
Enduring biodiversity conservation and water/food security in pastoral landscapes of the Chalbi desert (Marsabit County, Northern Kenya).

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Abstract

In the arid lands of Northern Kenya, biodiversity conservation projects reflect the debates that have shaped the nexus between biodiversity, water, food security and energy. For a long time, assumptions about the inability of pastoralists to manage land degradation, and soil and water conservation have been part of environmental policies, which legitimized "green grabbing" practices. How does the implementation of natural resources management models interact with pastoralist livelihood in a context of socio-ecological transition? This poster questions the relationship between conservation practices and the regional environmental dynamics. It also provides an overview of the services provided by the Chalbi desert ecosystem and the existing models of natural resources management. Based on a "landesque capital" approach, it shows how the landscapes of the Chalbi inherit from the interaction between social and labour organisation of the pastoralist and their environment. This concept is discussed through two fields. First a network of ecological niches situated at the intersection between the highland and the lowland of the desert, provides a field to discuss how water conservation projects enhance biodiversity protection. Second the Kalacha farmland enhancing natural resources management and pastoralist's food security, indicates how the implementation of conservation models have led to recent experiments and socio-technical choices for biodiversity conservation, which sustain pastoralist livelihood. Reflecting local pastoralist innovation in which biodiversity protection, farming system and pastoralist's food security are associated, the poster prompts for suggestions to include the split between environmental conservation and development and to better integrate research on pastoralist livelihood and socio-ecological dynamics in environmental policies.

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