

Bulletin no.5 – January 2008

Competing Claims on Natural Resources research programme

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1. New research site: Competing Claims in the Mid Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe

The Competing Claims research programme has recently started new research projects in the Mid-Zambezi Valley, northern Zimbabwe. A first project evaluates the socio-economic and environmental impacts of various Conservation Agriculture (CA) technologies based on Multipurpose Grain Legumes (MGL) for the diversity of smallholder livelihoods in the Mid Zambezi Valley. This project, which is implemented in collaboration with CIRAD-Zimbabwe. PhD-researcher: Frédéric Baudron. See: <http://www.competingclaims.nl/CC/ProjectsZW2.html>

Two other projects will look at different (institutional) dimensions of wildlife-people-livestock interactions in the Zambezi Valley, possibly comparing these to institutional arrangements in the southeastern lowveld. Full project proposals will be developed by the newly recruited PhD candidates Edson Gandiwa (MSc, Ecology) and Steven Matema (MSc, Social Ecology) in the first half of 2008. We welcome Fred, Edson and Steven and wish them success!

2. New programme: Competing Claims and bio-fuel production systems in Mozambique

The Competing Claims research proposal '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', has been awarded funding. This programme is financed by a partnership fund of Wageningen University and the Netherlands' Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS).

This new research programme seeks to analyse different of bio-fuel production initiatives – ranging from small-scale cassava production, to tree-based (*Jatropha*), and large-scale irrigated sugarcane production – that are currently developed in Mozambique (and beyond), and how these different production systems intensify and alter resource competition.

3. New PhD project: Knowledge, power and participation in governance of natural resources

Chaka Chirozva, from the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) of the University of Zimbabwe, has been awarded a sandwich scholarship in Wageningen University's open competition. Early 2008 he will start a PhD project under the supervision of Prof. Cees Leeuwis (Communication & Innovation Sciences group) and the Plant Production Systems group.

Chaka also works as local facilitator for the CASS-Scenario planning project, which seeks to develop new participatory (scenario) planning with the aim to empower local communities in the context of newly defined bio-physical and administrative entities, such as the Great Limpopo transfrontier conservation area (GLTFCA), to strengthen their adaptive management capacity. We welcome Chaka to programme! See also: <http://www.competingclaims.nl/CC/ProjectsZW1.html>

4. New projects linked to Competing Claims

PhD-project: Mobilisation of knowledge in Competing Claims in resource-use negotiations

Natural Resource Management and land use planning are complex decision making processes in which stakeholders negotiate over competing claims. This PhD-project seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how stakeholders strategically mobilise knowledge in natural resource management negotiations. Based on a comparative case study approach, it seeks to analyse two case studies within existing Competing Claims research sites. A third case study will be selected in the Netherlands. PhD-researcher: Marc Schut, Communication & Innovation Studies group (CIS), Wageningen University. See: <http://www.competingclaims.nl/CC/ProjectsLinked.html>

PhD-project: Modelling resilience of agro-ecosystems

The combination of population increase and natural resource conservation has always been difficult. According to some scholars, a critical threshold of population density has been crossed in the area of the GLTP. When ecological, economic, or social (including political) conditions make the existing system untenable, then the capacity to create a fundamentally new system is called transformability. Transformability is seen as an essential element in socio-ecological resilience. This study provides a possibility to study the effect of experiences of crisis and surprises on the transformability of agro-ecosystems. This study is part of a larger PhD project 'Modelling resilience of agro-ecosystems'. PhD-researcher: Dirk van Apeldoorn, Land Dynamics group, Wageningen University. See: <http://www.competingclaims.nl/CC/ProjectsLinked.html>

5. New MSc-projects

MSc students, Patience Zisadza, Fadzai Zengea, Philip Kuvawoga and Godfrey Mutovo, MSc students of the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences (DGES) of the University of Zimbabwe, will start 6-month GIS/Remote Sensing related research projects in Zimbabwe's south eastern lowveld. They will respectively work on: Quantifying spatio-temporal dynamics of land cover and use; Modelling the spatial distribution of Mopane worm; The spatial distribution of wildlife-livestock conflicts, and; Vegetation diversity mapping. The projects are linked to the PhD projects of Chrispen Murungweni, Xavier Poshiwa and Edward Mufandaedza, and are supervised by Dr. Amon Murwira. Fieldwork for the MSc projects of Marleen Elderman and Irene Verbeek in Mozambique (see bulletin 4), will commence in February 2008.

6. PhD meeting, Wits Rural Facility, Acornhoek, South Africa

In December 2007, an informal meeting for PhD-students was organized to discuss progress and problems in the initial fieldwork stage. The meeting not only sought to provide a platform for discussion of first fieldwork experiences and the challenges students encounter, but also to (1) stimulate students to raise additional funds for their projects, (2) identify collaborations and comparative themes on the basis of initial fieldwork, and; (3) to seek ways of informing each other of each others activities and interests as to initiative and facilitate such collaborative work (it was agreed to do this a.o. through 3-monthly project activity summaries of all projects).

Since the Competing Claims programme has recently recruited new PhD students and expanded into northern Zimbabwe, where a new research site was opened in the Mid-Zambezi Valley, the meeting also provided an excellent occasion to introduce some newly recruited PhD students to the existing group, to jointly discuss the nature of competing claims in this new site from a comparative perspective, and to elaborate on new competing claims initiatives.

7. Conference Announcements

KNP Annual Science Network Meeting, Skukuza, 21-25 April 2008.

See: www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/conservation/scientific/noticeboard/

Resilience2008 International science & policy conference, Stockholm, Sweden, 14-17 April 2008.

See: www.resilience2008.org

8. Other news

Nelson Manjate, who left the Competing Claims PhD-team a few months ago, has found new employment as marine researcher at WWF-Mozambique and will be based in Pemba, in north of Mozambique. We wish him all the best in his new job!

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).

Competing Claims on Natural Resources

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