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# Land enclosures and agrarian change in East Africa

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## Résumé

Atelier : "Paysages ruraux sub-sahariens en mutation face aux accaparements fonciers : expulsions, migrations, usages des sols et systèmes agraires" Large-scale land enclosures that international finance institutions labelled as development opportunity, and activists defined as 'land grabbing', escalated in coincidence with converging and mutually reinforcing food, financial and energy crises. The African continent has been the geographical epicentre of this new land rush. East Africa, on the other hand, seems to have recorded the highest number of large-scale commercial land deals. The new scramble for african land has been matched by a parallel literature rush as many studies have tried to grasp with its origins, causes and consequences. Yet a great part of this literature strictly focused on the character of newness of the process, and interpreted land grabbing as an epiphenomenon. Furthermore it framed the process in Manichean terms missing the social cleavages and stratifications of the effaected rural communities. The overall effect has been ignoring the existing agrarain social structures and the continuity with long term historical patterns of land dispossession. Drawing from two case studies in Uganda and Tanzania, the paper explores the implications of land grabs on pre-existing land tenure regimes, land use patterns and agro-ecological conditions. In doing so it aims understanding the ways in which capitalist land enclosures shape the trajectories of agrarian change and differentially affect the various social groups within the rural communities.

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