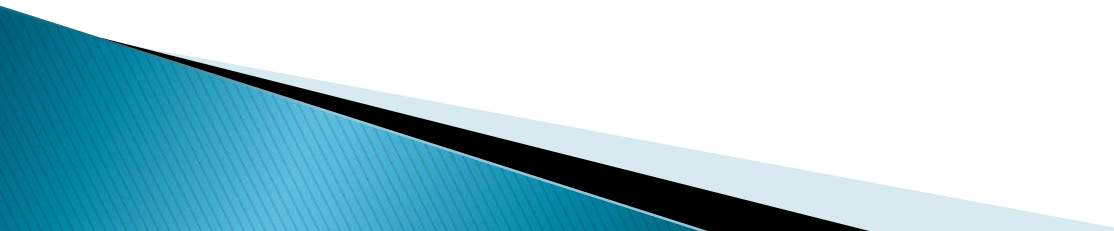


Biofuel investments in Africa: lessons for South Africa?

Cecile Schultz & Gideon van Riet

Biofuel discourses

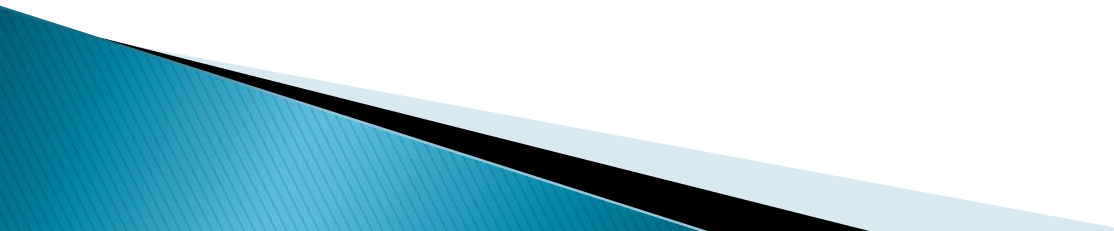
- ▶ South Africa: 2007 Biofuel Strategy– rural development (homelands)
- ▶ Global South: win–win–win: energy, environmental and rural development;
- ▶ Africa’s identity of ‘underdeveloped’;
- ▶ Biofuels will bring ‘development’:
 - capital, knowledge transfers and employment

- ▶ African governments ‘opened up’ land markets by land zoning exercises, satellite images
 - ▶ identifying ‘unutilised’; ‘marginal land’: ignorant
 - ▶ In reality however, traditionally used: pastoralism, grazing, subsistence farming.
 - ▶ Investors: ‘efficient’ producer;
 - ▶ Neoliberal rationality determining land access
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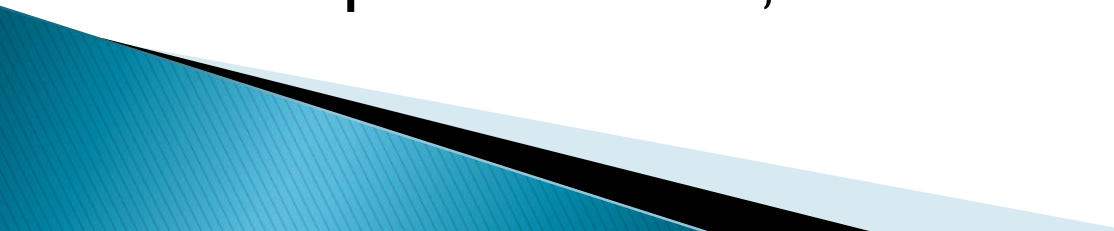
Land access and biofuel investments: general trends

- ▶ Dispossession;
- ▶ Favouring large-scale deals;
- ▶ Transformation of livelihood strategies: incomes threatened, exploitation for example jatropha – increased food insecurity;
- ▶ Biofuel crops demand extensive water supply;
- ▶ Investors do not favour ‘marginal areas’
- ▶ Land access influenced as people had limited ability to benefit from land despite having land rights;
- ▶ Politics in practise: uneven power relations
- ▶ Gender biased (consultations)

Rural livelihoods in SA

- ▶ ‘marginal areas’ – homelands in SA, land access crucial for food security;
 - ▶ Small-scale farming for own consumption: safety net;
 - ▶ Diversified livelihoods – managing risk;
 - ▶ Complexities, multiplicities and hybridity of rural livelihoods and stresses farmers face;
 - ▶ development discourses undervaluing these land use practices
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Lessons for SA?

- ▶ Biofuel investments target rural livelihoods;
 - ▶ However, maize and jatropha forbidden: food security;
 - ▶ Adherence to commercialisation of agrarian reform, farmers convert to monocrops;
 - ▶ No irrigation allowed, no safety net in cases of drought–detrimental for food security;
 - ▶ Big businesses ready to take over if policy change
 - ▶ Dispossession: due to land deals and competitiveness;
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- ▶ Uneven social– and power relations. Social identities (coupled with racist history) and land access;
 - ▶ Need for democratisation of agrarian reform, lead with politics not policies;
 - ▶ Inclusive politics, recognising complexity and context–specific; discard universalising discourses of development;
 - ▶ Should not be a one–size fits all approach
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