Dialogue on Climate-resilient Farming Practices, Agroecology and Food Sovereignty

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Abstract

This paper is part of the session titled "Dialogue on Climate-resilient Farming Practices, Agroecology and Food Sovereignty". A growing number of multiple threats are combining to shape agriculture and food security in Northern Ghana. Among these threats include a legacy of long-term colonial underdevelopment, neoliberal restructuring, emerging land grabs, climate variability and change, and intra-household inequalities in resource access and control. The purpose of this paper is to provide critical perspectives on farmers’ socio-ecological resilience in the face of these multiple threats. In particular, emphasis will be placed on the complexity of local knowledge and proven climate-resilient farming techniques used to hedge against drought, conserve water, build healthy soils, and fight climate change. The paper will assess the limits and logic behind different agro-ecological farming practices, especially how each is selected on the basis of seasonal material needs, household composition, and labour availability. The discussion will be grounded in the analytical lens of political ecology, with empirical evidence drawn from eight months of intensive ethnographic research in northern Ghana. Overall, it will be argued that smallholder agro-ecology is not only effective solution to complex agricultural challenges, but also an affordable way to increase yields without external inputs. Furthermore, indigenous farming practices - with their low inputs, low emissions and local control over production decisions - offer a food sovereignty alternative to the unsustainable agro-monocultures currently being pushed to address climate and food crisis.

Keywords: Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, Local Knowledge, Political Ecology, Socio, ecological Resilience

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