

Waste Frontiers/War Enclosures: Decolonial Geosocial Analysis of Contaminated Military Land Conversions

Krupar, Shiloh (2024.0)

ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

Military-industrial practices have left widespread contamination affecting land, water, air, and human and nonhuman bodies. This article uses decolonial analysis to examine the racial-colonial foundations that underlie contemporary efforts to reuse former U.S. military land for development projects. Interrelating scholarship on security and development with that of militarization and political ecology, I use “geosocial spectacle” to probe the material and pedagogical governance, frontier logics, and colonial aesthetics that emerge through land remediation and redevelopment. Featuring two military sites within U.S. base closure and realignment—the U.S. Front Range area of Colorado and former U.S. unincorporated territory of the Panama Canal Zone—the article delineates and expounds on two types of U.S. military land conversions: brownfields and biodiversity recreation. The article interrelates the conversion of contaminated land in both cases as waste frontier that facilitates ongoing cycles of land repossession as a form of dispossession and containment or denial of war. The article concludes by advocating for decolonial studies of the global color line entrenched by the U.S. Pentagon’s ongoing climate colonialism, to subvert the compartmentalized harms of war and capitalist extraction, and to galvanize explicitly anticolonial, antiracist land reuse and governance. © 2024 by American Association of Geographers.