



Private wildlife production and conservation in the Eastern Cape: impacts on farm dwellers' land rights and livelihoods

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Introduction

Recap:

Social-ecological systems: social sustainability important too!

Linkages ecosystem services and human well-being

How to define human well-being and whose well-being?

Relations different stakeholders





Introduction

This presentation focuses on private wildlife conservation and production in the Eastern Cape:

Based on findings from a NWO-WOTRO and SANPAD funded interdisciplinary research project involving the cooperation of the VU University Amsterdam, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Free State

Focus on the impacts on land rights and livelihoods of farm dwellers





Conversions to private wildlife conservation and production

Growing trend in South Africa: shift from large-scale commercial agriculture to game ranching

Nationwide: \pm 9000 game ranches: hunting, tourism, venison, breeding

Occupying about 14% of South Africa's total surface

Half are mixed farms

Eastern Cape: \pm 10% converted entirely





Conversions to private wildlife conservation and production

Presented as win-win situation: good for nature conservation and local development

Both state conservation agencies and environmental NGOs look to private land owners for assistance

-Increase in surface, habitat

-Creation of corridors





EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE





Conversions to private wildlife conservation and production

First conversions started in EC started in the 1970s.

Rate of conversions increased in the 1990s:

- (Further) deregulation agricultural sector; led to land consolidation
- Fierce competition in a global market; wildlife production and tourism more attractive than farming
- Land owners feel threatened by land reform, need to justify their presence on the land, try to prevent tenant claims





Conversions to private wildlife conservation and production

Conversions to game ranching involve amalgamation of farms, resulting in land consolidation

Conversions require large financial investments, hence local and international investors are mobilized

Conversions started by local (mostly white) land owners, who then often sell the land to investors

Immediate cash flows not always large, but land prices go up (speculation is also occurring)





Impacts on farm dwellers' land rights and livelihoods

Conversions take place in a context of colonial and apartheid legacies: but (impacts of) legacies vary locally:

- Karoo: early onset of proletarianization farm workers, high mobility, very few land claims, hardly any tenant claims
- Coastal areas: stronger ties of farm dwellers to farms, had more access to land for grazing and cultivation





Impacts on farm dwellers' land rights and livelihoods

Development defined in terms of job opportunities rather than strengthening land rights of the poor

However, most forms of private wildlife production – hunting, venison production, breeding, leisure farms – are less labour intensive

Large-scale luxury 'eco-tourism' ventures appear to be an exception: require more labour, but (former) farm dwellers mainly in lower echelons of work force, and market is vulnerable





Photo: Femke Brandt





Impacts on farm dwellers' land rights and livelihoods

Creation of 'pristine wilderness' changes spatial organization, role and place of farm dwellers

Cultivation and livestock forbidden, farm dwellers moved to the edges or over the edges of the farms

Attempts to strengthen farm dwellers' land rights through ESTA fail

Farm dwellers oscillate between farms and towns/rural informal settlements





Ambivalent State Reactions

Government departments divided:

Agriculture: some see it as profitable land use option, others express fears about food security, yet prejudice against small-scale farming prevails

Environmental Affairs: some welcome expansion habitat for conservation and increased revenues, others are concerned about breeding and stocking practices, no concern about farm dwellers or land rights





Ambivalent State Reactions

Land reform: responses differ per province and district, but often claims are stalled/dismissed, fear of damaging growing economic sector and negative consequences for investment climate

Game farming results in higher land prices, therefore hampers redistribution component of land reform





Conversions to private wildlife conservation and production

Privately owned land is transferred, but private-to-private transfers:

- Obscure negative impacts on farm dwellers' land rights and livelihoods
- In some cases hamper land reform
- Perpetuate pattern of racially skewed access to land



