

Bulletin no.3 (July 2007)

Competing Claims on Natural Resources research programme

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1. Wageningen workshop, June 2007: PhD students present their proposals

In a workshop held in Wageningen late June 2007, six PhD students presented their research proposals. The students developed their proposals together with their supervisors while following courses at Wageningen University and ITC-Enschede for a period of six months. Nicia Giva and Armindo Cambule, who completed their scoping studies in the Limpopo National Park area (Mozambique) in March 2007, presented their results and proposals-in-progress. In addition, several Dutch MSc and PhD students presented their study plans during this workshop (see below). The workshop programme and presentations will be available on the Competing Claims portal: <https://portal.wur.nl/sites/CompetingClaims/default.aspx>

2. Wageningen workshop: Concepts, coordination and comparative analyses

During the last day of the Wageningen workshop, the participants reflected on some of the central analytical concepts of the Competing Claims framework, such as the NE-DEED framework (*Negotiated describe-explain-explore-design*). It was observed that while, understandably, the design phase generally did not receive much attention in the PhD proposals, the central element of negotiation is often implicitly taken as referring to formal situations only. Yet, negotiation is not confined to meetings between stakeholders and/or policy makers, but a common element in all interactions with stakeholders, including that of researchers trying to do societal relevant research! (after all, what is relevant is negotiated).

In the wrap-up of the workshop it was also agreed that the Competing Claims core-team (Maja Slingerland, Ken Giller, Jens Andersson and the country coordinators) will take the lead in the comparative analysis of Competing Claims across the sites. They were given a mandate to initiate such an analysis and compose thematic groups to work on specific issues and publications.

Besides the comparative analysis the project and regional coordinators (Maja and Jens) may also be asked by PhD students to assist them, and thus become co-authors on different papers. However, it is crucial that in such cases the supervisory team (including the promoters) of the PhD student is informed, defines and agrees on the particular arrangement made.

3. New projects in the Competing Claims programme

Several Wageningen University students introduced their (planned) studies within the Competing Claims programme, during the June workshop,:

- Lennart van der Burg (MSc-student Environmental Science) plans to work on competing claims on water in the Luvuvu catchment, in north-western South Africa in 2008;
- Joep van den Broek (MSc) will conduct a study on land-use options in Kranspoort, South Africa, in July/August 2007. He will work with stakeholders and PhD-student Yves van Leynseele, who has worked on competing discourses on land in this land claim area for the past two years;
- Marc Schut (MSc), will start his PhD research on the mobilisation and utilisation of knowledge in competing claims contexts, turning the experiences of the Competing Claims programme in southern Africa into one of his case studies.

The MSc research proposals will be made available on the Competing Claims portal soon.

The Competing Claims PhD students are encouraged to make a list of potential MSc projects for local and Wageningen students and communicate these with the regional and project coordinator and their supervisors. Thus we can more easily plan and prioritise projects, find interested MSc-students, and enlarge their contribution to the PhD project to which they are linked.

4. MSc project results: Heleen Klinkert and Leonardo Wilson

Heleen Klinkert (MSc-student Animal Production Systems) conducted a study in Wageningen on the expectations of Competing Claims staff and PhD students with regard to the inclusion of the interests of marginalised stakeholders in research. She found that whereas PhD students were generally positive about the potential impact of their research on stakeholders' position and livelihoods, staff was more doubtful. They generally saw politics as playing an important role in competing claims problems.

Leonardo Wilson, who conducted fieldwork on smallholder farmers' soil fertility management practices on the fringes of the great Limpopo Transfrontier Park in Mozambique, presented his MSc-thesis (Plant Production Systems) in a colloquium on 21 June. His thesis, entitled: 'Patterns of nutrient allocation and management in smallholder farming system in Massingir District, Mozambique. A case study of Banga village', is available on the Competing Claims portal ([Documents and Lists>Literature>Theses](#)).

5. PhD-students: 'go/no-go' decisions and fieldwork

Like all Wageningen University PhD-students, the Competing Claims PhD-students face a 'go/no-go' evaluation by their supervisory teams during the first year of their studies. Early July, four PhD-students were officially given the green light: a 'go'. Chrispen Murungweni, Xavier Poshiwa, Edward Mufandaedza and Petronella Chaminuka have since left Wageningen to start fieldwork in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Unfortunately, our two PhD-students from Botswana – Kgosietsile Velepini and Mothusi Ntseme – were given a 'no-go' by their supervisory teams. We are very sad they leave the Competing Claims team, but wish them all the best in pursuing their careers.

6. DGIS-WUR partnership call for proposals: Competing Claims submits concept note

As part of the partnership programme 'Globalisation and Sustainable Rural Development' between Wageningen University and Research Centre (Wageningen UR) and the Netherlands' Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), Wageningen UR has opened a call for concept notes on research proposals that address 'Competing Claims on Natural Resources'.

See: <http://www.wi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/>

In order to both extend and strengthen our programme in southern Africa, the Competing Claims on natural resources programme has submitted a concept note entitled: 'Competing claims, competing models: Understanding (the benefits of) bio-fuel-based development models and their impact on resource use negotiations and rural livelihoods in southern Africa.'

7. Staff travel: please inform us!

It would be appreciated if PhD supervisors and other staff members of participating organisations travelling in/to southern Africa in connection with Competing Claims initiatives would inform the programme's coordinators (Jens Andersson/Maja Slingerland) of their plans. We may be able to assist or combine visits to the field and/or relevant events.

8. Other news

Ken Giller intends to be on sabbatical in the southern African region for three months from January to March 2008.

If you have relevant information to share for the next Competing Claims bulletin, please send it to the Regional Coordinator (Jens Andersson) or the Programme coordinator (Maja Slingerland).

To subscribe/unsubscribe to the Competing Claims bulletin, please mail: jens.andersson@wur.nl

Competing Claims on Natural Resources

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