

Senior Fellowship for Dr. Gilbert Fokou: Coping with pastoral uncertainties in post-conflict context in West Africa: cross-border mobility, institutional change and livelihood strategies of smallholders in North Côte d'Ivoire

Initiative: Wissen für morgen – Kooperative Forschungsvorhaben im subsaharischen Afrika (beendet)

Ausschreibung: Postdoctoral Fellowships on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change

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In West Africa, transhumant pastoralists from the Sahel are increasingly shifting to coastal countries in the south where they rely on pockets of natural resources for livelihoods. However, in Côte d'Ivoire, the socio-political crisis of 2002-2011 led to the collapse of state authority in the north of the country controlled by the rebellion of Forces Nouvelles. The rebellion contributed to accelerate social transformations and modified types of interactions between various resources users. This context of weak and fragile state institutions has contributed in turning interactions between various users into conflicts, threatening livelihoods of smallholders (pastoralists and farmers). It becomes then important to investigate how social and environmental factors influence interactions between groups of users in the context of absence/fragile state and how this affects livelihoods of people. The objectives of the study are: Analyzing institutional changes in the context of socio-political crisis and effects on interactions between users; investigating relationships between changing social-environmental conditions, pastoral mobility and conflicts; generating knowledge and understanding on adaptive strategies of various groups of stakeholders to social, economic and environmental change to secure their livelihood conditions. With an inter and trans-disciplinary approach, this study builds on expertise of social sciences and geography to look into the effects of institutional change on social and ecological processes and effects on livelihoods of smallholders. The significance of the study is to understand the way access and use of natural resources by smallholders is currently being negotiated between state and non-state actors in the area formerly under the control of the rebellion.

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