Land and Agricultural Commercialisation in Africa

What difference does the model make?

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What is the best pathway to commercialisation?

• Debates continue about the relative merits of large and small farms, their implications for labour absorption, rural livelihoods and growth in Africa’s farm sector

• Recent resurgence of plantations, mimicking (or even reviving) large colonial estates and state farms from post-colonial developmentalism


• Growth of ‘middle farmers’ driving land concentration in Africa
Land & Agricultural Commercialisation in Africa

Three models of commercialisation:
1. Large plantations or estates
2. Contract farming or outgrower schemes
3. Commercial farming areas

Comparative three-country study:
1. Ghana
2. Kenya
3. Zambia
### Three models of agricultural commercialisation in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plantations</th>
<th>Commercial farm area</th>
<th>Contract farming</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• large, self-contained agribusiness farms</td>
<td>• medium-to-large farms relative to surrounds</td>
<td>• a processing firm, sometimes with a nucleus estate</td>
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<td>• vertically-integrated processing chains,</td>
<td>• more or less contiguous, and dominate an area</td>
<td>• outgrowers are contracted to supply their produce</td>
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<tr>
<td>• associated with one major crop</td>
<td>• associated with mixed farming operations</td>
<td>• outgrowers farm on their own land</td>
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<td>• permanent or seasonal hired labour.</td>
<td>• owned by individuals or small companies</td>
<td>• use their own family labour</td>
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<td>• not much interaction with local economy</td>
<td>• may be planned or not</td>
<td>• may also work on the nucleus estate</td>
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**Contract farming**
- a processing firm, sometimes with a nucleus estate
- outgrowers are contracted to supply their produce
- outgrowers farm on their own land
- use their own family labour
- may also work on the nucleus estate
From ‘efficiency’ to ‘agrarian change’

• Assumptions about efficiency and scale changes beg a lot of questions: who benefits, how do agrarian transitions happen, what processes of accumulation and dispossession happen over time, and where potentially do livelihoods get secured and for whom?

• What are the outcomes of these different models of agricultural commercialisation for:
  1. Land
  2. Labour
  3. Livelihoods
  4. Local economic linkages
Research methods

Detailed local case studies:

1. **Qualitative**: in-depth interviews with farmers, manager and workers; primary and secondary document analysis.

2. **Quantitative**: random household survey in each site including those involved in our case studies (as workers, outgrowers, independent farmers) as well as those not.

3. **Qualitative**: in-depth life histories; mapping of local economic linkages