

Bulletin no.4 (September 2007)

Competing Claims on Natural Resources research programme

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1. New PhD project: Resource gradients in southern Africa

Abel Ramoelo from the Natural Resources and the Environment unit of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR-NRE) in Pretoria, South Africa, has been selected to start a PhD project in the Competing Claims programme. He will start at ITC, Enschede in the Netherlands in October 2007. His daily supervisors are Ignas Heitkönig of the Resource Ecology group – chaired by Prof. Herbert Prins – of Wageningen University, and Andrew Skidmore of ITC. He will prepare a proposal for a regional study on resource gradients. We welcome Abel to programme!

2. New MSc projects: Marleen Elderman, Irene Verbeek and Kingston Muchemwa

Two MSc students from Wageningen University will assist Jessica Milgroom in Mozambique with her PhD-research. They will provide data allowing to compare the current villages that are supposed to move from the inside of the LNP to territories of hosting villages and these hosting villages themselves. Marleen Elderman, supervised by Karen Eilers of the Animal Production Systems group, will investigate roles of livestock in both villages. Irene Verbeek, supervised by Ignas Heitkönig of the Resource Ecology group, will investigate natural resources and their use. Kingston Muchemwa, MSc-student at ITC Enschede, has started fieldwork in Zimbabwe's southeastern lowveld, conducting a study into sudden as opposed to gradual land use and cover changes, using historic and present earth observation materials of different resolution. The project seeks to benefit the work of Chrispen Murungweni, Edward Mufandaedza, and Xavier Poshiwa, three Competing Claims PhD students working in the area, and is co-supervised in Zimbabwe by Amon Murwira.

3. PhD-students: 'go/no-go' decision and fieldwork

After the research proposals of four Competing Claims PhD students were given a go-ahead in July, a fifth PhD candidate, Nicia Giva, was given the 'green light' in August. Like her colleagues, she has since completed course-work in Wageningen and left for Mozambique to start her fieldwork in the multiple-use zone of the Limpopo National Park. Nelson Manjate, whose project commenced slightly later than that of most PhD students, unfortunately did not receive a 'go' of his supervisory team. He leaves the Mozambican team of the Competing Claims programme. We wish him success in pursuing his career.

4. PhD-course announcement: Interdisciplinary Farming Systems Analysis

An interdisciplinary PhD-course on Farming Systems Analysis will be organized in February 2008. The course seeks to provide skills and methods for the analysis of (the dynamics of) farming systems as embedded in the complex livelihoods of rural people in Africa. The course integrates agro-ecological analyses with sociological understandings of the organization of agricultural production and targets PhD students and post-docs working on and within (smallholder) production systems, rural livelihoods, and the effects of global change at the regional, national and local level. For registration and more information, contact: jens.andersson@wur.nl

5. Competing Claims portal (restricted access): Access for PhD candidates

The Competing Claims portal is a restricted access area on the Wageningen University computer network. On the portal Competing Claims team members can communicate with each other, share information and archive a number of relevant documents and links. The portal is accessible to anyone who has an e-mail account at Wageningen University and who has been given access. Hence, all Competing Claims PhD candidates with a WUR e-mail account now have portal access. The portal can be accessed from the Competing Claims website, or directly, using the URL: <https://portal.wur.nl/sites/CompetingClaims/default.aspx>

6. Conference announcements

World Conference on Animal Production, Cape Town, 23-28 November 2008

The World Conference on Animal Production examines the scientific progress in livestock production and its effects on the environment, economies and the quality of life of people. The theme of the conference is: 'New World, Future World' and focuses on future scenarios for the various systems of animal production. For details, see: <http://www.wcap2008.co.za/>

IASC Conference, Cheltenham (UK), 14-18 July 2008 (abstracts deadline 30 Oct. 2007)

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) organizes its 12th Biennial Global Conference on 'Governing shared resources: Connecting local experience to global challenges.' All interested are invited to submit abstracts on any aspect of the conference themes. For details, see: <http://www.iascp.org/iasc08/2008themes.html>

7. New books, journal issues

Book: Livelihoods & Landscapes in South Africa

This book analyzes changes in the use of the landscape and the nature of rural livelihoods in two villages in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, it provides a comprehensive study of the patterns of land use over time. The book depicts the steady deterioration in agricultural production and the corresponding increase in dependence on social grants and wages. Despite this trend remnants of a peasantry do exist.

Paul Hebinck & Peter Lent (eds) *Livelihoods & Landscapes: The People of Guquka and Koloni and their Resources* (Leiden: Brill Afrika-Studiecentrum Series, Vol. 9a, 2007). See: <http://www.brill.nl>

Book: Transfrontier Conservation in Africa

This book discusses the emergence of transfrontier conservation in Africa against international experiences in bioregional planning. The roles of the state and local populations are analysed, as well as the ecological, socio-economic and political implications.

M. Ramutsindela, *Transfrontier Conservation in Africa at the confluence of capital, politics and nature* (Wallingford: Cabi). See: http://www.cabi.org/bk_BookDisplay.asp?PID=2020

Journal: Conservation and Society

Some of you may be interested in the latest issue of *Conservation and Society*, containing a special section on the politics of engagement between biodiversity conservation and the social sciences. Download the articles from: <http://www.conservationandsociety.org/vol-5-1-07.html>

Website: PLECserv: People, Land Ecosystem

PLECserv is a free electronic list that seeks to inform the scientific and professional community concerned with rural development and conservation in smallholder farming regions of the developing world. One can subscribe to the list and get one article abstract a month. More information is available at: <http://c3.unu.edu/plec>

Newsletter of the Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE) programme of IDRC

IDRC's Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE) programme supports research focusing on the needs of the rural poor who live in fragile or degraded ecosystems. For more on this programme and its newsletter, see: <http://www.idrc.ca/rpe/>

8. Other News

Former Competing Claims PhD student Mothusi 'KK' Ntseme is getting married in Gaborone in October 2007. CONGRATULATIONS to 'KK' and his wife-to-be, Sethunya Monageng!

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

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