

## **Reconfiguring power: investors, ruling elites and local populations**

Conveners:

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After decades of liberalising reforms, aimed at attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through facilitation and deregulation investments are now materialising, putting pressure on land and natural resources in Africa. This has led to a re-evaluation of the terms under which foreign investors especially operate, vis-à-vis national governments that demand better deals, and in response to local protests contesting lost livelihoods. This, we suggest, require renewed reflections on the relative strengths and weaknesses of different actors, and the appropriate methodologies required to investigate the power configurations of these actors.

Based on insights from existing works on the concrete exchange relations between ruling elites, different types of investors, and local populations in high-profile investments the panel will discuss how a broader understanding of the composites of power can help us develop a clearer understanding of liberalising reforms and investments in African countries and how power becomes reconfigured. The panel will include papers that use Mushtaq Khan's concept of 'holding power' (referring in this context to 'the capability of an individual or group to engage and survive in conflicts'), to analyse these relations, but encourages papers that analyse relations between actors in investments from different power perspectives.