



IOS Fair Transitions / LANDac Conference & Summit

Land governance and the politics of fair transitions: Deepening the search for social justice

Addressing Ecological Crises or Natural Resources Rush: Political Ecology of Peasant Struggles for Access to Natural Resources in the Great Lakes Region of Africa

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Recent literature recognizes struggles for access to natural resources as inherent to societal transformation processes. Sources also emphasize a trend towards the depoliticization of these struggles, which pushes various population groups to the periphery of the debates: indigenous peoples, women, youth, and fishermen. By aiming to alleviate human pressure on natural resources through the preservation of biodiversity, as well as to mitigate or eradicate "systemic" disparities and injustices in natural resource governance, the modern state and international development institutions point fingers at the "backward" traditions that need reform through new technical approaches. The fundamentally technocratic conception of access is seen in two dynamics: (1) customary land rights are reorganised through neoliberal and formalistic models of land access; and (2) conservationist and demarcationist approaches separate humans from biodiversity. In a context characterized by multiple crises (economic, political, security, ecological) and interventions at various scales by actors with diverse and often divergent interests, this panel aims to contribute to understanding the impact of structural, economic, political, and climate changes in the Great Lakes region of Africa. It seeks to explore how 'peripherised' groups, such as indigenous peoples, fishermen, women, and farmers, practically approach and assert their access to natural resources through strategies of resilience and resistance.

Alain Midagu: Conservation, Compensation, and Community Reconfigurations around Virunga National Park in Eastern DRC.

Lionel Bisimwa: Nature Conservation Facing Environmental In-justice: A Cross-Examination of Kahuzi-Biega and Lomami National Parks in RDC.

Lucien Ramazani: Turning over the soil inside-out means polluting water: Is Ignorance a form of power?

Patient Polepole: 'Gender rumble in the customary arena?' Understanding masculinity in women's land access in Eastern Congo

An Ansoms: 'Climate-smart agriculture': top-down solutions versus knowledge from the ground up in rural Rwanda

Mathijs van Leeuwen : Discussant

Highlight

- State and institutional interventions seek to address systemic disparities and injustices in the governance of natural resources. However, in policy making, there is a strong focus upon the implementation of new technical approaches.
- The technocratic approach to access to natural resources has the effect of depoliticising the struggles of marginalised groups to gain control of these resources. This particularly affects the rights of indigenous peoples, women, youth and fishermen,.
- This panel focuses on:
 - Understanding the impact of structural, economic, political, and climate changes in the Great Lakes region of Africa.
 - Analysing how policies in relation to natural resource access interact with these changes.
 - Exploring how marginalized groups (indigenous peoples, fishermen, women, and farmers) assert their access to natural resources through resilience and resistance strategies.