

RETHINKING RURAL POLITICS IN POST-SOCIALIST SETTINGS

Rural communities, Land Grabbing and Agrarian Change in Russia and Ukraine

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1. Peasants are able to adapt to, and coexist with large-scale industrial agriculture. *(This thesis)*
2. Post-Soviet rural dwellers are not against large farm enterprises, as they can hardly imagine a future without them. Foot-dragging and pilfering can be classified as everyday resistance against the decreasing support from large farm enterprises to rural households. *(This thesis)*
3. Transformation of agricultural lands into construction sites, where new *dachas* (country houses) for Russian middle class urbanites are built, is another type of land grabbing. *(This thesis)*
4. Due to the economic crisis and the civil war in Ukraine, the majority of Ukrainians have no money to purchase farmland, which will become available after the moratorium on land sales will be lifted. This would lead to land accumulation by state-affiliated oligarchs and large agricultural companies, who are already *de facto* land owners of this land. *(This thesis)*
5. Rural households' response strategies toward large-scale agricultural development influence the socio-economic stratification in the countryside. The more adaptive responses lead to more advantageous positions of households in rural communities, while the least adaptive strategies cause villagers' social exclusion and increase their poverty risk. *(This thesis)*
6. The development of capitalism 'from above' in the post-Soviet countryside hindered the agrarian transformation 'from below'. *(This thesis)*
7. Gender analysis is important for a better understanding of everyday rural politics, as women have 'informal power' in everyday life and decision-making processes at the household level and in rural communities.
8. The image of an active 'Soviet woman' is still present in the post-Soviet countryside, and manifests itself in advocacy rural politics – whose participants are predominantly women.
9. Russia's food import ban was designed to stimulate domestic agricultural development by means of protectionist state policies and shock therapy.
10. Russia's strategy of 'reward' and 'punishment' in its international food trade policies is used to create divisions within the European Union and to put pressure on pro-western non-EU countries.
11. Ignorance of class dynamics in studies on rural inequality and dispossession might lead to an incorrect interpretation of many incidents and phenomena, such as rural poverty, for example.