

The Shifting Meanings of Land and Territory: The Case of the Afar Region, Ethiopia

Simone Rettberg¹

¹University of Bayreuth, Department of Social Geography, Germany

simone.rettberg@googlemail.com

This presentation deals with the impact of shifting land-discourses of Afar-pastoralists on social practices of land use . Based on an empirical case study in the Middle Awash Basin located within the arid Afar-Region of North-East-Ethiopia it will be highlighted to what extent interpretations and practices of land access and use have changed in a context of increasing external interventions, land scarcity, violent conflicts and unclear land policy. It becomes clear that land access is increasingly directed by exclusive practices of territorialization and commodification of land in the frame of an expanding demand for irrigation agriculture while conceptions of land as common property resource seem to become weaker.