge value in developing guiding principles for our march in the right – sustainable – direction.

KEYNOTES

PAULINE PETERS The Land Question: Reforms, Dangers and Challenges

Pauline Peters, social anthropologist and Professor Emeritus, Centre for International Development, Harvard University, argues that when designing governance systems that are beneficial for people and nature, it helps to learn from past experiences. Bringing in the historic perspective, Pauline Peters sketches the mistakes made during three major 'waves' of land tenure reforms in Africa over the last century.

The first reforms were executed without knowledge of existing land governance systems, resulting in tribal and ethnic conflicts over land. Another wave of reforms accompanied the structural adjustment programmes dictated by multinational financial institutions. These reforms involved emphasis on private ownership and expropriations of customary land. Transfers of customary land continue to take place. To counter this process, customary land ownership and management need to be formalised in some way, Peters argues.

Concluding her keynote, Peters emphasises the gender aspect of land governance and tenure systems, but warns against over-simplifications. The fact that often only sons can inherit land should not just be considered as discrimination against women. It is foremost a protection against land getting lost to another 'descent group' (i.e. the descent group of the widow).



Pauline Peters, social anthropologist Harvard University

LORENZO COTULA Land Rights under Pressure: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues

Lorenzo Cotula, Principal Researcher in Law and Sustainable Development at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), argues that there are two dimensions to the dispossession of land, which many people across the Global South experience. One dimension is linked to short-term cyclical factors, driving the competition for valuable lands. Another dimension is the extent to which governance arrangements can effectively and equitably manage this growing competition for land, which is related to longer-term processes such as socio-economic and political change. These two dimensions are closely interlinked.

On the one hand, short-term, cyclical factors driving the competition for land include the 2005-2015 commodity boom and bust, the process of land concentration in the hand of local and national elites, and public policies that promote industrial and infrastructural development. On the other hand, governance arrangements often tend to promote exclusionary outcomes. According to Cotula, there are a number of trends that affect land

governance, including the growing control of the state over national resources, transferring these resources to foreign agents; the level of protection of traditional rights, where local communities and would be title-holders must prove that they use the land productively; and the increasing role of international treaties protecting international investments.

Strengthening the land rights of rural people is therefore imperative, so they can have a greater control over land, livelihoods and processes of change. Governments play a central role and should review their policy, legislative and institutional frameworks governing land and investments. Research also has a role to play, not only in documenting what approaches work, but also by correctly identifying problems – the first step towards developing solutions.



Lorenzo Cotula, Principal Researcher at IIED

DENIS KABIITO Youth Perspectives on an Ever-Decreasing Resource for the Green Gold (Agriculture)

Denis Kabiito is not only National Coordinator of the Young Farmers Federation of Uganda, but he is also a farmer himself, working a farm in the Rakai district in central Uganda. In his first

capacity, Kabiito focusses on the role of youth in the agriculture business in Uganda. Involving more youth (from ages 12 to 39) in agriculture is the main challenge for the Federation. Worryingly, youth have limited access to land in Uganda. Yet land is a critical factor; it is not only a vital source of production and a pillar of existence, it also shapes the collective identity of Uganda. The land tenure system in Uganda, however, is extremely complicated, with a number of entitlement types that all have different characteristics and are governed by different rules and regulations. Besides public land governed by the Uganda Commissions, there are four land tenure systems in Uganda: customary land tenure; freehold land tenure; leasehold tenure; and finally the so-called mailo tenure system. To stimulate youth involvement in agriculture, Kabiito advocates measures like accessible loans, tax-exemption, group ownership and lobby to promote the possibilities of youth to acquire land.



Denis Kabiito, Young Farmers Federation of Uganda

Discussion with the audience

In the discussion that follows the three keynotes, led by **Monica Lengioboni** from ITC, University of Twente, several atten-

dees emphasise the need for context-based approaches: one size does not fit all. Land governance issues vary from place to place and from time to time. Approaches, solutions and even target groups should be adjusted to specific circumstances.

Pauline Peters, for example, explains that the concept of 'family' in African contexts is often not the most relevant unit to address land governance issues. "Descent groups are much more useful as a unit." And on a similar note, it is stressed to not look into the role of women in general, but differentiate between sisters and mothers, between wives and widows. Not all women share the same views or have the same interests.

Finally, Lorenzo Cotula adds that strengthening communal rights to land is

not a panacea. Investments in land – whether small-scale or large-scale, domestic or foreign – can be a force for good. It depends on the terms and conditions: who decides on the investments? Who sets the terms? For responsible investors it is not always easy to identify all relevant stakeholders. How can they be sure that prior and informed consent has taken place?



Plenary discussion with keynote speakers Pauline Peters, Lorenzo Cotula and Denis Kabiito

WHO WAS THERE?

Olga Langa (ASCUT, Mozambique)



Who is Olga Langa?

"I am coordinator and advocacy officer at ASCUT. ASCUT is an alliance of Mozambican NGOs. We work on land issues. Land grabbing is a major issue in my country. Foreign companies – Chinese, for example – trying to get hold of large tracks of land for agriculture, for biofuel, or mining and even for tourism, because Mozambique is a beautiful country."

Is this your first time at a LANDac conference?

"Yes it is. A couple of weeks ago I was at another land conference, in Washington. That was my very first international conference."

Why LANDac?

"I come here to learn from the experiences in other countries. How they deal with land issues, what strategies they follow."

What did you learn so far?

"I have learned a lot. For example how in Colombia the communal lands – Baldíos they are called – are under threat of being sold to foreign companies. We have the same problems in Mozambique where there is much pressure on our communal lands, we call it 'Terra Ociosa', idle land."

What would you like LANDac to address next year?

"What was less prominent in the sessions that I attended was the voice of the communities. We are talking about them, but we are hardly talking with them. We do not hear their stories. In my next LANDac conference, I want representatives of communities to be present."

IMPRESSION PARALLEL SESSIONS

On the first day of the conference, three sessions of each seven parallel workshops, panels and debates were open to the participants. Topics varied from 'spatial injustice' to 'women's land rights'. Below three impressions from the sessions that took place. A complete overview of all sessions and their key insights can be found [here](#).

From Discourse to Practice in Women's Land Rights

Maybe the most vocal activists in the 2019 conference are the women behind the recently initiated global Feminist Land Platform. This platform is officially launched during a parallel session on Thursday morning. During the session, women from different continents share stories on how the issues of land governance affect women in different ways, and often more severely than men.

According to **Patricia Chaves** of the Brazilian organisation Espaço Feminista, the goal of the platform is to bring gender justice into land governance. It would be a mistake, however, to see women merely as victims, stresses **Priti Darooka** from the Indian Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. She argues:

"Recognise women as farmers, as producer, as workers. Women are not just illiterate and unskilled [...]. Women are also activists and change agents."

Fridah Githuku, of the Kenyan women's rights organisation GROOTS, adds that the land governance movement is dominated

by men. "Men have even taken control of the gender issue. Donors require attention to gender-issues, so in many cases men have stepped in to take over women's voices."



The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanization in Africa

Cities in Africa are growing fast. The total number of urban residents in Africa is projected to reach a billion by 2040. The nexus between land and urban areas is a very relevant entry point for the analysis of this urbanization process. A large share of the politics of the urban transitions play out around the urban land nexus. Urban land governance is critical to equitable accommodation of the growing urban populations, and especially vulnerable groups, during the course of the urban transition. This session focuses on research in three African cities: Dar Es Salaam, Mwanza (Tanzania) and Khartoum (Sudan).

Presenting research in both Tanzanian cities, **Alphonse Kyessi**, Ardhi University and Institute of Human Settlements Studies, acknowledges that urbanisation means modernisation. Smooth and sustainable urbanisation, however, must involve the service levels and employment opportunities keeping pace with growing

population numbers. Kyessi identifies a number of areas of concern regarding the urban land nexus, including informal settlements with little land for services; gentrification and redevelopment processes, resulting in further displacement of the urban poor; disregard of livelihoods when designing and executing resettlement measures; central decision making with little attention to local contexts; lacking policies; breakdown of informal safety nets; disregards of the position of (informal) tenants.

Griet Steel, LANDac & Utrecht University, goes into the contradiction of vacant land versus urban housing shortage in Khartoum. She presents her research in the 'sites and services' (S&S) development area Khogolab, on the outskirts of the city. Almost twenty years ago this site was assigned for urban development. Plots

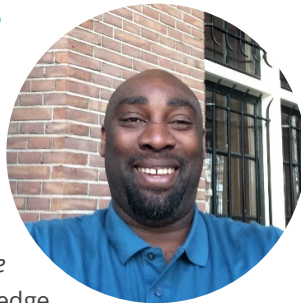
were allocated, but nothing happened: twenty years later, Khogolab is still empty. Steel discovered that services are lacking. Although the area counts several high voltage electricity masts, there are no electricity connections to individual plots. Also water availability is problematic. Khogolab is close to the Nile, but there seems to be no water underground. Construction without available water is problematic. Steel concludes that S&S schemes alone is not enough to stimulate urban development.

Key insights:

- There are different typologies of informality;
- Policies and regulations pertaining to informality and vacant plots;
- This has important implications on the urban land nexus discourse.

WHO WAS THERE?

Jean Brice Tetka
(Transparency
International,
Germany)



Who is Jean Brice Tetka? "I am knowledge and technology coordinator at Transparency International, based in Berlin. I originally come from Cameroon. Land is an important issue for us at Transparency International. Corruption is very common when land deals are negotiated."

Is this your first time at a LANDac conference? "Yes, this is my first LANDac conference. I wanted to come last year, but logistically that was not possible."

Why LANDac? "I came to support some of my colleagues, who did a presentation. Mainly I

want to interact with other visitors, to hear what is going on in other countries.

What did you learn so far? "I was most impressed by the keynote speech of professor Pauline Peters on Thursday. I liked how she put the issue of land governance in a historic perspective. If we do not learn from history, we are bound to repeat the mistakes that were made in the past."

What would you like LANDac to address next year? "I think the political aspect deserves more attention. Many of the sessions that I attended seem to focus on tools and strategies. This is contrasted to the fact that land issues usually are political. The main bottleneck for solutions is political will. That is why lobby and advocacy are needed. I would like to learn more about experiences and best practices regarding lobby and advocacy."



Interdisciplinary Research in Sustainable Transition of Palm Oil Production

One of the challenges of land governance research is to combine and make use of different scientific disciplines within one single research-project. This session focuses on the challenges involving different disciplines in research (i.e. into the palm oil production). As **Birka Wicke**, assistant professor at the Copernicus Institute of Utrecht University, explains, multidisciplinary research approach involves several scientific disciplines to look at a single topic. Interdisciplinary research goes one step further and integrates different scientific disciplines into one research approach. A trans-disciplinary approach means that also other (non-scientific) stakeholders and their knowledge are taken into account.

Wicke concludes after preliminary assessment of 501 scientific articles written about palm oil between 1980 and 2019, that multi- or interdisciplinary research is far from mainstream. Research into the production of palm oil is dominated by natural sciences. To illustrate this, Wicke presented a 'word cloud' based on the terms used in the articles. Only one term ('governance') in the word cloud referred to social sciences. Birka Wicke adds that there is ample research on the impact of oil palm investments, but this research is almost exclusively monodisciplinary. Only 15 of all 501 articles included in the assessment, mention an inter- or transdisciplinary approach to the research. In reality, however, impact categories are highly interconnected. Monodisciplinary research will shed little light on this interconnectedness.

Rosa de Vos from Wageningen University & Research sheds light on some of the challenges regarding interdisciplinary research. Social scientists and natural scientists come from different research cultures, she explains. Natural scientists sometimes think that social sciences are not 'real science', whereas social scientists feel that the quantitative data collected by natural scientists poorly represent what is really going on. Formulating joint research questions can be a challenge: is the goal of research to measure impact or to understand the process? De Vos: "As a social scientist I wanted to describe communities and complexities, but my natural science colleagues asked: "Where are the graphs?"

Key Insights:

- We need to consider not only various disciplines, but also gender, cultures and languages in inter- and trans-disciplinary research.
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work is increasingly asked for, but it is very challenging – particularly for academic research.
- Overcoming barriers of interdisciplinary/ transdisciplinary research require a genuine interest in other perspectives and methods.

PLENARY REFLECTIONS

Concluding the first day of the conference, Mayke Kaag, African Studies Centre Leiden, Raul Socrates Banzuela, National Confederation of Family Farmer Organizations from the Philippines, and Rukia Cornelius, Oxfam South Africa, share some of the insights they had picked up during the day.

'Land is about power', is the first lesson that **Raul Socrates Banzuela** distils from the discussions and sessions that he had participated in. The struggle for land is a power struggle, he says, and that makes it very political. The second lesson, Banzuela continues, is about organization. "What I learned is this: if you give me a fish I will eat for a day. If you give me a rod, I can fish until the rivers are contaminated and the lakes are privatised. But if you teach me and my peers how to organize, we can fashion our own solutions."

Mayke Kaag adds that the LANDac community consists of a unique combination of people with different backgrounds and experiences: academics, practitioners and activists both young and old. This mixture is very enriching and contributes to the liveliness of the sessions. Coming back to the main theme of the conference, Kaag adds that it is often difficult to deal with transformations, especially in research, because changes in land governance do not proceed in a linear way. A situation may transform slowly and over a longer period, but that slow process is often intertwined with sudden and rapid revolution-like changes. All this together shapes the dynamic that LANDac-researchers want to capture in their research. Regarding the political 'power' aspect, Kaag comments that in the past years there has been considerable progress in analysing the political force field. Transforming this analysis into recommendations, however, still seems difficult. Recommendations are often amount to: 'the government should listen more to local communities'. But the



essence of the analysis was exactly that governments do not listen to local communities because of existing power relations.

“I am because you are” – with this Ubuntu concept **Rukia Cornelius** starts her reflection on her experiences of the first day. Cornelius shares what she experienced during a session about the power of data and algorithms. New technologies – from blockchains, and bitcoins to drones – can be empowering when in the hands of the right people. These technologies can contribute to transformations that work for people and nature. Cornelius argues, however, that the first day mainly focussed on institutional and systemic changes, and that there are opportunities to look into normative changes, such as behavioural change. She therefore advocates for research into the personal connections of people and communities to land: “The land does not belong to us. We belong to the land.”

After these plenary reflections on the first day, the winner of the Data Stories Contest by the Land Portal is announced. Winner **Konrad Hentze** pitches his story on how satellites can locate potential land grabs in Africa. Festively closing the first day of the conference, ILC launches its LANDex Dashboard for People-centred Land Monitoring, while the conference participants enjoy a drink and a walking dinner.

WHO WAS THERE?

Filipa Oitavén,
(Anthropologist,
Portugal)



Who is Filipa Oitavén?

"I was trained as an anthropologist in Amsterdam, but I am originally from Portugal. I did research on land governance in Mozambique. My main topic was large-scale land investments. I did surveys and interacted a lot with local communities and farmers. My conclusion was that their narratives are usually represented too one-dimensional. As if all small farmers are against land investments and modernisation. Maybe this is typical of anthropologists: we like to complicate things!"

Why LANDac?

"Actually I came here to find opportunities to do more research, but I am also here to meet people; new contacts and old friends."

What did you learn so far?

"I attended a panel by Marc Wegerif. Marc commented on efforts by some NGOs to enhance productivity of female farmers. Female farmers are less productive than male farmers, so there are many projects to increase their productivity. Marc defended the position that comparing productivity of male versus female farmers is not fair, as female farmers have other duties besides farming. Instead of focussing on increasing production, maybe NGOs should focus on other things like market access for female farmers."

What would you like LANDac to address next year?

"This is my third LANDac conference. My observation is that now, more practitioners are included than before. My earlier conferences were more academic. I think that this is a good development: including more voices makes the debate more political. So I hope this process of widening the conference attendance will continue."

DAY 2 FRIDAY 5TH JULY 2019

KEYNOTES

EUGENE CHIGBU Transformation through Responsible Land Management: Concept and Approach

Eugene Chigbu, Technical University Munich and the Global Land Tool Network, discusses the concept of transformation and how to make transformation happen through responsible land management concepts and approaches. Chigbu defines transformation as 'qualitative change toward a scenario that was previously non-existent'. All too often transformation is seen as a linear, 'vertical' process, such as

change through either a top-down or a bottom-up approach. Chigbu suggests that land governance transformation can also be 'horizontal'. Transformation, in other words, is all about thinking outside the box. Land governance is multidisciplinary – our analysis and research of land governance should be the same.

The actors pushing for transformation should also be recruited from all levels, including the elite. "We need all actors", he stresses. It is often perceived that the elite supports the status quo, but, according to Chigbu, some parts of the elite will ally with the masses. "We should lobby for elites to align with the agenda of the powerless."

CECILIA TACOLI Between Town and Country: Small Towns and Rural Transformations

Cecilia Tacoli, Principal Researcher at the Institute for Research and Development (IIED), highlights the role of small towns in rural transformations. Much of the attention of policymakers, researchers and practitioners is directed to big cities. In reality, however, about half of the world's urban population lives in cities with a populations of less than 500,000 inhabitants. One fifth evens lives in towns smaller than 50,000 inhabitants. The number of small towns is growing. Small towns function as market nodes, attracting especially youth for its employment opportunities. They therefore offer an alternative to migration towards metropolitan areas.

According to Tacoli, small towns play a distinct role in rural development and transformation. Rural-urban linkages are both positive and negative. Positive outcomes include the provision of market access, employment options especially for youth, and services to the rural population. Yet there are also negative outcomes; small towns are the entry point of cheap, imported goods. Often small towns experience economic stagnation and decline.

In the light of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs, Cecilia argues that policymakers need to approach small towns as part of current urbanisation dynamics and address both small towns' opportunities and challenges.



Keynote speakers on the second day: Eugene Chigbu, Cecilia Tacoli, and Fridah Githuku

FRIDAH GITHUKU Accelerating Rural Women's Land Rights through Bottom-up Strategies and Collective Action

Fridah Githuku, Executive Director of GROOTS Kenya, argues that new regulations and laws regarding land governance have not improved the position of women. In Kenya, for example, in spite of various new laws regulating land governance, women still cannot inherit land if their husband dies. Land governance in general is still dominated by men, according to Githuku. This has resulted in the fact that, for example, between 2013

and 2017 of the ten million hectares of land titled under the Kenyatta government, just 1.5 per cent was registered in the name of women. Githuku points out that in Kenya land ownership and other vital data are often incomplete and not segregated according to gender. As the issue of the limited ownership of land by women is not quantified, the process towards more female land ownership is thwarted.

Discussion with the audience

During the discussion after the keynotes, moderated by **Guus van Westen**, LANDac & Utrecht University, and **Imke Greven**, Oxfam Novib, several people reiterate that land governance is all about politics. One member of the audience comments

that a paradigm shift on thinking about development is needed. The dominant paradigm is still that large-scale agriculture is a major force – and maybe even a sine qua non – for development. The underlying idea, that African family agriculture is not productive should be challenged. Research must be done into the conditions under which small-scale agriculture can be competitive. Also the supposed ‘elephant in the room’ was identified during the discussion: climate change. Climate change needs to be the focus of land governance research. Will large-scale plantations survive climate change? And will smallholders? Who can deal best with changing circumstances? And what policy measures are climate proof?

WHO WAS THERE?

Bastiaan Reydon,
(Kadaster
International, the
Netherlands)



Who is Bastiaan Reydon?

“I am both Dutch and Brazilian. I started fighting for land reform in Brazil in the 1970s. It never ceased to amaze me that a big country like Brazil, with an abundance of land, has so many problems with land, while the Netherlands, a small densely populated country, has hardly any issue with land at all. The root of the problems in Brazil is that the land registration is very bad.”

Is this your first time at a LANDac conference?

“This is my fifth LANDac.”

Why LANDac? “I want to meet people from all walks of life. Purely scientific conferences are boring. Here I get a chance to meet scientist,

practitioners, government officials, people from NGOs. There is a positive vibe, maybe because we have the illusion that we can solve the problems, haha.”

What did you learn so far?

I was very impressed by the presentation of Dimo Todorovski, from Twente University. He explained how issues regarding surveying and administration of land can be solved by using modern, ‘fit for purpose’ geo-information management tools. Mobile mapping applications may not be as accurate as old-school surveying methodologies, but who cares? No farmer cares if his land ends here or half a metre further.”

What would you like LANDac to address next year?

“The economic aspects of land governance are a bit forgotten, I think. Almost all land issues, in the end, are about economy. We should look more what motivates people to act in certain ways. We see things too much in terms of good or bad. I say: bring in more dissenting views.”

IMPRESSION PARALLEL SESSIONS

On the second day of the conference, there were two sessions of each seven parallel workshops, panels and debates. Topics varied from 'pastoralist landscapes' to 'community forest rights'. A complete overview of all sessions and their key insights can be found [here](#).

Accumulation by dispossession and land grabbing in Colombia

The dynamics of conflict and large-scale land acquisitions in Colombia was the topic of this session. Five decades of conflict have displaced over five million people in Colombia. In the same period, 6.6 million hectares of land have been dispossessed. Not only armed groups – army, paramilitary and guerrilla forces – are responsible for dispossessions of land. Many displacements were instigated by cattle ranchers, drug barons, land speculators, institutional authorities and national and international companies. These actors have systematically divested poorer agricultural workers off their land holdings for their own use, forcing them to migrate to urban centres.

Rural reform is part of the peace agreement between the main guerrilla movement and the Colombia government. This reform includes a move towards sustainable development and prioritizing the position of the rural poor. **Edwin Jesith Bernal Ramírez**, New Granada Military University, explains that the peace agreement is contradicted by the so-called 'Zidres' law of 2016. This law facilitates the concentration of land in the hands of the rural oligarchy and the agro-industry. The Colombia example illustrates the

contradictory processes of rural reform, formalization of land titles and sustainable development, with the logic of capital accumulation, economies of scale and globalization.

Community forest rights – what are the key conditions for success?

Over the last decades, many governments have devolved collective rights and control over forests to local communities and indigenous peoples. This constitutes a shift away from the management of forests by the state or by private operators. The recognition of community rights can be a first step in securing land tenure. An important question is, however, under what conditions communities can profit from their resources. In other words: what are conditions for success?

Lucia Gbala, Heritage Partners & Associates, Liberia, explains the limitations of operationalizing community forestry laws in Liberia. In 2016, new forest laws in Liberia recognised the rights of communities to manage their forest. Limited access to this law and poor knowledge, however, limit the effects of the law.

Freddie Sayi Siangulube, University of Amsterdam, discusses community rights to forest resources in the Tanganyika Basin in Zambia. The lack of clear boundaries between protected areas and other land leads to conflicts between communities. These conflicts are aggravated in cases where, for example, valuable timber was involved. Freddie Sayi Siangulube advocates taking account of the local context when trying to strengthen community engagement. **Nathalie Faure**, ClientEarth, identifies key legal elements

for communities to manage their forest. ClientEarth works in Nepal, Tanzania and the Philippines, analysing legal frameworks for community forest management and their implementation. Challenges often involve the quality of the laws; legal frameworks should be clear and accessible, as well as the implementation.



WHO WAS THERE?



Yanuardi Yanuardi
(Utrecht University,
the Netherlands)

Who is Yanuardi Yanuardi?

“Actually, my name is just Yanuardi. I only have one name. Here in Holland, however, people have a first name and a last name, so here I am Yanuardi Yanuardi. I am a lecturer in Yogyakarta in Indonesia. I teach political science and development studies. Currently I am doing PhD-research at Utrecht University.”

Is this your first time at a LANDac conference?

“This is my first conference, but seven years ago I visited the LANDac Summer School, so it is not all new to me.”

Why LANDac?

“I came here to give a presentation of my research. My topic is: ‘Extractive Industries Gov-

ernance in Post-Conflict Area’s’. I did research in Atjeh, on Sumatra. The presentation went very well. I only got one question, but I was inspired by the discussion that followed.”

What did you learn so far?

“I was most intrigued during a session about trans-disciplinary research. I know about multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Transdisciplinary is new to me. I do not know how to apply this in my own research, but I will think about it.”

What would you like LANDac to address next year?

“Hm. I wouldn’t know ... well maybe this: maybe we could use a bit more synthesis. I mean: all the session are really interesting, but I would like at some point that everything comes together: what are the commonalities? What is the synthesis of all the workshops? How do they interrelate? That would be my wish for next year.”

PLENARY REFLECTIONS

Land issues are losing momentum, is the warning of **Ward Anseeuw**, from ILC & CIRAD, during the plenary session on Friday. Donors are less active in providing funds for land issues. One of the reasons is that activities 'on the ground' are attracting less (media) attention: "Land acquisition is not in the news anymore." In reaction, Annelies Zoomers, says that, in spite of the loss of momentum, land investments are still a big issue. Climate change makes it an even more urgent matter. Zoomers indicates that investments are often done in places where people are not aware of the changes that are awaiting them. "Problems will appear in different shapes, but the dynamics are often similar. We must involve local stakeholders. We must develop knowledge in a global way; we must compare experiences from different countries and regions. The challenge is not just up-scaling research results, down-scaling is also important."

Nzira de Deus, Fórum Mulher, Mozambique, comments that people may also get fatigued because they are not taken into account: their voices are not heard and benefits are often not shared. If people have the feeling that engaging in land governance will touch upon their lives, they will engage.



Closing Panel 2019: Ward Anseeuw, Nienke Stam, Alphonse Kyessi, Nzira de Deus

Discussion with the audience

Lack of knowledge is still a major factor, one attendee of the conference signals. For example, what are the common drivers of land investments? Understanding how it works is the basis of the solution. **Griet Steel**, LANDac & Utrecht University, reacts to this saying that some people feel that there is no time to fully understand the common drivers.

Both **Nienke Stam**, IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative, and **Alphonse Kyessi**, Institute of Human Settlements Studies, Ardhi University, stress that capacity development is an important factor. Stam: "When you start working in, for example, Sierra Leone, you cannot just open a can of experts. Expertise is scanty. You have look for resources on all sides; including the private sector and government." Kyessi adds: "Involving people involves capacitating them." In addition Kyessi calls for collecting and disseminating 'good practices'. "There is very little awareness 'on the ground' of the progress and the results made elsewhere." Putting the power-issue back on the table, he continues: "Without political will we can forget it." Nzira de Deus stresses that efforts must be made to share experiences: "Especially community efforts – successful or not – are largely undocumented." Ward Anseeuw argues that science should become more policy-oriented and bottom-up. One way to do this, is working with communities and then feeding the results of the research back into the community. Research should empower communities.

CLOSING NOTES

Joke Vroegop, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, closes this year's conference. Vroegop emphasises that land issues are a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This priority is highlighted by the yearly High-level LANDdialogue, organised at the ministry. This dialogue not only involves NGOs and policymakers, but also the private sector. Referring to the strong presence of women during the LANDac conference, Vroegop says that gender equality is a crosscutting theme in all policy issues at the ministry. A small team at the ministry is dedicated to involving the gender perspective in all activities. Bringing this year's conference to an end, Vroegop announces that the ministry plans to host an event on land governance to celebrate LANDac's 10-year anniversary next year. Researchers and practitioners are invited to present their work.

Finally, Annelies Zoomers and the LANDac fellows call upon the audience to become a LANDac fellow and join the LANDac network. After these final words, the participants at the conference are invited to the sunny courtyard of the Muntgebouw, for cold drinks and the multicultural sounds of the Noordooster Orchestra.



Land Governance in Transition: How to Support Transformations That Work for People and Nature?

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Deadline for manuscript submissions:

15 November 2019

Message from the Guest Editors

This Special Issue emerges from contributions to the LANDac Annual International Conference that takes place 4–5 July 2019, in Utrecht, the Netherlands. You are invited to submit your abstract by 1 August 2019 and full papers by 15 November 2019. Contributions may address several topics, for example:

1. Inclusive Land Governance: Gender and Migration
2. Urban Land Dynamics, Infrastructure and Deltas
3. Community Rights: Climate Change and Natural Resource Management
4. Realities of Dispossession, Displacement and Resettlement
5. Land Governance and Agribusiness
6. Land Governance in Practice: Approaches and Tools
7. Land Governance and New Technologies



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Special Issue

About LANDac

LANDac – the Netherlands Land Academy is a partnership between Dutch organizations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners who share a concern for land inequality and land-related conflicts to conduct research, distribute information and forge new partnerships.

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