

Internal Colonialism as Socio-Ecological Fix: The Case of New Clark City in the Philippines

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Abstract: We study the emergence of New Clark City, Philippines, which is part of the country's development programme "Build-Build-Build". Triangulating data from field observations, interviews, and documents, we analyse the social, economic, and ecological consequences of this "city of the future". The city enables capital to be fixed into space, which (i) creates new accumulation opportunities for investors, (ii) lubricates capital circulation, shortening turnover times and lowering costs, and (iii) staves off a multitude of longstanding barriers faced by capital and state actors by reordering space along the lines of the Philippines' geographical expansion and spatial restructuring strategy. Aiming to address a geographical-switching crisis, this socio-ecological fix goes hand-in-hand with the stark reality of an internal colonialist agenda, resulting in negative consequences for local and Indigenous communities. We contribute to the socio-ecological fix literature by arguing that internal colonialism offers a vital lens to understand capital expansion from the centre to the periphery.

Resumen: Estudiamos el surgimiento de New Clark City, Filipinas, que forma parte del programa de desarrollo del país "Construir-Construir-Construir". Triangulando datos de observaciones de campo, entrevistas y documentos, analizamos las consecuencias sociales, económicas y ecológicas de esta "ciudad del future". La ciudad permite que el capital se fije en el espacio, lo que (i) crea nuevas oportunidades de acumulación para los inversores, (ii) lubrica la circulación de capital, acorta los tiempos de rotación y reduce los costos, y (iii) evita una multitud de barreras de larga data que enfrentan el capital y actores estatales reordenando el espacio siguiendo las líneas de la estrategia de expansión geográfica y reestructuración espacial de Filipinas. Con el objetivo de abordar una crisis de cambio geográfico, esta solución socioecológica va de la mano con la cruda realidad de una agenda colonialista interna, lo que tiene consecuencias negativas para las comunidades locales e indígenas. Contribuimos a la literatura sobre soluciones socioecológicas argumentando que el colonialismo interno ofrece una lente vital para comprender la expansión del capital del centro a la periferia.

Keywords: socio-ecological fix, internal colonialism, capital switching, Indigenous people

Palabras clave: solución socioecológica, colonialismo interno, cambio de capital, pueblos indígenas

Introduction

The Philippines opened the 30th Southeast Asian Games this year with a performance celebrating the country's Indigenous cultures. A day earlier, Indigenous Aeta communities were given a notice evicting them from their ancestral lands. These Aeta families—up to 500 of them according to a local Indigenous association—are among those being displaced to give way for New Clark City (NCC), a 9,500-hectare development that is supposed to become the Philippines' "first smart and green metropolis". (Magallona 2019)

In 2019, the Philippines hosted the 30th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in a newly constructed city called New Clark City, which is said to become the Philippines' greenest city and new administrative capital by 2030. The city project offers the prospect of a more sustainable, greener, and environmentally friendly future for capital and government elites, which is said to be achieved through technological innovation and construction-induced economic growth. New Clark City is constructed in response to the overpopulation, flooding risks, and climate change affecting the mega-city of Metro Manila, the current capital of the country. The site of New Clark City in Central Luzon is protected from tsunamis and typhoons by the surrounding mountains. It is also above sea-level and not on a geological fault-line and was therefore deemed to be a more sustainable location than Manila. The development of New Clark City is progressing on land, which, according to the Philippine government, is currently vacant as the construction site encompasses a former US Air Force base, which is said to be ripe for development. However, the local Indigenous Aeta tribe has lived on this land for thousands of years, and peasant farmers gain their livelihood from the land. This is largely ignored by the local government, which accuses the Aeta tribe of living unsustainably. Instead, the government claims that New Clark City is built on "green" principles, contributing to the global fight against climate change. One key objective of the 2019 SEA Games was to introduce this "green" city to the region and the wider world, showcasing the Philippines' developmental paradigm, dubbed the "build-build-build" programme.

In this article, we analyse the social, economic, and ecological consequences of the rise of the "city of the future", New Clark City, which is merely one example of similar large-scale, "green" city projects in Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and other countries. These emerging city projects are examples of large-scale infrastructure investments that reorder the socio-ecological relations of a territory. Infrastructure matters, so to say (Casaglia 2018; Maharawal 2023). To study the realities of infrastructure investments, we visited New Clark City and its surrounding areas in 2019, collecting qualitative data from field observations and interviews, which have been triangulated with documentary data.

Theoretically, we make sense of our empirical case by adopting the socio-ecological fix framework (Ekers and Prudham 2015, 2017, 2018), which further develops Harvey's (2001, 2003, 2006) seminal understanding of the "spatio-temporal fix" tendencies of capital. Through this concept, we comprehend the construction of New Clark City as a fix, seeking to restructure and reorganise space in response to a variety of political, economic, and legitimacy crises-dynamics in the Philippines.

Furthermore, we develop our theoretical framework by taking on board Ekers and Prudham's (2017, 2018) recent understandings of socio-ecological fix, examining processes of centralisation and decentralisation through the lens of capital switching (Harvey 1978, 1981, 1982). To this we add the dimension of "internal colonialism" (Blauner 1969; Das 2020; Gramsci 1957; Lenin 1956; Love 1989; Pinderhughes 2011), which we argue is crucial for understanding the dynamics of socio-ecological fix. Accordingly, we conceptualise New Clark City as a fix that follows an internal colonialist agenda, attempting to stave off a geographical-switching crisis (Beauregard 1994), which is represented by an increasing need for capital and state actors in Metropolitan Manila to expand capitalist logics from the centre to the periphery.

Overall, we argue that the construction of New Clark City can be understood as an attempt by capital to be fixed into space. This fix (i) creates and secures new accumulation opportunities for domestic and international investors, (ii) lubricates capital circulation, which shortens turnover times and lowers costs between spatial scales, as well as (iii) staves off a multitude of longstanding barriers faced by capital and state actors in the Philippines by reordering space along the lines of the Philippines' geographical expansion and spatial restructuring strategy. This, as we show in this article, has resulted in manifold negative consequences, including: amplifying the exploitation and subordination of the local peasantry and Indigenous communities in their own homeland (Casaglia 2018); accelerating the historical dispossession, displacement, and marginalisation of peripheral cultures; facilitating property transfer from poor to rich; as well as destroying the socio-ecologies embodied in the lives of the locals, transforming them into beggars, criminals, sex workers, and servants of foreigners hosted by the tourism industry.

Our study contributes to the growing socio-ecological fix literature in two ways. First, we argue that internal colonialism offers a vital lens for understanding the dynamics of socio-ecological fixes in the context of the expansion of capitalist logics from the centre to the periphery. Second, we provide a case from the Global South, which remains an under-researched context in the socio-ecological fix literature.

This article now unfolds as follows. Next, we develop our theoretical framework of socio-ecological fix, reviewing what might be called the "fix" strand of the critical geography literature. We will show why this literature should include an understanding of internal colonialism. Following the outline of our methods, we present a detailed case study of New Clark City in the Philippines. We then discuss our case findings in relation to the theoretical frames of socio-ecological fix and internal colonialism. Finally, we conclude the article by discussing the implications for future research.

Literature Review

The “Fix” Strand of the Critical Geography Literature

The overarching question of how the geography of capitalism is made has long been the subject of critical economic geography (Harvey 2001, 2003, 2006; Massey 1995; Smith 2008; Storper and Walker 1989), particularly since Lefebvre’s (1991) influential contributions. According to Harvey (2006), the production and restructuring of space serve capital as a spatio-temporal fix in a double sense. On the one hand, it is a fix that allows capital to stave off, if not resolve, the tendency toward crisis formation through geographical expansion and/or spatial restructuring. On the other hand, this fix constructs a fixed space, in which capital’s presence and activity is secured and deepened to re-enable the spatio-temporal displacement of recurrent crises of overaccumulation.

Since its first emergence in the early 1980s, the theory of spatial fix has been widely adopted in geographical political economy. Bok (2019) identifies four successive thematic moments of “fix thinking”: spatial fix (1980s); institutional and spatio-temporal fixes of regulationist-theoretical approaches (1990s); the scalar fix of state rescaling theory (2000s); and, finally, the “environmental fixes” of political-ecological approaches (2010s). This latest strand extends Harvey’s notion of spatial fix into political-ecological contexts. Castree (2008), for example, develops a notion of an environmental fix to explain the greening of capitalism as a strategy for the neoliberalisation of nature. Equally, While et al. (2004) suggest a notion of sustainability fix to explain local governments’ restructuring strategy to balance the rising economic, social, and environmental demands for ecological modernisation. To shed light on the scalar dimension of crisis displacement, Cohen and Bakker (2014) propose “eco-scalar fix” as a rescaling instrument of environmental governance.

The most recent and perhaps most systematic attempt to examine and develop Harvey’s spatial fix is the notion of “socio-ecological fix”, developed by Ekers and Prudham (2015). Their starting point is the idea that the spatial fix is a metabolic process that cannot be comprehended only in economic terms (Ekers and Prudham 2017, 2018). The “socio-ecological fix” concept is concerned with the way capitalist crises, which include political, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions, are staved off by way of reordering capital along socio-ecological processes and landscapes (Friend and Hutunuwatr 2021). Understanding Harvey’s notion of spatial fix as an inherently metabolic process in which the production of space and nature happens simultaneously, the concept aims to capture the ways in which social relations as well as material and symbolic conditions of capitalist accumulation are reproduced through fixed capital investments in landscapes that are conjoined productions of space and nature (Ekers and Prudham 2017).

The concept has also been used to examine the ways in which human–nature relations and socio-ecological landscapes are produced and reproduced to offset (at least temporarily) entangled social, environmental, and legitimacy crises of capitalism. McCarthy (2015), for example, discusses the global shift toward renewable energy as a global-scale socio-ecological fix, addressing various crisis tendencies that originate in the contradictions of the fossil-fuel era. Ekers (2015) addresses the practices of reforestation and sustained-yield production as a socio-

ecological fix, assisting the Canadian state in tackling the problems of accumulation, unemployment, and legitimacy of the state and forestry industry. Similarly, Nugent (2015) demonstrates how politico-economic contradictions in Ontario, arising from air pollution, traffic congestion, and economic stagnation, were fixed through advancing the neoliberal governance of public infrastructure investments. Equally, Zalik (2015) explores the fixing role of the reserve replacement, environmental review, and tribunal processes in the case of the Canadian oil industry (see also Collard and Dempsey 2022; Dempsey 2015; Ekers and Prudham 2015, 2017; Guthman 2015; Johnson 2015).

The concept of “socio-ecological fix” has helped us understand how capital is able to reproduce itself in an era of climate and ecological emergencies, showing the metabolic circuits of capital’s geographical switching and fixed capital formation in social-environmental transformations. In this way, Ekers and Prudham (2017) argue that socio-ecological fixes are not only economic in nature but play an important ideological role in the reproduction of capitalist hegemony.

So far, we have reviewed the origins and development of the “fix” strand in the critical geography literature by placing a particular focus on the notion of socio-ecological fix. Now, by taking the recent contributions by Ekers and Prudham (2017, 2018) on board, we turn our attention to, what can be called, the inner and outer moments of socio-ecological fixes. We also discuss Harvey’s (1982) notion of regional crisis formation and Beauregard’s (1994) interpretation of geographical-switching crises, which, we argue, are all important to understanding the dynamics of socio-ecological fixes.

The Twin Moments of Socio-Ecological Fixes and Crisis Formation within Regions

Characterised by its own specific conditions of surplus value production, exchange, and realisation, a region is a dynamic and interactive spatial unit where production forces and social relations are continuously produced and reproduced to enable, maintain, and develop capitalist accumulation. However, this integration of a region with the logic and praxis of capitalist growth constitutes the very foundations of its devaluation and crisis formation both within and beyond its spatial boundaries. In Harvey’s (1982:428) words, “the more capitalism develops, the more it tends to succumb to forces making for geographical inertia”. Consequently, “the more the forces of geographical inertia prevail, the deeper will the aggregate crises of capitalism become, and the more savage will switching crises have to be to restore the disturbed equilibrium”. Drawing on Harvey, Beauregard (1994:718) discusses one of such crises. In his view, a geographical-switching crisis “occurs when capitalists are unable to extract capital sunk into one region for use in another region where investment opportunities are more numerous and profits more robust”. This shows that a spatial fix must always be seen not only as a response to recurring overaccumulation crisis arising from contradictions between the production forces and social relations within the process of capital circulation, but also as an attempt to relieve the crisis formations within regions through, what Harvey calls, inner and outer transformations.

Ekers and Prudham (2017, 2018) call these transformations the twin moments of a fix. According to this account, the “inner moment” refers to a fix having an intensive and centralising character, seeking to absorb surplus capital by deepening existing market capacity, accelerate capital circulation, improving spatial infrastructure and social reproduction within a defined space. The outer moment, on the other hand, refers to a fix having an extensive and decentralising feature, which is characterised by expansionary tendencies. This involves seeking to open new markets for commodities, developing new pathways for investment flows, and searching for cheaper sources in new locations through spatial restructuring and reorganisation. Despite such distinctive characteristics, these twin moments are interwoven with each other and therefore hard to isolate (Harvey 1982). They are hence best understood as having a conjoined and relational character (Ekers and Prudham 2017, 2018).

This, we argue, is important when it comes to understanding regional crisis formations, particularly when making sense of: (i) the forces that allow capital and state actors to develop fixes in response to existing regional crisis formations; and (ii) the “fixing” role fixed capital plays in staving off geographical-switching crises. Yet, there is another dimension to socio-ecological fixes that has received little attention. Hence, in the next section we argue that the dynamics of internal colonialism are equally important when it comes to understanding the logics of socio-ecological fixes and the expansion of capital accumulation from central to peripheral regions.

Internal Colonialism and Socio-Ecological Fixes

Colonialist relations have always been a focal point in critical geography. Harvey’s notion of spatial fix itself has been built on theoretical pillars that are linked to colonialism, including his conceptions of primitive accumulation, imperialism, rent, uneven development, capital export, and geographical expansion. As Bok (2019) highlights, when the concept of spatial fix first surfaced in Harvey’s (1981) *Antipode* essay, a Marxian perspective of colonisation was at the very centre of his critique of Hegel’s theory of capitalist imperialism.

Despite its central role in the emergence of the “fix” literature, the concept of colonialism has only recently been scrutinised in the socio-ecological fix literature. For example, Ekers (2019, 2023) adopts the notion of settler colonialism to argue that the growing investments into British Columbia’s forestlands can be seen as a socio-ecological fix for finance capital and institutional investors. Equally, Webber et al. (2022) question the socio-ecological potential of capital switching in confronting the climate crisis by drawing on perspectives from the geographies of colonialism.

However, the recent interest in the concept of colonialism remains limited, and we argue that there is a need for further theoretical and empirical development of the field. This is particularly salient today as the colonisation of the rural by the urban has been significantly accelerated as a corollary of increasing fixed capital investments—so called “green” projects—that flow disproportionately into rural areas. The potential of green colonialism in rural, often peripheral regions, is

hence ripe, fuelled by lower land values, less powerful actors, and fewer formal land rights (McCarthy 2015). This is specifically important for rural regions in the Global South, where antecedent colonial relations built around traditional agricultural economics have increasingly been subjected to spatial restructuring through “green” fixed capital projects, which seek to integrate agrarian socio-ecologies into the regime of accumulation by decarbonisation (Bumpus and Liverman 2008, 2011). These dynamics have had, so far, little attention in the socio-ecological fix literature. Here, we agree with Bok’s (2019) welcome intervention that calls for more theoretical and empirical pluralism and diversity in our attempt to understanding the dynamics of capitalist accumulation across the Global North and South.

We particularly think that the concept of internal colonialism offers a potent lens for understanding the dynamics of socio-ecological fixes for two reasons. First, the concept allows us to understand the “whys” and “wherefores” of the emergence of fixes and application of colonialist agendas within and across regions. Second, internal colonialism considerably improves the explanatory potential of the theory of socio-ecological fix by allowing us to grasp the interplay between the restructuring and reorganisation of interregional arrangements and the socio-ecological transformations that arise from the interweaving centralising and decentralising moments of the fix deployed.

The theory of internal colonialism has a longstanding history, which can be traced back to Lenin’s depiction of the Tsarist autocracy-led forced migration of small industrialists and handicraftsmen to the steppes to promote an internal market for capital centred in St. Petersburg and Moscow (Calvert 2001; Hind 1984; Lenin 1956). Gramsci also employed the concept to describe relations between inhabitants of Italy’s industrial north and the agrarian south (Gramsci 1957; Love 1989). A further iteration of the concept emerged hand-in-hand with dependency theory and postcolonial scholarship employed in the Latin American context in the mid-1960s to describe the spatial and economic practices of domination and segregation experienced by racialised minorities after “decolonisation” (Alexander 2006; Casanova 1965; Das 2020; Etkind 2011; Kipfer 2007; Netzloff 2003; Short 2005; Turner 2018). Since then, the concept has been widely used by a variety of fields, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, minorities, culture (Blaut 1974; Cheung Judge 2023; Love 1989; Martinez 1982), vulnerable and marginalised groups (Ramirez and Böhm 2021), gender (Gordon 2006), migration (Jones 2020), countries in conflict (Gladney 1998), and environment and urbanisation (Calvert 2001; Ramirez and Böhm 2021; Taylor 2014).

The notion of internal colonialism evokes a pattern of exploitation and subordination of a group of people (class, race, etc.) within a defined territory (Pinderhughes 2011). While there are different interpretations of the concept (see Das 2020), we adopt Chávez’s (2011:786) definition, which explains that “internal colonialism seeks to explain the subordinate status of a racial or ethnic group in its own homeland within the boundaries of a larger state dominated by a different people”. As Chávez (2011) says, the exploited and dominated group is made to feel as if they are aliens in their own homeland. This dynamic does not only

exist in Global South contexts but has been documented within Global North countries too. As Hechter (2017) shows in the case of the United Kingdom, people on the Celtic fringes of the country have experienced hundreds of years of internal colonialism, being dominated by English culture, military, and peace-time politics as well as economics (see also Batel and Devine-Wright 2017, for their analysis of energy colonialism in the UK).

Thus far, we have reviewed the literature relevant to the three theoretical pillars of our framework, outlining a theoretical synthesis. In the next section, we introduce our methodological framework and the empirical context of this study.

Methods

A qualitative methods approach guided this research, which is appropriate when exploring new geographical sites and tensions in developmental settings. The empirical data was collected by the two lead authors during fieldwork in August 2019. Our study should be understood as time-bounded, reflecting the wider socio-economic circumstances of the time (Saunders et al. 2009).

To understand the different knowledges around the objects of theoretical enquiry, we collected data from a multitude of sources. This included observations, personal photographs, interviews, government documents, mass media publications, and social media posts. Primary data was collected during the fieldwork period. Observations were unstructured, collected individually and analysed throughout the fieldwork period. Personal photographs were made using the researchers' mobile phones and were included in the observation analysis. Interviews were conducted with local communities and corporate and state actors. All interviews were in a semi-structured format for three reasons: first, key concepts had already been identified in the literature, which were used as guides when designing the interview questions; second, for many of the interviewees it was the first time they had participated in an academic interview and, as such, structured questions in the initial stages of the interview helped to develop a level of trust needed to have a successful interview; third, the flexibility offered by the semi-structured format enabled space for additional topics to be explored within the interview raised by individual participants (Bell et al. 2022). Interviews were conducted in English with local politicians, state institutions, and corporate actors. Interviews with the local community were conducted in Tagalog with the help of a local fieldwork assistant who acted as an interpreter. All interviews were transcribed by the authors and cleaned before analysis.

Secondary data was collected in the months before and after the fieldwork, including government documents, press releases, local media reports, social media interactions, and videos. A purposive sampling strategy was used for all data collected (Bell et al. 2022). For secondary data, the *Rappler* national newspaper was selected as an independent news outlet, covering Philippine national news and some local news. At the time of our research, *Rappler's* editor-in-chief, Maria Ressa, was continually arrested by the then Duterte regime for numerous misdemeanours, which was said to be a crackdown on voices critical of the administration (BBC News 2019). The newspaper is available online and was used

to collect data before, during, and after fieldwork. The local newspaper was available in print-only and published in English. Social media, more specifically Facebook groups and Instagram, were used to identify organised groups and local associations. Initial contacts with participants were also sought over social media. This included the research assistant who introduced us to her contacts in the local community. She acted as a gatekeeper to these groups and ensured our intentions for research were genuine before introducing us to local actors.

For the analysis of our data, we used multiple sources to understand the socio-ecological fix mechanisms in this case. This enabled us to create and continuously develop codes and categories until substantive theory was created. Sources were collated and tested for validity through triangulation, and primary data collection was enhanced through the recruitment of a wide spectrum of state, corporate, and local community actors (see Table 1).

During our fieldwork, we encountered multiple elite actors, belonging to three different social groups (see Table 2). The first are political elites who have decision-making power and can obtain capital. They include the Philippine government at the highest level, the local mayor at a local level, and various state institutions involved directly and indirectly in the project. The second group are capital elites, consisting of transnational actors and multi-national corporations, bringing finance from overseas into the Philippines. Finally, local economic elites consist of actors involved directly and indirectly with the project, including national companies commissioned for various services such as stadium design and

Table 1: Data sources

Source of data	Language	
Primary data	1 interview with Mayor	English
	4 interviews with local farmers	Tagalog
	8 interviews with Aeta community in New Clark City	Tagalog
	10 interviews with Aeta community in the mountains	Tagalog
	1 interview with Mayor of Aeta community	English
	1 interview with Clark Development Corporation	English
	1 interview with Tarlac Employment Ministry	English
	1 interview with a foreign business owner	English
	2 interviews with BCDA	English
	1 interview with Phase 1 construction company	English
	Researchers' photographs	—
	Researchers' observations	—
	Secondary data	Government publications
Government websites		English
<i>Rappler</i> newspaper online		English
Local newspaper (print)		English and Tagalog
Social media		English and Tagalog (translated using software)

Table 2: Elite groups in the New Clark City development

Actor	Description	Link to New Clark City
Political elites		
Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA)	The BCDA Group is a for-profit arm of the Philippine government. It now owns the land formerly occupied by the US military and works to develop the land into economically viable spaces.	BCDA as the owner of the land for New Clark City went into a Joint Venture Agreement with MTD Capital Berhad to build the sports facilities at New Clark City.
Mayor of Capas	Elected individual.	New Clark City is within the boundary of Capas. The Mayor of Capas can receive taxes from the profit of New Clark City to invest in the Capas region.
Land Bank of the Philippines	State-owned bank.	The Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) and the New Clark Government Center Corporation (NGCC) are exploring potential collaboration initiatives for the construction of new government buildings in New Clark City.
Development Bank of the Philippines	State-owned bank.	Gave the P9.5 billion loan to MTD Capital Berhad to build sports facilities.
Philippine government	At the time of the case study, the Duterte Administration were in power.	New Clark City is the flagship project in the “Build-Build-Build” infrastructure programme.
Philippine civil servants	Phase A of New Clark City will house the administrative buildings of the central government.	Civil servants will be relocated to New Clark City, away from the over-population problems associated with Metro Manilla.
Clark Development Corporation	Mandated to operate, administer, manage, and develop the Clark Freeport Zone and the Clark Special Economic Zone.	Received investment to develop Clark International Airport. Infrastructure links to New Clark City brings development opportunity.
Trans-national capitalist elites		
MTD Capital Berhad	Malaysia-based infrastructure conglomerate.	Constructors of the New Clark Sports Hub. Submitted an unsolicited P121.8-billion proposal to build a 207-hectare national government administrative centre in New Clark City.
Broadway Malayan Asia Pte. Ltd	Global architectural firm.	Designers of Central Park, New Clark City. Won an international architecture award in Singapore on 12 December 2022.
Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corp.	International infrastructure corporation.	Plans to connect Clark Green City to Manila as well as surrounding cities by rail.

(continued)

Table 2: (continued)

Actor	Description	Link to New Clark City
IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute	An independent research institute that conducts research and consultancy assignments on environmental and sustainability issues.	To assist the BCDA to come up with “smart and disaster-resilient” features for the planned community.
Local economic elites		
Filinvest Land	Filinvest Land Inc is the real estate arm of Filinvest Development Corp.	Project collaborator. Filinvest New Clark City is a mixed-use and industrial district being developed under a joint venture agreement between BCDA and Filinvest Land.
BUDJI ROYAL Architecture Design	Filipino architecture and design firm.	Project collaborator. Sports facilities designed by architect Royal Pineda, the stadiums were made out of local materials to showcase the Filipino identity.
Small business owners around construction site	Family-owned business running guest houses, bars, karaoke bars, convenience shops, restaurants, taxi services.	Wider beneficiary. These businesses service the local migrant worker population who have temporary accommodation in the region. Higher-end services are also used by travelling business executives, investors, and international visitors.
Small-holding land speculators	A group of people who are able to buy land in surrounding areas in anticipation for land prices to increase over time.	Wider beneficiary. The mayor and BCDA described how some local economic elites were speculating with the land around the New Clark City boundary.
Business owners moving into New Clark City	Small- to medium-sized businesses already located within Clark Freeport Zone.	Wider beneficiary. Business owners have opportunities to diversify and expand their business ventures in New Clark City.

construction. This category also includes small, family-run businesses that benefit from the project, such as local bar owners, taxi operators, and owners of guest-houses. This group is varied, and some have significant power in the local economy and government. In our case, all elites are interconnected, although they might operate across different functions in society and different scales.

Case Study: A “Fix” for Political and Corporate Elites

Our case study findings can be categorised into three moments of geographical switching. The first cycle illustrates the forces that push the government into moving the administrative centre, helping the reader to understand why switching is needed. The second cycle shows the workings of the “fix” itself; how it was

employed on the ground. Finally, the third cycle demonstrates the consequences of the fix for local communities and ecologies.

First Cycle: The Forces Pushing the Government to Move the Administrative Centre

This section outlines the socio-environmental factors that were used by elites (see Table 2) to justify the need to change the location of the country's administrative centre. We show how overcrowding, lack of space for investment, and natural hazards meant Metro Manila became a key concern for the political elites.

The Philippines, labelled a "culture of disasters" (Bankoff 2003), is both geographically and meteorologically one of the world's natural hazard "hot spots". The administrative capital, Metropolitan Manila, is located on a fault line and low-lying floodplain, making it one of the most "at risk" cities from climate change in Asia (Mercado et al. 2020).

Before the threat of climate change, Manila was already susceptible to extreme natural events. The Malacanan Palace, the first government palace of the Philippine Republic, was frequently impacted by earthquakes and typhoons. After the palace and most other government buildings were destroyed in World War II, the government decided to relocate official buildings to what is now Quezon City, located within Metro Manila. Quezon City is also located on a fault line, but at the time it was said to be more stable than the alluvial and delta deposits in the city of Manila (Bonduc 1950). As such, the core political elites of the Philippines have had a history of the natural environment impacting their administrative centres.

The most recent move, to New Clark City, was also said to remove the threat of natural hazards, in particular after severe flooding events affected Metro Manila in 2009, 2012, and 2013. Since then, disaster risk management projects have led to large-scale relocation projects, particularly of the urban poor, who were blamed by elite actors for blocking the rivers (Alvarez and Cardenas 2019). Certain zones were identified that could not safely support human life, and those inhabitants were resettled to the periphery of Manila. According to Saguin and Alvarez (2022), these new settlements were "death zones" with no infrastructure, sub-standard housing, and a lack of services. Other groups, such as the non-city dwellers of Laguna Lake, north of Manila, have also had to live with the negative consequences of infrastructure development in the city (Saguin 2016). The Manila elites used these projects to highlight their urban planning skills and effectiveness, yet many people were left to fend for themselves on the periphery of the city. The construction of New Clark City can therefore be seen as the latest in a long history of urban planning projects designed to ensure the protection of elite interest at the expense of local populations and environments.

In addition to natural hazards, modern-day Metro Manila experiences manifold urban problems. It is one of the most densely populated and overcrowded cities in the world (Jensen et al. 2020). For example, it is reported to have some of the worst traffic and commuting times in the world (Fallaria et al. 2019). In 2015, it was estimated to cost nearly three billion pesos (US\$64 million) every day in lost commerce (Mouton 2021). Metro Manila also produces 25% of all the waste

generated in the Philippines (Regmi 2017). A large young population has also led to issues associated with unemployment (Yulu 2021), drugs (Simbulan et al. 2019), and human trafficking (Faller-Capistrano 2020), particularly in the informal housing areas of Manila. Elites use these factors to justify numerous relocation projects of the urban poor, allowing for the vacated spaces to be used for new urban developments. New Clark City provides yet another opportunity for elites to escape the problems associated with overpopulation.

Whilst there are local environmental and social reasons for moving the administrative centre, one can see New Clark City within a wider Global South urban planning regime (López-Morales 2015; Mishra 2019). The Philippines, like many other Southeast Asian countries, have experienced large-scale infrastructure development projects, which are geared towards international trade and investment opportunities, taking advantage of technological development in the logistics and infrastructure industries financed by international financial institutions (Schindler and Kanai 2022). However, it also offers an opportunity for national elites to gain power through forging new political regimes at the national level whilst creating new international networks (Shatkin 2022). These new national political regimes have enabled land reform and new forms of large-scale, privatised urban planning. New urban spaces are developed that marginalise the poor while supposedly solving overcrowding. These new spaces are often exclusively created for urban elites, consumerism, and export-orientated industries (Shatkin 2008). New Clark City should hence be seen as part of a wider urban gentrification regime (López-Morales 2015), which has taken hold around the world, having been a driving force for an elite re-imagining the city of the Global South.

Another factor is geopolitics, which matters in any Global South context nowadays. Like many African, South American, and Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines have shifted their geopolitical focus from the United States to China (Bräutigam and Gallagher 2014; Jenkins 2022). This is often connected to China's so-called Belt and Road development projects, which offer investments for large-scale infrastructure projects (Liu et al. 2020). Whether this amounts to a long-term alliance, taking advantage of Chinese investments and political support (Lee 2020), or short-term diplomatic and economic tactics (Manantan 2019), is still debated.

Regardless of geopolitics, however, there is an ever-increasing need for space to attract overseas investments. New Clark City is only the latest solution to Manila's space problems, but it will not be the last. Recently, it was announced that the San Roque informal settlement in Metro Manila's North Triangle district will be redeveloped to house a new complex of shopping malls, office towers, and residential compounds (Recio and Dovey 2021).

Second Cycle: New Clark City as a "Fix"

The previous section outlined the factors that led to Metro Manila being viewed as unsustainable for housing the Philippine government, outlining the increasing space restrictions and overcrowding issues in the capital. This section focuses on how and why New Clark City would present a "fix" to the issues associated with Manila.

In 2016, then President Benigno Aquino III announced that New Clark City in Central Luzon¹ would be the new administrative centre of the Philippine government. The city would house 1.2 million workers and be a “green and disaster resilient” city (Bracher 2018). It subsequently became the flagship programme of President Duterte’s administration under his “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure programme from 2016 onwards.

New Clark City² was designed to “ensure the sustainability of its environment through the use of technology” (Abuyuan et al. 2017:47). Special features include recycled water to feed green spaces and district cooling systems, solar farms to supply green energy, and an underground rapid transport system (Abuyuan et al. 2017). The “Operations Center” would control water and electricity usage, sewage disposal, and telecommunications, and the “Disaster Risk and Recovery Center” would monitor seismic activity in the area (Mouton 2021).

New Clark City will follow global trends by having security at the heart of its development. Gated communities, armed guards controlling entry and exit, CCTV, and enhanced police presence are some of the features keeping residents “safe” from external social threats. The initial plans for the city had no affordable housing for domestic or non-skilled workers. The blueprint for the city was seen as a “safe” haven for elites wanting to escape the overpopulation problems associated with Metro Manila.

However, the land used for the city’s development is contested. According to the Philippine government, the land is located within Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone, a former US Air Force base. The area covers 38,000 ha and is strategically located, 83 km north of Manila and 77 km from Subic Bay Port—a former US Navy base. At the time, the land was said to be unused and owned by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), a public body designed to convert previously military-occupied spaces into economically functioning spaces.

When the US military forces left the Philippines in 1992, all military land was given to the BCDA. The land is strategically located near major transport hubs and natural ports. It also includes large expanses of fertile soil. These spaces, therefore, offered Philippine political elites an opportunity to “fix” international perceptions and highlight their independence and autonomy from the USA, whilst “fixing” “empty spaces” into economically viable spaces. The land comprising New Clark City is now under the control of the Clark Development Corporation. In 1992, the Corporation built Clark Freeport Zone, a mixed-use economic zone with small-scale retail and leisure facilities mainly for local economic elites (see Figure 1). Over the years, the Clark Development Corporation’s vision for the development of the region has evolved, as explained by their representative:

Way back in the 1990s ... we had to have duty-free shops. Very few of these shops renewed and many have expired and do not continue operations. Why? This is because we would rather have big commercial malls to cater to different nationalities. Of course, a lifestyle mall would be much easier to visit than smaller shops as everything is there. We would like to cater to more international, more outlets perhaps in the future. (Interview 25)



Figure 1: Top left—new lifestyle mall in Clark Freeport Zone. Bottom right—derelict duty-free mall in the same area and inside an open duty-free mall with visible structural issues (photographs by Lauren Crabb).

The lifestyle mall (see Figure 1) mentioned by the interviewee is a prominent feature of the Clark Freeport Zone. During our fieldwork, we observed the over-employment within the stores. It was normal for three or four, mostly young people to be attending to a single shelf. This is indicative of the surplus of labour that is inherent in the Philippine economy (Yulu 2021).

New Clark City offers local economic elites the opportunity to diversify their businesses and expand their networks to include regional and national elites. The following interview excerpt is from the CEO of an SME specialising in business process outsourcing, currently located in the Clark Freeport Zone. He explains why he wants to relocate from the Freeport Zone to New Clark City:

The New City looks amazing. Of course, I am interested to relocate there, I have already spoken to my staff ... I am safe here, you have seen the security, it's fine. But I think it would be better to be in New Clark City; they are already offering us incentives too. The photos look really great, and I think it would be a great opportunity to develop some of my other interests there. I have some ideas. (Interview 27)

New Clark City offers new flows of capital to boost local employment, significantly going beyond the spatial arrangements of Clark Freeport Zone. These new flows offer numerous opportunities, which political and economic elites have begun to take advantage of. The initial Phase 1 construction contract was between BCDA and the contracted builder, MTD. It is claimed that MTD

submitted an unsolicited bid of P8.5 billion. The BCDA committed to paying P11.1 billion over five years, with P2.49 billion said to cover “expenses”. These arrangements are currently under investigation, as they are seen to be illegal (Baun 2020). This example highlights the “fix” opportunities provided by large-scale infrastructure projects, providing economic elites with “windfall” profits.

There are also opportunities for peripheral political elites. Although the BCDA owns the land within the Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone, they are situated within local municipalities. Clark Freeport borders Angeles City and Mabalacat, and these municipalities receive a percentage of the gross income. New Clark City will border Capas and, as the Mayor explains, Capas political elites are expecting this to be financially lucrative:

Mabalacat earned one billion pesos this year from the operation of Clark [Freeport]. We are also hoping that someday Capas will become a billionaire because of the New Clark City and then we will be hoping to do a huge amount of planning to proportion our share of the gross income of NCC. (Interview 1)

New Clark City, as the flagship project of Duterte’s “Build-Build-Build” infrastructure programme, also needed an international introduction, particularly to take advantage of worldwide investment opportunities. Central to the introduction of this new administrative city was the hosting of the 2019 South East Asian (SEA) Games. The SEA Games is a biennial multi-sport event, attracting competitors and spectators from across Southeast Asia. The expedited construction of the stadium in New Clark City was the focus of the Games in December 2019 (Go 2019; New Clark City Stadium 2019).³ The SEA Games provided an opportune platform to showcase the city, securing essential funding for the next stages of infrastructure development and attracting potential clients to the city (Cervantes 2018). At the time, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano, who was also the chair of the SEA Games Organizing Committee, said that “the Philippines’ hosting of the next Southeast Asian (SEA) Games is seen as an opportunity to showcase to the world the progress happening nationwide under the Duterte administration’s ‘Golden Age of Infrastructure’” (Philippine News Agency 2017).

The South-East Asian Games were seen as a success by some people in the country. New sporting facilities would offer numerous opportunities for future event hosting and preparation of elite athletes. This was supported by the opening of the new terminal at Clark International Airport, which is predicted to increase annual tourist numbers from 2.4 million to 12 million (Tecson 2019).

New Clark City offers a final benefit for local and national elites. It would provide a “safe” location for core elites in terms of geophysical threats, given that the new city is supposed to be more secure from seismic and flooding disasters. Yet, it also presents a “fix” for local and national political threats. A local threat to the elites is the armed struggle by the People’s Liberation Army in Central Luzon. This group was initially an anti-Japanese guerrilla army, operating in the 1940s and 1950s, called the Hukbalahap, who have been fighting for political recognition ever since (Van Den Muijzenberg 1973). Although local members of the group suggest they are non-violent (Interviews 14, 15), local economic elites fear a threat of an uprising and have hence taken “anti-terrorism” measures. For example, the construction of



Figure 2: Aeta community resettlement location. The community were offered individual houses for family groups, a school, and a police unit for protection (photographs by Lauren Crabb).

a hydroelectric dam meant the relocation of some local Aeta groups whose lands were flooded. The new settlement is monitored by a police unit whose presence is said to protect the Aeta from armed groups (Interviews 20, 21). However, local peasants nearby suggest their presence is to prevent grassroots organisation against local development projects (Interviews 22, 23). The dam is a contentious issue in the region and has been under development for several decades (Tabios 2018). The relocation settlement for this group has included individual properties for families, a community school, and nearby space for future resettlement communities—plus the said police unit (see Figure 2).

Third Cycle: Consequences of the “Fix” for Local Communities

The final findings section will now present data that highlights the social, ecological, and economic consequences of these “fixes” from the perspective of the local communities. The development of New Clark City and related infrastructure projects have had wide impacts across the region. The two specific groups affected are the Aeta community and local peasant farmers, whilst elites were able to capitalise on these new developments.

As New Clark City became publicised in local and regional news outlets, local property owners were able to capitalise on the increased value of the land. Local

economic elites have also found opportunities to accumulate through land banking. As the Capas Mayor explains:

Outside the boundary of NCC there is lots of lands which are private property. But, you know, me personally, I have learnt to become a real estate broker ... One year ago before the grand opening ceremony [of the SEA Games] I could purchase some land for 100 pesos per square metre. Outside the NCC ... But it is very hard to see a vacant lot now. And the minimum asking price is 1,500 just for a little or maybe 2,000 pesos. From 100 pesos to 2,000 pesos. (Interview 1)

This situation has also drawn the attention of criminal actors. A representative from the BCDA explains how some people have been tricked into buying land without land titles:

Some people have known for a while now about NCC. And then what happens is the original owner sells it to another person for a price knowing already that the government's going to take it back. So, some of them that say they paid 50,000 pesos for a certain lot, but the actual value of it and the price that government will give will only be like 5,000 pesos. (Interview 29)

Although these new urban developments are said to lead to inclusive growth, Zoomers et al. (2017) suggest that they can lead to growing inequalities and socio-spatial segregation through physical class barriers. Further, they warn that for there to be full integration of those farming communities who lose their land, planning and training need to be implemented from the beginning of the construction phase (Zoomers et al. 2017). Yet, Philippine government publications in relation to New Clark City fail to acknowledge the history of dispossession endured by some of the local community.

The Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone, in which New Clark City is located, is in the heartland of the Indigenous Aeta community who have lived in Central Luzon since the Pleistocene period (Gaillard 2006). Their recent history has been influenced by both political and natural disasters, which has tested their resilience. The occupation of the Philippines by first Spanish and then US colonisers meant their territory was systematically dispossessed and changed into a variety of uses, for example, the US Air Force base that is now being turned into New Clark City.

The 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo and social unrest about US presence in the Philippines created the conditions for the US to hand the land back to the Philippine government. The Pinatubo eruption displaced over 10,000 families, and 7,800 of these were Aeta families (Bautista 1996). Around 7,000 of these families were relocated to Madapdap in Mabalacat. According to Tariman (1999), each family was awarded a 94 m² plot with a concrete house and sanitary facilities. Madapdap now lies within the boundaries of the New Clark City development (for a more detailed history, see Gaillard 2006) and a relocation programme has now been developed to remove these communities. A BCDA employee, whose job is to relocate people, described her job:

The issue is a lot of the land where the New Clark City is going to be built, there's a lot of informal settlers who have been living there for generations, their land has been



Figure 3: Extended family who decided to relocate without BCDA compensation. Their current location on the hillside is precarious with no confirmation this land will not be used in future New Clark City developments (photographs by Lauren Crabb).

passed down. Some of them are formal settlers and there is a high poverty level ... we have issues where they've been relocated there, because of Pinatubo. So, for some families, it might be they were placed there ... They were given some sort of certificate, but it's not a land title and the land is not theirs. (Interview 28)

The Aeta who live within the boundaries of the New Clark City development have a range of different experiences. Some told us how their communities were destroyed without receiving payment or a relocation provision (Subingsubing and Ramos 2019). Others heard of these stories and decided to move the community before they were ordered to leave (see Figure 3). The following is an excerpt from an interview with a community leader who moved his community:

The original community location will be used as a road for New Clark City. We had a letter from the BCDA [Bases Conversion and Development Authority]. The BCDA called for a dialogue, at first to ask for permission, but we did not give permission, then the BCDA said whether you like it or not we will have the lands as they own the land ... But the BCDA did not pay anything for the houses we had established in the community. We have been in the location for 30 years ... so then we self-relocate here and the BCDA still have not said if they will use this place or not, so we might need to move again, but I do not know what to believe. (Interview 24)

The investment needed for social reproduction, such as schools and health facilities for the Aeta communities, has not been provided to the extent needed. Although there have been efforts to rehouse some communities, it is clear this has not reached all affected communities. The infrastructure needed for these communities to rebuild their lives has not yet materialised.

It is not only the Aeta communities who are affected by the building of New Clark City. Local peasant farmers are also being relocated and given little compensation for their land. The following quote is from a community whose land borders the road entrance to the construction site:

We were told they were building a farm to market road where the goods from the mountains can easily go to the market ... So, it started with the BCDA they come here and asked us to sell our lands at a very low price of 20,000–30,000 pesos per hectare ... Before this money was agreed, the heavy equipment started to park in the entrance of the community so we tried to stop the bulldozers from entering the community. But we saw also in the news there was 9,450 hectares and it's a city not just roads so we started to call for more, not just compensation, because we realised all our lands would be gone so now, we start to fight for our land. And we asked for an increase in compensation, from 20 or 30,000 to 90,000 pesos. (Interview 4)

In our interviews, we were told that local farmers feel that they are driven off their land, that they are being dispossessed. This is hence a struggle over territory (Casaglia 2018), and the land becomes an important cornerstone of the social struggle (Friend and Hutunuwatr 2021). A crucial factor for the government to be able to portray New Clark City as a sustainable or “green” city is the claim that the land was depleted or indeed a kind of wasteland before the city development began. Given the stories we were told on the ground, this is clearly not the case. Yet, local and national elites have repeatedly depicted the Aeta communities’ way of life as environmentally damaging. Providing new construction and service jobs in the “sustainable city” is hence viewed as a method to ensure the sustainability of the wider region. The Mayor of Capas explains:

Our Indigenous brothers in the mountains, they are also hired to work in NCC [New Clark City], almost 400 Indigenous brothers ... I had to go to the mountain and convince them. They do some activities that damage our environment especially cutting trees and turning this into charcoal. Whereas we offered, leave your family here, go to the lowlands for new work either labourer, mason, or carpenter. You will be trained by our technical efficiency school so you will become a more effective citizen of the Philippines. (Interview 1)

The Aeta community offered a different perspective to the “new opportunities” available to them:

In these mountains we have lived for many generations, our livelihood is in the mountains, and we do not have any other source. Because if we go down into the lowlands, like they say, we don't want to be there asking for alms. (Interview 16)

From these excerpts, it is clear that the role of the Aeta in the future of the area is contested. The mayor views the role of the Aeta as active members of the community, yet mainly as labourers and service providers. The mayor argues that the

investments needed for these communities are already in place and can be used to retrain the Aeta. This “retraining” is only envisaged, however, within the horizon of the new spatial arrangements offered by New Clark City. That is, there do not appear to be investments available to enable the Aeta to continue their existing, historically grown, way of life on the land.

Over generations, Aeta communities have struggled to gain recognition from the Philippine government. With the devastating impacts of the Mount Pinatubo eruption and previous stresses on their ancestral lands, some Aetas have moved to the lowlands to find new livelihoods. For some, this includes selling local crafts and begging to tourists. Additionally, the presence of the US Air Force base since World War II created mini economies in the local region. Sex work is one industry that arose due to the US presence and has remained since. The area attracts returning US servicemembers and more recently visitors from Europe, South Korea, and China. Many bars and hotels are servicing this industry, and local Aeta and peasant farmers fear this industry will grow with increased international business tourism, ultimately attracting their young into the industry (Interviews 3, 4, 7, 12, 13). Their fears are summed up a local peasant farmer:

The concern of the community is also when it's all finished and the construction is finished. What jobs will we have? We don't have any farms anymore, the construction is finished and we did not finish school so probably after the construction, there are no more jobs. Because we won't be admitted into office jobs because we have no qualifications. Our children will not have jobs, they will not have land, they will not have anything. (Interview 5)

It is hence clear that New Clark City continues a historical path of dispossession and discrimination against Aeta communities. The new spatial developments do not create genuine opportunities for the Aeta, nor for local peasant farmers, to rebuild their land-based communities and livelihoods. On the contrary, the dispossession continues and is even intensified, although this time it is done, it seems, with a “green” label.

Discussion

A multitude of social, economic, and ecological challenges have accompanied sustainability transition discourses and practices throughout the world. The reordering of space done in the name of green ambitions is never a straightforward process of phasing out unsustainable, destructive practices and providing fertile ground for sustainable, regenerative ways of life to take hold. Instead, we see multiple injustices, modes of exploitation, and dispossessions that accompany this transition process. The construction of “green cities” is not immune from these contradictions.

In this article, we have expanded our understanding of such developments by synthesising the theories of socio-ecological fix (Collard and Dempsey 2022; Ekers and Prudham 2015, 2017, 2018) and internal colonialism (Blauner 1969; Das 2020; Gramsci 1957; Lenin 1956; Love 1989; Pinderhughes 2011). Informed by Harvey's (1982) notion of regional crisis formation and Beaugard's (1994)

interpretation of geographical-switching crises, our case study demonstrates that the new “green” city, New Clark City, must be seen as a fix to the prevailing forces of geographical inertia in the Philippines’ governmental and economic capital, Metro Manila.

In our analysis, we have grouped these forces into three categories. First, there is the threat of natural hazards, responding to the longstanding need of state and capital elites in the Philippines for a new administrative and business centre (Alvarez and Cardenas 2019; Bankoff 2003; Bonduc 1950; Mercado et al. 2020; Saguin 2016; Saguin and Alvarez 2022). Accordingly, we have shown that this “green”, “disaster resilient”, and “sustainable” new capital city (Abuyuan et al. 2017; Bracher 2018; Fallaria et al. 2019; Mouton 2021) is only the latest in a long history of urban planning projects designed to address the persistent natural hazard threats of the Philippines, creating a safer, more secure, and resilient space for political and economic elites.

Nevertheless, whilst the constant threat of natural hazards has continuously been a substantial geographical force, which state and capital elites have employed to justify the need for a capital city, our analysis demonstrates that the Philippines’ move to a new administrative and business centre must also be seen in connection with the country’s wider geographical expansion and spatial restructuring strategy. The construction of New Clark City, we have shown, cannot be understood without considering President Duterte’s flagship policy under his “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure programme. Accordingly, to understand the cardinal role the project New Clark City has played in the Philippines’ spatial strategy, we have turned our focus to other forces of geographical inertia, taking into account the specific conditions of surplus value production, exchange, and realisation in Metro Manila.

Deepening our analysis, second, we have shown that the move to New Clark City has been triggered by manifold and aggregated problems of urbanisation in Metro Manila. These include costly and time-consuming transportation problems, over-population, a variety of associated governance, power, and control issues, and ever-worsening organised crime and human trafficking. These factors have led to an overaccumulation of surpluses of capital and cheap labour that are not used efficiently. The move beyond Metro Manila offers not only a spatio-temporal solution, setting trapped capital and labour surpluses free, but also an opportunity for increasing capital circulation, accelerating turnover times, boosting local employment and tourism, and lowering costs.

Here, our analysis has revealed that these additional forces of geographical inertia have acted in two ways. On the one hand, they are a catalyst, coupled with the threat of natural hazards, for reproducing the conditions of regional crisis formation (Harvey 1982). On the other hand, echoing Ekers and Prudham’s (2017, 2018) argument on the twin moments of fixes, our analysis shows that Metro Manila’s geographical inertia diminishes the potential and capacity of a spatial solution, which would deepen existing market capacity, accelerate capital circulation, improve spatial infrastructure and social reproduction within the current centre. As a result, the expansion of capitalist logics from the centre to the periphery through the move to New Clark City arises as a response to, what

Beauregard (1994) calls, geographical-switching crisis. This move enables capital and state actors to extract capital sunk into Metropolitan Manila for use in the wider region where significant investment opportunities are available. In other words, the outer moment of the fix—with its extensive and decentralising character—overcomes these limits through geographical expansion, which in turn re-enables the inner moment, expanding and sustaining the dominance of the core over peripheries. Our analysis here provides empirical and theoretical support for Harvey's (1982) and Ekers and Prudham's (2017, 2018) arguments that the twin moments are interwoven with each other.

Accordingly, our case analysis has shown that the Philippine government has capitalised on the construction of New Clark City to enable, secure, and lubricate capital's access to space and nature through geographical expansion. This has been achieved by way of a wide variety of incentives, aiming to mobilise the absorption of overaccumulated capital in the forms of foreign funding and foreign direct investments being canalised into the Philippine government's infrastructure-led development agenda. Furthermore, our findings demonstrate that the fix allows elites to establish and further develop their political and economic power and control over geographies and communities.

Third, and connected with our findings above, New Clark City enables new business ventures, locally, nationally, and globally, enabling the Philippines' inter-regional and international alignment to wider business and political networks in line with the changing geopolitics of the region. Our findings show that, at the interregional scale, the fix offers spatio-temporal opportunities and revenues for economic and political elites and their reach into the peripheries of the country. At the international scale, we have identified that this often goes hand-in-hand with the Philippines' shift of geopolitical focus from the United States to China—particularly due to the latter's Belt and Road programme—offering long- and short-term opportunities, while the country continues its long-standing alliance and cooperation with the US (Lee 2020; Manantan 2019). Our case analysis shows that the SEA Games were used as an opportune platform to showcase the "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure programme, representing the flagship development agenda of the Philippine government (Philippine News Agency 2017), securing essential funding for its next building stages, attracting potential clients to the city, as well as boosting the tourism industry as the regional economy's backbone (Cervantes 2018; Go 2019; New Clark City Stadium 2019; Tecson 2019).

Our analysis shows, however, that this socio-ecological fix has resulted in manifold negative consequences for local and Indigenous communities in a territory that they consider their own. As has become clear in our analysis, whilst the construction of New Clark City has been crucial for finding solutions to the deepening geographical-switching crisis tendencies in Metro Manila, it has deepened existing inequalities in the country, reproducing them along new modes of social and ecological justification. In addition, the socio-ecological fix sought by elite political and economic actors has also implied the reproduction of dynamics of internal colonialism (Blauner 1969; Taylor 2014) characterised by forced land displacements, destruction and domination of Indigenous cultures and patterns of

social organisation. Although our case is different to Cheung Judge's (2023) analysis of neocolonial encounters between British youth and people in sub-Saharan Africa, our findings confirm that colonial relations can be reproduced in unforeseen ways.

Our analysis contributes to the literature in two main ways. First, our case study advances the theory of socio-ecological fix (Ekers and Prudham 2015, 2017, 2018) by demonstrating that internal colonialism should always be seen as integral to the emergence, deployment, and implications of fixes. As our analysis shows, internal colonialism has been central to the Philippines' spatial strategy since the very emergence and development of the project "New Clark City". This is due to the decreasing potential and capacity of Metro Manila to expand capitalist logics, which has triggered the need to extend capitalist accumulation beyond Metro Manila deeper into the hinterland, allowing the absorption of over-accumulated domestic and foreign capital. Similarly, our case analysis demonstrates that the same internal colonialist logic and praxis have been integrated into the deployment of the fix through associated infrastructure projects in an attempt to establish, sustain, and deepen the core-periphery relations within and between the regions.

Our analysis of the consequences of the fix shows that this internal colonialist agenda has resulted in the amplification of the exploitation and subordination of the local peasantry and Indigenous communities in their own homeland. Through such internal colonialist agendas, the local peasantry and Indigenous Aeta tribe have been further marginalised, whilst the project itself has, so far, contributed little to social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Rather, the development of New Clark City has resulted in the acceleration of historical dispossessions and displacements of peripheral cultures who are forced to migrate from their territory and land (Friend and Hutunuwatr 2021) to facilitate property transfer from the poor to the rich. As we have shown, this restructuring and reordering of space and nature irreversibly destroys the socio-ecologies embodied in the lives of the peasantry and Indigenous communities located in the affected areas, transforming them into beggars, criminals, sex workers, and servants of foreigners hosted by the tourism industry.

Second, our analysis provides much-needed empirical evidence for the recently emerging literature that revisits the theory of colonialism (Ekers 2019; McCarthy 2015; Webber et al. 2022). Whereas colonialism has played a vital role in the broader "fix" literature (Bok 2019; Harvey 1981), it has so far not been addressed sufficiently in the socio-ecological fix literature. Given the expansion of so-called green economy logics throughout the world, it is important to further develop our understanding of the dynamics of socio-ecological fixes, which, we argue, must include vital empirical insights from peripheral Global South geographies.

Conclusion

This article has presented a case of the ongoing development of New Clark City in the Philippines, which was inaugurated by the 2019 SEA Games. Our analysis has demonstrated that this brave new "green city" represents a socio-ecological

fix that enables capital to be fixed into space, which has resulted in: (i) staving off a multitude of longstanding barriers faced by capital and state elites in the country; (ii) creating and securing new accumulation opportunities for domestic and international investors along the lines of the Philippines' geographical expansion and spatial restructuring strategy; and (iii) lubricating capital circulation, shortening turnover times, and lowering costs between spatial scales.

Our article contributes to the literature in two main ways. First, we demonstrate that internal colonialism offers a vital lens to understand the development, deployment, and outcomes of socio-ecological fixes in the context of the expansion of capitalist logics from the centre to the periphery. This insight supports Ekers and Prudham's (2015, 2017, 2018) much-needed intervention to conceptualise spatial fixes as metabolic processes that cannot be comprehended only in economic terms. In addition, however, our analysis offers a more relational theorisation of the dynamics of socio-ecological fixes within countries, showing the consequences of internal colonialist agendas between central and peripheral regions, and between elite and marginalised actors. Hence, our contribution also underlines the need to understand the ways in which so-called "green" infrastructure and transition projects can continue historical, colonist injustices, creating negative consequences for agrarian socio-ecologies in the Global South, as they are being integrated into regimes of accumulation by decarbonisation (Bumpus and Liverman 2008, 2011).

Second, and connected with the above, we contribute to the growing body of socio-ecological fix scholarship (Collard and Dempsey 2022; Dempsey 2015; Ekers 2015; Ekers and Prudham 2015, 2017, 2018; Friend and Hutauwatr 2021; Guthman 2015; Johnson 2015; McCarthy 2015; Nugent 2015; Zalik 2015) by extending the concept's explanatory power to a Global South context, which has not received a lot of attention in the socio-ecological fix literature. Here, we must reiterate Bok's (2019) argument, emphasising the necessity for merging "fix thinking" with plural theoretical approaches to mobilise the concept's explanatory power in diverse empirical locales for a more nuanced understanding of capitalist accumulation across the Global North and South. By taking Bok's (2019) welcome intervention on board, our study takes this literature further by offering vital empirical insights from a peripheral Global South geography.

Finally, we would like to highlight a few promising areas for future research. First, as our findings have pointed out, whilst the Philippines continues to maintain its long-standing alliance and cooperation with the United States (Lee 2020; Manantan 2019), global infrastructure developments, particularly China's Road and Belt programme, have been playing a crucial role in the country's spatial strategy, enabling China to rapidly extend its economic and military presence in the wider region. This clearly indicates that there is a geopolitical dimension, role, and implication of socio-ecological fixes, which needs to be investigated further. Therefore, we call on authors to pay more attention to the politico-economic as well as geopolitical dynamics of socio-ecological fixes. Second, although the SEA Games were not the focus of our analysis, we call on researchers to study in more detail the role of large sporting events, such as FIFA World Cups, Olympic Games, as well as their regional offshoots, as they often imply large infrastructure

developments and socio-ecological fix tendencies. Finally, we call on socio-ecological fix researchers to pay more attention to the local dynamics of how fixes are contested in specific territories (Casaglia 2018), highlighting the role of land-based communities, peasant farmers, and Indigenous people who are often the losers of any socio-ecological fix programmes instigated by national and international elites.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, Prof Steffen Böhm. The data are not publicly available due to their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

Endnotes

¹ For a map of the Philippines highlighting Central Luzon, see Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Central+Luzon,+Philippines/@12.4577539,122.184301,6z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x33972fc30b864ae1:0xacda5d7d477e0834!8m2!3d15.4827722!4d120.7120023!16zL20vMDFycTc3!5m1!1e4?entry=ttu> (last accessed 24 November 2023). Also, for the location of New Clark City see: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/15%C2%B020'35.5%22N+120%C2%B031'50.5%22E/@15.3418091,120.5327716,1931m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d15.3431944!4d120.5306944?hl=en-GB&entry=ttu> (last accessed 24 November 2023).

² For more detailed information about the master plan and artistic impressions of the city, see BCDA (2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019).

³ For information about and images of the construction of Phase 1A—e.g. Athletics Stadium, Aquatics Center, Athletes' Village, The Residences, Government Building, and the River Park—see New Clark City (2023).

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