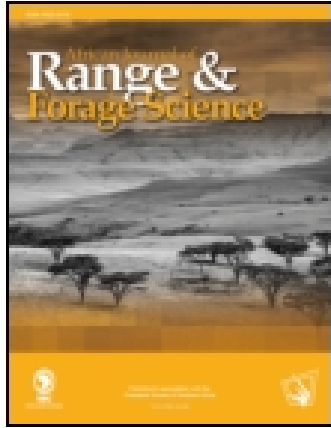


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Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins

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Book Review

Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins

Edited by Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind and Ian Scoones

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The book is in essence an offshoot of a conference held in Addis Ababa in March 2011. Selected papers presented at the conference were further elaborated. The introductory paper by the editors stresses the complexity of pastoral development and indicates dependency on regional and global politics and problems within pastoral economies, but also stresses the innovative and adaptive capacities of pastoralists.

Part I on 'Resources and Production' starts with a paper by Gufu Oba on sustainability of pastoral production. He discusses herd recovery after drought, frequency of drought and the role of key resources, such as floodplains, as dry-season grazing and the consequences if they are lost, but also stresses adaptability of pastoral systems and new ways of survival (commercial pastoralism, integration of crop and livestock production). The following paper by Boku Tache on rangeland enclosures in southern Oromia, Ethiopia, asks whether this is an innovative response or erodes common property resources. The main conclusion is that rich pastoralists profit most from rangeland enclosure while the non-enclosed areas are overgrazed, so that erosion of common property resources seems to dominate.

Two papers deal with irrigated agriculture. In a paper on pastoralists and irrigation in the Horn of Africa, Sandford asks if it is time for a rethink. As livestock-based pastoral livelihoods can no longer support all the people now in pastoral areas, diversification is necessary. He argues that irrigated agriculture is one alternative. Despite failures of many (usually publicly financed) large-scale irrigation schemes, there are also success stories with smaller-scale privately financed schemes. Behnke and Kerven count the costs of replacing pastoralism with irrigated agriculture in the Awash valley of Ethiopia, comparing cotton and sugarcane production with losses from pastoral production because of the loss of dry-season grazing. The revenues from either cotton or sugarcane are comparable with pastoral production. In the case of sugar, the price fluctuations make the risks even higher than in pastoral production. The main difference between irrigated agriculture and pastoral production is that the former is easier to control and tax.

The paper by Ericksen et al. explores the consequences of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa. It shows that

the normalised difference vegetation index is a good way of documenting past trends in vegetation dynamics and droughts. It explains in detail some of the factors that influence weather in Africa and concludes that, especially for rainfall, the results of climate models are inconsistent for most parts of Africa. The sole exception is southern Africa's December/January period, for which a large decrease in summer rainfall is predicted.

Part II addresses 'Commercialisation and Markets'. In 'Moving up or out', Catley and Aklilu found that export marketing of livestock did not reduce pastoralist poverty. Over the last 30–40 years, the number of poor and very poor pastoralists increased sharply, the number of rich pastoralists increased moderately and the weakest growth was found in the medium-wealth group. The gap between rich and poor widened. The paper by Mahmoud reveals that a very dynamic domestic and export camel market developed over the last few decades without any government or development assistance. Similarly, Abdullahi et al. report on the development of regional town markets for camel milk, also largely without outside assistance. In a paper on 'responsible' companies, Morton reports that, although private companies were willing to assist pastoralists, they were unable to listen and learn from local people.

In Part III on 'Land and Conflict', Goldsmith indicates a range of causes of conflicts in eastern Africa, such as weak states, tensions between authoritarian regimes and popular demands for more political participation, competition for scarce resources, criminal network, well-intended but not well-thought-through Western interventions, the rise of Chinese involvement in Africa including the impact of a planned massive infrastructure programme, and the 'Somali factor' including Al-Qaeda. He highlights the importance of Somali capital investment, even in Nairobi. He thus embeds a rather complex picture of pastoral conflicts in a wider political environment. Galaty discusses land grabbing in the eastern African rangelands, giving attention to 'new agrarian colonialism' in Ethiopia, 'environmental imperialism' in Tanzania and 'legal theft' in Kenya. This is a well-elaborated and passionate contribution.

The remaining four papers in Part III deal with two cases from Kenya, one from Sudan and one from Ethiopia. Nunow discusses the land deal and changing political

economy of livelihoods in the Tana Delta, where the government allocates large tracts of land to investors and where only richer pastoralists seem to be able to secure dry-season grazing. The second Kenyan case by Letai and Lind, called 'Squeezed from all sides', describes not only the pressures on pastoral systems but also innovative new arrangements between pastoralists, ranchers and smallholder farmers during a recent drought. In Sudan, both the dry-season key resources and the traditional grazing corridors are taken up by land grabbing, leading to increasingly violent conflicts. The Ethiopian case by Mulatu and Bekure is on the need to strengthen land laws in Ethiopia to protect pastoral rights. There are constitutional rights and regional proclamations to protect traditional rights to land also by pastoralists, but the authors point out a number of deficits, including the lack of clear procedures for local and traditional authorities to resolve disputes and conflicts. Moreover, the right of the state to expropriate land for 'development' remains untouched.

Part IV deals with 'Alternative Livelihoods'. Fratkin explores the various possibilities in northern Kenya, which include marketing livestock and livestock products, shops, building and construction, transport, petty trade, wage labour, salaried or own crop farming, normally accompanied by settling in towns. The benefits are increased access to services, increased female involvement in commerce, access to larger markets, access to schooling or greater police security. Downsides of leaving the pastoral sphere are negative impacts on child nutrition and human health

and the loss of kinship networks during times of drought, yet most poor pastoralists prefer poverty in town to poverty on the range. The paper by Siele et al. explores how pastoralists can be reached by formal education. The paper by Devereux and Tibbo discusses social protection, e.g. food aid, food/cash for work, various insurance schemes or restocking/destocking. The paper by Livingston and Ruhindi deals with women and economic diversification, changing roles of women and improving prospects for pastoral women's empowerment.

The final section (by Little) is, in essence, a summary of the conference. It stresses the complexity of pastoral life and its development. It ends on a positive note with a vision of pastoralism in 20 years' time: better-off pastoralists with truck transport of animals between pastures, marketing of high-end products, efficient services, mobile animals and sedentary people.

The title of the book is a misnomer, as the papers concentrate on eastern Africa rather than Africa as a whole, but this is the only criticism to be made. The text is very competently written and explores multiple facets of pastoralism in eastern Africa. In other pastoral areas, the mix of stresses on pastoralism will differ, so the wider applicability of the findings may be limited. However, the facets discussed could generate discussion and research in other pastoral areas and, for this, the book is relevant beyond eastern Africa. Hopefully, texts of equally good quality will be produced on other pastoral areas in the near future.

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