





Perspectives on enclosures in pastoralist drylands: From contradictory evidence to the formulation of innovative land management strategies

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Abstract

Drylands in Sub-Saharan Africa are subject to rapid and enduring population increase, agricultural expansion, land large-scale infrastructure developments, as well as climate change, affecting some 265 million pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. These changes are promoting a transition from traditional pastoralist ways of life characterized by seasonal mobility, towards more sedentary livelihoods based on more intensive and commercial uses of land-based resources. As part of this ongoing transition, establishment of enclosures on pastoralist commons is emerging as a default, but highly contested, development pathway. Based on a review of the current enclosure debate across the natural, economic, and social sciences, with a geographical focus on the East African drylands, we discuss the potential and limitations of enclosures as land management tool, and propose a conceptual framework for how enclosures can act as an integral part of sustainable pastoralist land use. Such a framework constitute an important piece of the puzzle for more productively linking the urgent need of innovative ways of managing pastoralist rangelands, to the present international and national commitments to restoration of degraded lands.

Highlights