Land Politics Working Group

MT 2019 and LT 2020

**Wednesdays, 4:30-6:00**

Meetings on Wednesdays, **4:30** to 5:45 + drinks for those available. Venue: **LSE CON 703**

Seminar organizer, 2019-20: Yuezhou Yang, LSE ID Y.Yang91@lse.ac.uk

MT Dates and presenters

23 October.

Yuezhou Yang, LSE, "Chinese Land Investments in Tanzania and Zambia: Prelimiary Results"

20 November.

Adam Harris, UCL. "Land Titling as Social Cleavage in Malawi and Zambia".

4 December.

Jonathan Weigel, LSE, "Land and legibility: Evidence from an urban land titling RCT in Congo"

LT Dates. Presenters TBA!

22 January.

12 February

Juliette Crespin-Boucaud, Paris School of Economics, and Alexander Moradi. "Settlement schemes and land titling in Kenya: What effects over time?"

11 March

Naomi Pendle, LSE, 'Contestation and claims of custom in response to changing land use in Western Lakes State, South Sudan'.

Participants (this is an open-access group)

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Abstracts

**Ms. Yeuzhou Yang, LSE International Development department (PhD student)**

**Land tenure institutions and Chinese land-based agricultural investment in Tanzania and Zambia: preliminary findings**

Abstract:

This thesis asks, Why do patterns of Chinese investment in agricultural land vary across and within African countries? Three sub-questions underline this main interrogation: What are the determinants of (1) timing, (2) locations, and (3) forms of Chinese investments in agricultural land in Africa? It uses Chinese agricultural investments in Tanzania and Zambia as case studies. China as the emerging great power has increasing economic engagements and political influence in African continent. In relation to Tanzania and Zambia, there is long history of China’s agricultural engagements in both countries with significant pre-2000 similarities, but also much cross-national and sub-national variations on different patterns of Chinese investments in agriculture since 2000. These unexplained variations call for deeper investigation.

This thesis uses detailed case studies to show how Chinese investors’ choices around the nature and locations of their agricultural investment projects are shaped by the national governing strategies of African countries, which vary both cross-nationally and across subnational political-economic contexts. The case studies featured in the thesis will be based on 150 interviews that I have collected during my 8-month fieldwork in Tanzania and Zambia.  One of the main arguments of this thesis is that there is great variation in Chinese investors' strategies both across and within Tanzania and Zambia, and that this suggests that African states have played an important role in defining Chinese investment patterns in their land. The observed outcomes also demonstrate that there are subtle and often decisive local constraints that shape investors' strategies. Given the often-controversial nature of China-Africa engagements, my evidence-based paper argues against attention-grabbing headlines describing a “Chinese scramble for Africa” and the “Chinese land grab” in Africa. By analyzing multiple and diverse Chinese investors involved in the agricultural sector in Tanzania and Zambia, the paper provides a more nuanced understanding of the local determinants of the timing, location, and forms of Chinese investment. Overall, this paper provides insight into how local conditions and policies set constraints on China-Africa investment agendas.