

Cotton farming, land ownership and salinised soils in southern Central Asia

Increasing soil salinization induced by the deteriorating irrigation infrastructure, incorrect water management and inadequate agricultural policies have been undermining the legacy of Soviet 'cotton utopias' all across post-Soviet Central Asia. In Southern Kazakhstan, cotton producers who emerged from the end of collective agriculture experience land ownership and land degradation as important factors in the reshaping of social inequality and, at the same time, they are comparing their present-day problems with a past in which soil salinity had been managed more effectively. By investigating questions of environmental justice in Central Asia's cotton agriculture, this chapter addresses the adaptations of small and large farm holdings to multiple challenges. While environmental awareness and criticism of unsustainable practices has been relatively muted in post-socialist cotton agriculture, mounting problems have led the government to intervene more proactively in order to address questions of land conservation. While farmers confront issues of social and environmental injustice, policymakers are concerned about reconciling economically effective farms with environmentally responsible management and planning.

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The guest lecture will take place **on 20th June 2023 at 14:00 o'clock** c.t. at IAAW, 2nd floor, room 217

