

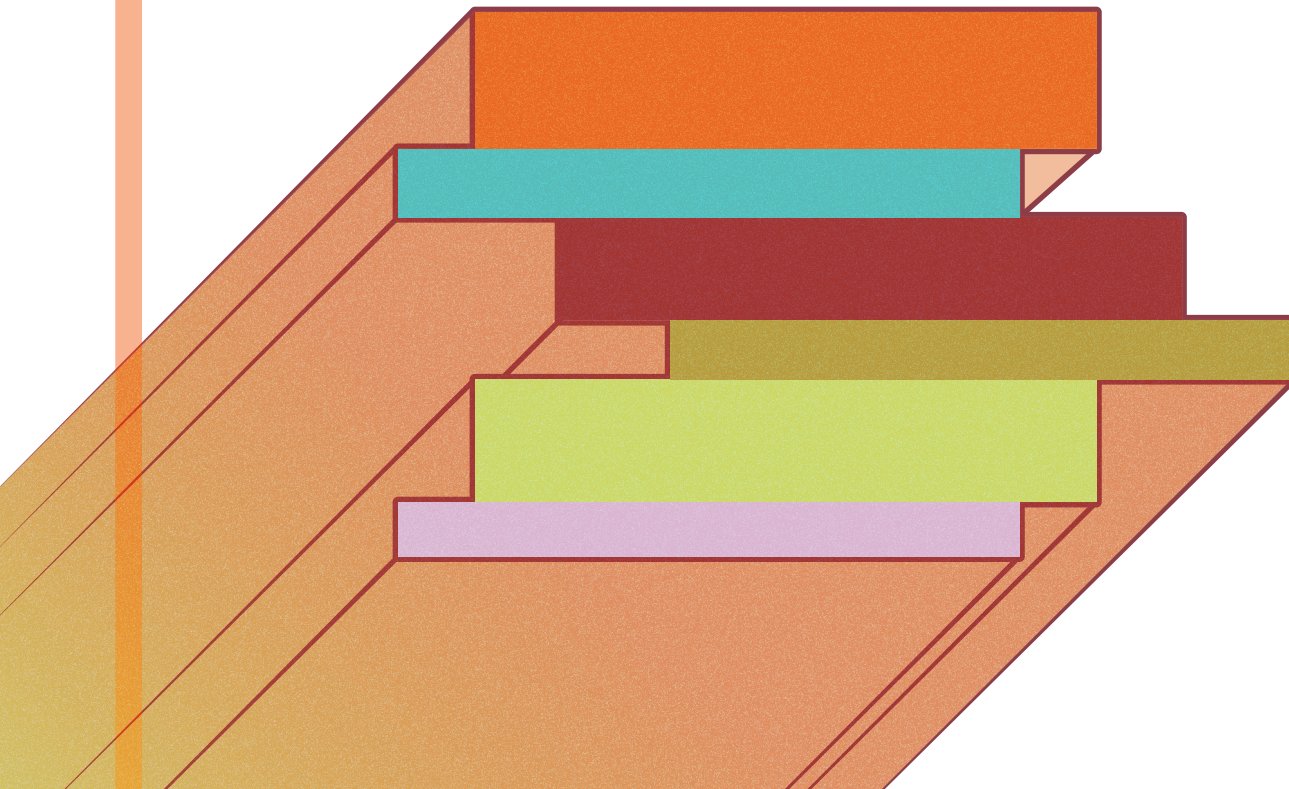


RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Forests, Trees and
Agroforestry

FTA 2020 Science Conference

Forests, trees and agroforestry
science for transformational change

14-18 | 21-25
September 2020



Book of Abstracts

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Climate change from the margin: Intersecting inequities in adaptation to climate change in the West African Sahel

People and species living in drylands have adapted over millennia to cope with extreme climatic variability. Diverse human populations in the drylands have created behavioral dynamics and social relations that enable reciprocity and mutual responsibility to use highly variable resources. For instance, mobility is a complex socio-ecological mechanism that relies on highly fine-tuned rules and norms to build the strategic exploitation of sporadic water and pastoral resources in an ecosystem characterized by high spatial and temporal climate variability. It allows different social groups to mutually manage and share resources through long-term traditional, negotiated tenure agreements, rights and responsibilities. Mobility is rooted in a broader governance system, and it is central to the identity of mobile pastoralists. While considerable attention and resources have been made available for the humid tropical forests, there has been a lack of comparable sustained attention on drylands. Local knowledge systems in drylands, the adaptive alliances woven through the coexistences of multiple identities and visions to manage and negotiate the landscape and the future are precious human experiences and knowledge systems, yet they sit on the periphery of the climate change agenda. Furthermore, within and outside the drylands, the repertoire of marginalization in the climate change debate includes those of major groups without social power: women, pastoralists and poor farmers.

Taking deliberately an opposite approach – focusing on climate change from the margin – this presentation will use case studies from the West African Sahel to illustrate the profound socio-ecological interactions and environmental and sociological shift happening within drylands systems.

The analytical approach used in the case studies aligns with theories on gender and climate change to include social differentiation. It relies on intersectionality as a tool to bring together existing concepts (e.g. vulnerability, adaptive capacity) to critically assess and enrich both common climate change and gender debates and theories. Using an intersectionality approach unveils emancipatory pathways and challenges the dominating narratives on vulnerability research. Through the examination of the intersecting factors and conditions by which power is not only produced and reproduced but also actively resisted, intersectionality calls for a more complex approach to address the system that creates power differentials, rather than the symptoms of it.

KEYWORDS

Adaptation, Sahel, gender, drylands

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