Action theatre to study resistance to land grabbing

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- Research project: Land Rush in the Great Lakes
- 2. Methodology to study resistance: applied theatre
- 3. Ethical challenges and reflections



Global drivers

Regional drivers



Regional drivers Global drivers Agrarian and land policies **UGANDA** NORTH Goma KIVU RWANDA SOUTH BURUNDI KIVU

Global drivers

Regional drivers



- Neo-liberal agrarian and land policies
- Focus on productive value of agriculture
- Partnerships: public private civil society



Global drivers

Regional drivers

Agrarian and land policies



Resilience / resistance at the local level





Different shades of resistance

Coping Strategies individual acts of violation aimed at survival

Deliberate violation

individual acts of deliberately violation (element of pride)

Collective cor

individual acts of violation with i

Col'ective hid 'dominant' – 'dominated'

collective acts of violation, but part of the hidden transcript

Disguised collective acts of viola

Infrapolitics Evolution of resistance in space and time re renegociation -

Entanglement of

resistance - role of

variety of actors beyond

ers

Narrow Politic reappropriation - dialogue

organised acts performed in public that pursue immediate change

Broad Political Action

organised acts performed in public that pursue abstract political aims

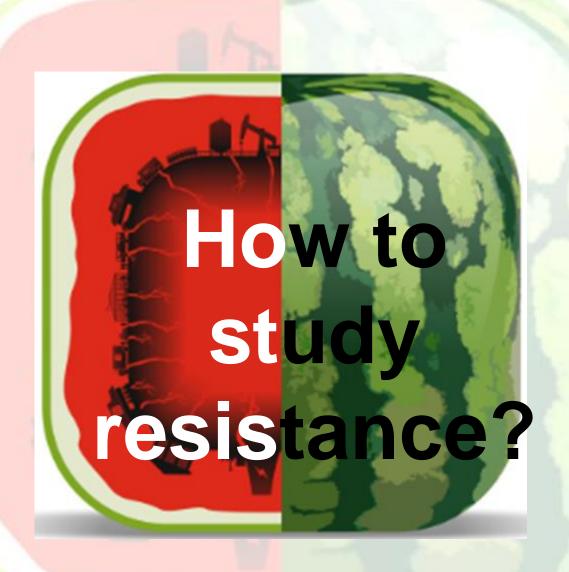
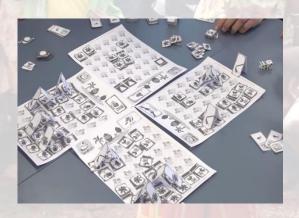


Image courtesy: Chaire Singleton, UCL, 2015

Innovative research method:

- Qualitative in-depth research long-term engagement
- Elaboration of innovative methods: Simulation game transformed into community theatre action research



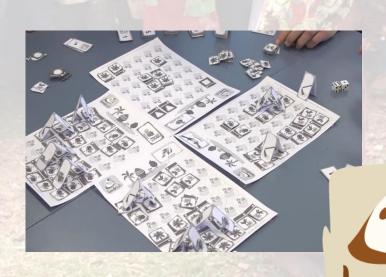


- In close collaboration with civil society organisations and local theatre groups created through the research project
- Discussion through participation of public



LAND RUSH: an applied theatre method







LAND RUSH: an applied theatre method

"Aesthetic distance allows applied drama participants [as well as audiences] to address and work with their own lived experiences and concerns in a safe way, through the distancing provided by translating reality into fiction".

(Prendergast and Saxton, 2013: 16)

- To share hidden discourses that normally remain confined to a very particular inner circle through explicit narratives and plot twists OR through subtle metaphors and body language
- To reveal tacid knowledge, taking participants beyond their conscious self into parts of their sub conscience and into the world of others

LAND RUSH: ethical questions

- How guarantee security of participants and public?
 - What about consent when process has taken off
 - Emotional triggers
 - Coordination and presence of bystanders
 - Uncontrolable context
- Participatory / loss of control
 - Power relations also among subaltern
 - Keep specific elements distanced from real-life situation
 - Objective is not to get to consensus



LAND RUSH: ethical questions

Theatre as transformatory encounter

- Paternalistic treatment? Cultural invasion (Freire)
- Transmission of culturally-bound values
- Theatre in action-research
 - Placing research in longer-term perspective
 - Collaboration with civil society partners
 - Appropriation of resistance strategies by those fighting 'on their behalf'?



LAND RUSH: ethical questions

- Right of researcher to disclose hidden discourse / to study resistance?
 - Tricking people into revealing
 - Giving honest interpretation
 - Instrumentalised by whom?
- Auto-reflexivity in resistance studies
 - Ethic protocols? No black or white answers
 - Researcher / activist
 - Collective discussion



