Inverting the Moral Economy: The Case of Land Acquisitions for Forest Plantations in Tanzania

Author(s)

M.F. Olwiga , C. Noe , R. Kangalawe and E. Luoga

Abstract

Governments, donors and investors often promote land acquisitions for forest plantations as global climate change mitigation via carbon sequestration. Investors' forestry thereby becomes part of a global moral economy imaginary. Using examples from Tanzania we critically examine the global moral economy's narrative foundation, which presents trees as axiomatically 'green', 'idle' land as waste and economic investments as benefiting the relevant communities. In this way the traditional supposition of the moral economy as invoked by the economic underclass to maintain the basis of their subsistence is inverted and subverted, at a potentially serious cost to the subjects of such land acquisition.

Keywords

Land acquisitions; moral economy; carbon forestry; idle land; sustainable investments; Tanzania