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"The Persistence of Tightly Coupled Conflicts. The Case of Loisaba, Kenya"

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Contributing to the debate on the multidimensional nature of resource-based conflicts in political ecology, and building upon Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Theory, we have studied the *persistent* and *shifting* nature of conflicts as well as their *dependencies* on other conflicts in and around Loisaba conservancy. This private conservancy is situated in northern Laikipia (Kenya). For a long time, its management was focused on wildlife conservation, high-end tourism and commercial ranching. Developments and events at neighbouring ranches and community conservation areas shifted this focus. Decades of more or less peaceful regional co-existence has recently transformed into conflictual, sometimes even violent situations. At first sight, these emergent conflicts seem related to recurrent droughts, competing resource dependencies, national elections, or incitements by wealthy and influential politicians. For this study, however, we conceptualise conflicts as particular kinds of discourses that emerge, exist and change. This happens not only according to their own internal logics, but also through their dependencies with other conflict discourses. In this paper, we characterise the relations between conflicts on a range from tight to loose couplings and introduce three related forms of coupling (*overpowering*, *resisting*, and *resonating*) to provide a more detailed understanding of how conflicts may interrelate. (Text from authors' abstract)

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