

Assessing gender roles in a changing landscape: diversified agro-pastoralism in drylands of West Pokot, Kenya

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Previous studies in drylands have shown that while gender roles are becoming more flexible, privatization and formalization of land tenure tends to marginalize women in drylands while environmental degradation leads to differential changes in gender workload.

This study reviewed in which ways enclosures have influenced gender roles in the dryland systems of Chepareria, with specific regard to division of labour, financial responsibilities and decision-making processes on the household level, and also tries to identify the underlying driving forces that have contributed to the observed changes.

Workload of women has increased under new land fragmentation processes in rangelands due to increased responsibilities in cattle herding and income generation, but also that due to this, women have gained higher influence in household decisions concerning the family economy.

Women to a larger extent than before are engaged in small-scale business such as the selling of farm products and poultry keeping, hence getting financial resources under their own control.

In this way, women are involved in decision-making processes and income generation to a higher extent than before, though they are still excluded from certain traditionally male-dominated spheres both within and beyond the household, such as the sale of cattle and the handling of larger amounts of financial resources.

Under the new land fragmentation processes in Chepareria, women are increasingly seen as crucial income earners and they are enjoying a higher degree of financial independence, more decision-making power and a louder voice than before in household and public matters.

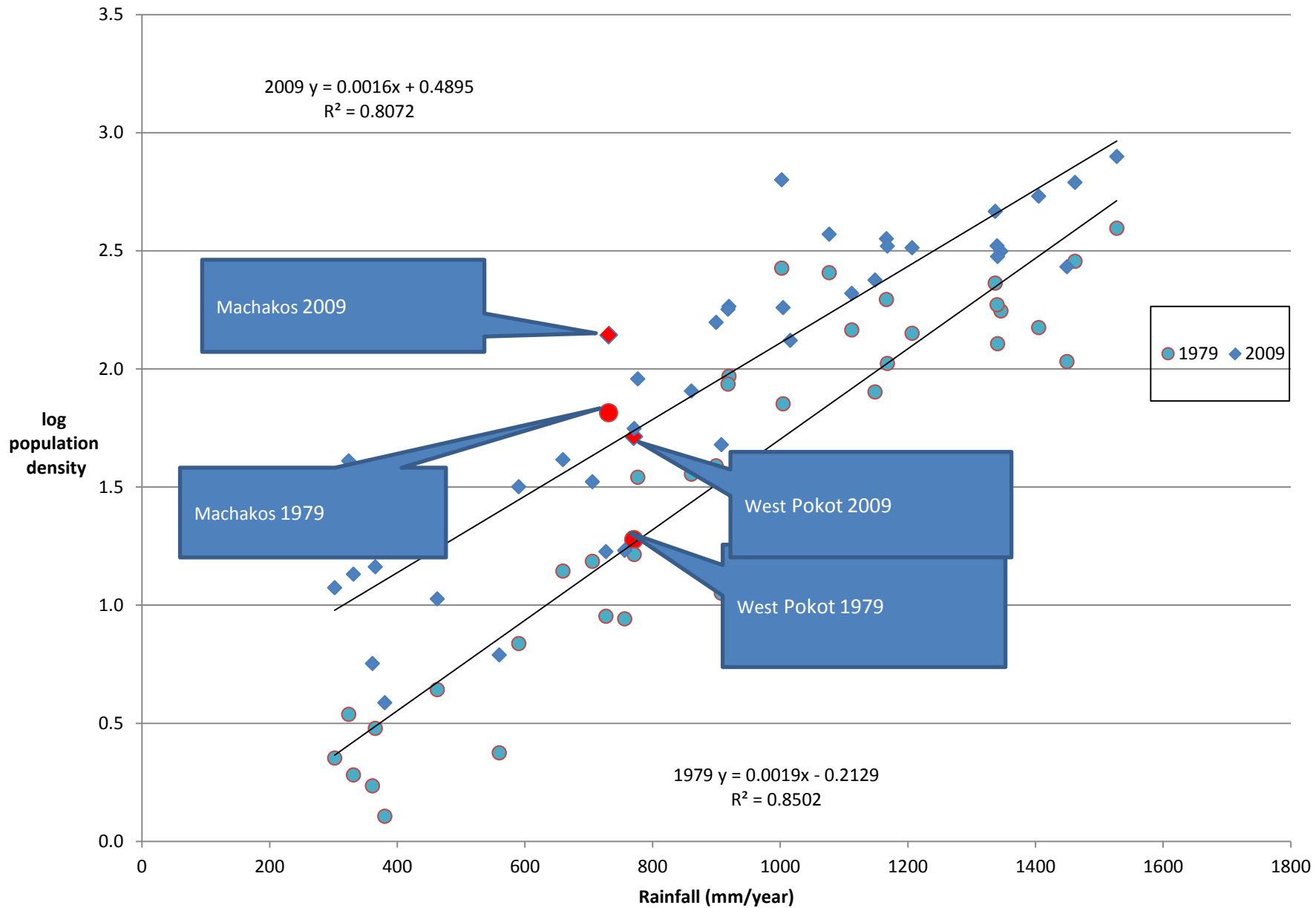
Enclosures in West Pokot, Kenya: Transforming land, livestock and livelihoods in drylands

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Dryland livestock production systems are changing in many parts of the world, as a result of growing human populations and associated pressure on water and land.

Based on a combination of social and natural science methods, we ***studied a 30-year transformation process*** from pastoralism to a livestock-based agro-pastoral system in northwestern Kenya, with the overall aim to increase the understanding of the ***ongoing transition*** towards intensified agro-pastoralist production systems in dryland East Africa.

Key to this transformation was the use of enclosures for land rehabilitation, fodder production, and land and livestock management.



- Enclosures have more soil carbon and a higher vegetation cover than adjacent areas with open grazing.
- The level of adoption of enclosures as a management tool has been very high, and their use has enabled agricultural diversification, e.g. increased crop agriculture, poultry production and the inclusion of improved livestock.
- Following the use of enclosures, livelihoods have become less dependent on livestock migration, are increasingly directed towards agribusinesses and present new opportunities and constraints for women.
- These livelihood changes are closely associated with, and depend on, an ongoing privatization of land under different tenure regimes.

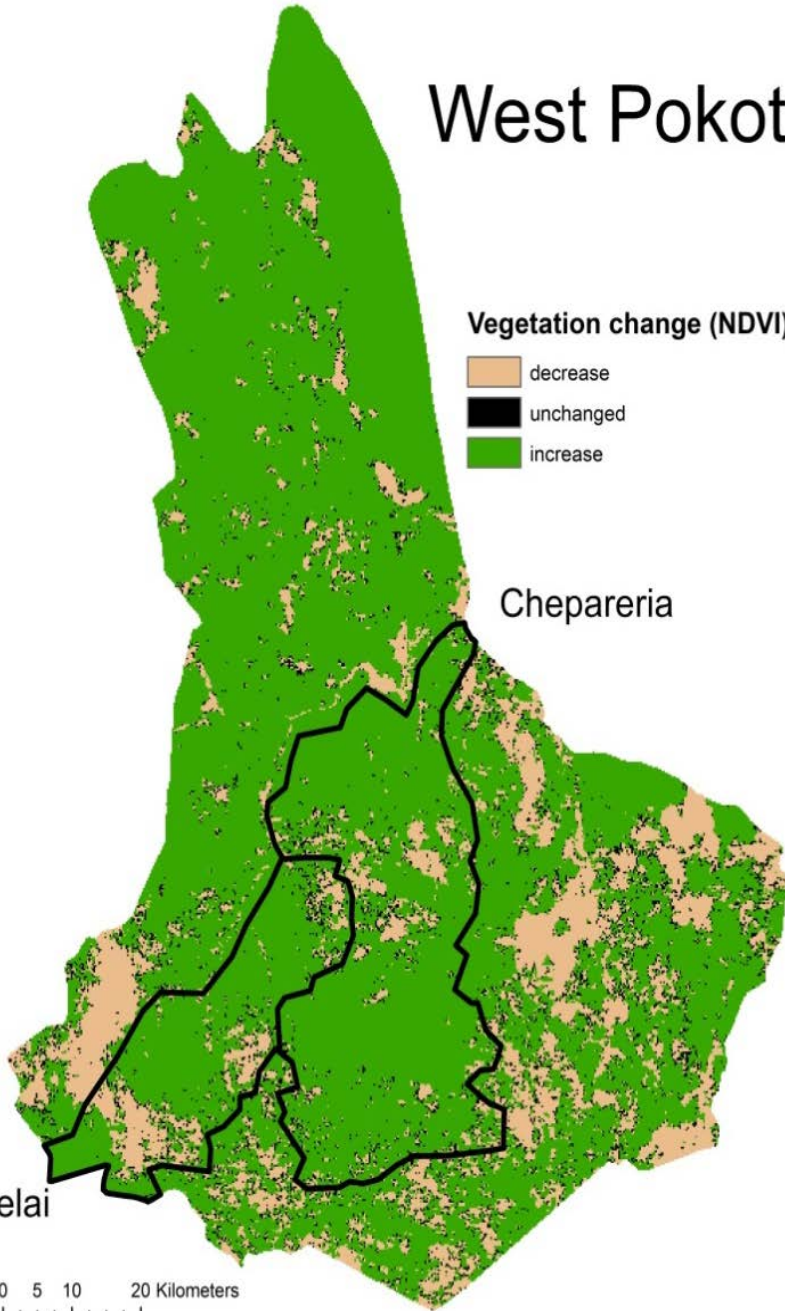
West Pokot

Vegetation change (NDVI)



Chepareria

Kongelai



Discussion:

Enclosures provides opportunities for a more productive and profitable livestock production where diversified income streams are possible, and at the same time contribute to increased vegetation cover and soil organic carbon.

Enclosures seem to form part of rapid and, in most parts, positive change in gender relations.

On the other hand, the practice of enclosures is also related to emerging conflicts and inequalities in relation to land.

Conclusion:

In order to more firmly and systematically assess the sustainability outcomes of enclosures and the ongoing transition towards sedentary, market-based agro-pastoralist livelihoods, further studies are needed.

Illustrates the importance of recognizing and accounting for local, alternative pathways and strategies within the general transition.

The transformation from pastoralism to a ***livestock- based agro-pastoral system***, where enclosures are an integrated part of the land use management, may represent a sustainable and productive development and transformation that could be a valid way forward in many dryland areas, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

