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[Agroecology as a pathway to “resilience justice”? Farmer unions and re-territorialization in the Niayes region of Senegal]

[The peri-urban Niayes coastal region is the main horticulture production area of Senegal. It is also a pioneering area for the development of agroecology, with smallholder farmer unions promoting sustainable farming, input substitution and commercialization of organic products in the region for more than 30 years.

However, traditional smallholder farming in the area is highly threatened by urbanization and the development of large agribusinesses, extractive industries and state infrastructures. Facing this context, farmer unions are increasingly engaging in struggles to ensure access to land and water for smallholder farmers. Through this evolution, they are gradually shifting their focus on farm-level and value chains to a focus on territorial governance. This nevertheless involves several challenges, including a highly centralized State with strong mechanisms of coercion and co-optation, the dependency of farmer unions on foreign funding via NGOs, and the complexity of issues at stake due to systemic nexuses between land, water, labour, ecosystems and markets.

To understand these challenges, we propose to build on and expand the concept of “resilience justice” to encompass smallholder farmers’ struggles that aim at restoring resilient social-ecological systems and improving their position within these systems. We provide empirical evidence based on fieldwork research in the Niayes region in 2018 and 2019, with a representation and analysis of systemic links, involved actors and mobilized territorialities as networks (Boillat, Bottazzi 2020). We suggest that this framing provides clues on how to reconcile resilience framings, that have been criticized for overlooking agency and power relations, with dynamic, transformative and politically engaged research-action on territorial governance.]

[References]

Boillat, S., Bottazzi, P. (2020). Agroecology as a pathway to resilience justice: peasant movements and collective action in the Niayes coastal region of Senegal. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 7 May 2020, 1–16. [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2020.1758972>.

Main organizers

Co-organizers

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