

Propositions

attached to the thesis

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

by Sara Vigil Diaz-Telenti

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

1. Although the impacts of environmental change on migration and of environmental politics on land grabs have received increased attention, the role of both environmental and migration narratives in shaping migration by modifying access to natural resources has remained underexplored. (this thesis).
2. The interlinkages between environmental change, land grabs and migration have been discursively and materially co-constituted through the deployment of certain security and adaptation frames that have served, advertently or inadvertently, to justify land grabs in the name of migration and/or environmental protection. (this thesis)
3. The material and discursive interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration are inherent to the contradictions within nation-states 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. (this thesis)
4. A variegated geopolitical ecology analytical angle, and a global ethnographic and comparative methodological approach, 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. (this thesis)
5. Despite intrinsically opposed assumptions between dominant security and adaptation frames with regards to migration, they can both interact with environmental justifications in ways that create ‘self-fulfilling risks’ which make security and maladaptation a reality well beyond the landscapes where land grabs unfold. (this thesis)
6. Placing the migration label exclusively on poor and vulnerable people, while failing to label political elites, investors, and corporations as migrants, contributes to strong misconceptions of the impacts of migration on the environment.
7. Migration constitutes a viable adaptation strategy for those who have the most socio-economic assets, and a secure access to land to begin with.
8. The rise of China as the main donor for many developing countries where land grabs occur, will fundamentally change the directions of security and adaptation.
9. In the context of land grabs, making quantitative projections of migration based on demographic growth, economic scenarios, and climate models, does not provide an accurate account of whom might inhabit which places in the years to come.
10. Bridging feminist geopolitics with feminist political ecology can significantly advance our understanding of both the macro and micro level factors that together shape the complex interrelations between environmental change, land grabs, and migration.
11. Creating synergies between social movements that address environmental, agricultural, and migration issues is key for transformative social change.