

Bouillon d'idées le **lundi 14 octobre (12H00 - 13h00) - Géopolis - 3799.**

LAND HUNGER - The clash over forestland control and acacia plantation livelihood in Upland Central Vietnam



Photo taken by VanNguyen: The village head is looking at his village's acacia production field, Huong Nguyen Commune, A Luoi district, Thua Thien Hue, Vietnam.

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The paper aims to contribute to the broader scope of analysis of the contemporary land rush associated with crop booms across Upland regions of Global South. Over the last decade, most of the studies focus on large-scale land acquisition dominated by the States and giant foreign corporations, there is much little attention to the dynamics on the ground at micro level and led by the poor. Inspiring from Nevins and Peluso (2008)^[1] and the concept of “in situ”, “intimate exclusion” (Hall et al., 2011)^[2] and using the field data in 2018-2019, the paper examines how did a boom in commercial acacia plantation ignited and intensified; before paying more attention to unpack the dynamics of land accumulation and different mechanisms that farm villagers applied to grab and accumulate land for acacia expansion in one Upland commune, Central Vietnam. The findings indicate that land accumulation/acquisition associated with crop booms always happen, not only at large scale but also small-scale and initiated by the villagers. However, unlike booms of tree crops elsewhere, we argue that the anomaly of acacia in Vietnam's context, with its “forest-friendly” meaning, short-term nature, low costs, facilitated local cultivation practices and high-market values, has gradually put the villagers into the path of acacia addiction but contained a lot of risks. They are hungry for land and have thrown themselves into the land hunt with a

trajectory of intensified competition among intimate people like their kin and neighbors. Going beyond, they start their resistance process to re-claim (legally) and encroach (illegally) to the natural forests nearby, which are under-protection of State policies and international organizations, to get more land for acacia. In the paper, we do not offer these observations to deny the significant roles of acacia plantation for both forestry sector and local livelihoods in Vietnam. But we expect to point out the dynamics which are emerging at micro-level on the ground but have not yet received sufficient attention in the context of commercial commodity production expansion as acacia and call for more on-the-ground sustainable solutions to this situation.

[1] Nevins and Peluso, 2008. Taking Southeast Asia to Market: Commodities, Nature and People in the Neoliberal Age. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London.

[2] Hall, D., Hirsch, P and Li, T.M., 2011. Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia. National University of Singapore, Singapore.

This is one result paper of Van's doctoral thesis. She already presented the initial draft of this paper at the 5th FLARE network (Forests and Livelihoods: Assessment, Research, and Engagement) in AnArbor, Michigan, USA on August 25, 2019.

Le «Bouillon d'idées» est un séminaire proposé par le [groupe de recherche «Développement, Sociétés, Environnements»](#), dans lequel les chercheuses et les chercheurs sont invité·e·s à présenter une recherche en cours.

L'entrée est libre. N'hésitez pas à amener votre repas.