



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA:

The Impact of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian Investments

Fantu Cheru and Renu Modi (eds) Zed Books (in association with NAI): London and New York, 2013. 263 pp

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This volume from the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala, Sweden, is another valuable contribution to the expanding debate on Africa's agricultural development strategies. The book looks at South-South interactions, contrasting these with old colonial ties and conflicts.

While its specific aim is "to evaluate the extent to which FDI [foreign direct investment] from China, India and Brazil is contributing to the transfer of modern agricultural research and knowledge capacity in modern agriculture, and to helping African governments overcome the

financing gap", the 16 contributors achieve a lot more.

The introductory section provides a concise overview of Africa's current state of agricultural development and its key challenges. In the three sections on the respective countries, we first get a brief but clear summary of their own agricultural transformations and then a glimpse of their current situations.

The collection makes two main arguments. First, that several aspects of the agricultural transformation in the three countries are directly relevant to Africa's urgently needed transformation. Second,

that, in their expanding engagement as development partners in Africa, each of these emerging powers already addresses relevant and important aspects of the agricultural transformation process.

The different chapters – including case studies of Indian agricultural investment in Ethiopia and Brazil's biofuels investment in Mozambique, and the summary of agriculture-related inputs from China, India and Brazil in Africa – provide the reader with a good sense of the complexity of issues, tasks and challenges to be addressed. Yet, given the equally vast and complex history of successful agricultural transformations in the three emerging powers, one also gets a glimpse of what may be feasible in Africa over the next decade or two. This conclusion is strengthened by a broader awareness of "Africa rising" and the strategic role that this immense continent can – and must – play in global agricultural development.

Seldom does one find a collection that so powerfully opens minds and encourages an integrated look at a complex development field.