

Land Politics and Development Seminar, 2021-22

Thursdays, 5:00-6:30 (London) via Zoom and in-person

LSE CON.7.05 from 5-6:30pm.

This seminar has been organized as a joint LSE-UCL land politics workshop since 2016. It transitioned to a DSA study group in Dec. 2020. It is a forum for discussions and questions on land tenure, governance of land and property rights in development contexts. Researchers at all career stages, from all theoretical backgrounds and methodological traditions are welcome. In 2021-2022, this seminar will be hosted in hybrid format, via zoom and in-person at LSE.

If you would like to join the seminar group, please email Yuezhou Yang (y.yang91@lse.ac.uk). She will send out a Zoom invite link ahead of each session.

To attend in person, if you are not the speaker or a regular attendee, please contact Yuezhou Yang to confirm. We can accommodate up to 8 persons per session in a large room with windows. Following LSE rules, mask wearing and negative rapid test within past 4 days are required.

This is an open-access research group. Please circulate this flyer in your networks to anyone who may be interested.

Organizing committee: Catherine Boone (LSE) and Alexandra Hartman (UCL) . DSA Land and Development Study Group: Julian Quan, Tom Lavers, Matt Kandel . LSE seminar organizers: Carolin Dieterle, Yuezhou Yang

MT Term 2021

- Thu, 7 Oct. 2021 **Jean-Paul Faguet**, LSE, with Fabio Sánchez and Marta-Juanita Villaveces
The Perversion of Public Land Distribution by Landed Elites: Power, Inequality and Development in Colombia
- Thu, 4 Nov. 2021 **Juliette Crespín-Boucaud**. *Ethnic Homogenization and Public Goods: Evidence from Kenya's Land Reform Program*
- Thu, 9 Dec. 2021 **Alexandra Panman**, UCL, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit
Common Property and Urbanization: What Happens, Who Gains, and Why?

LT 2022

- Thu, 20 Jan. 2022 **Alexandra Hartman**, UCL, joint with Sigrid Weber. *Property Rights and Post-Conflict Recovery: Evidence from IDP Return Movements in Iraq*
- Thu, 3 Feb. 2022 **Alexander Dyzenhaus**, PhD candidate, Cornell University
The Price of Redistribution: Local Markets and Agriculture in South Africa's Land Reform Program
- Thu, 3 Mar. 2022 **Camilo Acero**, PhD candidate LSE (paper with and Frances Thomson and Monica Parada-Hernández. *Land formalization -- The new magic bullet in counternarcotics? A case study of coca cultivation and tenure (in)formality in Colombia.*

Abstracts

Thu, 7 Oct. 2021 Jean-Paul Faguet, Fabio Sánchez and Marta-Juanita Villaveces

The Perversion of Public Land Distribution by Landed Elites: Power, Inequality and Development in Colombia

Abstract (full paper available)

Over two centuries, Colombia transferred vast quantities of public land into private hands. Much of this process was justified publicly in terms of giving land to the landless and reducing rural poverty. And yet Colombia retains one of the highest concentrations of land ownership in the world. Why? Analyzing the period 1960-2010, we show that the effects of public land distribution across 1100+ municipalities are highly heterogeneous. Where small and medium-sized farms dominate, land distribution increased average farm size, decreased land inequality, and accelerated local development. But where land was concentrated in the hands of a rural elite, distributed land was diverted to bigger farms, resulting in fewer small and more large farms, greater plot size dispersion, and lower levels of development. We explore whether these effects flow through voter turnout, political competition, or public expenditure and taxation. Land distribution increases turnout, makes politics more competitive, and increases public service provision. But landed elites use patron-client ties to distort local policy and decision-making to their benefit. Land distribution's secondary, institutional effects on the distribution of power outweigh its primary effects on the distribution of land.

Thu, 4 Nov. 2021 Juliette Crespin-Bouncaud

Ethnic Homogenization and Public Goods: Evidence from Kenya's Land Reform Program

Abstract

Little is known about the effects of ethnic homogenization policies. In this paper, we examine the effects of ethnic homogenization on public good provision using a natural experiment that took place in Kenya. We study a large-scale land reform program that led to a significant reduction in ethnic diversity, the settlement schemes program. Using a novel dataset about the precise location of program area boundaries (Lukalo et al., 2019) that we combine with archival, survey, census, and satellite data, we implement a spatial regression discontinuity design. We argue that the border between program areas (treatment) and neighboring areas (counterfactual) is plausibly random at the local level and confirm that there are no observable differences in pre-treatment characteristics. We find a strong discontinuity in ethnic diversity but no differences in school provision between program areas and counterfactual areas in the short run as well as in the long run. As individuals were resettled to the program areas, they likely lack the dense social networks that favor collective action to either hold politicians accountable or to provide public goods throughout cooperation at the community level. Our results are not driven by spillovers from treatment to counterfactual areas. A mediation analysis indicates that income effects are unlikely to drive this null result.

Thu, 9 Dec. 2021 Alexandra Panman, UCL, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit

Common Property and Urbanization: What Happens, Who Gains, and Why?

Abstract

The world is urbanising rapidly. As cities expand, the payoffs to land uses change, property values rise, and, in many cases, property rights are transformed. This process is central to the economic benefits of cities yet are also associated with loss of cultural heritage and dispossession of the poor. Nowhere is this tension more evident than in peri-urban Africa, where there is growing policy interest in protecting customary land tenure regimes with collective titles. Is collective titling an effective policy response in the urban context? As has been documented in rural areas, collective titling projects are often marred by conceptual ambiguity and implementation challenges. Yet there are also unanswered questions about the internal stability of common property regimes under these conditions. The proposed research thus aims to shed new light on what happens to legally protected common property regimes as areas urbanise through mixed methods analysis of First Nations reserves in Canada. The quantitative analysis will draw on census and survey data to explore patterns in living standards and land uses across the approximately 700 reserves that are now located in peri-urban areas. The second phase will explore the institutional features that underpin the variation observed outcomes with qualitative research in purposefully selected reserves.

Thu, 3 Feb. 2022

Alex Dyzenhaus, PhD candidate, Cornell University

The Price of Redistribution: Local Markets and Agriculture in South Africa's Land Reform Program

Abstract

Classic theories of land redistribution contend that uneven, incomplete or stalled land reform is the result of recalcitrant, landed and wealthy elites who oppose the seizure of their assets. But in recent decades, land redistribution has changed. I argue that the uneven outcomes in contemporary land redistribution stem in part from intra-elite variation that makes certain agricultural sectors more willing participants in or more desirable targets for redistribution. In this paper, I focus on South Africa's post-apartheid land redistribution program to enquire into the conditions that allow for successful land redistribution from White to Black farmers. I build a typographical theory and test it using sub-national cases studies. Through interview-based and close analysis of two sectoral case studies within the land redistribution program, I show that one can explain subnational variation in land redistribution outcomes by examining the variation in the type of crop that landowners farm. I identify two conditions that contribute to the success or failure of land redistribution: the degree to which an agricultural sector is liberalized and whether institutional power is centralized. These local political and economic dynamics structure agricultural institutions, which in turn determine the supply of land from landowners and demand for that land by the state. The sugar sector, which centralizes power in processors and is less liberalized, has experienced a comprehensive buy-in to the land redistribution program on the part of landowners and is a moderate success story. In contrast, the grains sector, which is highly liberalized and disperses power among producers, has had patchwork and minimal participation in land redistribution and has thus under performed.

3 March 2022

Camilo Acero (and Frances Thomson and Monica Parada-Hernández)

Land formalization -- The new magic bullet in counternarcotics? A case study of coca cultivation and tenure (in)formality in Colombia.

This paper is forthcoming in *World Development*, 149, Jan 2022, avail. and is now in first view.

Abstract: Both policymakers and scholars have suggested that informal land tenure contributes to the perpetuation of illicit drug crop cultivation and, conversely, that land formalization programs serve counternarcotics aims. This article examines some of the key causal mechanisms said to underlie the posited relationship between land tenure (in)formality and the cultivation of crops used for illicit drug production. Our analysis is grounded in the context of Puerto Asís, Colombia – one of the most important coca-producing municipalities in a country that produces the majority of the world's cocaine. The case study is based on extensive fieldwork in Puerto Asís, including in-depth interviews with peasants who cultivate(d) coca, community leaders and local officials. We found: (i) that informal and semiformal institutions provide a *basic* level of land tenure security for both those with and without state-recognized property titles; (ii) that peasants invest considerable amounts of money and labor in their farms and community infrastructures, despite lacking formal land titles; (iii) that coca cultivation itself is a comparatively costly investment, with eighteen months minimum before payback; (iv) that peasants' access to credit is not conditioned on them having a formal land title; (v) that bank loans do not make people less dependent on coca cultivation; and that (vi) farmers find it difficult to survive with legal livelihoods and thus permanently exit the coca economy for a long list of reasons, which are not addressed via land titling and registration programs. These findings are contrary to popular policy narratives. We conclude that formal titles are an important tool for Colombian peasant farmers to defend their land against powerful external actors but will not necessarily serve the purposes commonly presented in the literature on illicit drugs.