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The construction of biodiversity as a boundary object within the OHMi Téssekéré



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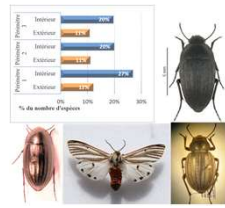
Introduction

The Great Green Wall, a project initially developed to restore degraded ecosystems in the Sahel, includes a major reforestation component. This logically led OHMi ecologists to conduct studies on the ecological benefits of these restoration actions. These studies bear the hallmark of biodiversity assessment, as an expression of biological diversity, and are mostly derived from comparisons between the interior of the Great Green Wall plots (the founding event of OHMi Téssekéré) and the exterior of these plots. This was the starting point for the mobilization of the notion of biodiversity by different disciplines and actors of the OHMi Téssekéré.

The objective of this poster is to show how biodiversity has been set up as a boundary object within the OHMi Téssekéré, thus allowing actors with different epistemic cultures to dialogue and, beyond that, to build common projects around the same object (Demeuleunaere 2009).

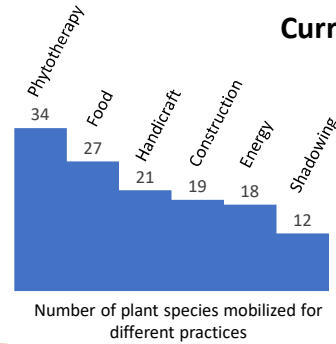
Biodiversity

Great Green Wall : influence of the founding event



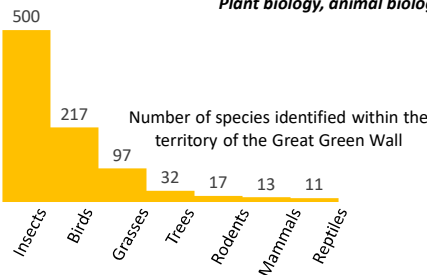
Example : relative abundance of insects within and outside GGW plots

Current uses



Disciplines :
Ethnobotany, organic chemistry, ethnozoology

Disciplines :
Plant biology, animal biology, genetics



Monkeys
Hairs : used to trigger itching in a troublemaker
Meat : used to fight against fatigue



Vultures
Head : used to increase intelligence
Nest : used to make the body invulnerable (« Toul »)



Structuring fact : aridification

Biodiversity as biological diversity

Biodiversity as diversity of uses and practices

Biodiversity as societal issue

Extinct uses

Spotted hyena
Skin : field protection
Nose : used to increase the sense of smell



Commiphora africana
Toothpicks



For populations

Witnesses about the past Ferlo agree on a great biodiversity loss :

- the surroundings were described as a very dense forest tough to cross (so a lot of paturage and ecosystem resources)
- there were many wild animals hunted for consumption or to prevent them to assault cattle

Biodiversity loss is associated with poverty, precarity and bad health, from a human and environmental standpoint.



For international actors

- Classification of the Koily Alpha community nature reserve as a Key Biodiversity Area (Government of Senegal)
- Implementation of the Great Green Wall accelerator in Senegal (International funders)

Conclusion

Biodiversity concentrates the complexity of the socio-ecosystem studied by OHMi Téssekéré, and thus encourages interdisciplinarity. As an object with porous boundaries, it enables dialogue between ecology, ethnobotany, organic chemistry, anthropology and political ecology, among others; its study involves both the structuring fact of the OHMi (aridification), its founding event (Great Green Wall), its focal object (Téssekéré territory), but also questions a more global, international, level.

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Diatta D. Sous presse. Habiter le Sahel : usage des plantes dans le Ferlo. In Duboz P, Ndiaye P, Boëtsch G, Guisse A. *Dynamiques sahéliennes*. Paris : Atlantide.

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