

Globalizations >

Volume 15, 2018 - [Issue 1: BRICS and MICS: Implications for Global Agrarian Transformation](#)

1,042 Views | 26 CrossRef citations to date | 4 Altmetric

Articles

# Land control and crop booms *inside* China: implications for how we think about the global land rush

Saturnino M. Borras Jr., Juan Liu, Zhen Hu, Hua Li, Chunyu Wang , Yunan Xu ,

... show all

Pages 134-151 | Published online: 08 Dec 2017

 Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2017.1408287>

 Check for updates

Sample our  
Global Development  
Journals

>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access  
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article  Figures & data  References  Citations  Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

[Read this article](#)

[Share](#)

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to broaden the scope of analysis of the contemporary global land rush by examining crop booms not only outside, but inside China; and investment flows not only from China, but also within and into China. It does so by examining the eucalyptus and sugarcane sectors in southern China, which have witnessed investment booms during the past decade, with capital being infused by both domestic capital and foreign capital, including Finnish, Indonesian, and Thai companies. Our argument addresses three key issues: (a) explaining why foreign and domestic companies enter into a multitude of lease and grower contracts involving holders of micro-plots, (b) revisiting the notion of extra-economic coercion, and (c) a critique of thinking about flows of large-scale investments centred primarily on nationality. These issues are central in

current debates in the land grabs literature, and our study offers a different perspective from dominant narratives.

KEYWORDS:

BRICS China crop booms sugarcane eucalyptus land grabs

! View correction statement:

[Corrigendum](#)

---

## Acknowledgements

We thank the journal's peer reviewers for their critical but constructive and useful reviews that helped improved the quality of this paper.

---

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

---

## ORCID

Yunan Xu <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4520-1207>

---

## Notes

1. Note that in March 2001, during the Asian debt crises, APP defaulted on its debt, most of which was subsequently rescheduled at lower values.
2. The exact figures of acreage and output for these different patterns in Guangxi are not available, but the official data show that in 2014, 656,300 mu land has been circled out and cleared for HSPB ('Guangxi Shuanggao', [2015](#)) and by the end of 2015, 992,500 mu, with the government grants reaching 1.798 billion RMB (Ministry of Land and Resource of PRC, [2016](#)).

3. For a relevant background discussion on migration and livelihoods, rural and urban, see van der Ploeg, Ye, and Pan ([2014](#)); for the dynamic interplay between land and labour, both rural and urban, see Chuang ([2015](#)), Andreas and Zhan ([2016](#)), Ho and Spoor ([2006](#)), and Ye ([2015](#)).
4. This decision was announced by the government's Central Rural Work Committee in October 1993. See CPC Central Committee and the State Council ([1993](#)).
5. For instance, in 1972 the price of sugarcane rose from 30.29 to 34.94 Yuan per tonne, but at the same time the price of sugar was unchanged. The production cost of sugar increased, and many sugar factories lost money (see Si, [2004](#)).
6. 1 mu equals to 1/15 ha.
7. For background on the politics of taxation, see Kennedy ([2007](#)).
8. The Arrangement Measures for Sugar EIT (Zhitangye Qiye Suodeshui Guanli Banfa), adopted by Guangxi autonomous region in 2009, is one of the most important regulations in the system of sugar taxation.
9. Interview with HLQ, an official in Nanhua Sugar Company, March 6, 2015, Fusui County.
10. Interview with Gan, a village leader, March 7, 2015, Fusui County.
11. Interview with HQZ, a village leader, January 5, 2016, Fusui County.
12. Interview with Huang, an official in Nanhua Sugar Company, March 7, 2015, Fusui County.
13. Interview with XP, an official in Nanhua Sugar Company, March 7, 2015, Fusui County.
14. Calculated from data on the FAOSTAT website.
15. Calculated from FAOSTAT website.
16. Interview with XP, an official in Nanhua Sugar Company, March 9, 2015, Fusui County.
17. Interview with LS, an official in Nanhua Sugar Company, January 9, 2016, Fusui County.

18. Interview with an office director, a technician and an accountant in one of the state farms. March 10, 2015. Fusui County.
19. In fact, Stora Enso's investment in this project began in late 2014.
20. Interview with an office director, a technician and an accountant in one of the state farms in Fusui County, March 10, 2015.
- 

## Additional information

### Funding

This work is supported by the Ford Foundation [grant number 0135-1532-0], Basic Research Fund of China Agricultural University [grant numbers 2016RW005, 2017RW002], and the Start-up Grant of Northwest A&F University [grant number 2452015349].

### Notes on contributors

Saturnino M. Borrás

Saturnino M. Borrás, Jr. is Adjunct Professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies (COHD) of China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing, Professor of Agrarian Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, and a Fellow of the Transnational Institute (TNI).

Juan Liu

Juan Liu is an Assistant Professor at College of Humanities and Social Development, Northwest A&F University, China, and a post-doctoral researcher at ICTA, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

## Zhen Hu

Zhen Hu is Associate Professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies of China Agricultural University in Beijing. He specializes in land law, legal history, and agricultural law.

## Hua Li

Hua Li is a lecturer at the College of Politics and Law of Taiyuan University of Technology. Her research interests include water politics, land transfer, and labour migration.

## Chunyu Wang

Chunyu Wang is Associate Professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies of China Agricultural University in Beijing and was a China Scholarship Council post-doctoral fellow at International Institute of Social Studies (2011-2012).

## Yunan Xu

Yunan Xu is a PhD Candidate at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in Erasmus University Rotterdam funded by the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Her PhD research is about the political economy of industrial tree plantations in southern China in the era of global land rush.

## Jennifer C. Franco

Jennifer C. Franco is Adjunct Professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies (COHD) of China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing, and a researcher in the Agrarian and Environmental Justice Program of Transnational Institute (TNI).

Jingzhong Ye is Professor and Dean of the College of Humanities and Development Studies (COHD), China Agricultural University.

## Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by  
26

### Information for

- Authors
- R&D professionals
- Editors
- Librarians
- Societies

### Opportunities

- Reprints and e-prints
- Advertising solutions
- Accelerated publication
- Corporate access solutions

### Open access

- Overview
- Open journals
- Open Select
- Dove Medical Press
- F1000Research

### Help and information

- Help and contact
- Newsroom
- All journals
- Books

### Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

 Sign me up

