The Relational Governance of Land: Contested Plantation Concessions in Laos

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Regimes of Dispossession and Resistance

- Rapid increase in land investments
- Significant socio-environmental impacts
- Emerging forms of resistance

Source: Lao DECIDE Info 2018
The Relational Governance of Dispossession

- Dispossession as a function of global capital accumulation?
- Levien (2012): accumulation by dispossession as politically contingent
- What are the politics of dispossession? How is it governed?
The Relational Governance of Dispossession

Figure 1: Conceptual diagram for the governance of land grabbing impacts

Figure: M. Kenney-Lazar
Relational Tree Plantations in Southern Laos

- Capital-state relations
- Socioenvironmental relations
- Community-state relations
RELATIONAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

• Multi-sited, multi-stakeholder ethnography

• Comparative analysis of plantation companies and villages

Photo: M. Kenney-Lazar
CORPORATE-STATE RELATIONS:
Quasa-Geruco Joint Stock Company

Photo: M. Kenney-Lazar
CORPORATE-STATE RELATIONS:
Shandong Sun Paper Joint Stock Company

Photo: M. Kenney-Lazar
Referring to Sun Paper: “they follow the laws, but they don’t take care of us like Quasa-Geruco does, they only care about the central government” - district land official, November 2013
“The government policy is for investments to reduce poverty by creating jobs for the people. [Villagers] want to clear the forest that has big trees. We don't want investment on all of their land, only land that is empty, not used in any way” – district land official, Feb. 2015
SOCIOENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS

Upland vs. Lowland Territories

Photo: M. Kenney-Lazar
“We fought for this land in the war, with our Vietnamese brothers. So, why should we have to give it up to the Vietnamese now”
– village focus group interview, Feb. 2014
CONCLUSIONS