



**GEOPOLITICAL ECOLOGIES OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE, LAND GRABBING
AND MIGRATION:
comparative perspectives from Senegal
and Cambodia**

by Sara Vigil Díaz-Telenti

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University of Liège
and
International Institute of Social Studies
of Erasmus University Rotterdam

**Geopolitical Ecologies of Environmental Change, Land
Grabbing and Migration:
comparative perspectives from Senegal and Cambodia**

**Geopolitieke ecologie van milieuveranderingen, landroof en migratie:
een vergelijkende studie in Senegal en Cambodja**

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by
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*To my belated father who would have been proud to see this day.
Your sensitivity and love for knowledge are my greatest inheritance.*



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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BECCS	Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage
CNCR	National Council of Rural Concertation and Cooperation
ELCs	Economic Land Concessions
FAO	United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SAED	The Delta Management and Exploitation Company
SLCs	Social Land Concessions
UNCTAT	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia



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Abstract

Adaptation and security framings have gained traction not only to explain the causal chains and impacts of environmental change and/or migration, but also to justify land intensive interventions to address them. Despite progress in the understanding of the complex links between environmental change and migration, academic and policy analyses have paid scarce attention to the ways in which environmental and migration narratives are (re)shaping access to fundamental natural resources and changing migration dynamics in the process. Moreover, in the burgeoning literature on land and green grabs, the impacts of migration narratives on land grabs as well as the impacts of land grabs on migration remain underexplored. In order to fill these gaps and bridge the diverse disciplines that deal with these phenomena, this research uses a ‘variegated geopolitical ecology’ framework to examine the material and discursive interactions between environmental change, land grabbing, and migration. Using a global ethnographic approach, the methodology involves a historical and multi-scalar analysis together with extensive comparative fieldwork conducted in two different socio-political settings: Senegal and Cambodia. Notwithstanding important context specificities, findings across cases show how environmental and migration narratives, linked to adaptation and security discourses, have been deployed – advertently or inadvertently – to justify land capture, leading to interventions that often increase, rather than alleviate, the very pressures that they intend to address. The research shows that despite the opposed assumptions that underpin the ‘migration as adaptation’ or ‘migration as

security threat' narratives, both frames can interact with environmental and climate change justifications in ways that create 'self-fulfilling risks,' which make insecurity and maladaptation a reality that extends well beyond the landscapes where land grabs unfold.

Geopolitieke ecologie van milieuveranderingen, landroof en migratie:

Een vergelijkende studie in Senegal en Cambodja



Samenvatting

De causale ketens en gevolgen van milieuverandering en/of migratie worden steeds vaker verklaard vanuit het perspectief van aanpassing en veiligheid en dit perspectief dient ook om grondintensieve interventies om de problemen aan te pakken te legitimeren. Hoewel het inzicht in de complexe verbanden tussen milieuverandering en migratie toeneemt, is er weinig wetenschappelijk en beleidsonderzoek gedaan naar de manier waarop milieu- en migratienarratieven de toegang tot fundamentele natuurlijke hulpbronnen (opnieuw) vormgeven en daarmee de migratiedynamiek beïnvloeden. Daarnaast blijven de invloed van migratienarratieven op landroof en de invloed van landroof op migratie in de opkomende literatuur over land- en groenroof onderbelicht. Om deze lacunes op te vullen en een brug te slaan tussen de verschillende disciplines waarin deze verschijnselen worden onderzocht, wordt in dit onderzoek de 'rijkgeschakeerde geopolitieke ecologie' gebruikt als kader om de concrete en discursieve interacties tussen milieuverandering, landroof en migratie te bestuderen. Vanuit een algemene etnografische benadering wordt een historische en multi-scalaire analyse uitgevoerd, in combinatie met uitgebreid vergelijkend veldonderzoek in twee verschillende sociaal-politieke omgevingen: Senegal en Cambodja. Hoewel er belangrijke contextgebonden kenmerken zijn, blijkt uit de resultaten van verschillende casussen dat milieu- en migratienarratieven gekoppeld aan aanpassings-

en veiligheidsdiscoursen - al dan niet per ongeluk - zijn ingezet om het in beslag nemen van grond te rechtvaardigen. Dit heeft geleid tot interventies die de druk onbedoeld vaak eerder verhogen dan verlichten. Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat de aannames achter het perspectief van 'migratie als aanpassing' of 'migratie als veiligheidsdreiging' weliswaar intrinsiek tegengesteld zijn, maar dat beide perspectieven te maken kunnen hebben met rechtvaardiging van milieu- en klimaatverandering. Hierdoor ontstaan 'zichzelf waarmakende risico's' waardoor onveiligheid en aanpassingsproblemen een realiteit worden; een effect dat zich uitstrekt tot ver voorbij de landschappen waar de landroof optreedt.

***Écologies Géopolitiques des Changements Environnementaux,
de l'Accaparement des Terres et des Migrations :
Perspectives Comparatives du Sénégal et du Cambodge.***



Résumé

L'encadrement des normes de sécurité et d'adaptation ont connus une montée en puissance, non seulement pour expliquer les chaînes de causalité et les impacts des changements environnementaux et/ou des migrations, mais aussi pour justifier le recours à des interventions à usage intensif des terres. En dépit des progrès dans la compréhension des liens complexes entre les changements environnementaux et les migrations, les analyses académiques et politiques ont jusqu'ici accordé peu d'attention à la manière dont les discours environnementaux et migratoires (re)façonnent l'accès aux ressources naturelles fondamentales en changeant les dynamiques migratoires. En outre, dans la littérature consacrée à l'accaparement des terres et aux accaparements verts, les impacts des discours migratoires sur l'accaparement des terres, de même que les impacts de l'accaparement de terres sur les migrations, demeurent sous-explorés. Afin de pallier ces lacunes et de nouer des liens entre les diverses disciplines traitant desdits phénomènes, ce travail de recherche utilise un cadre analytique « d'écologies géopolitiques diversifiées » pour examiner les interactions matérielles et discursives entre changements environnementaux, accaparement des terres et migrations. La méthodologie s'appuie sur une approche ethnographique globale, impliquant une analyse historique et multi-scalaire, ainsi qu'un travail comparatif de terrain mené

au cœur de pays aux contextes socio-politiques très différents : le Sénégal et le Cambodge. Indépendamment des spécificités contextuelles importantes, les résultats montrent comment les discours environnementaux et migratoires, liés aux discours d'adaptation et de sécurité, ont été déployés – sciemment ou par inadvertance – pour justifier l'accaparement des terres. Ces discours engendrent des interventions qui tendent à accroître plutôt que d'atténuer, la pression qu'ils tentent de surmonter. La recherche montre que malgré les présupposés opposés qui sous-entendent les discours de « migration comme adaptation » ou de « migration comme menace sécuritaire », les deux peuvent interagir avec des justifications environnementales et climatiques de manière à créer des « risques autoréalisateurs », qui font de l'insécurité et de la maladaptation une réalité qui s'étend bien au-delà des lieux où se déroulent les accaparements des terres.

***Ecologías Geopolíticas del Cambio Ambiental, del
Acaparamiento de Tierras y de las Migraciones:
Perspectivas Comparativas de Senegal y Camboya***

Resumen

Los marcos de adaptación y de seguridad han ganado terreno no sólo para explicar las cadenas casuales y los impactos del cambio ambiental y/o la migración sino también para justificar intervenciones intensivas en recursos de tierras para abordarlos. Pese a los progresos realizados en la comprensión de los complejos vínculos que existen entre el cambio ambiental y la migración, los análisis académicos y de políticas han prestado escasa atención a la forma en la que las narrativas migratorias y ambientales están configurando el acceso a recursos naturales y cambiando las dinámicas migratorias en el proceso. Además, en la abundante literatura sobre el acaparamiento de tierras y los acaparamientos verdes, los impactos de las narrativas migratorias sobre el acaparamiento de tierras, así como los impactos del acaparamiento de tierras sobre la migración, siguen estando poco explorados. Con el objetivo de paliar estas lagunas y de unir las diversas disciplinas que se ocupan de estos fenómenos, esta investigación utiliza un marco de “ecología geopolítica variada” para examinar las interacciones discursivas y materiales que se producen entre el cambio ambiental, el acaparamiento de tierras, y las migraciones. Utilizando un enfoque de etnografía global, la metodología implica un análisis histórico a varias escalas acompañado de un extenso trabajo comparativo de campo, realizado en dos entornos sociopolíticos diferentes: Senegal y Camboya. A pesar de importantes particularidades contextuales, en todos los casos, los resultados muestran cómo las narrativas ambientales y migratorias, vinculadas a discursos de adaptación y seguridad,

se han desplegado – de forma advertida o inadvertida – para justificar el acaparamiento de tierras, llevando a intervenciones que a menudo aumentan, en lugar de aliviar, las presiones que ellas mismas pretenden abordar. La investigación demuestra que a pesar de los supuestos opuestos que sustentan las narrativas de la “migración como adaptación” o la “migración como amenaza para la seguridad”, ambos marcos pueden interactuar con justificaciones de cambio ambiental y climático creando “riesgos autocumplidos” que convierten la inseguridad y la mala-adaptación en realidades que se extienden mucho más allá de los lugares donde los acaparamientos de tierras se desarrollan.



Preface: From Co-Development to Land Grabs

‘Wanderer, your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; wanderer, there is no path, the path is made by walking. By walking one makes the road and upon glancing behind one sees the path...’

(Antonio Machado, *Campos de Castilla*, 1912).

This dissertation stems from a detour that became so gripping that I decided to (nearly) abandon the initial project altogether. However, the ‘discovery’ of the subsequently chosen path was intimately linked to the initial one, which served as a compass guiding me through new roads of reflection. Due to the importance that the road not taken had upon the final path, a word about this initial journey merits attention. Interested by the impacts of environmental and climate change on migration, my initial research proposal aimed to test a narrative that widely dominates environmental migration policy and academic debates today: ‘Anthropogenic climate change is driving millions of people into exile by endangering the security of the most vulnerable. These migrations can lead to socio-environmental pressures in receiving regions, thereby feeding a negative cycle of insecurity and migration. However, if migration is well managed, the skills acquired by migrants at their destination can support the adaptation of those remaining at home to climate change through socio-economic remittances sent by migrants. Moreover, development within the place of origin (aided, ideally, through migrants’ involvement in climate adaptation and mitigation) can prevent forced displacement’. Fol-

lowing this proposition, I set out to understand, if and how, Senegalese migrants who were arriving to an agricultural ‘El Dorado’ in southern Spain (Almeria), could support the adaptation of their communities of origin – offering possibilities of co-development¹ between origin and host societies.

In addition to being a highly intensive agricultural area that depends on migrant labour, the greenhouses of Almeria have also been referred to as examples of what harmless geoengineering could look like. The albedo effect of these greenhouses, which reflect heat outwards, has been cited in influential scientific papers, and has inspired policymakers around the world to paint their cities white, based on the understanding that this strategy could serve as a climate mitigation option. However, as I sat around what is known as ‘the sea of plastic’, which is amongst the most agriculturally intensive greenhouse areas in Europe, I came to realise not only the impossibility (and naivety of these narratives in the current socio-political and economic context), but also their potentially devastating impacts as they drive policy interventions.

After two months of visiting the greenhouses that feed our supermarket chains and getting to know the people growing our tomatoes and lettuces, the possibility that most of the migrants interviewed could support the adaptation of their communities of origin seemed highly improbable or simply impossible. The agricultural sector of Almeria took a huge hit with respect to employment and labour conditions as a result of the 2008 economic crisis; the crisis deeply affected all sectors of the economy in Spain, and the construction sector in particular. Whereas Almeria had once been a simple entry point for migrants who intended to leave shortly upon their arrival to find better paying jobs within Spain’s construction sector, following the crisis it became a refuge for the millions who became unemployed due to the crisis. With few available jobs and an oversupply of cheap migrant labour, the salaries and conditions of these migrants had steeply deteriorated. Consequently, these migrants - barely capable of saving themselves - could in no way be

in a position to support the adaptation needs of their families and communities of origin.

By deliberately following the path that I had been encouraged to omit from my analysis by the local authorities I contacted, I witnessed how labour inspections were skewed to maintain the only sector that was still flourishing after the economic crisis. Thriving economically for some, but at huge social price for the majority of irregular migrants who provide a continuous supply of cheap (and/or free) labour, and at a massive environmental cost for everyone else. Within the greenhouses, I witnessed working conditions of extreme difficulty and precarity, with temperatures ranging from 40°C to 50°C. I took part in sensitisation campaigns for women migrants who, unable to find employment in the male-dominated agricultural sector, had nothing but their bodies to sell to their fellow migrants. I met the friends of a Senegalese man who had drowned while escaping the police in an attempt to avoid forced deportation. I met many migrants who had not seen their families (or even met their children) in years due to their lack of regular status combined with personal insecurities and feelings of being perceived as complete failures if they were to return home. Discouragingly, I also experienced first-hand how high-ranking officials consistently ignored (and debated) the first-hand information that I communicated to them – and which was certainly not new to them. In this context, the discourse of the ‘cooling’ trend associated with this huge greenhouse area – the only structure that can be seen from space besides the Great Wall of China – was not only exacerbating the exploitation of labour, but was also contributing to the destruction of the land and the aquifers upon which it grew. Additionally, and perhaps most striking to me, was that the straightforward discourses of co-development were replicated by some of these very migrants themselves:

‘The problem is not so much the rain. We have land and we have water; we just don’t have machinery or money. You, the Europeans, know how to do good agriculture...Look! (pointing to the greenhouses). You should just come and do this agriculture at home since our Government

doesn't want to, and we can't help. That way, at least we get to stay at home close to our families' (Interview, Senegalese migrants, Almeria, Spain, 2014).

Although this might sound like an optimal scenario, suspicions over this endeavour were highlighted by other migrants: 'I hear that there are a lot of Europeans now investing in agriculture in Senegal, but I also hear that these are often stories of land grabs' (Interview with Senegalese migrant in Almeria, Spain, 2014). The atrocious situation that Europe continues to offer to these migrants, combined with the repercussions of European colonisation, raises a set of questions: What are European investors doing in Senegal, for whose benefit, and on whose backs? Who do the environmental and migration arguments serve, and with what consequences? Is framing environmental change and migration in terms of security and adaptation productive or counterproductive? While these questions had not been envisioned within my initial proposition, they subsequently sparked an enormous curiosity within me that became impossible to ignore. This is when the journey really took off, and what follows is what I learned.



Introduction

We are witnessing one of the most consequential and decisive moments in human history. The very existence of the most vulnerable segments of humanity is at risk; the stakes could not be higher. As I write these lines, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has just released its latest report highlighting the urgency for a radical transformation of our socio-economic system, if we are to avoid the catastrophic consequences that a rise greater than 1.5 °C in global temperature would entail (IPCC 2018). Moreover, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has revealed an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss – of which land use change for agricultural production is its main driver – and the consequences of which are an unparalleled rate of species extinctions and the destruction of ecosystems upon which humanity relies for its survival (IPBES 2018).

The impacts of environmental and climate change are already well underway with those most marginalised experiencing an exacerbation of their pre-existing vulnerabilities. Moreover, today more people are on the move than ever before.² Even if it is extremely difficult to isolate climatic and environmental variables from the socio-political, economic, and demographic factors that together shape migratory dynamics, environmental and climate change are having both direct and indirect impacts on human mobility; these impacts can only be expected to worsen as certain places become uninhabitable. Research on the relationship between the environment and/(or) climate change and human mobility has greatly proliferated in recent years and shown many of the complexities and nuances that exist in environment-migration interactions (Gemenne 2011; Black et al. 2011).³ The main specificity of migration linked to environmental degradation today lies in the fact that climate change is the result

of certain human activities, adding dimensions of responsibility, ethics, and justice into the equation.

At the same time, but in a different research and policy environment, there has been growing attention given to what has come to be denominated as ‘global land grabbing’. Since the convergence of multiple global crises in recent years (food, energy, financial), there has been a global rush for land at a scale that is unprecedented since the colonial era (Borras and Franco 2010). Land grabs can be defined as ‘the capturing of control of relatively vast tracts of land and other natural resources through a variety of mechanisms and forms that involve large-scale capital that often shifts resource use orientation into extractive character, whether for international or domestic purposes, as capital’s response to the convergence of food, energy and financial crises, climate change mitigation imperatives, and demands for resources from newer hubs of global capital’ (Borras et al. 2012, 851). Although far from being a new phenomenon, today we see new characteristics that make land grabs distinct from the colonial and imperial periods. Particularly, and crucially, land grabbing today takes place in a world of ‘formally’ recognised sovereign-states – often through legal yet contested processes. Contrary to the previous modes of colonial and imperial grabs that operated through force, the mechanism to control and acquire land and other natural resources today is often Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or direct buying or leasing (Sassen 2013a).

In the context of rising environmental and climate concerns, many of these land grabs are ‘green grabs’. These are defined as ‘the appropriation of land and nature for environmental ends’ (Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones 2012, 238). Although the phenomenon of green grabs builds on historical resource expropriations in the name of the environment, climate change has reinvigorated the trend considerably with novel discourses around climate mitigation and adaptation being deployed as justifiers (Hunsberger et al. 2016; Corbera, Hunsberger, and Vaddhanaphuti 2017; Franco and Borras 2019). With Bioenergy and Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) presented in climate policy forums as an essential

mechanism through which emissions can be reduced, the rush to appropriate farmland has been mainly driven by the desire to increase the production of ‘flex crops’ – crops that have multiple uses (food, feed, fuel, industrial material). This is because flex crops can now be used to cover both financial and climate risk allowing investors to sell in the most profitable market (Borras et al. 2016). Moreover, initiatives for forest carbon offsets – combined with earlier conservation initiatives – are also incentivising a rush for forests. Much of the land that has been targeted is governed by customary, traditional and indigenous systems of common property upon which millions of the most socio-environmentally vulnerable people rely on for their livelihoods (Dell’Angelo et al. 2017). The phenomenon of land and green grabs is of worldwide significance, but those most vulnerable are also those most heavily and adversely impacted. Therefore, in addition to the well-known double injustice of climate change, today we must add a third injustice: Environmental and climate change hit disproportionately the most vulnerable segments of the population; those most vulnerable are also the least responsible for environmental and climate change; and these vulnerable groups are now also embattling the worst impacts of certain environmental and climate policies enacted to mitigate them.

Map 1: Location of Land Deals and the Corresponding Intended Production Aims⁴



Source: Land Matrix

Although environmental change, migration, and land grabs represent some of the most pressing and challenging socio-political issues of our time, the interlinkages between these issues have tended to be problematised, analysed, and acted upon – at best – in pairs. On the one hand, while research on environmental change and migration has greatly advanced our understanding of the complex relationships between biophysical environmental changes and human (im)mobility, much less is known about *how discourses, narratives and frames around environmental, climate change and migration modulate these impacts by modifying access to natural resources*. On the other hand, while research on global land grabs has advanced our understanding of many of its drivers and impacts, and in doing so, has illuminated the increasing role of environmental and climate policies, *the role of migration narratives in legitimising land grabs, as well as the impact of these land grabs on migration* remains underexplored. In both cases, however, an

understanding of how discourses shape realities is crucial, because it is through discourses and narratives that specific assemblages of ideas, concepts and categorisations are made to give meaning to both physical and social realities (Hajer 1995; Lakoff 2008). These specific ideas give way to frames that create boundaries around social groups, biophysical entities, and/or their interactions, to establish an ordered vision of events (Forsyth 2004). Frames influence not only the kinds of questions that are asked, but also structure the kind of knowledge that is produced. In doing so, they determine what is included on the agenda, and what is silenced (O'Brien et al. 2007).

Although environmental change, resource grabs and migration can be framed in many different ways, security and adaptation framings have become dominant in both climate change and migration policy circles. The power of security and adaptation framings resides in their malleability, flexibility, and in the fact that they both refer to something that seems intuitively desirable. Security, broadly understood, simply means 'the pursuit of freedom from threat' (Buzan 1991, 18). Adaptation is also a seemingly straightforward idea in that it describes 'a response to a perceived risk or opportunity' (Pelling 2010, 20). Given their malleability, both security and adaptation can mean very different things to different people. This creates great divergences in the ways that the relations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration are both understood and acted upon. Paying attention to these frames does not however suggest a call to relativism: environmental and migratory concerns are amongst the most pressing of our era, and security and adaptation challenges linked to them clearly exist. However, it is not sufficient to analyse their material realities; we must understand how the very enunciation of certain frames shapes these realities and with what consequences.

This research is thus not only concerned with how environmental change, land grabs, and migration shape each other in the *material* sense, but also about how *discourses* around them shape these very realities. It means paying explicit attention to how the material and discursive are interconnected and (re)shaped through diverse inter-scalar interactions

that give way to different types of justifications, interventions, and outcomes. In order to achieve this understanding, this dissertation explores two self-reinforcing mechanisms: Firstly, how different actors use environmental and/or migration narratives to, advertently or inadvertently, justify land grabs in the name of adaptation and/or security. Secondly, how these land grabs shape the security and adaptation of the people impacted by them – and beyond. In so doing the dissertation seeks to answer the following key question: *Why and how do environmental change, migration, and land grabs shape each other – both materially and discursively – and with what consequences?* By seeking to answer this question, this dissertation constitutes a first attempt to draw both theoretical and empirical connections between these three crucial and intertwining phenomena.

In order to understand the aforementioned self-reinforcing mechanisms, Chapter 1 starts by analysing the epistemological roots of the most common security and adaptation frames around environmental change, land grabs, and migration, drawing on both their incongruencies as well as on their overlaps. On this basis, the chapter then proposes an alternative analytical framework termed *variegated geopolitical ecology*, which forms the analytical apparatus of this work. Variegated geopolitical ecology draws on critical political economy and political ecology as well as on political geography and critical geopolitics in order to historicise and politically-embed the causes of the phenomenon under scrutiny, whilst also seeking to understand their multi-scalar material and discursive relations. With this theoretical and analytical framework in place, Chapter 2 adopts a global ethnographic and interconnected comparison between Senegal and Cambodia as the methodology upon which this work relies. Although located geographically at a vast distance, both of these countries share a French colonial past that has partly determined the relations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration to date. Despite important similarities, it is in their diverse historical pathways, in their current political systems, and in the different positions that they occupy within the world economy that we can find some of the key differences that are essential to explaining the puzzle at hand. To this aim, Chapter 3

offers a historical geopolitical ecological comparison of Senegal and Cambodia – a historical analysis that positions both nature and migration as central. The chapter analyses not only the colonial roots that brought about the current interlinkages between environmental change, land grabs, and migration, but also the antecedents of mainstream security and adaption frames that are so commonly used today.

Having embedded the phenomenon under study historically, Chapter 4 builds upon the empirical material collected in both countries at the national scale to show the effects of these diverse historical pathways on the current conjuncture. To do so, it concentrates on the variegated power of global discourses and how these are, in turn, impacting land grabs, environmental change and migration dynamics differently in specific countries. Although studies have often tended to analyse the impacts of migration policy on migration, or the impacts of environmental policies on the environment, the aim here is different. The chapter focuses on the policies that have facilitated land grabs in each country and analyses how, and if, migration and/or environmental arguments have been important in contributing to these land grabs. In so doing, it seeks to explain why certain environmental and/or migration frames have prevailed over others and with what contradictions and consequences.

Following this analysis of how global frames interact with national realities, Chapter 5 then zooms down into three landscapes where three specific land grabs are taken as the point of entry to understanding more complex landscapes where a multitude of overlapping land claims and land grabs have occurred. In doing so, the chapter analyses the specificities and particularities of land grabs as they are situated in complex socio-natural configurations and the impacts these have on both migration and the environment in the landscapes where they unfold. Finally, and in order to draw connections between these particular landscapes and the broader geopolitical whole of which they are part, Chapter 6 focuses on ‘self-fulfilling risks’⁵ – or on the (un)intended consequences that land grabs are having on security and adaptation well beyond the landscapes where these unfold. The argumentative structure of the dissertation thus

takes a circular approach in that it moves from the macro and more abstract level to the concrete and particular – and then back again. In so doing, this thesis aims to show how and why powerful frames on environmental change and/or migration can be used to justify land grabbing, advertently or inadvertently, in ways that can increase, rather than alleviate, the very pressures that they purportedly intend to redress.

Notes

¹ Co-development refers to the linking of migration and development policy. This link can refer to either the allocation of development aid to origin countries on the condition that these states will cooperate in controlling migration (Adepoju, Van Noorloos, and Zoomers 2010), or to the enhanced role of migrants in contributing to the development of their origin countries through remittances (Scheffran, Marmer, and Sow 2012).

² In this research, migration is broadly understood as ‘the movement of persons either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification’ (International Organization for Migration 2015)

³ See for example: Gemenne 2011; Foresight 2011; Black et al. 2011; 2013; Warner 2010; Zickgraf et al. 2016

⁴ Estimates on the number of hectares involved have varied greatly, from reports stating that 56 million hectares were acquired between 2008 and 2009 (Deininger and Byerlee 2012) to others stating that as much as 227 million hectares were acquired between 2000 and 2010 (Oxfam 2013). A ‘literature rush’ (Oya 2013) has shown how different definitions and methods used to quantify the amount of targeted land can provide very different figures and ‘messy hectares’ (Edelman 2013). The lack of transparency around land deals, and the fact that it is difficult to know if these have been confirmed or speculative, makes the task of giving precise numbers particularly arduous.

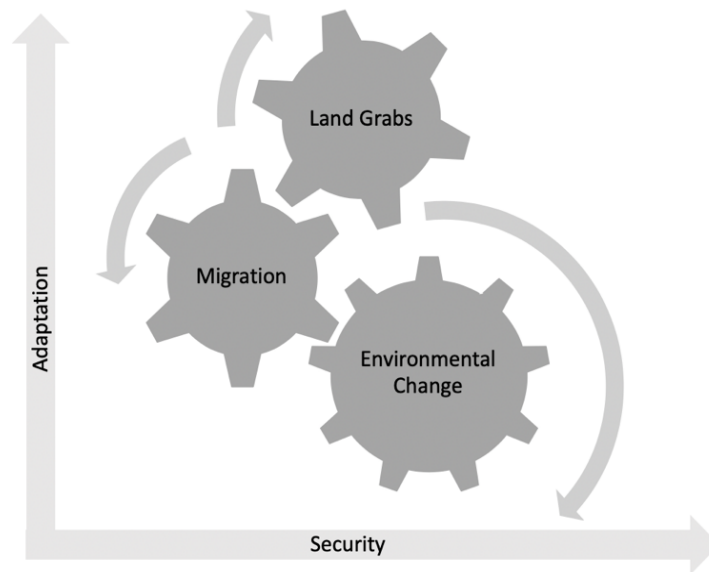
⁵ I owe this turn of phrase to an enlightening discussion with Pr. Jesse Ribot at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, in 2017.

Introduction

Why and how do environmental change, land grabs, and migration shape each other, materially and discursively? And what are the most important feedback mechanisms that must be understood and addressed in order to prevent a downward spiral occurring between them? These are the nagging questions that this dissertation seeks to address, both theoretically and empirically. The challenge is to build theoretical and conceptual bridges that can allow us to analytically make sense of the complex material and discursive interrelations that are at the basis of this puzzle. Although different lenses and frameworks could be used to analyse these interrelationships, this work has benefited from, and been influenced by, my direct involvement in climate change and migration policy processes where both security and adaptation framings have become pervasive.¹ On the one hand, descriptions using these frames with regards to migration often fluctuate between those that conceptualise migration in the context of climate change as a driver and/or consequence of conflict and national insecurity to those that consider migration to be an essential adaptation measure capable of promoting human security and to contributing to triple win solutions for migrants, origin and host societies. On the other hand, arguments to legitimise the need for land intensive investment often use environmental security/adaptation narratives as well as narratives around employment creation as key justifications. But what are the theoretical antecedents of these powerful ideas, where do they come from, and where do they fall short? In order to address this question, this

chapter analyses the interconnections between environmental change, land grabs, and migration as they relate to diverging security and/or adaptation frames. To do so, this chapter: 1) reviews these interconnections from the vantage point of neo-Malthusian security frames; 2) reviews these interconnections from the vantage point of neoclassical adaptation frameworks; 3) reviews these interconnections from the vantage point of a broadly defined variegated geopolitical ecology perspective.

Figure 1: Exploring Interrelations



1.1 Environmental Security and Population Bombs

The earliest frames of environmental security can be found in 'Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War* and Plato's *Republic*. Both authors compared the security of societies that lived within their 'natural' limits, like Sparta, to those like Athens that relied heavily on imports (Floyd and Matthew 2013, 3). These ideas survived the passage of time and received a powerful translation in the famous *Essay on the Principle of Population* by the demographer Thomas Malthus. Thomas Malthus' well-known thesis is that the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power of the earth to engender subsistence for man (Malthus 1872). Malthusian economics departs from two key interconnected assumptions. The first is that as population starts to increase, so does the land under cultivation. Once all of the high-quality land has been utilised, further cultivation will then need to take place on less productive land. This results in lower food productivity per worker, which is the 'law of diminishing returns'. The second assumption is known as the 'principle of population'. According to this, a country's population is proportionally determined by the amount of resources it possesses. For as long as a population has access to an unlimited amount of resources for its subsistence, population growth would continue to multiply. However, according to Malthus' theory, eventually a point will be reached where the amount of people surpasses the capacity of the agricultural land to produce the same quantity of food per worker and the 'law of diminishing returns' would once again come into effect. Although the falling living standards that would result are assumed to bring about a reduction in population growth and contribute to stabilising the amount of resources per person, if poor peasants continued having too many children, despite their falling wages, then a crisis similar to that of the Irish famine, through which millions of people were compelled to migrate and a million died, would re-emerge (O'Rourke 2015, 93–94).

Malthus was hesitant on migration as a mechanism to solve the problem of overpopulation. Although migration could serve as a temporary fix to relieve pressure on the labour market, in the long run the 'principle

of population' would come into effect with higher wages and greater fertility, thereby filling the gap that had been created by the departing emigrants (O'Rourke 2015, 96). In terms of scarcity, this means that there is an absolute scarcity of natural resources that is 'physical, real and inescapable' (Scoones et al. 2019, 234). Given that population would theoretically grow at a geometric rate while that same population's ability to produce resources would increase only at an arithmetic rate, the population will inevitably surpass the needs of their subsistence leading to chaos, insecurity, and collapse. The higher the natality rates, the higher the number of people, all of whom would require energy; these people would in turn generate more waste, leading to the cyclical destruction of the planet (McBrien 2016, 131). Following this thesis, neo-Malthusians argue that the finitude of natural resources places strict limits on population growth and on consumption. If these limits are exceeded, poverty, social breakdown, migration, and conflict become inevitable (Homer-Dixon 1995). In this reading, environmental degradation and the ensuing poverty that this degradation leads to is at the very heart of the causes of migration.

National Security and Migration

Despite Malthusian predictions, colonial administrators were primarily concerned about under-population, attributing it as the cause of stagnant economic growth (Collins 2002). It was not until the post-war period that the Malthusian fear of overpopulation spread and that national security concerns became fused with environmental security (McBrien 2016; Baldwin 1997; Barnett 2001). These ideas were championed by authors such as Paul Ehrlich in his book *The Population Bomb* (1968) and by Garrett Hardin in his widely influential essay *The Tragedy of the Commons* (1968). Garrett Hardin deployed the Malthusian argument of geometric population growth to argue that 'a finite world can only support a finite population' (Hardin 1968, 1243). Under the assumption that human beings act like selfish individual maximising agents, he used the metaphor of a selfish herder to underline that people would continue to over-

exploit natural resources for their own self-interest. The result leads to a vicious circle of environmental degradation that Hardin labelled the 'tragedy of the commons'. Following this argument, he claimed that the 'Freedom to breed is intolerable' and that 'If we love the truth we must openly deny the validity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', because it permits decisions over the size of the family to be determined within the family itself (Hardin 1968, 1246). Biologist Paul Ehrlich also incited the fear of overpopulation by stating that 'The battle to feed all of humanity is over', that 'hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death', and that 'overpopulation is now the dominant problem in all our personal, national, and international planning problems' (Ehrlich 1968).

These arguments around resource scarcity and the dangers of population growth gained traction in the midst of the 1970s oil crisis when the concept of energy security also entered the stage (Scoones et al. 2018). It was also at this moment that ideas about planetary limits emerged in ecology and conservation, championed by Richard Falk's *This Endangered Planet* (1971), as well as within the environmental political scene through the Club of Rome's 1972 *Limits to growth* report, amongst others (Meadows et al. 1972). Richard Falk linked war, resource depletion, and environmental overload with population growth. Amongst many diagnoses, the Club of Rome showed that 'even under the optimistic assumption that all possible land is utilised, there will still be a desperate land shortage before the year 2000 if per capita land requirements and population growth remain the same as they are today' (Meadows et al. 1972, 51). The links between national and environmental security were forcefully argued by Lester Brown in his book *Redefining National Security*, in which he stated that: 'The new sources of danger arise from oil depletion, soil erosion, land degradation, shrinking forests, deteriorating grasslands, and climate alteration. These developments, affecting the natural resources and systems on which the economy depends, threaten not only national economic and political security, but the stability of the international economy itself' (Brown 1986, 25). These national security and neo-

Malthusian ideas have deeply influenced conceptions around migration in security studies where the concept of ‘environmental refugees’ originated. The term was first popularised in the 1970s by the founder of the Worldwatch Institute, Lester Brown, and became extremely popular amongst those who saw population growth, environmental degradation, and national security as intimately linked. For example, in an essay entitled *Environment and Security* (1989), the famous British ecologist Norman Myers argued that in an increasingly economically and environmentally interdependent world, the effects of soil erosion on agricultural productivity, the mass extinction of species, climate change, deforestation and desertification are a cause of national security concern for the US. To draw the link between environmental destruction and national security, both population growth and refugees were made central to his thesis: ‘These two later problems (tropical deforestation and the spread of deserts), like certain others are closely connected to rapid population growth in the Third World, a problem related in turn to pervasive poverty and to associated issues of massive unemployment, overburdened cities, and refugees from environmental degradation’ (Myers 1989, 23).

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, also pushed the interrelated concepts of environmental security and population growth, stating that ‘urgent steps are needed to limit extreme rates of population growth’ (Brundtland et al. 1987, 43). While noting that ‘environmental stress is seldom the only cause of major conflicts’ (Brundtland et al. 1987, 5), the report emphasised the need to treat environmental security concerns as matters of national security underlining that ‘a comprehensive approach to international and national security must transcend the traditional emphasis on military power and armed competition. The real sources of insecurity also encompass unsustainable development, and its effects can become intertwined with traditional forms of conflict’ (Brundtland et al. 1987, 4). In an influential article in *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled *The Coming Anarchy*, Robert Kaplan convincingly linked environmental degradation to national security concerns. According to Kaplan, foreign policy would be shaped by: ‘surging popu-

lations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and possibly rising sea levels – developments that will prompt mass migrations and in turn incite group conflicts’ (Kaplan 1994, 58).

Environmental scholars, such as Homer-Dixon, also drew strong links between population growth, energy scarcity, and conflict through narratives whose starting points were located in demographic projections as a cause of concern: ‘Within the next fifty years, the planet’s human population will probably pass nine billion, and global economic output may quintuple. Largely as a result, scarcities of renewable resources will increase sharply...Environmental scarcities are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts are probably the early signs of an upsurge of violence in the coming decades that will be induced or aggravated by scarcity’ (Homer-Dixon 1994, 5–6). According to the views presented thus far, it is an imbalance between the supply and demand of natural resources – often driven by escalating population growth and migration – that creates scarcity and exacerbates socio-economic problems that can in turn escalate into conflicts, and hence, political insecurity (Homer-Dixon 1994, 1991; Homer-Dixon 1995; Kaplan 1986; Diamond 2005).

These discourses that draw the link between population growth, security, and migration, have continued to gain prominent political attention as concerns over climate change have skyrocketed. One dominant narrative exhibited in international politics and media portrays close connections between climate change and conflict, especially in the African Sahel, which is often presented as ‘ground zero’ for climate change. The Sahel has been globally described as a ‘perfect storm’ case, wherein the combination of climate change impacts and population growth is predicted to lead to land degradation, famine, and terrorism insurgencies if urgent action is not taken. In a neo-Malthusian fashion, these narratives start by introducing demographic realities and projections, directly followed by climate projections: ‘In 1950, the region contained 31 million people; today there are more than 100 million, and in 2050, there could

be more than 300 million. New projections of climate change ... foresee a rise of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius above today's already high temperatures by 2050...The projections for 2100 are startling, with a population of 600 million in the Sahel and temperatures up to 8 degrees above today's norms. It would be totally implausible to sustainably accommodate this scale of growth. Without immediate large-scale action, death rates from food shortages will rise as crops wither and livestock die and the largest involuntary migration in history could occur' (Potts et al. 2013, 3).

In this view, global climate change leads to both desertification and drought, which result in further resource scarcity. This scarcity over resources then leads to the migration of ethnic groups, which can trigger new conflicts or exacerbate pre-existing ones (Benjaminsen 2016, 112). Such narratives have permeated high level policy debates at the United Nations Security Council where events on the issue occurred in 2007 and 2011 (Dannreuther 2013). During the 2006 G8 summit, the concept of 'climate security' was emphasised, which was subsequently reiterated in 2007 by the first United Nations Security Council debate on Climate Change Security and again in 2009, by the first United Nations General Assembly on this issue (Scott 2012, 221). Furthermore, in 2007, the Nobel Peace Prize was jointly awarded to the IPCC and to Al Gore for 'their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change'. Within his award acceptance speech, Al Gore stated that: '...Unfortunately we can already establish that global warming not only has negative consequences for "human security", but can also fuel violence and conflict within and between states (...) The consequences are most obvious, however, among the poorest of the poor, in Darfur and in large sectors of the Sahel belt, where we have already had the first 'climate war' (United Nations 2016). In his speech, Al Gore also made the link between climate migration and security by stating that 'climate refugees have migrated into areas already inhabited by people with different cultures, religions, and traditions, increasing potential conflict' (Baldwin, Methmann, and Rothe 2014, 123).

The Pentagon has also increasingly underlined the impacts of climate change on national security and the impacts it is expected to have upon military infrastructure (Schlanger 2014). In a conference of defence ministers in 2014, the United States Secretary of Defense at that time, Chuck Hagel, stated that: ‘The most pressing security challenges – from organized crime to ungoverned spaces – do not respect national borders. Nor do their consequences, such as the *migration* of unaccompanied minors. No nation can address these challenges alone. We must work together to confront them. That is why it is welcome news that many nations in the region are becoming *exporters of security* – working with neighbouring countries to provide training, build capacity, and address urgent security needs’ (Hagel 2014, own emphasis). More recently, defence workers in the Pentagon have been defying the current US President, Donald Trump whose rhetoric spouts climate change denial, to protect its military bases from the effects of climate change (Weedon 2019).

With regards to potential terrorist threats, although most analyses focus on the links between ideology and terrorism, the links between climate change, national security, and terrorism are also being elucidated in various ways. Climate change is believed to fuel extremism because people who are unable to provide for their families in contexts of extreme weather events and environmental degradation become easy targets of extremist recruits who may offer them employment and food. An example that is often provided is how the drying up of Lake Chad contributed to the growth of Boko Haram. As Robert Muggah, a climate and security specialist, explained it: ‘Climate shocks and stresses are pushing many into extreme poverty. Joining an armed group is sometimes the only option available’ (Gerretsen 2019). Other scholars have also made the argument that ‘increased poverty and reduced state capacity, which are a foreseeable consequence of climate change, may contribute to the creation or sustenance of functional space which may allow terrorist groups to flourish’ (Smith 2007, 264).

In Iraq, for example, climate change is believed to have exacerbated the armed conflict due to the interrelated impacts of population growth, increased droughts, and water scarcity upon tensions within the country. As Alala Ali, an Iraqi women and peace activist stated: ‘Actually, the climate change issue started in Iraq intensively in 2006 and 2007, when drought and global warming affected a lot especially the West part of Iraq, mainly in Neineveh and Al Anbar. Many families, thousands of families became jobless after the drought; no agriculture, their animals died. Thousands of youth became jobless, and this was the critical point that those terrorist groups – including Al-Qaida and, later on, ISIS – recruited those youth really easily, because they had no other options’ (Climate Diplomacy 2018). Moreover, the conflict in Syria has been showcased as an example of how climate change can indirectly lead to civil strife as people are driven out of rural areas, partly as a result of climate change exacerbated droughts, into urban areas that are incapable of absorbing the additional population pressure associated with migration. According to a report released by Adelphi, climate change will continue to fuel terrorism and strengthen recruitment efforts by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State and Boko Haram (Nett and Ruttinger 2016). While the authors underline that the interrelations between climate change and migration are not a unilinear causal phenomenon, the Sahel is noted to be conflict-prone due to the prevalence of pastoralism and rainfed agriculture that together with population growth and a greater demand for fuelwood lead to environmental degradation (Kisangani 2012). Although scholars have been nuanced in showing the complex multi-causality involved in such interrelations (Kelley et al. 2015), media channels have rapidly simplified the relationship through headlines such as: ‘The world faces an increased risk of terrorism *because of* climate change’ (Tousignant 2017, own emphasis).

The New Scramble for Land: Food and Energy Security

As evidenced above, the Malthusian links between environmental security, national security, and migration have received increased media, policy, and scholarly attention. However, from a geopolitical vantage point, how do environmental and climate changes contribute to the global land rush? From a geopolitical standpoint, international relations have always been integral to securing access to natural resources. While the term ‘geopolitics’ can evoke many meanings simultaneously, geopolitics can be simply understood as the ‘influence of geographical factors on political factors’ (Fettweis 2015, 233). Another commonly-used definition is that of ‘the struggle for political dominance’ (Dalby 2013b, 38). Classical geopolitics perceives geographical conditions – or the physical realities of states – as being decisive for international relations (Scholvin 2016). From colonialism to imperialism and throughout the world wars, the Cold War and the Gulf wars, states have been driven by an expansion to access and secure resources abroad. This has, and can, lead to ‘scrambles for land’ (Scholvin 2016) and ‘resource wars’, defined as ‘(armed) conflicts revolving to a significant degree, over the pursuit or possession of critical materials’ (Le Billon 2004, 1).

The recent food, fuel, and financial crises of the 2006-2008 period re-centred arguments around population growth, security, and scrambles for land back into academic and policy debates. When the prices of basic cereals more than doubled, food exporting countries began to restrict grain shipments in order to limit food price inflations within their countries, which subsequently led to a generalised panic within food importing countries. As the founder of the Worldwatch Institute, Lester Brown, stated: ‘Seemingly overnight, importing countries realized that one of their few options was to find land in other countries on which to produce food for themselves’ (Brown 2013, 101). Additionally, as a result of rising oil prices and fears over energy insecurity, energy policies started to promote biofuel expansion (which, importantly, was also at the root of the increased food prices). Hence, rising oil prices combined with national commitments to transition towards green economies, prompted

many countries (with the European Union and the United States leading the trend) to endorse biofuel targets and support the production of ethanol and biodiesel through tax exemptions and other financial incentives (Anseeuw 2013; Vigil 2018b).

While the concept of energy security has been mobilised since the 1970s, today the concept encompasses more than oil because concerns over climate mitigation and adaptation have become deeply intertwined with how we relate to energy (Cherp and Jewell 2014). However, if we look at resource endowments and security from the perspective of the places most affected by scrambles for land, it is their relative resource abundance, rather than their own resource scarcity, that makes them attractive for scrambles thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict and domestic security concerns. It is in this line of thought that the ‘resource trap’ thesis was developed by showing how resource abundance can lead to competition between different groups that aim to extract economic rents from particularly valuable natural resources, which can then lead to competition, conflict, *migration* and further *conflict* (Homer-Dixon 1991, own emphasis). As resources elsewhere become increasingly scarce, the monetary value of the apparently unutilised, available resources rises. Hence competition over these remaining resources becomes a very likely scenario either incited at the national level and/or internationally. In other words, it is the ‘resource scarcity’ present within some countries, combined with the ‘resource abundance’ of other countries that is the main driver of geopolitical scramble for resources. In order to protect natural resources from being grabbed and from environmental destruction, designating land for nature (i.e. non-human purposes) has long been touted as the most optimal response. In line with Malthusian notions of population pressure and the destruction of ecosystems that these populations engender, ‘land sparing’ consists of the decision to set aside land for biodiversity and conservation purposes (Phalan et al. 2011). In this view, protecting nature requires its isolation from society.

While there are numerous linkages between national and environmental security that could be elaborated upon further here, for our purposes,

the broad overview provided here sufficiently highlights the Malthusian understanding of the interlinkages that exist between environmental change, migration, and resource grabs: resources are finite, but populations continue to grow. Therefore, and according to this frame, as population grows and environmental conditions deteriorate, people will inevitable begin to fight with one another over the scarcely available resources and/or move towards places where resources are more widely available, thereby contributing to heightened tensions in receiving regions. As a result of migration and increased competition over scarce resources, which create conditions conducive to terrorist groups easier targeting vulnerable people, national security is deeply threatened. Moreover, resource scarcities induce a geopolitical scramble for land and resources that has the potential to ultimately lead to resource wars – and once again spark conflicts within and between states. Although this interpretation of the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration has become widespread, it is often perceived as a ‘doom and gloom’ worst-case scenario that can be overcome with certain conditions in place. In the next section, we will turn to an analysis of adaptation framings whereby it is claimed that these security threats can be surmounted.

1.2 Environmental Adaptation and Ingenuity

The origins of the term ‘adaptation’ can be traced to the discipline of evolutionary biology, in which adaptation is broadly defined as the ‘good fit of organisms to their environment’ (Gould and Lewontin 1979, 592). The idea of evolutionary adaptation stems from the notion of adaptation to the natural environment – the backbone of Lamarck’s theories (1809) and of Darwinian explanations of natural selection. According to Darwin (1872), it is those individuals with the most favourable adaptations (variations), who are most likely to survive due to an evolution of tiny, accumulative changes occurring at fairly constant speeds through time. Darwin’s important insights were extrapolated and applied by Herbert

Spencer to societies which required adaptive responses to re-establish ‘equilibrium’ after an external shock or challenge (McBrien 2016, 122). If adaptation occurs, then population growth and/or environmental degradation do not necessarily need to result in a Malthusian worsening of rural livelihoods and to national security concerns.

In fact, by the middle of the twentieth century it was evident that significant population growth had occurred without the apparent diminishing returns that Malthus had predicted. Although part of this growth was simply the result of production expanding into previously untouched areas, it was also due to technological innovations (Kneese 1988, 283). In the book *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*, the economist Ester Boserup (1965), challenged the Malthusian idea that population growth inevitably outstrips the capacity of land to produce enough food. Boserup’s main thesis was that, contrary to prevailing ideas, primitive communities with sustained population growth have a better chance of achieving economic development than primitive communities with stagnant or declining populations. This was attributed to population growth in rural areas being a main driver of innovation as well as land intensification stimulating land-saving practices (Boserup 1965, 4).

As underlined by Scoones and colleagues (2018), Boserup’s theory aligns well with the neoclassical economic understanding of natural resource scarcity, which was influenced by earlier works in classical economics, and particularly by David Ricardo. Ricardo’s theory of scarcity rests on the assumption that land is not *absolutely* limited, but that it indeed declines in quality as it is increasingly exploited. However, Ricardo emphasised that agricultural productivity is influenced not only by the quality of the remaining available land, but also by the amount of financial capital, and the ‘skill, ingenuity and instruments in agriculture’ (Ricardo 1821, cited in Scoones et al. 2018, 3). For neoclassical economists, there is no need to stipulate limits on human population, consumption, and growth, because properly functioning markets will provide the incentives needed for conservation and technological

innovations. Implicit within this perspective is the idea that natural resources are not necessarily in limited supply, because the capacity of humans to adapt is generally capable of compensating for shortages associated with particular resources (see Chenoweth and Feitelson 2005 for a review). In this sense, it is generally assumed that ‘continuous substitution is always possible’ – at least to some degree (Baumgärtner et al. 2006, 489).

The adaptation concept became central to the hazards literature of the 1970s, through which adaptation was conceptualised as a ‘purposeful adjustment’ to environmental hazards. In the context of climate change, the concept of adaptation is central (see Bassett and Fogelman 2013), with the IPCC defining adaptation as ‘the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects’ (IPCC 1990). Moreover, it is important to note that, although mitigation and adaptation have been treated separately by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and within IPCC reports, this separation is conceptually problematic. In fact, mitigation ought to be understood not as a separate domain but as a subset of adaptation: mitigation is an adaptive act aimed at ameliorating and reversing the forces behind climate change. In this way, lifestyle changes and technological solutions to reduce carbon can be regarded as acts of adaptation targeted at supporting mitigation (Pelling 2010, 22).

Green Growth and Innovative Investment

According to ecological modernisation theories, technological innovations can break the vicious cycle of growth and degradation – enabling economic growth and environmental conservation to work in unison (Mol and Spaargaren 2000). This is the fundamental assumption behind green growth perspectives. From this perspective, new technologies and new farming techniques can contribute to decreasing the ‘yield gap’ whilst also equipping farming to be more efficient and productive. The assumption that large-scale commercial farms allow for higher produc-

tivity on smaller plots of land, and are thus a more effective way to manage natural resources and increase food production than traditional modes of farming, has been present ever since the Green Revolution (Eric B. Ross 1998). In the context of the global land rush, a report by the World Bank entitled *The Rising Interest in Farmland* argued that large-scale land acquisitions can reduce poverty by introducing a more efficient use of underutilised land (Deininger and Byerlee 2011; see Li 2011 for a critique). Although challenges concerning land grabs are acknowledged, these are attributed to weak governance systems in fragile or failed states, which lack the appropriate tenure security or land markets supposedly necessary to protect their territories and populations. Implicit within this view is the idea that if bureaucratic and legal systems are improved, land titling programs are implemented, and land deals occur following business responsibility models including principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), then large-scale land acquisitions and especially those aimed at conservation or the production of biofuels, have immense potential to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction (Wolford et al. 2013, 191).

In addition to biofuel production, forest carbon projects and climate smart agriculture are also presented as ideal ways to solve the environmental crisis, whilst also continuing to enhance adaption and limit food and energy security threats. Technical solutions to climate change include developing infrastructure, such as irrigation and dams, or responses that seek to create biophysical changes, such as carbon sequestration and geo-engineering (Nightingale et al. 2019, 2). The view follows that, if natural resources are managed efficiently, with adequate price incentives and disincentives, the security problematics of ‘resource wars’ emanating from land acquisitions can be avoided, resulting in adaptive options. In these framings, although material constraints do exist, and population growth stresses the limits, the main problem lies in an underproductive system that stems from the suboptimal allocation of resources (Scoones et al. 2019, 234).

Making Migration Work for Adaptation

Within this broad adaption framing, migration does not need to pose an environmental or national security threat. If well managed, migration, and the labour pool it creates, has the potential to become as a key ingredient of the optimal allocation of production factors, as labour is central to this. In fact, in neoclassical economics, migration is viewed as a self-regulating process through which spatial differences in labour demand and labour supply adjust themselves – and hence adapt to one another. As shown by Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration* (1885), it is primarily wage differentials that stimulate migration – especially from rural to urban areas where 'the economic rational man' calculates a cost-benefit analysis in order to decide whether to move or not. In his extremely popular 'push-pull' model, he argued that 'traditional' people migrate from the countryside to cities and from 'less developed' to 'more developed countries' (Kearney 1986, 334).

From this neoclassical perspective, people affected by environmental changes and disasters thus make a rational decision to leave in order to sustain themselves and their families. People 'adapt' by moving to places where natural resources and/or labour are available. Indeed, the notion that population movements are an adaptive mechanism to environmental change is also well-rooted in the discipline of geography (for a review, see McLeman and Gemenne 2018). Since prehistoric times, people have migrated temporally or definitively during periods of droughts, floods, and other climatic events that have impinged either directly on their lives, such as by driving people into exile, or indirectly by affecting their livelihoods and ability to sustain themselves. Consequently, migration has always been one of the most important survival strategies adopted by people in the face of environmental changes and other economic factors (Hugo 1996).

Migration can serve as a way to reduce population pressures in places affected by environmental change (McLeman and Hunter 2010). Moreover, migration can result in not only a higher degree of human security for those who leave, but also for those who stay; migration can provide

the potential for improved adaptive capacities and resilience for those remaining family members, due to the remittances they receive from family members that migrated (Warner and Afifi 2014). This is especially important given that many countries rely heavily on economic remittances of migrants abroad. In fact, in many countries, remittances have surpassed other sources of external funding, such as Official Development Assistance (ODA) or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Today, the migration as adaptation thesis is widely popular in environmental migration research (see Gemenne and Blocher 2017 for a review). It rests on an important nuance that came into popularity through *The New Economics of Labor Migration* thesis developed by Stark and Bloom (1985); their analysis shifted the locus of decision-making from the individual to the household while underlining that it is relative, rather than absolute, deprivation that is a key determining factor in migratory decision-making. Rather than interpreting individuals as rational income maximisers, Stark and Bloom underlined that these decisions are not actually made individually, but by households. The framing of migration as an adaptation strategy to environmental change recognises the agency of migrants and assumes that remittances will be invested in the communities of origin in order to improve resilience to environmental stress (Warner and Afifi 2014; see Bettini and Gioli 2016 for a critique). According to this idea, the key lies in well managed migration which can serve as an adaptation option to climate change. Not only does enforcing state borders to deter migration decrease the human security for those that are obliged to flee detrimental environmental conditions, but deterring migration is also counterproductive for development.

The reading of migration as adaptation to environmental change has featured at the international climate change negotiations, and the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognised the growing importance of migration and displacement within the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework (Warner 2012). In this framing, bilateral and circular migration programs between areas that are environmentally stressed and those that require additional labour resources,

are often thought as an ideal ‘win-win’ scenario. Through appropriate ‘migration management’, these perspectives hold that population pressures at the origin can be relieved, destination areas can receive the extra labour force they require, and migrants themselves can contribute to the development and adaptation of their communities of origin through socio-economic remittances (see Vigil 2016 for a critique).

Although security concerns are not alien to adaptation framings, the concept of adaptation is more attuned to concepts of human security than to those of national security. The Global Environmental Change and Human Security program defines human security as: ‘something that is achieved when and where individuals and communities have the options necessary to end, mitigate or adapt to threats to their human, environmental and social rights; have the capacity and freedom to exercise these options; and actively participate in pursuing these options’ (Brauch et al. 2008, 360). In the 1990s, the idea of human security, which sought to link the complex interactions between social, political and environmental factors, entered into the UN discourse shifting the discourse on security (Baldwin, Methmann, and Rothe 2014, 124). From a human security perspective, environmental change is considered as a threat to *human* security. However, although the ‘migration as a security threat’ discourse and the ‘migration as adaptation’ discourse appear to be based upon different underlying assumptions, critics have argued that both operate within the contours of the mainstream neoliberal discourses on climate change, because they aim to ‘make the unruly governable’ (Bettini 2014).

While the interrelationships between environmental change, migration, and land grabs are not coherently articulated within this neoclassical and adaptive view, the implicit understanding of how these phenomenon interrelate begin to emerge as follows: If correctly managed, large-scale land investments in agriculture can enhance adaptive options by improving technologies and innovations and creating employment (which can potentially diminish forced migration). Moreover, migration *per se* does not need to be problematic or raise security concerns. As long as it is

well managed, it can compensate for labour shortages in receiving regions, whilst simultaneously contributing to alleviating environmental stress and the adaptation of their communities of origin through remittances.

1.3 Variegated Geopolitical Ecologies

Both the broadly understood neo-Malthusian and neoclassical frames examined above highlight different root causes and chains of explanation between environmental change, land grabs, and migration. The way in which the problem is identified and understood (i.e. whether the problem lies within absolute or relative scarcity, population growth, or a sub-allocation of production factors), has important consequences on how proposed solutions are imagined (i.e. population control, or management, ingenuity and innovation). From a structuralist perspective, however, the assumptions on which both frames rely, as well as the solutions that stem from these visions of the world are partial at best and can be problematic at worst. In both frames, concerns over environmental change, resource grabs, and migration have been ‘disembedded’ (*a la* Polanyi) from the socio-political and structural factors that originally caused them. Hence, according to structuralist readings, it is not population growth or an absolute or even relative scarcity of resources that is the problem (or root cause), but rather a socio-political and economic system that relies upon exploitation and the continuous commodification of both nature and labour. As Scoones and colleagues have argued (2019), whereas environmental security is utmost concerned with *absolute scarcity*, and neoclassical economics with *relative scarcity*, a political economy and political ecology reading forces our attention to *political scarcity* (Scoones et al. 2019, 233- own emphasis).

Re-Embedding and Historicising Destruction and Expulsion

From a structuralist perspective, migration cannot be understood separately from the socio-political and historical context in which it emerges.

As the renowned migration scholar, Stephen Castles, argues, ‘A theory of global change in which the economy is seen as disembedded from society, and the political and social consequences are treated as inevitable ‘externalities’ (as economists put it), leads also to a disembedded understanding of migration. This means seeking the determinants of migration in a range of rational choices based on economic interests. The essential link to massive changes in global economic and political power relationships and the resulting social transformation process is absent’ (Castles 2010, 1578).

Instead, world systems accounts of migration (Wallerstein 1980), which are grounded on the concepts of structural penetration and the ‘unbalancing’ of peripheral areas, emphasise that it is precisely the insertion of the periphery into the world capitalist system that leads to exploitation (Amin 1974, 1982; Frank 1975, 1980, 2004; Wallerstein 1980) and creates the conditions for massive displacement (Portes and Walton 2013; Sassen 1988). Even if environmental problems existed prior to capitalism, these tended to be local and regional. The advent of capitalism globalised these environmental problems, by making them dependent upon other changes in the world economy (Moore 2003, 99). Colonialism is seen as inseparable from capitalism since it is the system that initiated the hyper-exploitation and plunder of the Global South. The world ecology approach, which can be understood as a world systems perspective of political ecology, situates the origins of today’s environmental crises in a socio-economic system that began with colonialism, as opposed to with the Industrial Revolution and with coal and steam (Moore 2015).

Structuralist readings of migration identify colonialism as the starting point of *colonizing migrations* - defined as migrations that involve ‘the geographic displacement to areas where natural resources and labour are more readily available’ (Portes 1978, 2) - which led not only to the destruction of previous forms of community and the exploitation of labour, but also to the exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of colonising powers (Castles 2017, 1539). Following this analytical angle,

population growth and migration are not problems *per se*. Rather, it is the increase of a certain type of population, in a particular world economy, which is responsible for both environmental collapse and forced migration. Given that only 10% of the global population is responsible for over half of all greenhouse gas emissions, and that the richest 1% of the population emits more carbon than over half of the world's poorest populations, it is indeed easy to see why it is a 'certain class' of population that is the cause, and not humanity as a whole. For this reason, some authors have suggested that the term 'Capitalocene' is a more appropriate concept to use than that of the Anthropocene (literally, the age of humans) in order to underline the decisive impacts that a certain type of humanity has had upon the world's ecological system (Moore 2015, 2011; McBrien 2016). Deploying a world systems and world ecology perspective enables us to situate the roots of the problem within the socio-economic system itself. In doing so, the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration begin to appear quite differently to those highlighted in the previous two framings.

With regards to the links between land grabs and migration, Marxist concepts are particularly important. The Marxist category of 'primitive accumulation' is based primarily on the expropriation of the peasantry, pointing to both a logic of extraction that can expropriate and impoverish and also to a mode of incorporating capitalist economies into non-capitalistic ones (Sassen 2010). According to this view, it is precisely through this process that 'great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled onto the labour market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians' 01/11/2019 20:03:00. In introducing the concept of 'accumulation by dispossession', David Harvey sought to emphasise that primitive accumulation is an ongoing process in the post-Keynesian period (from the 1970s onwards), and that predatory capital accumulation practices continue to play a major role in the current conjuncture (Arrighi, Aschoff, and Scully 2010, 411). Here capital accumulation is not seen as previous to capitalism, but instead as intimately linked to it (Wolford et al. 2013, 197). The *colonizing migrations*

that Alejandro Portes has analysed share some strong similarities with the *migration of corporate investors*, who migrate to places where cheap nature and cheap labour are available today.

Through the historical-structuralist analytical lens, migration is not generally seen as an adaptive process - as neoclassical economics or 'migration as adaptation' theses would posit - but rather as a process of exploitation and disempowerment, in which choices to move or stay for the most vulnerable are very limited (Veltmeyer and Delgado Wise 2016). Another useful analytical category for the aims of this research is the Marxian concept of 'relative surplus population'. The use of relative here is used to distinguish it from the Malthusian term of 'surplus population'. As Tania Li has explained, the term 'surplus' in Marx's 'relative surplus population' concept, does not mean surplus to societal and environmental needs - as in Malthus - but rather surplus to capital's demand for labour (Li 2010, 68). In this view, population growth is essential for capitalist expansion because it forms the 'disposable reserve army', which both prevents wages from rising (and hence cutting profits) and forms a mass of human material always ready for exploitation (Harvey 1974). Moreover, in many countries of the Global South, the anticipated transition from the farm to the factory has not occurred (Li 2011). The mechanisms of dispossession of our current period have been explored by Saskia Sassen through her concept of 'expulsions.' According to her analysis, the most vulnerable are 'expulsed' through emergent systemic trends of which the creation of new global markets for land and the destruction of the environment are amongst the most evident and far-reaching (Sassen 2014). These casual and unprotected labourers then enter into complex patterns of labour circulation through 'the *barrios* and *favelas* of the world-system' (Wallerstein 2003, 24). This dynamic of continued pauperisation of the population has also been vividly described in Mike Davis's *Planet of Slums* (2006). In the context of this dissertation, a structuralist reading that combines the aforementioned elements of the interlinkages between certain types of migration (colonising or corporate migrations), environmental destruction, re-

source appropriations, and expulsions enables us to historicise, re-politicise, and turn the interlinkages between environmental change, land grabs and migration on their head.

Challenging Security and Adaptation Framings

Linked to structuralist theories, scholars within the political ecology tradition reject the ‘end-point vulnerability approach’, which considers vulnerability as the result of certain external events such as environmental change. Instead, they assume a ‘starting point’ vulnerability approach (O’Brien et al. 2007, 74-75), whereby vulnerability is socially and environmentally constituted to highlight that ‘vulnerability does not (simply) fall from the sky’ (Ribot 2014). According to its classic definition, political ecology ‘combines the concerns of ecology with a broadly defined political economy’ (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987, 17). Political ecology departs from the assumption that no environmental issue can be explained without accounting for structural political factors. Instead of following a deductive approach that links environmental scarcity or abundance to social effects - such as conflict, social segmentation, or forced migration - political ecology broadens the scope to a wider array of historically and geographically contingent actors and processes – something that Watts (2004) calls the ‘resource complex’. In doing so, political ecology shows how economic and political processes, networks, and discourses operating at international, national, and local levels interact to produce environmental outcomes in particular places, thereby providing a contextualised analysis of how ‘socio-natures’ (Swyngedouw 2004) are mutually (re)constituted, both materially and discursively at multiple scales (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987; Bodin and Tengö 2012; Elinor Ostrom 2010; Swyngedouw 2004). Political ecology takes material and biophysical limits seriously, but it forces our attention to the interconnections between biophysical landscapes and broader political economies of development, and how these are (re)shaped through global discourses (McCarthy and Prudham 2004; MacDonald 2010).

With respect to neo-Malthusian environmental security framings, political ecologists have long rejected simplistic causal links between environmental factors and conflict (Peluso and Watts 2001). By analysing the politicisation of the environment through conflict and seeking to explain how conflicts develop *around* environmental issues and not *as a result* of them, political ecology offers a departure from the neo-Malthusian concept of environmental conflict (Le Billon 2015, 598). The relationships between security and conservation are considered from a political ecology standpoint through examples such as how protected areas become intertwined with military practices that seek to protect nature through security measures (Peluso 1993; Peluso and Watts 2001). Political ecologists have deemed neo-Malthusian conceptions of land sparing (as a conservation mechanism) to be often encompassing instances of what has been defined as ‘fortress conservation’ (Brockington 2002). Fortress conservation pursues the preservation of wildlife and habitat through the forceful exclusion of the local communities that have traditionally relied on the resources for their livelihoods (Brockington 2002; Igoe 2002). This is in line with theories of securitisation that view security not only for what it *is*, but importantly for what it *does* (Buzan and Wæver 2009). Securitisation can be understood as act of presenting a particular issue as an existential threat, which then justifies the deployment of exceptional measures to deal with the identified threat (Buzan et al. 1998). In this view, securitising environmental issues can then justify the deployment of violence and force (Barnett 2001, 9–10). Critical conservation scholars have demonstrated how fortress conservation permits ‘accumulation by securitization’. This concept can be understood as encompassing the acts through which capital accumulation is ‘enabled by practices and related logics of security in ways that often provoke dispossession, with such dispossession itself enabling further accumulation’ (Massé and Lunstrum 2016, 228).

From a geopolitical perspective, these protected areas can be understood as the expression of localised sites to address global struggles, such as those of climate change and biodiversity conservation, which are pre-

sented as global security risks (Kelly and Ybarra 2016). In this sense, political ecology stresses the dangers, and the profound political implications, of the supposed ethically-neutral, scientific discussions concerning the relationships between population and resources, especially those of neo-Malthusians, which have served to legitimise ‘repression at home and neo-colonial policies abroad’ (Harvey 1974, 256). Given that the Malthusian ‘population bomb’ is now situated in the underdeveloped Global South, its arguments can be used to justify the deployment of instruments for the containment of unwanted or unnecessary populations (Robbins 2011). Environmental justifications and risk management strategies have also been used to legitimise massive resettlements and the displacement of the most marginalized populations (Nygren and Wayessa 2018).

Political ecologists have shown how states have appropriated environmental concerns from global institutions not only as a means to attract funding, but also to further their own control over productive natural resources, even at times employing coercion or violence to do so (Peluso 1993). Moreover, although development interventions, such as land investments, are often presented as a way to alleviate rural poverty, from a critical geopolitical reading, the global containment of irregular migration is the backdrop, usually left unspoken, against which the current development-security nexus operates (Duffield 2010). Political geography has also challenged traditional international relations and geopolitical assumptions by arguing that it is politics (and not geography) that determines which resources are valued and who can (or cannot) *access* them (Dalby 1992; Peluso and Watts 2001). Adopting a constructivist perspective, critical geopolitics examines the very construction and social effects of geopolitical imaginations and geopolitical identities: the imaginary spatial positioning of people, regions, and states and the shifting boundaries that accompany their positioning. In doing so, critical geopolitical scholars have argued that environmental issues can be used to support geopolitical arguments that shape the physical realities of power and place (Dalby 2013).

Securitisation theory has also been used to examine how dangers, threats and risks around climate and migration are constructed, to in turn understand how these constructions influence politics (Baldwin, Methmann, and Rothe 2014). With respect to reductionist hypotheses concerning the links between environmental change, migration, and security, Hartmann (2010) has argued that the securitisation of environmental migration may end up militarising not just migration and climate policy, but also development aid. This is evident in the use of degradation narratives to criminalise migrants as well as in fortress conservation approaches to keep certain people out, which can be understood as a micro level intervention for the containment of population circulation (Hartmann 2010). With regards to the idea that valuable resources lead to conflict – also known as the ‘resource curse’ thesis – much of this research has tended to pathologize resource-producing regions and to depict its populations as ‘naturally’ inclined to fight over resources, rather than to find cooperative solutions (Zalik 2011). Additionally, and in contrast to the reputed thesis of the ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ (Hardin 1968), an extensive body of work drawing on Elinor Ostrom has shown that community systems of production and subsistence are able to develop effective self-governing institutions. The sustainable governance of the commons is not only possible, but often the best alternative because local communities are able to develop governing arrangements to fit their particular needs (Ostrom 1990; Dietz, Ostrom, and Stern 2003; Ostrom 2010; Agrawal 2001). As political philosophers have also underlined, the tragedy of our times is that of appropriation (Zarka 2013), and not that of the commons.

Moreover, the literature has demonstrated that there is no simple link of causality between climate change, migration and violent conflict (Gemenne et al. 2014). However, climate change and migration discourses can support measures taken to close borders as well as the securitisation of control in migration destination areas (Bettini 2013; Boas 2015). Political geographers have also provided empirical evidence to debunk the myth that massive drought-induced migration exacerbated the socio-

economic pressures that subsequently led to the Syrian civil war (Fröhlich 2016; Selby et al. 2017). Regarding narratives that link climate change to terrorism, political ecologists studying pastoralism in Mali, have argued that the rural peasantry tends to support jihadist groups, because people have become increasingly fatigued by a predatory and corrupt state and because the developmental model has not responded to pastoral priorities. Instead of focusing on Islamism, they underline how questions of access to resources have fed into the anti-state, anti-elite discourse, which is shared by jihadist groups (Benjaminsen and Ba 2019).

As they do with mainstream security framings, political ecologists also underline that what counts as adaptive or not, is always political and therefore contested. Although adaptation projects can secure resources for some groups, they often do so at the expense of excluding others (Taylor 2014). As a result, adaptation actions influence social relations and the governance and distribution of resources (Eriksen, Nightingale, and Eakin 2015). Political ecologists challenge cornucopian (or adaptive) approaches that posit that ‘technological fixes’ (Harvey 2001) within the established socio-economic system will solve the ‘climate problem’. These authors warn of ‘selling nature in order to save it’ (McAfee 2012), underlining the contradictory logics of embedded within ‘green capitalism’ (Dobson 2000; Falkner 2013; Fletcher 2017; Arsel and Büscher 2012). From this perspective, market solutions are less concerned with preserving ecosystems than they are with ‘making nature work for capital’ (Igoe 2010; Büscher and Arsel 2012, 130). Consequently, these analyses tend to reject endeavours of carbon trading, offsets, and biofuel production as forms of ‘greenwashing’ for private profit that often deepen environmental inequities rather than solve them (Bakker 2016, 446). This logic is based upon the observation that neoliberal market-based solutions tend to suggest that environmental degradation is an externality that can be internalised within the very system that produced it. Hence market-based solutions treat environmental degradation as if it were a ‘market failure’, rather than being a failure of the ‘market society’ (Wright and Nyberg 2014). These ‘solutions’ can be interpreted as ‘spatial fixes’

that are inherent to capitalism in its pursuit to resolve its crisis tendencies through geographical expansion and restructuring (Harvey 2001, 73–74).

The power of the adaptation narrative lies in its affinity to ‘discourses of security, risk management and (neoliberal) resilient social systems’, whereby ‘the idea of spontaneous market order has become, ironically, a form of sustainable development’ (M. J. Watts 2015, 41). By presenting ‘nature’ as external to ‘society’ – as adaptation frames tend to do – the adaptation framing succeeds in creating a new justification for development interventions that fall within existing institutional parameters (Taylor 2014, 7–8). Yet, from a political economy and political ecology perspective there is no space for divides between nature and society given that ‘all ecological and environmental projects are socio-economic projects and vice versa’ (Harvey 2014, ch.16). When interventions make these distinctions, they can lead to processes of ‘regeneration by dispossession’, which has been defined as ‘the capitalist project of operating within and regenerating nature by dispossessing ordinary villagers to facilitate continuous capital accumulation’ (Borras and Franco 2018, 1319).

Political ecologists and critical geographers have criticised the ‘neoliberalisation of nature’ (McCarthy and Prudham 2004; Buscher and Dressler 2007) and the ‘economy of repair’ (Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones 2012a, 242) for suggesting that destructive practices in one place can be ‘mitigated’ by more sustainable ones in another (Leach, Fairhead, and Fraser 2012). Instead, they have highlighted how discursive strategies over nature are used to create mystifications over nature and to hide the realities that nature suffers under capitalism (Dalby 2013a; Parenti 2011). In doing so, technocratic and neoliberal environmental discourses and policies, allow political actions to be presented as apolitical, and hence outside the contours of controversies which are essential to politics (Swyngedouw 2011).

From a critical geopolitical standpoint, these arguments are premised on the assumptions that a rich, developed Global North must master nature because the poor underdeveloped Global South is unable to do so

(Dalby 1992). Scholars within the tradition of environmental justice have highlighted the ‘eco-imperialist’ traits of environmental policies that impose Northern environmental views upon the Global South (Martinez-Alier 2003; Nygren 2013). For example, new carbon markets have been described as creating what has been referred to as the ‘new geopolitics of climate change’ (Dalby 2013). Although the idea that the environmental crisis signifies the end of capitalism has become widespread, Harvey does not interpret the looming environmental crisis as necessarily a fatal contradiction for capitalism. Instead, he highlights how capital has a long history of circulating and accommodating to environmental crises and that capital has managed to turn nature into ‘big business’ (Harvey 2014).

Similarly, but with regards to migration, the adaptation thesis has also been rejected from structuralist perspectives for often amounting to little more than ‘making migration work for capital’, rather than for migrants themselves. Critical authors have highlighted that the ‘migration as adaptation’ theses have strong similarities to neoliberal thinking (Felli 2013; Bettini 2014; Baldwin 2012; Baldwin and Fornalé 2017). This is because the term ‘adaptation’ implicitly places the burden of change on the affected unit (hence the migrant), rather than on those responsible for creating vulnerability. By placing the burden of adaptation upon migrants, concerns with climate justice, rights and responsibilities are diluted because the logic of presenting migration as adaptation is mostly concerned with accommodating labour migration to the exigencies of capital (Bettini, Nash, and Gioli 2016). When migrants are presented as ‘entrepreneurial subjects’ (Bettini 2014), this can reinforce their vulnerability by conditioning population movements to a productive accumulation of capital (Felli 2016, ch. 4). By doing so, the migration as adaptation thesis also offers a de-politicised reading of both climate change and migration to which one must accommodate and/or adapt instead of question and resist (Baldwin and Fornalé 2017, 324). From this, it follows that both of the terms ‘climate refugees’ and ‘environmental migrants’, when misused and manipulated to serve political aims, can provide a means for evading culpability to those responsible for population displacement. Evasion is

made possible because these terms provide governments and development agencies with a convenient excuse, as disasters like hunger, conflict or forced displacement can be simply attributed to over-population or environmental change (Blaikie et al. 2004).

Inserting a Political Ecology of Access to Migration

Narratives which support large-scale investment often point to land titling and land formalisation as the best strategies to protect the vulnerable from land grabs (Deininger and Byerlee 2012). However, it is important to note that many land deals actually occur legally (meaning that they abide by the written legal articles) and therefore occur in spite of property rights and tenure reforms. Focusing solely on tenure rights in this context is therefore insufficient. In order to understand how land grabs affect both migration and environmental change, the theory of access developed by Ribot and Peluso (2003) offers important insights. Access, as conceptualised by these two scholars, is defined as the ‘the *ability* to derive benefits from things’, rather than the classical property’s definition of ‘the *right* to benefit from things’ (Ribot and Peluso 2003, 156). As these authors have underlined, law (whether written or oral, formal or customary) can never completely delineate all the modes and pathways of resource access along complex and overlapping webs of power (Ribot and Peluso 2003, 156). Ribot and Peluso explain that even the terms ‘property relations’ and ‘tenure’ examine only those relations of resource ownership and control that have been sanctioned in some way by a social institution. Whereas the notion of ‘property’ can be understood as a ‘bundle of rights’, ‘access’, on the contrary, is more analogous to a ‘bundle of powers’ and it includes a wider range of social relationships that constrain or enable benefits from resource use than the notion of property rights does (Ribot and Peluso 2003). By focussing on access rather than on property, we can begin to understand not just *who* benefits from resources, but *why* some people or institutions benefit from resources, *regardless of whether* they have rights to them (Ribot and Peluso 2003, 154). Access to livelihood opportunities depends on mech-

anisms of social inclusion and exclusion, on social relations and differentiations within communities, and – crucially – on power relations (De Haan and Zoomers 2005). In the context of globalisation, we must analyse how this access is shaped by diverse networked spaces and the positionality within them (Zoomers 2018, 2). By using access as a conceptual tool, we are then able to locate property as just one (among many) larger socio-political relations and discursive strategies that shape the four basic questions of agrarian political economy: who has what? who does what? who gets what? what do they do with it? (Bernstein 2004). To these four questions, we can add a fifth for the purpose of this thesis: and how does all of this impact migration?

Variegation and the Role of the State

Despite the power of the world system as an analytical category in which to embed and understand the interrelationships between environmental change, land grabs, and migration, it is important to underline that the ‘capitalist core’, as theorised by Marx, has not spread evenly nor has it maintained the same legitimisers and consequences throughout time and space (Henderson, Appelbaum, and Ho 2013). The variegated capitalism literature emerged as a reaction to the entrenched opposition between structuralist understandings of neoliberalism as an ‘all-encompassing hegemonic bloc’ on the one hand, and post-structuralist accounts on the other hand, which emphasised a ‘radical contextual particularity’ (Peck and Theodore 2007). In searching for a middle ground between the specific and the general, the variegated capitalism literature conceptualises neoliberalisation as ‘historically specific, unevenly developed, hybrid, patterned tendency of market disciplinary regulatory restructuring’ (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010a, 330). In doing so, the framework is able to recognise multi-scalar complexities without erasing distinctive spatialities. Through a ‘geopolitical ecology’ framework, Bigger and Neimark (2017) have underlined the need of creating synergies between ‘the attention given by political ecology to multi-scalar environmental politics and the discursive-material co-constitution of global institutional geopolitics’

(Bigger and Neimark 2017, 14). This work builds on this approach by paying attention to environmental and/or migration justifications and outcomes within variegated contexts.

The use of variegation, requires us to pay attention to ‘the conflictual volatile, and contested *interaction* of transnational regulatory experiments with inherited (national and subnational) landscapes’ (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010b, 195). In this sense, ‘globalization, in part, needs to be seen as an ‘externalization’ of given national capitalisms and aspects of their attendant social formations’ (Henderson, Appelbaum, and Ho 2013, 1222). This means that globalisation should also be understood as the ‘consequence of the gradual externalization of the socio-political character of particular forms of capitalism in particular historical periods’ (Henderson, Appelbaum, and Ho 2013, 1221), whereby land grabs constitute a ‘proxy for geopolitical influence’ (Sebastian and Warner 2014). In the context of this thesis, ceasing the variegated impacts of the externalisation of particular forms of capitalism is important to understanding how changing geopolitical balances, as well as the particular position that certain states occupy within regional political economies, shapes the interrelations under analysis. In other words, in order to understand how security and adaptation frames around migration and environmental change (re)shape ongoing dynamics around resource politics in particular places, we must pay particular attention to how and why broader geopolitical (im)balances are infused with other power struggles on the ground (not only at the nation level but also at the landscape level).

Although the concept of territorialisation refers to a state-led process of spatial demarcation for the purpose of controlling and regulating people and nature (Scott 1998)², territorial practices are not limited to national borders or to state actors (Corson 2011); this is especially evident through globalisation. Today, not only are territorial practices not limited to national borders, but the territorial practices of one actor affect those of the other actors (Lee, Wainwright, and Glassman 2018). Hence, the production of territory is never simply the outcome of a single state’s activity, but rather is an effect of actions by multiple actors, located at

multiple scales, (not exclusively states) and is not necessarily intentional. Through the global land rush, we see the very visible impacts of what has been termed the ‘foreignisation of space’ (Zoomers 2010) or the ‘denationalization of national territory’ (Sassen 2013). This does not mean that the state is no longer a key actor, however. In spite of claims to the contrary, authors have argued that the power of the state has not been erased in today’s globalised context (Sassen 2006, 2013b). Although there has been a ‘hybridisation of authority’, through which combinations of governments, intergovernmental organisations, corporations, and NGOs have merged to govern transnational issues such as climate change (Bulkeley 2005; Bulkeley et al. 2014), the transformations that the state has suffered are more nuanced than those indicated in narratives of state decline (Sassen 2002; 2003). The state remains a key player and different political regimes (ranging from democracies to authoritarian regimes) can influence outcomes. In fact, as Glassman underlines, it is true that *‘both the internationalization of capital is increasingly important and that states retain a crucial role in international political economy’* (Glassman 1999, 673). States thus remain a key unit of analysis in this work, but today we must strive to both ‘See like a State’ (Scott 1998) and to also see beyond it.

In order to understand the role of the state in shaping the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration, we must first understand competing explanations of state-society-interactions. For Fox (1993), Weberian approaches to public policies tend to be state-centric by depicting the state as an autonomous and independent entity. Marxists approaches, on the other hand, tend to be society-centred in that they see the state as an instrument of class rule with no autonomy. However, in the structural Marxist view, the constraints to the autonomy of the state are not only the result of the influence of class actors, but also the result of constraints imposed by the capitalist system itself. In this view, a degree of state autonomy is necessary not only to act independently of particular interests, but also to defend the dominant social order as a whole. It is in this tradition of scholarship that James

O'Connor has stressed that 'the capitalistic state must try to fulfil two basic and often mutually contradictory functions – *accumulation* and *legitimation*' (O'Connor 1979, 6). Given that the capitalist state depends on the stable functioning of the economy for its revenues, the state must attempt to maintain and/or create the conditions for profitable capital accumulation. At the same time, however, it must try to maintain or create the conditions for social peace and political stability. Following this, Fox developed an interactive state-society framework that considers state action as resulting from a 'reciprocal cause and effect relationship between changes in balance of power within states and shifts in the balance of power within society' (Fox 1993, 22).

The interactive state-society framework developed by Fox is useful in the context of this thesis because it allows us to understand not only how security and adaptation frameworks have been used to maintain the balance between capital accumulation and political legitimation, but also how society has reacted to the way these (im)balances shape different routes of action. States are not merely passive victims of land deals. Many states actually welcome land investments and make the necessary changes in legislation to facilitate them. However, there are variations in terms of the discourses used by different countries as well as in the actors, institutions and practices involved in land grabs (Wolford et al. 2013). While some states have enforced strict regulations limiting foreign land ownership, others have embraced foreign large-scale land acquisitions. Why some states might embrace land acquisitions while others reject them is deeply entrenched in the need of the state to create the balance between capital accumulation and political legitimation, in order to minimise the likelihood of social upheaval.

As Karl Polanyi's double movement shows, the conversion of land (meaning nature at large), labour, and money into commodities, poses lethal threats to nature and human beings, which inevitably lead to grievances, resistance, and demands for protection. As these demands for protection clash with the principles of economic liberalism and deepened commodification, a 'double movement' arises (Polanyi 1957; Peluso

2012). The basic objective of the double or countermovement is to limit the influence of markets over society and to manage the ‘fictitious commodities’; those that have not been produced for the market. Paying attention to double movements is important in understanding how people resist the commodification of land and labour, as this commodification often forms the very basis of forced and distressed migratory movements today. The particular forms that these double movements can take, however, are also dependent upon the particular historical moments and trajectories in which they develop (Peluso 2012, 83). Despite difference manifestations of double movements across political regimes, it is important to underline that the commodification of land and labour occurs throughout all regime types precisely because capitalism has elevated ‘the market’ (and not states) to the dominant role in economic governance (Henderson, Appelbaum, and Ho 2013, 1226). Neoliberalism can be defined as ‘a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade. (In this context), the role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices’ (Harvey 2007, 22).

However, and despite stark critiques of market-based mechanisms for the management of natural resources, these are often perpetuated precisely because they still have wide societal support (Blühdorn 2007). In this context, and in order to understand the drivers of resistance (or lack of thereof), we must go beyond an analysis of double movements as those that arise between a ‘bad’ market and a ‘good’, caring social civil society (Carton 2014) to account for mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. This is particularly the case in the context of climate change whereby the transboundary and global nature of climate change impacts, might create both ‘intra-class tensions and across-class alliances’ that challenge traditional class divisions and strategies of resistance (Arsel 2019).

In the context of this dissertation, an analysis of these variegated double movements – including where and why they succeed and fail – will allow us to shed light on why and how ‘political reactions from below’ (Borras Jr and Franco 2013) emerge in different ways in the context of land grabbing and how these reactions shape the diverging security and adaptation impacts of the land grabs in, and beyond, the landscapes where they unfold. These histories of resistance are seen as forms of ‘geopolitics from below’ that emanate from those dominated in an attempt to challenge the hegemony of the state (Routledge 2015, 236). This dissertation pays attention to how variegated geopolitical ecologies from below unfold across landscapes as a means to connect the more micro-level with the broader global level.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

The eclectic analytical framework of ‘variegated geopolitical ecology’ allows us to embed, historicise, and problematise the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration within the context of diverse types of capitalism that are embedded in shifting geopolitical configurations. It compels us to not only pay attention to the long trajectories that have shaped expulsion and destruction, but also to how these have been materially and discursively co-constituted through diverse deployments of security and adaptation framings. Moreover, it allows us to attend to the similarities and differences that are key in explaining variegated outcomes. It is by using the critical analytical and conceptual framework of variegated geopolitical ecologies that this dissertation seeks to answer the main research question that underlines this work:

Why and how do environmental change, land grabs and migration shape each other, both materially and discursively, and with what consequences?

The main proposition that guides this research is that the material and discursive interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration are inherent to the contradictions between capital accumulation and political legitimation that emerge in a world where both environmental and migratory issues have become, understandably so, dominant justifiers for policy and development interventions. These interrelations are shaped through the deployment of diverse security and adaptation frameworks that portray distress migration and environmental destruction as externalities that can be internalised within the very system that produced them. Despite the different forms that these interrelations assume across time and space, security and adaptation frames can serve to justify land grabs, advertently or inadvertently, by shaping the very conditions under which environmental destruction and migration occur, as well as the realities of security and adaptation beyond the landscapes where land grabs unfold. How these interrelationships unfold differently in specific places, and for what reasons, is an empirical question that this research will seek to address. To do so, the main cross-cutting research question is addressed through sub-questions that seek responses from different temporal, spatial, and geographic scales:

How have the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration evolved historically in Senegal and Cambodia, and why?

How are global adaptation and security frames around environmental change and/or migration serving to justify land grabs differently in Senegal and Cambodia, and why?

How have these land grabs unfolded in particular landscapes and with what main migratory and environmental impacts?

What are the key risks that these specific cases pose at both the national and global levels in terms of adaptation and security?

Objectives:

By answering these questions, this research aims to:

- 1) Contribute to the ‘environmental migration’ literature by illuminating how discourses and frames around environmental change and/or migration (re)shape the socio-environmental conditions under which migration occurs, by shaping access to resources;
- 2) Contribute to the ‘global land grab’ literature by giving particular attention to how migration narratives overlap with environmental ones in legitimising resource grabs, and by drawing attention to the migratory drivers and impacts of such resource grabs;
- 3) Contribute to both of these broad fields by providing new theoretical and methodological ways of linking the historical with the present, the global with the local (and vice-versa).

Notes

¹ Throughout the course of this dissertation, I have served as a policy advisor to the Hugo Observatory and have been a part of the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Given the increased policy attention to the inter-connections between environmental change and migration in recent years, I have also served as a consultant for other international organisations on this topic, such as the World Bank, the FAO, and the Nansen Initiative. All throughout, I have had the opportunity to see first-hand how the topics that are at the centre of this work become framed and acted upon. While my involvement in these policy processes was not intended to be methodologically linked to this work, it deeply informed the way I came to see my own research and understand the power of both security and adaptation frameworks.

² See also, Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Whitehead, Jones, and Jones 2007; Peluso and Lund 2011.

2

Global Ethnography and Incorporated Comparison

Introduction

How do we actually proceed with empirically investigating multi-scalar transboundary phenomenon such as environmental change, migration, and land grabs – and the discursive and material interrelations between them – in a way that does justice to variegation and impacts? This chapter aims to show that the study of such complex socio-ecological phenomenon can greatly benefit from the deployment of multi-case ethnographies. Multi-case ethnographies are able to capture not only the general pathway through which our objects of study have been (re)created and (re)shaped, but also their particularities and contingencies. Drawing on the literature on variegation, and employing a global ethnography methodology, this dissertation is based on an incorporated comparison between two very diverse socio-political contexts: Senegal and Cambodia. These countries were chosen because they share a common French colonial past which greatly determined the acceleration of environmental change, resource grabs, and migration in both places. Moreover, they are both countries where the recent global land grab has materialised, as well as being countries that are deeply touched by environmental degradation, climate change, and shifting migratory dynamics.

However, the historical pathways of these two countries, and the state-society interactions that occur within each, have evolved in distinctively different directions; these variations are key to explaining their diverse outcomes – and in thus allowing to cease variegation. Additionally, and as a result of their different integration paths within regional political

economies and diverse trading and investment networks, the justifications, as well as impacts, of resource grabs occur differently in these two contexts. While research at the national level can allow us to see the interactions between the global and the national, is able to capture these complexities, a more locally-based ethnographic approach is necessary in order to deal with particular context specificities. In order to gain this locally-based nuance, this research draws on extensive ethnographic research conducted in three specific landscapes where land grabs have been justified, advertently or inadvertently, by a variety of environmental and/or migratory narratives. The chapter is structured as follows: First, it explains the methodological apparatus, including the relevant epistemological and ontological discussions, that underpin this research. It then presents in detail the research design, the profile of the countries and landscapes under study, as well as the data collection techniques that were used. Finally, it explains the methodological challenges and limitations that were encountered throughout the process.

2.1 Global Ethnography and Incorporated Comparison

Ethnographic fieldwork has long proven to be amongst the most useful qualitative research tools for offering novel insights at both the theoretical and empirical levels. Ethnographic approaches are particularly helpful when studying phenomenon where quantitative data sources are scarce, unclear, or debated. However, ethnographic research has too often relied upon single case study investigations which, while offering rich insights and empirical data on particular places and populations, most often lack the ability to be extrapolated beyond the specific places and contexts where the research has been conducted. Conversely, studies relying on broad data sets and multiple case studies often fail for the opposite reason: they make more generalising claims that miss extremely important context specificities. As a reaction to these limitations, the sociologist

Georges Marcus introduced multi-sited ethnographies in his book, *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin* (1998).

The purpose of Marcus' methodology was to expand the traditional ethnographic method to incorporate multiple sites with the aim of explaining what binds them together. This approach does not limit itself to 'connecting the dots' empirically, but rather is equally concerned with the broader path on which they are connected – meaning the broader historical world system relations that they are a part of. Although connections often involve direct, immediate contact between people or things, *relations* involve indirect, mediated contacts (Feldman 2011, 379), which are less discernible to the observers' eye. As Marcus himself asks: 'If multi-sitedness designates a kind of path of movement in fieldwork, (then) where does the path come from?' (Marcus 1995, 110). Instead of constituting purely a contextual framework, in a multi-sited ethnography, the world system becomes integral to, and embedded in, the various objects of study in multiple sites.

Although multi-sited ethnographies have been extremely useful in the study of commodity chains and transnational migration, the sociologist Michael Burawoy contended that multi-sited ethnographies depart from the assumption of *pre-existing* sites, and he argued that it is more fruitful to turn to cases. This means turning to theoretically constructed objects while being aware that it is the process through which we bring theory to each site that actually transforms them into *cases of* something. Epistemologically, instead of pretending to free the researcher from all theoretical biases – as the positivist grounded theory approach strives to do (Glaser, Strauss, and Strutzel 1968; Glaser and Strauss 2008) – the extended case method contends that by its very definition no researcher is free of assumptions and therefore, the assumptions must be overtly dealt with as they significantly shape what the researcher sees. It is in fact precisely through the theoretical understandings that the researcher brings, that the frictions, disconnections, and re-theorisations can be produced. Following this approach, a case is constituted in two ways. First, it is constituted by the social forces in which it is embedded and the social process-

es it expresses. Second, it is constituted imaginatively by the position the researcher holds in the field as well as by the theoretical angle that is introduced (Burawoy 1998). Instead of aiming to connect sites through networks or flows of people, as multi-sited ethnographies tend to do, the aim of the multi-case ethnography, and of the extended case method, is to compare cases with a view to understanding and explaining their differences (Burawoy 2009).

Taking as a methodological apparatus what Burawoy terms ‘global ethnography’ can help us to both distinguish common patterns around the world, as well as the particular forces that create them (Burawoy 2009, 17). Even if the research is still located within particular locations, it considers those places to be globalised through multiple connections and relations (Gille and Riain 2002, 291). Hence, this methodology is capable of investigating ‘glocalisation’ (Swyngedouw 2004) and how particular localities are different expressions of multi-scalar interrelations (Sassen 2013). The extended case method achieves this by applying ‘reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory’ (Burawoy 1998, 5). In so doing, a global ethnography allows us to surpass the abstract implications of ‘globalisation’ by studying its particular experiences – experiences that are not homogeneous and ubiquitous, but rather specific and concrete (Burawoy 2000) and hence variegated (Peck and Theodore 2007; Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010b).

Interrelations between environmental change, resource grabs and migration – while global – are produced differently in various countries and particular communities and landscapes at different times. Certain causal explanations may prevail at one time and be overshadowed by other explanations at another time. This is why turning to a comparative approach is especially useful to capture variegation and to show that what might seem as counterintuitive at a particular time within one particular world economic context, is only the product of complex interactions be-

tween the broader whole and specific localities (Burawoy 2000, 152). However, and in order to avoid falling into the trap of objectifying the parts (or cases) as subordinated to the whole (system), McMichael proposed to view the totality as a conceptual *procedure*, rather than as a conceptual or empirical *premise* (McMichael 1990, 391). In an ‘incorporated comparison’ the parts are always relational categories and all objects are historically connected.

Comparative inquiry tends to be constructed around an ‘external’ relationship between ‘cases’ and theory, where ‘cases’ or ‘wholes’, such as the nation-state, are abstracted from their time/place setting. In an interconnected comparison, however, nation-states are not assumed to be self-contained systems with common patterns. Rather, they are examples of interrelated instances that are integral to, and define, the general historical process (McMichael 1990, 389). Comparison, in this view, is ‘internal’ to a historical inquiry, where processes are comparable *because* they are historically connected and mutually-conditioning. In order to achieve this, two types of non-mutually exclusive interconnected comparisons can be conducted. The first adopts a *multiple* form where instances are analysed as the result of continuously evolving process in and across *time*. Here, comparison is a systematic process that consists in the juxtaposition of instances through time. The second is a *singular* form, that analyses variation in or across space within a particular world historical conjuncture (McMichael 1990, 389). In other words, while cross-time comparison specifies that an era is composed of temporally differentiated instances or versions of a world-historical process, cross-space comparison specifies that a single conjuncture is the combination of particular spatially-located parts of a global configuration (McMichael 1990, 671). These two forms can be combined, however, and it is precisely by drawing on both the global ethnographic approach and an interconnected cross-time and cross-space comparison that the research design for this research has developed.

2.2 Research Design and Data Collection

This dissertation is designed by applying a global ethnography approach and using a cross-time and cross-space incorporated comparison to account for variegation. To do so, this work starts by embedding the variegated ‘geopolitical ecological’ histories of Senegal and Cambodia, before proceeding to bridge these with the current conjuncture through in-depth ethnographic research at both the national and local scales. It considers not only how the global is interested in the national and the local, but also how these interrelations occur in the opposite direction. As a result, the research design proceeds through a series of juxtapositions through which the global is collapsed and made into an integral part of related local situations (and vice-versa).

In order to understand the (dis)connections that emerge between narratives and material realities, the research not only moves between different geographic locations, but also asks the same questions from different angles. In fact, although interrelations are produced through complex historical assemblages and their articulation in particular contexts, these can look very differently depending on whether we interrogate an international agency, a rural community, a company, or a government representative. Although a global ethnography approach does not require us to contrast all of these perspectives simultaneously, the research is enhanced by examining one problem through different angles and building explanations that can better inform the whole (Burawoy 2000, 156).

2.2.1 The Construction of an Incorporated Comparison

Defining a case, as well as the strategic sites for conducting research concerned with complex global interrelations, cannot always be done in advance of the study. In fact, the need to extend one's theoretical and methodological apparatus often emerges through research itself. This is precisely the approach that I have taken when conducting this work, and although this was much more time-intensive than adhering to an initial and pre-defined plan, I believe this was key in order to both shape and answer complex questions. Indeed, and as was explained in the preface to this work, the questions that this dissertation poses arose from research that was conducted in Spain.

On the basis of this preliminary exploration, the research abandoned the initial research questions and became centrally concerned with understanding how environmental and migration narratives, framed around adaptation and security narratives, were used to, advertently or inadvertently, justify land grabs in Senegal. However, although land grabs with both environmental and migratory justifications are occurring in Senegal, it is not the first country that comes to mind when raising the subject of violent resource grabs. In fact, the particular landscape I chose to study in Senegal is emblematic in that it is not the norm. In other words, although Senegal represents an interesting context in which to pose the questions of this dissertation, it cannot be considered as representative of the much more violent developments that occur elsewhere. As a result, it seemed essential that an understanding of how environmental change, land grabs, and migration interact would be supplemented by also studying these in a socio-political setting where they are more widespread and violent. Moreover, a comparative approach would seek to partly address a core dilemma that many ethnographic researchers face: how to produce ethnographic work that can handle the critiques that might arise from quantitative researchers (i.e. is this representative of the larger whole?), while at the same time addressing the need for in-depth

studies that also ‘speak’ to the empirical conditions in *other* cases beyond the study at hand (Small 2009, 10). In the context of a comparative approach to address these dilemmas, the options seemed endless and many other countries of the Global South could have also fit this purpose. However, various reasons led me to choose Cambodia over another country.

At a first glance, not only is Cambodia one of the world’s most affected countries by land grabs, but it also shares with Senegal important traits, such as a French colonial past, as well as the fact that they have been both deeply affected (albeit to varying degrees) by environmental change and migration. Moreover, and for reasons of practicality and feasibility, while land grabbing in Cambodia is amongst the most alarming in the world, it is also one of the few places where foreign researchers (at least during the time that I conducted my own fieldwork) were not at serious risk of harm nor facing physical threats for conducting such politically-sensitive research. Additionally, the choice of country came at a time when I was initiating contact with the project leader of an extremely connected project entitled, ‘Climate change mitigation policies, land grabbing and conflict in fragile states: understanding intersections, exploring transformations in Myanmar and Cambodia’ (MOSAIC),¹ the project leader of which ended up becoming my PhD co-supervisor; being part of this team was absolutely essential for my work that subsequently followed. Although this research could have potentially extended to include other countries, the geographical scope of this dissertation and the time and resource constraints of a PhD excluded this possibility. The next section introduces in detail the basic information that renders the comparative approach between these two settings both theoretically and empirically useful for answering the main research question of this work.

An Incorporated Cross-Time Comparison

The common historical process that both Senegal and Cambodia share is that of relations of dependency, which began with French colonialism. From the theoretical perspective that this dissertation takes, it is precisely

at this historical moment that an analysis that aims to understand the origins of environmental change, massive resource grabs and disposessions must depart from. Despite this common historical past, which is also (and not accidentally) what continues to render these countries, and many others in the Global South, the most concomitantly hit by these three phenomena, both Senegal and Cambodia have followed very distinct historical pathways. While post-colonialism in Senegal was relatively free from stark conflicts, Cambodia suffered a turbulent combination of war and genocide.

The aim of an integrated comparison is to explain not only the commonalities between cases, but also their differences. In fact, having multiple cases is not just about their multiplicity; it is about the spatialised (and cultural) differences, which can transform different insights into theoretical cases *of* something. As a result, what matters most when building a multi-case study is precisely that they are different. This is in fact an essential requisite; without it there would be no point in moving from case to case (Falzon 2016, 13). The first step in building a global ethnography is precisely to be aware, and to make explicit, these historical pathways as more than purely contextual elements. These pathways are in fact a key to determining and explaining any of the interrelationships that we can see today. As a consequence, this research begins by undertaking a historical analysis as if both nature and migration were central components of this history. This entails not only a historical and socio-political overview of each country, but also an analysis concentrated on variegated migratory and environmental narratives of territorialisation, as well as their impacts. To do so, it draws on historical and current literature in both French and English while applying to it the variegated geopolitical ecological framework that theoretically structures this research. This analysis is carried out in Chapter 3.

An Incorporated Cross-Space Comparison

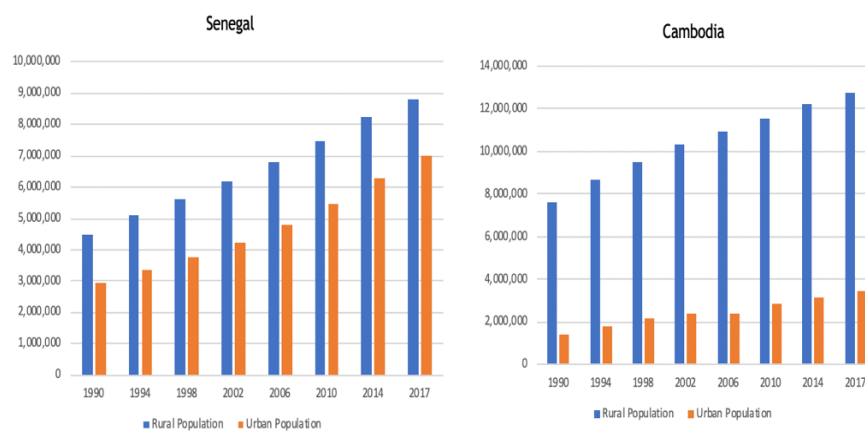
With the respective historical and socio-political comparison in mind, this research then places itself in the current conjuncture. The aim is not only to understand how diverse security and adaptation frames around environmental change and/or migration shape land grabs, but also the key explanatory variables that explain differences in justifications and outcomes. To do so, it analyses the key policies that have facilitated land grabbing – mostly land and agricultural policies – to then analyse whether and how migration and/or environmental arguments have been used. Before offering an in-depth analysis of these issues, which is provided in Chapter 4, it is already useful to advance some basic contextual information for each country.

Despite some progress, both Senegal and Cambodia face considerable development challenges. As of 2018, Senegal had a Human Development Index of 0.505 (low human development), ranking 164 out of 188 countries. The same year, Cambodia had a Human Development Index of 0.582 (medium human development), with a ranking of 146 (UNDP 2019). Nearly half of the total Senegalese population (15 million) lives in conditions of poverty. National poverty was last measured in 2011, amounting to 46.7% of the country's population. Most of these populations are concentrated in rural areas where 66% of residents are considered poor (World Bank 2019). Unlike many other countries that face extreme poverty, Senegal is generally considered to have a 'stable government'. According to the 2018 Democracy Index, Senegal was categorised as a 'flawed democracy' with a score of 6/10 – a trend that has remained stable since 2012 (The Democracy Index 2018). In Cambodia, according to official estimates, the poverty rate stood at 13.5% in 2014 as compared to 47.8% in 2007. Although Cambodia has achieved the aim of reducing poverty by half, most families are only marginally above the cut-off limit. Around 4.5 million people remain 'near-poor' - vulnerable to falling back into poverty when exposed to economic and other external shocks. Approximately 90% of Cambodia's poor live in rural areas (World Bank, 2019). In Cambodia, the ruling party has been in power for

over 30 years. According to the Democracy Index, Cambodia is classified as an ‘authoritarian regime’ with a score of 3/10 – a trend that has been deteriorating since 2015 (The Democracy Index 2018).

Access to resources – and changes in the quality and quantity of natural resources available – is of high importance in both countries, where the majority of the populations live in rural areas and depend on agriculture as their main livelihood. In fact, although the percentage of the urban populations in both countries has increased over the last decades, the majority of the population in both Senegal and Cambodia continue to be rural. As of 2017, the rural population in Senegal represented 55.6% of the total. In Cambodia, the percentage is much higher, with 78.8% of the population being rural (FAOSTAT 2017). Regarding Senegal, World Bank estimates suggest that formal employment in agriculture consisted of 53.43% of the country’s total employment in 2017. However, when informal employment in agriculture and subsistence farming is considered, these estimates rise to between 60% and 75% (ILO 2018). Despite high economic growth, the labour market has not been able to create sufficient opportunities to absorb the labour force and the demand for jobs is growing at a rate that is twice as high as the supply (ILO 2018). In Cambodia, the agriculture sector accounted for more than 70% of formal employment until 2001; but by 2009, this fell to below 60% and by 2013, it stood at just below 50%. As the share of agriculture has fallen over time, the shares of services and industry have increased. By 2013, industry accounted for 20% of employment and the remaining 32% was within the services sector. However, the shift away from agricultural employment has tended towards low-skilled occupations. Despite these shifts, agriculture (both formal and informal) still accounts for the majority of Cambodia’s employment and for the foreseeable future will continue to provide livelihoods for a significant portion of the population (ADB 2015).

Figure 2: Urban and Rural Population in Senegal and Cambodia (1990-2017)

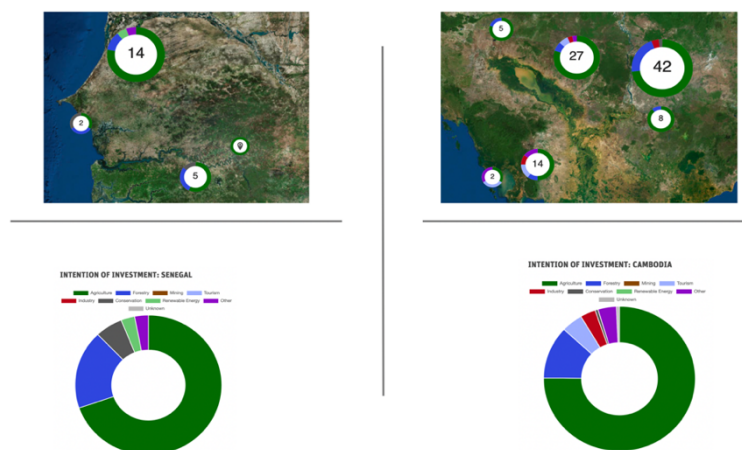


Source: FAOSTAT 2019

As is the case in many poor countries, rural people engaged in agriculture are highly vulnerable to environmental and climate shocks, including droughts and flooding. Both Senegal and Cambodia experience the impacts of climate change in the form of increased periods of drought and floods – the combination of which affect farmers most drastically. Small-scale and poor farmers who depend on rain-fed agriculture for their subsistence are particularly at the *mercy* of fluctuating weather patterns. Specifically, it is their pre-existing vulnerabilities, which have been socio-politically shaped, and not just their exposure to risk, which makes them prone to hazardous impacts. The combination of socio-economic and political vulnerabilities that the rural poor must navigate has not only been compounded by the effects of environmental and climate change, but importantly, by agricultural and investment policies that have paved

the path for land grabs. While in Cambodia the extent of foreign large-scale land acquisitions is more prominent than in Senegal, land grabs are also an important phenomenon in Senegal.² Additionally, it is important to highlight that a significant amount of land transactions emerge on smaller scales and through the hands of domestic investors, despite the absence of such figures within databases.

Figure 3: Number, Location, and Production Aims of Land Deals in Senegal and Cambodia



Source: Land Matrix 2019

Although the global land rush has materialised in both Senegal and Cambodia, what we seek to understand is if and why the justifications used have been similar or different and whether environmental and/or migration justifications have prevailed in one case over the other. In this respect, it is not only by looking inwards into Senegal and Cambodia that we can obtain an understanding of variegated drivers and impacts, but also by looking outwards beyond the national borders and paying atten-

tion to the different positioning of each country in diverging regional political economies. Factors such as who the primary donors are, which countries are its main trading partners, as well as to whom their debts accrue to, and where their migrants go are assumed to influence not only changes in access to resources, but also the justifications employed to appropriate land. These factors are analysed in Chapter 4. Both countries are heavily reliant upon Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA). Although OECD countries have been the main lending countries since World War II, and have attached certain conditions to their disbursed loans, the last decade has seen an important shift. As of 2019, nearly 40% of Cambodia's external debt is now owed to China, and under 10% of Senegalese debt is owed to China. Moreover, the amount of 'hidden debt' is believed to make these figures significantly higher (Horn, Reinhart, and Trebesch 2019, 14).

To understand how different geopolitical dynamics play out in specific contexts, this research draws on both primary and secondary data collected at the national and local scales. Fieldwork in Senegal was conducted in July and August of 2014 and between May and July 2015. In Cambodia, fieldwork occurred in March and April of 2015 and between August and October of 2016. In order to cease the variegated impacts of diverse environmental and migratory narratives, a number of expert interviews (including with government officials), were conducted. In Senegal, key informant interviews were conducted with government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment, as well as with officials from United Nations agencies (IOM), the World Bank, NGOs (CICODEV, IRD, Wetlands International, ARD, Institute Panos), the national farmer association (CNCR), and researchers and journalists. In Cambodia, key informant interviews took place with government officials from the Climate Change Department at the Ministry of Environment, as well as with donors involved in the Cambodian Climate Change Alliance and Climate negotiators, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Land Management, the Forest Administration, United Na-

tions agencies (UNDP, IOM, OHCHR), the World Bank, NGO's (LICADHO, ADHOC, Equitable Cambodia), the environmental conservation NGOs, researchers and journalists (see a list of key organization interviewed in Annex).³ The experts were selected according to their expertise on environmental and climate change, migration, agriculture, and natural resource management. These key informants were chosen according to their wide expertise and through a snowball sampling strategy. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended with the aim of acquiring the most relevant information possible and were tailored to each participant, according to their different roles, knowledge, and backgrounds. In total, approximately 30 expert interviews were conducted in each country.

Most of these key informant interviews took place in the urban areas of Dakar and Saint-Louis in Senegal, and in Phnom Penh in Cambodia. With respect to language, the interviews were conducted directly in French (Senegal) or in English (Cambodia). These interviews were absolutely crucial to understanding the diverse socio-ecological and political realities that shape diverse resource grab and migration justifications and realities in a specific place. Moreover, interviews with key informants often took place on more than one occasion in order to triangulate the information that I had gathered from them with the information that I had gathered on the field. Data triangulation proved crucial in order to identify points of contention. Moreover, I also participated in seminars and conferences relevant to the scope of my research which were very useful both for gaining information and networking with diverse stakeholders who were subsequently interviewed for this work. Two important events which occurred during my fieldwork were a Roundtable on Human Security and Land Rights held on the 9th of March 2015 in Phnom Penh and the Global Land Forum held in Dakar from the 12th to the 16th of May of 2015. These events provided me with an opportunity to meet with key stakeholders and to discuss my research as well as to undertake formal and informal interviews.

Additionally, at the international level, I followed both Cambodian and Senegalese delegations during the conferences of the parties (COP21 in Paris in 2015; COP22 in Marrakech in 2016; and COP23 in Bonn in 2017). During these conferences, and as a member of The Hugo Observatory, I have been part of the Advisory Group on Human Mobility and Climate Change with members from several UN agencies and civil society. This not only gave me an insider's view on the negotiations, but also allowed me to seize the importance of adaptation and security framings.

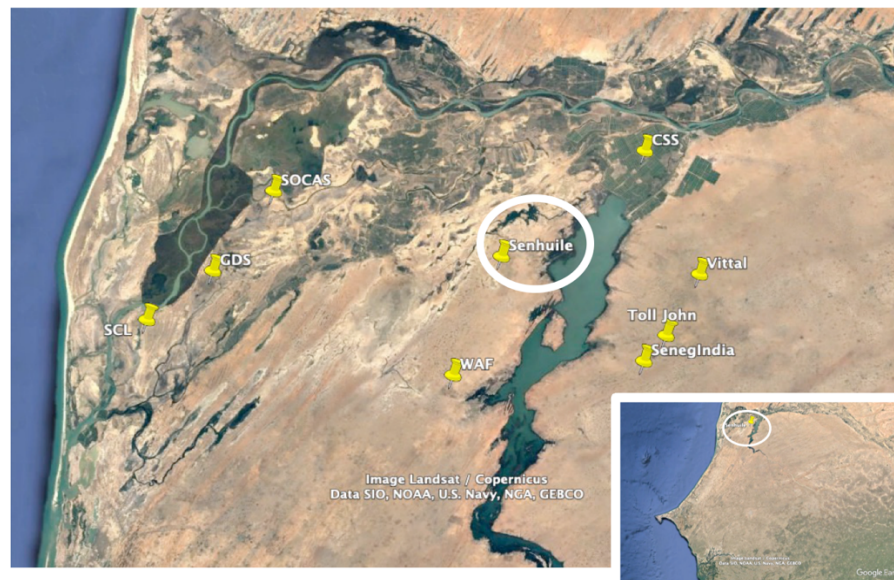
The Importance of Pilot Fieldwork

Key informant interviews not only allowed me to identify the main factors that could ultimately explain differences and similarities across cases, but they also led me to the locations where in-depth ethnographic research with companies and affected populations could be conducted. During the first month in both countries, I conducted pilot fieldwork several sites (see maps below), in order to gain a broad understanding of how resource grabs were occurring and also to help me discern which cases were the most appropriate for more in-depth investigation. Although not all of the empirical material gathered during these exploratory visits is explicitly mentioned in this dissertation, the information acquired at these early stages was important for informing my understanding of the macro-dynamics that drive resource appropriations and their impacts. Moreover, this preliminary work was crucial to determining and specifying the most interesting and feasible locations in which to carry out in-depth research, and where local communities welcomed my presence. Given the political sensitivity of the topic at hand, this was a very important consideration.

In Senegal, most large-scale land acquisitions are concentrated around the Senegal River Delta due to its proximity to water resources. As a result of the geographical concentration of several European companies that have mostly settled in the area since 2006 (see Figure 3), it was possible for me to visit a variety of communities affected by diverse forms of agro-industrial plantations: Les Grands Domaines du Senegal (GDS),

the Société de Cultures Legumieres (SCL), SOCAS, Compagnie Sucrière (CSS), Vittal, Toll John, SenegIndia, and West Africa Farms. While all of my preliminary visits in Senegal provided critical insight into the broader national context (presented in Chapter 4), Senhuile proved to be the most appropriate for further in-depth work.

Map 2: Visited Sites and Chosen Site in Senegal

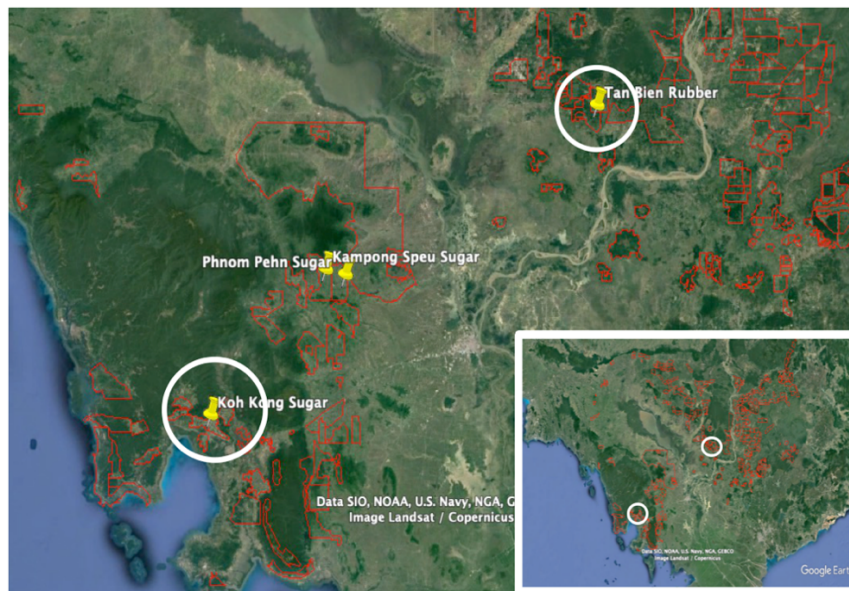


Source: Google Earth

In Cambodia, where half of all arable land in the country is being targeted by land grabs, the phenomenon is more wide-spread geographically than in Senegal. As a result, the information on relevant sites for in-depth research was more confined to key informant interviews, accessibility, and safety considerations. The choice of my cases in Cambodia was influenced by the two main crops grown in the country (particularly within Economic Land Concessions), which include rubber and sugar. Due to the dominance of rubber and sugar, I found it important to select

cases from which I could draw out the different justifications and impacts that these two diverse production aims have. Before making a definitive choice on the cases, I briefly visited a rubber plantation in Preah Vihear, home to indigenous communities, where I conducted two days of fieldwork with an official from the Ministry of Agriculture at the Cambodia/Thai border. While there, I was able to speak to many people who had been affected by several land concessions, as well as with many others who hoped to flee to Thailand, due to having lost their land in the regions from where they originated. At this stage, I also conducted additional in-depth fieldwork within two adjacent sugar concessions, Phnom Penh Sugar and Kampong Speu Sugar, before determining that the most relevant and feasible for my own work would be the cases of Koh Kong Sugar and Tan Bien Rubber (see map below).

Map 3: Visited and Chosen Sites in Cambodia



Source: Google Earth, the Economic Land Concessions boundaries delineating in red, via LICADHO

2.2.2 Zooming into Three Landscapes

With an understanding of the historical and socio-economic and political trajectories of each country, and insight into how recent land grabs for farmland are taking place at each national scale, this research then zooms into three concrete sites, determined through exploratory fieldwork in both countries that was explained above. The aim of the case-studies is to give a micro-foundation to the more macro processes (Burawoy 2009). In other words, after analysing how the ‘global inserts itself into the national’ (Sassen 2013a), fieldwork in these locations provided me with a lens into *how* the global inserts itself into the local (via the national) – and with what consequences. This is because complex processes of variegation are grounded territorially, and therefore: ‘territories of extraction can be seen as a kind of rooting’, through which analyses may be conducted (Rocheleau and Roth 2007, 435). For this purpose, three cases were chosen as entry points into complex landscapes: one in Senegal (Senhuile-Senethanol) and two in Cambodia (Koh Kong Sugar and Kampong Thom Rubber). The choice to concentrate on just one case in Senegal, while focussing on two in Cambodia, stems from practical reasons as well as to the fact that given the much wider spread of land grabs in Cambodia, two cases, instead of one, will provide richer insights.

What draws these seemingly dissimilar cases of land grabs together is that they have all been justified by different actors through a diverse set of security and adaptation framings linked to environmental and/or migratory motives. Another point of connection is that they are all – to varying degrees – cases of land grabs for ‘flex crops’. Flex crops are crops that can be used for multiple purposes (food, fuel, material, etc.), which are attractive for investors as they enable them to diversify their income opportunities, by, for example, deciding to sell a crop as food and/or fuel depending on market prices (Borras, Franco, et al. 2016). In sum, the interconnected comparison between the three cases reveals an ap-

proach of selecting cases based upon theoretical replication, with the aim of understanding what is similar and different between them.

1. **Senhuile-Senethanol** in Senegal is a plantation jointly owned by Italian and Senegalese shareholders, conceived as part of the country's most recent biofuel plan for (supposedly) producing sunflower oil.
2. **Koh Kong Sugar** in Cambodia is a sugar plantation jointly owned by Thai and Cambodian shareholders; the site is linked to the higher global demand for sugar stemming from biofuel production incentives and favourable EU trade deals (such as the Everything But Arms Initiative).
3. **Tan Bien Rubber** in Cambodia is a rubber plantation owned by the Vietnamese Rubber Group and presented politically and discursively as a way to increase forest cover, and hence contribute to mitigation and 'greenness'.

Although the research starts with an understanding of each of these cases, these cases are only taken as a point of entry into understanding the much more complex landscapes, where several other land grabs have taken place. These three cases, serving as anchor points into complex landscapes thus constitute the departure, but not end point of this research. This approach follows recent calls by scholars for taking a landscape, rather than a single case approach, in order to grasp the complexity of socio-ecological transformations (Hunsberger et al. 2016; Baird and Barney 2017; Scheidel and Work 2016).

In terms of sampling, I chose the villages that had been the most directly impacted by the 'anchor cases' and from these starting points, expanded the sample to include other villages and contiguous projects,

based upon the information gathered during the interviews. My first point of contact in all of the villages was the village elder, community leader and/or village chief. The populations were then purposively sampled according to how they had been both directly and indirectly impacted by several resource grabs, by their relative economic (or class) position (i.e. 'rich', 'middle', and 'poor'), by gender, and by age. In order to do so, I followed the snow-sampling technique by which interviewees were asked to recommend other interviewees (Weiss 1995). Moreover, the study was conducted in all three sites coinciding with a national holiday (Pchum Ben in Cambodia and Ramadan in Senegal). The rationale for this was that these holidays comprise the few dates when most migrants that are able to, return home to see their families. The choice of these dates was particularly crucial to understanding first-hand from migrants what in particular drives migration for different people. By interviewing migrants, I came to understand not only their motivations for migrating, but also the conditions under which they had done so, and whether or not their migratory journey had improved or jeopardised their well-being and that of their family members.

I conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with an estimated 200 people across these three locations. The interviews included base-line questions concerning the environmental and migratory experiences that the participants had encountered before and after land grabs took place. These before/after questions were important in understanding which impacts can be attributed directly to land grabs, and which fall outside of these specific interventions. When important information that was not initially the focus of the interviews or focus groups emerged (for example, the existence of other land grabs impacting them), questions around these topics were subsequently included in the semi-structured interview and focus group guides. These guides remained fluid and flexible, especially during the first round of fieldwork, and became more structured and fixed during the second round of fieldwork. Hence, the research was flexibly structured to enable me to investigate crucial factors that emerged in the process. Interviews were conducted until data

saturation was reached. Depending on the site, the amount of time required for this to happen varied. But across all sites, there became a clear point where additional interviews were not providing additional information with respects to my questions.

In Senegal, some interviews at the local level were conducted directly in French (as some people in the villages where I was carrying out research spoke French), but the vast majority of the interviews took place with the help of a translator (Wolof to French). In Cambodia, at the local level, all interviews took place with the help of a research and field assistant, who also served as my translator (Khmer to English), since no interviewees spoke French or English. Regarding the duration of the interviewing process, approximately 20 days were spent in each of the three sites, divided across two trips to each of the three sites. Revisiting the ethnographic sites enabled me to compare the situation from one year to the next, which proved extremely important as it is common for the projects inducing land grabs to change their aim and scope (and hence their impacts) in a short amount of time. In fact, since the last research round was conducted, certain projects have been abandoned in all three sites.

2.3 Challenges and Limitations

Data and Access

This dissertation covers a broad empirical and geographic scope and deals with issues that are extremely politically sensitive in both countries and where no robust data on migration exists. Although migration data exists at the national and regional levels (to a certain extent), it has not been disaggregated at the village level. This means that the available data on mobility is unable to explain the impact of particular projects on migratory dynamics. Internal migration, which constitutes the majority of movements, is not recorded in either country and data on international migration is often unreliable and is also not disaggregated by village.

This, of course, represents a significant challenge which can only be overcome with ethnographic fieldwork that includes as many people as is logistically possible. Although collecting quantitative figures on the exact number of people that have been displaced or have migrated as a result of the land grabs examined, would have been useful to an extent, and while I did consider distributing a survey for this, the time and resource intensity of collecting such numbers was beyond the possibility of this work. Such a survey would have required a careful design in order to accurately assess the particular role of the land grabs on all other migration drivers. Additionally, it would have had to be translated into various languages without a clear understanding of the added value that survey results would reveal. More importantly, a survey was an inadequate format for posing the questions required to dig into the complexities and overlaps, which are the primary aim of this work. For these reasons, the possibility of collecting quantitative data was abandoned.

An additional challenge is that although data on particular land grabs does exist, the information is unreliable and often does not coincide with what we observe on the ground. This stems from the high amount of secrecy involved in these transactions, as well as the fact that the majority of information on land grabs has been collected rapidly by NGOs and journalists who often lack the resources to do the type of in-depth research that is needed to answer many of questions. Despite considerable hurdles, accessing the company premises to conduct interviews with company directors and managers was possible in both Senhuile and Kampong Thom Rubber. This information was crucial to triangulate the data provided by those interviewed in the village sites with that of the companies. Unfortunately, given the highly conflictual status of the Koh Kong sugar company, I was unable to access the premises nor to speak to the company representatives.

Positionality

Positionality is extremely important in the construction of cases (Burawoy 2009, 204). Not only does each case appear different depending on its vantage point, but also the specific context, as well as the researcher's race, gender, and age all affect the way others perceive and interact with the researcher. Therefore, there is a need to consider how the ethnographer relates to the people being interviewed and how these relations affect what is being observed and how the data is collected. Being a white, young, European in Senegal initially played against me at the local level because investors in the area are also European. This meant that gaining the trust of populations was challenging as many initially thought that I may be conducting research on behalf of the company itself. My same background, however, facilitated my contact with the company managers who shared these characteristics.

The opposite occurred in Cambodia, however, where being a white European tends to be welcomed by the populations, given that there is an underlying assumption that most foreigners are NGO workers willing to fight for remedy and help them reclaim their land. Conversely, access to companies becomes more difficult not just because land grabs are intrinsically more politically sensitive in Cambodia, but also because companies associate white people with being journalists and NGO workers intending to undermine them. This means that my position, and access to data, shifted continuously depending on where I was and on who my interlocutors were. To balance the changing perception that participants had of me, it was extremely important to understand the context and the image that I projected, and to contribute to altering assumptions that were incorrect and might bias responses.

Moreover, and as Burawoy expressed, 'an intervening social scientist cannot avoid domination – both dominating and being dominated. Entry is often a prolonged and surreptitious power struggle between the intrusive outsider and the resisting inside. Moreover, to penetrate the shields of the powerful, the social scientist has to be lucky and/or devious. Using diverse pretexts' (Burawoy 2009, 56–57). Indeed, contacting govern-

ment officials and company representatives often required a different strategy. Given the scope of my research, the explanatory angle that I used to initially gain access was tailored to the needs and interests of the interlocutor. It never implied a lie, or an overt manipulation, but the research object was portrayed in a way that would facilitate opening doors. Wearing different hats has its strategic advantages: there is no need to show all of your cards to everyone you come into contact with, but rather you can choose to show the card that has a greater chance of facilitating your access across the required doors. For example, to gain access to government officials in Cambodia, it was necessary to avoid using the politically charged term 'land grabs'. In cases of doubt, I presented myself as a researcher on climate change and migration, which is generally welcomed. Whereas had land questions been explicitly raised, the doors would not only have been shut, but there is a possibility that I might have been prevented from conducting my research altogether. Nonetheless, once the interviews began and trust had been established, I was able to inquire about most of the difficult and politically charged questions. The strategy was thus one of door opening, not of topic avoidance.

Gaining and Maintaining Trust

Conducting research in sites where the participants are often explicitly or implicitly in conflict with one another is particularly challenging. People need to be able to trust that the information they disclose will remain anonymous and will not be used against them. In order to gain trust, it proved essential to first establish bonds with the most vulnerable (the people affected by land grabs), before attempting to connect with those involved in carrying out land grabbing. This was extremely important so that those I sought to interview in the villages would not perceive me as a threat. Building this kind of trust with communities where I lacked the language skills, and where I had only visited for relatively brief amounts of time was challenging, but not impossible. It required a sincere interest in their lives beyond the scope of my sole research question, and an in-

tentional effort to remain in contact throughout the years despite being thousands of kilometres away. It required building human connections and not viewing people as mere vehicles for my research aims. This type of contact and trust was established in all sites, but it was especially built in the case of the communities touched by Senhuile (given the lack of language barriers). Building this trust was extremely useful for me to obtain the most updated and current information on the evolution of the project and its impacts without having to physically revisit the site. Moreover, without having built this type of trust, I would not have been able to acquire a great deal of extremely important and sensitive information, which was critical for this work.

The Crucial Choice of Translators and Gatekeepers

When one conducts research on politically sensitive topics as a foreign outsider, the role of the translator becomes critical. In Senegal, where some people in villages spoke perfect French, I was able to rely on local translators to conduct my research interviews. This greatly facilitated data collection, but doing so required carefully selecting the translators with respect to how trusted they were within their communities. In the case of Senhuile, I was often accompanied by the Village Chief (who, in Senegal, is a respected figure within the village and has no political appointment) who served as a translator, as well as a development worker who had been living in the area for years and was highly appreciated and trusted by the communities. In Cambodia, however, given that none of the people within the villages spoke English, I was obliged to rely on the help of translators from Phnom Penh. This meant that throughout the interviews, there was not only one outsider, but two. Finding the appropriate people for this task was one of the most challenging fieldwork issues I grappled with, and which I had not planned for from the outset.

Conclusion

Understanding the material and discursive interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration calls for methodological tools that can capture the complexity and variegation of the world system (and of the world ecology), while also accounting for its specificities. The global ethnographic approach used in this research pays explicit attention to changing historical contexts in order to understand the different impacts that diverse security and adaptation framings have upon shaping access to natural resources and in modifying the socio-economic and environmental conditions under which migration takes place. To account for variegation, I have chosen to apply an incorporated comparison between two countries that are positioned within different regional political economies, which in turn, allows me to account for both domestic and international factors. Both Senegal and Cambodia are theoretical cases of variegated geopolitical ecologies in that they share strong colonial pasts, but they are also able to show how the 'core' of capitalism evolves differently according to time and diverse geopolitically constructed influences. Moreover, the methodological approach taken aims to capture variegation through three specific cases of land grabs that serve as 'anchors' into understanding much more complex landscapes. Instead of limiting the research to a specific site, the method consists of following the empirical links that become revealed through the research, until connections and interrelations from the global to the local, and vice-versa, can be established. Such an approach enables me to identify empirical micro-foundations in what may otherwise appear as abstract theoretical explanations of world ecological functioning. Although this approach does not come without considerable challenges, it allowed me to understand how geopolitical ecologies are mutually co-created from above and from below.

Notes

¹ Additional information about the MOSAIC's project framework, methodology and results, is available here: <https://www.iss.nl/en/research/research-projects/climate-change-politics-land-grabbing-and-conflict-fragile-states>

² Although the Land Matrix is one of the most reliable sources concerning data on the number of deals and hectares targeted by land grabs, the veracity of this data and its capacity to tell us more must be seriously considered (See Oya 2012 and Eldelman 2013 for a critique on numbers). This dissertation often uses figures from the Land Matrix as a simple tactic to give a broad overview of the scale of the phenomenon. This does not, however, imply that I am taking these numbers as a given nor am I overlooking their contested nature.

³ Given the high political sensitivity regarding land grabbing in both countries, many of my respondents demanded explicit anonymity to participate in this work. Citations in text are therefore not attributed to particular individuals in order to respect and protect participants. Most of the key informants interviewed have not been listed in the annex for these same reasons.

3

Historical Geopolitical Ecologies in Senegal and Cambodia

Introduction

Broader socio-ecological changes can only be understood, and hence re-shaped, if we address their root causes; where we chose to begin our analysis matters. The interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration that we see today are a product of fundamental historical changes that can be located, to a very large extent, in colonialism. It is precisely through ‘colonizing migrations’ (Portes 1978, 2) that the commodification of land and labour took unprecedented dimensions, and where environmental destruction extended vertiginously (Moore 2015). The colonial past that both Senegal and Cambodia share has greatly determined and shaped the trajectories through which these three phenomena have been shaped both discursively and materially. However, colonialism did not take place evenly or homogenously. The framings used to legitimise the commodification and extraction of land and labour were dependent on both the material realities found in place (the type of resources and peoples available for commodification) as well as on the diverging geopolitical and economic interests of the colonial power in each country. Moreover, the postcolonial paths that took place in each country assumed very different routes, which it is essential to understand in order to explain these interrelations in the current neoliberal context.

The key research question this chapter seeks to address is: How have the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration evolved historically in Senegal and Cambodia? This is important to allow us to capture the roots of, and divergences between, the material and discursive interrelations that are present today. This chapter presents a historical overview of both Senegal and Cambodia as if both nature and migration were central explanatory components. It does so by concentrating on three main periods – namely colonialism, postcolonialism, and neoliberalism – and by drawing on the similarities and differences between the two countries with respect to these periods.

3.1 Colonialism: Commodification and Securitisation

Although humans have transformed the environment from the onset of our existence, this transformation became particularly apparent during colonialism. It was during this era that land was transformed into property, and labour into a commodity, and where massive socio-ecological transformations began. A world ecology approach views the modern world system as an environmental history whereby the rise of capitalism radically reshaped world ecology through agro-ecological transformations (Moore 2003, 311). Throughout this process, peasants were either violently expelled from their land and forced to migrate, or remained on the land and forced into agricultural wage labour (Moore 2015; 2011). During the colonial era, not only was there a desire to ‘secure’ territory, but also to secure the ‘free’ human labour that these territories contained. The need for food and forest products were some of the earliest demands of the early modern world economy (Moore 2003, 319). Controlling the mobility of local communities was deemed as necessary for capital accumulation. In this context, local communities were viewed as not only commodities, but also as a threat to the security of the colonisers, who began to view these ‘uncivilised’ populations as suspect and potentially dangerous (Burawoy 1976, 1058). Additionally, even

if the concept of adaptation as such was not deployed, rural populations already were targets of ‘modernising’ ventures that aimed to intensify production and to incorporate producers into national and international divisions of labour (Taylor 2014, 98–99). Although local adaptation strategies to environmental changes already existed (such as polyculture, swidden agriculture, and extensive grazing), colonisers brought with them different ideas of what adaptation should look like (namely monocrops and large plantations).

Senegal under French Rule

For the Senegalese, land is considered to be a ‘divine creation’, like the air, the sky and the sea. It belongs to God, to the gods and to the ancestors. Before the colonial period, land formally belonged to communities, and its chiefs (*the Lamane*) were the ones that attributed and administered plots with the aim of achieving an equal distribution of land and balancing its usage (Faye 2008). The French colonial enterprise in Africa dates back to 1637 in Saint Louis of Senegal, but from 1854 onwards it expanded with an aim to establish Senegal as West Africa’s colonial centre (Harris 1911, 353). The colonial administration initiated a territorialisation process according to the ‘vocation’, or potential economic contribution that each territory could offer (Magrin, Ninot, and Cesaro 2011). Given its availability of land and water, the Senegal River Delta attracted the attention of Colonel Schmaltz. In 1816, the Governor of Senegal instigated a ‘Plan of Agricultural Colonisation of the Delta’ stating that: ‘I have travelled a lot and I have always observed very closely the countries that I have visited. I have never seen anything more beautiful or better suited to great businesses than Senegal’ (cited in Niang 2011, 28).

The introduction of cash crops during the colonial period paved the way for capitalist penetration and for the emergence of wage labour relations in agriculture and trade (Fall 2011, 201). The colonial economy was sustained through the expansion of groundnuts. This expansion required both the delimitation of large-scale land concessions as well as the mobilisation of large amount of labour (Moitt 1989, 50). The agrarian trans-

formation that accompanied groundnut expansion modified both environmental and migratory dynamics under the premise that traditional farming methods were both inefficient and environmentally destructive. In other words, there was the implication that traditional methods were maladaptive and posed an environmental security threat. In 1904, the French colonial administration applied the French Civil Code to Senegal in order to provide a legal regime for private, individual ownership of land, and attempted to establish a registration system (Golan 1990, 232; Ribot 1995, 1590). According to this registration system, all lands that were vacant and without a master (owner or lord) belonged to the state. The code created the concession system and protected areas, including usufructuary rights. It placed forests under the direct control of the colonial state, and it was the General governor who controlled the distribution of concession rights (Ribot 1997, 263). The French Civil Code determined who was able to access what and who could make the decisions over that access, thereby shaping human mobility.

At the time, it was not population pressure that was problematic, but rather the contrary. In fact, a lack of population meant that there was a limited capacity to mobilise the labour that was needed for the expansion of groundnuts. As a result, the colonial administration developed various strategies to regulate labour flows. The main strategy was to force people into the cash economy through the imposition of a cash head tax (Colvin 1981, 63). The introduction of monetary taxes encouraged temporary migration to places where migrants could earn wages and pay for these taxes (Beauchemin et al. 2014). As occurred also in other African countries, the imposition of taxes upon those living in rural areas dislocated them from their usual subsistence livelihoods and pushed them into plantations and/or mines (Burawoy 1976, 1058). The number of migrant workers, *navetaan* (from the Wolof term *navet*, which refers to the rainy farming season), increased enormously during the 1930s (Oya 2015, 40). Although they were now ‘free laborers’, the origin and movements of migrant workers remained the same as it had been during the previous slave period.

Moreover, and despite the supposed possibilities that these migrants had to become ‘independent’, their actual working conditions and their dependence on the Wolofs – or masters – meant that, in effect, their conditions remained very similar to what they had been during slavery (Moitt 1989, 47–48). In fact, the use of an involuntary labour force was utilised on a daily basis as the principal driving force of colonial ‘*mise en valeur*’, which is the profitable and efficient use of land (Tiquet 2018, 136). Finding strategies to manage people’s movement was thus necessary to resolve a relative scarcity of labour that threatened the possibilities for capital accumulation by the colonisers. The higher-ranking employment positions within the administration or in commercial posts were filled by French and Lebanese migrants. However, when the World Wars struck, Senegalese migrants began moving towards Europe due to the colonial powers’ needs for army workers (Tall and Tandian 2011).

During World War II, peanut production needs doubled as a result of an increased demand in biofuels, following the rise in prices of fossil fuels (Hassan and Kalam 2013). In fact, and although we tend to assume that biofuels are a recent development in the context of climate politics, peanut was the original bio-diesel, or what we might today call a ‘flex crop’ (Borras et al. 2014). In order to double peanut production, the colony relied upon the arrival of unprecedented amounts of migrant workers from different regions in Senegambia, which in turn led to an unprecedented volume of groundnut exports in the 1950s. However, while this increased the overall economic security of the colony, the introduction of monoculture cash crops systems reduced the number of cereal crops grown for domestic consumption and exponentially exacerbated the food insecurity of local people, while simultaneously making them dependent upon international markets for food. Senegal became the first African colony to depend on imported rice from Asia (Venema, Schiller, and Bass 1996, 147). The energy security of the colonisers was already directly competing with the food security of the Senegalese.

Although the movement of migrant workers was actively encouraged, the movement of pastoralists came into conflict with the desire for

greater territorial expansion of peanut. Pastoralists were considered a nuisance and threat to the further expansion of groundnuts; conflicts between the Islamic brotherhood (who had a key role in the cash crop economy) and the Fulbé pastoralists escalated (Fall 2011, 65; Oya 2015). Given the that the colonial administration had both political and economic interests of maintaining good relations with the Islamic brotherhood – due to their role in expanding groundnut production – the colonial administration sided with them in orchestrating conflicts over land (van den Breemer and Hesseling 1999, 27). In order to control the movements of pastoralists and to stop these tensions, the colonial administration dug the first boreholes in the savanna region of the Ferlo, with the aim of achieving their semi-sedentarisation (Ba 1986). Hence, although the movement of some (wage labourers onto groundnut plantations) was economically useful, the movement of others (mainly pastoralists) was to be managed and kept to a minimum. As James Scott observed, ‘a state mainly concerned with appropriation and control will find sedentary agriculture preferable to pastoralism or shifting agriculture’ (Scott 1998, 338).

As groundnuts expanded, their environmental impacts materialised. The destruction of natural forests, which had provided a protective curtain against desert winds, marked the beginning of a domino effect of ecological degradation in Senegal (Venema, Schiller, and Bass 1996, 147). Given the impacts that this could have on the economy, in 1935 the Forestry Code for French West Africa recognised the key role of the forestry sector and inserted new rules for the use and exploitation of nature (Boutinot 2001). However, these measures were often in contradiction with traditional usages and local people were excluded from using forests. Commercial rights over forests were granted nearly exclusively to Europeans and other urban elites (Ribot 1997). Whereas people from urban areas were considered ‘citizens’, those emanating from rural areas were merely ‘subjects’. The former had access to civic rights and received authorisations for exploiting and commercialising forests. The latter, however, could only use resources for subsistence, and only in the in-

stances where these resources were not required by the ‘citizens’ for commercialisation (Ribot 2001). As a result of these regulations, rural populations were only allowed to exploit the areas that had no commercial value to the colony. Moreover, the new protected area system that was introduced served as an instrument to further the colonial agenda of regulating labour flows, with an aim to move people onto plantations, by modifying access. Together, these measures transformed the Senegal River Valley into a labour reserve for cheap, mobile and docile workers that were needed for agriculture (Clark 1995, 198–99).

Cambodia under the French Protectorate

The French colonial authority had interests in Cambodia because it provided a strategic enclave within Indo-China and a means for subverting British expansion in the region. Moreover, The King of Cambodia, Norodom, demanded assistance of the French as a result of the Vietnamese and Thai squeeze upon their territory (Chandler 1997, 38). Before the French established their protectorate in 1863, land ownership in Cambodia had been historically tied to land use; it was acquired by ‘the plough’. Whoever farmed the land received usufruct rights to its possession, but the king remained the owner of land and water. This system allowed farmers to hand over their usufruct rights to their children, but if ever the land was unused for more than three years, their rights to that land were lost (Chandler 1997). When the French arrived, they found a ‘worm-eaten’ kingdom (as they called it), shattered by warfare and with fewer than half a million people (Chandler 1997, 36). Cambodians were cast as people trapped in the past and ‘suspended in motion that the colonizers (as liberators) were going to transform’ (Edwards 2007, 422–23). High government positions became occupied by French and Vietnamese officials.

The colonial administration focused on agriculture and on processing raw materials such as rubber for local use or export (Chandler 1991). To facilitate this, the French protectorate introduced private property and a ‘rationalisation’ of tenure rights. Each parcel of land had to be registered

in a cadastral system that fed into a tenure market where people were free to buy or sell these rights (Diepart 2007, 133). The French also introduced the concession system for the management and exploitation of forest and fisheries resources and the establishment of agricultural plantations (Diepart and Schoenberger 2016, 157). These land laws were also used as a means to combat swidden cultivation, which the French viewed as an archaic and destructive practice. In 1908, a royal decree stipulated that land belonged to those who cultivated it for at least three years, and it also introduced property taxes on land, which were also partly aimed at combatting swidden agriculture (Guerin 2017, 122).

The first rubber plantation was established in the Kampot province of Cambodia in 1911 and during the following two decades there was a massive ‘rubber boom’ in the country, with rubber plantations expanding within other provinces, including Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom and Kratie (Natividad 2015). Before World War I, rubber plantations had generally been small in scale in Cambodia. But following the rising global market demand for rubber due to the growing automobile industry, these rubber plantations quickly transformed into large-scale ones (Murray 1992). In an attempt to avoid conflicts with local people, rubber concessions were typically granted in scarcely populated and forested areas. However, this meant a condition of labour scarcity and by the mid-1920, plantations faced severe labour shortages (Murray 1992). The colonial government solved the labour shortage problem by facilitating the immigration of indentured labour, bringing migrant workers from northern and central Vietnam (Byerlee 2014). Additionally, itinerant labour recruiters patrolled the Cambodian countryside in search of the many Cambodian landless and indebted villagers who might offer scarce resistance to recruitment. The French Protectorate in Cambodia also established the highest tax rates on peasant farmers in all of Indo-China, thereby effectively forcing people into wage labour to be able to afford their taxes. While the 1920s had been relatively prosperous given the high demand for rubber, rice, and corn, the economic crash of 1929 caused extreme economic hardship, especially among rice farmers who

were dependent on moneylenders (Ross 1987). To pay off their debts, plantation work – regardless of its dire conditions – became the only viable option for many rice farmers. However, non-contractual laborers were only hired to meet temporary, seasonal demands for casual labour that offered no job security.

Contracted workers were subjected to many obligations which amounted to nothing less than indentured servitude. These included binding clauses on the nature, duration, and conditions of work on the plantations. Infringement of any of these clauses was viewed as a criminal offence, and punished accordingly (Murray 1992, 52). The plantation compounds resembled ‘gigantic prison-like enclosures’ where workers that had already been separated from their means of production, were now isolated from the outside world. The frequent use of state power to break strikes and settle industrial disputes became an integral part of deterring workers’ resistance in Indochina. While for Europeans latex came to be known as ‘white gold’, plantation workers referred to it as ‘white blood’ (Murray 1992). Although the plantations were actually much less efficient than those of smallholders in terms of production, plantations were far more convenient units of taxation. Another advantage of this production system for the colonial state, was that it typically provided centralised forms of residence and labour that were far more amenable to central political and administrative control (Scott 1998, 189–90). Maintaining people in these locations thus safeguarded continued state revenue, both due to the surplus value added by labourers and for the improved capacity that the state had to tax them.

With regards to natural resources, and in a similar way as occurred in Senegal, the French instituted a system of forest reserves, wherein French companies were granted ‘logging privileges’, but locals were no longer permitted to use the forests. This severely limited livelihood opportunities as people could no longer access, graze, or collect forest products (Diepart and Schoenberger 2016). From 1902 onwards, logging activities were regulated within these concessions through licenses between French companies and the forest administration, in what came to

be known as the ‘exclusive logging privilege’. This privilege served to limit small-scale use by the large-scale exploitation of forests (Diepart and Sem 2015, 18). At the same time that these exclusive logging privileges expanded, between 1902 and 1920, the area designated as reserve land doubled. Colonial forestry rules served to protect French entrepreneurs whilst criminalising peasants and local authorities (Thomas 1999 cited in Diepart and Sem 2015, 18). These reserves were strategically located in areas where the administration was able to collect money by fining ‘environmental offenders’. However, as the need for greater capital accumulation expanded in the 1930s, the local governments decided to open the reserves to commercial activity. At this time, the French protectorate also established a system of ‘collection rights’ in order to exploit wood from forests (Diepart 2007, 136).

3.2 Decolonisation and Postcolonialism

France emerged from World War II weak and divided. Economic hardships, the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as global superpowers, combined with the growing power of nationalist elites throughout Africa and Asia, forced the retrenchment of European colonial states from their colonies. Decolonisation, however, did not equate to real independence from the French state, which continued to maintain a large degree of control over its former colonies and protectorates. How this control evolved and the political situation it led to in different countries, however, was not homogeneous.

Senegal: Between Socialism and Liberalism

Following Senegalese independence in 1960, power was assumed by a government supported by France under the presidency of Leopold Sedar Senghor and his party, the *Union Progressiste Sénégalaise* (UPS), which would remain in place for the following thirty years (Boone 1992, 11). Senghor’s socialism was described by his foreign minister as a ‘middle way’ between Social Marxism and American liberalism. Although some

classic elements of liberalism were introduced, such as a reduction of the role of the state and an enhancement of private sector involvement, the political elite also remained closely tied to the Socialist International (Schraeder 1997, 487). Senghor opposed deregulation, privatisation and trade liberalisation. However, at the same time he nurtured the relationship with France, and continued to base the Senegalese economy on groundnut production for export and rice importation (Oya and Ba 2013, 16). Although he opposed market reforms, he did not oppose a heavy French influence or a state controlled by elites - two characteristics that would play an important role in the transformation of Senegal towards neoliberalism (Hedin 2007, 35–36).

Domestically, throughout Senghor's presidency Islamic leaders received land grants from the government to further expand their groundnut estates (O'Brien 1975). French firms owned over 85% of Senegal's modest industrial sector (O'Brien 1975, 109) and all of the banks, and they easily monopolised the import-export trade. French and Lebanese businessmen also controlled retail trade in urban and rural areas (Boone 1992, 433–34). In return for these privileges granted by the state elites, French support assisted the new government in holding onto power in the face of challenges from nationalists, trade unions, and student movements, who rejected what the state's 'pseudo-independence' and demanded *real* independence instead (Chafer 2003). Caught between the need to manage capital accumulation, which was facilitated by the preferential treatment it received from France, together with domestic political legitimisation at home, Senghor tried to 'reconcile the socialist rhetoric of the party, with an emphasis on co-operation, consensus, and solidarity, with the aims of foreign donors and investors' (Oya 2006, 206).

The economy under Senghor was based on a clear modernising mission of agriculture under the banner of 'rural socialism'. The rhetoric of this vision was that deep involvement of the state in the economy was necessary to protect peasants (Oya 2006, 205). A newly formed development agency, The Delta Management and Exploitation Company (SAED), was mandated with the development and management of water

and land, in what became a pioneering zone for development projects (Bourgoin et al. 2016). The vision of this development agency, however, was not one of industrialised agriculture. Rather, it promoted pump-based irrigation, which was initially very popular (Koopman 2012, 659). Between 1965 and 1975, 30,000 hectares of the Delta were brought under cultivation by the SAED through small irrigation perimeters. Peasant farmers were expected to grow rice on land that had been made available to the SAED by the state and distributed through cooperatives. This was accompanied by large-scale organised and supervised immigration to provide the necessary workforce for the exploitation of the irrigated perimeters (Corniaux et al. 2016).

However, due to the hardships that farmers on the Senegal River were facing at this time due to droughts and economic downturn, the government popularised the idea of investment in dams, legitimated by the desire to turn the Valley into the ‘California of the Sahel’ (Koopman 2007). The droughts of the 1960s were capitalised upon by the development planners, who used the droughts as an opportunity to suggest that traditional farming systems belonged to the past and that large-scale irrigated agriculture was the only way forward (Adams 1977). One of the key reforms instigated under Senghor, and which continues to be at the base of environmental and tenure regulations to date, is the Law of the National Domain (*Loi sur le Domaine Nationale, 1964*). This law nationalised all lands not registered or occupied prior to the date of its implementation (Le Roy 1985, 683) and categorised the national territory into three domains: the national domain, the state domain, and the private domain. Approximately 95% of all land falls under the national domain, with the other 5% being shared between the state and private owners (van den Breemer and Hesseling 1999, 20). Most of the territory within rural areas (excluding protected areas which fall under the state domain) are administered by rural communities which have the power to distribute user rights to the land amongst their communes. The law was meant to promote the *mise en valeur* (meaning ‘to add value’) of lands and to protect farmers against large land holders (Faye 2008). Under this law, the

state is also authorised to transfer usufructuary rights to all of its citizens on the condition that the receiver uses these rights in an economically useful way.

However, the criteria of what constitutes *mise en valeur* as never clearly defined and thus was left open to interpretation and co-optation by economic and political interests at the expense of poorest (Black and Sessay 1998, 38). A major change that the law entailed was that, *de facto*, the law ended customary rights over land and prevented the transmission, or inheritance of land. The implication was that those people who were traditionally considered to be 'owners', no longer had legal rights and hence the expropriation of their land was possible. However, in practice and despite changes in legislation, those that cultivated the land still considered it to be their own (Black and Sessay 1998, 38). The two systems of legal versus customary land ownership still overlap today. With regards to forestry, the state continued to own many forest reserves, inherited from colonial times, while the 1935 Forestry Code remained in place (van den Breemer and Hesseling 1999, 20).

The Forestry Services, which had been granted significant power during colonial times, continued to consider local people as the main enemies of the environment and so they imposed restrictions of access as well as fines on agro-pastoralists (van den Breemer and Hesseling 1999, 25). These restrictions, however, did not apply to investors, who were viewed as inherently capable of properly making an efficient and economically profitable use of resources. The tenure changes that had come into effect with the 1964 Law on the National Domain had significant consequences as the irrigation schemes grew, since they provided a mechanism to allocate land for irrigation and hence led the way to land speculation (Black and Sessay 1998, 38).

These regulations on access and tenure over resources also served to manage populations, specifically to push people into places of production where labour was most needed. The Senegal River Delta became a place of in-migration with resettlement schemes for new populations.

Claims that SAED's strategy sought to improve local food production and provide an alternative to labour migration which was not needed at the time, improved the tone for foreign aid negotiations that were funding them (Adams 1977, 51). Agricultural projects that were organised on the basis of 'stopping migration' began to become more popular. However, the heavy mechanisation and investment required meant that the work that could be done by untrained farmers was limited, which legitimised further involvement by the SAED. Moreover, the fertilisers, seed and hired machinery that were required as determined by the SAED, were provided to the farmers on credit (Adams 1977, 40). The high cost of SAED services, the peasant farmer's low productivity, and their tendency – in the absence of substitute crops – to consume much of their harvest themselves, combined with technical difficulties, drew the peasants deeper into a spiral of debt (Adams 1977, 42).

The end of preferential price arrangements with France in 1966, and the devaluation of the West African CFA franc (CFA), marked a drastic fall in groundnut prices and created a very tense political situation (Corniaux et al. 2016, 12). At the same time that revenues from the groundnut sector were declining, the droughts of the 1970s exacerbated the situation (Boone 1992, 169). The socio-political and economic situation enflamed the popular frustration with the political system. Farmers blamed the government for diverting peanut earnings into the bureaucracy while the producers were going hungry, labour unions began to complain of the declining real value of the minimum wage, Senegalese business leaders demanded a better deal in relation to French capital, and university students and other intellectuals were outraged by the ongoing power given to the French in Senegalese matters (Boone 1992). The discontent of the peasantry (known in French as the *malaise paysane*) translated into a double movement that defied the political *status quo*. Student groups and labour-unions initiated protests that demanded 'national control' over the economy. The following message from one labour union encapsulates the generalised feeling at that time:

‘The present economic system of Senegal works like this: Foreigners are rich and getting richer while the Senegalese are poor and getting poorer...Senegalese workers (cannot save) and they consume everything they earn (13 billion CFA francs in total). What is worse, they are forced to go into debt. The foreigners, who represent only 5% of the workforce, earn 57 billion CFA francs. Living very comfortable lives, they can still save and send their profit outside Senegal to invest abroad. They repatriate 43 billion CFA francs each year, $\frac{3}{4}$ of what they earn in Senegal. Every year foreigner repatriate sums that exceed the national budget of the country’ (Senegalese Militant of the *Union des Groupements Economiques Sénégalais* (UNIGES) in 1968 – cited in Boone 1992, 168).

Senghor’s initial response to this tense socio-political situation was to declare a state of emergency and to silence groups with violence. However, as protests continued, Senghor moved swiftly to demobilise, divide, and co-opt the opposition. Peasant debts to cooperatives were forgiven and the government raised groundnut producer prices. He also provided student leaders attractive government jobs and increased the minimum wage (Boone 1992, 169). In an effort to regain stability and political legitimacy, Senghor embarked in efforts to increase public investment in agriculture, increase producer prices, and subsidise fertilisers. However, in order to increase public spending, Senghor embarked in acquiring an unprecedented amount of foreign loans. Senegal’s foreign debt rose from 15.5% of GDP in 1970 to 99.5% in 1985 (Dembele 2003, 15–18). Foreign borrowing provided the material basis for expanding the state and reconsolidating the Senghor regime during the second decade of independence. Loans granted to Senegal by the World Bank Group increased dramatically in the early to mid 1970s, tripling between 1970 and 1975, and placing the World Bank ahead of the French government as the prime financier of Senegalese public investment (Boone 1992, 173). Although the government had been very reluctant to completely liberalise the agricultural economy and privatise state-owned enterprises (Faye et al. 2007: 10), the amount of debt that Senghor had accumulated provided

little leeway to contradict the international financial institutions that demanded these changes. The government accepted the intervention of the financial institutions mandated with the mission to spread the neoliberal paradigm (mainly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund).

Although Senegal had experienced a negative net migration rate since the early 1970s, the above crises led to a spectacular increase in out-migration (Sidibé 2006). Due to the impacts of the multiple economic and structural reforms on weakening farmers' support systems (particularly of those that needed irrigation in the context of droughts), most families had no other choice than to send their sons abroad in search of income to support them (Koopman 2012, 656). This became a convenient strategy for the Senegalese state as it ensured a continuous inflow of money from the diaspora. At this time, significant domestic policy efforts were devoted to strengthening the potential of emigration for development through remittances. However, as the economic crisis in the 1970s hit, France radically changed its migration policies, introducing the requirement for residence permits in 1974, closing the border in 1975, and thereafter initiating return policies. Hence, the economic crisis of the 1970s threatened the possibilities and benefits of migration for development. People started to return home and those countries experiencing the economic crisis began to delocalise companies, relocating to developing countries where natural and human resources were cheaper (Daffé 2008, 113).

Senghor tried to appease the democratic demands of the various populations by adopting a new constitution in 1976 that transformed the *de facto* one-party state into a tripartite political system. However, the process incurred strong interventions designed to assure any relinquishing of power. The new constitution designated Senghor's ruling party, the *Union Progressiste Sénégalaise* (UPS), as 'socialist and democratic' and provided a mechanism to crystallise two opposition parties. These included the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), led by Abdoulaye Wade, and the African Party of Independence, led by Mahmoud Diop. While according to the constitution the former had to adhere to the 'liberal and

democratic' creed, the latter had the constitutional obligation of espousing the 'Marxist-Leninist or communist' ideology (Cruise O'Brien and Coulon 1978). Senghor and his party were convinced that this limited pluralism would reconcile the growing popular demands for liberty and democracy with the imperatives of political order and stability (Fatton 1987, 281). As a result of this manipulation, Senghor won the semi-competitive elections of 1978 by a large majority.

The macro-economic context deteriorated, however, and Senegal was caught in huge external debt and fiscal deficit (Oya 2006, 209–11). This set the stage for further structural adjustment and the turn towards neoliberalism, which would later be consolidated under Senghor's successor. In 1979, the government announced a new IMF-inspired five-year economic plan designed to cut government spending (including in agriculture), promote economic growth and reduce Senegal's trade deficits and foreign debt (Gellar 1995, 52). The lack of financial control and pervasive corruption resulted in losses that seemed unsustainable. The situation of socio-economic and political chaos towards the end of Senghor's presidency led him to resign, passing on his power to a very close ally, Abdoulaye Diouf, in 1981.

Cambodia: Between (In)dependence and Genocide

Post-colonialism in Cambodia assumed a very different path, as it was caught in the midst of various international conflicts and wars being fought over its territory. While in 1941, the Japanese army proclaimed the end of European powers, the French administration continued to remain in the country. In 1945, understanding that their defeat by the United States was eminent, Japan entered with force into Indochina, seizing power and removing the French administration. However, later that year, the allied forces (Great Britain, India, and France) arrived to Cambodia with the help of the Cambodian King, and thereafter, Cambodia became an autonomous state within the French Union. The focus

of this newly ‘independent’ state was to establish an industrial base. During the Sihanouk regime (1953-1970), Cambodia agreed to coexist with foreign interests and hired foreign personnel to fill the posts that had been left vacant by the French administration, while also accepting foreign capital investments in infrastructure. The geographical location of Cambodia was strategically important for military interests especially given the neutral foreign policy adopted by Cambodia during the Cold War years (Chhair and Ung 2013). Nonetheless, despite foreign investments in infrastructure, agriculture continued to be an extremely important sector providing approximately 41% of the country’s GDP. Cambodia’s exports continued to depend on primary goods with rubber and rice remaining the most important (comprising over half of the total exports) (Chhair and Ung 2013).

The tenure system that the French had introduced in Cambodia was preserved and land transactions increased. This consequently led to an important tenure concentration and the formation of a landless farmer class (Hou Youn 1955 cited in Diepart 2007, 133). This placed a significant number of peasants into a vicious cycle of debt and impoverishment. Although Sihanouk wanted to maintain the ideals of France, by the end of the 1960s a strong anti-colonial sentiment rose, echoing what was occurring in many parts of the world. Sihanouk’s authoritarian rule, which aimed to silence opposition, provided movements of national liberation and Khmer nationalism with a strong impetus to present themselves as an alternative to foreign domination (Osborne 1993). However, Khmer nationalism did not assume power immediately. In 1970, Sihanouk was overthrown by the right-wing General Lol Nol with the backing of the United States. Lol Nol embraced a policy of liberalisation which involved devaluing its currency, removing state controls on foreign trade and banking, and reducing state involvement. The policies of liberalisation were short lived however, because Cambodia became trapped in a civil war fought between regime supporters - backed by the United States - and Khmer nationalists – backed by China (Chhair and Ung 2013).

Between 1969 and 1973, during the Vietnam War, the United States dropped an estimated 550 000 tons of bombs over the neutral country to supposedly flush the Viet Cong forces thought to be operating in Cambodia (Boyden and Gibbs 1997). This intervention killed thousands of people and more than a million people were internally displaced in Cambodia. This provided ammunition to the nationalist sentiment and nationalistic factions, which became more powerful as a result, held together through their anti-Americanism. For many, it was the prospect of freedom that mobilised them for a revolution that promised radical transformation (Chandler 1997, 42). Throughout the country, the perpetually powerless segment of the population was drawn towards the revolution under the hope that they would finally be empowered through it. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge overthrew General Lol Nol (Chandler 1976).

The Khmer Rouge (KR) sought to dismantle the French colonial idea of *Cambodge* and replace it with that of 'Kampuchea'. The flaws that needed to be rectified in what the Khmer Rouge called the 'old society', included social ranks, personal possessions, wealth, consumerism, individualism, 'family-ism', book learning, foreign ideas and 'urban' society. Many of these characteristics, the Khmer Rouge argued, had been imported thoughtlessly from the 'depraved' United States. The regime proposed to wage a class war and to transform the economy by abolishing class distinction, destroying pre-revolutionary institutions, and transforming the population into unpaid agricultural workers (Chandler 1991, 1). Supported by an extremely impoverished population, the Khmer Rouge initiated the radical collectivisation of farming. Under the leadership of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge regime abolished money, evacuated all cities and towns, prohibited religious practices, suspended formal education along with newspapers and postal services, imposed communal eating after 1977, and forced everyone to wear peasant attire.

The main priority of the Khmer Rouge was the production of rice. The Khmer Rouge paid scarce attention to the forestry sector as their prime focus was the expansion of agriculture. Almost overnight, Cam-

bodia became as rural as it had been at the time of the French's arrival in 1863 (Chandler 1997, 45). Approximately 30-40% of the population were uprooted from their origins and all urban areas were emptied (IOM 2009). New ways of life instituted by the regime included a culture of obedience to authority figures, but no longer to one's parents and elders. However, anti-Vietnamese prejudices and Sihanouk's obsession of being surrounded by enemies remained, contributed to the fact that by 1978, Cambodian hatred towards its neighbours had become the driving force of Cambodia's foreign relations (Chandler 1997, 45). At this time, all assets were owned by the state and all international involvement in the state was removed. The Cambodian 'balance sheet' throughout this time of radical change includes the death of approximately 1.7 million people – or one fifth of the population – who perished as a result of forced overwork, starvation, mistreated diseases or executions (Chandler 1991). Whereas the internal migration of populations was forced by the regime, people were not allowed to leave the country. However, both during the Khmer Rouge period and immediately after, a large number of people fled to refugee camps in Thailand or sought asylum overseas.

In 1979, a Vietnamese invasion overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime and established the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Members of the Khmer Rouge fled to the north-eastern provinces of Cambodia – along the Thai border – and guerrilla activity ensued (Marschke 1999, 16). With the Khmer Rouge no longer in power, people started migrating throughout Cambodia in an attempt to acquire their former land back. The People's Republic of Kampuchea initiated a distribution of land among peasants and people were able to return their villages (when these had not been completely destroyed); the land continued to remain classified as state property (Vickery, Haysom, and Sutton 1986, 137–38). The new government attempted to set measures for the collectivisation of agricultural land and established a policy of 'solidarity groups' (*krum samakke*), but the collectivisation policy did not extend into other means of production. The 'solidarity groups' were groups of 15 to 25 families who farmed the land collectively and shared the fruits of their labour equita-

bly amongst themselves (Vickery, Haysom, and Sutton 1986, 138–39). Under this system, land user rights were granted to each family in relation to the number of active members. Land was given in usufruct and abandoned land was cultivated by those who had the labour capacity to do so. However, as the system developed, it not only led to conflict over land access, but it also reminded people of the damage experiences they suffered under the Khmer Rouge, and so the people rejected collectivisation (Feldt 2016).

From an environmental standpoint, the lack of access to international markets and the absence of external investment stalled deforestation in Cambodia from 1975 until the start of the 1990s (Dudley et al. 2002, 324). However, by end of the 1980s, the rhythm of deforestation increased as a result of the exploitation of luxury wood by military factions that used the revenues to maintain themselves. The last chapter of the Cambodian civil war was characterised by both the establishment of timber as a ‘conflict commodity’ and a rise in wildlife trade, which served to sustain the power of both the army and political elites (Le Billon 2000). For both cultural and circumstantial reasons, land collectivisation failed, and land privatisation was introduced (Ovesen, Trankell, and Öjendal 1996). The negotiations for the transition from war to peace began in 1989. With the end of the Vietnamese domination, Cambodia moved towards a market economy and from a system of state ownership of land to a private property system (Feldt 2016).

This transition to private property took place in the middle of the civil war with the presence of Vietnamese troops, after Western countries halted aid flows; it also occurred in the context of a country struggling to rebuild itself from one of the darkest chapters in history (Hughes 2003, 1). Under the supervision of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Cambodia engaged once again in fundamental changes to its land tenure institutions. In 1989, new legal provisions were inserted as amendments to the Constitution and three categories of land were defined: settlements, agricultural land and concessions. These provisions

would be letter integrated into the 1992 Land Law (Diepart and Sem 2015, 27).

3.2 Variegated Neoliberalism

Despite striking similarities during their colonial periods, postcolonialism took drastically different directions within Senegal and Cambodia. It was on the basis of such diverse historical pathways that neoliberalism also assumed variegated pathways that maintained salient similarities with the colonial period. As stated by Moore: ‘neoliberal capitalism was built by returning to the ‘scenes of the crime’, ruthlessly appropriating wealth from the long-plundered zones of the Global South’ (Moore 2011, 17, 133). The end of the Cold War and the subsequent breakdown of the Soviet Union was facilitated by a massive upheaval of global economies during the 1970s. Between 1973 and 1979, global oil prices rose dramatically, generating a severe economic crisis in industrialised nations as well as a massive debt crisis in the developing world. The disillusionment with state involvement based on Keynesian economic principles led to a paradigm shift that consisted in leaving the ‘regulation to the market’ through neoliberal principles (Springer 2010, 2). However, how neoliberalism plays out in practice is conditioned by the political situation in place and by how state-society interactions unfold. As a result, each country adapts to neoliberalism in very different ways and with distinctively different legitimisers and outcomes with respect to environmental change, land grabs, and migration.

Senegal: Balancing (In)dependence

In order to appease social tensions, the new President Abdoulaye Diouf increased the democratisation process initiated by Senghor and the National Assembly legalised and recognised all political parties. Similarly to what Senghor had done before him, Diouf portrayed himself as both a ‘moderniser and a protector of traditional values and institutions’.

(Fatton 1987, 285). However, although one party rule was replaced by an apparent multi-party democracy, the structures of power remained unchanged (Barker 1988). Democratisation in Senegal was granted by a ruling class that sought to maintain political legitimacy in the face of social unrest. Thus, the process of democratisation in Senegal has been interpreted as a ruling class project bent on reorganising the state in an effort to diffuse an 'organic crisis' and neutralise the threat from the left (Fatton 1987; Barker 1988).

In the 1980s, economic downturn coupled with new droughts had once again a disastrous impact on Senegal's agricultural economy. As a way to remedy the situation, the government embarked on a series of policy reform packages associated with the structural adjustment loans of the World Bank (WB) and the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Oya 2006, 211). International development institutions attributed the sharp fall in production to droughts, inappropriate infrastructure, excessive administrative costs, inadequate incentives, and high production costs, which reduced the self-financing capacity of farmers. The solution was presented as lying within greater liberalisation of the conditions of production and with increased privatisation. The structural adjustment plans demanded that the state retreat from agriculture, that SAED assignments be reduced, and that private sector activity be enhanced (Adams 1977). This created inequalities between the poorest farmers, who were strongly affected by the loss of subsidies, and farmers who were better placed to take advantage of the new circumstances. Only those that were relatively better off financially could now afford irrigation, which has since then created additional problems of land access and social cohesion (Adams 1977).

A major endeavour of these loans was to finally transform the Senegal River Delta into a zone of capitalist production for the world economy and one of rice production for the national economy. The government wished to transform the delta into a granary (Scheer 1996, 36) and the Senegal River Basin Development authority (OMVS, *Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Senegal*, in French), established in 1972, was

charged with the task of doing so. Following the advice of a technical feasibility study conducted by French authorities, the basin states proceeded with dam development (Venema, Schiller, and Bass 1996). The riparian States of Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania joined forces within the OMVS, and approved the construction of two dams: the Diama dam in Senegal (which was completed in 1986) and the Manantali dam in Mali (completed in 1988) (Ubink, Rahmato, and Amanor 2009).

Many critics had warned that the basin plans would not benefit local residents and would rather place additional pressure on them, because they would translate into increased land prices and an inability to secure access to resources. Moreover, studies showed that for an equal investment of labour and money, flood-recession farming would actually yield much better results. However, these criticisms went unheard and the idea of a modernised and forward-looking agricultural system was favoured over traditional smallholder farming (Adams and So 1996). The governments of these three countries believed that the dams had the potential to end the economic recession, whilst also providing the conditions for stable agricultural production at a time of great climate fluctuations, and relieving the costs of cereal imports that had contributed to great national debt (LeMarquand 1991, 268). The dams were supposed to allow for a control of water flow from the river, thereby facilitating annual double-cropping and reducing Senegal's cereal deficit (Bass, Venema, and Schiller 1996, 494). France's interests in financing the dams were partly due to the presence in France of African migrant workers from the Senegalese River Valley as well as to the growing belief that migration could be regulated through investment and development in the country of origin and that traditional farming systems were not sufficient to adapt to the droughts (Kamara 2010). However, although originally the costs of the Diama dam had been planned to be financed by user fees, the project's financial results were negative in an area where local farmers could simply not afford irrigation costs (Venema, Schiller, and Bass 1996, 143).

In the face of mounting difficulties, in 1984 the World Bank initiated an increasingly invasive program of structural adjustment compelling the

state to further dismantle agricultural support agencies (Dembele 2003). The government implemented a 'New Agricultural Policy' (NAP), which followed the prescriptions of international financial institutions. Farmers were now responsible for their own economic activity without help from the state, and the private sector was mandated to sell fertiliser and seeds to farmers who would pay in cash for the needed inputs. The New Agricultural Policy stood on two principles: market liberalisation and the withdrawal of the state's direct support to producers (Oya 2006, 213). A new financial institution, the *Caisse National de Crédit Agricole* (CNCAS), was now charged for issuing agricultural credit, while producers were responsible for major public perimeters and water management tasks (Corniaux et al. 2016, 11). The consequences of these reforms were often disastrous, especially within the Senegal River Valley where the government's ability to continue constructing irrigation schemes crippled and between 1980 and 1987, the agricultural GDP fell by 41% (Koopman 2012, 656). Given the impossibility for farmers to compete with those that had access to the expensive irrigation system, their only option – other than migration – was to work as agricultural wage labourers (Adams and So 1996). The development projects in the Senegal River Valley failed both with respect to their economic and social objectives, and protests against the government began to proliferate across the country. In 1992 the government accepted a new round of Agricultural Sector Loans that paved the way for a new agricultural policy framework, which included the Structural Adjustment Program for Agriculture (PASA), the Program of Investment for the Agricultural Sector (PISA), and the Political Declaration for the Agricultural Sector (DPA) (Oya 2006, 217).

Despite pushback from segments of civil society, in January 1994, the neoliberal paradigm was further consolidated when the state acquiesced to IMF and WB demands to devalue the CFA franc currency by 50%. With the currency halved in value, many Senegalese perceived this as an indication that they were being abandoned by France. The public reaction was immediate and Senegalese newspapers screamed at their betray-

al by both France and the regime, through violent riots in Dakar (Chafer 2003, 163). Despite attempts to float the economy, the Diouf Administration could not foster the type of economic growth its lenders demanded. The price of basic items spiked significantly while wages remained stagnant (Hedin 2007, 39–40). In 1995, the World Bank approved a new Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) for agriculture, which once again stated that its aim was to increase food security, improve rural income, and advance natural resource management, while contributing at an average growth rate of 4% (Adams 1977). This program stipulated further liberalisation and improved incentives for the private sector investment. Following a further push from creditors, the Diouf administration adopted a Plan of Action on Tenure in 1996 destined to benefit foreign investors over ‘non-productive’ Senegalese farmers. Although the 1996 decentralisation laws confirmed the transfer of power over land allocation to rural councils over the national domain, the new reform allowed the state to expropriate land considered to be of public use for development, which could then allow to facilitate land access for private investors (Chafer 2003, 163). These reforms in agricultural and tenure policies have not gone unchallenged in Senegal, however. In 1993, the *Conseil National de Concertation des Ruraux* (CNCR), a federation of 28 small-scale producer associations, was established. Since its creation, it has become the prime civil society organisation to interact with the government on matters of agricultural policy (Resnick 2004). It is also the country’s main peasant movement and a key actor in defending small-scale agriculture whose role is of continued importance (Pesche 2009).

Cambodia’s Triple Transition

Following 30 years of brutal conflict, and with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, Cambodia began a process of economic and political reform. The 1991 UN-negotiated civil war settlement marked the beginning of what has become to known as Cambodia’s triple transition from

authoritarianism to democracy, from a command economy to a free market, and from war to peace, which would be overseen by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNCTAT) (Hughes 2003). The UNCTAT was mandated with the task of disarming the warring factions and of creating an (economic) liberal order to connect Cambodia to the world economy (Ojendal 1996, 194). In order to achieve this, the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia provided loans and grants for development, on the condition that structural reforms were made (Slocumb 2010, 289). Cambodia started normalising relations with the west and accepting large amounts of aid in the form of grants and loans from bilateral and multilateral sources (Ear 1997, 73). Market liberalisation reforms consisted of new land tenure policies and land privatisation, tax and market reform policies, a new investment law designed to attract foreign capital, and a separation of the state from production through the reduction of subsidies and the privatisation of state-owned businesses (Hughes 2003, 31-33).

During the 1990s, the government announced a reform agenda to promote development. Agricultural development was prioritised within the reform agenda in order to ensure food security and economic growth; this was to be done by providing raw materials for the processing industry, increasing exports, and creating employment. To facilitate this, the government introduced a series of investment incentives (Hughes 2003). In the 1990s, land concessions were officially reintroduced as the main system for natural resource management. The concession system benefited from the strong support of international organisations and it became the main system to manage natural resource in Cambodia throughout the 1990s. The objectives of the concessions were to generate revenue for post-war reconstruction efforts, enable the sustainable management of forests, and generate revenues from exports (Diepart and Sem 2015). In contrast to the previous concession system however, this model was intended to make a rational use of resources through centralised management that would impose rules on the concessionaires. These rules included the various obligation such as the need to

invest in transformative industries and to increase the finance available for rural infrastructure such as roads and schools (Hibou 2004, 4 cited in Diepart and Sem 2015). The elections held in 1993 gave power to a coalition formed by the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which opposed the Khmer Rouge, and the *Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif* (FUNCINPEC), led by Norodom Rannaridh, who tried to integrate the Khmer Rouge into the government as a means to weaken the CPP. The need that both of these parties had in order to accumulate capital for accumulation led to a sharp rise in the allocation of forest concessions (Diepart and Sem 2015, 32).

The Constitution, adopted by the new Royal Kingdom of Cambodia (RCG) in 1993, reinstated a constitutional monarchy and a pluralist political system (Siphana et al. 1998 cited in Diepart 2007, 135). The 1993 Constitution marked the shift to a market economy and legalised both private ownership and state property. This fundamental change implied important tenure changes to private property. For example, due the Constitution's inconsistencies vis-a-vis the 1992 Land Law - which had stipulated that only residential land could be granted legal ownership - the Constitution hence implied a necessary modification of the 1992 Land Law (Diepart 2007, 136). These new land measures generated a new speculative drive over land permitting those with greatest means to amass natural resources (Hughes 2003, 41).

Access to agricultural land in the 1990s was characterised by great inequalities with respect to agricultural land size, leading to increased landlessness and land concentration (Diepart and Sem 2015). Many people who had earlier returned to settle on land following the peace agreements would be considered – under the new tenure reforms – to be illegally using that land. These people had in fact begun to resettle on vacant plots previously occupied by victims of the genocide, and to re-adopt pre-Khmer Rouge organising principles of land access, through which 'actual use' and not 'proprietaryship' prevailed. However, under the new tenure reforms, these people no longer had rights to these plots. The 1992 Land Law stipulated that local authorities held the authority to

grant land ownership rights, but in effect, land rights were granted to those who bribed the local authorities to issue receipts, rather than to those who actually occupied the land. Those that suffered expropriations had scarce recourse options (Springer 2010).

In a country that was devastated by years of war, natural resources were considered to be a catalyst for economic post-conflict reconstruction (Le Billon and Springer 2007; Le Billon 2000; Milne 2015). However, as global awareness of environmental issues and funding opportunities to address these spread, the exploitation of natural resources became an increasingly contested solution (Le Billon 2002). Illicit logging in Cambodia became a key point of contention between the government and the international donors, who at the time, were providing more than half of the national budget (Le Billon 2002, 574) and funding opportunities became increasingly linked to reforms in the forest sector (De Lopez 2001). In order to appease the international donors and diffuse the mounting tensions, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) passed a number of environmental laws in the 1990s. The 1993 Royal Decree on the Designation and Creation of Protected Areas was subsequently followed by the passing of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management Law in 1996, while the socio-economic development plan of Cambodia (1996-2000) also contained provisions for natural resource management.

All of these regulations can be interpreted as the result of effective technocratic work and pressure put forth by donors, however, these regulations were hardly effective within the political context of Cambodia (Mehmet 1997). Instead, what these laws did *de facto*, was to place more land in the hands of the state. Between 1994 and 2001, 39% of Cambodia was allocated to forest concessions while agricultural concessions had expanded to an area of 809,296 hectares by 2001. In fact, while deforested areas between 1973 and 1993 averaged approximately 70,000 hectares per year, according to estimates from the World Bank, between 1993 and 1997 this more than doubled to rate of 180,000 hectares per year (COHCHR 2004, 13). In 1996, Global Witness – Cambodia's former

forest-crime monitor – cautioned that: ‘there is not another instance in the world where such vast proportion of a country’s forests, situated in areas with no effective government control, had been sold in such a short time, and in such great secrecy, to foreign companies’ (quoted in Springer 2010b, 67). In the process, those most vulnerable saw their possibilities to access the resources they relied on for their livelihoods increasingly restricted.

Conclusion

The land rush that we see today was set in motion long before the recent global crisis. Legitimations around environmental security and adaptation, with regards to migration and environmental change, underlined many of the justifications for such land acquisitions. Despite the differing geopolitical interests of the French colonial administration within the two countries, the similarities in terms territorialisation outcomes that the colony imposed in both countries are striking. In both cases, colonial migrations were about controlling people through labour and extracting natural resources. They were also designed to enable access to territories that were vital to further consolidate control of populations and resources. The French colonial administration attempted to ‘modernise’ agriculture in both countries, in a way that is similar to what is being done today in the name of adaptation. At the time, it was low population rather than high population that concerned the colonial administration. Tenure, taxation, and environment reforms all contributed to demarcating resource access for the most powerful while excluding the most vulnerable. The exclusion of peasants from resources combined with their inability to compete in new land markets, facilitated the mobilisation of labour into large-scale plantations that fed the increasing needs of the colonial power. Both countries became dependant on cash crops and export crops (peanut in Senegal and rubber in Cambodia) which had dire environmental consequences. However, the forced migration and mo-

bility of some (wage labourers) came at the price of the sedentarisation and involuntary immobility of others (mostly pastoralists and swidden cultivators).

Despite this shared colonial past, both countries pursued distinctively different pathways following independence, which are key to understanding the current period. As in other parts of the world, anti-colonial and nationalistic sentiments emerged with force. Touched by broader economic crises, two double movements took place. In Senegal, this double movement led to a socialist government that remained in power for 30 years and that tried to find a balance between independence and its ongoing links to its former colonial power. In Senegal, droughts coupled with the continued dependence on the colonial power and on structural reforms loans, propelled the state's retreat from agriculture. As land markets rose, poor farmers were incapable of competing and the agricultural sector suffered severe hardships. In Cambodia, on the contrary, the civil war that took place between supporters of a right-wing general supported by the US and a communist faction supported by China, gave way to one of the darkest chapters in history. The Pol Pot regime perpetrated one of the deadliest genocides in human history with the forced uprooting of urban populations, which were pushed into rural areas (and with the impossibility to migrate abroad), and the death of one-fifth of the population from overwork, starvation, and executions. All assets were owned by the Cambodian state and all international involvement was removed. Trials to impose collectivisation failed under the Vietnamese invasion and Cambodia moved towards a market economy.

The transition towards neoliberalism occurred progressively in Senegal where the aim of striking a balance between independence and dependence from the west gave way to the latter. Structural reforms altered tenure regimes in drastic ways, while irrigation schemes - presented as a form of environmental adaptation - could only be accessed by those who had most means to begin with. As a result of the application of *mise en valeur* principles, poor peasants were unable to compete with wealthy investors. The economic situation of Senegal deteriorated, and out-

migration became an escape valve from poverty for many small-scale farmers who were unable to compete in the domestic market. In the process, the new agricultural policies which intended to build resilience from environmental change and economic efficiency, inadvertently placed natural resources in the hands of political and economic elites, as they held the political power and economic means to make such ventures 'profitable'. In Cambodia, the transition towards neoliberalism occurred at the end of the conflict, during which time private property was reintroduced along with new legislation. The new legislation was designed by donors in an effort to protect the country's natural assets (which had been relatively untouched by deforestation during the colonial period), by regulating the granting of land concessions. However, natural resources become key in the acquisition and maintenance of power by the ruling party. It is within this context, that the legislation and tenure reforms further served to place natural assets in the hands of those in power who depended these resources as a means to support their legitimacy. Despite important differences, in both countries the path from colonialism to neoliberalism has been marked by the will to control population and nature to the benefit of the most privileged and at the expense of those most socio-environmentally vulnerable.

4

Green and Migration Grabs

Introduction

At the turn of the century, a number of major events on the international stage altered not only the material realities of migration and environmental change, but concomitantly, how these realities have been framed and acted upon. With regards to environmental change, the increased severity and number of casualties linked to natural hazards, as well as the decline of endangered species, has propelled climate and environmental change to the top of international political discussions. In an effort to halt climate change, new institutions and negotiations have been created¹ and a wide variety of measures have been designed with the intent of mitigating and adapting to a rapidly changing environment and climate. Amongst the wide variety of measures proposed, Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), together with market mechanisms to control emissions, have become particularly salient. Moreover, funding for adaptation has been made available for developing countries to adapt to the worst impacts of climate change.

With regards to migration, while many developing countries depend upon migration as an escape valve from poverty and a means to fulfil increasing aspirations to migrate, the global financial crash severely reduced the labour needs of many migrant-receiving countries. Measures to control migration include a stronger securitisation of border controls, whilst development aid and assistance are increasingly designed to halt migration at the place of origin. In this context, it is important to not only examine *green grabs* – understood as the ‘appropriation of nature for

environmental ends' (Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones 2012) - but also *migration grabs*, which, following the previous definition, can be defined as 'the appropriation of natural resources for migration ends'. Given that both environmental change and distress migration often impact rural populations the hardest, interventions in agriculture for both environmental mitigation and employment creation have been regarded as a suitable response. However, in a global context of increasing food and energy prices through which corporate investors have been propelled to invest in farmland, many rural areas have become the target of land grabs. In this context, the question this chapter seeks to address is: *How are global adaptation and security framings around environmental change and/or migration serving to legitimise land grabs differently in Senegal and Cambodia, and why?*

In order to answer this question, the chapter analyses how the material realities of environmental change and/or migration have been framed differently in the very diverse contexts of Senegal and Cambodia and how these frames have been used to legitimise land grabs. To do so, it analyses the main policies that have reshaped access to land since the turn of the century and underlines the specific migration and environmental intentions of each. This chapter draws on both an analysis of key policy documents, and on primary data collected in interviews with key stakeholders, government representatives, donors, NGOs, and researchers in both countries.

4.1 Senegal

The consequences of removing agricultural subsidies for producers in the 1990s were devastating for many small-scale farmers. This was exacerbated by the fact that at this time Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the agricultural sector also decreased. The assumption that that private investors would fill the gaps left by agricultural subsidies did not materialise and with the arrival of cheap subsidised imports from developed countries, the livelihoods of many farmers deteriorated drasti-

cally (De Schutter 2015, 6–7; Dembele 2003). After 40 years of socialist rule, in 2000, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal's liberal party won the Presidential elections based upon his promises to diversify foreign relations in a way that would diminish reliance upon France (Chafer 2003) and to improve living conditions, which had seriously deteriorated during the 1980s and 1990s (Patel and McMichael 2009). Due to his ambitious programs to modernise the agricultural sector, he was also nicknamed 'the agronomist' (Benegiamo and Cirillo 2018).

Given that structural adjustments had become increasingly contentious during the 1990s, African political leaders – including Wade – started to criticise the West openly for their mismanagement of African economies. However, instead of criticising neoliberalism *per se*, elites focused their critiques on its misapplication (Hedin 2007, 50). African leaders thus tried to strike the balance between capital accumulation and political legitimisation by seeking to redefine neoliberalism in a manner that would be appropriate to the social demands of independence combined with greater sovereignty over their own national economies, which populations demanded. In 2001, Senegal – under President Wade – joined the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) and President Wade became one of the key architects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), signed by many African Heads of State. This development framework aimed to address the challenge of agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa by underlining the key role that the private sector and foreign investment should play in revitalising agriculture – namely through agribusiness led development (Bourgoin et al. 2019, 42–43). To do so, NEPAD proposed a new policy of privatisation and free trade designed to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Cherry 2002). In this view, and in line with the World Bank's prescription, the assumption was that increased privatisation of land would resolve the many tenure conflicts occurring in rural areas, whilst also increasing the efficiency of the sector (World Bank 2003 in Ndiaye 2011). Instead of calling for more loans however, the NEPAD called for foreign investment. The NEPAD embodied the paradoxical

relationship between embracing the Western economic principles of free trade and investment, whilst simultaneously depicting Africa as a 'self-reliant' entity (Hedin 2007, 50). The document stated that unlike previous IMF and WB policies, this was a project of African nationalism: 'It will be African-led and managed' (Cherry 2002, 19).

In line with these objectives, Senegal pursued investor-friendly policies by allowing a full expatriation of economic benefits and securing the tenure interests of investors. Senegal's Code for Investment stated that 'Physical or moral persons who have invested, have the right to transfer freely to the State where they are residents, the dividends and products of all nature of the capital invested, and of the product of liquidation of their company' (art. 6). Hence, the new Constitution of 2001 divided land ownership between state-owned and privately-owned land, and permitted the allocation of land rights to private investors (Crabtree-Condor and Cassey 2012, 55). This prioritisation of privatisation is in line with neoliberal principles that postulate that facilitating private ownership over land would increase efficiency and economic security. According to the World Bank, new politics on tenure were needed to incentivise growth and to reduce inequality. Property rights are believed to reduce poverty by incentivising investment and facilitating access to credit. Property rights are also presumed to incentivise land redistribution through sales or leases (Banque Mondiale 2003).

In 2002, as a result of a crisis in the peanut sector and of the great tensions emerging in rural areas, the new President and his advisors started to outline a new agricultural vision for the country (Pesche 2009, 143). In 2003, a draft vision was published stating the aim of increasing the efficiency of Senegalese agriculture so that it would be able to compete in international markets. The draft document proposed to support both small-scale farms and commercial/industrial farms for greater efficiency. The draft contained a chapter on tenure that made a distinction between two types of land: one regulated by rural communities and another regulated by an agency overseen by the President. The National Council of Rural Concertation and Cooperation (CNCR) and the oppo-

sition party suspected that the vision was a tenure reform in disguise. After a series of civil society protests over what the presumed consequences of such a law, the chapter on tenure was finally removed from the draft law (Pesche 2009, 144-145).

However, unclarity and uncertainty over tenure and access to land remained. Even if the 1964 Land Law had in fact abolished customary rights to land, the population had continued to function in accordance to customary modes of tenure. Today, Senegal has overlapping land regulations that includes both legal rights aligned with and sourced from the official land policy as well as the informal, yet socially-legitimate, customary rights to land. Although the 1964 Land Law clearly stated that the land is not the property of the state, *de facto* many people view the state as having appropriated land and consider the law to have facilitated a great land grab by the state (Ndiaye 2011). Given that the conditions of *mise en valeur* were never clearly defined, in a context where productivity became the central objective of agricultural interventions, small-scale farmers were unable to compete with those who had more endowed means to use the land. Additionally, the modalities through which rural communities could grant or un-grant land were never clearly defined, leaving ample room for corruption (Ndiaye 2011). In a context of increased liberalisation in which the state seeks to attract investors, the loopholes in the 1964 Land Law combined with domestic political problems, provided ample space for conflict over the distribution of land, and those with the greatest economic power had clear advantages to this over vulnerable populations. The quest for increased FDI and for making resources available to investors conflicted directly with access to land by farmers. As explained by the executive director of the *Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale* (IPAR):

“The vast majority of land in Senegal is land under the national domain that does not belong to those who exploit it, since the law of 1964 suppressed customary rights. However, in practice those who use the land regularly do consider that the land belongs to them, it is the land of their parents. Yet, from a legal perspective, those land do

not belong to them: this is why there is tenure insecurity because at any moment the State for reasons of public utility can take back the land. Local collectivises can also do the same thing, so this creates problems of tenure insecurity' (Dr. Ba, executive Director of IPAR – quoted in Niang et al. 2015)

In response to the increasing liberalisation of tenure, the CNCR requested a number of measures to protect family farming including: the formalisation of all user rights; the creation of a right of transmission; the regularisation of all land that had been seized illegally; the creation of specific legislation for the tenure of pastoralists; the creation of village committees on tenure issues; the use of a cadastral system and the correct implementation of land use planning (CNCR 2012). As one farmer expressed, 'Before the SAED helped us, they even gave machinery and seeds...But in the last years we have been left to deal with our own destiny...' (Interview with farmer, Senegal River Valley, 2015).

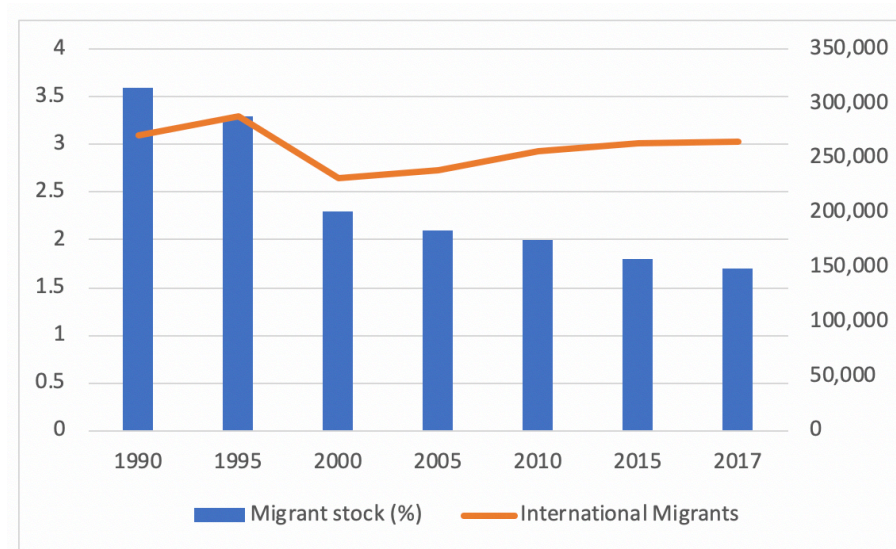
As a result of consultative processes with the CNCR, the law on Agriculture, Forestry, and Livestock Act (LOASP) was passed in 2004. It sought to strike a balance between modernising small-scale farms whilst also promoting investment, with the ultimate aim to achieve a level of food security that would enable Senegal to become self-sufficient. The law promoted the creation of land markets which are deemed to be more effective and efficient in the reallocation of resources. Despite efforts to balance these two visions, in reality the LOASP was foremost concerned with increasing the amount of agricultural exports and generating incentives for private investment in rural areas (Resnick 2014). As a representative from the CNCR explained in 2014: 'There are two very different visions for the future of agriculture. Civil society here wants to support family farming and the state wants to support food security. They say that the only way for food security is more agrobusiness; we know this is not true...The policies say that we can do both at the same time, but in reality, this is not what is happening' (Interview, CNCR, Dakar, 2014). While agrobusiness, under certain conditions, is seen as necessary, what the peasant movement underlines is that it is family farming

which should be the priority (Pesche 2009). Even if not explicitly stated within the approved law, the creation of land markets by the LOASP did *de facto* introduce a new tenure regime, thereby breaking with the socialist principles of the 1964 Land Law, and placing itself in line with a clear liberal tradition (Ndiaye 2011).

4.1.1 From Migration as Adaptation to its Securitisation

At the turn of the century, the cumulated economic difficulties that resulted from decades of structural adjustment in the primary employment sectors of Senegal were visible not only through an increased rural exodus towards urban areas, but also by the growing number of migrants traveling towards the European Union (Feldman 2011, 383). Given that France had introduced increasingly restrictive migration policies, the desired destinations tilted towards Italy and Spain, whose populations were already growing at rates generally below those of other European countries (Arango 2013, 3). Not only were jobs easily available to migrants but, in Spain, there was also a limited detention period, opportunities for regularisation, as well as few obstacles to readmission (Carling 2007, 7). Before the turn of the century, irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa reached Europe through journeys across the desert to the Maghreb and thereafter crossing to Europe. After 2000 however, the intensification of border controls at the strait of Gibraltar drove migrants to use boats to reach European islands, such as that of Lampedusa, Sicily or the Canary Islands.

Figure 4: Senegal: International Migrant Stock (%) and Number of International Migrants



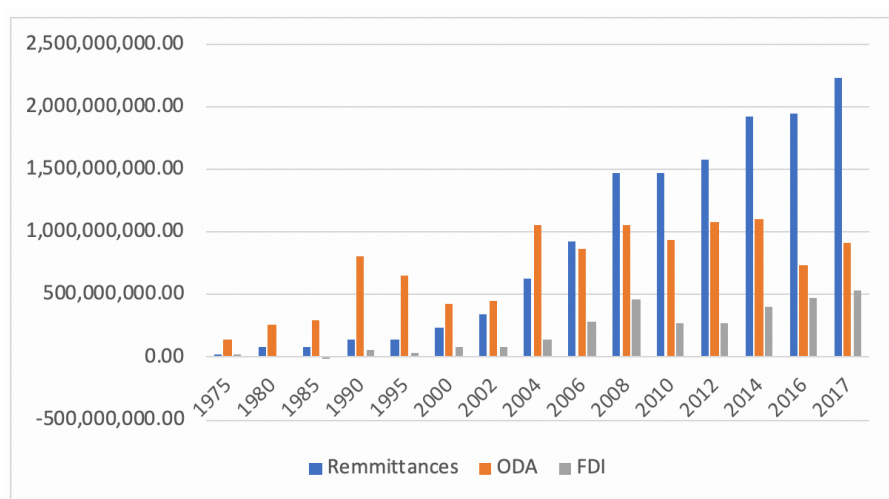
Source: IOM Migration Data Portal. Primary data UNDESA

Many of these migrants left home inspired by the motto, *Barsa wala Bar-shak*, which in Wolof means ‘Barcelona or Die’, as Barcelona represents the European Eldorado (Mbaye 2014, 3). Besides the constraints on their livelihoods, there are also strong cultural reasons that incentivise the migration of Senegalese youth. In fact, the popular culture is full of proverbs that highlight the importance of migration: ‘If you have a son, let him go. One day he will come back, either with money or with knowledge or with both’ ... ‘He who does not travel will never know where it is better to live’ (Tandian 2018). For the Senegalese government, the out-migration of its population was viewed as beneficial given the importance of remittances for domestic development (see Figure 5).

Despite the loss of lives throughout the journeys and the deteriorating conditions within the host countries, migration was seen not only as an adaptation strategy for the migrants themselves, but also for the associat-

ed communities of origin that rely to a large extent on migrant remittances. As was the case with most developing countries during the 1990s, the amount of remittances received nearly doubled; this happened to correspond with the time that Official Development Aid began to shrink (De Haas 2005). In absolute terms, Senegal received one of the highest amounts of remittances from Sub-Saharan African countries (Gupta, Pattillo, and Wagh 2009). In 2003 a Ministry of Senegalese Living Overseas and several structures to protect migrants and promote remittances were established (Ndiaye and Araar 2017). Migrant remittances have drastically improved the living conditions of many households in developing countries. Migrant remittances are also considered to be less cyclical than other forms of financial flows such as ODA and FDI. As a result, remittances have become a type of ‘development mantra’ among institutions, such as the World Bank, NGOs, governments, and civil society organisations (De Haas 2005).

Figure 5: Senegal: Personal Remittances, Official Development Assistance and Official Aid, and Foreign Direct Investment Received (current USD)



Source: World Bank Data

Despite Spain's need for cheap labour, and Senegal's ongoing need for remittances, images of migrants arriving to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla began to instil fears of an 'invasion' within the general European public (Beauchemin et al. 2014, 2). In 2005, Spanish authorities reached a cooperation agreement concerning repatriation and border controls with the governments of Morocco and Mauritania. Although this decreased the number of people crossing to Europe from these countries, other migration routes substantially increased in popularity, especially those from Senegal (Carballo de la Riva 2009). The year 2006 marked a turning point with respect to security fears of migration, after around 30,000 people left West Africa – half of whom were Senegalese – and arrived to the Canary Islands; this amounted to 25,000 more people than that of the previous year. This episode came to be known as the '*Cayuco* crisis' (Arango 2013, 3). The *cayucos* are vessels (usually traditional fishing boats) of around 30 metres in length, capable of transporting up to 180 people. Even if the numbers of those arriving by *cayuco* was minimal when compared to other means of entry represented (de Haas 2008), media headlines depicted the arrival of the *cayucos* as 'avalanches', 'tides', and 'plagues', reinforcing the image of migration as a security threat (Pinyol-Jimenez 2012, 37).

In European imaginaries, these arrivals were depicted as those of 'wild men', a somewhat 'inexplicable armada arriving at the southernmost margins of the European Union and the very heart of western leisure migration, the *playas* of Tenerife and Gran Canaria' (Andersson 2010, 31). Between 2006 and 2013, Spanish media headlines recurrently used messages such as 'Nearly 5000 immigrants are collapsing the retention centres in the Canary Islands', '200 more people without papers arrive', and 'The Canary Islands has received more than 1400 undocumented migrants over the weekend' (Villaseñor 2017). A British journalist described the power of the images circulated in the media as a surreal encounter 'between the Stone Age man and the 21st century bikini-clad girl' (Andersson 2010, 32). Despite irregular entries by sea consti-

tuting only 8% of the total irregular entries into Spanish territory (Velez Alcalde 2008), the mediatic attention on boat arrivals propelled migration to be among the top concerns of the Spanish public opinion (Villaseñor 2019).

Although the factors driving Senegalese migration to Spain are acknowledged to derive from a complex combination of economic and social factors, the environmental drivers of these movements have been increasingly underlined. The first international symposium on desertification and migration, organised by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and with support from the Spanish government, was held at the University of Almeria (Spain) in 1994. The Almeria Declaration that resulted from the symposium noted that: ‘The number of migrants in the world, already at very high levels, nonetheless continues to increase by about 3 million each year. Approximately half of these originate in Africa. These increases are largely of rural origin and related to land degradation. It is estimated that over 135 million people may be at risk of being displaced as *a consequence of severe desertification*’ (Almeria Declaration 1994 – own emphasis). National and environmental security issues with regards to migration and desertification were also underlined in Valencia (Spain) in the context of a special North Atlantic Treaty Organization workshop held in in 2003. In 2006, and coinciding with the *cayuco* crisis, a second Almeria conference on desertification and migration took place. The opening presentation underlined the increased levels of migration that Spain had experienced in recent decades underlining that: ‘While this immigration was no direct outcome of environmental or desertification factors, the inflow has increased from those countries in North and Sub-Saharan Africa that are victims to desertification’ (Brauch 2006). In addition to discourses on environmental security and migration, irregular migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union began to be regarded as a security threat associated with international crime, particularly following the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005 (de Haas 2008, 1305–6).

4.1.2 Security Aid and Investment in Agriculture

The ‘myth of invasion’, which has been empirically debunked by Hein de Haas, gave way to a new European security system was concerned with fighting smugglers and intensifying border controls (de Haas 2008, 1305–6). As a result, fences were erected in Ceuta and Melilla and the European Union decided to intensify patrols in West African waters (Adepoju, Van Noorloos, and Zoomers 2010, 45). In 2006, the European Union and Senegal implemented two short-term cooperation projects, which consisted of a European Union contribution towards surveillance operations, repatriation and rehabilitation (of around 1.8 million EUR) as well as the provision of local support for migration related activities of non-state actors (1 million EUR). In the medium-term, the plan for these funds was to invest in public projects (19.8 million to 27.4 million EUR) and to create 4000 jobs in a year (EUBusiness 2006 cited in Adepoju et al. 2010, 61). The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, (FRONTEX), began to patrol Senegalese and Mauritanian waters to prevent potential migrants from crossing into Europe via the Mediterranean Sea, and provided funds to Senegal so that Senegal would patrol its own borders more intensely. The Spanish government, in an effort to externalise its border controls, requested to collaborate with FRONTEX to halt migration from West Africa to the Canary Islands through the Hera Operation and later through the implementation of SEAHORSE (which is a cooperation project between Spain and Morocco, Mauritania, Cape Verde, and Senegal designed for controlling immigration) (Lemberg-Pedersen 2017, 39).

Aside from enhancing border controls and repatriations, other policy measures to control migration sought to address migration by increasing development aid in return for migration control (de Haas 2008, 1305–6). Along the lines of this logic, policy cooperation designed to curb migration would be enhanced by an increase in development spending and, in

return, President Wade would agree to sign repatriation agreements. However, repatriations spiked strong social opposition; President Wade's response was to emphasise the development plans that he would enact in order to facilitate the reintegration of migrants (Pian 2014). It was within this context, and with funding from the EU, that President Wade launched the Plan REVA in 2006 (*Retour Vers l'Agriculture*, or Return to Agriculture) (Panizzon 2008). This 'co-development and capacity building' program aimed to 'reintegrate' returned migrants into farming jobs within Senegal, in order to combat unemployment and irregular migration. According to the policy document, 'The aim is to fight against emigration and rural exodus by creating durable conditions for people to voluntary return to the land and allow those interested to regain their dignity' (Senghor 2006). Additional objectives of the Plan REVA were to promote private investment, facilitate foreign investment, and create an export-oriented agriculture. To facilitate this, the Plan REVA mandated the creation of the National REVA Agency whose logo was: 'Agriculture, the new business'.

To tackle the migration challenge, the Plan REVA proposed to create agricultural development poles for those migrants that were repatriated and for youth considered at risk of migrating. The National REVA Agency managed to create around 15 farms and employ around 2,000 people. The underlying assumption of this initiative was that by externalising Europe's borders controls and 'fixing the youth', the would-be-migrants would instead stay in their communities of origin (Andersson 2010, 45). However, the employment numbers under the National REVA Agency remained significantly below the agreed-upon aim of employing 7,000 people, as had been written into the Plan (Oya and Ba 2013, 18). Furthermore, it was also far from being able to tackle unemployment or the underlying desires to migrate.² According to critics, the Plan REVA continues to oscillate between the impossible balance of promoting the development of export-oriented industrial agriculture and local food security (Kaag, Gaye, and Kruis 2011). Additionally, returned migrants have stated that these measures have done little to reintegrate

them: ‘...The government of Senegal has not made any efforts since we have returned. Sometimes it speaks about plans such as REVA ...But all of that, it is not the reality...’ (Member of the Association for Returned Migrants, quoted in Pian 2014, 185). Moreover, as one farmer in the Senegal River Valley explained, the Plan REVA served as a mechanism for businessmen to acquire land: ‘This Plan REVA story...they said they were going to do a lot. Then they started irrigating a perimeter here and there and just stopped doing anything. All stopped, nothing was done...The land belongs to some Senegalese businessman that has a lot of investment in the area...what they will do with this land? We do not know...’ (Interview, farmer, Saint Louis, 2015). According to several sources the Plan Reva never achieved more than 10% of its aims (see Antil 2010).

In addition to agricultural interventions, measures to address climate change in Senegal have also been linked to migration. The most prominent example is The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative that was launched by African leaders in 2007 and which President Wade championed (Bascombe 2012). Implemented under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the aim of the initiative is to restore the productivity and vitality of the Sahel region. According to President Wade, ‘The desert is spreading like cancer. We must fight it and that is why we have decided to join this titanic battle’ (Morrison 2016). Similarly, the Director of the National Agency for the Great Green Wall, which was created in Senegal in 2011, underlined that the Great Green Wall must ‘valorise the desert and transform it in order to *fix populations* and thus combat emigration...It is a program to fight climate change, drought, and poverty’ (AFP 2011). However, 2008 and 2014, only 13,000 out of the 80,000 hectares that formed the national objective had benefitted from reforestation and soil rehabilitation initiatives (Guenard 2016).

At the same time that securitisation and investment were increasing, emigration from Senegal to the European Union did decline between 2008 and 2010. Although this was interpreted as a success of the new

security measures and cooperation agreements between the European Union and Senegal (Domínguez-Mujica, Díaz-Hernández, and Parreno-Castellano 2014, 27), the decline in the number of migrants is largely attributable to the lack of employment opportunities that the economic crisis brought within Europe, and not simply a result of security measures or the development aid given to the migrant countries of origin (Tilly 2011). However, what the crisis did achieve was to alter the perception within Senegal that migrating to Europe would be a pathway out of poverty. In Spain, for example, many of the migrants that had previously used the agricultural sector as a springboard to access higher paid jobs in construction or industry – and with whom I met at the very beginning of this journey – found themselves unemployed and with scarce possibilities to regularise their status within Spain. As a result, the notion that Europe was an El Dorado dissipated within origin communities; the risks involved in the perilous journey to Europe were seemingly not as worthwhile as previously. However, this did not in itself halt migration. It simply changed the destinations that migrants sought to reach. Echoing stories from many households with whom I spoke to in the Senegal River Delta, one farmer explained: ‘People from our village left to Italy and Spain in the past. To work in construction and farming...But there are no more jobs there... now more people just go to Mauritania. This year around 50 of our children went there. They go to work in construction, agriculture, house cleaning...The women get paid around 5000 CFA per month and their food is also paid...Much better than here!’ (Interview, farmer, Senegal River Delta, 2015).

At the same time that international migration towards Europe was becoming a less viable option for escaping poverty, the domestic situation within Senegal was also worsening due to the global financial, food, and energy crises. The historic and ongoing dependence of Senegal on external food markets created a particular situation of vulnerability vis-à-vis the global food price crisis (Resnick 2014). In fact, even though 60% of the population at the time of the global crises was employed in agriculture, more than 50% of the rice consumed in Senegal was imported

(Antil 2010). Consumers experienced a 100% increase in the price of rice between January 2007 and September 2008 (Resnick 2013, 629). Combined, increasing unemployment and poverty along with spikes in food prices and the rising costs of transport, electricity and other basic items, led to a growing dissatisfaction with the government, which culminated in food riots that spread across Dakar (Tattersall and Ba 2007; Patel and McMichael 2009). The protests were organised by opposition parties, unions and civil society groups that demanded an end to Wade's presidency (Fortier 2011). In an effort to appease the rising tensions, President Wade proposed two major agricultural policies. The National Biofuel Program (in the context of the Plan Reva) was intended to address energy security, while The Great Push Forward for Agriculture, Food, and Abundance (Plan GOANA) was intended to address food insecurity. Both of these proposed measures were integral parts of the 'Green Revolution' agenda for Africa, that had been launched in 2006.³

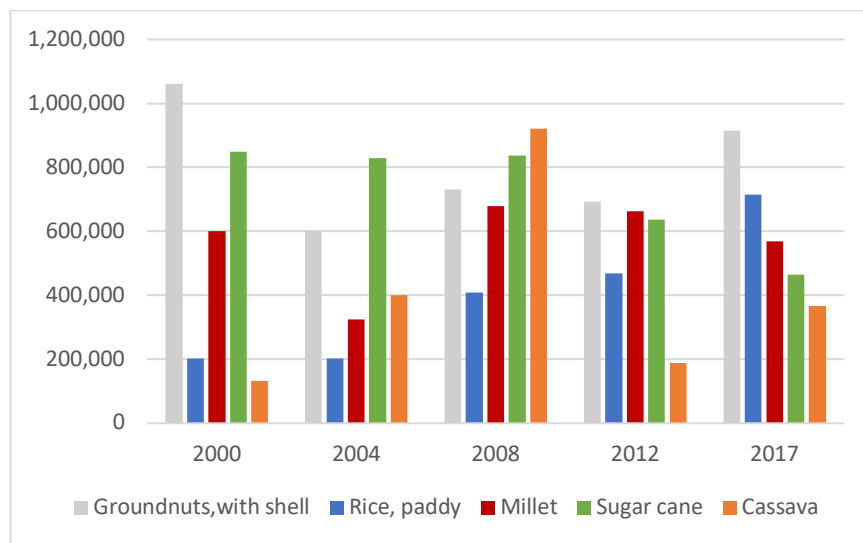
The specific aim of National Biofuel Program (2007-2012) was to achieve energy independence and particularly biodiesel self-sufficiency by 2012. The rise in the interest of biofuel production at this time reflected a global interest in the production of biomass-based energy. Many developed countries (with the European and the United States initiating the trend) endorsed biofuel targets and supported the production of ethanol and biodiesel through tax exemptions and other financial incentives (Cotula, Dyer, and Vermeulen 2008; Vigil 2018b). In the midst of the food crisis, President Wade thus embraced the idea of a 'Green Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' through the wide-scale planting of crops, not for food but for fuel, which had been one of the initial catalysts for the global food crisis to begin with (Ma'anit 2007). And yet, to achieve the biofuel targets, the largest company in Senegal (*La Compagnie Sucrière Sénégalaise*) was growing sugar for ethanol production; in the National Biofuel Plan the production of *jatropha curcas* – a tropical plant for biofuel production – was encouraged to reach 1,190,000 litres by 2012. According to the National Biofuel Program, not only would growing food for fuel contribute to making Senegal less dependent on oil

prices, and achieving its pledges under the Kyoto Protocol, but it would also contribute to reducing migration:

‘The price of oil continues to rise...Not only are the prices high, but oil reserves will be exhausted in the near horizon. On top of oil prices, environmental challenges (climate change, environmental protection) and the respect of international conventions (Kyoto Protocol ratified by Senegal) are major challenges (...). Biofuels have become a reality. Their use reduces CO2 emissions...Biofuels are an opportunity for the future of countries that do not produce petrol. The production of this type of energy in Africa is even more pertinent given the vast availability of land, which constitutes a sure competitive advantage. Africa could become the first world producer of biofuels. Nonetheless, the most immediate advantage is that it can reduce the bills of petrol for States and households...Its appearance in countries like Senegal will contribute to stopping rural exodus and clandestine migration’ (Sall 2007, 2–3).

As the figure below illustrates, the impacts of the global demand for flex crops have manifested strongly in Senegal where the production of cash crops such as cassava and sugar rose spectacularly, even surpassing rice production in 2008.

Figure 6: Production of the Top Five Commodities in Senegal (tonnes)



Source: FAOSTAT

The Great Push Forward for Agriculture, Food, and Abundance (Plan GOANA) aimed to end food dependence, whilst increasing agricultural production, employment, and achieving rice self-sufficiency by 2015. It was also presented as a land reform process that required each municipality to designate land to interested and ‘capable’ farmers (Boccanfuso and Savard 2008, 8). By using the legal provision of *mise en valeur*, the Wade government instructed rural councils to alienate land from farmers and pastoralists, who they believed lacked the resources to ‘develop’ it, and instead grant this land to wealthy foreign or national investors (Koopman 2012, 656–57). According to the Ministry of Agriculture, ‘GOANA is a great idea because there are many farmers, but they just do not use the land well. We must give the land to those who have the

means to exploit it so that we can feed Senegal' (Interview, Ministry of Agriculture, Dakar, 2015). Similarly, other officials underlined: 'We have a lot of hope in the agribusinesses...And family farming can develop in parallel. People want to be producers, not famers...! Our main worry is to create employment for the youth...Land is not elastic, you know! Families grow, but the land does not, and they need more work. The SOCAS (*La Societe de conserves alimentaires au Senegal*), which started operating in the Senegal River Delta in 1965 for example creates 1,150 seasonal employment and 1,000 permanent and the CSS (*Compagnie Sucriere Senegalaise*) is the biggest employer in Senegal with around 100,000 people working there...Not all agrobusinesses are the same! And they do contribute to development! In terms of salary they are meant to pay the minimum salary established by law which is 45,000CFA' (Interview, SAED, Saint Louis, 2014).

Both of the agribusiness companies cited above however, are examples of Senegalese companies that have been operating for decades. Moreover, the quantity of employment created by the SOCAS amounts to 300 permanent employees and 1,000 temporary employees during harvesting (according to their website) and not 1,000 permanent jobs as stated by the SAED. GOANA has been criticised for relying on poorly-targeted consumer and producer subsidies, and for putting forth food production goals that were deemed unrealistic (Resnick 2013, 630). Moreover, it has been unable to balance the state's double aim of supporting both agrobusiness and family farming. As explained by one agronomist, 'It's like (GOANA) just want to clearly indicate that this program is for those who want to invest in agro-industries, and has nothing to do with small farmers...This GOANA is a bargain for opportunists and the corrupt, but not for peasants...In the same way that the Plan REVA before it, GOANA is inevitably going to fail' (Jacques Faye, cited in Gueye 2008, 19). The dominance of corporate interests over those of small scale farmers has incentivised those with the highest economic and political positions to maximise their power. As stated by one investigative journalist working on land issues in Senegal, 'GOANA has just been

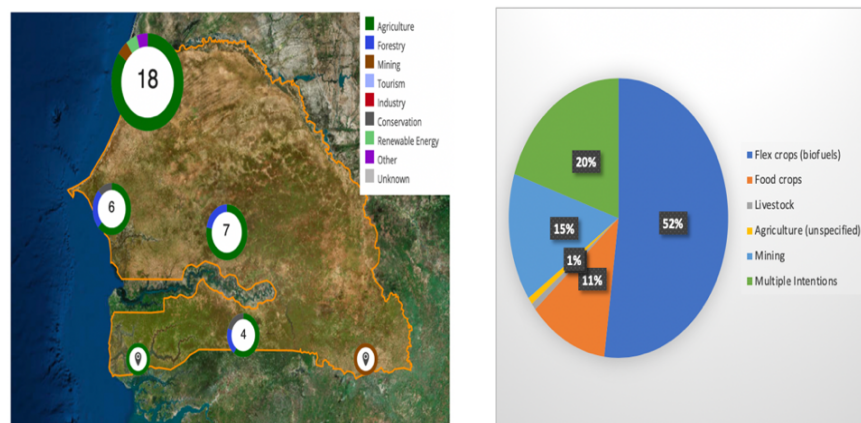
one great excuse for the richest people in Senegal and for foreigners to get a hold on land' (Interview, journalist, Dakar, 2014)

One of the underlying assumption informing the Plan REVA, the National Biofuel program, and the Plan GOANA were that by granting land to those who can use it the most efficiently, there will be a trickle-down effect that translates into higher economic growth and employment creation, thereby preventing irregular migration. Although in theory the agricultural reforms were in effect supposed to balance their support for agribusiness with their support for small scale farming, in practice, these two visions have been largely incompatible with one another. As the Wade administration required that land be given to those that have the 'means' to adequately develop it, a large portion of land was granted to private foreign and national enterprises; in fact, by 2015, 17% of the country's arable land had been allocated to large-scale investors (Faye, Mbow, and Thiam 2016, 9–10). Due to the ongoing search for FDI, combined with new policies and regulations that defined what constitutes valuable and 'effective', large-scale land acquisitions reached a peak in 2010 and 2011. Although specific data concerning land transactions remains unreliable, the Land Matrix asserts that within Senegal, 33 large-scale land deals have been finalised since the year 2000, which amount to a total area of 375,733 hectares. Most of land transactions for agricultural development have occurred in the Senegal River Delta where there is not only land, but importantly, water. Whether or not directly linked to the National Biofuel Program, a large portion of crop production has been for flex crops.⁴

Of the total number of the recorded large-scale land deals, 26% have been abandoned due to reasons involving the respective project's lack of viability, the bankruptcy of investors, and/or to community-led protests. Of the 33 land deals recorded, four of the deals concern production for domestic markets only, two concern production for export only, and six concern production for both domestic and international markets with the largest share of the produce designated for export (Land Matrix 2016). However, land in Senegal has not only been acquired by foreign

investors. In fact, much of the land granted under the Plan REVA, the National Biofuel Program, and Plan GOANA was allocated to political, military and religious elites. According to estimations, land acquisitions by Senegalese persons amounts to approximately 61% of the total land deals (Faye et al. 2011). In less than ten years, nearly 30% of all arable land within Senegal was affected by land acquisition processes (IPAR 2012).

Figure 7: Land Deals in Senegal: Number, Location, and Production Purposes



Source: Land Matrix

Choices made within agricultural policies are extremely important with respect to their impacts upon migration. This is because the agricultural sector absorbs the majority of the Senegalese labour force, particularly for youth aged 15-24 years. Moreover, education in and of itself is not a solution to unemployment as within Senegal the rate of unemployment increases with education level, peaking amongst those with higher education (Guarcello 2007). Given the lower rates of formal employment in rural areas, the fact that urban areas are unable to meet the employment

demands of the youth, and the decreased possibilities of international migration, it is within the slums of Dakar that the Senegalese youth increasingly concentrate (Antil 2010). These slums are also home to returned migrants who have been unable to reintegrate into Senegalese society, despite the promises made by authorities (Janin 2009, 257).

In addition to enabling large-scale land acquisitions at the expense of small-scale farmers and failing to provide employment and reintegration opportunities for those returned, President Wade undermined democratic institutions. During his presidency, crucial state institutions remained highly politicised and key posts were filled by regime loyalists. President Wade utilised patronage networks to concentrate power within his party, as well as engaged in electoral manipulation, and violated civil liberties by cracking down on opposition leaders (for a review, see Kelly 2012). The final straw came in 2011, when President Wade attempted to change the Constitution to permit him to run for a third round of Presidential elections. At this point, hundreds of people protested in the streets under slogans of '*Y'en a marre!*', which referred to a social movement initiated by two rappers, and which in French translates to 'enough is enough!', or quite literally 'fed up!' (Fortier 2011). In 2012, Macky Sall, Wade's former Prime Minister, won the elections. Macky Sall had engaged in deep conflict with Wade following his demand that President Wade's activities be audited. In retaliation, Wade had renounced Sall's tenure as president of the National Assembly, pushing Sall to abandon the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) and to create a new political party, called the Alliance for the Republic (APR) (Kelly 2012, 125). Since 2009, Macky Sall had been travelling throughout the country, including to remote rural areas, which gave him a large advantage in the run up to the Presidential elections.

Sall's campaign centred around the country's high food prices; he proposed to protect consumers with subsidies and invest heavily in agriculture if elected (Resnick 2013, 634). Following his election, Macky Sall created a National Commission for Tenure Reform in 2013. The proposal for a tenure reform body aimed to appease a number of civil socie-

ty movements that had emerged in response to the increased number and intensity of land grabs under the CRAFS (*Cadre de Reflexion et action sur le Foncier au Senegal*). In addition to protecting small-scale farmers, the various NGOs and civil society organisations of which this group is composed, advocated for improved transparency and reliability of land tenure information (Bourgoin et al. 2019, 3).

However, despite the initial promises put forth by Macky Sall, agriculture has continued to be developed through the same model of large-scale land exploitations driven by foreign capital and agribusiness that was put forth by Wade (Bourgoin et al. 2019, 3). As his former Prime Minister, Abdoul Mbaye expressed, ‘A country like ours is made up of fallow lands, of water that throws itself into the sea, and of unused hands. In front of this there is market of households that has to feed itself. No other activity than agriculture and agrobusiness can allow for a rapid absorption of the massive unemployment and under-employment that characterizes economies like ours’ (Mbaye 2014). It is under Sall’s Presidential tenure that Senegal has become one of the target countries of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN), which was launched in May 2012 at the Camp David Summit of the G8 as one of the responses to the global food price crisis of 2008-2010. At the heart of this alliance is a recognition that African governments alone will not be able to compensate for the huge underinvestment in agriculture since the 1980s. Hence, the NAFSN evolved as an effort to mobilise the private sector and facilitate investment within agriculture (De Schutter 2015, 9).

In 2014 Macky Sall launched the ambitious Emergent Senegal Plan – a plan that seeks to undertake a major infrastructure and economic overhaul by 2035, and which encompasses all sectors from transport and industry to education, urbanisation, agriculture, healthcare and employment (Sala 2018). At the heart of the agricultural segment of the Emergent Senegal Plan (called PRACAS) is the idea that the private sector will facilitate both food security and support small scale farmers. The plan involves a series of measures designed to facilitate access of private

investors to land and new regulations for exporting companies. The aim of this policy is to support food security and to create employment through the transformation of agriculture: 'Food security, the fight against rural poverty and sustainable agriculture constitute major pressing challenges for Senegal. These three complex and interrelated problems are today affected by climate change...Senegal has great potential, however (land, human resources), and a democratic and stable political context, which shows peace and security, and are able to give hope to answers capable of responding to the problems of youth employment and of food security of the Senegalese...For the President of the Republic, agriculture must be the main economic engine of Senegal...There is a need to accelerate the transformation of agriculture to increase productivity and competitiveness of the sector...' (PRACAS Introduction, 14).

Although large-scale land acquisitions hit a quiet period between 2012 and 2014, largely due to civil society uprisings that preceded Sall's election, after 2014 they raised again (Land Matrix Senegal). Given the declining opportunities to migrate and the exacerbated economic crisis, the fact that so much land has been granted to investors continues to deeply concern civil society, not only for its immediate effects, but also importantly for its longer-term effects: 'They have already given around 17% of the land in 10 years... On top of that there are other risks like coastal erosion and desertification, and population growth is of around 3%... if this trend continues; what will be left?' (Interview, CICODEV, Dakar, 2014). Other civil society groups highlight the incongruences between domestic and international food security as a result of policies that prioritise large-scale investment: 'All these companies, they say it is for food security you know...But then they export everything to Europe, how is that food security for us?' (Interview, CNCR, Dakar, 2014). With international migration increasingly perceived as an existential threat for Senegalese migrants, the incoherencies become even more striking. As one representative from the CNCR explained: 'People go to Italy and Spain for the harvest, but here we can produce it! When we know today the level of food and financial crisis in the world, we need to sensibilise

people that risk factors are far worst in other places... Three million CFA (around 5,000 USD) is an important capital for a farmer. Its much better to invest that in our lands than spending it in a clandestine journey! But if they give all the land to Europeans...! Then what can we do?!' (Interview, Aliou Gueye, CNCR, 2014, Saint Louis).

While population growth is perceived as a problem, the problem is not understood to be rooted in the environmental destruction that population growth will engender, but rather the increasing resource demands that the domestic population will have, particularly given the limited access that local people have to their own resources. As a representative from the CNCR highlighted, 'Every 25 years, our population doubles. How are we going to feed the Senegalese when our lands are in the hands of foreign investors? It's a production that is aimed at foreign markets with foreign capitals that will return (to their) home. The economic potential of our lands is enormous, but we have no confidence in ourselves, and we just keep giving them away....We are not assuring our food security, instead what we are doing is assuring the security of international markets....If this continues our lands will not serve to feed us, but rather to feed others' (Interview, CNCR, Dakar, 2015). This sentiment is widely accepted and observed throughout society: 'I do not understand why hundreds of hectares are given to foreigners, when the priority should be to make these lands accessible to our producers' (Mariam Sow, ENDA Pronat, Global Land Forum Dakar, 2015). Despite the promises that many Senegalese people hoped would result from Macky Sall's changed approach toward agricultural development, the proposals presented by the CRAFS to the National Committee on Tenure Reform in 2016 have to date remain unheard (Bourgoin et al. 2019, 3).

Land Investments: Keeping them in their Place?

As demonstrated above, since the turn of the 21st century Senegal has sought to attract FDI as a means to gain independence and free itself from debt. However, the structural reforms and the withdrawal of the

state from Senegal's agricultural sector heavily impacted farmers. Although migration had served as an escape valve at of poverty, with the economic crisis in 2008 migration became increasingly securitised with ODA being tied to migration controls a within migrant-sending countries. At the same time, in the midst of the crisis, foreign investors rushed to acquire land in Senegal where they were met by an accommodating Senegalese state. This pursuit of FDI was often justified under the assumption these investors would generate considerable employment that would contribute to slowing migration. However, the contradiction between aiming to maintain people in their place, while simultaneously granting the best land resources to foreign investors who are unable to meet the employment needs of a growing population, has become strikingly evident. The ways through which migration and environmental justifications have served to justify land grabs in Senegal has been heavily influenced by the position that Senegal holds within a particular migration system as well as by the interests of its main donors and corporate investors. This chapter now travels to a completely different national context, within a different region, in order to explore how the linkages between material realities and political legitimations have translated into different circumstances, that are nonetheless part of the broader picture of variegated interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration.

4.2 Cambodia

Since the 1998 elections, Hun Sen has served as the sole Prime Minister of Cambodia. Despite the Environmental Protection Laws passed in the 1990s at the request of donors, by the early 2000s, 70% of Cambodia's forests were enclosed within forestry concessions (Oldenburg and Neef 2014). By the turn of the 21st century, the environmental destruction and human rights abuses that had resulted from the concession system generated international attention. Following reports by Global Witness and increasing international pressure, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) issued a logging ban in 2001, incorporated mechanisms for regu-

lating the concession system in its new 2001 Land Law, and in 2002, issued a new Forestry Law as well as an Environmental Protection Law.

The 2001 Land Law established a cornerstone for private property rights and was drafted with the assistance of numerous international donors during a time when neoliberal interpretations of property were not only the norm, but also a precondition for receiving the Official Development Aid that Cambodia was so reliant upon (Thiel 2010). Given the massive shortcomings of the 1992 Land Law and the widespread abuses it inadvertently led to, expectations concerning the 2001 Land Law were extremely high. The main objectives of the law were to improve tenure security and access to land through a market-based reform (based on land titles, cadastral administration, and land markets) to facilitate investment and productivity and to redistribute land through Social Land Concessions (Diepart and Sem 2015, 44).

The 2001 Land Law transformed large areas of land - previously managed by communities - into state land. Today, the government holds approximately 75-80% of the country's territory under the status of 'state land' (USAID 2011), which it can reclassify into 'state private land' in order to grant concessions (Touch and Neef 2015). With regards to land concessions, the Land Law distinguishes between two forms of land concessions - those for economic purposes and those for social purposes (RGC 2001, Art. 49). Economic Land Concessions (ELCs), regulated by the Sub-Decree n° 146, defines them as: 'a mechanism to grant private state land through a specific economic land concession contract to a concessionaire to use for agricultural and industrial-agricultural exploitation'. According to Article 3 of the Sub-Decree, ELCs are meant to: 'increase employment in rural areas within a framework of intensification and diversification of livelihood opportunities and within a framework of natural resource management based on appropriate ecological system'.

ELCs are assessed in terms of their capacity to: increase agricultural production in order to stimulate employment, promote living standards for the people, reinforce environmental protection and resource man-

agement, and create linkages and mutual support with SLCs, all whilst avoiding negative social impacts (Art. 5 of the sub-decree on ELCs). The law grants concessionaries exclusive rights over the respective land for a period of 99 years, in exchange for fees and investments. Following protests by civil society organisations, the government introduced a cap on the size of ELCs, meaning that land concessions granted shall not exceed 10,000 hectares. Moreover, (and purportedly to avoid speculation) all granted concession lands must be exploited within 12 months or risk cancelation of the grant (Art. 62 of the Land Law). Although the sub-decree on Economic Land Concessions of 2005 stipulated that ELCs must include Environmental Impact Assessments, it provided concessionaries with the right to clear concession land (including any forested area within the concessions) (Art. 49 of the sub-decree on ELCs). Moreover, within ELCs, social impact assessments are not required.

By 2003, the bottom 40% of the economic strata owned only 5.4% of the arable land, while the top 20% owned 70% of the land; the richest 10% owned 64.4% of the land (Un and So 2009, 129). Social Land Concessions (SLCs) were established to remedy this situation. SLCs were regulated in 2003 through the sub-decree n° 19, which defined them as: ‘a legal mechanism to transfer private state land for social purposes to the poor who lack land for residential and/or family farming purposes’ (RGC 2003, sub-decree on Social land Concessions, Art. 2). According to the 2001 Land Law and the Sub-decree n° 146 on ELCs their duration was restricted to 99 years, their size to 10,000 hectares and these could not be transformed into private property. SLCs, on the other hand, do not have any time restrictions placed, residential land granted can be up to 1,250 square meters in size, and SLC’s for agricultural use can extend to a maximum of 2 hectares. Contrary to ELCs, SLC’s can be transformed into private property. This pro-poor policy was expected to play a key role in resolving land disputes, many of which had been triggered by ELCs and the policy was depicted by governments and international donors as a measure to reduce landlessness and poverty, and to assure equitable land distribution (Neef, Touch, and Chiengthong 2013).

4.2.1 Criminalising Internal Migration

Among the various streams of internal migration, rural to rural migration has been the predominant stream (accounting for over half), followed by rural to urban (28%) and urban to urban (15%), while urban to rural migration remains negligible (CRUMP and Ministry of Planning 2012). According to the demographic census of 2008, 61% of migrant household heads stated that the main reason for rural to rural migration was the search of employment or of agricultural land (frequently related to a lack of land in origin) (Diepart and Sem 2015, 62). However, new regulations had a considerable impact on this mobility. The 2001 Land Law established that ‘no further encroachment can take place....and new occupants without title are considered as illegal occupants...’ (Land Law 2001, Art. 38 – emphasis added). While state expropriation of property can only be exercised ‘in the public interest and with prior provision of just and fair compensation’ (Art. 44 of the Constitution and Art. 5 of the 2001 Land Law), the definition of what constitutes ‘public interest’ has remained unclear and the interpretation of the Land Law with respect to pre-existing notions of possession, actual use, and common resources (and not proprietorship) has created significant confusion amongst authorities and populations (Springer 2013).

The introduction of the Land Law in 2001, was shortly followed by the cancellation of forest concessions and the adoption of the Forestry Law in 2002, which defines the framework for management, harvesting, use, development and conservation of the forests. It states that ‘forests shall be protected against damaging activities caused by excessive exploitation, abusive forest clearing...and shifting cultivation...’ (Law on Forestry 2002, Art. 32). In this context, internal movements have been increasingly criminalised because they are presumed to play a considerable role in environmental degradation and deforestation. As the Forest Administration, the government body under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) charged with forest management, ex-

plained, ‘After the Khmer Rouge the Government encouraged people to open agricultural plots inside the forest. People needed land to grow agriculture and it was in the interest of all that they did this...But then we had the idea of conservation...All these rules and laws do not allow for any more smallholder clearance and they are there to protect the forests’ (Interview with the Forest Administration, Phnom Penh, 2016).

The vilification of (internal and poor) migrants is combined with the alleged compromise of protecting forests in policy narratives as follows: ‘Illegal logging and forest destruction happens because of the migrants. It is illegal. But they still want to cut the forest and move there? We can’t let them...We must protect the environment’ (Interview with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Phnom Penh, 2016). As a conservation NGO expressed: ‘The problem is not so much emigration as immigration...People come from other rural areas they want to clear land.’ (Interview, Wildlife Conservation Society, Phnom Penh, 2016). In such a context, what qualifies as ‘land grabbing’ remains very unclear. As the Director of an influential Cambodian think tank explained: ‘There is a huge patronage system... Can we call it land grabbing? It depends... If its friends (of the powerful) then it’s ok, but if its normal people or landless migrants then it’s not ok...They use the laws to their advantage and implement what suits them’ (Interview, Phnom Penh, 2016).

In these narratives, migrants are somehow generalised and labelled as ‘poor and destructive’ with no clear explanation of who is moving, why they are moving, and what power status they possessed to acquire the forests that they are supposedly destroying. Nonetheless, despite their common characterisation as ‘illegal evictions’ by NGOs and the media, most dispossessions in Cambodia actually occur in line with the written article of laws; in other words, they are legal (Springer 2013). In effect, the country’s land and forestry laws have turned many small landholders into illegal trespassers by ‘the stroke of a pen’ (Peluso and Lund 2011a, 674). As one official at Cambodia’s Ministry of Land Management explained, ‘They need to go by the regulation that they have...They think the law is a tool against them. They never abide the law. Here we do law

enforcement and then the opposition says we violate human rights.’ (Interview, Ministry of Land Management, Phnom Penh, 2016). Although migration can have effects on deforestation, in the context of massive land concentration, landlessness and an expanding number of ELCs, it is important to pay attention to and identify where the root causes of deforestation lie, especially in a context of flowing investment:

‘The land in Cambodia is needed by a lot of people...During the war time people did not occupy the whole country because it was not secure. And with 30 years of war we didn't have time or budget to develop infrastructure. Much land was forest. Cambodia's population since 1950 when French independence was only 3 million. From 1954 to 1970 not much money. We had small population, so much land was under the forest cover. The forest grows very quickly in tropical climates. From 1998 until now the investors and the people know that they need to get the land...They (the investors) want to come to Cambodia because we have easy natural climate and resources make people live very peacefully and they have food and peace...’ (Interview, Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh, 2016).

Although SLCs were designed to secure land access for the hundreds of Cambodians who lack secure tenure, the implementation of SLC's has been slow and has often ignited conflicts. When comparing ELCs and SLCs, the differences are striking. In terms of area, ELC's were granted an estimated 2 million hectares as of 2012, while SLC's were granted only 113,167 hectares as of 2014⁵. In other words, SLC land comprised only 4% of the area granted to ELCs (Diepart 2016). Additionally, conflicts have emerged when SLCs are granted on land that is already occupied, thereby leading to the forced eviction of its previous occupants (Open Development Cambodia 2015), as well as on lands claimed for ELCs. Moreover, the quality of the land granted for SLCs is often of low quality and inadequate for farming (LICADHO 2015). At one interview with the Ministry of Planning concerning the possible benefits of SLCs, when I inquired as to how many people have received land through SLCs, it appears that the numbers are ‘off record’ and that no official figures are

released: 'People ask for absolute figures. Journalists come and attack us... These poor people got land and are still poor. There is a law, a process to follow... If you want to get land then apply, we tell them. They don't want to apply. The ones that occupy the land are not poor. Those land disputes on the land is not with poor. The poor people become the tool of the rich... The political movement opposition is there to say things against the Government. Cambodia is a democratic country. We do things very well, some of them just don't want to go in order.' (Interview, Ministry of Land Management, Phnom Penh, 2016).

Not only have SLCs failed to materialise as planned, but the Systematic Land Registration system, which has benefitted 625,000 families as of 2012, has been only very partially implemented and primarily limited to the area around the central lowlands (Diepart and Sem 2015, 54). Any areas that are deemed to be under conflict cannot benefit from Systematic Land Registration. In the current context, this is vastly problematic as it is difficult to find locations where there is no conflict over land. As early as 2003, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia released a report on human rights and land concessions stating that: 'The situation I met shocked me. The companies have been given rights over land that are very similar to ownership. Yet they have little or no regard for welfare; and they contribute little, if anything, to overall state revenue. I have concluded that the policies are wrong. They are not reducing poverty in Cambodia, and they are allowing the continued plundering of its natural resources. To use a Khmer phrase, they are 'Eating the Kingdom'...The concerns are urgent. Cambodia's rural poor are the most vulnerable to arbitrary acts by public authorities and the powerful' (COHCHR 2004, 2).

As previously stated, an important argument used to justify ELCs has been their potential to create labour opportunities. As one government official stated: 'We don't want our people to leave. I'm in very pain... So painful to see the Thai soldiers kill people. That's why we bring the companies to Cambodia... We know our people need money and this is all of us think about.' (Interview, Ministry of Planning, 2016, Phnom

Penh). It is also through the justification of employment creation that any resulting environmental harm caused by plantations is seen as justified: 'We are promoting rubber to create jobs...Nobody wants to deforest or cause environmental damage, but there is always a balance.' (Minister of Agriculture Undersecretary of state, cited in Harfenist 2015). Although people may lose land, the expectation is that they would be incorporated into plantations as labourers, and that these people would fill the gap of much needed labour: 'On one side they lose all their way of life their identity, everything: they have no more land no more forest. But if there is opportunity to be a daily worker, then they would accept that' (Interview, ILO, Phnom Penh 2016). This 'acceptance', however, is often not as voluntary as it might appear at first glance as it is often times linked to other factors, such as rising land prices and economic constraints: 'With the arrival of companies, the land price goes up, so people decide to sell their little land and to work for the company instead' (Interview, CDRI Migration, Phnom Penh, 2016). Such sales should be understood as distress sales that leave them with no assets.

Moreover, despite the provision by the land law that all ELCs should start operating within 12 months of their inception or risk cancellation, this has not been enforced. In addition to this leading to speculative practice, this also means that land is taken but that no labour is actually created inside the concessions. When plantations do provide employment, the actual labour created depends on the actual labour needs vis-à-vis particular crops, the level of mechanisation involved in the plantations, and on whether the plantation managers chose to hire local labour, labour from other provinces, or to import foreign labour with them. Moreover, the nature of the employment opportunities that emerge should be analysed in terms not only of quantity, but also with respect to the quality of employment. Although there is no national record of the precise number of jobs created through ELCs, observers question the actual number of employments created: 'The expectation is that these will create labour and increase internal movement but be a substitute for international migration...However, the employment created has not

been that significant and people still make more money by going to Thailand or Malaysia...' (Interview, CDRI Migration, Phnom Penh, 2016). According to local NGOs, companies often prefer migrant labour: 'We have to destroy the myth of ELC as job producers...The companies bring lots of workers with them! The companies prefer migrant labour rather than locals...' (Interview, Oxfam, Phnom Penh, 2016).

In addition to quantity, the quality of the jobs leaves much to be desired. As one representative from the International Labour Organization (ILO) remarked: 'So far the government has not taken any action on a minimum salary in agriculture. Labour law does not cover domestic work or seasonal worker...There is no initiative for minimum wage, no protection of employment... (We see) slavery conditions especially in plantation areas which have just started. They are not allowed to go home, not communicate with outsiders, located deep in the forest... They take their ID card from each worker so that they cannot run away...In the garment factories is much better conditions (and this does not mean they are good). But for the workers inside the ELC it is really terrible.' (Interview with ILO, Phnom Penh, 2016). Moreover, in the event that local labour is hired, it can serve as a means for patronage – a situation in which, those with the strongest political connections get access to the best jobs (COHCHR 2004, 30).

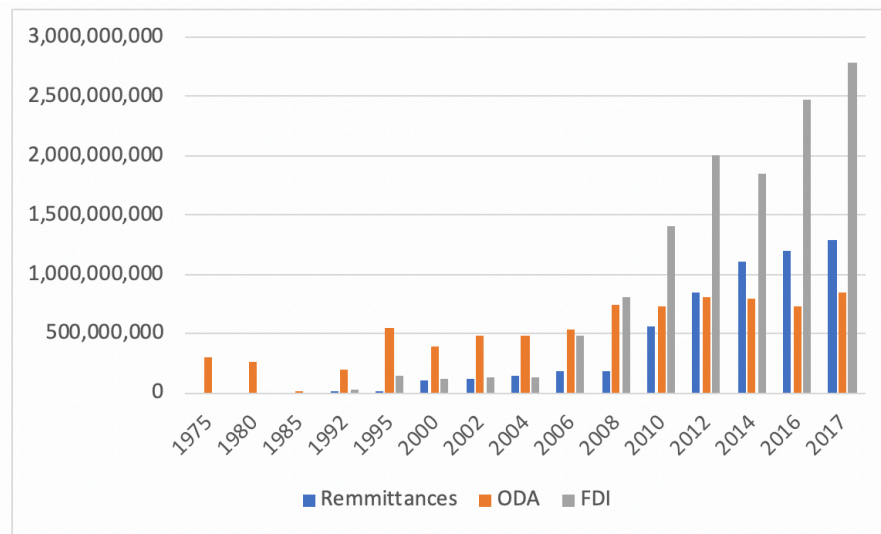
Exporting labour

'They should go, they should go! They have nothing to do here...We need people that can invest here, not just some poor farmers that do nothing...They should go' (Interview, Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh, 2016).

In multiple developing nations across Asia, governments have devoted increased attention to the economic and social implications of labour

export, and to the possibility that international migration can be harnessed to improve economic development mainly through remittances (Hugo and Stahl 2004, 174). Cambodia has been promoting overseas migration as one of the measures to alleviate poverty and unemployment/underemployment, especially among its young citizens. The first policy that considered international migration in Cambodia was sub-decree 57 on Sending Khmer Workers abroad, signed in 1995. The sub-decree underlined the lack of employment opportunities in the domestic market and highlighted the opportunities that migration could generate with respect to improving national standards of living through economic remittances (Sophal 2009, 6). This is evident within Art. 1 of the sub-decree, which states that: 'In order to access the higher standards of living and to upgrade vocational skills, and generate the national revenue, the Royal Government allows the sending of Khmer workers to work abroad while the domestic labour market is unable to absorb totally the unemployed and under employed persons' (sub-decree 57, 1). Given Cambodia's socio-political and economic situation, and the needs of neighbouring countries with respect to cheap and compliant sources of labour, Cambodia is rapidly becoming a labour-exporting country, and many households now rely on remittances from relatives working in Thailand and also Malaysia (Bylander 2015). Since 2000, remittances sent to Cambodia have been rising sharply, and since 2012, they surpassed the amount of ODA received by Cambodia (see Figure 8).

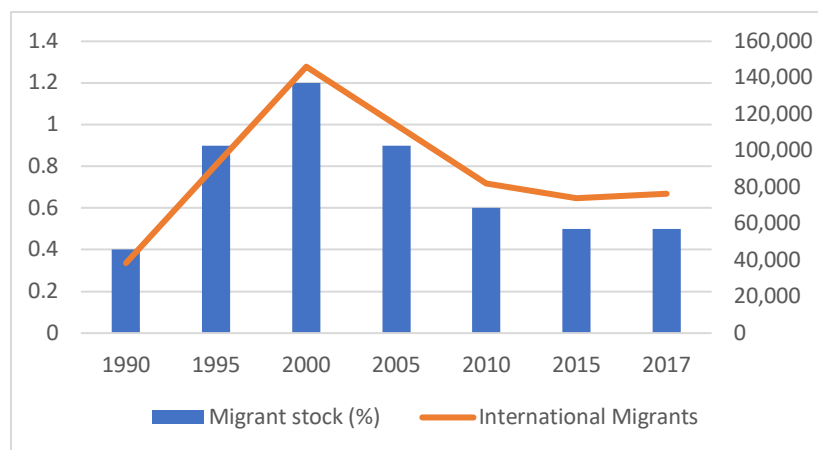
Figure 8: Cambodia: Personal Remittances, Official Development Assistance and Official Aid, and Foreign Direct Investment Received (current USD)



Source: World Bank Data

As stated within the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, ‘Labour export has been an important option for reducing poverty in several of Cambodia’s Asian neighbours, such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The Royal Government policy is to encourage official labour exports to increase welfare, enhance skills, reduce unemployment and increase state revenues....’ (RGC National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005). In fact, although many Cambodians would prefer to stay within their own country and be closer to their families, the opportunities in Cambodia’s urban areas do not match the amount of labour needed by Cambodians: ‘Young people want freedom. They want to be city people. But in most cases, they don’t have anything to do in the cities...So going to countries like Thailand and Malaysia becomes the only real option’ (Interview, CDRI, Phnom Penh, 2016).

Figure 9: Cambodia: International Migrant Stock (%) and Number of International Migrants



Source: IOM Migration Data Portal. Primary data UNDESA

Thailand, followed by Malaysia, are the most popular destinations for Cambodians (Kaur 2010, 7–12). Both countries are heavily dependent on foreign workers and have initiated guest worker programs as a solution to fill their domestic labour needs. Given the strong need for cheap labour within Cambodia's neighbouring countries, the view that migration should serve as an adaptation strategy is widespread: 'I don't worry if people can get a job in here or not. The other countries don't restrict movement so it will be easy to move. The high skilled will be able to move so they can move around because of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) community agreement. The middle and low skill movement. So not a problem, if they don't find a job, they can go... Magnitude of migration to Thailand is very strong. There is no sign that Thai economy will demand less low skill labour in the near future, so people leaving is no problem...But 90% of those going to Thailand are undocumented. It is a policy debate. They don't want to open benefits to

migrants. Makes sense from a policy point of view...’ (Interview, CDRI, Phnom Penh, 2016).

In 2011, a new sub-decree (n°190) on ‘the Management of Sending Cambodian Workers Abroad through Private Recruitment Agencies’ was enacted. However, when compared to the law it replaced, which was sub-decree 57 of 1997, it provides diluted and weaker protections for workers in many key areas (LICADHO 2011; Drolet 2013). According to the Cambodian League for the Promotions and Defence for Human Rights (LICADHO), the sub-decree fails to address core issues that have been well documented, such as: 1) debt bondage through the provision of enticement loans to workers; 2) recruitment of underage girls; 3) illegal detention and mistreatment of workers in pre-departure training centres; 4) the facilitation and use of forged legal documents; 5) failure to provide contracts to workers; 6) failure to pay workers their full salaries and/or not to pay any salary until the end of the contract; and 7) preventing and obstructing contact between workers and their relatives (LICADHO 2011, 1). These guest worker programs include fixed-term employment contracts with a range of restrictions, including workers’ repatriation upon completion of the work contract.

Although high skilled professionals are permitted to bring their families with them when migrating, less-skilled guest workers are not granted this right. Given that the majority of Cambodian migrants are low skilled, they are usually employed in what have come to be known as ‘3D jobs’ – dirty, dangerous and demeaning – and they are very often victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation. This is partially due to the fact that, despite growing bilateral agreements and guest worker programs, the costs of migrating regularly are very high. On average, the cost is around 700 USD to migrate to Thailand, whereas human smugglers provide the same service, much faster, for 100 USD. The Human Trafficking snapshot disseminated by the International Organization for Migration has identified the following key trends in human trafficking: 1) the trafficking of men and boys for forced fishing and fishing related industries; 2) the trafficking of women and children for forced sexual ex-

ploitation; 3) trafficking of children for forced domestic work; 4) trafficking for forced begging; and 5) trafficking for forced marriage. These trends occur both internally and across borders (IOM 2018).

International migration has not also come to be regarded as an escape out of poverty, but also as an escape valve for possible political contention: 'For the government this (migration) represents an escape valve out of poverty. Good for the government that they go...A majority of those who go would vote against the ruling party. So now they are gone it's better for the government...It's like a time bomb waiting to explode' (Interview, UN Agency, Phnom Penh, 2016). The lack of land contributes both directly and indirectly to these movements. As one official from the Ministry of Environment explained: 'If you look back, the farmers had land size: they had a lot of natural resources. 1950-1960 before the war, the families had 12 children and had no problem. The land is smaller and smaller, and the population is increasing. The children don't work in the farm. When we have a peaceful country, people have been looking for natural resources. When there was a lot of forest land people were moving. This was when there was a lot of forests. Now there is no more land and people have to go' (Interview, Ministry of Environment, Phnom Penh, 2016).

4.2.2 Adapting to Environmental Discourse

The significance of environmental justifications in Cambodia is not only due to the natural capital the country holds, and the importance of its forests for global temperatures, but also to an unwillingness of donors to engage in what they term as 'politically sensitive' topics. When asked why the analysis of the drivers of migration often overlooks questions of land access and land rights, many answers were along these lines: 'Yes, we know how important this (land grabbing) is. It is really a huge factor driving people out...but you know, here, we need to be very careful...We are trying to make progress on other things like education and drug trafficking. If we touched the land question, we would get kicked

out of Cambodia...And then, well... then there is no contribution that we could make at all...When we keep it in environmental terms, it just makes life much easier...' (Interview, UN Agency, Phnom Penh 2016). Indeed, although human rights and corruption issues have always been high on the donor's agenda, very few NGOs are able to successfully navigate the near impossible constraints of working in partnership with an increasingly authoritarian government, while also having the space to criticise and challenge state actors. Others have sought to explain this phenomenon by attributing it to the fact that Western donors feel limited in what they demand of Cambodia, following their embarrassing inaction during the Khmer Rouge genocide; instead, they grant Cambodian officials allowances for the burden of the country's history (Ear 2007, 82).

However, even if environmental issues are perceived as less politically contentious, and as potentially offering more leverage for action, donor reforms have been insufficient in inducing the change necessary for environmental protection. Although certain reforms, such as the logging ban and the new forestry law are important, these have failed because they have taken a technical approach, neglecting to challenge the fact that forest management continues to be oriented towards the interests of the political elite, rather than towards those of ordinary Cambodians (Davis 2005, 163). For example, the Protected Area Law, enacted in 2008 to protect forests and vital eco-systems, reinforced the control and power of the state over natural resources. By the end of 2017, protected areas in Cambodia covered the equivalent of 41% of the country's total land (Open Development Cambodia 2017). However, if protected areas are considered to have lost their 'public interest' these can be declassified and allocated to ELCs. Despite the assertion to protect the environment, and despite strict prohibitions under the Forest and Environmental Protection laws, ELC licenses have very often served *de facto* as logging concessions at the edges of protected areas, or even within them (Tucker 2015; Forest Trends 2015).

Market-based approaches have become increasingly appealing because they appear to be more effective than project-based, state-led or regulatory conservation (Ferraro 2001; Kiss 2004). However, in Cambodia, there has been a steady rise of state ‘ownership’ or control over payment schemes, especially regarding new mechanisms such as the United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program. Even if NGOs play a significant role in the technical and advisory parts of carbon schemes, the government retains the ultimate control over how to implement these schemes (Milne and Chervier 2014). The Cambodian government’s prevailing view is that Payments for Ecosystem Services and REDD+ are potential mechanisms for generating state revenue. For example, the 2010 National Forest Program document states: ‘Conservation of healthy forests will attract state revenue through payments for environmental services’ (RGC 2010, 11). As one member of the Ministry of Environment explained, ‘Adaptation is about receiving funding, and mitigation we still do not know how to calculate emissions. They cannot apply that has forest before 1990. All the ones that exist already cannot apply for the Clean Development Mechanism⁶ project... REDD+ works easier because we can lie. Forest protected areas they can convert to REDD+.’ (Interview, Ministry of Environment, 2016).

In fact, even after Cambodia started to receive money in 2011 for agreeing to follow sustainability standards under REDD+, deforestation activities in the country flourished. The Cambodian REDD+ initiative has been criticised by the Forest Carbon Partnership for its lack of attention to the impacts of ELCs and for overlooking the need to integrate ELCs into land use planning (Forest Trends 2015). As other observers noted, ‘Illegal logging will always bring more money than REDD’ (Interview, Oxfam, 2016). For example, in just one year – that of 2017 – Vietnam imported 179 million USD worth of timber from Cambodia (Forest Trends 2015). The amount received from timber exports to Vietnam alone is more than the combined amount of mitigation and adaptation climate-related finance that Cambodia has received on any given

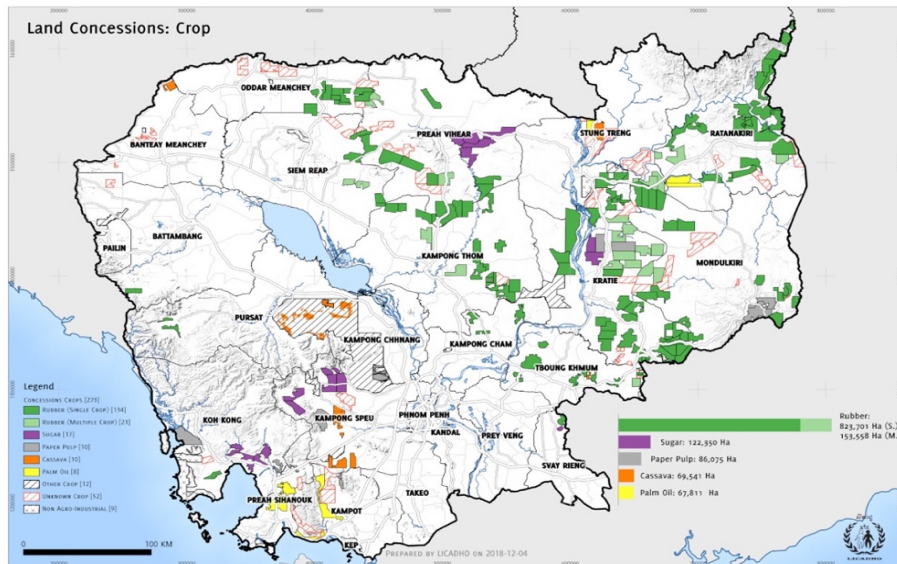
year since 2007, except for in 2014 when it received 186 million USD (OECD 2017). Although climate-related finance is considerably lower than what Cambodia receives from logging, politicians have been trying to capitalise on rubber trees, which – similar to the concept of flex crops – have the potential to contribute towards both logging revenues and climate revenues. As one official from the Ministry of Agriculture stated, ‘Rubber trees should not only be for latex but for carbon trading too!’ (Interview with the Ministry of Agriculture, Phnom Penh, 2016). While Cambodia has long been host to rubber plantations, following an increased market demand and an increase in commodity markets in 2005, rubber became the most important commodity driving ELCs and it now represents the second largest agricultural export after rice (Natividad 2015).⁷ The rubber from Cambodia is mainly exported to China, Vietnam and Malaysia (Chhair and Ung 2013). Despite wide ranging evidence on the environmental impacts of this crop and its substantial responsibility in driving deforestation (Ziegler, Fox, and Xu 2009; Ahrends et al. 2015), rubber has been presented not only as crop capable of attaining economic development, but also environmental protection.

Cambodian Prime Minister, Hun Sen, stated that ‘Rubber, once bigger, is considered as forest coverage too... Promoting rubber plantation on economic land concession we will then have more land under forest coverage and people will generate economic benefit from their rubber too...In Malaysia, their forest coverage is palm oil tree and rubber too. They make their country green. They are replacing former natural forest. They cleared them and grew in their place trees with more economic values. I think we will need to encourage more cultivation of rubber.’ (Hun Sen quoted in Vannarin 2013). In fact, the Forest Law does not differentiate between tree plantations and natural forests. Art. 2 of the Forest law defines ‘forest’ as including both natural and artificial forest systems; this definition enables companies (such as rubber companies) to claim that they have ‘reforested’ an area, when in fact they have cleared natural forests to cultivate tree plantations of economic value (COHCHR 2004, 21).

Some have attempted to utilise this green narrative, which is also facilitated by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) definition of forest, to advocate for the insertion of rubber concessions within REDD+. ⁸ The FAO defines 'forests' as: 'Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares of trees equipped with a minimum height of 5m at maturity in situ and a crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10 percent.' (FAO Term Portal). Hence, industrial tree monocultures can be considered forest under this definition: 'They don't have a definition of forest cover. They are still discussing what trees to include in forest.' (Interview CDRI Environment, 2016, Phnom Penh). Unclear definitions that can be exploited for multiple aims have multiple social and environmental ramifications. As one member from the Cambodian delegation to the climate negotiations explained, 'This has been a big discussion. Politically there are many interests that have been lobbying for its inclusion within REDD+...Although it is not possible technically, ⁹ political interests try to find loopholes...the idea has spread so widely that they use the idea to grab the land from the people by spreading the wrong information... There is so much confusion with REDD+... The local people think that this is possible and even at the central level here, people who are not involved in the technical discussions, continue to believe so.' (Interview, Ministry of Environment, 2016, Phnom Penh).

This is useful for elites, since many *okenhas*¹⁰ have rubber investments and are losing their profits from rubber, as its market price has dropped: 'Now with these new mitigation policies, the *okenhas* see rubber plantations as an opportunity' (Interview with CCAFS, 2016, Phnom Penh). However, although the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries counts the increasing number of private plantations in ELCs – often filled with rubber and acacia trees – as 'forest cover', the UNFCCC (under which REDD+ is organised) does not. It is hence also important to underline that the implications of flexing may occur not only when these are material or anticipated (Borras et al. 2016), but also when flexing is just hypothetical or imagined.

Map 4: Economic Land Concessions by Crop



Source: LICADHO

Within ELCs, sugar is second largest crop grown after rubber. Global sugar demand has spiked considerably as a consequence of the rising global biofuel demand. It is part of the ‘global flex sugarcane complex’ (Bordonal et al. 2018; McKay et al. 2016). The rise in sugarcane concessions in Cambodia is also linked to the EU’s Everything But Arms Initiative (EBA). The initiative was adopted in 2001 with the stated intention of promoting development in the world’s least developed countries (LDCs) by granting duty free and quota free access to the European market. Market access for sugar was fully liberalised in October 2009, which is especially relevant as the EU guarantees a minimum sugar price higher than that of the world market (Equitable Cambodia and Inclusive Development International 2013, 20). The EBA has been one of the key drivers for sugar cane plantations in Cambodia. In fact, while sugar cane was negligible before EBA was enacted, today more than 100 hectares of

land are designated toward sugar concessions whose product was exported to the EU (Borras, Seufert, et al. 2016, 33).

Since Hun Sen's rise to power, there have been a number of international outcries concerning the regime's use of violence and its human rights records, and to attention being given to the human rights impacts of ELCs (Human Rights Watch 2015; Global Witness 2009; COHCHR 2004). Despite the relatively strong legal provisions of the Land Law and subsequent sub-decrees, concerns over the human and environmental impacts of ELCs continued to be raised by local communities, civil society organisations, UN agencies and development partners. As a result of the domestic and international outcry, in 2012 the Prime Minister issued a moratorium on the granting of new ELCs through an *Order on Measures for Strengthening and Increasing the Effectiveness of the Management of Economic Land Concessions* (Order 01), coupled with a new nation-wide land titling campaign. The aim was to target people who were 'illegally' occupying state land so that they could obtain legal claims to those lands. This coincided with the run up to 2013 national elections, during which time there was an overwhelming sentiment of ELCs being viewed as potential threats for social stability and the cause of a Cambodia's tinted image internationally. Rural discontent over land grabs was a major cause of support for the opposition party (Naren and Willemyns 2013). Therefore, the moratorium can be seen as an appeasing policy by the government to address the demands of affected communities that can be understood as an action taken to maintain political legitimization in the face of increased social revolt (Young 2019).

The Order 01 not only called for the suspension of granting new licenses to ELCs, but also for the revision of existing ones, in order to cancel those which had failed to comply with regulations. This included concessions that cut down trees and subsequently failed to cultivate the land, as well as those that have encroached on areas beyond their concession boundaries, those that have left parts of the concessions empty in order to sell them to third parties, those that have undertaken activities that were not initially included within the ELC contract, and those

that have dispossessed local people and/or indigenous communities by removing their land access. It also called on relevant stakeholders to follow the ‘leopard skin strategy’, which seeks to demarcate concession boundaries in ways that avoid existing residential and agricultural land. However, while the Order prohibited the granting of new concessions, in principle, this did not affect those that had already received approval prior to the Order. As a result, 32 new concession licenses were issued following the Order (Grimsditch and Schoenberger 2015, 5–6). However, between June 2012 and December 2014, 1.2 million hectares of land granted to ELCs were reclassified as state public land. One official from the Ministry of Environment stated the following three reasons for cancelling ELCs: ‘First, the company was not following legal procedures. For example, before the development they need to do an (environmental impact assessment) and a master plan...Second, there was non-resolution with affected villagers. And third, the company did not have the capacity to develop the land’ (cited in Grimsditch and Schoenberger 2015, 10).

By December 2014, 610,000 land titles were issued to small-scale farmers. However, the Order had mixed results. Although the stated purpose of registering and titling lands was supposedly to clarify ownership within conflicted areas, a study conducted by NGO forum revealed that many people nation-wide reported that their land was not surveyed precisely because there were conflicts regarding differing claims to it or that it overlapped with land enclosed within ELCs. In fact, ‘outsiders’, or people that were not from the conflicted areas, had benefitted from the Order – counter to its initial purpose. Lack of clarity remains around whether the Order had in fact targeted people with legal claims to the land, and thereby failed to provide any additional security for those that lacked legal claims (Grimsditch and Schoenberger 2015). Moreover, the politicised nature of the campaign raised numerous concerns as to how it might have inadvertently facilitated further corruption and land grabs. In 2013, the Asia Director of Human Rights Watch stated that, ‘While some have benefitted from the campaign, in other cases the scheme has

amounted to a land grab by powerful interests with no legal protections or recourse for those who lose out in the process. The campaign is being conducted in a secretive and bullying manner in which independent organizations are prevented from monitoring what is happening and local residents are threatened if they complain' (Human Rights Watch 2013). The next chapter directs its attention to two landscapes where, despite legal provisions and promises made by the government, the land disputes remain far from being resolved.

Greening Territorialisation and Criminalising Internal Migration

Complex combinations of environmental and migration drivers and justifications overlap with one another to justify land grabs in a country whose economic growth has generated heavy social and environmental costs. While emigrating from Cambodia was not a major trend at the turn of the century (and hence neither were remittances) in Cambodia, internal migration – particularly undertaken by those in search of available land for livelihoods – was the prime form of mobility. As a country that was heavily reliant on ODA for its transition, Cambodia adopted donor reforms concerning land tenure (i.e. the regulation of ELCs and SLCs, as directed by the Land Law) with the hope that attracting investors would lift the country out of poverty. As FDI grew, so did the demand for agricultural land; however, this was most often allocated to investors at the expense of national populations that sought land access – many of whom have been criminalised. The destruction of environmental resources, especially in terms of deforestation, has continued to capture prominent international attention. In response, Cambodia has become a prototypical example of a state that is 'willing to comply with international conservation agreements or with western conservation principles, as such agreements and principles are often used to justify the state's resource management practices' (Peluso 1993, 200). With the hypothetical greening of rubber, and the rise in flex crop production for green energy, the dependence of small-scale farmers on cash crops has been pushing them further into debt; in such a context, international mi-

gration has become an important strategy to escape poverty and landlessness.

Conclusion

Despite their diverging historical pathways, in both Senegal and Cambodia, tenure and agricultural reforms have been structured around diverse environmental and/or migration narratives. Both countries have used environmental and migration arguments to justify the contentious granting of massive land concessions in an attempt to maintain the thorny balance between capital accumulation and political legitimization. Although environmental and migration narratives are used in both contexts, migration arguments have greater prevalence in Senegal, and environmental ones in Cambodia. This is due to the different positionings of the two countries within the world economy, as well as the differing interests of its main donors and corporate investors. For example, while Cambodia can provide a 'carbon sink' due to its remaining forests, Senegal can provide a 'migration sink' at the same time as generating increased biofuel outputs.

In Senegal, international migration was, and still is to a large extent, seen as a way to escape poverty that simultaneously generates large economic returns through remittances. Yet EU policies have increasingly criminalised international migration and development aid has aimed to reduce migration through measures that assume foreign investment can address underdevelopment or the root causes of Senegalese forced migration. The resulting large-scale agricultural investments are justified not only as means to ensure employment creation at home, but to also increase food and energy security domestically and internationally. In Cambodia, on the other hand, it is internal migration that has been presented as a security threat, while international migration is perceived as an adaptation opportunity. This is because neighbouring countries, such as Thailand and Malaysia, still rely upon and need cheap labour. Moreover, out-migration leaves more land space open for profitable invest-

ments all while creating an escape valve to release the pressures of rising unemployment and possible political contention. At the same time, protected areas have facilitated the criminalisation of internal migration. In order to understand how different land grabs materialise on the ground, the next chapter zooms into three very different landscapes where land grabs have occurred in order to understand their specific environmental and migration outcomes.

Notes

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was created in 1988, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992.

² The number of young people entering the labour market every year is currently estimated at 269,000. According to demographic projections this number will reach 376,000 in 2025 and 411,000 in 2030. However, the formal sector creates fewer than 30,000 jobs per year in Senegal (Hathie 2014).

³ See more on the Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA), here: <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/how-we-work/resources/grantee-profiles/grantee-profile-alliance-for-a-green-revolution-in-africa-agra>

⁴ According to the Land Matrix, the top investor countries in Senegal in terms of hectares under contract are Romania (100,000), Italy (68,250), Norway (30,000), Saudi Arabia (20,000), France (16,498), Cameroon (11,000), Nigeria (8,000), India (5,700), Belgium (5,000), Libya (3,150), the Netherlands (3,000), and the United Kingdom (310). Combined, French and Italian investors are involved in most land deals (9 out of 19). More than half of the land deals have an area under contract of less than 5,000 hectares, which illustrates that Senegal has only marginally been affected by mega deals (of 10,000 hectares or more). Of the acquired land, the vast majority are leases (between 10 and 99 years).

⁵ This figure includes those SLC's managed and granted by the government and those co-managed between the government and donor organizations such as World Bank, GIZ, Life with Dignity and Habitat for Humanity (Diepart 2016).

⁶ The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was created through the Kyoto Protocol in order to fund projects in developing countries that contribute to greenhouse gas emission reductions.

⁷ Data shows that the area of rubber plantations increased from around 129,000 hectares in 2009 to around 326,000 hectares in 2013. The Ministry of Agriculture has predicted that the area of rubber plantations would reach 450,000 hectares by 2020 (Forest trends Cambodia 2014).

⁸ The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) creates a framework through which companies and governments can be compensated economically for protecting forests.

⁹ Palm oil and rubber are excluded from the REDD+ definition.

¹⁰ The title of *okbna* was traditionally a title of nobility bestowed by the king and that was in 1994 included in a sub-decree in 1994. This title is now granted to those who donate 100,000 USD to the government and that have a commitment to the greater good. However, and despite the purpose of serving the greater good, a number of high-profile *okbna* have been implicated in land grabs, illegal logging and human rights violations (Odom 2014).

5

Expulsions and Destruction: Overlapping Scenarios

Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapters, security and adaptation framings interact with national realities to shape narratives around land grabs differently according to diverse political, environmental, and migratory situations as well as according to the diverging interests of the donors and investors that manage them. But, *how have land grabs unfolded in particular places and with what particular migratory and environmental impacts?* To answer this question, this chapter zooms down to three specific landscapes to show how land grabs manifest themselves, the justifications accompanying these land grabs on the ground, and the environmental and migratory impacts that they have on the people most directly affected by them.

An understanding of how diverse environmental and migratory narratives are deployed to justify land grabs, and their environmental and migratory outcomes requires an understanding of ‘land grabs as *processes*’ (McMichael 2014). There has been a tendency to examine different ‘types’ of land grabs in isolation from each other. Studies have focused on grabs aimed at different purposes (food, fuel, tourism, mining, conservation, special economic zones etc.), on whether their purposes are ‘green’ or not green (extraction vs protection), on the different types of investors (public vs private, domestic vs international), and on their diverging impacts on the ground (inclusion vs exclusion, destruction vs preservation) (Zoomers 2010). Although these separate categories are powerful and useful analytical tools, studies have underlined the alliances and interdependencies between different resource grabs (Büscher 2009;

Kelly 2011; Corson 2011), and the need to assume a landscape, rather than a single project approach to account for cumulative impacts (Hunsberger et al. 2016; Baird and Barney 2017).

In order to capture these overlaps and complexities, this chapter uses three cases of land grabs as entry points into more complex landscapes. Firstly, the chapter directs its attention to the Senegal River Delta where the majority of land grabs in Senegal have taken place. It does so by anchoring itself within the most controversial project that Senegal has had in recent years – that of the Senhuile-Senethanol – which contained land granted within a protected area for the aim of biofuel production. Secondly, the chapter travels towards Cambodia into two landscapes – those of Koh Kong Sugar and Tan Bien Rubber – where rubber and sugar grabs are employed as anchors (these are the two crops driving the majority of concessions). Rather than merely analysing the anchor cases at face value, each case study is analysed from a historical perspective, which is then broadened in its scope geographically, as the means to understanding the overlapping justifications as well as the outcomes that each have had. In doing so, the chapter aims to show not only the blurred lines that exist between justifications and resource grabs that shape particular outcomes, but also to capture which of these has had the most lasting impacts.

5.1 Senhuile: Un-Greening for Virtual Green Purposes

The project of Senhuile, formally operating as Senhuile-Senethanol, located next to the Lac de Guiers in the Senegal River Delta, has been the most controversial and stark example of recent land grabbing in Senegal. The company started as a joint venture owned by Tampieri Financial Group SA based in Italy (51%) and by Senethanol SA based in Dakar (49%) which, in the context of the national biofuel plan, proposed a project for sunflower production to produce ethanol for the European market. The former CEO of the company had introduced a demand for 20,000 hectares of land in the rural community of Fanaye (Podor). As

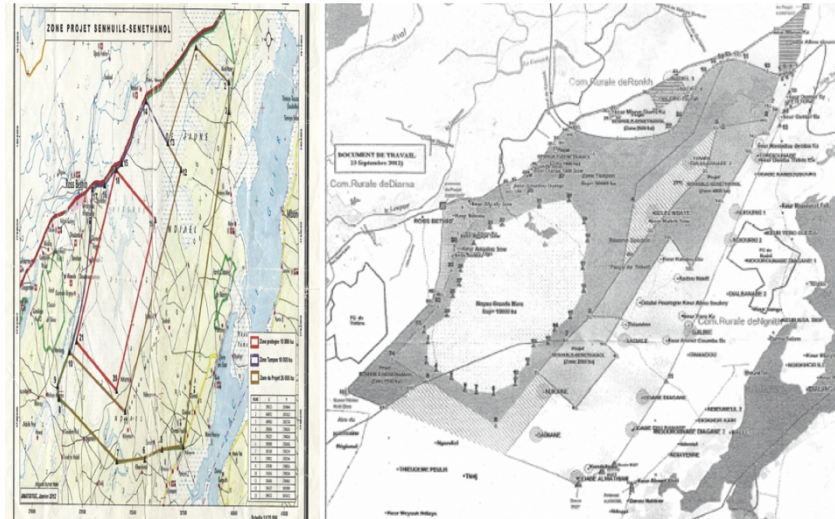
part of the deal, the company would have to pay 500 million CFA (849, 222 USD) to the rural community for a 50-year lease (Interview with the CEO of Senhuile, Dakar, 2015). Although the rural council in Fanaye approved the granting of 20,000 hectares of land in return for the given fee, it only led a consultation process with those who were already favourable to the project. Once the company started operating, and the broader population in the area realised that a deal had been signed without their consent, violent protests occurred resulting in two deaths and many people wounded. While many blamed the company, the CEO stated that they simply did what they were told to do: negotiate with the rural community and give them the money in advance (Interview with the CEO of Senhuile, Dakar, 2015). However, given the violence of unfolding events, President Wade suspended the project in Fanaye but promised Senhuile-Senethanol to find an alternative solution where negotiations with rural communities could be avoided.

Given that protected areas are state land - and hence require no rural community consultation process - President Wade decided to relocate the project to the area of the Ndiaël Reserve (*Réserve Spéciale d'Avifaune du Ndiaël*) located next to the Lac de Guiers. The Ndiaël Reserve was classified as a special wildlife reserve in 1965 in order to compensate for other land conversion that had taken place in the Delta as a consequence of agricultural expansion. Farming activities were prohibited within the reserve, but traditional grazing activities were still allowed (Benegiamo and Cirillo 2018). In 1977, the Ndiaël Reserve had been designated as a Ramsar Convention wetland of international importance covering 26,000 hectares. In 1990, due to the ecological concerns threatening the area, the site was included into the Montreux record, which is 'a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference' (Ramsar 1971). The site is of great conservation importance, especially for birds, mammals, and reptiles. The Ramsar Convention wetland is also crucial for its economic, cultural, scientific and

recreational value, including its vital position for the wellbeing of local people, as it provides water for livestock and crops, among other contributions (Ramsar 1971).

The *Lac de Guiers* - a lake located adjacent to the Ndiaël Reserve - is the most important source of fresh water in Senegal and provides 150,000 m³ of potable water daily to Dakar (Faye, Mbow, and Thiam 2016). Despite its importance for biodiversity and for water resources, President Wade signed two presidential decrees in 2012 to first nullify the qualification of the Ndiaël as a reserve and to then grant 20,000 hectares (out of the 26,500 hectares of the former reserve) to Senhuile. When the government granted the Ndiaël Reserve to Senhuile, it did so under the guise of the area being uninhabited. This is a recurrent practice in places where land grabs occur and is common on lands that are falsely labelled as 'idle'. In this case, 37 villages, populated by 9000 pastoralists had been living in the area for over 100 years (well before the classification of the Reserve) and the Reserve constituted the only available space for grazing in an overdeveloped delta designated for agribusiness development and rice cultivation. In addition to grazing land for an approximate 100,000 animals (including cows, sheep, and goats), the reserve lands also provided the populations with firewood, fruit, medicinal plants and resin. Although those most directly affected are pastoralists, another ethnic group, the Wolof's, whose main livelihood stems from farming, also depend on the reserve for their livelihoods. In total, there are an estimated 21,000 inhabitants that have strong links to the Ndiaël (Fall 2017).

Map 5: State Map Depicting Land for Senhuile Company (left, without hamlets) versus Community Map (right, with hamlets)



Source: Maps provided by the Collectif du Ndiaël.

Before being able to understand the current impacts of Senhuile, it is important to understand how and why these people came to inhabit the area originally. Over the last 40 years, human mobility within the Senegal River Delta has been completely transformed. As a result of irrigation and the arrival of agro-industries, from 1965 onwards, the *waloo* (the left side of the valley) and the Delta, became zones of immigration. Migration towards the area was encouraged via state policies of *terres neuves*, which attracted thousands of migrants for whom the SAED built new villages whilst also providing them with improved conditions for rice cultivation (Tourrand 2000, 58–59; Corniaux et al. 2016, 10). Although the new irrigation schemes provided many opportunities for farmers, they led to a new rush for irrigated land and resulted in diminishing access for pastoralist groups (Cotula 2006, 18–19). The dams also had direct consequences on pastoralists: ‘Before the Diama dam, the water from the lake went directly to the marsh and our cows could eat...Since

the dam, the lake is always filled and contaminated. Because of all the contamination, many cows died in 1992. Before there was one rice season. Now the season is all year around so the cows can't go to eat on the rice fields as they did before.' (Interview with the *Collectif du Ndiaël*, Saint Louis, 2015). As a pastoralist stated: 'It is ok to do agriculture, but not if you kill pastoralism!' (Interview with a Peul woman, Ndiaël Reserve, 2015).

As a result of the agricultural expansion and of the droughts of 1972-73 and 1983-84, many pastoralists were forced to leave their activities and to enter wage labour jobs as farmers (Tourrand 2000, 58). Moreover, because of the dam construction, annual flooding could no longer be relied on, which made the situation increasingly difficult for poor farmers and pastoralists (Adams 1977). In 30 years, the quantity of pastoral grazing resources diminished by around 85% in the dry season and 40% in the rainy season. The highest quality grazing areas were converted into irrigated farming areas (Tourrand 2000, 68). Despite the fact that some pastoral hamlets had been established in the Ndiaël over a century ago, once agriculture in the Delta expanded, many pastoralists (who had progressively lost the space required for extensive grazing) were ordered by the authorities to move to the newly created reserve. As a result, all of the pastoralists who had not assimilated into agriculture increasingly moved the Ndiaël Reserve (Benegiamo and Cirillo 2018).

Today, the pastoralists that inhabit the area, known as Peuls, live in habitats that are spread across diverse hamlets with herds moving just short distances (around 15km). Their usual livelihood consists of circulating around the area during the wet season, and periodically moving towards the left side of the valley; they cross over to Mauritania when quality the pasture has been exhausted (Santoir 1994, 239). However, their access to water became increasingly difficult due to the construction of the national road, which created a barrier, and also because of farm field expansion at the border of the Lac de Guiers (Benegiamo and Cirillo 2014). Although Peuls are very attached to their mode of life, and many show a resistance at moving to farming based livelihoods, many

underline that given the situation of shrinking space for pastoral livelihoods, farming has become necessary to meet their basic needs. However, despite multiple demands to the rural council, pastoralists have been denied land for farming: 'We did just pastoralism, but it was becoming more and more difficult. We knew that to survive we also needed to do farming, so we kept asking for land, but they never gave it to us. And if we cannot have land to farm, it is just impossible to survive' (Interview, pastoralist, Ndiaël Reserve, 2015).

Additionally, as competition for agriculture in the area increased, farmers attempted to access the Reserve for agricultural purposes several times. Their demands were rejected and people attempting to access the Reserve were imprisoned on the purported basis that the area should be devoted to pastoral uses and that infringing upon it was thus a crime. However, at the time of granting the reserve to the company neither pastoral or farming demands created a barrier. According to a representative from the CNCR, 'This is the biggest tenure mistake in the history of Senegal. How can we allow to declassify a natural reserve that was meant to be protected...And even they imprisoned a farmer that had tried to dig a canal with his own funds because they said the area was protected and only for pastoralist...They locked him up for a whole week! Not even 24 months after that incident it's a presidential decree that declassifies the reserve for industrial agriculture...In whose name?!' (Interview with CNCR, Saint Louis, 2014).

The Government justified its privileged treatment of the Senhuile on the grounds of the employment opportunities it promised to create as well as through the justification that its biofuel production was in line with the country's energy security needs, as outlined within the national biofuel plan. Although by law, all projects must carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment prior to commencing their activities, Senhuile only commissioned one after their operation had already been running for a few months. Senhuile hired the consultancy firm, SYNERGIE, to undertake its Environmental and Social Impact Assessment in 2013 (a year after its arrival). As I was able to access this assessment via local au-

thorities, I found that the project narrative situates itself 'within the national strategy of biofuel production that aims, amongst other objectives, to identify and develop projects of greenhouse gas emissions within the mechanisms set out by the Kyoto Protocol' (Senhuile Environmental Impact Assessment 2013, 4). The assessment specifies how the strategy is also being followed within India, which foresees 40 million hectares of biofuel production, as well as within other countries such as China, Vietnam, and Thailand. The underlying rationale is the 'questioning of future energy sources that are particularly strategic given the rising prices of hydrocarbons which are increasingly expensive for economies that are already affected by the world's financial crisis' (ibid: 4).

Moreover, the assessment underlines that 'implementation of green energies is a vital axe in the processes of combatting ozone depletion and in order to find alternatives to the energy crisis. The government of Senegal, aware of these challenges, promoted the law on biofuels to allow the private sector to invest in this domain' (ibid: 12). It is within this context that Senhuile has launched the ambitious plan to produce sunflower oil to be exported and then transformed into biofuels. The project also claims to contribute to the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Government, the Initiative on Accelerated Economic Growth, the National Plan of Action for the Environment, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the National Program to Combat Desertification, the sectorial Environmental Policy, and the strategy for biodiversity conservation (ibid: 13-15).

The document also explicitly states that it contributes to climate change adaptation as defined by the United Nations Convention of Climate Change because 'sunflower production for biofuels can be analysed as an adaptation measure to climate change.' (ibid: 48). Beyond this, the assessment asserts that the sunflower plantation would be able to contribute to climate mitigation through CO₂ sequestration (ibid: 48). It also stated that it would contribute to poverty reduction, create employment for youth and reduce rural exodus. Despite the fact that the project relied heavily on green narratives to legitimise itself, the intended plans quickly

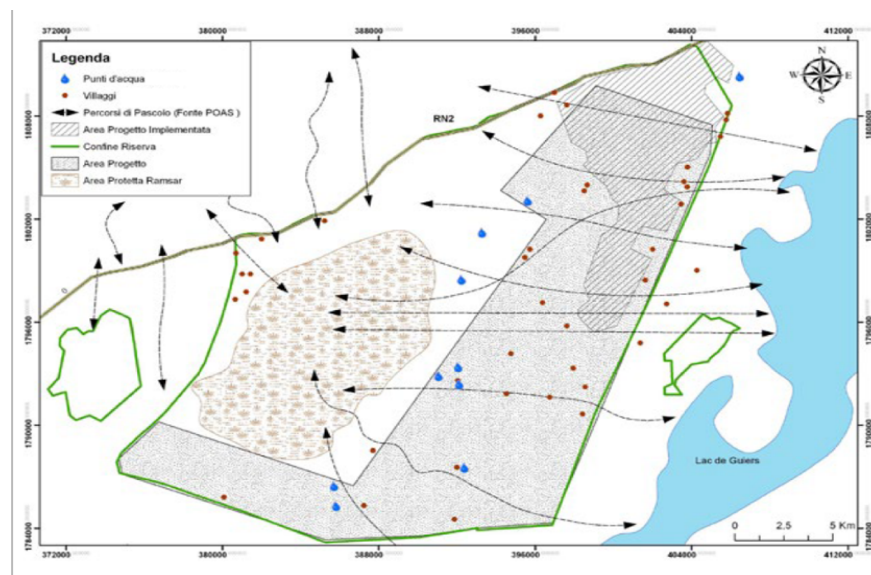
failed. As the CEO of the company explained: 'From 2013 to 2014, we tried to grow sunflower, but the soil was too salty, so we had to abandon the plan ... The previous team had no agricultural training, and since no environmental impact assessment was made, they did not envision that the production would fail.' (Interview, Director Senhuile, Dakar, 2015). As a result, the company went on to produce rice, corn, and peanuts for the local market, in direct and (advantageous) competition with local producers. The company thus passed from framing its activities within the biofuel and energy security objectives to those of food self-sufficiency that had also been set by the President Macky Sall. However, as of 2015, the Director of the company stated that these productions were not economically viable and that they were considering their departure. But at the same time he explained that 'we have lost so much already and had so many problems that it is difficult for us to just give up...That is why we are trying to make it work' (Interview, Director Senhuile, Dakar, 2015).

In-Situ Displacement and (In)Voluntary Immobility

The arrival of this company signified the end of the Reserve as a safe place for pastoralists. The granting of the Ndiaël Reserve to Senhuile has broader implications than the livelihoods of the 9,000 people located there. As many explained, this represented one of the last battles for pastoralist survival within Senegal, as it was one of the few remaining places. This loss is exacerbated by the fact that locals had not even been informed that the company was going to arrive: 'One fine day we got up and saw bulldozers. When we asked (what was going on), seven police cars came to stop us. Twelve people were put in prison for trying to defy the project.' (Interview Ndiaël Reserve, 2015). Although the company never planned to relocate the hamlets, the mere 500 m that separated the hamlets from the land allocated to the company meant that their livelihoods would become increasingly difficult. They felt trapped by the boundaries set by the company, particularly because they had already lost much of their required grazing space and witnessed the damage of pasto-

ral corridors. Prior to the arrival of the company, these semi-nomadic pastoralists only had to move 4 km to meet their cattle grazing needs. Following the company's arrival, however, these pastoralists now had to travel between 22 and 30 km north in order to feed their cattle: 'Before (Senhuile) the herds would go out during the day but return at night. Today that is no longer possible. Before there were many marshes (mari-gots), and today there are nearly none at all' (Interview, pastoralist, Ngith, 2015).

Map 6: Mobility within the Ndiaël Reserve



Source: Cirillo 2015 cited in Bagnoli et al. 2015, 35.

Long distance out-migration for the Peuls is not part of their culture due to a deep attachment to both their land and culture. Moreover, while the youth are beginning to question the viability of their livelihood strategies, they are also struggling more than the Wolofs to find alternative livelihoods due to their lack of education. Given the compounded struggles

that they have faced, an increasing number of young people have left for Mauritania and Dakar: 'If they (Senhuile) continue, no one will be able to stay here...And if we do not get any land for farming we will not be able to survive...' (Interview, Peul, 2015). The difficulties faced by the Peuls have been compounded by the environmental impacts created by the company, which are particularly salient and have been visible in forms such as cleared grasslands and shrub steppe as well as water contamination. This is despite the fact that the company's 2013 Environmental Impact Assessment had stated that it would ensure that the clearance of grass and shrubland would be kept to a strict minimum, limited to the area of production. In actuality, 10,000 hectares were cleared, despite the fact that only 2,000 hectares were under production. As a result, local populations dub the project as both a social and environmental disaster: 'Senhuile is a social and environmental disaster. They destroy natural species and contaminate the land and water with chemical products that they throw from planes. They have really polluted the Lake too' (Interview, President of the Farmer Producer Union, 2014).

Figure 10: Cattle Grazing Within the Ndiaël Reserve



Source: Photo by author, 2015.

Importantly, in this context, we see how displacement is not only about physically displacing homes, but also about displacing the livelihoods that make life in those homes possible. Although pastoralists have always counted on multiple livelihood diversification strategies to counter environmental difficulties, the lack of the ability to move combined with the minimal opportunities that the company has afforded to them, has restricted the flexibilisation that they require. Indeed, although the majority have remained in place, they have suffered a prolonged multi-stage process of losses (Lubkemann 2008), that have compromised their access to land and their livelihoods (Ribot and Peluso 2003). By establishing barriers to their movement and limiting the land available for their grazing needs, their traditional adaptive strategies are on the verge of disappearing. And although there has been a push for farmers and herders to obtain credit in order to survive, populations are deeply reticent of this option: ‘There are no banks that come here to take our money...We do not want debt! It is difficult for us for two reasons. First, the conditions that banks ask to give credits are not compatible with the conditions that we have. Second, for religious reasons. Interests are prohibited by Islam...No banks here, that is out of question!...But the problem is that the younger people now think this might be a solution...we try to dissuade them. We know that only brings problems’ (Focus group, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2015).

Fake Promises: Return Migration and Lack of Labour

Upon its arrival, the company promised to create 4,500 jobs with salaries of 4000 CFA per day (6 USD). As villagers foretold, the company also promised to provide electricity, roads, schools, etc. The main reason that some of the Wolofs living near the Ndiaël Reserve had initially been supportive of the Senhuile’s project was precisely because of the employment promises the company had made. For the farmers in the area, the expectations that the company would bring employment and infrastructure created hope, which even ignited the return migration of those

who had left to find work in Dakar and Saint Louis. Yet because the promises of employment (made by the former CEO) hinged on the production of sunflower, which never materialised, the promised jobs did not materialise either. In actuality, only 300 people were initially employed, and during my latest visit in 2015, only 190 people were employed, according to the company records. People complained that the contracts were not stable, and many former employees claimed to have worked for 3,000 CFA per day (5 USD), but without a contract. As a result of the company's fake promises, the out-migration of returnees resumed again.

In 2014, the CEO of the Senhuile was arrested on charges of misappropriating 200 million CFA (more than 300,000 USD) (RFI 2014). The new CEO explained that he was obliged to fire many employees because the project was economically unviable. According to him, the former team had no agronomic experience whatsoever and under the belief that sunflower production would flourish, they sought to reassure local communities by promising thousands of jobs that thereafter never materialised. In practice, the jobs created consisted of daily contracts and the company only requires labour for two months of the year. The company director attributes the stark conflicts that arose between local communities and the company (examined in Ch. 6) to these false promises of employment: 'Why did they (the former administration of the company) promise jobs when we don't need labour?! These are not productions that are labour intensive. The starting plan has gone completely wrong and created terrible problems...100 of the 190 current employers are there for security reasons.' (Interview, Director Senhuile, Dakar, 2015). The 'security' reasons here refer to safeguarding the company from the forms of resistance that populations have been using against the company, such as stealing machinery or releasing cattle onto the company's grounds.

In order to appease emerging tensions, the company's new administration signed an agreement of cohabitation with those members of the local communities who were not directly involved in resisting the pro-

ject. In 2014, the company established a department for social responsibility with the aims of: 1) minimising the environmental impact of the company on local people; 2) contributing to the socio-economic development of local communities; 3) becoming one of Senegal's preferred partners in terms of social and economic progress. Women-only groups, designed to boost their socio-economic status, were established as were some school classes. According to the new director general of the company, those who have been most adversely impacted by the project have reached agreements with the company: 'those that complain it is because they have not succeeded in being included' (Interview, Director Senhuile, Dakar, 2015). Moreover, the benefits resulting from these agreements have not been distributed equally.

In fact, what has happened in reality is that some leaders that are politically connected have received irrigation tools and farming land from the company, as well as employment as company security guards of the company. Certain leaders have even received plane tickets to visit Mecca paid for by the company, which is viewed upon as a form of corruption by some people (Interview, CNCR, Ngith, 2015). Despite allegations from the company that such benefits should trickle down to the remainder of the populations, in actuality this has failed to materialise. The vast majority of the people in the area have not had such opportunities and instead, have only experienced the negative impacts of the company's operations, with respect to their way of life on land that has been within their families for generations: 'That is not true! (that we have received anything). Only very few have received, and they kept everything to themselves!' (Interview, pastoralist, Ndiaël Reserve, 2015). The pastoral populations asserted that they were doubly cheated: first by Senhuile, and then by the chiefs that were meant to protect their interests.

Intercommunity tensions have consequently emerged between the majority who is against the company and the minority who has reportedly received preferential treatment and gifts in return for their silence. This has created mistrust and even family conflicts between those resisting the project and those who have been granted inclusion within it. As

exemplified during a focus group interview, this has led to conflicts even within the same households: ‘Tell her, tell her the truth! Tell her you accepted money from the company to say this!’ (Focus group, Ndiaël Reserve, 2015).

Figure 11: Irrigated Plot Facilitated by Senhuile Company.



Source: Photo by author, 2015.

Moreover, many local people reported an increase in conflicts between farmers and pastoralists that were a consequence of the company's presence: 'Before Senhuile, our relationships with the Peuls were fine. They had enough space to do their grazing and they could access the lake. But now, they keep coming into our fields to graze and this is creating a lot of tension' (Focus group, Ngnith, 2015).

In-Migration to Family Farms

Although the company has not been able to contribute to creating the opportunities needed for locals to stay at home or to incentivise return migration, irrigated agriculture elsewhere in the area has attracted populations from the inner regions of Senegal that rely on rain-fed agriculture

(especially from Fouta, Kaolack, Casamance, Fatick and Diourbel). Generally, these migrants are young men between the ages of 20 and 30. Populations from these regions engage in seasonal agricultural labour migration as a way to diversify their livelihoods during the dry season. The later arrival of the rains than usual combined with a lack of infrastructure, irrigation facilities, and access to markets, has made farming in their provinces increasingly difficult.

Many migrants in the area claimed that Dakar had previously been their preferred destination. But as life became increasingly difficult in urban areas, with growing competition for low skilled urban jobs, they preferred to migrate to the Delta. Moreover, they explained that in Dakar charges, such as rent and electricity, are costly, whereas if they work on family farms these costs are covered. According to the migrants interviewed, in their homes, it is only women, children and elderly that remain during the dry season. However, there are also a minority of families that come together and live in huts within the fields. All of the migrants interviewed preferred to work on family farms as opposed to agrobusinesses, primarily because the employment is stable and housing and food costs are covered. Other reasons include loyalty towards those that had previously hired them and the fact that they feel the work is less physically demanding. In the agribusinesses: 'you know at what time you start, but never when you finish' (Focus Group, Ngnith, 2015).

Life for these migrants is not without hardship, but agrobusiness companies have not provided better alternatives. The salaries they receive on family farms are around 30,000 CFA per month (51 USD), which is around 150,000 and 200,000 CFA (between 256 and 340 USD) for the full six-month seasonal stint. Although these salaries are much lower than what the companies purportedly provide (around 2,55 USD per day as opposed to 6 USD per day), the salaries provided on family farms still meet the nationally established minimum salary requirements.¹ Moreover, because they offer stable employment, they are actually much more profitable than working sporadically for say 20 days on an agro-

business plantation, which would thereby exclude the possibility of working on the family farm for the full six month period.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Both pastoralists and farmers are reliant on land and water access to maintain their livelihoods and to ensure their food security in the face of a changing climate. In a landscape that is seen as highly profitable for farming, pastoralist livelihoods have been tainted as maladaptive and environmentally destructive. Moreover, land regulations have focussed on economic productivity and on making land available to those who can put it to the 'best use.' Many of the tenure conflicts that have arisen between farmers are linked to the rules that shape the granting or ungranting of land by the rural councils. According to the 1972 decree, those who do not care for or work on their land in a productive manner can be dispossessed from it. The meaning of what '*mise en valeur*' or productive use is, however, can be interpreted in a controversial manner in order to justify granting land to the most powerful or politically connected, whilst dispossessing and excluding the most vulnerable. This has effectively translated into land redistribution for those who were already in a superior socio-economic position to start with. The determination of what constitutes productive versus unproductive livelihoods, coupled with the belief that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) would be able to harness food and environmental security, while also contributing to employment creation and the diminishing the rural exodus, has justified a multitude of large-scale land acquisitions in the area. The designation of the Ndiaël Reserve as a protected area has de facto unprotected it by shrinking the space of local democratic authorities via debate, and instead permitting the central government to grant land to actors like the Senhuile without any local oversight mechanisms.

The case of Senhuile is a paradigmatic land grabbing case whose outcome was radically different to its stated plan. Not only have pastoralist

livelihoods been further cast aside, but the promises of biofuel production and massive employment creation have not materialised. Instead, environmental and social costs have been high, and both pastoralists and farmers have suffered multi-faceted losses that may lead to expulsion. Although a massive exodus has not yet occurred, the local populations are preoccupied with what tomorrow will bring. As a pastoralist explained: 'Today there are already many problems. But our big fear is tomorrow. If they continue to exploit this land, what will we do?' (Interview, Collectif du Ndiaël, 2015). In a similar message, another pastoralist showed concern for the future: 'Without rain or land, where will our people go?' (Interview with pastoralist, Ndiaël Reserve, 2015). Despite common media and policy rhetoric that millions of people want to flee Sub-Saharan Africa, not one person I spoke with in this area (over 150 people) has now the plan to attempt the perilous journey. Rather, they want to ensure that they can benefit from the resources that their country can provide, while making sure that these precious resources are given to those who need them, rather than the highest bidder. One of the farmers in Ngith even named his farm, 'Barça,' in order to dissuade the youth from attempting deadly journeys, when they can rather fight for their own means of subsistence at home. With an understanding of the specific legitimisers and impacts of this paradigmatic case of land grabbing in Senegal, this chapter now analyses what paradigmatic cases of land grabs in Cambodia look like.

5.2 Koh Kong: Overlapping Grabs, Overlapping Displacements

The area the Sre Ambel district in the province of Koh Kong in Cambodia drew media and NGO attention in 2006 when the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) granted two Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) in the Chi Kha Leu commune to two sugar companies (Koh Kong Plantation and Koh Kong Sugar Industry). Both of these companies are jointly owned by the Thai company Khon Kaen Sugar Industry, Taiwanese Ve Wong Corporation and a Cambodian Senator; Ly Yong Phat – who is well connected to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and is one of Cambodia's most influential businessmen. Although belonging to the same investors, each concession was granted approximately 9,500 contiguous hectares in order to bypass the legal limits of 10,000 hectares per concession that the ELC sub-decree establishes (EC and IDI 2013). Moreover, the concessions were granted within evergreen forests which are classified by the 2001 Land Law as inalienable state public land (Dwyer 2015).

As a result of these ELCs, hundreds of families that had been living in the area since the 1970s lost their land. However, as villagers explained, this was not the first time they had experienced land dispossession in recent years: 'We were thrown out long before the sugar company arrived...First, the forest administration said they had to save the trees, then an NGO wanted to save the animals...After, some of that land was given to the company for sugar...Now (I hear) something about REDD+...I don't understand how this works!' (Interview with a villager in Koh Kong, 2016). In order to understand the current conjuncture, it is thus essential to take a step back and to analyse the cumulated impacts of these multi-layered resource grabs on the current situation.

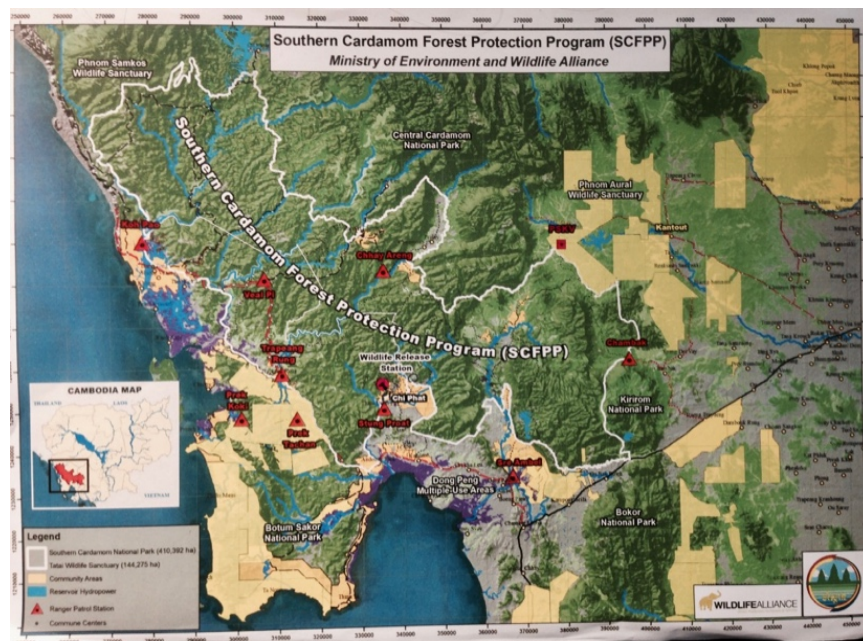
The area where the two adjacent sugar concessions are located is contiguous to the Cardamom mountains, which are one of the few remaining, relatively intact forest landscapes in Southeast Asia. Given the cover

afforded by deep mountains, forests, and rugged landscapes, this area represented one of the last strongholds of the Khmer Rouge where many defeated soldiers retreated to (Hanson et al. 2009). Between 1975 and 1990, the lack of access to international markets and the absence of external investment delayed the onset of deforestation in these mountains and therefore, a significant amount of biodiversity, including rare and endangered species, have remained (Dudley et al. 2002, 324). As a result of their richness in biodiversity, the mountains are considered by Conservation International as part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot. Biodiversity hotspots are defined as areas with ‘exceptional concentrations of endemic species and exceptional loss of habitat’ (Myers et al. 2000a, 853).

During the transitional period, when new markets opened for investment, a national road was built (national route 48), and a new influx of loggers, poachers and settlers came to inhabit – and re-inhabit – the area. In 2002, and in order to protect the area from these new influxes, the Southern Cardamom Forest Protection Program was initiated in a partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) and an American conservation NGO, Wildlife Alliance (formally operating as WildAid from 2002 to 2006) (see Map 7). The mission of Wildlife Alliance, which is financially supported through international donors (e.g. USAID, ADB) and corporate matching programs, is to ‘support law enforcement and provide technical assistance for wildlife and forestry protection’ (Wildlife Alliance 2017). The Forest Administration (FA), is in charge of patrol squads and ranger stations, while the military police provide additional manpower and the Wildlife Alliance contributes onsite technicians. Environmentally protecting the Southern Cardamom mountains has come with significant social costs. Following the forest conservation scheme, which rests on the assumption that the presence of people is negative for the environment, many people were evicted. In certain cases, houses were burned down, and populations were violently expelled through the use of military police force (Interview with Wildlife Alliance representative, Phnom Penh, 2016). Even

those populations that have been farming the land since the 1990s, and who therefore held possession rights under the 2001 Land Law, were not spared eviction (Tiththara 2009).

Map 7: Map of the Southern Cardamom Forest Protection Program



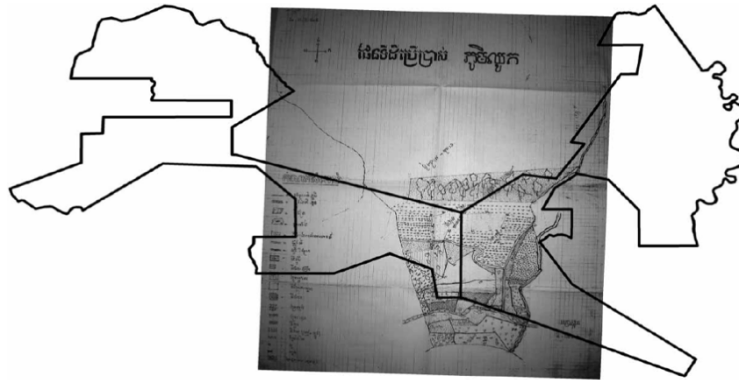
Source: Map facilitated by WildLife Alliance, 2016

When the Koh Kong sugar concessions arrived in 2006, they razed large areas of forest and violated the ELC sub-decree by not conducting a public hearing, failing to inform the public via a public announcement, and by not conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (NHRC 2015, via Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2016). Although the company, backed by the Royal Government of Cambodia, claimed that the concessions were located in an abandoned area, 456 families from the Sre Ambel district were forcibly evicted from approximately 5,000 hectares, which were used to make way for the concessions (CLEC

and EarthRights International 2012). Local communities were not informed or consulted about the project and without warning, demolition workers with bulldozers and excavators, accompanied by armed and military police, arrived and began to clear their land and crops.

Many of those who had previously seen their land confiscated as a result of new conservation efforts and as a consequence of the commune chief granting false land certificates, were dispossessed of their land once more. The majority of the people whose land was taken had lived on their land peacefully for more than five years, and hence were entitled to the right of possession under Article 30 of the Land Law. Moreover, all three of the affected villages were located within the Participatory Land Use Planning implementation area since 2002, which provides proof that the residents' land ownership was indeed uncontested and publicly evident (NHRC 2015, via Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2016). At the time of dispossession, most of the farmers lost all of their vegetable land holdings and ten families also lost their residential land. Local residents claimed to have been forced to accept as little as 300 USD per household as compensation, with those having opposed the project not receiving any compensation. In total, 707 families have been affected by the dispossession of 3000 hectares of farmland that has left these farmers without livelihood options.

Map 8: Commune Land Use Planning Map Overlaid with Koh Kong Concession Boundaries



Source: Dwyer 2015

Although the majority of residential land was not cleared, respondents unanimously reported extremely difficult living conditions resulting from the loss of farmland. As explained by one of the villagers: ‘With the loss of land, we lost everything that we had. We don’t have money for our children to go to school. Not enough food to eat. No money to pay the interests because for the first time we now have to go to banks. No job opportunities....some people are seriously considering suicide’ (Interview, farmer, 2015). Moreover, most of the 42 participants claimed to be scared of entering the forest to collect non-timber products, because the company requires them to buy a pass to have access. Those participants who had previously had their residence inside of the company boundaries were offered one hectare of land in a relocation site situated in an isolated plot in the middle of the forest and 350 USD per household as compensation. Without road or water access, the ten families that were forcibly moved to this location continue to experience tremendous difficulties.

Figure 12: Relocation Site in Koh Kong

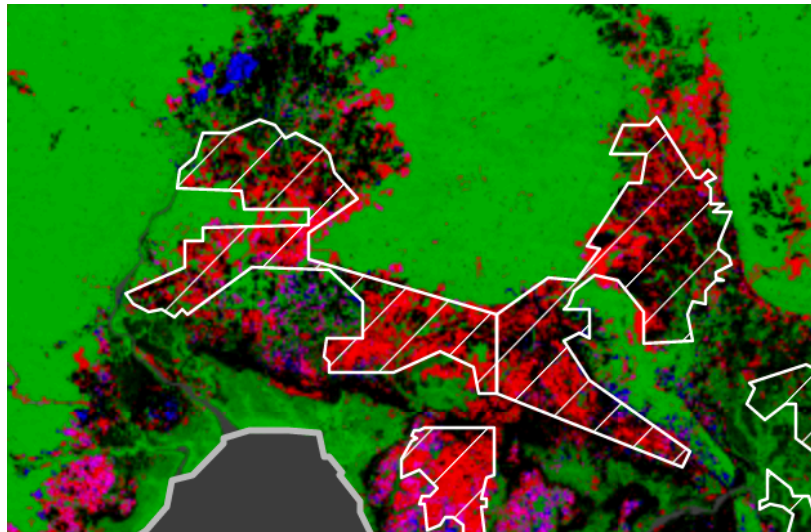


Source: Photo by author, 2016

The livelihoods of local communities depend on forest products that have significantly reduced since the arrival of the company. In addition to the forest that is now located within the company boundaries, the two community forests, totalling 1,800 hectares, were also adversely impacted by the company and the access of poor populations to the forest has been further restricted: 'The company destroyed the forest as well...The company not only destroyed farmland but also destroyed community forest. People were dependent from the forest for non-timber products...But now if we try to access, we are fined and products get taken away' (Interview with affected farmer, Chouk village, 2016). As another villager noted, 'We don't have land to make money, so we went into forest to get some non-timber products like bamboo and the company stop us and ask for money' (Interview with affected farmer, Chouk village, 2016). Local communities also have less access to water as the water reserves have either been polluted or are in dire shortage due to the excessive use of water by the company for irrigation.

Moreover, the majority of land within the concession has not been exploited, which makes the ELC a case point of a logging concession in disguise. Although the sub-decree on ELCs stipulated that companies must present Environmental Impact Assessments (which this company failed to do), it also granted concessionaries the right to clear concession land (including any forested area within the concessions). ELCs that are located next to conservation areas, such as the Koh Kong sugar concessions, are particularly lucrative because ‘protected timber’ can be secretly harvested and trafficked under the companies concession permit (Milne 2015).

Map 9: Deforestation Within Koh Kong Sugar and Nearby Concessions



Source: Licadho

Other abuses include killing cattle, the confiscation of crops, the exclusion of communities from water and forest resources, and the failure to provide livelihood alternatives (Dwyer 2015). The water from the streams where villagers used to catch their fish has been completely polluted because the chemicals from the company’s operations flow directly

into the streams: 'It is polluted the water and buffaloes dies when they drink this. Last year many died...It's because of the pesticides they use to spray the plantation...Some people that drink this water get very sick. Before people just drank that water but now people are scared because of the chemicals. We have had to dig wells' (Interview with community leader, Chouk village, 2015). As another villager pointed out, 'Before the stream was deep and had many fish. But after the company cleared the land, the land fell into the stream and no water or fish there anymore. The small water that is left, the pesticides flow into the water and the fish die. They don't have fish anymore.' (Interview with affected farmer, Chouk village, 2016).

Lack of Employment, Debt, and Distress Out-Migration

With the loss of farmland and restricted access on forests, farmers in need of livelihoods have been forced to either migrate or accept employment within the company that brutally expelled them. Approximately 50% of those who have remained in the villages work for the company as sugar cane cutters. However, these jobs are only available three months per year and only two people have been engaged in the factory in stable working conditions with work contracts. As expressed by one interviewee in a focus group, 'There is sometimes work in the plantation from November to February. The rest of the time there is no work at all in the plantation. But we have to eat all year. If we just work at the company, how can we eat?' (Interview, farmer, Chouk village, 2016). The salary is around 120 USD/month for hard working conditions that entail eight hour shifts (from 8am to 4pm). In fact, to maximally exploit the workers, the company does not offer fixed salaries. Instead people are paid according to the amount of sugar they collect – receiving 100 riel (0.025 USD) in return for 20 canes (one bunch). As a result of targets that require strenuous physical activity, there are also strict age limitations: 'No one in the household works in the company. I want to work there because I need money, but the company does not allow me be-

cause I'm too old (30). They only want young people from 18-19.' (Interview with farmer, Chouk village, 2016).

Moreover, villagers report that the company's labour needs are low all year around: 'They do not need many people to work at the plantation because they have machines. The machines cut the sugar cane, they spray the fertilizers, insecticides, etc.' As the community leader reported, 'It is not true that these companies give opportunities to the people. We have to let people know that this is blood sugar!' (Interview with community leader, Chouk village, 2015). Additionally, since many villagers have filed lawsuits against the company, the scarce amount of employment that is available does not tend to go towards local communities: 'They don't use many locals. For the workers, they use people from other provinces. Maybe because we complained to the company to get the land. So the company does not want us to work there'. (Interview with affected farmer, Chouk village, 2016). According to the affected local communities, the jobs that the company does require are mostly filled by migrants from other provinces who are not in direct conflict with the company. These people are provided housing within the company's boundaries during the cutting season, but unfortunately I was not given permission to access the company grounds in order to enquire directly about their conditions.²

As a result of the loss of the livelihoods of those living in the area, many families have been targeted by micro-credit schemes that have consequently pushed them into an unsurmountable amount of debt: 'The government offered the land to the concession in order to give a job opportunity to the people, but, in fact from this development the people suffer from the company and we lost our family members. Some move to work outside and we don't have income and now we are in debt' (Interview with farmer, March 2015). In the event that they cannot pay back the accruing interest, their houses can be seized: 'Most of the people here are in debt. We borrow money from micro-finance and we don't know what we are going to do. A few families don't have money to pay for the interest and the money lender want to take their house away'

(Interview with landless farmer, Chouk village, 2016). The loss of these livelihoods, coupled with an increased amount of debt, has led to an exponential wave of out-migration that was unprecedented before the arrival of the company and is directly linked to the loss of land. As one farmer explained, 'Before there was no migration because people don't know how to do anything but farm, so the possibilities elsewhere are very scarce.' (Interview with affected farmer, Chouk village, 2015). According to estimates from the community leader, approximately 30% of the population has left permanently since the arrival of the company. Almost everybody of a working age now migrates, especially women, while the largest cohort of the population remaining are the elderly and children. The main destinations of those leaving include the capital city of Phnom Penh, where women have possibilities of employment within the garment factories, Thailand, where this is work within the agricultural and construction sectors, and Malaysia, where women can work as housekeepers.

Conducting my interviews during the Khmer New Year enabled me to speak to migrants that had returned home for the vacation. They reported extremely poor working conditions in their destination areas, including sexual abuse, non-payment of salaries, and very precarious housing conditions. They equally reported that the profits they used to make via agriculture were substantially superior to those that they now make in their destination areas; most of them are unable to send any remittances home. All of them pointed out that the 'land grab' was the only reason they had 'decided' to leave: 'Farming the land is much more profitable than working in Thailand. If we had agricultural land, we would not have left.' (Interview with migrant, Koh Kong, 2015). As in many other rural areas in Cambodia experiencing similar situations, the remittances that migrants send are used primarily to pay off debt: 'Yes, they send some money to the family. They use the money to pay the debts. They have debts from micro finance and money lenders...' (Interview with farmer, Koh Kong, 2015).

Those people who have a relative choice whether or not to migrate, and who are not deeply indebted, do not desire to migrate to Phnom Penh. Life in the city is not perceived by the migrants as a way out of poverty, but rather as a deeper poverty trap: 'I am not sure if I go to PP because we spend a lot for rent and get very little salary. Rent, electricity, water, etc. So not sure it's worth it. That's why I came back.' (Interview with former migrant, Koh Kong, 2016) The majority of those who had migrated to Thailand did so irregularly, which means that when their irregular status is identified by authorities, they are forced to return to Cambodia: 'We go illegally to Thailand, so no passport to get in so it is dangerous, and we come back' (Interview with farmer, Koh Kong, 2015). Although there is still some remaining hope, if these communities are unable to get back their agricultural land, the population envisions a massive out-migration, used as a last resort. Under the current conditions within the areas of destination, migration is not perceived as a livelihood diversifying strategy for migrants nor for their non-migrant families, as the departure of relatives is often a traumatising experience: 'I cry because I miss my children (woman crying during the interview) this is not a livelihood strategy...! It's the only option we have, and it's a very painful one' (Interview with farmer, Chouk village, 2015).

Overlapping Justifications and Expulsions

As we have seen, people living in the area where the Koh Kong sugar concessions are located have suffered a multitude of overlapping expulsions that have been justified on both environmental protection and sugar production grounds – and the confluence between the two. Although the aims of both the protected area and the environmental law enforcement NGO is to protect biodiversity, and not to centralise resources into the hands of the government or violate human rights, the avoidance of politically sensitive issues has facilitated it. By turning a blind eye to the root causes of natural resource destruction in these 'biodiversity hotspots' – namely the endemic corruption of political elites and the poverty of local communities (Cincotta, Wisniewski, and Engelman 2000;

Fisher and Christopher 2007) – national and local authorities have not had to account for their predatory practices. The approach of purportedly protecting the environment while avoiding contentious land issues has been welcomed by the government. By having a justification to label vulnerable populations as ‘illegal settlers’, the government has been able to put the blame of deforestation and wildlife trade on local communities and on poor landless farmers all while reinforcing a culture of impunity for those that are responsible for logging and granting fake land certificates.

Other important regulations such as the possession rights granted under the 2001 Land Law, the sub-decree regulation on not permitting more than 10,000 hectares to a single concession, as well as obligations to conduct Environmental Impact Assessments, have been circumvented for sugar production. The rise in production of this flex crop for the global market – linked to growing demands for ethanol – has taken place hand-in-hand with the expulsion of people from their farmlands and the consequent loss of livelihoods this entails. Despite promises to meet local labour demands, the company has offered minimal employment with respect to both quantity and quality, as it is seasonal in nature and requires a strong physique, thereby excluding the elderly and women. Although the majority of the local populations did not lose their residential land, this case shows that physical eviction is not necessary for expulsion. In fact, the loss of livelihoods caused by the loss of farmland and access to forests, coupled with the absence of alternative adequate opportunities, has led many farmers to migrate elsewhere in order to ensure their livelihoods and to contribute towards the debt repayment for those family remaining.

However, the act of migration for the most vulnerable can hardly be considered as an adaptation strategy, given the precarious situations they find within the destination areas. In fact, migration is perceived locally as a last resort option, often leading to situations of bonded labour abroad with great risks to their human security. Given that the widespread extent of land grabs in Cambodia, and that Social Land Concessions

(SLCs) originally established as an instrument to mitigate the negative potential consequences of ELCs, we now turn to a different case where both SLCs and ELCs have overlapped with one another.

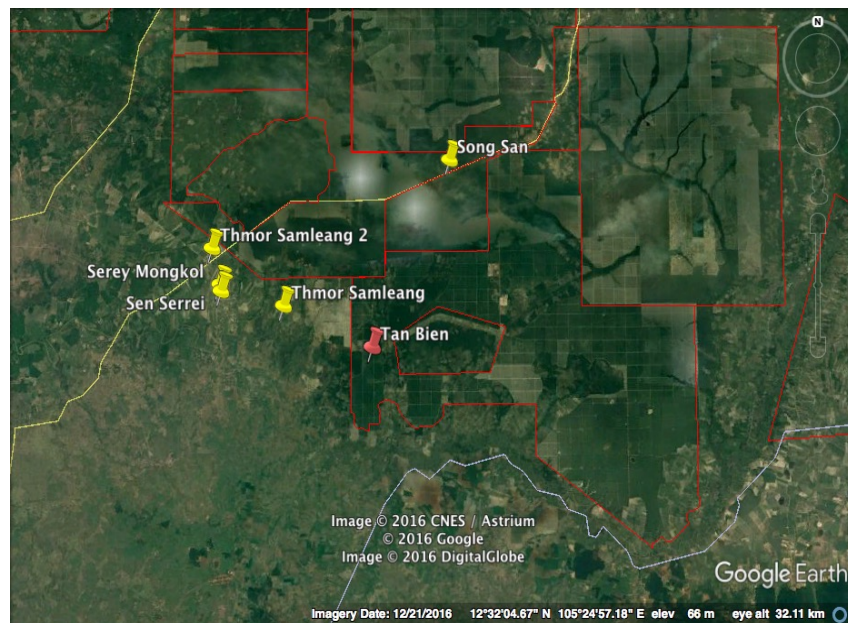
5.3 Kampong Thom: A Perpetual Movement of Broken Promises.

The Santuk District of the Kraya Commune in Kampong Thom Province was featured at the forefront of media and NGO attention in 2009, when families were evicted from the Bontey Rongang village. Their eviction came following the granting of an ELC of 8,100 hectares to the Tan Bien Rubber Development Group (part of the Vietnamese Rubber Group) under a cooperation program between the governments of Vietnam and Cambodia. The military and police evicted 1,750 families who had reportedly been living in the area since 2004, due to promises that a Social Land Concession would be granted to them ³ (Interview LICADHO 2015; Titthara 2012). Given that the evicted families had been living in the area for a relatively short amount of time, while other families had been living the area for a longer period and were not evicted, it is first important to understand what brought whom to the area, with what rights, and – ultimately – with what variegated impacts.

First, it is important to note that the province of Kampong Thom had been completely devastated during bombardments by Americans under the Pol Pot regime (Diepart 2007, 45). Although prior to the civil war there were a few families settling in the area, during the 1980s and 1990s Kampong Thom became a battlefield and many of these families were forced to leave again. It was only after the fall of the Pol Pot regime that populations – such as those from other districts in Kampong Thom and the neighbouring province of Kampong Cham – began to settle in the area. This sparsely populated area contained abundant forested land that, during the transition period, the government encouraged for clearing for agricultural production. The firstcomers to the area (around 30 to

40 families) settled in the village of Son Sang (today known as the old village) in 1993 (see the map below). When the Tan Bien Rubber company arrived in 2009, there were approximately 97 families in Son Sang and by 2014, there were 176 families. According to the records from the village chief, the majority of people arrived to the village between 2011 and 2012 in order to buy land (Records from the village chief of Son Sang, 2016). As interviewees recall there was no out-migration at that time, due to the availability of land and the demand for labour.

Map 10: Location of Studied Villages in Kampong Thom



Source: Image from Google Earth. Village locations from Open Development Cambodia. ELC boundaries (red) from LICADHO.

A separate stream of people, consisting of disabled people, widows, and orphans, started arriving to the area in 2006. Previous to their arrival, a former influential member of the military, Mr. Kim Kheang, had set up Disabled War Veterans Association for Agricultural Development (AHADA) in Kampong Thom and promised people that after clearing

the forest, they would be able to request a Social Land Concession. The word quickly spread around the country, and hundreds of families immigrated to the area, with 1,200 families settling in a village called Bontey Rongean. Although most people came from neighbouring province of Kampong Cham, disabled landless migrants also came from other provinces. As one villager underlined, 'People came from everywhere because they had no land or jobs in their home villages' (Interview, farmer, Kampong Thom, 2016). After having cleared the forest, families received plots ranging from three to five hectares depending on the size of the family. The families grew cashew nuts, mangoes, rice and collected non-timber products from the forest for primarily their own consumption. However, as members from the community recalled, 'We all knew that this was state land, but the leader told us that it was ok and that if we held on to the land for 5 years, we would be able to ask for land titles⁴... He gave us no land card or title or anything, but he promised us that we would eventually get one...and we believed him...' (Interview, community leader, Serey Mongkoul, 2015).

However, although AHADA had been recognised as an association by the Kampong Thom Provincial government, it never gained recognition or permission from the central government. Moreover, according to the village chief of the current relocation site, the area had long been discussed for future ELCs: 'We had polled the area of Tan Bien and other two rubber concessions (Ba Ria and Gold Foison) already in 1999. I was part of the polling team (maps were shown to me) and the map was sent to the government, so they could issue these land concessions.... The problem did not start with the company (as many NGO's and media reported), but with the leader of the disabled association that encouraged people to clear land that was not his and made false promises to the people. Because of him all these people were illegal' (Interview with village chief, Serey Mongkoul, 2016). Through this case, we see not only the confusion that the Land Law generated concerning the meaning of 'possession' versus 'propriatorship', but also how influential self-proclaimed leaders exploited this confusion for their own benefit.

As villagers explained in a focus group discussion, ‘The chief of the disabled association was selling land to the poor (and not only granting land to the disabled) so this is why we came. The disabled paid only 10-12 USD/hectare, but the poor who were not handicapped paid him much more. He completely cheated us!’ (Focus group, Serey Mongkoul, 2016). The village chief went further stating that: ‘He had interests and got lots of money from the disabled and poor peoples. He was selling some plots of land for 200-500 USD’ (Interview, village chief, Serey Mongkoul, 2016). However, according to the village chief, the provincial authorities had indeed already prepared agricultural land in Kbal Lan for these disabled peoples: ‘The disabled peoples’ chief had agreed but went to the company area anyway to clear land...this way he could make more money.’ The leader of ADAHA was eventually imprisoned and he continues to serve his sentence. However, the villagers condemn the lack of information provided by authorities during this time: ‘Why didn’t they (the authorities) stop us before if that was the case?... It was great for the companies and local authorities that we already cleared land, that way they had less work to do when they were finally here!’ (Focus group, Serey Mongkoul, 2016).

When Tan Bien Rubber arrived, families were obliged to accept compensation (200 USD/hectare) and to relocate to the designated village of Phum Thmay, which would later be divided into two villages: Serrey Mongkoul and Sein Serrey. On the day the company arrived, the communities set on fire some of the company’s machinery as a way of protesting; however this was not part of a long-term strategy to reclaim their land. In response to this spontaneous form of resistance, the authorities blockaded the area, leaving the communities without any food supply (see Cismas and Paramita 2015). Out of 1,200 families, 602 ‘accepted’ the compensation money in exchange for their relocation, while the others left the area altogether without compensation. Unsatisfied with the amount and quality of land that they would receive, many returned to their home provinces or migrated directly to other places. The families that relocated to the new village were granted plots of residential land of

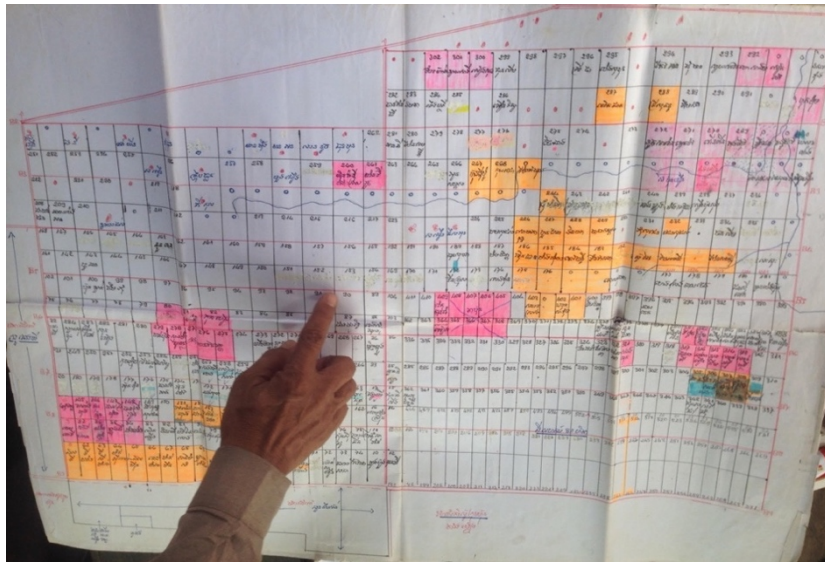
20 x 40 meters; they were also promised 1 hectare of agricultural land for households of 1 to 5 members, or 1.5 hectares for households of 5 to 7 members. However, the granting of the agricultural land was delayed, did not happen, or ignited new conflicts. On the one hand, only those who had influence and money were granted their agricultural plots (Focus groups, Serey Mongkoul and Sein Serrey, 2016). On the other hand, many of the farm plots granted by the authorities overlapped with plots that were already occupied by previous settlers. In light of the lack of agricultural land, many families were in a situation of despair and decided to sell their residential land and move out entirely.

In 2016, nearly seven years after the relocation took place, there were only 310 families left in the village. Those remaining possessed the following land status: 39 families had been granted agricultural land and had no subsequent conflict; 49 families were granted a plot of land that overlapped with other claimers (examined below); and 110 families were as of yet still not granted any agricultural land (Records from the village chief). These families claimed that other families had paid the authorities to receive their agricultural land. With such rampant corruption practices, the most economically vulnerable are unlikely to ever receive this 'promised' land. As one villager stated, 'Those who don't have anything, don't get anything' (Interview with farmer, April 2016). Moreover, the agricultural land that has been granted is located 10km away from residential land site. Given that most people do not have a motorcycle or other means of transport, this means they are effectively unable to use their agricultural land. Additionally, all 49 respondents unanimously claimed that the quality of the land that had been granted was extremely poor for farming and that they are also in fear of having this land grabbed once again by a Cambodian business tycoon.⁵ As a result, the relocated families that remain in the village have had to enter into wage-labour. Even those families that were granted agricultural plots have diversified their livelihoods by becoming wage-labourers on the plantation of 'the rich', working for the company (when there is employment), and relying on loans and remittances sent by migrant family members.

Stacked Claims: Whose Land is this?

Given the multiplicity of actors involved in land grabs in this landscape, I decided to examine the contested plots that were granted to the 49 families from Serey Mongkoul (located around 10km away at the other side of Tan Bien Rubber) and speak to the previous owners. Many of them were living in a village called Song San where people had started to settle in the early 1990s, yet no land titles had been granted there either. As their village chief explained, 'The problem is Serey Mongkoul is very strange... They were relocated and then they were granted agricultural land, but all that land already had owners so there were a lot of conflicts with the first owners of the land. We went to meet the provincial officers and they told us that we needed to share the land. Because this was a problem, they put much pressure on people so that they would sell land to the rich from Kampong Thom and Kampong Cham provinces. I didn't personally sell it but many people in the village did ...The authorities actually forced them to do so and to split the money with the villagers from Serey Mongkoul. For every hectare of land, they would get 1,000 USD and then give 500 USD to the villagers in Serey Mongkoul. Some people from this village went back to their home town because they had no land and many from Serey Mongkoul also moved out because their conflicted land was sold.' (Interview with village chief, Son Sang, 2016). Other villagers from Son Sang clarified that there was an explicit logic within this, 'The local authorities sold the land that was meant to be for Serey Mongkoul and Sein Serrey villagers to the rich, then took the money and then distributed land to villagers that already had two owners on it. This is where all the problems began.' (Focus group, Son Sang, 2016).

Map 11: Map of Contested and Granted Plots



Source: Village Chief Son Sang Village. The plots with multiple owners appear with a red dot. Photo by author, 2016.

Many inhabitants from Thmor Saleang (the first village where the newly-arrived migrants had settled) explained that they had been compensated for the land that had been allocated to the concession, but that they were entangled in other land contestations that are rooted in the conflicting interests of the local authorities, the forest administration, and ‘the rich’ (mainly middle income and higher income investors): ‘People here don’t have problems with the company, but with the rich. They have rubber plantations of 20-30 hectares. They start planting rubber trees and cassava on villagers’ land and then start making complaints to each other about who owns the land. The rich have titles but not the poor’ (Interview, farmer, Thmor Saleang, 2015). This is also the case in Song San village (the village to where people were relocated), where stacked claims are between more than two owners and beyond conflicts with the Forest

Administration. Rather, these land contestations also entail grabs by the powerful: 'The rich said that this was their land. They told the families: you are all here illegally and some went to file a complaint' (Interview with farmer, Song San village, 2016). But the rich had somehow received the land titles that the local farming populations had long been requesting: 'The rich showed us land titles that were official. We only had land cards and they were useless...I heard that if I grow crops for five years someone will issue a land card, but I've been told so many things I don't know what to believe' (Interview, farmer, Song San, 2016).

Expectedly, those without land titles continue to fear additional 'grabbing' by the powerful economic elites: 'Most people have problem with the rich tycoons.⁶ The rich pay the police and put demarcation poles down. The police have guns and try to kick people out. Now it's near the national elections so the police stopped doing this, but it will start again after the elections.' (Interview farmer, Thmor Saleang, 2015). In the meantime, the fear of having their land grabbed remains: 'People are scared and worried everyday thinking that another company might come, or that the powerful will show up with cards even if no one has ever seen them in the area before' (Interview with village chief, Song San village, 2016). Many of these 'rich grabbers' (as they are referred to in the area) arrived in 2012 when the previous villagers had given up on finding solutions, were deeply indebted and thus willing to sell their land holdings: 'We heard that we could buy land here from the first comers so we bought between 5 and 20 hectares: at 1,300 USD/hectare... The firstcomers were selling the land because they had no money. At the time for the disaster from others, the rich started coming to buy land and we got land authorizations from the district level...We had some savings and thought that this was a good investment' (Focus group, Thmor Sale-an village, 2016). For the most part, the 'rich grabbers' originated from Kampong Cham and had been business owners prior to moving to the area. Today, they serve as plantation managers and hire some locals, mostly migrants, to work for them.

Environmental, What?

Although environmental discourses flood political legitimization narratives around rubber at the national scales, it turns out that projects managers themselves lack awareness of their existence. As the Kampong Thom Rubber plantation manager explained to me, 'We came here in order to improve the economy. When we came here there was a lot of forest. So, the first thing we had to do was to clear it in order to be able to plant rubber trees...' (Interview with plantation manager of Tan Bien Rubber, 2016). However, the plantation manager admitted that he had never heard of the legal requirement of conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment prior to commencing their operations: 'Environmental...What? We are legal in Cambodia and have full rights to be here. There was no need for us to do that and nobody asked us to.' (Interview, plantation manager of Tan Bien Rubber, 2016). This illuminates the deep divide and ambiguity that occurs as projects that have been justified by several actors at multiple scales interact on the ground. There was absolutely no intention, or claim made by Tan Bien Rubber company to be environmentally sustainable. The Vietnamese Rubber Group (of which the company is a subsidiary), however, has understood the importance of environmental branding. As a result, it has advertised its operations accordingly and partnered with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, which is 'a global not-for-profit organisation that sets standards for what constitutes a responsibly managed forest, environmentally and socially (Forest Stewardship Council® n.d.).

In an attempt to protect the remaining forest (despite difficulties in determining where this remaining forest lies), and to reforest the area, the Forest Administration (FA) began to reclaim back land from villagers in 2006. As one villager explained, 'Villagers have problems with the FA, not with the companies. They put a lot of pressure to get land back and accuse villagers of illegally clearing the forest... This is true because the government never gave land to the villagers, but then they give it all to their friends and to the companies...but we are Khmer. If we can't have land in our country, what do we do?!' (Interview with affected villager,

Thmor Saleang, 2016). Whilst the FA's mission is to replant trees on contested land and to protect the remaining forest, it seems that other lucrative activities are part of their operations as well. As expressed by one villager, 'They grow trees, but they also rent part of the land to people to grow cassava...(Is that part of their mission,' I asked?)...They don't grow cassava themselves, but they rent the land for others to do it.' cassava' (Interview, affected farmer, Song San village, 2016). As several other villagers conveyed, the FA's involvement in growing trees was a cover up for these other more lucrative activities: 'They grow trees on the outside (where you can see) and then on the inside, they clear the forest and rent the land to others to grow cassava' (Focus group, Song San, 2016).

However, while the FA capitalises on growing cassava on land that ought to have been allocated for conservation purposes, there are minimal complaints filed due to fear of the repercussions: 'The FA officials hire workers to plant cassava and cashew nuts for them...But if we complain, we get arrested. So we don't know what to do... The FA waits for all the land to be cleared and then comes to take it away from us. When there are trees they don't care. They wait for the land to be clear so they can make business.' (Interview with a Tan Bien Rubber company employee, 2016). According to the FA, within this area they have reclaimed on average 100 hectares per month since 2014, which has been facilitated by increased budget from the government. However, they deny using the confiscated land for cassava production (Interview, Forest Administration. Kampong Thom, 2016).

Figure 13: Forest Clearance on a Contested Land Plot in Song San Village



Source: photo by author, 2016

Adverse Incorporation

As in the other cases examined, a strong justification for the rubber concession has been employment creation. However, the amount and quality of jobs promised by the company have not reflected the reality. According to the plantation manager, they employ 600 permanent workers and around 100 seasonal workers. Around 30-40 of the technical and management staff are Vietnamese, while the rest are Cambodian workers. However, of these Cambodian workers, the majority are migrants from other provinces in Kampong Thom or from Kampong Cham, as opposed to being local workers. These migrants arrive to the plantation area with their families and the company provides housing, schooling, and healthcare for them. As many local villagers explained, the company prefers migrant workers because they settle and live inside the concession area and thus are always available. When the company arrived, many employment opportunities arose for migrants looking for employment: 'In 2009 there were lots of jobs to clear the forest and plant rubber trees,

but since a year there is hardly anything to do...Before there were around 100 families in this block, now only 16 remain...In the other blocks it's the same situation. All of those who had a house or some land moved away... (Of) those that stay here, often their husband or wife left to work abroad' (Focus group, workers inside of the Tan Bien Rubber concession, 2016). According to the migrant workers living within the concession, as well as a few locals who work for the company, the salaries are quite unequal: 'The company has no policy. One day they tell you 5 USD and then at the end they give you 1.5 USD. They cheat us all the time. And we have no other jobs to do...Some people try to go outside to work on cassava plantations, but we cannot go too much because we get into trouble. We are allowed (to leave) just when there is no job in the company' (Focus group, workers inside of the Tan Bien Rubber concession, 2016).

According to the plantation manager, since 2015 the company no longer needs workers because rubber prices have continuously devalued in price: 'While before you could get 6,000 USD for a ton of rubber, now you can only get 1,500 USD. There is an oversupply of rubber and China (our main market) does not need so much anymore. The same is true with cassava....' (Interview with plantation manager of Tan Bien Rubber, 2016). Although the rubber trees within the Tan Bien Rubber plantation had reached maturity, the low market prices have effectively translated into limited rubber tapping by the company, as they wait for higher market prices before proceeding. This of course has profound implications on the extent of employment that they are able to provide. As the plantation manager noted, 'The prices are very low and we are losing a lot of money. The populations might not be aware of this and they just complain and complain that we don't give jobs, but we are also losing out (money) here' (Interview with plantation manager of Tan Bien Rubber, 2016). The low market prices for rubber have translated into lower wages for remaining workers: 'Other years we would make 125 USD/month because we had jobs every day. But this year, not much work and (we) only make 25 USD/month' (Focus group inside of Tan

Bien Rubber concession, 2016). To put these numbers into perspective, it is worth noting that while there is no minimum salary established for agricultural workers in Cambodia, the garment sector, which has been target of many regulations, established its minimum salary at 182 USD/month in 2018 (Thul 2018).

In the case of the rubber plantations, it is those who have greater technical knowledge on rubber and a permanent contract that are more comfortable financially and content to live within a concession that grants them schooling, healthcare, and housing. In fact, a few of these workers stated that, 'We are very happy here...we make much more than we would elsewhere, and our house, electricity and food is covered for. When we have enough money and time, we can even go and farm our own land outside the concession...For other people it is more difficult, but if you have knowledge it is good. Both my wife and I have stable employment here and there would be no point for us to go anywhere else' (Focus group with Tan Bien Rubber workers, 2016). However, such workers with stable employment at the company represent a minority. The large majority have deeply suffered from the crop busts linked to the declining price of rubber. As the company representative explained, 'The price of rubber has gone down so much, we just cannot afford (or need) any more workers' (Interview, plantation manager of Tan Bien Rubber, 2016).

The vulnerability of the landless migrant workers is compounded by the amount of debt they possess. As a result, their ability to migrate has diminished considerably and many remain involuntarily immobile within the concessions: 'I really want to go to Thailand or Malaysia, but I have no money to go there...I'm not happy with the livelihood, but I have no choice. I have no land back home. My husband left...This year everyone that has a house or land at home left. But all those that don't are still stuck here. The problem is that we do not have a permanent job, but we owe a lot of money to the moneylender' (Focus group, Tan Bien Rubber workers, 2016).

Family Farms for Locals and Migrants

In general terms, local villagers preferred to work on the plantations of ‘the rich’ rather than in the rubber concession, as these tend to offer higher salaries and more stable employment. However, rich landowners admitted that they have a preference for migrant workers: ‘Our workers come from other districts in the same province... I pay them 4 USD/day. If I have urgent jobs, I pay 5 USD to the locals but, if not, I take migrants because I can pay them less...’ (Interview with a landowner, Kampong Thom, 2016). Migrants are also regarded as more compliant, because they have been removed from their social nets. The migrants working on these plantations are landless, vulnerable people whose only option is to accept harsh living conditions: ‘I came because my husband is sick and we had to sell all our land in order to cure him...We have been here for nearly 10 years and the land owner constructed a house for us inside the plantation. We work every day of the month (we have no weekend breaks) and we get paid 4 USD/day...All the workers around here are migrants...I want to leave and to have my own land, but I just can’t afford it...Most of the money we make is to pay back debts that we had before...’ (Migrant worker from Kampong Cham, working on a rich landowner’s plantation, 2016).

Figure 14: Home of a Migrant Worker on a Family Farm (right) and Inside Tan Bien Rubber (left and bottom)



Source: photos by author, 2016.

However, the situation within the cassava and rubber plantations of the middle-income and richer landowners following the crop busts is similar to those that the company has been experiencing. The recent fall in cassava prices has affected poor, middle and rich farmers alike: ‘The price of cassava last year was of 300 riel/kilo. This year its 150 riel/kilo because Vietnam buys it at a cheaper price’ (Interview, village chief, Song San village, 2016). One of the rich landowners explained that ‘The prices are going down because China and Vietnam have a conflict in the China sea and the cassava must be transported across Vietnam to reach them’. (Interview with rich landowner, Thmor Saleang village, 2016). In other words, the combination of the shifting market prices and inconsistent government policies, has caused the cassava boom to go bust: ‘Before the trucks would carry 40 tons, now the government officials don’t allow this and trucks can only carry 20 tons. So, the cassava buyer needs to pay a lot for gasoline. Its government policy that doesn’t make much sense’ (Interview with rich landowner, Thmor Saleang village, 2016). On top of

this, the drought that struck Cambodia in 2016 severely strained cassava production: ‘The droughts harm the cassava and the price of cassava keeps decreasing.... It’s very difficult for everyone, especially the land poor that depend almost exclusively on this crop for their livelihoods and there is less work on the plantations’ (Interview, farmer, Serey Mongkoul, 2016).

Increased Debt and Out-migration

Although moneylenders have long existed in the area, microcredit lenders have entered much more recently. Today, nearly all households in the area are indebted after borrowing from the Cambodia Micro-Finance Association (AMK). As one villager explained, ‘This is the first year that they (micro-credits) entered the area and families were happy at the start with the microcredit, but then the price of cassava was so bad that they couldn’t pay back to the micro-finance and had to leave’ (Interview, farmer, Serey Mongkoul, 2016). It is important to note, however, the differentiated social impacts of credit: whilst it allowed middle-income farmers and richer landowners to invest increasingly in cash crops, it pushed the poor and landless into increased debt. In other words, while land investors attribute their increased land holdings to the credit they received, the poorest attribute their dispossession to the debt accrued as a result of microcredit: ‘A lot of people with debts to the microfinance are selling and leaving...They don’t really have another choice’ (Interview, local land broker, Serey Mongkoul, 2016).

As a result of the loss of land to multiple actors and increased indebtedness in the village of Song Sang, today there are only 101 families remaining out of the 174 that were living there in 2014. The majority have migrated to Phnom Penh to work in the garment factories or within construction, while an increasing number are also making the move to Thailand and Malaysia. Data from Serey Mongkoul and Sein Serrei shows that while 607 families moved to the relocation site in 2007, only 310 remain today: ‘Nearly all households have migrants. Maybe 30% of

families had migrant members before and today more than 70% do. Only older people and the children stay here. Some women are here because they have small babies, but their husbands have already migrated' (Interview with community leader, Sein Serrei, 2015). However, due to poor working conditions abroad, some of these migrants have had to return home. One 25-year-old woman explained that she had been manipulated by a migrant broker to engage in trainings in order to be employed as a house worker, which – in the end – resulted in a job that was close to constituting bonded labour: 'My passport was paid by a Malaysian company and I had to pay back the company 130 USD per month out of 250 earnings. I got up at 5am and only had 5-minute breaks... Working hours from 5am to 1pm, a 5 minute break for coffee and bread and then from 1pm to 9pm. I did this for 2 years and 8 months. I would save up everything I could and after a year I was able to send 1,500 USD to my mother who was taking care of my children. But I left because I was so tired, so tired...I could not stay anymore... Now I work in cassava plantation and take care of my children, but my husband has had to leave to work in another province' (Interview, returned migrant from Malaysia, 2016).

Contradictory Justifications and Variegated Impacts

As indicated above, the area wherein the Tan Bien Rubber concession is located has been inhabited by people with very different backgrounds and socio-economic profiles. Those most adversely affected by the arrival of the concessions were the disabled, widows, and orphans that were deceived into believing that their claims for land within a Social Land Concession (SLC) would be recognised, which would enable them to finally access land and have a fresh start following years of warfare and loss. And although the mechanism of SLCs was indeed designed to redistribute land to the poorest segments of society, this case indicates that powerful elites have also used the mechanism to manipulate the most vulnerable to their advantage. The false promises to establish SLCs in the area attracted hundreds of migrant families searching for safe access to

land. However, and rather than uphold their claims to land, authorities have considered many of these people to be environmental criminals. In other words, not only were the promises of receiving land access unrecognised under law, but these migrants also lost everything they had when the claimant – in this case the company – was granted the land through for a rubber ELC. Many of those who relocated to the designated village continue to wait for access to farmland to support their livelihoods, while those that have been granted farmland have discovered that it often overlaps with that of previous occupants. Through this continuous chain of broken promises, these landless migrants have had few options, other than to work on other farms (in the event that such work is available), to borrow money from microcredit lending bodies, or to migrate in order to be able to pay back their debts. Those who were granted farmland continue to fear that the possibility of yet again losing it to business tycoons. For those people who did not lose their farmland (mostly the first comers to the area), the company's promises of employment have not materialised and the livelihoods of these people have worsened as a result of being unable to access forests upon which they previously relied on for their livelihoods.

Additionally, green justifications have been deployed – albeit inconsistently across scales and actors – to justify the expansion of rubber and to reclaim land from vulnerable populations. Although the discourse surrounding the green benefits of rubber have spread at the national level as a means to justify the expansion of rubber plantations, these rubber plantations come at the expense of the natural forests that they replace, which contain the most potent environmental benefits. Additionally, the Forest Administration, has been reclaiming land from villagers, often in order to further extract resources through cassava production. However, and although cassava production has been one of the few alternative livelihoods for small scale and landless farmers, their dependence on this cash crop has made farmers increasingly vulnerable to market fluctuations. At the time of my visit, the crash of both rubber and cassava prices was inducing strong effects on poor, middle-income and high-income

farmers alike – with those most vulnerable evidently suffering the highest consequences. It is within this context that forced out-migration has become the norm, rather than the exception.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that narrowly focusing the investigation on particular types of land grabs in order to understand their justifications and their impacts can only produce a partial understanding of the more complex and interrelated dynamics that are experienced on the ground. Not only do different ‘types’ of land grabs co-exist and overlap within the same landscapes (Hunsberger et al. 2016), serving to advertently or inadvertently (re)accommodate one another – as we have seen in all three cases analysed – but access to resources has been (re)shaped by overlapping, and often contradictory, environmental and migratory narratives and realities. In this scenario, attributing migration to a single land grab or one land grab to a single justification is not possible.

The evidence provided in this chapter shows that land grabs are not usually the result of one single justification or driver, but rather the complex consequence of multiple land use changes occurring concurrently where diverse narratives overlap and clash with one another. Moreover, the very same land grab might receive very different justifications depending on the actor and the scale involved. However, as political interests in managing population flows and environmental dilemmas increase, so does the strength of environmental and/or migratory narratives to justify particular resource grabs. However, just because certain land grabs they have been justified at the international and national scales by a particular green or migratory discourse, this does not mean that the discourses travel all the way down to the landscape level or materialise as such. In fact, the narratives often become lost in translation.

Land grabs must necessarily be accommodated within and between earlier cycles of national and local processes of extraction and protection. They do not replace earlier extractive and protective ventures complete-

ly, but rather build upon each other as layers that can only partly be separated (Escobar 1995). It is not only ‘flex crops’ (Borras, Franco, et al. 2016), such as sugar and biofuels that are on the rise, but ‘flex grabs’. Flex grabs can be defined as those that use flexible discursive frames to give one same intervention many different meanings depending on the purpose of the actors that use the narrative. Land grabs may be legitimised by environmental or migratory motives by some actors, while contested for environmental destruction and expulsion by others; they may have socio-environmental benefits at one scale but involve socio-environmental harms at another. For example, although rubber has been greened in Cambodia at the national scale in order to legitimise its spectacular rise – a justification that is contested at the international level – this has not translated at the company level – in other words, with the implementing subsidiary company, Kampong Thom Rubber, not vehiculating green discourses, even when the Vietnamese Rubber Group, of which it is a part, does. Moreover, although certain green discourses can and are used to legitimise land grabs, as for example was the case with biofuels in Senhuile, this does not mean that the company will follow through with the intended green aims that justified its existence in the first place. In both the cases of Senhuile and Koh Kong, we have seen how the placement of the company’s operations inside or contiguous to a protected area has actually facilitated their expansion.

As land grabs shift from one purpose to another they may lose or gain environmental and/or migratory justifications in the process. If we do not disaggregate interests at multiple scales, then we are forced to infer motivations from seemingly objective or external characteristics of the investments or investors themselves, such as that biofuel investments are presumed to be motivated by climate mitigation, state-led projects in the name of food security (Keene et al. 2015, 132), and/or migration control by security interests, etc. Additionally, the fact that many resource grabs overlap – and collaborate – with one another, makes isolating the justification and impacts of one from the other particularly arduous. This is the case, for example, in Koh Kong, where the location of

the concession next to a biodiversity hotspot has led to cooperation tactics between the protection aims of an environmental NGO with the extractive aims of the sugar concessions. Moreover, despite the green narratives they carry, all of the diverse land grabs studied here have had particularly dire environmental impacts at the local level.

The migratory patterns we are seeing today depend on a wide range of factors that include the cumulated vulnerabilities created by all of the overlaps that previous projects have created, the tenure arrangement in place, the employment opportunities in other sectors, as well as the broader economic and political situation of the country in which they are located and the labour demands of destination countries. In terms of migratory justifications given, although the argument of employment creation - and its linkages to preventing out-migration - has been strongly mobilised at the international and national scales, this has not tended to translate into a greater number of employment opportunities at the local level. Different waves of in-migration to the landscapes have all occurred in the midst of the search for land. Whilst not normally considered 'migrants', investors are in fact the migrants that most importantly define subsequent environmental and migratory impacts. Migration can have negative environmental impacts, but the strongest impacts do not come from the migrants that we often identify as migrants, but rather from the movements of a select few powerful actors.

Even if not all local people have lost all or part of their land as a result of diverse land grabs, as possibilities for the agricultural expansion of farmers and pastoralists diminish, and as people lose their previous access to forest resources and non-timber products, they too suffer a multifaceted 'package of losses' that has led to diverse forms of 'displacement in place' (Lubkemann 2008). Although not all of the populations have encountered 'enclosure' or 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2005), the penetration of corporate capital has had profound impacts on local livelihoods (Hall et al. 2015). This form of *in situ* displacement within an ever shrinking area has pushed the vast majority into 'semi-proletarianisation', thereby making them dependant on wage labour, on

labour migration, and/or on debt. Expulsion and displacement are not in fact solely about the loss of residential land. Land grabs displace people in place by displacing the possibilities for livelihoods that people had prior to the land grabs occurring. For example, the loss of access routes to water resources and grazing land that Senhuile has created, has forced pastoralists not only to travel longer distances, but also immobilised them due to the lack of opportunities and options for their future. In both Koh Kong and Kampong Thom, those who have not had their residential land taken away, have still experienced reduced freedom to move as their access to forests has become restrained, due to both conservation and rubber and sugar production. In other cases, people have also lost their residential land and been physically expelled. Although other options have been made available (such as a relocation site for those expelled in Koh Kong and Kampong Thom), the quality and quantity of the replacement land they have received has made their subsistence unsustainable.

Although 'inclusion' within the established concessions and plantations has occurred for some villagers, the outcomes of such inclusion for local people are highly dependent on the relative assets they maintained prior to their incorporation (Hall et al. 2015) as well as on the terms of such incorporation (McCarthy 2010). For example, those that have landholdings in Kampong Thom and Koh Kong sometimes work on plantations as an additional source of income. However, those that depend solely on wage labour to make ends meet find that the seasonality and conditions experienced on such plantations are insufficient for their livelihoods. Even for those migrants or villagers that were included within plantation work, crop busts that have occurred in all cases have ultimately led to high unemployment rates, leading gradually to the most iconic scenario of exclusion, which occurs when the 'land is needed but the labour is not' (Li 2011).

In fact, the people who lose land are often not the same people that gain employment (Li 2011). This is because there is a preference from employers to hire migrant workers given that many locals are involved in

direct conflicts with the companies and that migrants are more compliant due to their lack of social ties to support them. In a context of progressive loss of entitlements and employment opportunities, in Koh Kong and Kampong Thom villagers have become increasingly indebted and have had no other option than to sell their small landholdings and to move out of the area. In rural areas of the Global South, together with (legal and extra-legal) expropriations, indebtedness represents the third main mechanism of 'primitive accumulation' (Gerber 2014, 734). In Cambodia, micro-credit has grown exponentially since the mid-1990's and has made Cambodia one of the top five countries in the world in terms of microfinance borrowers as a percentage of the total population (Bylander 2014). In the case of Senhuile, the lack of materialisation of employment opportunities has translated into an increasing trend of out-migration.

Importantly, across all cases, it has been family farming – and not large-scale holdings – which have been able to provide the most stable employment opportunities and attract or retain migrants. Although the conditions and salaries in small-scale farms are not necessarily better than those found within the concessions, the stability of the employment, and the loyalty of family and small-scale farms towards their employees, makes them a more desirable option than working inside plantations. This coincides with findings from recent studies on rural development that have refuted the argument that pathways of development are decoupled from land and farming and that a beneficial access to land for the poor does play a complementary role in poverty reduction (Sunam and McCarthy 2015; Li 2009). Even if migration transition models (Zelinsky 1971) (largely based on modernisation theory (Rostow 1960)), hypothesised that as 'early transitional societies' (such as Senegal and Cambodia) – modernise, there will be mass movements of rural exodus as people move out of agriculture into industries and service sectors, these models are too simplistic in assuming that all societies will follow the same path as Western societies towards development. Although significant rural-urban migration flows have occurred in both

Senegal and Cambodia, they have coincided with limited industrialisation, high unemployment, and high poverty rates in urban areas (Goldsmith 2004; CRUMP and Ministry of Planning 2012). In this context, depriving people from a secure access to the farmland and forests on which they depend for their livelihoods has dire negative consequences for the most vulnerable and does not constitute a path towards environmental or social sustainability.

Notes

¹ In 2018, Senegal's minimum wage was of 209.10 CFA francs per hour, for general workers and 182.95CFA francs per hour for agricultural workers.

² Researchers, journalists, and activists have long been intimidated in this area. I myself was stopped and questioned by the police as to my reasons for being there.

³ Social Land Concessions (SLCs) were introduced as a policy mechanism in 2003 to distribute land to the landless and land poor. However, their implementation has been slow and has ignited further conflicts on many occasions (cf. LICADHO 2015).

⁴ Article 30 of the Land Law establishes that: 'Any person who, for no less than five years prior to the promulgation of this law, enjoyed peaceful, uncontested possession of immovable property that can lawfully be privately possessed, has the right to request a definitive title of ownership.' However, in this case, these people had not been living in the area for five years and their possession of the land was far from 'peaceful' or 'uncontested.'

⁵ They initially suggested bringing me to see first-hand the agricultural land and the surrounding situation, but decided not to for fear that something might happen to us.

⁶ Tycoons in Cambodia are business leaders that contribute money to the Cambodian People's Party (the ruling party). In return, they enjoy support from the Prime Minister for their business ventures.

6

Self-Fulfilling Risks

Introduction

As demonstrated through previous chapters, land grabs are reshaping the distribution of vital resources and creating scenarios of destruction and expulsion. While the cases analysed in this thesis are context specific to an extent, they can help us to understand broader geopolitical ecologies at the global scale. Instead of focusing on how the global inserts itself into the local via the national, this chapter turns this relationship on its head by examining how the local shapes the global via the national. This chapter seeks to understand the key security and adaption implications that the above-analysed land grabs have beyond the landscapes where they physically unfold. Rather than focussing solely on the actions of states and elites within them, *geopolitics from below* (Routledge 2015, 236) forces our attention on the contestations articulated by populations to the geopolitical policies enacted by states (in this case the diverse land grabs), and the discourses articulated by policy-makers (in this case the diverse security and adaptation discourses).

Analytically, in order to make linkages between local and global phenomena that may appear disconnected, this chapter makes use of Robert Merton's 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Merton 1968, 477)¹. In the context of this chapter, self-fulfilling prophecies become 'self-fulfilling risks' when these prophecies rest on false security and adaptation framings around the perceived risks of environmental change and migration, which then lead to interventions that can make both security risks and maladaptation a reality – far beyond the landscapes where the land grabs unfold. While

these self-fulfilling risks also take diverse shapes depending on the contexts in which the land grabs have unfolded and how people have been able to resist them, all of the local cases examined can reveal much about the global geopolitical ecologies that are shaping our future.

Through the case of Senhuile, the first part of the chapter shows how political reactions from below can potentially lead to the very security threats that justify large-scale land interventions to begin with. Through the case of Koh Kong Sugar plantation, the second part of the chapter illustrates how human rights violations in the name of environmental protection can change geopolitical balances, creating the very conditions which make our planet insecure. Finally, through the case of Kampong Thom, the chapter shows how attaching environmental criminality labels to certain migrants (the most vulnerable), but not to others (economic and political elites) can hamper global efforts to combat climate change and biodiversity conservation.

6.1 Weathering the ‘Perfect Storm’

At the global scale, the Sahel is often presented as the location of a perfect storm to unfold. Not only are poverty and population growth on the rise, but the impacts of environmental and climate changes are having disastrous consequences on fragile economies which lack strong governance systems. And if the situation was not already dire enough, terrorism has taken hold of the region, with those most vulnerable being the first targeted for recruitment by extremist groups. In the context of increased terrorist threats in the region, the Sahel has also become known as a ‘terrorist hotspot’ (Institute for Economics and Peace 2018). In line with environmental security narratives, many have also contended that Tuareg rebellions are the result of ‘environmental scarcity and the harsh conditions of an expanding Sahara desert’ (Kisangani 2012, 61). According to environmental security narratives, pastoralism has often been viewed as a contentious adaptation strategy due to the supposedly environmental and social problems it can create. Additionally, pastoral groups have been pictured as the targets of radicalization and extremism due to their pre-

existing vulnerabilities. In a global context where both environmental security considerations and terrorism threats are on the rise, unpacking the problematic assumptions between such causal explanations is of utmost importance. How we locate the problem, where we identify it originating from, and which responses we create to address it all have very strong repercussions. The case of Senhuile provides us with some important insights in this regard.

By studying the landscape where Senhuile is located, we have seen how the purported aim of providing energy and food has compromised the environmental security of the delta through the declassification of a natural Reserve that is home to a locally adaptive system of transhumant livelihoods. So called 'energy security' concerns have positioned environmental security ones at the margins. This has coincided with presenting land-intensive mitigation options, such as biofuels, as possible adaptive strategies to avoid presumed conflicts over scarce resources that such a scenario could engender. However, the acquisition of land by Senhuile has been unable to provide the adaptive energy and environmental security measures that the government and the company had claimed to be able to produce. Not only has a previously protected area been declassified for failed biofuel production, thereby transforming what was once a peaceful habitat for marginalised pastoral populations, but furthermore, large areas of land have been degraded as a result of the corporations' operations. The project has also failed to provide its employment targets, that were purportedly meant to decrease forced migration. The security and adaptation claims that the government and the company deployed have not met their own standards.

From Peaceful to Potentially Violent Resistance

The ongoing marginalisation of pastoralists, which has been taking place for decades, has led local communities to embark on a number of counter-movements against both the state and the company in order to claim their land back. When the project first appeared in the Ndiaël Reserve, those pastoralist populations that were the most impacted by the project organised themselves to protest the decision; they were received in April 2012 by the newly elected President, Macky Sall. In fact, his presidential campaign had been largely based on attacking previous large-scale land concessions that the former President's government (President Wade) had put in place, and which Sall had denounced. In order to appease mounting social tensions, the newly elected President cancelled the two decrees that had originally granted the Ndiaël Reserve to Senhuile. However, despite this commitment, by August of 2012 the President had already cancelled his two cancellation decrees and re-validated the decision of his predecessor to declassify the Reserve and grant 20,000 hectares to the company. As a result, and despite heavy social mobilisation, the company was authorised to occupy 20,000 hectares of land for a period of 50 years. Since then, populations have been mobilising for the right to continue to occupy the land that has been within their families for generations.

At first, protests and marches were sporadic and lacked organization. However, in 2014, two years after the arrival of the company, pastoralist populations organised themselves into a group of thirty-seven villages, called the *Collectif du Ndiaël*, to collectively join efforts in the protest against the company. As one member of the group stated, "They want to feed a company by erasing 32 villages...They want to kill us!...We will not stop until justice is made!" (Interview, Collectif du Ndiaël, Saint Louis, 2016). At the beginning, the strategies used by the *Collectif du Ndiaël* consisted of sabotaging the equipment of the company and confronting the workers of Senhuile. However, since these actions attracted police officers and did little to achieve their aims, they then devised a strategy to bring international attention to the case, with the support of interna-

tional NGOs. The opposition campaign to Senhuile is the campaign against land grabbing that has received the most support from civil society and media coverage within Senegal. The *Collectif*, has received the support of fifteen NGOs and civil society groups - including Wetlands International, CNCR, ActionAid, Congad, Enda Pronat, and Panos International as well as NGOs, such as GRAIN, Re:Common, and the Oakland Institute – that have all released reports condemning the project, and have also set up an online petition and met with the Italian owners of the company (Bartley 2019). As one member of the *Collectif du Ndiaël* explained, ‘Before we had a slogan: Senhuile = Ebola. We used it to raise awareness. We must always have a strategy of resistance’ (Interview, *Collectif du Ndiaël*, 2015). The *Collectif du Ndiaël* has also received strong support from the CRAFS (*Cadre de recherche de l’Action sur le Foncier au Senegal*) - the coalition of anti-land grab organisations that was set up in response to the rising number of land grabbing cases in Senegal.

Although the main target of their critique has long been the Senegalese state, targeting the company itself was useful in order to gain international attention. The ActionAid focal point for Senhuile stated that ‘It is more effective to go against the company than against the Government...We know that it is the state that is responsible for this, but it is still more effective to go against the company’ (Interview, ActionAid, Dakar, 2015). However, company representatives have had strong hesitations concerning the new roles and responsibilities that the communities and the state expect of them. As explained by one French expatriate worker for Senhuile,

‘It is not fair for us to be expected to bring social development to the area. The state makes it appear as if we should be in charge of the education and healthcare of these populations. Of course, there are things that we can do to help, but the main aim of a company is to make money and profit, not to take care of education and healthcare. That is the role of the state! The money we give to the state for rent and water usage should go to these communities...The state cannot

give up on these responsibilities just because we are here. That was not the plan!’ (Interview, Senhuile French worker, 2016).

Despite receiving support from a wide variety of actors within civil society as well as the national and international media attention that their campaign received, by 2015 the communities involved within the *Collectif du Ndiaël* were still far from achieving their ultimate aim of having the project cancelled and their livelihoods restored. As a result of an uphill battle against corporate and state interests, new modes of more violent resistance – or at least the threat of their use – were beginning to emerge: ‘If someone comes to mistreat us, and if I have the possibility to make the sky fall, I will do it – they will all die’ (Interview, Senegalese pastoralist, 2016). Considering the location of the Ndiaël Reserve along the Malian border and the well-established relationships between pastoralist groups on both sides of the Senegal River, an interest in Tuareg modes of resistance was sparked. As one pastoralist explained, ‘Yes, we are in contact with the Tuaregs in Mali... They also defend a cause. The most important is not the cause *per se*. But they are also mistreated in their own country and they want to rest. This is what unites us: the fight against the State’ (Interview, pastoralist, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2015).

The Tuaregs share many characteristics with the Peuls in the Senegal River Delta. They, too, depend on access to water and land for their livelihoods and on transhumance for adaptation to a harsh climate. Just as occurred in Senegal, the Tuaregs have become marginalised from the mainstream modernising agricultural development projects and by the arbitrary determination of national borders by colonial states (Alesbury 2013). As a pastoralist explained, ‘By continuously exhausting people, one day or the other they will turn against you. And when that day comes, they will use all the possible means to hurt you – whatever the price’ (Interview, pastoralist, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2016). Although it was impossible within the scope of this research to track down and verify the existence of such links and the intentions to use them, the fact that they were even alluded to already poses a number of important questions. As with environmental security more generally, narratives around environ-

mental security have sought to explain Tuareg rebellions in Mali as a result of desertification and resource scarcity. However, if we look closely at the political history of this part of the Sahel, the causes of marginalisation and conflict dynamics can be located – just as in Senegal – in the agricultural modernisation policies implemented after independence and which were based on the assumption that nomadic pastoralism was unproductive (Benjaminsen 2016, 110). In this view, Tuareg rebellions are the result of grievances from their political exclusion from development (Benjaminsen 2008).

Although studies have underlined that ‘ideology is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the development of jihadist insurgency’ (Ibrahim 2017, 9), ideology did not seem to be a necessary condition for its appeal in this case. As a pastoralist explained, ‘Religion has no place in all of this. The only thing that interests us is their experience in terms of combat...that is all...Every problem needs a solution.’ (Interview, Senegalese pastoralist, 2016). Aware of the role of terrorism as a security risk for the state as well as for the West and its population (including myself), the interlocutor highlighted that the aim behind establishing links with the Tuaregs, lie not in a counterinsurgency against company representatives but rather had the aim of creating a destabilised environment for the state that would then place the state in a position to fulfil their demands: ‘Our objective is not to chop the head of any foreigner or to hurt anyone. The essential thing is to know that the state is strong. It is so strong that we need to find a way to destabilize it. And we know that with this link, the state would be destabilized’ (Interview, pastoralist, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2016). Outwardly fatigued by interactions between the company and the state that have not resulted in an improved the situation or in land restitution, pastoralists claimed that, ‘The company needs to stop using the state as an intermediary. When there is no peace, there will never be work...They cannot continue to force us. One must always be careful with people that are angry... Until we obtain the truth, I will never stop until I’m dead or in prison’ (Interview, pastoralist, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2016). However, these local grievances can very well turn into

global grievances. The Peul's claims against the state and the company are articulated within broader struggles for social equality: 'There is no superiority between human beings. Human beings are all human beings. We must treat all with respect. How can we accept that some people have money in the bank and a nice life? And just next to them others are mistreated, dragged in the mud...Its unacceptable.' This is captured by a popular Peul expression that signifies when everything is upside down: 'Cows drink with their tail' (Interview, pastoralist, Reserve du Ndiaël, 2016).

Although the aim of large-scale agricultural ventures in the Delta was to provide socio-environmental security to an area dubbed as ground zero for climate change and conflict, the case of Senhuile shows that when these dominant framings translate onto the ground, they can actually perpetuate the very same risks that they were supposedly designed to redress. Conflict between farmers and pastoralists was not a reality to begin with in the area, but the project has now created conflicts between pastoralists and farmers and conflicts between local communities and the state itself. Moreover, an area that was seemingly sealed off to the terrorist insurgencies occurring in neighbouring countries, became a possible magnet to these insurgencies as a counter-movement strategy when more peaceful resistance tactics had failed. The insurgence of these threats results not from absolute or relative scarcities of land or water, but rather from the continued marginalisation of pastoralism, to the benefit of large-scale commercial farms that have failed to distribute their profits to local communities. Moreover, traditional modes of adaptation, such as pastoralism, are not associated with environmental degradation in the area. However, the company that was meant to contribute to mitigating climate change by producing biofuels has indeed damaged the protected area. For one, Senhuile cleared 1,000 hectares of land even though the company only ended up using 2,000 hectares. Moreover, the impacts of the company upon the nearby lake have affected a greater number of local people, given that 60% of the water from the lake is used within Dakar for drinking purposes. The impacts of the destruction

of wetland and biodiversity go well beyond the given landscape. Conflict has indeed been created, but its roots lie in other means and mechanisms than those typically exposed within environmental conflict narratives. It has not been climate change or migration per se that have led to migration or conflict, but rather those measures presented to purposely address climate change and migration, which have inadvertently created these very problems.

Responsible Agrobusiness for the Great Green Wall.

Another persistent idea amongst those supporting large private investment in agriculture as an adaptation mechanism, has been to highlight that the failures that have resulted in land grabbing are due to the misapplication of certain policies, and not from the policies themselves. However, it is not only in their misapplication, but in the actual assumptions that underline their design that the problem often lies. In order to appease social tensions while at the same time continue to promote private direct investment in agriculture, in 2014, the Senegalese government launched the Project for Inclusive and Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Senegal (PDIDAS), which has been financed by the World Bank (80 million USD) and by the Global Environment Fund (8 million USD). This project is part of the Great Green Wall Initiative that President Wade championed in 2007 and is the first project to receive substantial funds from the Sahel and West Africa Program that the World Bank created to support the Great Green Wall (World Bank 2013a). According to the World Bank, the aim of the PDIDAS project is to develop inclusive commercial agriculture and sustainable land management practices in projects areas while improving secure tenure (World Bank 2013b). It was also meant to support Senegal's Growth Strategy by accelerating a diversification of agricultural exports, an increase trade revenues, and a promotion of domestic and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the farming sector (World Bank 2013b).

At the time of my last round of fieldwork in Senegal, only certain consultations between the PDIDAS project and the populations had taken place in potential implementation sites, but the project was taking much longer than initially planned to materialise. This was reportedly because of the due diligence practices that were being carried out in order to avoid past mistakes (Interview, Ministry of Agriculture, 2016). When interviewed, the coordinator of the PDIDAS project reiterated that a key objective of the project was to create jobs to act as a deterrent for irregular migration. According to her, at least 9,500 jobs would be created by the project (Interview, PDIDAS Coordinator, Saint Louis, 2016). In order to avoid conflicts that had emerged when granting land leases of 99 years under the Wade Presidency, this project was intended to give 30 years leases to the rural community, who could then choose to sub-lease the land for an additional 30 years to investors. While these new rules are intended to safeguard the sovereignty of natural resources for the Senegalese, investors fear being forced off the land following their initial investments. As the owner of a small agrobusiness near Senhuile explained, 'With 30 years of leases and then sub-leases, communities will negotiate that they leave...If we had to renegotiate right now they would ask us to leave. Their objective is to hassle investors...In Senegal there is no such thing as land grabs' (Interview, Director General West Africa Farms, Saint Louis, 2015).

Small-scale farmers, however, underlined the need of government, rather than private investor support, in order for them to be able to farm: 'If the state could just come and do the necessary works so that we can access water (irrigation, etc.), it would be much better, but because we have nothing we have to do with what we get. It would be much better that the state did it and to have financial aid, much better. Farmers try to go to the banks but very few can actually get loans or anything...' (Interview, school teacher, Ngnith, 2015). In fact, the bidding process behind the project was perceived as having skewed any possibilities of poor farmers having land access: 'The World Bank should fund farmers, not

agrobusiness! (...) With these programs it is normally foreigners that win the bids' (Interview, journalist Dakar, 2014).

The populations that had been directly impacted by Senhuile in the pilot operation that took place in Ngnith had received certain benefits. According to the PDIDAS website in Senegal, it has financed five economic interest groups of which two were for women (PDIDAS 2018). However, beyond certain sporadic initiatives, and as the project comes to an end, the final results published by the World Bank are less than satisfactory; none of the targets have reached even 50% of their intended impacts. For example, in terms of employment creation, which was one of the project's main aims, only 7,597 jobs have been created on small and medium farms out of a target of 20,000, while zero jobs on large farms have been created out of a target of 3,000. With regards to improving land security, 35 plots have been secured, which is far below the target of 15,000 plots; zero plots have been secured through a tripartite agreement between local authorities and investors despite an initial target of 4,500 plots.² However, the system of rural cadastres that it established is now inspiring the long awaited tenure reform.

On the basis of lessons learned, the World Bank is now involved in supporting the implementation of a new tenure policy in Senegal that proposes a revision of the 'legal framework to eventually make it possible to consider usage rights as real rights as soon as the conditions necessary to validate the property are met' (Teyssier 2019). A new tenure reform is on the agenda for the period 2019-2023 within the *Plan Senegal Emergent*, the policy framework of Macky Sall's government. The aim of this plan is to adopt a regulation that is in line with the realities experienced by the Senegalese rural communities, and to prevent land grabs. The Senegalese government hopes to achieve this through the gradual transformation of rights of occupation into possession rights, investing in services for land planning, and by finding a balance between the power of rural communities and the power of the state for land allocation. The objective is to regain social cohesion and create an environment which accommodates family farmers and agribusiness. The document in

itself acknowledges previous difficulties in creating this balance, but the results will remain to be seen (Gouvernement Republique du Senegal 2014). With regards to Senhuile, in 2018 the company abandoned the area due to both financial losses and the social resistance present. However, it is important to underline that ‘failed land deals are not failed land grabs’ (GRAIN 2018). This is because the land often does not go back to the populations who were dispossessed of it. In the case of Senhuile, some of the land has been redistributed to the local communities, but a substantial amount has apparently been granted to a Dutch company.³ (Personal communication, Ngith, 2018).

Mitigating Environmental Insecurities

As documented above, narratives around the Sahel build on those of the environmental security school that seek to explain the rise in conflict in the Sahel region by attributing it to environmental degradation, population pressure, and resource scarcities that push people into movement and into conflict over scarce resources (Homer-Dixon 1994; Myers 2002). Although the Sahel has come to be known as a ‘terrorist hotspot’, Senegal has continued to remain surprisingly shielded from these threats (Institute for Economics and Peace 2018). Yet the continued marginalisation of pastoralist populations linked to other socio-economic grievances is increasing the potential for traditionally understood national security threats to arise from environmental struggles, but not through the causal explanatory mechanisms that are often put forth. Instead, interventions that amplify rather than address inequalities have the potential to easily threaten national security at the international levels. The case of Senegal in general, and of Senhuile in particular, puts into question narratives that assume that a simultaneous support for both small-scale farmers and large-scale investors is straightforward. Without extensive government support, the expectation that private corporations – which are profit-seeking per definition – will meet the basic needs of local impoverished populations, remains unjustified. However, vilifying certain companies, risks obscuring the state-capital interactions that shape the

broader picture. Although corporations should certainly comply with their legal obligations and need to be held accountable, they cannot be expected to take the role of development agencies or the state in providing basic social services. In this context, the flow of aid and development interventions should support those most in need and capable of ensuring that resources are sustainably used, rather than to those who most ‘productively’ use them for economic profit.

6.2 Fortress Conservation and Blood Sugar

The Cardamom mountains – one of the richest biodiversity hotspots in Southeast Asia – adjacent the Koh Kong Sugar concessions, have been the target of numerous economic and environmental interventions that, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, have not benefitted the environment or local populations. The type of conservation on which the protection of the mountains has been justified is based on the assumption that local people are environmentally destructive and must be phased out, if the forests and other living species are to be protected. The concept of biodiversity hotspots has been used to assist planners in prioritising areas for environmental funding (Fisher and Christopher 2007; Marchese 2015). Environmental NGOs, donors, and foundations have been quickly seduced by the simplicity of the notion of conservation hotspots and the significant financial resources that came with them.⁴

Biodiversity hotspots are based uniquely on the presence of species, and not on the ‘presence of populations or other taxa’ (Myers et al. 2000b, 853). This idea - the underlying assumption of which is that ‘human population size, growth, density and migration are the underlying causes of biodiversity loss’ (Population Action International 2012) - has had a long history of prominence in the environmental security literature. Developed countries now perceive climate change and biodiversity conservation as global threats whose tackling can be outsourced to faraway

sites, through the protection of the remaining forests and wildlife (Kelly and Ybarra 2016). These areas, which are supposedly susceptible to the threats of slash and burn and/or destructive peasant lifestyles, must be protected to meet the global challenges of ensuring environmental security. These areas allow conservationists and governments to decide which land-uses are acceptable and which land uses are not.

Resisting Conservation and Mitigation

As we have seen through the case of conservation in the Cardamom mountains, the vision of land sparing over land sharing has been the norm. In the process, people who depend on forests for their livelihoods have been expelled to protect nature while contiguous areas have been spared for economic development. Yet, the security concerns of local communities in terms of food security and human security have not been met. Given that conservation NGO officials tend to regard land tenure issues as being ‘too political’ (Chapin 2004), Wildlife Alliance did not get involved in delimiting the populations’ rights to the resources that they were funded to protect: ‘We are powerful, we are doing law enforcement, but we don’t do research. We don’t do survey or research or study...We are concerned with the elephants, not with human rights...’ (Interview with Wildlife Alliance representative, Phnom Penh, 2016). In the absence of greater collaboration between such NGOs and the government, we are instead seeing actions such as the increased fining and criminalisation of small loggers rather than that of powerful loggers. As stated by one villager, ‘the small fish are caught and the big fish are let free’ (Interview, farmer, Koh Kong, 2015).

Although 3,121 ‘offenders’ have been arrested and jailed since 2002, those most responsible have been let free (Interview, Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Penh, 2016). For example, the commune chief, took advantage of the situation by issuing fake land certificates to populations that agreed to pay him around 1000 USD/hectare. Hence, these people acquired land certificates that perhaps made them feel safer, but which

were illegal and provided a false sense of security. With the collaboration of WildAid, the commune chief was taken to court, convicted, and thereafter released without a prison sentence or even a fine, at the request of the government (Interview, Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Penh, 2016). In other words, the government penalises through law people that clear small areas of land, but those who clear thousands of hectares remain in impunity. As the NGO admits, ‘we shoot the messenger, but there is not much that can be done to track down and convict the powerful’ (Interview, Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Penh, 2016). The people that suffered expulsions despite holding a land certificate, not only lost the money they had given the government to obtain the land certificate (around 1000 USD/hectare), but they also lost the land that they had acquired. Despite their non-political stance and their environment-first approach, the NGO Wildlife Alliance is facing ethical dilemmas, according to leaks from internal reports: ‘...I don’t know if we really violate human rights, but for sure, sending complete families on roads, burning their houses with their belongings isn’t really fair’ (Finch and O’Toole 2011).

In an effort to clean its image, the Koh Kong Sugar company has sought to build an alliance with Wildlife Alliance. Given their mutual vicinity, and the overlap of their respective operations, both the company and the environmental NGO have strategic interests in collaborating. On the one hand, the conservation NGO needs to access key routes situated within the company’s boundaries in order to stop poachers and loggers (Interview with Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Penh, 2016). On the other hand, the company would benefit from the possibility of greening its image through its association with the NGO. In fact, at a hearing of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, the company explicitly claimed that it was going ‘to preserve watershed areas and large trees and to maintain forest areas within the land concession to ensure fertility into the future’ (NHRC 2015, 15 via Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2016). While the environmental NGO has indeed been pushing for the company to protect the remaining forested areas within the com-

pany's boundaries, it admits that the promises have remained largely rhetorical (Interview, Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Penh, 2016).

Despite the widespread proven human rights violations perpetrated by multiple actors in the area, Wildlife Alliance and the Cambodian Ministry of Environment signed an agreement to develop and implement Cambodia's largest REDD+ program in the Southern Cardamom National Park and Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary – just to the north of where the ELCs are located. The goal of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is to contribute to climate change mitigation actions by attaching monetary value to remaining forests through carbon credits. Given that the Cardamom Rainforest is one of the most biodiverse in Southeast Asia, authorities claim that through this mechanism the forest will be worth more left intact. According to the Minister of Environment, Sat Samal, 'REDD+ in the Cardamom landscape will be the third effort in establishing sustainable financing support for the protection and conservation of forests in Cambodia. It proves that Cambodia is ready for performance-based payment in climate change mitigation framework.' (Wildlife Alliance 2017). The Regional Director of Asia for Wildlife Works commented that the project has the potential to 'position Cambodia as a global leader in REDD+' (Wildlife Alliance 2017). Given its location in the midst of compelling human rights abuses, it is legitimate to ask who is benefitting from these carbon credits and at what cost.

From Bottom-Up Protests to Wider Geopolitical Imbalances

The communities of Chikor Leu commune have been mobilising against the sugar company and the government since 2006. They have used various tactics that range from peaceful protest, petitions, and filing complaints to the provincial and international courts. However, their protests at the local and national levels have encountered severe repression by armed security guards which even resulted in shootings, injuries and assaults. In late 2006, after another violent confrontation, 48 families were

persuaded to accept miniscule cash compensation of between 50-150 USD, which is below the land market value. These families accepted the offer because they were told that their choice was to either accept the cash or the government would confiscate the land anyway without giving compensation as they had no legal rights to it and it belonged to the state (Young 2019). As community members explained, 'People accepted because they were scared. They did not think they had any other choice than to accept this' (Focus group, Koh Kong, 2016).

The community leader states that he along with several other of the most vocal and resistant community members have suffered death threats to themselves and their families if they did not bring an end to the complaints: 'They try to intimidate so much... I know any day that I might walk out and be killed. That's the reality of the situation...It is very dangerous here and you should be careful' (Interview, community representative, Koh Kong, 2016). One community activist has already been killed and there has not yet been any investigation into their death. The fact that the concession is a joint operation that involves not only a Thai investor but also a ruling party senator, Ly Yong Phat, has made the possibilities of resistance against the state especially dangerous. According to the International Labour Organization, in a political context such as that of Cambodia, and especially in cases where high level politicians are involved, 'The buyers are the only instrument to change things.' (Interview, ILO, Phnom Penh, 2016).

The communities have received support from various NGOs including Equitable Cambodia, the Community Legal Education Centre, Inclusive Development International, and Hands off the Land Alliance with many more signing multiple appeals to diverse bodies to appeal for justice for these communities. A particularly strong campaign entitled 'the clean sugar campaign', began in 2011. This campaign consists of 'a coalition of affected communities and non-governmental organizations working to stop human rights abuses and environmental damage caused by the Cambodian sugar industry; Bring about a just resolution for the individuals and communities who have been harmed by the industry; and

ensure that the agricultural development and trade policies benefit small-holder farmers and local communities' (Clean Sugar Campaign n.d.). The campaign not only works on behalf of those affected in Koh Kong, but also for those who have been impacted by sugar concessions in the provinces of Oddar Manchey and Kampong Speu. The member organizations include a wide variety of national and international NGOs as well as research centres, including Equitable Cambodia, FIAN Germany, Inclusive Development International, LICADHO, ActionAid and the Transnational Institute. Together with the local communities, this campaign has managed to give the case strong international visibility, leading to some consequences for companies involved in land grabs. Several press articles and petitions were filed against the UK-based sugar company, Tate & Lyle, which purchased its sugar from the concessions examined in this thesis, and community complaints and petitions were also raised before the European Union. In 2011, a Swedish European parliamentarian, Cecilia Wikstrom, condemned Cambodian blood sugar for human rights abuses arguing that the EU should withdraw its trade preferences to the country (Deutsche Welle 2011).

Tate & Lyle sugar company is one of the two founding members of Bonsucro, which is a corporate-led self-regulation mechanism that promotes 'responsible' investment (Franco, Park, and Herre 2017, 342). The Bonsucro standards contain six core principles: 1) obey the law and respect human rights and labour standards; 2) manage input; 3) be efficient with production and processing to enhance sustainability; 4) actively manage biodiversity and ecosystem services; 5) continuously improve key areas for business. In addition to these five principles, the EU has added a sixth: to monitor GHG emissions and biodiversity conservation, and to value land with high carbon stock (Ackrill and Kay 2011, 559). In March 2013, 200 villagers filed a complaint in England against Tate & Lyle and T&L Sugars Limited (a subsidiary of American Sugar Refining) arguing that since they remain the legal owners of the land, they should receive not only their land back but also a portion of the profits of the crops grown on it (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2016).

After multiple pressures and allegations, in 2014, the EU agreed to investigate the Cambodian sugar industry (Hodal 2014). Another main channel through which to appeal for justice has been through the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand. In fact, before the sugar from these plantations reach Europe, the sugar is exported from Cambodia to Thailand where it is refined and then sold to the UK company Tate & Lyle, incentivised by the EU's Everything But Arms Initiative (EBA). In May 2010, with the assistance of a number of NGOs, filed a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand against the human rights impacts that Thai sugar suppliers were generating in Cambodia (Young 2019). At the time of my last visit in 2016, the EU delegation had conducted an investigation on the ground, but the communities were still awaiting final resolutions.

In 2014, a legal claim was filed before the International Criminal Court (ICC) based in The Hague against powerful members of Cambodian society (referred to as the 'ruling elite'), including representatives of the Cambodian government, security forces and government-connected businesses (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2016). The claim alleged that since 2000, 770,000 people, or 6% of Cambodia's population, have been affected by land grabbing, including the forcible displacement of 145,000 people from the capital, Phnom Penh (Arsenault 2017). In an unprecedented move in 2016, the ICC widened its remit to include cases of land grabbing, stating that: 'The Office (of the Prosecutor) will seek to cooperate and provide assistance to States, upon request, with respect to conduct which constitutes a serious crime under national law, such as the illegal exploitation of natural resources, arms trafficking, human trafficking, terrorism, financial crimes, land grabbing or the destruction of the environment' (ICC 2016, art. 7). The impacts of crimes will 'be assessed in light of, *inter alia*, the increased vulnerability of victims, the terror subsequently instilled, or the social, economic, or environmental damage inflicted on the affected communities. In this context, the office will give particular consideration to prosecuting Rome statute crimes that are committed by means of, or that result in, *inter alia*, the

destruction of the environment, the illegal exploitation of natural resources or the illegal dispossession of land.’ (ICC 2016, art. 15)

Although the decision did not indicate which land grabs in Cambodia would be considered for investigation, several NGO sources working on the Koh Kong case believe that Koh Kong is a serious contender. According to Cambodian government officials, the complaints to the ICC were filed by the opposition party: ‘They are just trying to make our government look bad. They invented fake numbers of people being affected by land grabbing and eviction’ (Arsenault 2016). The ICC has not to date released any information concerning investigations that are ongoing nor any results. If this case proceeds, it will set an exceptional precedent, that would enable companies and states involved in such land grabs, human rights, and environmental crimes to be prosecuted at the same level as those suspected for crimes of genocide (or other serious crimes).

Changing Geopolitical Balances

Although the inclusion of land grabs as a crime against humanity might hypothetically become an unprecedented move, the political situation of Cambodia has in the meantime spiralled into increasing authoritarian tendencies. In 2017, Cambodia’s Supreme Court dissolved the main opposition party (the Cambodia National Rescue Party-CNCR) under allegations that it was preparing a coup to overthrow the government. Hence, Hun Sen was left unchallenged and without an electoral competitor for the 2018 national elections (BBC 2017). According to those working within the government, in 2016, the ruling party conducted a poll across the country to better understand people’s voting intentions. Given that the result showed a favourable rise of interest in the CNCR at the expense of the ruling party, Hun Sen made the decision to imprison his main opponent under false accusations. The run up to the general elections was also characterised by the increasing intimidation of activists and NGOs.⁵

As a consequence of Cambodia imprisoning its main opposition leader and thereafter dissolving the opposition party, the US and EU withdrew their funding for the 2018 national election. In January 2019, the EU initiated a process to temporarily suspend trade preferences with Cambodia as a result of its failure to respect human rights (European Commission 2019). In response, Hun Sen declared that Cambodia would continue to flourish even without the EBA:

‘I have nothing to be afraid of in talking about this. Who is doing the monitoring? I have already said that if they give us preferential access, it won’t make us rich. If they withdraw it from us, it won’t make us dead... Look, when our economy is dependent on others, our independence is limited. We are not brave enough to talk to those who give us aid because we are afraid that they will cut that aid... But when we are independent, having enough to eat, we don’t depend on them and have an equal voice and rights, but not to control others. It is a voice a family needs, and an independent sovereign state needs this too.’ (Chheng 2019).

Hun Sen’s lack of fear to diminished trade with the EU is largely attributable to the increased amount of loans and aid that Cambodia has been receiving from China in recent years. Ever since the financial crisis, the disbursement of bilateral loans from China to Cambodia has grown spectacularly. As multilateral aid declined, Cambodia’s relationship with China continuously strengthened. China is now Cambodia’s largest bilateral creditor contributing to approximately 70% of the country’s total bilateral debt stock (FMI 2017). The increased presence of China in Cambodia has led observers to qualify the phenomenon as the ‘Chinazation of Cambodia’ (Kenki 2017). As with many other countries, China’s interests in Cambodia grew in the context of the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative (OBOR), launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013. While aid received from OECD countries tends to be linked to a number of political preconditions around improving human rights and civil liberties as well as enhancing accountability and transparency, China’s aid flow is not correlated to such preconditions. The extensive financial capacities of

China linked to their ‘no strings attached’ policies of aid and investment and relatively lower standards of environmental and social protection, have made relationships with China very attractive to many authoritarian regimes around the world (Wang and Zadek 2016; Vigil 2018).

Given that the OBOR initiatives involve deviating from the ‘harsh requirements’ and interference in the ‘internal affairs and sovereignty of applicant countries’ that characterise the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Sidaway and Woon 2017, 6), it is not surprising that autocratic regimes would leap at the potential economic opportunities that China brings (Vigil 2018a). While the exact amount of aid received from China is difficult to assess, according to the Ministry of Finance, Cambodia now owes China more than 4 billion USD. This represents about two-fifths of Cambodia’s outstanding debt and the figure is significantly higher than the combined multilateral debt owed to institutions such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Analysts warn that this growing reliance on China could influence the country’s policy priorities. Indeed, when the EU announced the possibility of suspending trade preferences for Cambodia, China was quick to announce that it would support Cambodia in the event that the EBA policy would be removed, thereby diluting the incentives for democratic reforms demanded by the West (VOA 2018).

According to well-informed Cambodians, the government will still attempt to grant some concessions for products that might be sold under the EBA policy, lest the EBA remains active (which is a possibility due to the impacts that voiding it would have on the garment industry in particular). As a result of these pressures, the Cambodian government has aimed to roll-back land grabs, but observers claim that, ‘There is no way that Hun Sen will release the opposition leader...He will try to make reforms in other areas, but losing power is not going to be part of the package. If he can retain the EBA through some concessions in terms of land rights, then he will. If releasing the opposition leader remains the prerequisite, he will not do it even if the trade preferences are removed...The backing of China has strongly consolidated him...’ (Per-

sonal communication, government official, 2019). This aligns with what one representative from the International Labour Organization already stated back in 2016: ‘The Government depends totally on China and China doesn’t care (about human rights violations linked to land grabs). They don’t care if the International Community will not give them any more money. They get it from China...’ (Interview, ILO, Phnom Penh, 2016).

However, – as stated above - given that thousands of workers depend on a garment industry that remains extremely dependent on trade with the EU, the consequences of suspending the EBA are likely to come at a big price for Cambodians. In a recent statement of response to United Nations, Cambodia used its right to reply in response to state that: ‘the EU, UK, French and Australian delegates who fallaciously alleged that the application of law in Cambodia has shrunk the space for freedom of expression to the United Nations stating that we also need aid and assistance including the EBA scheme (Everything But Arms) for which we really value and for which we appeal. But like other States, Cambodia’s sovereignty cannot be compromised when it comes to aid and assistance. Aid could not be taken as a hostage at the expense of sovereignty’ (Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the UN, 2019).

Questioning Land Sparing versus Land Sharing

The case of conservation in the Cardamom mountains adjacent to the exploitation of land for sugar (within two concessions) shows the contradictions and limitations of having environmental protection and economic growth as separate from social considerations. In terms of environmental measures, this case underlines the importance of two key matters. First, protecting biodiversity while excluding local people from being able to sustainably use and access resources and militarising conservation in coordination with governments that do not uphold human rights obligations, has devastating impacts. ‘Saving the elephants without worrying for human rights’, is a worrying strategy to consider for NGOs

that are funded internationally and that must - with due diligence - observe the social impacts of their actions. In these instances, supporting grassroots organisations that can articulate their claims from the bottom-up through local NGO support, for example, has been more useful.

Land degradation in local areas is often the result of social, political and economic processes in other parts of the world that, for example, increase the global demand for food and biofuels, thereby leading to local impacts such as the expansion of sugar cane concessions in Cambodia. The prices of internationally traded commodities, such as sugar for biofuel production, do not reflect the social and human externalities associated with their production and distribution. Despite fortress conservation measures, such as those in the Cardamom mountains, the products exported by Cambodia are among the ten top with respect to their adverse biodiversity impacts (IPBES 2018). Given that the Cardamom mountains lie just a few meters away from two Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) for sugar, the limitations of the land sparing versus land sharing debate need to be clearly acknowledged.

6.3 Reframing Environmental Criminality

At both the local and global scales, protecting forests is of key importance to mitigating climate change. In fact, deforestation is one of the major reasons of both climate change and major biodiversity loss. However, who carries out this deforestation, which trees are defined as being deforested, as well as who gets criminalised versus given responsibilities over protecting forests and keeping vital ecosystems alive, matters. As we have seen, the expansion of rubber concessions in Cambodia has been carried out since colonialism for economic purposes. However, in recent times and with the weight of donor-driven environmental conditionality enacted upon countries where trees remain, rubber concessions

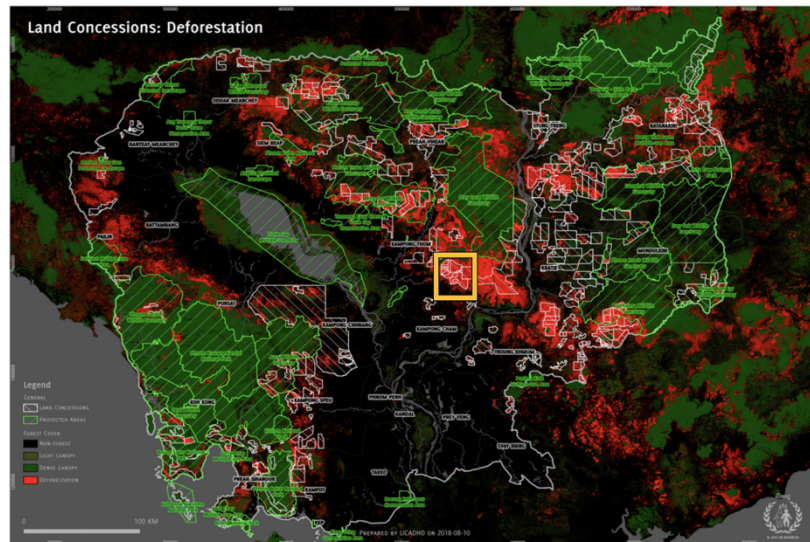
have been re-defined as comprising green intentions, at least at the domestic political level. Moreover, the expansion of large-scale rubber concessions has been justified by their capacity to create employment. However, as the case of Kampong Thom has demonstrated, the expansion of rubber to satisfy the international market demands has come at a massive socio-environmental cost, of which both expulsion and destruction have played a prominent role. In the case of Tan Bien Rubber, the resistance strategies applied by the families who were expelled (due to having no legitimate claims to the land following misleading false promises of Social Land Concessions), have had limited success and have received only sporadic support from NGOs and international attention.

Who Are the Environmental Criminals?

Migration has often been presented as a security threat not only for its potentialities to produce conflicts over resources, but also for creating environmental destruction by increasing population pressures in receiving areas. The migrants that came to Kampong Thom in the hopes of receiving a portion of a land concession have been framed as environmental criminals: 'They migrate because they are greedy! People from Kampong Cham people had already land; they never had enough! They are criminals! They come and say they want the land- they are criminals! How can they do that!...We say illegal, not criminals. If they do harm to environment, then it becomes criminal.' (Interview, Ministry of Land Management, Phnom Penh, 2016). In this case, migrants are not only criminalised for believing the widely-touted promises that the instrument of Social Land Concessions would benefit hundreds of landless people around the country, but moreover, they are also presented as potential environmental security threats. In fact, the transition from illegality to criminality is justified by the need to protect the environment from migrants who are supposedly destroying it, to thereafter grant the same land for rubber expansion to other migrants (Vietnamese in this case), who in fact contribute a great deal to deforestation.

Although the interviewed populations did not complain of any specific environmental impacts that the company has had upon their lives, it is within the ELC that the most deforestation has taken place. Today, as the map below shows, the extreme deforestation that has occurred has happened within concession areas. Prior to the arrival of ELC's to the area, the clearance of forested land was carried out by the first settlers and, what the government now labels as, 'illegal' settlers. However, as interviewees explained, 'There was plenty of forest remaining before the concessions arrived...It was the companies that cleared most of it....We simply were not numerous enough or had enough means to do this...Companies with bulldozers can easily strip clear the land, for us it's much more complicated and we also depended on the forest for non-timber product so we need the forest to remain.' (Focus group, Thmor Saleang, 2015). Driving throughout the area showed that any deforestation outside of the concession areas belongs to rich Cambodian tycoons or to middle-income and richer farmers that have grabbed or purchased the land from previous settlers. In other words, although poor farmers had previously participated in clearing that land, it has been since grabbed by rich and middle-income investors for profit and by the Forest Administration for supposedly conservation purposes.

Map 12: Deforestation Within ELCs (Tan Bien Rubber in yellow)



Source: LICADHO

At the national level, the expansion of rubber plantations has not only produced dire human rights violations, which have been documented in a report entitled *Global Barons* (Global Witness 2013), but moreover, it is the conversion of land for rubber production that has been the most dominant form of forest change in Cambodia (responsible for 42% of forest loss between 2000 and 2012) (Grogan et al. 2015). Despite the mainstream narrative that continues to blame deforestation on ‘illegal’ settlers, ELC’s are by far the main driver of deforestation in Cambodia. By 2015, 80% of land concessions had been allocated in production forests or protected areas that remained under forest cover as late as 2010 (Forest Trends 2015). In 2013, the ELCs covered 2.6 million hectares, which was almost four times the amount it was in 2004 and more than 60% of the total arable land in the country (Oldenburg and Neef 2014). In the period from 2001 to 2014 Cambodia experienced the fastest deforestation rate in the world (Hansen et al. 2013) and by 2013, virtually all forest clearance was associated with ELCs (Davis et al. 2015). The

role of global demand in driving forest change is substantial and accelerating through FDI and large-scale land acquisitions (Ingalls et al. 2018).

The drivers and actors of deforestation and forest degradation have thus completely shifted from small-scale landholders to large-scale agricultural clearances for global markets (Forest Trends 2015). As an official at the Ministry of Environment explained, ‘They say the people and migrants do it (the deforestation). But that’s not true... High officials with power and money hire them to do it and blame the smallholders...It’s these people that clear forests for them. Deforestation comes from ELCs in reality. When populations do illegal logging it’s very often for local leaders and authorities’ (Interview, Ministry of Environment, Phnom Penh, 2016). In a similar vein, a UN official highlighted that: ‘They blame migrants, but these things are just incomparable to one another. Migration is a tiny factor driving deforestation. Logging towards Vietnam has been huge with a very big increase between 2013 and 2015...Deforestation is such a big game. The money is too big. Forest is like a gold mine. Black wood with good smell. They sell the wood to China...Ordinary migrants go there and try to get hold of land. But it is not them that create deforestation. Some big landowners hire them to cut trees for them and then these big guys sell the log...The small guys are being paid to be the face of illegal logging.’ (Interview, UN agency, Phnom Penh, 2016).

It is also important to point out that the area on top of the map above in green is an area of intervention of the Tumring REDD+ project located at the edge of the Prey Land Forest (cf. Work 2017). Although a careful formulation of REDD+, which considers the value of natural forests beyond carbon, has the potential to reduce natural forest conversion to rubber for immediate gains, it is uncertain whether these projects will succeed when market prices for rubber increase (Ahrends et al. 2015). As studies have shown, the incompatibility between increasingly internationalised resource flows for commodities such as rubber and sugar, and the disconnected application of REDD+, represents a substantial and structural limitation to the real possibilities that

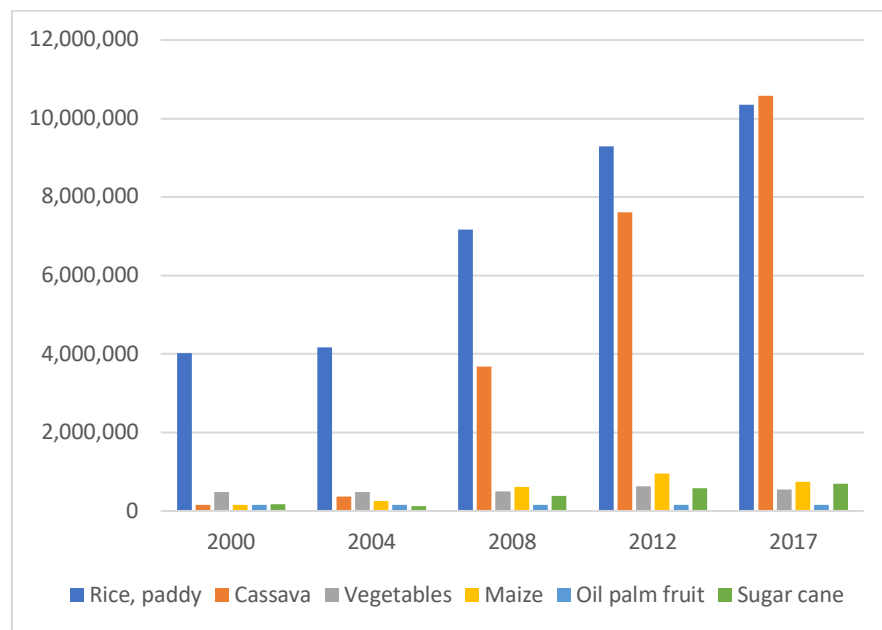
these schemes can have both locally and globally (Ingalls et al. 2018). As it stands, given the ongoing destruction happening just a few kilometers away from where a REDD+ project is taking place, it is important to ask exactly which degradation that such climate mitigation interventions are offsetting, at what cost, and who should be reaping the benefits. Moreover, although the sub-decree on Economic Land Concessions of 2005 stipulated that ELCs must include Social and Environmental Impact Assessments, it gave concessionaries the right to clear concession land (including any forested area within the concessions). ELCs situated next to conservation areas are particularly lucrative because the ‘protected’ timber can be secretly trafficked via the concession’s logging permit (Milne 2015, 217).

Environmental and climate regulations have done little in a country where the cycle of extracting natural resources, has continued to serve as the primary mechanism to gain and maintain control. As one UN official put it, ‘Climate change is just another source of money for policy makers here. It’s donor language. The government is quite smart and just plays along to get money. It’s a donor driven game...’ (Interview, UN Agency, Phnom Penh 2016). This is similar to what the Minister of Environment stated himself in that, ‘We have been able to make being ‘green’, being environmentally aware, we were able to make that sexy and a fashion here in our society, and I think that’s the biggest achievement’ (Minister of Environment (MOE) quoted in Parkhouse 2017)

Adapting to the Market

Although rubber and sugar are the most widely grown crops within ELCs in Cambodia, outside of the ELCs there are also other prominent crops that dominate the landscapes. In fact, if we compare the amount and types of crops that have been predominant in Cambodia since the year 2000, we can see not only an important rise in the amount of rice produced, but also a spectacular rise in the amount of cassava produced, which even surpassed rice production in 2017.

Figure 15: Production of the Top Five Commodities in Cambodia (tonnes)



Source: FAOSTAT

This spectacular expansion of cassava can be partly explained as a result of growing demands for ethanol production worldwide. Cassava is exported widely to Vietnam, Thailand and especially to China as an alternative source of fuel. As one official at the Ministry of Environment explained, 'In China they are producing a lot of ethanol...It's to clean the environment. In China the big problem is pollution. They need to clean the air. Cassava can help the climate...China cannot produce cassava (only very little). It is more expensive if they do it themselves because it needs a lot of labour and fertilizers. Labour in Thailand (is) now not so cheap, so they come to buy it in Cambodia...' (Interview, Ministry of Environment, Phnom Penh, 2016). Moreover, given its low capital input

and its capacity to grow even within poor quality soils, cassava has become a more profitable crop for small-scale farmers, including those that have lost good quality land to ELCs, receiving underproductive soil instead. As one villager in a relocation site explained, 'Before the villagers planted rice, and other fruits. Cassava was very marginal. But the quality of the soil here is so poor that cassava is the only crop that really allows the villagers to make any profit.' (Interview, farmer, Kampong Thom, 2016). Through the combination of market demands and poor-quality soil, the rush towards cassava cultivation has been exponential since 2005. As an official at the Ministry of Environment explained: 'People here adapt to the market, not to climate change' (Interview, Ministry of Environment, 2015).

However, despite the efficiency of cassava as a cash crop, Cambodia only possesses one ethanol transformation plant⁶ and farmers are completely subject to fluctuating market prices through which the benefits are often not equally distributed: 'There is no fix(ed) price...the cassava grown in the area is exported to Vietnam and then China via brokers and traders who determine its market value' (Interview, farmer, Kampong Thom, 2016). When changes in market prices occur, small-scale farmers that have shifted nearly entirely to cassava production for the livelihoods suffer enormous losses and impacts: 'This year it has been really terrible for farmers. In 2015 the price of cassava was 160 USD/ton and this year just 115 USD. This is because of China... They released old stock corn, 200 million tons of poor quality: they drop the price and push all the factories to use the corn; they stop buying cassava and reduce buying new corn...We are really dependent to China decides to drop with cassava. China has 4-year plans and corn is the second crop in China...They stock it for 4 years. And then old stock becomes spoiled and cannot be used for animal food, so they use it for ethanol...That means they need no more cassava from Cambodia for ethanol.' (Interview, cassava expert, Phnom Penh, 2016).

As one cassava producer noted, 'Prices are set abroad, and farmers are extremely vulnerable to market volatility and frequent border clo-

tures.’ (Interview, cassava producer, Kampong Thom, 2016). In the last year, the fall of prices has been drastic, and the crop is worth 50% less on average than it was the year before. As an official from the Ministry of Environment explained, ‘The price of the gasoline has gone down, and cassava is worth nothing’ (Interview, Ministry of Environment, Phnom Penh, 2016). Moreover, the cassava sector receives little support from the government and farmers have become increasingly indebted as a result. Although for economically better-off farmers growing cassava can pave the way to more capital-intensive cropping, for poorer farmers it creates cycles of debt and forced intensification that can lead to dispossession. As farmers themselves noted, often after cassava is produced, the land on which it was grown cannot be used again for another crop due to the soil degradation produced by cassava. This means that farmers become trapped within cassava production and less arable land (Focus group, Kampong Thom, 2016).

At a broader level, this case shows the potentially devastating consequences of framing migration as an environmental security threat, especially when these explanations are disconnected from the drivers of environmental destruction, which are found in the expansion of ELCs. As witnessed in Kampong Thom, and in Cambodia more generally, legal regulations have been used to criminalise people (particularly the most vulnerable) and to permit widespread extraction and deforestation for concessionaires. Although increased population pressure can indeed increase pressure on natural resources, it is of utmost importance to clearly delineate who is creating what amount and type of pressure, so that environmental measures do not criminalise nor equate small extents of damage with that of colossal destruction. Moreover, while the production of certain biofuel crops, such as cassava, can prove to be economically beneficial for poorer farmers, when such transitions happen at a rapid rate, as have been occurring in Cambodia, and moreover, when they occur without consideration of broader market fluctuations and at the expense of food crops, they can lead to both food and economic insecurities while further contributing to environmental destruction.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to show some of the key implications that particular land grabs can have on security and adaptation well beyond the landscapes where these unfold. Although many potential links ranging from the local to the global could be made through this analysis, this chapter has drawn on the most evident links that each case has illustrated, and which are relevant not only within the landscapes and countries involved, but also beyond them. Through the case of Senhuile, we have seen how the marginalisation of pastoralists, perpetrated through agricultural modernisation policies at the expense of pastoral livelihoods, which legitimised a project for biofuels, can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby international insecurity becomes the reality. When repeated attempts at peaceful resistance fail, those groups that have been left behind could very well develop strategies that bear the seeds of violent confrontation. However, violence or conflict in this case is not the result of resource scarcity or of the impacts of climate change in one particular place. Rather, it is the result of measures implemented to stabilise the relative scarcity of resources of the world's most polluting countries at the expense of the poorer classes, who bear the brunt of its most severe biophysical and political impacts.

The case of conservation and sugar production in Koh Kong draws on the profound limitations that a land sparing approach based on neo-Malthusian arguments of population pressure can have on both environmental and social security. When fortress conservation measures are implemented to safeguard against a small number of poor people – who are also those often better positioned to protect natural resources –while simultaneously overlooking the profound destruction happening in the same landscape for extractive aims, the environmental efforts are negligible at best, and destructive at worst. The case shows how problematic it is to grant REDD+ projects within landscapes that are possibly being investigated for crimes against humanity. In such contexts, until social grievances have been addressed and redressed, environmental measures only risk further entrenching - rather than addressing - the root causes of

vulnerability. Although the threat to suspend the EBA agreement on the basis of such dire human rights violations could potentially pressure the government to address the injustices, the massive amount of ‘non strings attached’ development aid flowing in from China reduces the possibilities of such EU-led strategies, which in turn places a greater burden on the millions of people in Cambodia who depend upon the EBA for their livelihoods.

Finally, the case of Kampong Thom Sugar exemplifies the problematic framing of migrants as environmental security threats. Despite recurrent claims by the authorities as to how migrants are among the causes of deforestation, evidence demonstrates clearly that Cambodia has become one of the countries in the world with the highest deforestation rates due to ELCs – often in the interest of investors that are also migrants – resembling the patterns of colonial migration. At a time when both environmental destruction and migration are higher than ever on international political agendas, it is of utmost importance to distinguish which migrants are doing what, if we want to avoid legislations that convert the weak into criminals while permitting the powerful and destructive to continue destroying socio-natures in all impunity.

Notes

¹ According to the renowned sociologist, Robert Merton, 'The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a *false* definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception come *true*' (Merton 1948, 195).

² The official results of the PDIDAS project can be found here: <http://projects.worldbank.org/P124018/senegal-agribusiness-development-project?lang=en>

³ At the time of my last fieldwork, there were also rumours that much of the land from Senhuile would be granted to the CSS (Compagnie Sucriere Senegalaise) and to the World Bank's PDIDAS project. Right now, who will receive access to this remains unclear.

⁴ See for example, Dalton R 2000; Kareiva and Marvier 2003; Brooks et al. 2006)

⁵ This includes Equitable Cambodia, which was one of the partners for the MOSAIC project.

⁶ This ethanol transformation plant belongs to a Korean company in the North of Cambodia that has applied for funding under the Clean Development Mechanism of the UNFCCC.



Conclusion

‘Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. Reframing is social change. Reframing is changing the way the public sees the world. It is changing what counts as common sense’

(Lakoff, 2004)

This dissertation has aimed to understand: *Why and how environmental change, land grabs, and migration shape each other, both materially and discursively, and with what consequences?* The short answer to this question is that the material and discursive interrelations between these phenomena are inherent to the tensions that exist, in different contexts and at different times, between capital accumulation and political legitimation. These interlinkages have been discursively and materially co-constituted through the deployment of certain security and adaptation frames that – by locating the roots of the current socio-environmental crisis in population growth, market failures, or technological inefficiency – have served, advertently or inadvertently, to justify land grabs in the name of migration and/or environmental protection. Although both environmental and migration justifications have been used since colonialism to expropriate land to make way for continued capital accumulation, these justifications have gained momentum at a time when both environmental change and migration are, understandably so, higher than ever on international political agendas. However, whether migration or environmental justifications prevail over one another depends not only on the broader geopolitical ecological context, but crucially on the migration system that each country is embedded in and on the interests of its main donors and corporate investors. Despite intrinsically opposed assumptions between dominant

security and adaptation frames with regards to migration, this research has illustrated how they can both interact with environmental justifications in ways which can perpetrate forced migration and environmental destruction. Moreover, this research has shown that land grabs have created self-fulfilling risks which can result in insecurity and maladaptation becoming a reality in locations beyond the landscapes where land grabs unfold, shaping geopolitical ecologies in the process. In these concluding pages, I will elaborate on this short answer to my dissertation question in order to highlight the main findings of this research as well as its main implications.

Overlaps Between Frames

As this research has shown, the way in which certain phenomena are framed in terms of security and/or adaptation is deeply political. As a result, it is necessary to go beyond an analysis that refers to an ‘objective’ reality of security and adaptation, and to instead examine how the very enunciation of these concepts organises social relations into security and adaptation relations – often independently of whether an adaptation or security situation existed in the first place. This work has examined the impacts of both neo-Malthusian security and neoclassical adaptation framings in shaping the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration by opposing these framings to with that of a *variegated geopolitical ecology* framing. In this section, I will underline the main research findings this approach has enabled to unveil in order to demonstrate why analysing these framings in tandem adds both empirical and theoretical depth to the understanding of phenomena that tend to be analysed in isolation to one another.

Creating Internal and External Borders

As this research has shown, security framings have been deployed since colonialism in order to determine who can *access* what natural resources and for what *purposes*. Understanding environmental destruction and migration in terms of population growth and absolute resource scarcity has led to interventions which transform not only the internal, but also the external bordering of territories. In line with the literature in political ecology that has examined the phenomenon of ‘fortress conservation,’ this research has demonstrated how natural reserves and protected areas have served not only to expel local communities, but also to direct population movements into areas where their labour is needed for further capital accumulation. For example, during colonialism in both Senegal and Cambodia, taxes, concessions and protected areas all served the purpose of directing the labour force onto plantations. At the same time, these measures were also designed to sedentarise those populations that were deemed as inefficient, environmentally destructive, and difficult to tax - primarily pastoralists in Senegal and shifting cultivators in Cambodia. The idea that land should be spared for the protection of natural resources, and that land should be granted for the most economically profitable activities, has been supported by narratives that portray the vulnerable and poor as both environmentally destructive and economically inefficient.

This double purpose of natural reserves as means through which to shape access to natural resources as well as steer populations movements, has persisted through time. For example, the Reserve du Ndiaël in Senegal was initially seen by the government as a way to contain the movement of pastoralists into a demarcated area, in order to spare land for agriculture in the Senegal River Delta. The concept of *mise en valeur*, based on economic efficiency, is the mechanism through which local populations are dispossessed of their land in favour of capital-intensive ventures. In Cambodia, conservation in the Cardamom mountains has led to the violent expulsion of local communities for the protection of biodiversity under narratives that portray landless farmers as environ-

mental criminals without simultaneously questioning the environmental impact of those deemed economically efficient. These global environmental security objectives come into contradiction with local security objectives by displacing populations from their basic means of subsistence - often violently. Through land sparing and fortress conservation, environmental security is divorced from human security by tainting those least responsible for environmental insecurities as those most destructive and uses this to justify their forced displacement. Additionally, in recent years, the links between national security and environmental security have become entrenched in narratives that portray population growth, environmental degradation, migration and national security as intimately interlinked, serving to add a layer of justification to increase border controls and the externalisation of borders, particularly to Sahelian countries with populations seeking to reach Europe.

Immobile and Mobile Adaptation

Although based on very different assumptions, dominant adaptation framings have also long been deployed to determine who can *access* what natural resources and for what *purposes* – albeit with different logics and outcomes. According to certain adaptation narratives that this research has examined, it is the *mobility of investors*, touted as the most capable of putting resources to ‘good’ use, that carry the potential not only to mitigate the worst impacts of environmental change, but also to reduce migration as well as national and environmental security threats in the process. As this research has shown, one of the main arguments behind large-scale plantations for biofuels or food crops is not only that they contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation, but that they also contribute to employment creation in the places where these plantations are established, purportedly creating the conditions for people to remain at home. In Senegal, this has been the key justification behind initiatives, such as the Plan REVA, and agricultural policies, such as GOANA. In Cambodia, the idea that Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) will create employment has also been one of its main justifiers. However, across all

of the cases examined, employment creation has been minimal, unreliable, and of low quality. Additionally, when employment is offered by a company, those who receive the jobs are often not the same people as those who have lost their land to the company. This is due to both the direct confrontations that arise between the companies and those expelled by them, and also because companies tend to prefer employing migrants from other areas who are more socially isolated and malleable. Those locals that do successfully manage to become incorporated within companies are often those that have landholdings and use plantation work as an additional, but not primary, source of income. Moreover, adaptation framings linked to environmental and migration justifications are not limited to creating the conditions for people to stay at home. Although employment creation *in situ* is a main justification for large-scale commercial farms, adaptation through *mobility* is also deemed essential for states in order to ensure both an inflow of socio-economic remittances and to spare land for more economically 'efficient' usages.

Variegated Geopolitical Ecologies

Despite the insights that a separate analysis of the impacts of security or adaptation frames can provide, neither of them influence the interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration in isolation from one another or in socio-temporal and geopolitical vacuums. An understanding of *why* one framing may prevail over another at a particular time, and *how* land grabs impact both environmental destruction and/or migration, needs to be understood through a processual approach that accounts for how 'geopolitical ecologies from above' and 'geopolitical ecologies from below' shape each other. To capture these overlaps, this research has taken a multi-scalar and circular approach by analysing not only how broader geopolitical ecologies are inserted into specific national contexts, and how these then translate differently into three diverse landscapes, but also to illustrate the impacts that specific land grabs can have well beyond the landscapes where they unfold.

Geopolitical Ecologies from Above

By taking a comparative approach between countries which are located within very different migration systems and where donors and investors have differing interests, I have been able to capture the relative importance of one frame over another as well as account for the explanatory variables that shape these differences. In doing so, the research has shown that although both environmental and migration narratives have been utilised by different actors in both countries, advertently or inadvertently to justify land grabs, today, migration justifications are more prevalent in Senegal, while environmental justifications prevail in Cambodia. In Senegal, the migration as adaptation framing gained prominence prior to the global financial crisis, not only because the country is highly dependent on socio-economic remittances for its domestic development, but crucially because the European labour market was in need of a constant supply of cheap and malleable labour to ensure its continued capital accumulation at minimal costs. Although this remains true in many respects, the global financial crisis was accompanied by European fears of migration inflows from a region that has been presented as a hotspot not only for climate change and environmental destruction, but also for potential terrorist threats.

In this context, European countries have used national security narratives in order to support development and investment packages within the originating countries of migration, which are primarily targeted in an attempt to keep their populations in place, while also enabling investors to make profits in a context where biofuels and large-scale farming are presented as solutions to both energy and food insecurities. In Senegal, this has translated into tenure, environmental, and agricultural reforms which have supported large-scale land investments as ways to create employment *in situ*, reduce rural exodus and irregular international migration, and ensure food and energy security both domestically and internationally. This framing is also used domestically to maintain a balance between capital accumulation and political legitimisation, given that the

perilous journeys towards Europe, and the conditions that those most vulnerable find upon arrival, has led populations to change their aspirations in relation to their capacities to migrate successfully, and to rather demand employment creation at home.

In Cambodia, the prevalence of one justification over another is marked not only by the importance of forests as carbon sinks for global climate mitigation, but also by its location within a migration system that still relies on an abundant inflow of cheap and docile labour for its growth. The devastating conflict period in Cambodia, which kept the country isolated, also resulted in a relatively untouched forest and biodiversity sector, which later became vitally important globally as the donor-led transition towards neoliberalism occurred. Tenure and environmental policies were designed with the purpose of maintaining the environmental endowments of a country that nonetheless required them for power maintenance and economic growth. Although environmental and tenure reforms can be regarded as good technocratic work, these reforms have done little in a country where the extraction of natural resources has been key to maintain the legitimacy of the regime by granting vast amounts of arable land through ELCs. Although the argument of employment creation in order to reduce out-migration is sometimes used as a justification for large-scale land investments, in the context of Cambodia, international migration is seen not only as an escape route from poverty, but also by the government as an escape valve from potential domestic political contention and as a way to make room for more economically-viable ventures. As a result, while the environmental as security threat arguments are mostly used against internal migrants in Cambodia, it is international migrants in Senegal which rather are vilified through these arguments. In an interesting reversal, while the adaptation as immobility narrative prevails in Senegal, it is the migration as adaptation narrative that prevails in Cambodia. Despite these differences, in both cases, the externalisation of environmental protection and of migration control becomes linked to tenure, environmental, and agricultural

policies by effectively re-territorialising space according to international and domestic accumulation interests.

Flex Grabs: Overlapping Justifications

Although paying attention to the location of particular countries within different regional political economies is helpful in understanding the prevalence of certain narratives over others at the national scale, this research has shown that particular land grabs are not always the result of one single main legitimiser or driver, and that the very same land grab often receives very different justifications depending on the actor, and the scale involved. For example, Senhuile is greened by some actors (i.e. as part of the biofuel program by the government and former the company representatives), but not by other actors (i.e. the new management structure). In the same line, while employment creation was a key justification for the company to gain access to the site, it has quickly been abandoned by management that would rather take advantage of the benefit of mechanization. The example of Kampong Thom Rubber shows how rubber has been flexed nationally for supposedly green purposes even though these green justifiers clash with international definitions and with those justifications given by the company. However, the very idea that rubber may be used for carbon credits has served to justify the expansion of concessions at the national level. It is hence also important to underline that the implications of flexing may occur not only when flexing has been carried out and is material or even anticipated, but also when flexing is just hypothetical or imagined.

The case of sugar in Koh Kong shows how the material flexing that takes place within international markets is very removed from the discursive flexing done at the national or company level. For example, although the growing demand for sugar can be explained as part of the global sugarcane complex that results from the growing global demands for ethanol production, the justification for ethanol from sugar is far removed from national or corporate justifications. At times however, the

international discourse filters down and influences that of the company or national level, such as in how the placement of the sugar company next to the protected area of the Cardamom mountains has incentivised a greening in their objectives in order to mitigate the company's damaging social and environmental impacts. What all these cases show, is that similarly to how 'flex crops' have been flexed materially and discursively to fit changing political agendas and market demands, so are specific land grabs more generally. Land grabs can be justified by environmental or migratory narratives by some actors, while contested for their environmental destruction and expulsion by other actors; they may have socio-environmental benefits at one scale, but also involve socio-environmental harms at another. Here the concept of *flex grabs* can allow us to draw attention to how justifications differ according the accumulation and legitimation needs that different actors pursue; and to highlight how these needs are often in tension with one another.

Overlapping Impacts

Assuming a broader landscape approach is not only necessary to understand multiple justifications, but it is also essential when analysing the impacts of land grabs on migration patterns and the environment. As the research has illustrated, environmental destruction and migration cannot be solely attributed to one single land grab. Rather environmental and migration outcomes are better explained as a result of more complex land use changes occurring at the landscape level and beyond. For example, Senhuile happens in a context where the mobility of pastoralists has been shrinking since colonialism. Although the Reserve du Ndiaël has provided temporary protection for pastoralists, Senhuile has challenged the safety of pastoralism as a livelihood as it infringes in one of the few remaining areas that they felt safe to call home. While the project has not displaced the pastoralist populations *per se*, the historical multifaceted package of losses that they have experienced, means that Senhuile has become the epitome of the ultimate challenge to the protection of pastoralism as a livelihood. The environmental impacts of the company are

magnified by the many negative impacts that other agro-industries in the area have inflicted on the land and the lake, on which both farmers and pastoralists depend for their livelihoods. In the case of Koh Kong Sugar, many of the families displaced by the company had previously been displaced by conservation in the Cardamom mountains. In the case of Kampong Thom, it is false promises of the granting of Social Land Concessions (SLCs) to landless people from other provinces that has attracted the migrants that would then be violently evicted from the area by an ELC. This case also demonstrated that much of the land has not been grabbed or lost to companies, but rather to the Forest Administration, and that conflicts over access to land are often the result of the same plot being granted to different people. In both of the Cambodian cases, it was the company that created the greatest environmental impacts through deforestation. The deforestation that occurs at the borders of concessions is either carried out by economically well-off farmers or by migrants that are hired by other powerful actors to be the visible face of deforestation.

Across all cases, and independently of context specificities, it is the cumulative effects of conservation and extraction that have shaped expulsion. Although not all people within the areas have lost access to residential land, they have all lost access to farmland, grazing land or forest areas, which together constitute their livelihoods. In the process, households - especially in Cambodia - have accumulated an unprecedented amount of debt, while many of those that did have secure access to land have been forced to sell it and move, in an effort to repay their loans to microcredit lending bodies. Although migration does and can constitute an adaptation strategy, findings across all cases illustrate that it is those who had the most socio-economic assets, and a secure access to land, to start with that have the potential to benefit the most from migration, while those that are landless and most socio-economically vulnerable can easily end up in situations which degrade, rather than improve, their adaptation. Moreover, in the three cases examined, it is small-scale farms, rather than large-scale farms, that have provided the most employment,

creating livelihood opportunities for those who never had, or have lost their, land access, while also attracting and employing migrants from other regions.

Geopolitical Ecologies from Below

A landscape approach not only enables us to see the overlapping justifications and impacts of specific land grabs as they are shaped by broader geopolitical ecological imperatives, but it also enables us to illuminate impacts that go well beyond the landscapes where land grabs occur. Similar to the definition of a self-fulfilling prophecy, self-fulfilling risks have been defined in this work as prophecies that rest on false security and adaptation framings around the perceived risks of environmental change and/or migration, and that lead to interventions which can make both insecurity and maladaptation a reality. Although the potential implications of precise land grabs on broader geopolitical ecological (im)balances are potentially very broad, this research focussed on the most salient connections that the empirical data revealed for each of the landscapes examined.

Firstly, through the landscape of Senhuile, the research showed that there is indeed an interaction between environmental and national security, but that this interaction does not unfold following the causal explanations given in dominant security framings. Instead, it is the continued marginalisation of local forms of adaptation (namely pastoralism) in the name of combatting non-existent threats (namely local conflicts between farmers and pastoralists as well as potential terrorist threats from the Sahel), that have led to interventions which - by further impoverishing local communities - have brought about serious grievances. These grievances have the potential to assume linkages to terrorism as a ways of protesting capital-state interactions. In this context, the currently unfolding interventions in Senegal under the Great Green Wall initiative are bound to fail, unless these interventions address the underlying and socio-economically constructed vulnerabilities in the process.

Secondly, the human rights abuses propelled by the Koh Kong Sugar case in Cambodia have led to both national and international upheaval, and the case is considered to have inspired the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to begin investigating land grabs as crimes against humanity. Moreover, cases such as the one in Koh Kong have also contributed to the EU's consideration of suspending its preferential trade with Cambodia through its Everything But Arms Initiative. Although the inclusion of land grabbing within the category of crimes against humanity could become an unprecedented move for environmental and social justice, the threats by the EU to cancel its trade agreements with Cambodia have been limited in effect, given the context in which China is now the main donor of and lender to Cambodia. It is still too early however, to assess the longer-term implications that a shift in geopolitical influence from Western donors to China will have on land grabs, environmental destruction, and expulsion in Cambodia. What is clear, is that the rise of China as an economic power in the region and beyond will shift the global geopolitical ecological configuration in the years to come, thereby potentially creating the national security threats and struggles over geopolitical influence that traditional geopolitics is characterised by. Moreover, the case of Koh Kong Sugar calls into question the current land sparing approaches for carbon sink purposes, as these do not account for the human costs that are involved in allowing consumers to mitigate their carbon impacts in places tainted by dire human rights violations and environmental destruction. In these contexts, which are certainly not specific to Cambodia, we need to seriously ask what these carbon credits are offsetting and at what broader environmental and social costs.

Lastly, the case of Kampong Thom Rubber exemplifies the broader dangers of an environmental security framing that does not distinguish between those migrants who are responsible for the vast deforestation that Cambodia has experienced, and those landless migrants, whose relative environmental destruction in the form of clearing lands for subsistence must be understood as resulting from their lack of options. Without

such distinctions, legal regulations passed to supposedly protect natural resources exclude the most vulnerable, for the benefit and profit of the most powerful and degrading actors. In the process, labels of environmental criminality serve to justify exceptional measures taken against those whose rights to access have been dismissed in the name of continued capital accumulation. Not only does this make invisible, and hence untameable, those who are responsible for environmental destruction, but it also widens the pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities that are responsible for turning hazards into disasters. Additionally, the case of Kampong Thom Rubber demonstrates how granting of the best quality land to concessions, in a context of increased global demand for cassava production to meet the ethanol market demands, has pushed farmers into growing cassava crops. This is a problem given the high volatility of cassava prices, which has led to increased food insecurity, the burden of debts, and ultimately, the need to decide whether a livelihood at home is possible.

Across all of the cases examined, a stark contradiction arises: aiming to keep people in their place while simultaneously granting the best resources in that place to corporate investors and political and economic elites that are unable to meet the employment needs of a growing population, has created intense pressure on the most vulnerable. Population growth is perceived as a problem for local populations, but not in terms of the environmental destruction that increased population will provoke, but rather in terms of the needs that vulnerable populations will increasingly have to access their own resources, when vast amounts of their territory are being used to meet global food, energy, and climate adaptation and mitigation imperatives. This is magnified in a context where the impacts of climate change already pose an existential threat to the resources and livelihoods of these populations. What determines whether interventions aimed at environmental protection or the reduction of distress migration will succeed is largely dependent upon whether capital accumulation or social and environmental welfare are prioritised.

Implications

The findings of this research point to several implications for research and for policymaking. For researchers, this study highlights the importance of cross-disciplinary and comparative work as well as the insights that are to be gained by situating oneself at the boundaries of two well-established fields: namely the ‘environmental migration’ field and the ‘land grab studies’ field. It was through a continuous conversation between these well-established bodies of work that my propositions, questions, and research were formed, and through which connections could ultimately be made. In so doing, the research has aimed to cross-fertilise these fields by making explicit the important and intrinsic connections that exist between them – but which had to date remained overlooked. Theoretically, in order to achieve this, the variegated geopolitical ecology framework drew on multiple perspectives from political economy, political ecology, critical geopolitics, and political geography, which have long provided alternative frameworks, through which the links under study could be analysed.

However, it is in their fusion, and not in their isolation, that the analysis of this research was able to proceed. By bridging perspectives, including those that have dealt with more macro historical-structural tendencies of migration and environmental change (i.e. world systems and world ecology), with those constructivist multi-scalar critiques concerning the influence of discourse on material realities (i.e. critical geopolitics, political geography and political ecology), with those more micro-based considerations (i.e. political ecology), the methodology used in this research consisted of a historical, multi-scalar, and circular approach that aimed to bridge the macro with the micro and vice-versa. This approach enabled me to embed environmental change, land grabs, and migration in a historical perspective, while also capturing the variegated tendencies that these have followed, and – importantly – the reasons for this variegation. Although this theoretical and methodological procedure does not

come without its limitations and complications, a positioning that aims to bridge the past with the present and the local with the global can allow us to see the broader implications of the interrelations under study and to better locate points of contention and contradictions.

For those working in the broadly defined field of ‘environmental migration’, this research further highlights the need to go beyond an analysis that focuses on the biophysical impacts of environmental change on migration, and to pay more attention to how dominant security and adaptation framings around environmental change and migration shape the very material realities under which migration unfolds. Without giving distinct focus to the power structures that underline environmental destruction and forced migration, the interventions enacted to solve them can reinforce both environmental destruction and the inequalities that drive forced migration. Therefore, at the theoretical level, this research calls for a deeper and continued engagement of the broadly defined ‘environmental migration’ field with that of political ecology. The focus on land grabs in this work has mostly shed light on the impacts of security and adaptation frames around environmental change and/or migration on agricultural and tenure reforms. However, future research could go further in this respect by analysing how these interrelations unfold in other socio-political settings, as well as by focussing on the impacts that these frames can have in other policy domains. Finally, and importantly for modelling efforts in the field, this study shows that if current rates of land grabs persist, then those impacted by environmental and climate change in the years to come will not be the same people who inhabit these areas today. This further supports the evidence that making quantitative projections based on demographic growth and climate models, does not provide an accurate account of whom might inhabit which places in the years to come.

For the broadly defined ‘global land grab’ field, the findings of this research highlight the importance of analysing green and *migration grabs* in tandem since the existence of one is usually inseparable from the existence of the other. As this research has shown, migration narratives are at

least as prominent as environmental ones in justifying land grabs. More attention to how and why this occurs, and a deeper engagement with migration studies could enhance an understanding of both the justifications and impacts of land grabs. Moreover, the research has highlighted that it is important not only to analyse land grabs in a particular landscape at a particular time, but rather to understand land grabs as processes which gain and lose diverse justifications throughout that process and that also entail differentiated impacts at different geographical scales. A deeper engagement with critical geopolitics is essential in understanding the drivers and impacts that land grabs have on adaptation and security at the international level. Although the research has located a number of consequences of geopolitical ecologies from below, by locating certain possible linkages between specific land grabs and broader geopolitical configurations, further research attempting to draw and document such links would provide a fruitful direction. Future research in this direction could engage with the broader implication of vast geopolitical ecological projects, such as the Belt and Road Initiative or the Great Green Wall of Africa, and the variegations that occur not only in sight of diverse geographical positionings, but also based on the diverging agendas and needs of changing investments. Lastly, an analysis of how different geopolitical ecologies from below shape the subsequent directions of land transformation processes would be another fruitful area for future research.

Beyond academic considerations, the findings of this research point to the urgency for policymakers to address the structural causes, and not the symptoms, of both environmental destruction and forced migration. The positioning of this research between the agricultural, migration, and environmental policy-making fields calls for urgent synergies between them if the 'self-fulfilling risks' and/or trade-offs are to be avoided. Acting upon environmental change, land grabs, and migration in isolated or binary manners can increase, rather than alleviate, pressures on those most socio-environmentally vulnerable. For those working in the broadly defined environmental policy field, this research highlights the

importance of designing environmental policies that focus on reducing social inequalities and in redistributing their benefits amongst the most vulnerable, if these mechanisms are to be more than purely 'technical and incremental' fixes that have done little to curb emissions to date. Without this, land-intensive environmental and climate interventions can lead to *the third injustice of climate change* whereby the most vulnerable are not only the least responsible for, and the least affected by, environmental change, but also the front-line victims of environmental and climate policies. Not only will interventions that entrench inequalities fail to meet their environmental targets, but they also risk contributing to a delegitimisation of the most existential cause that humanity faces. Importantly, this research adds to the evidence that emission accounting mechanisms will continue to be fundamentally flawed, unless they accounts for both the environmental and human rights extraterritorial impacts of food and energy production.

For the migration policy field, this research underlines the urgent need to separate and clearly distinguish between migrants whose environmental footprint constitutes a global threat, and those whose usage of resources is minimal and a vital part of their livelihoods. With heated debates around migration throughout the world, putting the migration label exclusively on poor and vulnerable people, while failing to label political elites, investors, and corporations as migrants when this equally applies to them (i.e. their movement to places where land and labour are cheap), contributes to strong misconceptions of the impacts of migration on the environment. Additionally, this research has shown that granting the best available land resources to large-scale and land-intensive agribusinesses in order to reduce migration can be counterproductive. Not only do these interventions expel those who need, and are better placed to protect, land resources, but such ventures do not provide employment in quantity or quality. Moreover, investments that are essentially concerned with short-term economic profit are at the very basis of the environmental and climatic changes that result in disasters and displacement in the places where they unfold, and also well beyond them.

In light of this, there is an urgent – and existential – need to reconfigure land tenure and agricultural policies that can simultaneously protect the natural resources and the populations which have been systematically destroyed. For the most vulnerable, land redistribution and secure control over natural resources are the most important insurance that determines whether potential movement becomes adaptive or maladaptive – especially in the context of the global land rush and of climate change. In a context where other economic sectors in many developing countries are not able to absorb the labour from rural areas, it is of the utmost importance to support the small-scale farms that use resources sustainably and that provide the labour opportunities necessary for those who wish, or who have no other alternative than, to stay. Environmental and social justice are two sides of one same coin; one will not be realised without the other.

Appendices

*Appendix 1: Key organizations interviewed, Senegal**

Organization	Date
CICODEV	09/07/14
IRD	10/07/2014
CNCR	11/07/14
Institut Panos	11/07/14
IOM	13/07/14
ARD Saint Louis	15/07/14
Université Gaston Berger	15/07/14
Collectif du Ndiaël	20/07/14
SAED	07/08/14
Société Culture Legumières	08/08/14
CNCR	09/08/14
ONG Wetlands International	06/08/14

SAED	08/08/14
CIRAD	01/06/15
Collectif du Ndiael	11/06/15
Ministry of Agriculture	09/06/15
AECID	Multiple
West Africa Farms	15/06/15
World Bank	20/06/15
Senhuile	30/06/15
Ministry of Environment	COP22 2016

**Names of key informants are hidden for confidentiality for purposes.*

Appendix 2: Key organizations interviewed, Cambodia

Organization	Date
Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee	02/03/15
World Bank	02/03/15
Ministry of Rural Development	04/03/15
Institute for Cooperation Peace	04/03/15
Oxfam GB	06/03/15

Phnom Penh Post	06/03/15
NGO Forum	12/03/15
Housing Rights Task Force	12/03/15
Equitable Cambodia	15/03/15
International Labour Organisation	16/03/15
LICADHO	10/03/15
IOM	09/04/15
Cambodia Centre for Human Rights	09/04/15
Cambodian Human Rights & Development Association	09/04/15
Cambodian Human Rights & Development Association	09/04/15
Legal Support for Children and Women	23/04/15
Wildlife Conservation Society	23/08/16
Ministry of Environment	29/08/16
UNDP	06/09/16
Forest Administration	11/10/16
Ministry of Land Management	12/10/16



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