



Interrogating Dispossession for Development in Ethiopia

Yonas Tesema

To cite this article: Yonas Tesema (2022) Interrogating Dispossession for Development in Ethiopia, *Forum for Development Studies*, 49:1, 53-76, DOI: [10.1080/08039410.2021.1984305](https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2021.1984305)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2021.1984305>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 08 Oct 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 744



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Interrogating Dispossession for Development in Ethiopia*

Yonas Tesema 

Department of Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Abstract In this article, I explore some of the implications of state land policy as an approach to analyzing the *double dispossession* – land and labor dispossessions. Despite a growing interest in the study of land dispossession in the global South, especially after the post-2008 financial crisis, examining the complexities between the land policy, land and labor dispossessions have relatively been overlooked. I discuss how the state’s land policy contributes to coercive land dispossession and how this aspect of dispossession becomes the precondition for the second dispossession – labor. The people who lost their land to investments concurrently lost their employment, and a new class of landless and jobless farmers is emerging.

Keywords: land; labor; dispossession; Ethiopia

Introduction

In today’s fast globalizing world, the developing countries’ national borders have increasingly become permeable to the flow of capital from capital-rich but resource deficient countries. Globalization accelerates the free movement of goods, ideas and investment capital (Margulis et al., 2013), which simultaneously enhances development and exacerbates large-scale social uncertainties such as marginality, insecurity and dispossession (Appadurai, 2013; Webster et al., 2008). In recent years, Ethiopia witnessed the increasing intensity of transnational investment capital flow in industrial park expansion and agricultural production that led to mass dispossession for development. Over the past decade, Ethiopia has undergone significant economic growth under the umbrella of an emulated developmental state model (Abbink, 2017; Cheru, 2016; Clapham, 2018), which the government uses as the guiding principle to transform the country’s economy from subsistence farming to mechanized agriculture and industrialization. Although some do not agree with the achievement of Ethiopia’s development model, the government pursued a series of policies, including investment and manufacturing industrial policies, to lift the country out of socio-economic quagmires, which characterized much of its modern history. The

*When using the term ‘development’ I refer to Ethiopia’s progress in economic growth within the last decade. I use development synonymously with economic growth throughout this essay.

Ethiopian government is working to attract foreign manufacturing and agribusiness companies to transform the country's economy. The policy of lobbying foreign direct investment was designed with threefold major strategic objectives: creating job opportunities for the local community on agricultural estate and in the factory in newly established industrial parks, bringing foreign currency from export items of the industries, and development at large.

This economic liberalization resulted in the privatization of public assets and the expropriation of vast swathes of peasants' land in rural areas and suburbs of big and medium-sized cities in the country. The lands required for such investments are, in most cases, coercively taken from the landholders by the state power under the rubric of 'public purpose' and national development. This paper questions dispossession for development in Ethiopia. It interrogates the top-down approaches, flip-flop land laws and policies that favor arbitrary land dispossession due to industrial park expansion and large-scale commercial farming, and how this aspect of dispossession becomes a precondition for the labor dispossession. The paper draws upon published and unpublished sources and media reports.

The article is structured in four parts. It begins with highlighting dispossession theory in the context of classical and neoliberal times. The next part provides a historical overview of Ethiopia's emulated development models across different regimes and is followed by the political economy process that embodied in the state's land policy which favors the government and the wealthier individuals at the cost of the people who use the land and how it instantaneously causes the double dispossession – land and labor. The article concludes with some advices to manage dispossession.

Theorizing dispossession

Dispossession centers the process of capital accumulation both in classical periods and in modern times. It 'breathes new life into capital accumulation' (Harvey, 2003, p. 151). In the classic theory of Marx's ([1867] 1976) primitive accumulation (PA), peasants were separated from their means of production (i.e. land and labor) and were forced to sell their labor power to the capitalists. Marx points out that PA precedes capital accumulation and serves as a precondition toward the transition to capitalism by 'the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production' which aimed to create the 'two transformations – turning the social means of subsistence and production into capital, and the immediate producers into wage-laborers' (Marx, [1867] 1976, pp. 874–875). PA is, therefore, about the emergence of private property rights by enclosing the commons and expropriating the peasants by turning their land and labor into a commodity to make them wage-laborers working for the capitalists.

David Harvey (2003) reformulated PA as accumulation by dispossession (AbD) due to the *ongoing* process of capital accumulation as opposed to Marx's view of PA as a historical process and initial condition for capitalism to emerge. Harvey

(2003, 2005, 2007) endorses all the elements of dispossession put forward in Marx's PA, say for example, the commodification of land and labor power, forceful eviction and proletarianization of peasants, and the suppression of indigenous mode of production. For Harvey, there is a need to repackage PA to become AbD to catch all-on-going processes of capital accumulation; otherwise, he and other scholars underline the relevance of PA in modern times (Adnan, 2013; Carbonella and Kasmir, 2014; Chatterjee, 2017; Hall, 2013; Harvey, 2003; Kasmir and Carbonella, 2015; Li, 2009; Mishra and Nayak, 2020; Perelman, 2000). AbD is a process by which a surplus capital or overaccumulation in one place flows into the demanding territorial region in order to create more profit. It takes place through what Harvey (2003) calls a 'spatio-temporal fix' that is designed to absorb over accumulated capital, thereby creating new 'dynamic spaces of capital accumulation through geographical expansion' (2003, p. 120).

It seems to me there are on two grounds that PA is refashioned to become AbD: (1) to make it fit the contemporary neoliberal globalization that sings the mantra of 'financialization of everything' and (2) to incorporate the interventions from powerful external states and financial organizations under the rubric of development and maintaining security having capital accumulation intentions lurking behind the curtain. The neoliberal globalization, which loudly chants the financialization of everything, allows both multinational companies and neoliberal states to work towards this end. Observing the interventions from powerful states and organizations in the weaker states having the agenda of capital accumulation in their behind pocket is common in our time. Harvey (2005) discusses how the US intervened in the internal affairs of Iraq and how it paved the way for its business firms to engage in AbD during the Bush administration. He clarifies the role of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization in capital accumulation under the banner of aid and grant provided to the developing nations. Adnan (2013) supports the idea that the alienation of land and the eviction of peasants from their property is influenced by global factors such as the promotion of development interventions by international financial agencies.

AbD takes place in two forms – external and internal. I argue that capital accumulation, by both external and internal means, entails both forceful and peaceful. Externally, the forceful path goes up to regime changes in weaker states by powerful states and organizations and setting up institutional arrangements to ease the bureaucracy for their companies to work in these states (see for example Harvey, 2003, 2005) while the peaceful way mostly focuses on doing business rather than politics (e.g. Chinese companies in Africa). I will discuss how this external friendly way of AbD works in the next section. Internally, states engage in AbD either through the formulation of laws, violent means or fraud. The internal forms of AbD happen both in powerful and weaker states. For instance, Noelle Stout (2019) states that the vulnerable immigrant community becomes the target of contemporary forms of bureaucratically-governed AbD in Oak Park in California. In sum, external and internal structures of AbD

occur when the country's wealth or assets transfer from vulnerable to rich countries and when people's assets transfer to the upper classes or wealthier individuals, respectively (Harvey, 2007, p. 34). In AbD, states can be dispossessors, capital accumulators and can also be dispossessed by the powerful nations. In the process of AbD, as it was the case in PA, the state's role is immense. Marx ([1867] 1976) points out that the state played a paramount role in dispossessing the peasants and discipline the proletarians by the formulation of new laws. Marx ([1867] 1976, pp. 899-900):

the rising bourgeoisie needs the power of the state, and uses it to 'regulate' wages, i.e. to force them into the limits suitable for making a profit, to lengthen the working day, and to keep the worker himself at his normal level of dependence. This is an essential aspect of so-called primitive accumulation.

Concerning the state's role in capital accumulation, Harvey's AbD expands its scope to the interventions from powerful countries in other weak states in contrast to PA and updates Marx's argument to the neoliberal state level. A neoliberal state, as formulated by Harvey (2005, p. 7), is a state which imposes force through its security apparatus to facilitate profitable capital accumulation conditions. The neoliberal states do this to satisfy the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital. Anthropologically speaking, neoliberalism is 'a casual force that comes in from outside to decimate local livelihoods' (Ferguson 2009, p. 171). The creation of neoliberal system (e.g. limited states' role in the market, conditionalities put forward by big world financial institutions, transfer of wealth from poor to prosperous countries, from subordinate to dominant class, and financialization of everything) 'has entailed much destruction on the division of labor, social relations, attachment to the land and the ways of life' (Harvey, 2007, pp. 22–23).

I observe a couple of critiques associated both with PA and AbD theoretical approaches. First, both theories focused on *how* and *when* the capital is accumulated and are unable to show *what* standard of accumulation constitutes capital accumulation? Do all types of dispossessions constitute capital accumulation, or does dispossession happen only for the accumulation of capital? What is the non-economic aspect of dispossession such as socio-cultural values? For instance, if the investor takes away land in many African countries, it is not just land that is gone but also a social, cultural, and ontological resource attached to it. Land plays a vital role in constructing social identity, organization of religious life, production and reproduction of culture (AU, 2009, p. 22; Wolford et al., 2013, p. 205). The land is a power that connects family, lineages and generations, and that it cements belonging (Zwan, 2010, p. 8). What the actors of AbD seem unable to understand is that 'turning land into a commodity entailed a profound erasure of sedimented cultural practices and historical memories through which land as a collective entitlement had been inscribed' (Makki and Geisler, 2011, p. 3). What if the dispossessor (mainly the state) uses the dispossession mechanisms for the non-economic purpose like consolidating its power and thickening

politics as happened in Burkina Faso (Côte and Korf, 2018) and Ethiopia (Asebe et al., 2018; Asebe and Korf, 2018; Fana, 2016; Korf et al., 2015; Lavers, 2016). Thus, not all types of accumulation by dispossession befall in the best interests of capital accumulation. Second, Harvey's (2003) analysis of AbD is ahistorical, while Marx's ([1867] 1976) PA is historical. Harvey failed to investigate diachronic aspects of capital accumulation whilst he reiterates the *ongoing* process of accumulation practices. Conversely, Marx also was unable to analyze the PA synchronically. For Marx ([1867] 1976, p. 875), PA is 'the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production' and happened at the 'point of departure' towards the transition to capitalism. Nothing had been said about how PA does or does not work after the transition. Adnan (2013) illustrates that PA is both a precondition for capitalism to emerge and an ongoing process of capitalist production. As Perelman (2000) aptly puts it, PA should not be relegated to pre-capitalist past, rather it plays a continuing role in capitalist development. If new people and resources continue to be incorporated into capitalist production, PA 'is not a finished historical stage, but it is an ongoing process' (Hall, 2013, p.1585).

Despite the conceptual ambiguities (see Adnan, 2013; Hall, 2013) both theories build on and their relevancy to various types of dispossessions, they both provide us insights how capital is accumulated at the expense of the people who hold the property ready to be expropriated and laid the foundation for the study of state's role in AbD both in classical and neoliberal times. Although some use Marx's PA and Harvey's AbD interchangeably, the latter deemed explanatory about the contemporary forms of dispossession in advanced capitalism (Arrighi et al., 2010). Both PA and AbD provide the conceptual framework for examining industrialization and land development processes in Ethiopia today. Regarding the enclosure of agricultural lands, Marx describes that 'the expropriation assumes different aspects in different countries, and at different historical epochs' ([1867] 1976, p. 876). The process of expropriating peasants and urban poor in Ethiopia is similar to Marx's PA happening in the modern era at 'different historical epoch.' The proletarianization of farmers and the transition to capitalist development is ongoing as the country initiated a massive industrialization program to lift people out of poverty.

The crisis of overaccumulation (Harvey, 2003; Luxemburg, [1913] 2003) in developed economies forced the capitalists to search for new sources of land, labor, and resources (Kasimir and Carbonella, 2008), mainly in the global South. It is on this ground that companies from global North and emerging economies in the global South are relocating their plants where 'cheap labor' and 'vacant' or 'unused' lands are abundant. In this vein, Ethiopia became an ideal destination for several large-scale land investments and labor-intensive manufacturing companies from global North and South, which are searching for cheap labor and 'unused' lands for manufacturing industries and agricultural investments. Being a destination for manufacturing industries brings dreams and hopes among unemployed people in the country. However, the process of allocating land for both types of investments in urban

outskirts and rural areas was not without harm. Thousands of local people become deprived and dispossessed of their land and employment due to large-scale agricultural land investments, industrial parks, and big dam projects by the state policy of ‘coercive dispossession.’ In classical PA, peasants were forcefully divorced from their means of production to facilitate initial conditions for capitalism to kick off. Similarly, contemporary forms of dispossession occur through fraud, violence, brute and coercive measures by the state forces (Borras and Franco, 2012; D’Costa and Chakraborty, 2017; Li, 2010; Walker, 2008; Wolford et al., 2013), without public dialogue in the form of what Dessalegn (2014) calls state’s ‘divine omniscience.’ Before I proceed to dispossession, let me brief some development approaches that Ethiopia attempts to follow across different regimes.

A glimpse at Ethiopia’s development approaches

Ethiopia has pursued different models of development across different regimes. The Ethiopian leaders have been emulating development models mostly from the East (e.g. Japan, Russia, and recently China, South Korea, and Taiwan). In sharp contrast to African experiences where the idea of modernization and development spawned in the 1960s post-independence period, Ethiopia has had development programs since the reign of Tewodros (1855–1868). Both Tewodros and Menelik II (1889–1913) attempted to modernize the country even though we cannot associate them with either emulated or homegrown specific development plans (Clapham, 2006). During the reign of Emperor Hailesillassie (1930–1974), the official development model emulation program started to take off. A group of educated Ethiopians, called progressive intellectuals or ‘Japanizers,’ who had pursued their education abroad in developed countries, attempted to modernize the country through the footsteps of the ‘Japanese miracle’ in the early 1920s and 1930s. This group emulated the Japanese development model due to the speedy Japanese transformation from feudalism to leading industrial power (Bahru, 2002b; Clapham, 2006). Besides the elites’ attempts of coping development paths, Emperor Hailesillassie himself had the dream of making Ethiopia ‘the Japan of Africa’ (Bahru, 2002b). The emperor tried to modernize the country by opening its economy to multinational corporations, which was aimed to boost agro-industrial productivity. For instance, the emperor granted large-scale agricultural land to Dutch HVA for a sugar plantation and British Mitchell Cotts for cotton farm (Asebe and Korf, 2018; Clapham, 2006, 2015; Kelsall, 2013).

After the downfall of Hailesillassie in 1974, Russia appeared to be an inspirational development model for Ethiopia during the Marxist-Leninist reign of Mengistu Hailemariam (1974–1991) on the ground of answering ‘peasant and national questions.’ Land redistributions to peasants, the establishment of state farms and agricultural producer cooperatives, and the dispatchment of students to the rural areas to support the residents were among the achievements of the socialist government to improve the lives of the people (Clapham, 2006). The then coalition Ethiopian People’s

Revolutionary Democratic Front¹ (EPRDF) government has also adopted Marxist-Leninist political economy ideology from 1991 to 2000s, when the development paradigm shifted towards emulating the developmental state model of the so-called Asian tiger economies. The main target of the EPRDF government was improving agricultural productivity to lift millions of farmers out of socio-economic quagmires, and that is why the state involved in large-scale private and state-owned agricultural investment (Clapham, 2018) that eventually changed the ‘land to the tiller’ motto to ‘land to the investor’ (Asebe and Korf, 2018) in the early 2000s. Most recently, the Ethiopian state has also engaged in the expansion of industrial parks. The EPRDF ‘government supports policies that target economic development through strategic neo-liberal directives that seek private capital investment to transform a smallholder agricultural to an industrialized agricultural economy’ (Song, 2015, p. 23). This neo-liberal development approach disproportionately dispossessed the subaltern groups both in rural and urban areas.

Except for EPRDF’s developmental state that achieved rapid economic growth over the past decade, none of the Japanese and Russian development models executed successfully due to the difference between theory and practice. Clapham (2018) analyzes that emulated development models failed mainly due to cultural obstacles and weakness of state machinery in Ethiopia. It is at this point that I find the importance of Ake’s (1996) argument about the failure of development models in Africa:

Because of exogeneity and its contradictions, Africa does not even at this late stage have a development agenda ... Africa has a confusion of agendas, reflecting the demonstrated failure of an exogenous agenda that its promoters do not acknowledge and the unfulfilled promise of an endogenous agenda that African leaders are too dependent and too diffident to push through. (Ake, 1996, p. 118)

Back to Clapham’s (2018) culture as obstacles to development, there are competing narratives about the role of culture in Africa’s development agenda. Some argue that ‘traditional’ culture in the continent becomes an obstacle to development, while others reject this idea and propose incorporating culture in the development agendas. The latter group of scholars insists that ‘development is a historical process deeply rooted in the cultural values and psychological systems of individual nations and communities’ (Odhiambo, 2002, p. 5). And hence, culture should not be viewed as an obstacle to development if the ‘selected policies reflect the knowledge and tastes of the masses, rather than those of powerful elites’ (Kuran, 2004, p. 135). The importation of development agendas from abroad and top-down approaches of development inevitably face resistance from the locals where it is designed to take place unless it is contextualized to the people’s cultural values and norms. The externally designed top-down approaches of development models attempted to be pursued

¹ This coalition party was dissolved in 2019 to become Prosperity Party – a party that is now in power.

by successive Ethiopian regimes and elites from the early 1920s to Hailemariam Desalegn's² period in 2018 apparently did not to any extent bring the intended results.

Dispossessing for development

Dispossession is 'part of the transition process in the advanced capitalism – from field to factory, agriculture to industry [and] peasants to wage workers' (Noy, 2019, p. 24). The former and incumbent Ethiopian governments have been coercively dispossessing people in towns and rural areas under the banner of development. Dispossession occurs in the cities in the name of slum reclamation or redevelopment, industrial and infrastructural development, while it took place in rural areas in favor of large-scale agricultural investments, sugar plantations, mining and big dam projects. Land dispossession has been embedded in Ethiopia's state-building projects across different regimes from the time of modern state formation to the present time. Under this section, I will discuss an overview of land and labor dispossessions in contemporary Ethiopia.

Land dispossession

Land has played a central role in Ethiopia's political economy. It has been the source of conflict and subject of political debate since the dawn of the country's modern history. Land expropriation and dispossession in Ethiopia has roots in imperial times during the reign of Menelik and Hailesillasie. The people of the southern and western parts of the country lost their land to Menelik's conquest in the late nineteenth century, and the right to own those taken lands was transferred to the military officials. Emperor Menelik owned all the land and granted land to his local chiefs, soldiers, and rulers, mainly in newly conquered areas (Asebe and Korf, 2018; Donham, 1986). In 1909/10, Emperor Menelik announced a new land measurement proclamation, probably the first of its kind, known as Land Apportionment Act³ which dispossessed

2 Hailemariam Dessalegn, who ruled Ethiopia from 2012 to 2018, came to power after the sudden death of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Ethiopia is now being ruled by Noble Peace Prize Laureate Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power in 2018. It is unclear what type of development paradigm his government is pursuing even though he introduced *medemer* as the all-encompassing philosophical paradigm that includes social, economic, and politics. *Medemer* 'is a homegrown idea that is reflected in our political, social, and economic life' (Ahmed, 2020). It is unclear whether his government sticks to the developmental state model or not as Abiy was busy deconstructing his predecessor's structures in all aspects.

3 According to this proclamation, the peasants' land had taken away by the state, landlord, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the peasants only allowed to retain one-third of his/her possessions. The central government benefited from the proclamation while it impoverished the peasants (see Tesema, 1984, pp. 184–190, 2006, pp. 108–113).

peasants from their land in favor of feudal lords, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, settlers and retired army officials in the conquered southern and southwestern regions of the country (Tesema, 1984, 2006). This trend continued during the reign of Emperor Haileselassie, where the royal family, soldiers, political supporters, and absentee landlords enjoyed the right to own the land (Asebe and Korf, 2018; Brüne, 1990). In 1942, Emperor Haileselassie enacted land grant proclamation, which led to the transfer of large tracts of land from peasants and pastoralists to private hands (Tesema, 1984). Large swathes of land were forcibly taken from its users and transferred to the regime's loyalists, patriots, ex-soldiers, the state, and Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Asebe and Korf, 2018; Bahru, 2002a; Markakis, 1974). The expropriation of the land transformed the lives of the locals from landowning into tenants of absentee landlords (Clapham, 1988; Pausewang, 1983; Tesema, 1984, 2006), and this spawned the popular 'land to tiller' students' slogan in the 1960s that eventually led to the change of government in 1974.

The Derg⁴ government (1974–1991) proclaimed land reform in 1975 by which the landlord-tenancy structure was abolished, and all land was nationalized, and the land was redistributed to peasants according to the family size. However, the nationalization of land dispossessed peasants from their customary access to land and gave the state extraordinary power to determine issues related to the land (Makki, 2014). The proclamation institutionalized state control over the rural land through the newly established peasant associations and forbade land sale, private ownership of land, lease, or mortgage (Daniel et al., 2011). The EPRDF came to power in 1991 and endorsed its predecessor's land reform proclamation by the 1995 constitution, which gives the state ownership of land.

Under the EPRDF regime, the state owns all rural and urban lands and has the power to expropriate land from anyone when required for 'public interest.' The farmers have usufruct rights over their land, the right to bequeath the land to their children, and the right to lease for a short period, which varies across different regional states' land proclamations. Therefore, the state's involvement in large-scale land deals is common in Ethiopia provided that the state owns the land where 'expropriation of farmland from small-scale farmers has been used by all levels of government as a tool for providing a new land for industrial investors, commercial agriculture and expanding cities' (Harris, 2015, p. 1). Land dispossession in Ethiopia is taking place due to large-scale land acquisition or land grab either by foreign or domestic companies 'whereby direct producers were separated from the means of production; common property rights are privatized, and non-capitalist modes of productions were either harnessed or destroyed' (Wolford et al., 2013, p. 197). Since the ratification of Ethiopia's 1995 constitution, the state emerged as the owner and distributor of the land, and as the buyer and dispossessor of the land for the 'development purpose'

4 Derg means committee and refers to the Mengistu Hailemariam regime, who ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991. He was ousted from power by the coalition EPRDF government.

or ‘public cause.’ In what follows, I will elaborate on the politics of land ownership, how it favored the state and private capital, how it contributes to dispossession, and the top-down process of dispossession.

Politics of land entitlement

Ethiopia’s landholding systems have been changing from regime to regime based on the interests of that government. The feudal landholding system was replaced in 1974 by the socialist government. The incumbent government also changed its predecessor’s landholding system by the 1995 constitution that gives the state the right to own the land collectively with the people. This situation inevitably paves the way for the state to dispossess the land from its users whenever the state wants to. Article 40 (3) of the constitution reads:

The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all-natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and the peoples of Ethiopia. The land is a common property of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or other means of exchange.

The current constitution dangles between theory and practice when it comes to land ownership. Article 40(1) of the constitution states that ‘every Ethiopian citizen has the right to the ownership of private property.’ However, the principle of the right to own private property does not recognize the land, which is a paradox. In practice, peasants have the right to use the land but not to own it as private property, the state has the right to own and use it. It seems that the state loopholes article 40 (3) of the constitution when it takes the sole owner of rural land by the Federal Rural Land Administration and Land Use Proclamation No.456/2005. Article 5(3) of this proclamation reads, ‘government being the *owner* of rural land; communal rural landholding can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary.’ This article utterly contradicts the constitution, and it becomes evident that the government rearranges its laws to set up institutional grounds to make it suitable for investors and to accumulate capital. This Ethiopian state’s role corresponds with what Harvey (2007, 35) calls ‘definition of legality’ to promote accumulation by dispossession. According to proclamation No.456/2005, holding right is defined as the right of any peasants:

To use rural land for the purpose of agriculture and natural resources development, lease and bequeath to members of his family or other lawful heirs and includes the right to acquire property produced on his land thereon by his labor or capital and to sell, exchange and bequeath the same.

From this excerpt, one can understand that the people have the right to use the land (e.g. develop the property, lease, bequeath to lawful heirs) but not to sell or present his/her land as collateral. On the contrary, investors who were granted land for investment can present the land for collateralization. Article 8(4) of the proclamation says, ‘an

investor who has leased rural land may present his use right as collateral.’ The land-holding policies systematically favor private companies. At the same time, the value of the land is measured in terms of productivity and the market value it worths. From this, we can understand that dispossession is not just an event; it is a political economy process squarely entrenched in the landownership policy of the state. Thus, the land policy has had a significant influence on the dispossession of the farmers.

The process

Understanding the capitalist enclosure in Ethiopia ‘would be incomplete without addressing the critical role of the state’ (Makki and Geisler, 2011, p. 3). The state usually plays a crucial role in promoting AbD through its monopoly of violence and definition of legality (Harvey, 2007, p. 35). Only state agencies have the power to allocate ‘unused’ lands to investors and use force to help investors get the required resources and profits (Li, 2015). The country’s large-scale land deals process takes place between the federal government and investors at the federal level. The role of regional governments is to identify potential land for investment with its size, location, suitability for what types of investment, and submit it to the federal land bank. It is the duty of the federal government to lobby foreign investors and sign an agreement with them. The federal government’s duty is to sign a lease agreement for land size measuring 5000 ha and above. After the agreement is made at the federal level, the federal government orders the local authority to execute the deal through its hierarchy of administration (Yonas, 2014). As such, it is not land deals between investors, local officials, and local community who hold the right to use the land. In 2009, in the wake of global financial, food and energy crises, the Agricultural Investment Support Directorate was established at the federal level under the Ministry of Agriculture to govern land measuring 5000 ha and above irrespective of the constitutional basis (Lavers, 2016; Makki and Geisler, 2011; Yonas, 2014). Article 52(2)(d) of the constitution gives regional governments the powers and functions to administer land and other natural resources. However, the establishment of the Agricultural Investment Support Directorate to administer rural lands under the jurisdiction of regional states contradicts the constitution.

In many cases, the land deal process followed top-down approaches without consulting the local officials and the community about the development project initiated to be kicked off. The government redefined the land where the investment designed to take place as ‘unused,’ ‘vacant’ or ‘terra nullius,’ and no popular consultation and informed consent were guaranteed (Makki, 2014; Makki and Geisler, 2011). The government always denies the expropriation of land and reiterates that large-scale investments take place on unused land. The then deputy minister for Agriculture and Rural Development ministry, Wondirad Mandefro, denied the accusation about the dispossession of the local community from their land in favor of large-scale investment projects. Speaking to the House of Peoples’ Representatives back in 2014, Wondirad said,

‘there was no one Ethiopian citizen dispossessed from their ancestral land for the sake of investment; investment took place only on unused public and state land’ (Adaye, 2014, p. 235). Ironically, the absence of popular consultations with the concerned community and top-down decision-making process traces the *modus operandi* and divine omniscience character of previous imperial and dictatorial regimes in Ethiopia. Even if consultation is made, it does not encompass all the would-be dispossessed people, as it is only done with pre-selected ‘representatives’ of the community. For example, in Bako Tibe in western Ethiopia, this kind of consultation was done, and no one even knew who and how these representatives were selected to discuss the issue with the state officials (Yonas, 2014).

There has been a clash of power between federal and regional governments on how to bring development projects down to the community where it was planned to take place. The federal government imposes its development plan without consulting the regional governments and the communities. For instance, the Addis Ababa Master Plan, which ignited thousands to protest designed to encompass substantial areas surrounding Addis Ababa from Oromia regional state without consulting the regional government and local communities. Regarding this power incongruity, the then Oromia regional state higher official and now minister of Mines, Takele Uma once said:

The issue of Addis Ababa and the towns that are surrounding the city is not merely a question of the master plan. It is an identity issue. When we raise the issue of identity, the expansion of Addis Ababa to its surrounding towns [in Oromia regional state] must be in accordance with respect and recognition of the Oromo people’s identity, history, and socio-political practices. We all are aware of the dispossession history of Addis Ababa. That is why we insist on the master plan to be implemented as per the articles of the constitution. We do not want to see Addis Ababa and Oromia’s development that pushes farmers to the margin, rather we want both farmers and their children included. To be implemented, the master plan must be first accepted by the people and the government of Oromia regional state but must not be imposed by another entity.⁵

‘By another entity ...’ Takele refers to the imposition of the development agenda by the federal government without consulting the Oromia regional government and the people against the country’s constitution. It is against article 89 (6) that reads ‘government shall at all times promote the participation of the people in the formulation of national development policies and programs.’ Probably Takele Uma was the first public official who denounced the threat of expropriation by the federal government due to the large-scale expansion of Addis Ababa in the radius of 100 km that would have dispossessed thousands of farmers from their land. The previous trend around the outskirts of the city shows that the state coercively dispossesses farmers by

⁵ This excerpt is taken from Takele Uma’s speech on Oromia Broadcasting Network in April 2014. I accessed the statement from the media’s channel online, and I translated from Amharic.

providing them certain amounts of compensation payment and accumulated capital by auctioning the land to the private businesses.

On the other hand, the global South states have their own interest lurking on behind the expropriation of lands in the name of ‘public purpose.’ The aim concealed behind the dispossession of the local community in peripheral regions in Ethiopia has sparked debate about the selection of the regions for large-scale investment purposes. Millions of hectares of land registered and submitted to the federal land bank are from the peripheral lowland regions. In the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) (2010–2015), the Ethiopian government prioritized lowland areas to transfer large-scale agricultural lands to international investors. The GTP document reads,

... where abundant and extensive land exists, large-scale commercial agriculture is possible, assessment will be made to identify suitable land and keeping the same in organized land bank; and promoting such lands for investment by facilitating for local and external investors to develop it using lease system. While keeping the support for private investment in large-scale farms, focus will be made to ensure that the products produced from such farms to be primarily for exports. In this regard, emphasis will be accorded for cotton, date palm, tea, rubber tree and the like ... In the coming five years, over 3 million hectares of land will be identified, prepared and, used for the desired development purpose by transferring it to investors and in so doing tangible support will also be given to private investors to enhance their investment in commercial agriculture. (Quoted in Srur 2014, p. 131).

According to available data, a total of 577, 570.7 hectares of land has been identified for large-scale agricultural production in the lowland regions of Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nation and Nationalities (Srur 2014, p. 222). In 2009, the government declared that 1.2 million hectares of ‘unused’ land was available in the Gambella region alone and waited for the investors (Makki and Geisler, 2011). Despite the government’s argument that the areas have ‘untapped’ or ‘unused’ fertile lands, some argue that the state chose the regions to consolidate its power in peripheral areas through the presence of security apparatus deployed to safeguard the investment projects. In this vein, Asebe et al. (2018) conclude that the state is ‘thickening its power’ through dispossession and coercive development mechanisms in Southern Ethiopia. Similarly, Fana (2016), Korf et al. (2015), and Lavers (2016) elucidate the agenda behind the large-scale land investments in the peripheral regions as a ‘state territorialization,’ ‘territory making’ and ‘enhancing state sovereignty,’ respectively.

To sum up, dispossession generates income for some and deteriorates livelihood for others. An empirical study by Harris (2015) on the outskirts of Kombolcha town in northern Ethiopia shows that the expropriated households engaged in business and non-farming activities than those who do not lose the land. The compensation payment ‘could lead to improve credit access, informal insurance, and local labor hiring conditions’ (Harris, 2015, p. 12). Let’s say the dispossessed farmers have enjoyed the cash compensation, but it is cash, not a crop for the poor. Dispossessing

farmers from their means of production forces them to buy their subsistence needs as commodities from the market (Chatterjee, 2017). What one of Teshome's (2014, p. 135) interlocutors said better catches this situation, 'we received the cash compensation, we used to buy grain for food since what we produce is not sufficient to feed our children.' Once they finish the money, there is a high tendency to fall into debt and end up as wage laborers (Li, 2009). Therefore, Harris's (2015) analysis works under a limited precondition which depends on the educational background of the dispossessed farmers, their business skills, a large amount of compensation package, and when we just measure dispossession in terms of economic resources than considering 'value dispossession' (Kan, 2019) or 'value grabbing' (Andreucci et al., 2017), and the 'epistemic dispossession' (Samson, 2015). Consequently, it is a mistake to see development 'as a quantitative material process' (Abbink, 2011, p. 524). Development must be reconceptualized from the viewpoint of the social, economic, political, and psychological web of people's past, present and future unless we could not have the comprehensive meaning of 'development' when some loose and the others accumulate capital.

Labor dispossession

Dispossession in Ethiopia does not merely entail the land; it also includes labor dispossession. I define labor dispossession as a type of unemployment or underemployment that occurs when the status of the dispossessed farmers is downgraded from previously self-producing on their land to either become 'surplus' or work for companies less than what is necessary for their reproduction. Not all land dispossession leads to labor dispossession. Labor dispossession happens when the dispossessed producers are left without livelihood options or earn less than what they used to get. By labor dispossession, I intend to mean having the labor power and interest to work but unable to get either equivalent or better job when compared with their previous status. In short, if the investors took farmers' land and failed to provide them either equivalent or better jobs, he/she is not only taking away the land property but also their employment, the moral and the interest to work. According to theorists like John Locke and Karl Marx, labor is a private property solely owned by the laborer. Echoing Locke's notion of labor property theory, Marx ([1867] 1976, p. 271) justifies labor power as a commodity and private property of the laborer. The dispossession of this private property happens in two ways: (1) when foreign companies import workers to the labor-abundant country to work a kind of work that can be taken by local workers, and (2) when dispossessed farmers unable to be absorbed into the job market and hence become underemployed or 'surplus population.' I elaborate on both assumptions as follows.

In the past decade, Ethiopia's economy has shown an exponential growth rate. The country built several industrial parks by loans secured by the Chinese government. There are also a lot of Chinese state-owned companies engaging in the booming

construction industry in Ethiopia. China gives loans and sends its companies and workers to build infrastructure projects in Ethiopia. Thus, the Chinese government and companies accumulate capital in the form of debt extraction. Besides debt extraction through loans, Chinese companies usually dispossess local labor by importing their own laborers. According to a report by CARI (2020), the number of Chinese contract workers and workers doing labor service in Africa is estimated to be more than 200,000 in 2018, of which Ethiopia shares 9112 Chinese workers and tops fifth in the continent. The number of Chinese contract workers and laborers in Ethiopia declined from 14,078 in 2014 to 9112 in 2018. China has the tradition to export its labor in overseas investment projects (Bräutigam and Xiaoyang, 2011; Li, 2009) that inevitably dispossesses the local workforce. The tradition that prioritizes its workforce at the expense of domestic workers is embedded in the biopolitics of the Chinese government (Li, 2009, p. 76). The Chinese action is the peaceful way of AbD as I envisaged above. It is peaceful because it doesn't entail regime changes or superseding in internal affairs but silently engages in both land and labor dispossessions, which I call a 'swamp of puncture.' We do not observe puncture in swampy and spongy lands until we get pierced. It is peaceful from outside and pierces from inside.

The process of industrialization and urbanization in Ethiopia does not absorb labor as estimated, and it marginalizes who gets a job and who does not. There is no doubt that dispossession creates jobs for a few people. Abbink (2011) points out that large-scale land investment in the country creates job opportunities for those who do not have land. Even though the wage is meager, as low as 26 dollars per month for factory workers (see, e.g. Barret's and Baumann-Pauly's [2019, p. 1] recent report), it is better than their previous landless status. Consequently, the job opportunity helps property-less laborers who must sell their labor power to survive (Hall, 2013; Harvey, 2014; Kalb, 2015; Li, 2014) than those who lost their property and control over the means of production. Lack of absorbing all dispossessed farmers into the job market inevitably creates a 'surplus population' (Chatterjee, 2017; D'Costa and Chakraborty, 2017; Li, 2009). There are documented cases that link dispossession to the employer's need for more workers as a 'surplus' (Li, 2009; Watts, 2009). Deliberate creation of reserve or surplus population cannot work in Ethiopia as the country has plenty of 'reserve' unemployed youth population. However, the possibility of getting jobs in the factories or agribusiness companies is bestowed in the youths' hands, probably due to young labor power, educational status, and docility or having 'nimble fingers,' especially women. As a result, thousands of older people dispossessed from their land are not being absorbed into capitalist production and, hence, implicitly become surplus population.

The creation of surplus population is a loss for a country like Ethiopia, where millions of 'educated unemployed' (Li, 2017) youths 'just sit and wait' (Mains, 2007) for jobs. Li (2009, p. 69) juxtaposes the importance of places and people in the lenses of capital accumulation 'in which places or their resources are useful, but the people are not, so that dispossession is detached from any prospect of labor

absorption.’ Li moves on, ‘for the dispossessed who need to work but failed to encounter capital, the situation is dire’ (2009, p. 70). Thus, the dispossessed farmers who did not get a job in the capitalist production either because of their age or unfulfillment of employment promises are not just dispossessed from their land; they become ‘potential reserve army of migratory labor or labor power freed for global consumption’ (Araghi, 2009 quoted in Li, 2009, p. 69). Their land is useful, but their labor is surplus (Hall, 2013; Li, 2009). This kind of primitive accumulation converts ‘human labor and natural resources into “free-floating” factors of production, ready-made for allocation within the capitalist market’ (Wolf, 1971, p. 3). The absence or low absorption of dispossessed peasants into the new economy separated them from their means of subsistence. But how possible is it to transform the country’s economy while keeping dispossessed people away as surplus labor? Sanyal and Bhattacharya (2010, p. 167) underline the impossibility of ‘the process of transition from one mode of production to a higher one without proletarianization that leaves the majority of the laboring population outside the dynamics of the great transformation.’

In much of the global South where large-scale land dispossession is taking place, the anticipations to transform the economy from agriculture to industrialization seems to have fallen far short of its goals. There is no clear pathway from agriculture to industry (Li, 2010, 2011). In this regard, Li (2017) analyzes the failure of large-scale investments in Southeast Asia in absorbing labor, and hence the dispossessed farmers become ‘surplus population’ to the needs of capital. Capitalist accumulation and reproduction determine the labor supply in order to yield maximum profit and productivity (Fernández-Kelly, 1983). As espoused above, not all dispossessed farmers in Ethiopia are absorbed into the industrialization projects, and they become surplus to the capital requirements. In a recent TV interview,⁶ Oromia regional state deputy president Chaltu Sani praised a Chinese garment factory owner in Dukem town who trained dispossessed farmers and hired them to sew clothes in his factory. Chaltu traces the suffering of the dispossessed farmers due to the expansion of the industrial zone and low labor absorption of the farmers in the factories. That is why she praised the Chinese factory owner, and she requested other investors to follow his footsteps. It is uncommon to hear about the suffering of the farmers from state officials in the country. Chaltu’s praise of the Chinese factory owner’s ‘generosity’ is significant to understand the intricacies of the relationship between the dispossessor (the state), the dispossessed (proletarians) and the capitalist accumulator (the factory owner). As I argued above, the relevance of PA in Ethiopia today is vividly shown when the capitalist dispossesses farmers from their land and makes them ready for capitalist production by transforming their lives from landowning to landless, from self-production to producing for the

⁶ Mrs. Chaltu Sani is a deputy president of Oromia Regional State, and the interview was conducted on May 29, 2020, on Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). I accessed the video online via the FBC channel, and I translated it from the Amharic language.

capitalist. When they lose their land, they surrender and were forced to sell their labor under the instances that Deninger (2003) calls ‘distress’ sale.

Chaltu continued

he [the Chinese factory owner] gathered the dispossessed peasants, trained them on how to sew clothes and work with the machine. He did not only train the peasants; he also trained their children on how to sew cloth in the factory.

In her interview with FBC, Chaltu disclosed the suffering of the dispossessed farmers due to eviction and low labor absorption, and she begged other investors or factory owners to create job opportunities for those in need. This shows the creation of a surplus population due to the low absorption of dispossessed farmers into factory production. As Marx ([1867] 1976, p. 848) observed, the evictions of farmers and the introduction of machinery create a ‘relative surplus population.’ The capitalists convert the farmers into surplus population despite the increasing mass of their productivity to weaken the power of resistance and make ‘them mere slaves of the land proprietors. The minimum wage becomes a law of nature for them’ ([1867] 1976, p. 849). Marx categorizes ‘relative surplus population’ into three:

- (1) those who can work
- (2) potential industrial reserve army (e.g. orphans and pauper children)
- (3) those who are unable to work (e.g. older people beyond the worker’s average life span, those who unable to adapt, and the victims of industry) ([1867] 1976, p. 797).

In this sense, the ‘generous act’ made by the Chinese factory owner, praised by Chaltu, falls under Marx’s argument of creating the potential reserve army of laborers. The children of dispossessed farmers trained on how to sew clothes in the factory can, of course, be viewed as a surplus population making ready for the upcoming capitalist expansion. Indeed, this process of capital accumulation is preceded by ‘the multiplication of the proletariat’ (Marx [1867] 1976, p. 764).

What state officials like Chaltu seemingly are unable to understand is that the farmers had their own job before the eviction because they had hectares of land, and they used to produce for their day-to-day life. It is the state which dispossessed them from their land – from one of the most crucial income-generating assets, under the rubric of national development and alienated them from their land and labor power. i.e. alienation of means of production. As Karl Polanyi ([1944] 2001, p. 73) bluntly puts it, labor and land are the two essential elements of production. If someone has labor power but not land where to produce (as happening in Ethiopia due to loss of land to investments), there are high chances for his/her labor to be depreciated in due course of time that will have a significant effect on the livelihood of that person. The other option for a person who has labor power but who lost his/her land is compelling to sell his/her labor in nearby factories which is ‘distress’ sale (Adnan,

2013; Deninger, 2003; Li, 2010) and underemployment when compared to his/her previous status i.e. having the two basic elements of production. That is what I call labor dispossession. In contrast, if someone has land but not labor power, he/she likely rents the land to the one who owns labor power or engages in sharecropping agreements.

From both elements of production, the land is the most important for both landowners without labor power and landowners with labor power. This is because the land serves as a source of labor for the one who has land but lacks labor power by engaging in rental or lease agreements. If we accept labor as a commodity, as argued by Marx ([1867] 1976), in opposition to Polanyi ([1944] 2001), the value of the commodity usually depreciates unless sold on time and on demand. Selling the commodity to lower prices when the commodity worths higher rates is value dispossession. But how does labor power depreciate? Although Polanyi ([1944] 2001, p. 75) argues labor is not a commodity,⁷ he elucidates that ‘unused’ labor power affects the bearer of that ‘peculiar commodity.’ I update Polanyi’s unused labor power as both ‘unused’ and ‘underused’ labor power. It is not only unused labor power that depreciates and affects laborers’ livelihoods; lack of proper labor power usage like underemployment also does the same. The assumption behind labor power depreciation is that unless someone works appropriately (i.e. enough to lead life and save for the future) when he/she is in laboring age, it inevitably affects that individual’s life. This is because the labor power (i.e. the capacity or potential to work) depreciates if not properly used. In this case, if farmers who had owned the land and used to produce for him/herself, becomes a precarious daily laborer or factory worker, it is labor dispossession.

Similarly, in China, peasants who were dispossessed from their land due to large-scale industrial expansion did not get jobs as expected, and they call themselves a new class of three nothings – ‘no land, no work, no social security’ (Walker, 2008, p. 476). If for example, a given farmer reaps 15 quintals of grain from the land he/she lost to industrial parks or large-scale land investment annually, he/she left with two fates – no work (become surplus as many graduates grab the job) or working precarious factory jobs to survive. His/her new career is by any means less than that of producing 15 quintals of grain, although it depends on the market value of each quintal of grain. Instead of working for him/herself or paid by him/herself, farmers forced to work for the capitalists for a reason beyond their control i.e. to survive, which have moral, economic and psychological impacts on their livelihoods.

By and large, land dispossession constitutes a precondition of land-based capital accumulation which, in turn, can lead to further dispossessions. For the capital, freeing laborers from any access to the land or any means of production is imperative

7 For Polanyi, labor, land and money are not just a commodity. To be named a commodity, objects must be produced for sale on the market where actual contacts between the buyer and seller take place. Labor is a human activity that cannot be detached from the rest of a person’s life and is not produced for sale. Thus, the commodity description of labor is entirely fictitious (see Polanyi[1944] 2001, pp. 75–76).

because it relies upon labor power for its own reproduction (Harvey, 2014). As shown above, the crisis of over-accumulation makes investors engage in the acquisition of land for agriculture or planting of the factory in the global South to make their capital work and create more profit. Put simply, capitalism usually creates its own ‘other’ through dispossession (Carbonella and Kasmir, 2014; Harvey, 2003; Kasmir and Carbonella, 2015; Luxemburg, [1913] 2003) – both land and labor dispossessions.

Dispossession in the neoliberal era is a ‘creative destruction’ (Harvey, 2007) that helps states and private companies accumulate capital at the destruction of the poor through the ‘new forms of deprivation and exclusion’ (Hough and Bair, 2012, p. 32). Contemporary capitalist development is indeed creative destruction due to both hopes and despair that embedded in theory and practice of development. It lets ‘some to die, in order for others to live’ (Li, 2009, p. 67).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown how the state’s land policy contributes to land dispossession and how this aspect of dispossession becomes the precondition for the labor dispossession. Over the past decade, Ethiopia has witnessed unprecedented double-digit economic growth under the auspices of the developmental state model, which facilitated a better ground for global manufacturing and agribusiness companies to relocate their businesses in one of the new capital frontiers of the global South. This neoliberal global capital accumulation has resulted in dispossessing the poor communities of their material and immaterial resources. As a result, a new class of underemployed and unemployed farmers, what Standing (2011) refers to as ‘precariat,’ has emerged. Farmers in the suburbs of towns and rural areas lost their land to investments, which forced them to lose their job and labor. The process of separating peasants from their means of production has had a myriad of problems on the uprooted people. On the one hand, this process deprives and impoverishes the people who used to produce for themselves. On the other hand, the process of alienating peasants provides a basis for capitalist development and wealth creation (Perelman, 2000; Webster et al., 2008). Capitalist development and wealth creation can also have other effects – dispossession and insecurity (Webster et al., 2008) as expanded reproduction. Some scholars see the peasant mode of production as an obstacle to the development of capitalism, while others see it positively because ‘less capitalism means less inequality’ (Li, 2014, p. 6). Unless properly managed, the emergence of capitalist relations continues to have far-reaching negative consequences on the vulnerable farmers whose day-to-day lives depend on their land and labor.

As Karl Polanyi ([1944] 2001, p. 146) aptly puts it, ‘the road to the free market was opened and kept open only by an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled interventionism.’ Polanyi’s argument is still relevant in contemporary neoliberal globalization that requires new institutional arrangements at the national and international levels to regulate the ‘financialization of everything.’ It is clear

that industrialization and development require vast tracts of land for industry, commercial agriculture, spaces for infrastructural development, and urban expansion. Thus, dispossession is ineluctable, especially in developing economies. Dispossession and excluding farmers from capitalist production inevitably impede the transition process from agrarian to industrialization. Therefore, the task of the government must be balancing between dispossession and development. A new socio-economic contract between land, labor and capital is needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my PhD supervisors Harald Aspen and Carla Dahl-Jørgensen, for their helpful critiques and suggestions on earlier drafts of this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Yonas Tesema is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. His research interests include dispossession, labour, industrial work, and development. His recent article was published in *Progress in Development Studies*.

ORCID

Yonas Tesema  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3308-2263>

References

- Abbink, Jon, 2011, 'Land to foreigners: Economic, legal, and socio-cultural aspects of new land acquisition schemes in Ethiopia', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 513–535.
- Abbink, Jon, 2017, *A Decade of Ethiopia: Politics, Economy and Society 2004–2016*, Leiden: Brill.
- Adaye, Yonas, 2014, *Conflict Complexity in Ethiopia: Case Study of Gambella Regional State*, PhD diss., University of Bradford.
- Adnan, Shapan, 2013, 'Land grabs and primitive accumulation in deltaic Bangladesh: Interactions between neoliberal globalization, state interventions, power relations and peasant resistance', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 87–128.
- Ahmed, Abiy, 2020, 'Nobel lecture. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2020', <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2019/abiy/109716-lecture-english/>.
- Ake, Claude, 1996, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

- Andreucci, Diego, Melissa García-Lamarca, Jonah Wedekind and Erik Swyngedouw, 2017, ‘“Value grabbing”: A political ecology of rent’, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 28–47.
- Appadurai, Arjun, 2013, *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*, London: Verso Books.
- Arrighi, Giovanni, Nicole Aschoff and Ben Scully, 2010, ‘Accumulation by dispossession and its limits: The Southern Africa paradigm revisited’, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 45, pp. 410–438.
- Asebe, Regassa, Yetebarek Hiziekil and Benedikt Korf, 2018, ‘“Civilizing” the pastoral frontier: Land grabbing, dispossession and coercive agrarian development in Ethiopia’, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 5, pp. 935–955.
- Asebe, Regassa and Benedikt Korf, 2018, ‘Post-imperial statecraft: High modernism and the politics of land dispossession in Ethiopia’s pastoral frontier’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 613–631.
- AU (African Union), 2009, *Land Policy in Africa: A Framework to Strengthen Land Rights, Enhance Productivity and Secure Livelihoods*. (Accessed, 01 Nov 2012).
- Bahru, Zewde, 2002a, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855–1991*, London: James Currey.
- Bahru, Zewde, 2002b, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Barrett, Paul and Dorothée Baumann-Pauly, 2019, *Made in Ethiopia: Challenges in the Garment Industry’s New Frontier*, New York: NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights.
- Borras, Saturnino and Jennifer Franco, 2012, ‘Global Land Grabbing and trajectories of Agrarian Change: A preliminary analysis’, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 34–59.
- Bräutigam, Deborah and Tang Xiaoyang, 2011, ‘“African Shenzhen: China’s special economic zones in Africa”’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 27–54.
- Brüne, Stefan, 1990, The agricultural sector, in Siegfried Pausewang, Fantu Cheru, Stefan Brüne and Eshetu Chole, ed, *Ethiopia: Rural Development Options*, London: Zed books, pp. 3–15.
- Carbonella, August and Sharryn Kasmir, 2014, Toward a global anthropology of labor, in Sharryn Kasmir and August Carbonella, ed, *Blood and Fire: Toward a Global Anthropology of Labor*, New York: Berghahn, pp. 1–29.
- CARI (China Africa Research Initiative), 2020, *Chinese Workers in Africa*. John Hopkins University. Available at: <http://www.sais-cari.org/data-chinese-workers-in-africa>.
- Chatterjee, Partha, 2017, Prelude: Land and the political management of primitive accumulation, in Anthony D’Costa and Achin Chakraborty, ed, *The Land Question in India: State, Dispossession, and Capitalist Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–15.
- Cheru, Fantu, 2016, ‘Emerging Southern powers and new forms of South–South cooperation: Ethiopia’s strategic engagement with China and India’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 592–610.
- Clapham, Christopher, 1988, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clapham, Christopher, 2006, ‘Ethiopian Development: the Politics of Emulation’, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 137–150.
- Clapham, Christopher, 2015, The Era of Haile Selassie, in Gérard Prunier and Éloi Ficquet, ed, *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi*, London: Hurst & Company, pp. 183–208.

- Clapham, Christopher, 2018, 'The Ethiopian developmental state', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 6, pp. 1151–1165.
- Côte, Muriel and Benedikt Korf, 2018, 'Making concessions: Extractive enclaves, entangled capitalism and regulative pluralism at the gold mining frontier in Burkina Faso', *World Development*, Vol. 101, pp. 466–476.
- Daniel, Ayalew, Stefan Dercon and Madhur Gautam, 2011, 'Property rights in a very poor country: Tenure insecurity and investment in Ethiopia', *Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 42, pp. 75–86.
- D'Costa, Anthony and Achin Chakraborty, 2017, The land question in India: State, dispossession, and capitalist transition, in Anthony D'Costa and Achin Chakraborty, ed, *The Land Question in India: State, Dispossession, and Capitalist Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 16–48.
- Deininger, Klaus, 2003, *Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Dessalegn, Rahmato, 2014, 'The perils of development from above: Land deals in Ethiopia', *African Identities*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 26–44.
- Donham, Donald, 1986, Old Ayssinia and the new Ethiopian empire: Themes in social history, in Donald Donham and Wendy James, ed, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–48.
- Fana, Gebresenbet, 2016, 'Land acquisitions, the Politics of dispossession, and state-remaking in Gambella, Western Ethiopia', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 5–28.
- Ferguson, James, 2009, 'The uses of neoliberalism', *Antipode*, Vol. 41, No. S1, pp. 166–184.
- Fernández-Kelly, María, 1983, *For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hall, Derek, 2013, 'Primitive Accumulation, accumulation by dispossession and the global land grab', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 9, pp. 1582–1604.
- Harris, Anthony, 2015, *Expropriation, Compensation and Transitions to New Livelihoods: Evidence from an Expropriation in Ethiopia*, Centre for the Study of African Economies Working Paper WPS/2015-04.
- Harvey, David, 2003, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, David, 2005, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, David, 2007, 'Neoliberalism as creative destruction', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 610, pp. 22–44.
- Harvey, David, 2014, *Seventeen contradictions and the end of capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hough, Phillip and Jennifer Bair, 2012, 'Dispossession, class formation, and the political imaginary of Colombia's coffee producers over the longue durée: Beyond the Polanyian Analytic', *Journal of World-System Research*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, pp. 30–49.
- Kalb, Don, 2015, Introduction: Class and the new anthropological holism, in James Carrier and Don Kalb, ed, *Anthropologies of Class: Power, Practice and Inequality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, pp. 1–27.
- Kan, Karita, 2019, 'Accumulation without dispossession? Land Commodification and rent extraction in peri-urban China', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 633–648.
- Kasmir, Sharryn and August Carbonella, 2008, 'Dispossession and the anthropology of labor', *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 5–25.
- Kasmir, Sharryn and August Carbonella, 2015, Dispossession, disorganization and the anthropology of labor, in James Carrier and Don Kalb, ed, *Anthropologies of Class: Power, Practice and Inequality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 41–52.

- Kelsall, Tim, 2013, *Business, Politics, and the State in Africa: Challenging the Orthodoxies on Growth and Transformation*, London: Zed Books.
- Korf, Benedict, Tobias Hagmann and Rony Emmenegger, 2015, 'Re-spacing African drylands: Territorialization, sedentarization and indigenous commodification in the Ethiopian pastoral frontier', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 5, pp. 881–901.
- Kuran, Timur, 2004, Cultural obstacles to economic development: Often overstated, usually transitory, in Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, ed, *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 115–137.
- Lavers, Tom, 2016, 'Agricultural investment in Ethiopia: Undermining national sovereignty or tool for state building?', *Development and Change*, Vol. 47, pp. 1078–1101.
- Li, Tania, 2009, 'To make live or let die? Rural dispossession and the protection of surplus populations', *Antipode*, Vol. 41, No. S1, pp. 66–93.
- Li, Tania, 2010, 'Indigeneity, capitalism, and the management of dispossession', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 51, No. 3, pp. 385–414.
- Li, Tania, 2011, 'Centering labor in the land grab debate', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 281–298.
- Li, Tania, 2014, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Li, Tania, 2015, 'Transnational farmland investment: A risky business', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 560–568.
- Li, Tania, 2017, 'After development: Surplus population and the politics of entitlement', *Development and Change*, Vol. 48, No. 6, pp. 1247–1261.
- Luxemburg, Rosa, [1913] 2003, *The Accumulation of Capital*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Mains, Daniel, 2007, *We are only Sitting and Waiting: Aspirations, Unemployment, and Status among Young Men in Jimma, Ethiopia*, PhD diss., Emory University.
- Makki, Fouad, 2014, 'Development by dispossession: *Terra nullius* and the social-ecology of new enclosures in Ethiopia', *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 79, No. 1, pp. 79–103.
- Makki, Fouad and Charles Geisler, 2011, 'Development by Dispossession: Land Grabbing as new Enclosures in Contemporary Ethiopia', Paper Presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, University of Sussex, April 6–8.
- Margulis, Matias, Nora McKeon and Saturnino Borrás, 2013, 'Land grabbing and global governance: Critical perspectives', *Globalizations*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1–23.
- Markakis, John, 1974, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, Karl, [1867] 1976, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Mishra, Deepak and Pradeep Nayak, 2020, Introduction: The political economy land and livelihoods in contemporary India, in Deepak Mishra and Pradeep Nayak, ed, *Land and Livelihoods in Neoliberal India*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–34.
- Noy, Itay, 2019, *Extracting a Living: Labor, Inequality, and Politics in a Tribal Coal Mining Village in India*, PhD diss., LSE.
- Odhiambo, Atieno, 2002, 'The cultural dimensions of development in Africa', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 1–16.
- Pausewang, Siegfried, 1983, *Peasants, Land and Society: A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*, München: Weltforum Verlag.
- Perelman, Michael, 2000, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Durham: Duke University Press.

- Polanyi, Karl, [1944] 2001, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Samson, Melanie, 2015, 'Accumulation by dispossession and the informal economy – Struggles over knowledge, being and waste at a Soweto garbage dump', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 813–830.
- Sanyal, Kalyan and Rajesh Bhattacharya, 2010, Beyond the factory: Globalization, informalization of production, and the changing locations of labor, in Paul Bowles and John Harriss, ed, *Globalization and Labor in China and India: Impacts and Responses*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 151–169.
- Song, Suzanne, 2015, 'Enclosure of the commons in a global economy: British Enclosure and African land grabbing', *The MIT Journal of Planning*, pp. 21–46.
- Srur, Muradu, 2014, *State Policy and Law in Relation to Land Alienation in Ethiopia*, PhD diss., University of Warwick.
- Standing, Guy, 2011, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Stout, Noelle, 2019, *Dispossessed: How Predatory Bureaucracy Foreclosed on the American Middle Class*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tesema, Ta'a, 1984, 'The basis for political contradictions in Wollega: The land apportionment act of 1910 and its consequences', *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, pp. 179–197.
- Tesema, Ta'a, 2006, *The Political Economy of an African Society in Transformation: The Case of Macca Oromo (Ethiopia)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Teshome, Emanu, 2014, *The Transforming Power of Urbanization: Changes and Uncertainties among the Farming Community in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi Town, Ethiopia*, PhD diss., Addis Ababa University.
- Walker, Kathy, 2008, 'From covert to overt: Everyday peasant politics in China and the implications for transnational agrarian movements', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol. 8, No. 2–3, pp. 462–488.
- Watts, Michael, 2009, The Southern question: Agrarian questions of labor and capital, in A. Haroon Akram-Lodhi and Cristóbal Kay, ed, *Peasants and Globalization: Political Economy, Rural Transformation, and the Agrarian Question*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 262–287.
- Webster, Edward, Rob Lambert and Andries Bezuidenhout, 2008, *Grounding Globalization: Labor in the Age of Insecurity*, Maiden: Blackwell.
- Wolf, Eric, 1971, Introduction, in Norman Miller and Roderick Aya, ed, *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World*, New York: The Free Press, pp. 1–13.
- Wolford, Wendy, Borrás Saturnino, Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones and Ben White, 2013, 'Governing global land deals: The role of the state in the rush for land', *Development and Change*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 189–210.
- Yonas, Tesema, 2014, 'Land dispossession and its impacts on the Bako Woreda Oromo community of Western Oromia, Ethiopia', *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 63–90.
- Zwan, Joost, 2010, *The Need for Conflict-sensitive Land Policy and Land Governance in Africa*. Available at <http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/020711landpolicy.pdf> (Accessed, 03 Oct 2012).