

Lands of the Future. Time for Innovation.

Can Ethiopia's developmental politics still set a global example of equitable development?

Dr. Echi Christina Gabbert Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Goettingen, Germany

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle /Saale

Dr. Fana Gebresenbet Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Dr. Edward (Jed) Stevenson University College London

Ethiopia's culturally diverse regions and populations provide unique resources of political, philosophical and socio-ecological knowledge, with century-tested agricultural and agro-pastoral production techniques still active. Yet the implementation of developmental land use schemes in Ethiopia in the last decade, understood to create benefit for all, has been overshadowed by approaches that often disregard local knowledge and cultural particularities without being suitable to decrease socio-economic inequality and ecological hardship. But how can we meet the needs of all within the needs of the country and the planet? Can Ethiopia still set a much needed, much different and innovative example that seriously integrates local knowledge and cultural particularity in a globalizing world? What good could come out from recent changes in land lease policies, e.g. by giving more agency to the respective regions? Are international norms and principles, enshrined in the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure practicable? Can local knowledge inform national and global planning for food security, as realized e.g. in agroecology?

To address these questions we are interested in bold and original contributions that discuss innovative and peaceful solutions on the local, national and global scope. We will look at national and international power relations while reflecting on cultural particularities and possibilities for mutual knowledge exchange and respectful communication in land use and development politics in Ethiopia. We want to share lessons drawn from particular cases in Ethiopia to a global audience and examine how ideas and principles at the global level are accepted and implemented at national and local levels. Topics of interest are: land use, resource management, local knowledge and livelihoods, centre-periphery relations, agro-pastoralism, human-nature relations, biodiversity, global markets, investment, climate change, drylands, conflict and peace. We especially welcome examples of innovative, integrative, cooperative and equitable development without asking for blue print solutions. This panel will also bring together researchers from two interdisciplinary networks - the Lands of the Future Initiative and the Omo-Turkana Research Network.

Empirical and theoretical works from different academic backgrounds, including anthropology, political science, economics and development studies are welcome.