

Whose Security? *Evolving frames and manifestations of climate security in an era of ecological militarisation and the implications for climate justice*

Abstract

Climate change being a threat to security, peace and stability is an increasingly dominant framing in academic, policy and activist circles. These ‘climate security’ debates know stark disagreements about causal relations between climate change, conflict and security. Meanwhile, climate security is moving beyond the discursive realm and is finding its way into policies and practices, that have implications for the use and control of land, water, forests. Consequently, climate security sees an increased engagement of military power and interests with approaches for climate mitigation and adaptation. Literature on climate security, also in critical approaches, has primarily engaged with its discourse, its embedding in broader debates on environmental and human security and with its problematisation. This dissertation contributes to the literature by answers the question how climate security manifests discursively and practically in an era of militarisation of ecologies, with what implications for climate justice. It does so by outlining the rise, expansion and continued stretching of climate security as a discourse and practice globally, and with emergence of new strands in Nepal. It problematises climate security and offers alternatives for moving forward towards just climate action.

First, the dissertation proposes a research agenda that calls for situating climate security within debates on climate politics, questions around climate securities and socio-ecological conflicts. Next, it presents an analysis on the framing of climate security in the translation from discourse to practice, identifying that despite a prevalence of the frame of ‘human security’, state security and its military interests continue to be central. This part identified six risks: a depoliticization of scarcity, control-seeking over natural resources through top-down governance, a push for neoliberal approaches, the dominant focus on violent conflict vis a vis conflicts as a clash of interests, and knowledge politics. The dissertation then presents a newly emerging avenue of climate security as encountered in Nepal: the militarisation of rivers, forests and disaster response as part of military strategies to protect vital infrastructures. It proposes ‘vital *climate* infrastructures’ as conceptual frame. This newly emerging avenue of climate security is then situated within the renewed era of green militarisation and green militarism; the military capture of ecological phenomena and the encroachment of military actors, investments, strategies, logics and practices into social and environmental domains. It proposes a new conceptual approach of ‘militarised ecologies’ and ends with a call for a research centre. Lastly, the dissertation goes beyond problematisation and proposes alternatives for just climate action: counternarratives and action around climate justice and peace, localised knowledge and practice for disaster risk reduction and response, degrowth, and increased scholar–activism towards climate justice and peace.