Denis Gautier - Assessing the perceptions of an arid natural environment in Northern Mali using participatory Gender-Based Hand-Drawn Mapping

Session 3655 Gender, Power, and Participatory Hand-drawn Mapping in Agriculture and Natural Resource Research
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In the framework of a project funded and implemented in 2003 in the Bamba region (Northern Mali) by the "French Scientific Committee on Desertification", I have undertaken a research on the perceptions by various stakeholders of the natural environment dynamics for the past 20 years. This has been done in order to accompany projects on natural resource management in the area. For that purpose I have used two complementary research methods: (i) I asked each surveyed stakeholder to give me the key-words which came to his/her mind, classified by importance, to qualify his/her present and natural environment, the drivers of the changes if any, and the actions to be implemented for a better future; (ii) I then asked them to hand-draw a map representing their present environment. The results are as follow: while the survey outputs seem to be strongly impacted by the main discourse on desertification and climate change and are focused on the deforestation and the silting up of the Niger, the hand-drawn mapping better reveals the environmental concerns of all the stakeholders and particularly of the more marginalized such as the women, Bella or Touareg. However, although better at revealing these concerns, the use of the hand-drawn mapping shows methodological limitations, particularly when used with marginalized social groups. Its usefulness is also questionable when it comes to understand the power relationship and the priority actions for natural resource management to be pursue.

Presenters

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Abstracts

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