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Local Development in the Context of Global Migration and the Global Land Rush: The Need for a Conceptual Update

Annelies Zoomers*, Maggi Leung and Guus van Westen
Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University

Abstract

This paper argues that global linkages, flows and circulations merit a more central place in theorization about local development. In particular, we make connections across two dominant types of global flows that shape our world tremendously: international migration and large-scale land investments. The paper compares the two hypes and underlines the similarities in their genealogy, rhetoric and push for good governance as a solution. It then maps out the emergent geographies of local development given rise by these two ntersecting global flows and discusses how they hinder the road to inclusive and sustainable development. While analysing the consequences of the two global flows, we probe the mileage of two interlinked influential concepts in development studies: the notion 'development as freedom' and the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. We conclude that the relational aspects of livelihood and development, positionality of the local vis-à-vis the global or external, and transformations coming from the outside should be central in our renewed conceptualisation about local development.

Introduction

This paper argues that global linkages, flows and circulations merit a more central place in theorization about development. The 'mobilities turn' has challenged the sedentarist assumptions embedded in much social thought (Sheller & Urry 2006; Walters 2014:4), but this is often not reflected in development studies. Discussions about local development usually give much importance to locally available capital-assets and capabilities. But 'globalization connects people and places that are distant in space but linked in such ways that what happens in one place has direct bearing on another, even if the relationship between localities is not immediately obvious[1]' (Zoomers and van Westen 2011). Local development hence is increasingly outcome not to be explained mainly by factors in fixed and confined settings.[2] Rather than depending essentially on 'local resources', livelihood opportunities are ever more shaped by positionality (Sheppard 2002), and the way people are attached to and participate in translocal and transnational networks.

To better understand local development in a mobile world, we focus on two types of cross-border flows, which are, in their own right, crucial triggers for local development and have recently intensified: (i) international migration, including flows of remittances and; (ii) large-scale land investments (e.g. in biofuels and food production and mining). Each of these topics has become hyped, producing thousands of case studies, abundant data and publications (academic, as well as media reports and documentaries). These have in turn generated heated, controversial debates about whether these 'new' flows of people and capital will contribute to inclusive and sustainable development. Until now, these two mobility topics have been discussed in separate communities – each with its own journals, conferences and websites.[3] Looking through the narrow lens of each debate, it is difficult to see 'the elephant'. In this article, we connect these two debates to chart the interface between them and their intersecting impacts on local development, in particular on people's livelihoods. While analysing the consequences of global migration and global investment flows, we probe the mileage of two interlinked influential concepts in development studies: (i) the notion 'development as freedom' advocated by Amartya Sen (1999) and his 'capability approach', by which the basic concern of human development is 'our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value'; and (ii) the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) that captures how people build their livelihood using different kinds of capital. They include: human capital (labour, also for migration), natural capital (e.g. land), financial capital and physical capital (which can be expressed easily in money terms), social capital (e.g. networks of friends and family) and cultural capital (knowledge, norms and values, etc.) (Bebbington 1999; De Haan & Zoomers 2005; Kaag *et al.* 2004). We argue that instead of denoting development in terms of 'free agency of people' and 'capitals' [and focusing on the (socially-constructed) confined space where local people live] more attention needs to be paid to the relational aspects of livelihood and development, including the transformations coming from the outside.

As a consequence of migration and large scale land investments, global landscape is undergoing complex transformations. Geopolitical relations are also rapidly changing beyond the mere 'rise of the South'. Ordinary people's agency is under pressure because local opportunity structures depend increasingly on decisions by outsiders. In addition, the set of capitals that people need to accumulate for a decent local livelihood is no longer the same. Achieving local development in the sense of 'expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value' as in Sen's ideal (1999) is increasingly beyond the control of the (less powerful) local people as their livelihood conditions are more than ever tied to translocal/-national networks, webs of influences and functional links. [4] 'Local communities – either of affection or administration – cannot serve as places of self-containment or resistance without finding avenues to cross and interact with various scales and other spaces' (Simone 2001:16). Local development as enjoyment of freedom (e.g., people's right to move or stay) is increasingly threatened by flow-driven processes from the outside, challenging local agency. Rather than accumulating capital within a spatially-bound context, people need to be able to 'plug in' and jump on the right train in order to benefit from increasing interconnectedness and mobility. Time has arrived to making a conceptual update of mobility and development.

In the following, we shall first provide an overview of the discourse surrounding global migration and the global land rush. After having compared the two hypes, we will map out the emergent geographies of local development. We will present some spatial trends given rise by these two intersecting global flows that hinder the road to inclusive and sustainable development, followed by a discussion of the need for a conceptual update and a short conclusion.

Global Migration and the Global Land Investments: Comparing the Two Hypes

In spite of lack of official data and limited comparability due to definitional problems, it is clear that the volume of global migration and global land investments is impressive, involving huge transfers of resources,[5] which are crucial for development. Both topics created a hype in academia and the media alike. Comparing the migration and land investments debates, we see salient similarities in their genealogy, rhetoric and push for good governance as a solution.

Regarding their genealogy, the hype started in the mid-2000s, and migration and land were discovered as important fields of policy interventions. The hype about migration started around 2005 with the *migration and development nexus,* initially pushed by the discovery of remittances as alternative for Official Development Aid in funding development. Development cooperation was then in crisis and there was serious concern about how to control the rise in South–North migration. Instead of viewing migration as the equivalent of 'lack of development' as had long been the case, remittances and return migration were discovered as a motor for development (Adepoju et al. 2008; de Haas 2005; Zoomers and Nijenhuis 2012), which culminated in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The hype about large-scale land investments appeared around 2007 and was initially presented as the *global land grab*: Along with the global food crisis capital-rich countries with limited possibilities to produce their own food, such as China, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, but also investors from European and the United States as well as the BRIC countries, started to buy and lease large tracts of land overseas, especially in Africa, mainly for the production of food and biofuels (Borras et al. 2010; GRAIN 2008; Evers et al. 2013; Schoneveld 2013). Also here policy makers, practitioners, business people and academics were heavily involved in discussions since the beginning, resulting in 2012 in the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries (www.fao.org).

Another parallel is the rhetoric of the two debates, both initially framed in terms of optimists versus pessimists. In both debates, the optimists believe that the new flows will contribute to inclusive and sustainable development and the fight against poverty, and the pessimists look at the darker side marked by human rights violation, displacement and inequality. In migration debates (e.g., de Haas 2005), the optimists often use win–win rhetoric to stress that migration impacts positively upon all stakeholders: sending sites and migrants themselves benefit because migrants get jobs, develop their skills, earn money and remit funds to their places of origin, while destinations benefit from the skills and labour of migrants. Migration is viewed as positive because it leads to equilibrium in the labour market (Jones 1992, cited in Mafukidze 2006, p. 105) and is expected to contribute to reducing inequality and sharing of the advantages of globalisation.[6] Besides financial remittances, a positive value is attributed to social 'transfers' (the flow of information and ideas) (Levitt 1998, Levitt and Lamba-Nievescd 2011). In cases of return migration, countries of origin are assumed to benefit from brain gain and capital inflow (Diatta and Mbow 1999; McCormick and Wahba 2001). According to the pessimists, however, international migration often leads to conflict in the receiving countries ('fear of invasion[7]') (Crush and Ramachandran 2010, de Haas 2008). They also emphasise the negative consequences for the countries of origin, particularly the loss of labour and intellect, stressing that generally the best the brightest, young, able-bodied people, leave first (Docquier et al.2007). Where migrants decide to return to their home countries, this is generally regarded as failure. 'Return migrants are likely to be the old, sick and unsuccessful, and skills brought back are unlikely to be of much help' (de Haan 2005). The poorest people with the least education and the invalids without networks therefore stay behind, and the failures are the first to return. This has unavoidable adverse effects in the country of origin. To the extent that these are compensated for by money transfers, a high measure of dependency is created, while conflicts can easily arise in the areas of origin between households with migrants elsewhere and those without (Park 1992, Rubenstein 1992).

In the debate about the new flows of investments in land, similar reasoning can be found. Optimists (organisations such as the World Bank and investors) applauded large-scale land investments as contributions to sustainable development and poverty alleviation, arguing that many host countries had large areas of 'empty' land, which could be used for the production of food and biofuel (win–win). The investments will help host countries to enhance economic growth; it will bring technology and employment while contributing to solving the energy and food crisis (e.g. Deininger & Byerlee 2011). The pessimists, on the other hand, organisations such as Via Campesina, the Oakland Institute and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Olivier de Schutter, pointed out the adverse effects for local communities, mostly from a human rights perspective (e.g. De Schutter 2009). Large scale land investments (or land *grabs*) will lead to the displacement of poor people (Oakland Institute 2011) and are seen as 'accumulation by dispossession'. In addition, to the extent that employment is generated, local people are often bypassed by better skilled outsiders.

Finally, in both debates much importance is assigned to institutional improvement in the sense that 'without good governance many things go wrong'. The lack of transparency and poor regulation are seen as core reasons for disappointing results. In international migration, for example, there is a strong emphasis on border control including Frontex operations by the EU, the training of customs officials and the introduction of detection technology. Combating human trafficking and illegal practices are presented as top priorities, often in combination with creating a conducive environment for return migration and brain gain by, for instance, deploying migrants' expertise in their country of origin, or involving diaspora and migrant organisations in the development of 'home' countries. In the case of land governance, the emphasis is on the implementation of voluntary guidelines, principles of Free and Prior Informed Consent, codes of conduct (Borras & Franco 2010), certification schemes and the introduction of multi-stakeholder platforms (round tables for soy, oil palm, etc.) as well as the need for land administration (formalisation and registration of land rights) (Deininger & Byerlee 2011).

Bringing Two Debates Under One Roof

The debates on international migration and large scale land investment do not only show resemblances; they are two key interconnected globalising forces in our current world. Contrary to the 'flat world' presented by Friedman (2006), 'new' linkages, flows and circulations – also those driving and produced by international migration and land investments – do not produce a levelled playing field. In the following, we shall present the key spatial ramifications of the two intersecting sets of global linkages and flows.

EMERGENT GEOGRAPHIES AND NEW REGIONALISM

Migration and land investments flows are in many respect different sides of the same coin. In the Gulf States, for example, large-scale investments in food production abroad are partly the direct response to the need to feed large immigrant populations.[8] In other countries, land investments cannot be explained without taking into account the role of migrants and diasporic groups when remittances are used for the purchase of land, or expats being active as investors. At the same time, migration patterns cannot be understood without considering the geography of land investment, which may offer some people new opportunities to stay at home or prompt others to move to localities where new investments take place, while causing resettlement and forced eviction of yet other groups.

Analysing the developmental impact of global migration/ land investments, it is not sufficient to divide the world into sending and receiving ends. Opportunities to benefit from migration and/or large scale land investment will depend on the junction of people and capital in a certain geographical setting (whether one has access to resources etc.) and to a large extent also by their relative positions or 'positionality' (Sheppard, 2002), i.e. how and where are people connected with other localities and under what rules and regulations. This positionality will steer exchanges in certain directions, which might slowly materialise in the form of corridors, selecting different types of people to engage in different types of mobility patterns, linking these localities in specific ways and developing in various directions (Zoomers, van Westen and Terlouw 2011). There is a great variety of ways in which countries (and regions) have become connected, and these directly affect the potential benefits and risks. Being linked (through migration and/or investments flows) to European Union countries, Canada or the United States, for example, will generate different types of dynamics than having direct connections with Saudi

Arabia and other Gulf States. Even though having much in common (these countries are important migration destinations as well as actors in the global land rush), there are important differences in conditions offered to migrants, e.g. opportunities to settle permanently, or for family reunification (which is not possible in the Gulf States). Even though they all are prominent sources of foreign direct investments for various purposes, the type of investments (in food or fuel, real estate etc. sectors) being made and business codes of conduct practiced are different.

Focusing on the other side, i.e., countries dominated by high levels of outmigration while receiving large scale investments in food and fuel, there are clear distinctions. On the one hand, we see a group of relatively wealthy diasporic states (e.g. China, India, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Vietnam, Indonesia and Ethiopia) with large migrant populations fanning out over many countries. Many of these 'migrant-sending' countries currently experience rapid economic growth (epitomised by 'rise of the South'). Migrants originating from these countries include a relatively well-off elite group of transnational entrepreneurs (Adepoju et al. 2008). Supported by the governments, many are making large investments in land, not only in their own countries but also in neighbouring areas (Sheffer 2003). Investors from countries such as South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil play important roles in the global land rush, pushing the expansion of oil palm, soy and other crops within their own region, but also into new directions such as in Mozambique, Liberia and Uganda.

On the other hand, we see the group of poorest countries, often characterised by high levels of South–South migration in the direction of neighbouring countries (a high proportion of these South–South migrants often fare relatively badly in the receiving countries), while simultaneously being mentioned as the 'top' victims of land grabbing. Examples here include: Mozambique with migration mainly to South Africa and Botswana; Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Congo, the population of which – through constant wars – has had to seek refuge in neighbouring countries; Burkina Faso and Mali with migration to Ivory Coast and also to Nigeria and Senegal. In Latin America, the countries concerned include Paraguay and Bolivia, from where, until recently, people migrated in large numbers to Argentina; Nicaragua with migration to Costa Rica; and Honduras with migration particularly to Mexico. In Asia, Burma can be cited as an example with a population of one million in Thailand, and there is also considerable migration from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to destinations within the region (Lucas 2004, p. 4).

The above emergent geographies and new regionalism produce contrasting development effects across the world. Being at the receiving side of migration and on the sending side of land-related investments tends to generate better opportunities. The poorest countries especially struggle how to benefit from South–South migration and deal with pressures on land while providing space to land investors from outside.

CHANGING LANDSCAPES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ON (IM)MOBILITY

Current trends show that people are increasingly limited in their *freedom to move* as a consequence of restrictive migration policies and border walls (Adepoju et al. 2008),[9] but also as the consequence of land investments (increasing numbers of people are enclosed – they are no longer allowed to enter commons or are excluded from reserves (see below). European countries and the United States, in particular, have become less accessible than before owing to heavy investments in improved border control (e.g. Frontex operations in the case of the European Union, and the building of walls to keep immigrants out).[10] As a direct result of restrictive policies in the European Union and the United States, migrants find themselves confronted with rising costs and are forced to earn extra money *en route* in order to finance the final part of their journey. Many get stuck *en route*—having shed their old identity, they stay temporarily as quasi-migrants at an intermediate location. They are forced to break off the journey but often cannot return home because they are afraid of loss of face and have no way to repay the sum that family members and friends advanced them. The migrants in transition regions, in particular, often endure poor conditions and are vulnerable to exploitation (Collyer 2006, p. 145). A consequence of restrictive policies is the growing role of people smugglers and rising criminality. Migration routes have lengthened; migrants spend longer periods *en route*; they remain longer in transition regions, and take greater risks. Enhanced border controls have not reduced illegality or helped to solve the problems.

At the same time, many people are limited in their *freedom to stay,* or forced to move. This is the consequence of migration policies, (repatriation etc.) but also a direct result of global investment flows. Large-scale land investments in food and biofuels, but also tourism complexes, hydro dams, nature conservation etc. are contributing to the rapid transformation of the landscapes, restricting people's access to open commons (land, water, forests etc.) and leading to enclosures and fragmentation or competing claims. Local groups are increasingly under pressure as the consequence of four spatial trends, which each is limiting local people's manoeuvring space (Zoomers 2010). The rapid expansion of food and biofuels promote worldwide '*monocultivation*', i.e., expansion of the areas used for industrial monocrops, for example soy, oil palm and sugar cane (Borras & Franco 2014; Budidarsono et al. 2014; Cotula 2012, 2014)[11]. Other examples of expanding monocrops include sugar, cacao, coffee and banana. Even though this might contribute to economic growth (employment, income etc.), it often goes at the cost of freedom of choice. Becoming an outgrower or plantation worker is the only way to benefit, but producing monocrops often make producers more vulnerable (price and climate variability). Second, there is a rapid increase of '*no-go areas*' as consequence of large scale investments in (eco)-tourism and, in particular, the boom of REDD+ in the context of climate mitigation. Facilitated through multilateral funding for reducing forest emissions, thousands of forest emission projects are currently being implemented on large areas of land in countries with remaining forest frontiers. Even though local people are supposed to share the benefits (e.g. providing ecological services), levels of remuneration are low, and the cost of losing access to common pool resources is often higher than the benefits. In addition, large-scale tourism development (usually at beautiful sites) is occurring in many countries, from Mexico and Costa Rica to Vietnam and Mozambique, and is often followed by real estate booms and rapidly rising land prices. Of all the beaches in Costa Rica, more than 80% are owned by foreign investors (Van Noorloos 2011, 2012). In addition, processes of *landscape destruction* are increasingly a cause of exclusion and displacement. Governments in countries such as Mozambique, Peru, Indonesia, Zambia and Nigeria have generously provided enormous concessions for the exploitation of oil, gas, bauxite, etc. In countries such as China, Vietnam, Brazil and Ecuador, large-scale investments are made in hydropower dams, often in the context of climate change mitigation (green energy), forcing local people to move or become resettled (Pham Huu 2015; Tanner & Allouche 2011). Local groups are at best compensated for their loss of land, but the amount they receive is in many cases not enough to rebuild their livelihood in new locations.

Discussion and Conclusion: Development as Freedom?

As a consequence of migration and large scale land investments, landscapes are undergoing complex transformations. Geopolitical relations are also rapidly changing and 'the enclosure and sustenance of coherent local spaces increasingly depends on the capacity to secure effective individual and corporate engagements with the wide range of networks and flows' (Simone 2001:16). Flows of people and capital are expanding more hastily than ever before, creating new development hubs and networks of opportunities but equally bringing new border walls and enclosures. Local livelihood opportunities are being altered constantly and quickly, more often than not by factors from outside. There is a huge and widening gap between what is currently happening 'on the ground' and the idealised notion of local development as 'people leading the life they aspire and value' or development as freedom.

These spatial, political and socio-economic transformations infringe upon the agency among local people in pursuing or enjoying 'development'. In migration, positive effects are reserved for the happy few who can afford travelling to places with attractive job opportunities in the European Union, Canada and the United States, but also in Singapore, Shanghai and Pretoria to name a few of the new hubs. But many more migrants find themselves in vulnerable situations and have no chances to become the 'unsung heroes' (Ramamurthy 2003). This in turn has direct consequences for the people to whom they are connected. Rather than sending remittances home, flows may even go in the opposite direction when migrants getting support from home. In places with a rapid inflow of land investments (in food, fuel, dams etc.), local people are often not informed about upcoming investment or are simply bypassed by incoming groups with higher levels of education etc. While some might benefit as out-growers, for example, others are forced to give up land or move. This illustrates the contradiction between the global and local. As Bauman (1998) maintains 'What appears as globalization for some means localization for others; being 'local' and immobile in a globalized world is a sign of social deprivation and degradation (Bauman 1998:6)'. It is evident that international migration and global land investment flows have exacerbated unevenness. Ever more local people are being dispossessed, being limited in their freedom to stay and freedom to move, and not enjoying the freedom to lead a life they value.

There is also a need to problematise the way 'local development' is conceptualised and practiced in policy. In current policy debates developmental issues are often narrowly defined as 'how to maximise the positive impacts while minimising the negative consequences'. Local development impacts are described mainly in terms of income and employment generation. Local is conceived as spatially bound and small. Taking in policy formulation the fields of migration and land investments flows as examples, the focus is on the 'directly affected' while not much attention paid on bypassed groups. Local people groups are referred to in terms of local 'communities', which are often described as 'homogeneous, territorially fixed, small and homogeneous whole with shared norms' (Agrawal & Gibson 1999, p. 633). In migration debates, policy makers discuss local communities as 'home of the left behinds' or as the potential destination of return migrants. In the discussions about Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), local communities are seen as all-encompassing group with common interests, able and willing to make desirable collective decisions such as when negotiating with investors. In stimulating local participation, the main concern is whether local people are informed, or (in the case of loss) receive a fair compensation, rather than engaging in a critical debate about whether the type of investment made is line with local people's priorities – whether it will help to solve local problems and satisfying local needs. In comparison with earlier debates about sustainable livelihoods (SLA), relatively little attention is given to questions such as whether development is in line with people's aspirations, and which people within the communities, in other words intra-community differentiation. Local communities, even if they existed as homogeneous 'wholes' – which is in reality never the case, are increasingly fragmented due to differential impacts of influences from the outside as well as differences in the abilities of diverse locals to link to non-local opportunities.

If we define development as 'enjoyment of freedom' (Sen 1999), we see an increasingly complex situation. Analysing 'local' development in a context of global migration and the global land rush, it is striking that increasing numbers of people, being part of networks, are limited in their freedom to move *and* limited in their freedom to stay. It is clear that international migration and large scale land investments might bring some benefits usually in terms of employment and income, but freedoms and choices are increasingly constrained. Even though contributing to the removal of debilitating limitations in their place (e.g., improving access to schools, medical facilities and infrastructure) and expanding people's manoeuvring space, becoming part of migration networks or benefitting from value chains will often come with new unfreedoms such as new rules and regulations, loss of resources, risks as well.

In the context of globalisation, discussions about 'local development' can no longer be framed in terms of bringing development interventions in line with people's capabilities and local priorities (as was often done in the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA)).[12] Typical for the livelihood approach was seeing people as agents actively shaping their own future on the basis of capitals (Sen 1981; Chambers & Conway 1991). In the context of the newly emerging geographies, the set of capitals that people need to accumulate is no longer the same. Rather than being principally determined by capital-assets and capabilities at the household level (as the SLA approach suggests), sustainable livelihoods is increasingly a matter of collective ability to become part of the right network (and establish effective connections with outsiders willing to share capitals and benefits. Livelihood opportunities are to a large extent determined by translocal relations, one's embeddedness in development corridors and development chains (Zoomers & Van Westen 2011) and the ability of local people and institutions to engage with these external forces in such a way that they can reap the benefits. This is ultimately a matter of the degree of local control – in a social and/or territorial sense. Investors and migrants, together with governments and elites, often playing crucial roles in determining whether certain capitals and opportunities will go or come; as local stakeholders, people are informed and asked for consent (FPIC etc.), and there are community meetings about compensation in the case of harm. Discussions are usually related to externally formulated plans and driven by expectations ('local needs' are often not the point of departure). 'Development as freedom' is increasingly reduced to 'do no harm' – as an investor one can tick the boxes on a checklist for responsible behaviour, irrespective of whether the initiative makes sense.

Globalisation has given rise to new and intensified transnational and translocal relationships, which shape places, development trajectories and livelihood possibilities in distinct ways (Schapendonk 2014). Relational dynamics are more important than ever before in determining whether local people can benefit or not from the inflow of new actors and capital. There is therefore an urgent need to re-spatialize classical notions in the development studies, such as Sen's idea of freedom, capabilities and SLA that have framed our thinking. Whether local people are able to benefit from international migration and/or investment flows will depend greatly on positionality and their ability to 'linking up', e.g., moving to the most favourable migration destination, finding the 'right' investor willing to come and settle and share benefits. Local development is increasingly a matter of dealing with 'outsiders', having the capacity to negotiate, being capable of consensus building and forcing outsiders to fulfil promises and expectations. Interactions (and hence also impact) are often unpredictable (Dovey 2012) and local resilience depends on people's capacity to act quickly and cope with the unexpected. Local development is about jumping on the right train and switching tracks until arriving at the right destination.

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Short Biographies

Annelies Zoomers is Professor of International Development Studies in the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning at Utrecht University, and Chair of LANDac (IS Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development). She has published widely on aspects of land governance and international migration, focusing on their intersections with (trans)local development.

Maggi Leung (Associate Professor) and Guus van Westen (Assistant Professor) also work at the Geography department at Utrecht University. Leung's recent research focuses on skilled and academic migration/mobility, and the infrastructure-development nexus. Van Westen specialises on topics pertaining to private sector development, institutions, and land-related development problems and policies.

Notes

* Correspondence address: Annelies Zoomers, Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 2, Utrecht, 3508 TC, The Netherlands. E-mail: E.B.Zoomers@uu.nl

[1] This kind of interconnectedness is described by Sheppard (2002) in terms of 'wormholes'

[2] It is obvious that local (under)development has always been affected by distant factors and process, well-illustrated for instance by colonial history. But we believe that current intensification of global connectedness merits special critical attention.

[3] For example http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org or http://www.iom.int for global migration; and http://www.farmlandgrab.org or http://www.gltn.net for the global land rush.

[4] There are of course also 'local' individuals, communities, corporations and institutions that have gained power to control other groups of 'locals' in our globalised political-economy, thinking about George Soros, food speculators working on and via the Wall Street, Cargill and the World Trade Organisation. Rather than considering these also as 'locals' operating from and embedded in specific places, there is a tendency to consider these forces as only 'global' (cf. Bauman 1998) and hence unavoidable and irresistible.

[5] Focusing on global migration, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the global migrant population (currently estimated at approximately 215 million) will increase to around 400 million in 2050 (http://www.iom.int/, accessed on 11 March 2015). Remittance flows to developing countries reached $414 billion in 2013 (up 6.3% over 2012) and are expected to reach $540 billion by 2016. Worldwide, remittance flows may reach over $700 billion by 2016 (http://siteresources.worldbank.org; last accessed on 11 March 2015). Attempting to provide a reliable estimate of the volume land investments, estimates of the total affected area are 20–60 million hectares but are highly variable (IFPRI 2009; Deininger & Byerlee 2011; Friis & Reenberg 2010).

[6] According to Adams and Page (2003), migration through remittances directly affects poverty: 'an increase of 10 per cent in a country's share of international migrants leads to a 2 per cent decline in 1$ a day poverty' (Adams & Page 2003, cited in de Haan 2005, p. 2).

[7] In many Northern countries, anti-immigration sentiments became increasingly strong: 'Today immigrants appear as threatening outsiders, knocking at the gates, or crashing the gates, or sneaking through the gates into societies richer than those from which the immigrants came' (Sassen 1999, p. 1).

[8] This is not to downplay the impact of the changing consumption patterns of the locals there.

[9] This is of course now particularly interesting considering the flow of refugees coming over to Europe. What is/should be the 'freedom' that is important when we talk about development is one of the core questions.

[10] Spain has built a 35 million Euro three metres high fence around its North African enclave city Melilla and a similar fence around the city of Ceuta (both funded by the European Union). Huge border fences have appeared between Mexico and the United States. Given these borders and the process of externalization of borders, Mexico and North African countries (Morocco, also Senegal etc.) are increasingly difficult to reach from neighbouring countries.

[11] In countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia, millions of hectares of land are covered by huge soy plantations, often to the detriment of biodiversity and leading to deforestation (Pacheco 2012). Similar processes are taking place in Indonesia and Malaysia with the production of oil palm. New plantations are rapidly emerging in countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Mozambique, Liberia and Uganda (see above).

[12] According to SLA, people's livelihood largely depends on the opportunity to access 'capitals' (which form the basis for their livelihood strategies). These capitals are 'human capital' (skills, education), social capital (networks), financial capitals (money), natural capital (land, water, minerals) and physical capital (houses, livestock, machinery etc.) (Bebbington 1999; de Haan et al. 2003, 2005); emphasis is on the flexible combinations and trade-off between capitals (all capitals are linked to each other).

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