The changing geography of wildlife conservation: Perspectives on private game farming in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

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Abstract

Widespread wildlife ranching on privately owned land in South Africa has been fuelled mainly by land use changes in the agricultural sector over recent decades. This has changed the landscape of nature conservation with varying effects. This article attempts to explain the contradictions and continuities in the governance of private wildlife ranching in South Africa, with a focus on the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The article draws on data from interviews with key informants, observations by the author and documentary evidence linked to the private wildlife ranching sector in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The theory of post-productivism is used here to attempt to understand the transformation in the agricultural and wildlife conservation sectors that has shaped rural development in South Africa. In analysing the complex relationships between different state and private actors in this space, the author argues that this changing geography is symptomatic of processes witnessed by the enclosure of land into private ownership, a process that, by no means is confined to South Africa. These transformations in the agricultural and nature conservation spheres are an integral part of rural transformation and restructuring in the South African countryside steeped in a long history of contestations over access to, and control of, natural resources inherently associated with land and wildlife.

Keywords: Wildlife ranching; Game farming; Conservation; Post-productivism; KwaZulu-Natal; South Africa.

Introduction

The shift from conventional farming to game farming or wildlife ranching[1] in the agricultural sector over recent decades has led to the phenomenal growth

1 Please note that the terms game farming, game ranching or wildlife ranching will be used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon of commercial utilisation of wildlife species since the focus on their impact in the article is common.

of the private wildlife ranching industry in South Africa.[2] Wildlife ranching in this article is taken to refer to "the commercial utili[s]ation of wildlife species, including meat, parts, by-products, sport hunting, aesthetics, and recreation".[3] Two types of commercial utilisation of wildlife species have been identified according to how they generate income as follows: "a private nature reserve is where ecotourism is the main focus; and a commercial game reserve is a hunting or breeding farm".[4] Transformation from livestock production to wildlife-based production has been noted since the 1960s, but since the 1990s the wildlife sector has grown exponentially.[5] The increase in wildlife-based production has in turn changed the landscape of nature conservation in South Africa with varying effects to the countryside. This transformation involves changes in economic activities, restructuring of spatial and social relations,[6] and changes in the organisational and institutional processes that shape the governance of wildlife resources. In this article it is argued that transformation in the agricultural and nature conservation spheres is an integral part of rural transformation and restructuring in the South African countryside that has a long history steeped in the contestations for natural resources associated with land and wildlife. The article concentrates on contradictions and continuities in the governance of private wildlife ranching in South Africa, with a focus on the province of KwaZulu-Natal Province (See Image 1).

2 C Van der Waal & B Dekker, "Game ranching in the Northern Province of South Africa", *South African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 30(4), 2000, pp. 151-156; N Smith & SL Wilson, *Changing land use trends in the thicket biome: Pastoralism to game farming*. Report Number 38, (Port Elizabeth, University of Port Elizabeth Terrestrial Ecology Research Unit, 2002); BK Reilly, EA Sutherland & V Harley, "The nature and extent of wildlife ranching in Gauteng Province, South Africa", *South African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 33(2), 2003 pp. 141-144; JA Cousins, JP Saddler & J Evans, "Exploring the role of private wildlife ranching as a conservation tool in South Africa: Stakeholders perspectives", *Ecology and Society,* 13(2), 2008 (available at http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art43/, as accessed on 9 March 2010); JW Hearne, T Santika & P Goodman, "Portfolio selection theory and wildlife management", *Orion,* 24(2), 2008, pp. 103-113; M Spierenburg & S Brooks, "Private game farming and its social consequences in post-apartheid South Africa: Contestations over wildlife, property and agrarian futures", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 32(2), 2014, pp. 151-172.

3 MJ Butler, AP Teaschner, WB Ballard & BK McGee, "Wildlife ranching in North America – arguments, issues, and perspectives", *Wildlife Society Bulletin,* 33(1), 2005, p. 381.

4 T Kamuti "A critique of the discourse of the green economy approach in the wildlife ranching sector in South Africa", *Africa Insight*, 45(1), 2015, p. 147.

5 N Smith & SL Wilson, *Changing land use trends in the thicket biome: Pastoralism to game farming,* Report Number 38 (Port Elizabeth, University of Port Elizabeth Terrestrial Ecology Research Unit, 2002); JW Hearne, T Santika & P Goodman, "Portfolio selection theory and wildlife management", *Orion* 24(2), 2008, pp. 103-113; M Brink, M Cameron, K Coetzee, B Currie, C Fabricius, S Hattingh, A Schmidt & L Watson, "Sustainable management through improved governance in the game industry", *South African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 41(1), 2011, pp. 110-119; D Snijders, "Wild property and its boundaries – on wildlife policy and rural consequences in South Africa", *Journal of Peasant Studies,* 39(2), 2012, pp. 503-520; J Carruthers, "'Wilding the farm or farming the wild?' The evolution of scientific game ranching in South Africa from the 1960s to the present", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa,* 63(2), 2008, pp. 160-181.

6 F Brandt, F & M Spierenburg, "Game fences in the Karoo: Reconfiguring spatial and social relations", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 32(2), 2014, pp. 220-237.

The author draws on data from in-depth, open-ended interviews with key informants linked to the sector in KwaZulu-Natal Province, observations and documentary evidence.[7] The key informants included officials from non-governmental organisations and provincial state officials from Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW), the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Affairs, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Regional Land Claims Commission. The author interviewed a sample of game farmers apart from municipal officials, all in Umtshezi and Emnambithi local municipalities (both within the uThukela District Municipality) in the area between Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith that is referred to as the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.

Image 1: KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Source: T Kamuti, *Private wildlife governance in a context of radical uncertainty: Dynamics of game farming policy and practice in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa* (Amsterdam, Vrije University Amsterdam, 2016), p. 15.

7 This article is one of the outcomes of a study that was part of a research programme entitled: Farm dwellers – The forgotten people? Consequences of Conversions to Private Wildlife Production in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. I am sincerely grateful for funding provided by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO-WOTRO) [grant number W01.65.301] and the South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) for the period 2010 - 2016. Fieldwork was conducted intermittently over the period 2011-2015.

The article proceeds by highlighting the theory of post-productivism to contextualise the changes that have taken place on the South African agricultural and wildlife conservation landscapes. This is complemented by a historical account of expropriation and subsequent privatisation of land in present day KwaZulu-Natal Province. This account is linked to the role of the then Natal Parks Board (now Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife) as an organisation and/or institution that shaped the governance of wildlife resources both in the public and private ownership domains. What follows is a treatise of the contemporary developments in wildlife ranching and conservation in KwaZulu-Natal. This structure is the basis for exploring and contextualising the contradictions and continuities in the governance of private wildlife ranching and contemporary conservation discourse. This will help to illuminate the changing geography of wildlife conservation in contemporary South Africa. Finally, the article concludes with the idea that the changing geography of wildlife conservation observed in contemporary South Africa, a process that is, by no means, confined to the country,[8] is symptomatic of processes witnessed in historical geography of the enclosure of land into private ownership.

Post-productivism through diversification into wildlife ranching

The theory of post-productivism is most appropriate to frame transformation in the agricultural and wildlife conservation sectors across South Africa. Post-productivism mentions that "the landscape that formerly was a production landscape has become viewed as a landscape for consumption and recreation in situ."[9] This kind of transformation has a critical meaning to "rural development and restructuring" as it culminates in "new spatial relationships" while simultaneously causing "uneven and unforeseen developments" such as "post-productive islands" like "tourism destinations in traditional rural communities".[10] Post-productivism is believed to have emerged in Europe in the 1990s[11] partly as a result of adjustments to the Common Agricultural

8 JD Sidaway, "Accumulation by dispossession: The play of capital", *Human Geography,* 2(3), 2009, pp. 104-107.

9 Å Almstedt, P Brouder, S Karlsson & L Lundmark, "Beyond post-productivism: From rural policy discourse to rural diversity", *European Countryside*, 4, 2014, p. 298; B Ilbery & I Bowler, "From agricultural productivism to post-productivism", B Ilbery (ed.), *The geography of rural change* (Harlow, Longman, 1998), pp. 57-84; N Evans, C Morris & M Winter, "Conceptualizing agriculture: A critique of postproductivism as the new orthodoxy", *Progress in Human Geography*, 26(3), 2002, pp. 313-332.

10 Å Almstedt *et al.*, "Beyond post-productivism...", *European Countryside*, 4, 2014, p. 298.

11 Å Almstedt *et al.*, "Beyond post-productivism...", *European Countryside*, 4, 2014, p. 299.

Policy (CAP).[12] In the South African context, post-productivism has been noted in the rural areas by the increase in the "number of tourism facilities, game farms, recreational features, and arts and crafts enterprises" and this has been associated with urban-to-rural migration and advances in transport and telecommunications.[13] This trend has also been characterised by the emergence of second homes, or investment into rural homes by urban dwellers.[14] This article is interested in the shift to game farming, a development that is beyond conventional agriculture.[15]

Several arguments have been put forward to explain the shift to game farming. These relate to the nature of the economic, political and social environments in that South African farmers find themselves. An assessment of the financial implications of a switch from cattle farming to game ranching in the Northern Cape Province concluded that there is a higher gross margin derived from game ranching in comparison to cattle farming. However, the process of conversion from cattle farming to game ranching is challenging and not immediately profitable in most cases.[16] In this regard, changes that are brought about by post-productivism "emphasise both environmental sustainability and [a] farmer's economic sustainability."[17] Scientific and cultural changes also promote the use of wildlife, and there is a view that the expansion of wildlife ranching is a milestone in the transformation of agriculture in South Africa.[18] One of the changes has been the growth of the tourist industry that around 2003 was touted as the fourth largest sector in the South African economy.[19] Conservation tourism is a growing subsector of ecotourism, and includes what is called "volunteer tourism" where tourists pay to participate in conservation projects.[20] There is even talk of agri-tourism that is "a post-productivist blend of

12 EL Glendinning, "Building resilience through post-productivism: The case of farmers' markets" (Ph.D, Cardiff University, 2012), p. 19.

13 M Ingle, "Counterurbanisation and the emergence of a post-productivist economy in South Africa's arid Karoo region, 1994-2010", *New Contree*, 66, 2013, p. 55.

14 G Hoogendoorn & G Visser, "Tourism, second homes and emerging South African post-productivist countryside", *Tourism Review International*, 14, 2011, pp. 1-15.

15 GA Wilson, "From productivism to post-productivism ...and back again? Exploring the (un)changed natural and mental landscapes of European agriculture", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 26, 2001, pp. 77-102.

16 PC Cloete, PR Taljaard & B Grove, "A comparative economic case study of switching from cattle farming to game ranching in the Northern Cape Province", *South African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 37(1), 2007, pp. 71-78.

17 EL Glendinning, "Building resilience through post-productivism..." (Ph.D, Cardiff University, 2012), p. 22.

18 J Carruthers, "'Wilding the farm or farming the wild?' The evolution of scientific game ranching in South Africa from the 1960s to the present", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa,* 63(2), 2008, pp. 160-181.

19 LC Hoffman, K Crafford, N Muller & De W Schutte, "Perceptions and consumption of game meat by a group of tourists visiting South Africa", *South African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 33(2), 2003, pp. 125-130.

20 JA Cousins, JP Saddler & J Evans, 2009. "Selling conservation? Scientific legitimacy and the commodification of conservation tourism", *Ecology and Society,* 14(1), 2009 (available at http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art32/, as accessed on 1 September 2010).

agriculture, tourism and lifestyle."[21] These changes in the rural landscapes can be understood in the context of different (historical) regimes of state change and influence on the access to, and control of, land and wildlife resources.

Early expropriation and privatisation of land in KwaZulu-Natal Province

In the region known today as KwaZulu-Natal Province, a major portion of land and resources in the province were transferred from the majority African population into the hands of the minority population and subsequently privatised, like what happened in other southern African countries (also settler states).[22] It was during the time of Zulu dominance in the region that the kingdom received white traders and adventurers, forerunners of the forces that would later face Shaka's successors and eventually destroy the Zulu kingdom.[23] This was followed by the exodus of large numbers of Zulus "to work on the farms, railways, mines and in the homes of neighbouring colonists".[24] These developments marked the beginning of a new political, economic and social system:[25]

> Zululand was invaded in 1879 to facilitate the absorption of the Zulu people into the developing southern African capitalist system by the forcible acquisition of Zulu land and Zulu labour. The intention of those who planned the invasion of 1879 was to terminate Zulu political independence and free Zulu labour by means of a decisive military victory. The Zulu army thwarted this and as a result the war became merely the first stage in a prolonged process during which metropolitan and colonial forces undermined the strength of the Zulu by exploiting divisions within their society, and brought about a civil war which left the country and its people open to political subjugation and economic exploitation.

In losing their power and independence, the Zulu faced many difficulties. Eventually the short-lived entity of British Zululand was ceded to the Colony of Natal in 1897.[26] Under the 1903-1905 Zululand Delimitation Commission more Zulu land was expropriated in the early twentieth century to make way for white settlement and agriculture.

The patrilineal lineage system (inheritance through the male child) is one of the characteristic features of the Zulu that did not change when the people

21 M Ingle, "Counterurbanisation and the emergence of a post-productivist economy in South Africa's arid Karoo region, 1994-2010", *New Contree*, 66, 2013, p. 62.
22 B Child (ed.) *Parks in Transition: Biodiversity, rural development and the bottom line* (London, Earthscan, 2009).
23 J Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1982), p. xviii.
24 J Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*..., p. xix.
25 J Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*..., p. xxii
26 J Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*..., p. 246.

were coerced into the South African capitalist system.[27] The Zulu people had developed a robust social system in which wealth was based on the possession of cattle[28] the ownership of which was directly related to both political and material power.[29] In the Zulu kingdom, ownership of cattle determined the number of wives one would have as cattle were exchanged for women's reproductive power through the practice of *lobola* or bride wealth, thus affecting "the size of lineages, homesteads, production communities, and the number of producers".[30] Centralised control of cattle in an environment that was suitable for such land use allowed optimum utilisation of pastures, and as Guy argues, the kingdom derived its strength and resilience partly from the physical environment that permitted human productivity.[31] So the rise of the Zulu kingdom needs to be understood in this context of "the productive potentialities of the physical environment and the way in which it was exploited and changed by southern Africa's pre-colonial farmers".[32]

The pervasive influence of the European economy was a hallmark of the south-east African region prior to the incorporation of the Colony of Natal (which by then included Zululand) into the Union of South Africa in 1910.[33] This was the era of British industrial dominance and the expansion of British imperial power around the world. At first, Britain's interests in Southern Africa were primarily motivated by the strategic significance of the region "in relation to British commercial interests in India and the Far East".[34] Later, the discovery of minerals such as diamonds and gold made southern African land valuable in itself. The Western dependence upon natural resources from the South still continues up to today.[35]

The growth of Natal's economy had a negative impact on the colony's physical resources and environment.[36] In the pre-colonial period, African

27 J Guy, "Ecological factors in the rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa* (Essex, Longman, 1980), p. 114; J Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*..., p. xxii.

28 J Guy, "Ecological factors...", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society*..., p. 114; M Cadman, *Exploring our provinces: KwaZulu-Natal* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2007), p. 16.

29 J Guy, "Ecological factors in the rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa* (Essex, Longman, 1980), pp. 102-119.

30 J Guy, "Ecological factors...", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society* ..., p. 114.

31 J Guy, "Ecological factors...", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society*..., pp. 102-119.

32 J Guy, "Ecological factors...", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society...*, p. 118.

33 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910: A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press & Shuter and Shooter, 1989), p. xxiv.

34 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910...*, p. xxiv

35 U Patnaik, "The origins and continuation of first world import dependence on developing countries for agricultural products", *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 4(1), 2015, pp. 1-21.

36 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910...,* p. 429.

people lived in relative harmony with their natural environment in the sense that even if they "needed vast numbers of animal skins for clothing, feathers for ornamentation and saplings for stockades and huts, there was no wholesale plundering of these natural resources". In cases where the carrying capacity of the land had been exhausted due to over-utilisation, the Africans would allow that land to lie fallow by moving to a fresh piece of land. On the other hand, the decline of physical resources is presumed to be one of the reasons behind the decline of the Zulu Kingdom.[37]

However, the arrival of settler hunters led to the organised slaughter of wildlife to meet the needs of Victorian life style and extractive tendencies to clear forests for agriculture, a process that went hand in hand with fencing off of land.[38] By the mid-1870s most of the herds of animals had disappeared, despite the institution by the Colony of Natal of its first game law in 1866.[39] The slaughter of wildlife was also instigated by settler-farmers as a tsetse-fly control measure[40] after restrictions on hunting were lifted during the First World War[41] in order to create a favourable environment to raise domestic stock by limiting the transmission of diseases.[42] Later a preservationist ethic returned as the Natal Parks Board and its predecessor boards strove to develop first the Hluhluwe Game Reserve, and followed by the Umfolozi Game Reserve in the 1930s which had been the centre of game culling and tsetse fly operations.[43] Steele felt that resistance to the Natal Parks Board's 1970s introduction of greater security measures such as "security outposts, or guard camps, [or fences] around the game reserves" stemmed partly from the fact that earlier on, farmers and sport hunters had been encouraged by the provincial administration to slaughter rather than protect wildlife.[44]

In the nineteenth century, "native reserves" had been designated under the so-called Shepstone system and were intended to provide land access to the African population. However, these areas were inadequate and not equally

37 J Guy, "Ecological factors...", S Marks & A Atmore, *Economy and society...*, p. 102.

38 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand...*; J Carruthers, "Changing perspectives on wildlife in southern Africa, C.1840 to C.1914", *Society & Animals*, 2005, 13(3), pp. 183-199.

39 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910...*, p. 429.

40 N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden* (Cape Town, T.V. Bulpin Publications, 1979), p. 6; J Carruthers, "'Operation rhino', KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 1961", *Global Environment: A Journal of History and Natural and Social Sciences,* 11, 2013, pp. 195-196.

41 S Brooks, "Changing nature: A critical historical geography of the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe game reserves, Zululand, 1887-1947" (PhD, Queen's University, 2001).

42 N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*, p. 6.

43 S Brooks, "Images of 'wild Africa': Nature tourism and the (re)creation of Hluhluwe Game Reserve, 1930-1945", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31(2), 2005, p. 220-240.

44 N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*, p. 6.

distributed across the colony. The system disenfranchised local people, especially in parts of the colony where there were few such reserves:[45]

> Few 'native reserves' or communal land areas were designated in the western part of the Natal Colony, with the result that from the 1870s, black people in the region needed to find places to live on white-owned farms. Informal (verbal) contracts were negotiated between farm owners and the heads of local Zulu-speaking households, in which the homestead head undertook to ensure that the members of his household performed labour for the farmer. In exchange, the homestead head gained access to grazing land for cattle and a place to establish his homestead or umuzi.

These types of sharecropping and tenancy agreements occurred in the western part of the then Natal Colony, including the Midlands area of KwaZulu-Natal where this study was conducted.

Many people ended up living as "squatters or labour tenants on privately-owned farmland", and even those on native reserve land were "trapped in a system from which the only eventual outlet for many would be to enter the labour market".[46] Africans became "labour- or rent-paying tenants, farmers-on-the-half or squatters" in those areas where whites had total control of large swathes of land.[47] (In the reserves, people were squeezed into a smaller area overall, however, there was little alienation of land and communal land tenure persisted). The practice of labour tenancy was very widespread in the Natal Colony.[48] In present day KwaZulu-Natal, this has important implications for the welfare of farm dwellers within the new democratic dispensation. The position of farm dwellers – former labour tenants – is fundamentally affected by the conversions from conventional farming to game farming highlighted in this article. Studies elsewhere, for instance, in the Eastern Cape Province also show that people who have been resident on farms up to now also experienced the worst impacts of proletarianization[49] and alienation from land.[50]

45 S Brooks, M Spierenburg & H Wels, "The organisation of hypocrisy? Juxtaposing tourists and farm dwellers in game farming in South Africa", W van Beek & A Schmidt (eds.), *African hosts and their guests* (Rochester, James Carey, 2012), p. 209.

46 A Duminy & B Guest, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910...*, p. 42.

47 W Beinart, "Production and the material basis of chieftainship: Pondoland c.1830-80", S Marks & A Atmore (eds.), *Economy and society...*, p. 120.

48 J Lambert, *Betrayed trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal* (Scottsville, University of Natal Press, 1995), p. 79.

49 L Evans, "Gender, generation and the experiences of farm dwellers resettled in the Ciskei Bantustan, South Africa, ca 1960-1976", *Journal of Agrarian Change,* 13(2), 2013, pp. 213-233; N Mkhize, "Game farm conversions and the land question: Unpacking present contradictions and historical continuities in farm dwellers' tenure insecurity in Cradock", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 32(2), 2014, pp. 207-219.

50 T Connor, "The frontier revisited: Displacement, land and identity among farm labourers in the Sundays River Valley", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 2012, 30(2), pp. 289-311.

Historical and political factors such as the colonial processes of dispossession, racial segregation, discriminatory regulations and the apartheid system that were imposed in 1948 disenfranchised African people including compromising their relationship with land and the environment.[51] These colonial processes had the effect of alienating African people from their land, disconnecting them culturally and spiritually from their environment, thus impacting negatively on their perceptions about nature and its conservation.[52] These colonial processes also caused "the decline of smallholder African agriculture".[53] There is little regard to customs and taboos associated with the indigenous knowledge systems that African people used in caring for their natural resources.[54] Ian Player repeats the idea that large expanses of forests and grasslands were reserved for the exclusive utilisation of the Zulu royal family, including the area found today between the Black Umfolozi and the White Umfolozi that represented "Shaka's royal hunting ground".[55] This area is currently part of the central Umfolozi side of the greater Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve. Some of the current perceptions of various stakeholders towards nature and biodiversity conservation are shaped by this historical context: there is still substantial polarisation in terms of what could be the best possible ways of accessing, protecting and utilising natural resources, in this case wildlife.

The role of the Natal Parks Board

In terms of administrative arrangements, the Natal Parks Board was established through Ordinance 35 of 1947 as a statutory body on the 1st of December 1947 with Colonel Jack Vincent OBE as its first Director under Douglas Mitchell, the then Administrator of Natal in 1945/4.[56] It was during Colonel

51 F Khan, "Rewriting South Africa's conservation history – the role of the native farmers association", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20(4), 1994, pp. 499-516.

52 A Muir, "Strengthening wilderness in South Africa: Strategy and programs of the Wilderness Foundation S.A.", *International Journal of Wilderness* 8(2), 2002, pp. 4-8; M Draper, "Going native? Trout and settling identity in a rainbow nation", *Historia,* 48(1), 2003, pp. 55-94; M Draper, "In quest of African wilderness", *USDA Forest Service Proceedings RMRS-P27,* 2003, pp. 57-62; P Bond, R Dada & G Erion (eds.), *Climate change, carbon trading and civil society* (Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), p. 5.

53 D Neves & A Du Toit, "Rural livelihoods in South Africa: Complexity, vulnerability and differentiation", *Journal of Agrarian Change,* 13(1), 2013, p. 94.

54 F Khan, "Rewriting South Africa's conservation history...", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20(4), 1994, pp. 499-516; P Bond, R Dada & G Erion (eds.), *Climate change, carbon trading and civil society* ..., p. 5.

55 This has been obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library, but also see Brooks, 2000; I Player, "An elder sitting by the fire: My path to Jung", *Psychological Perspectives: A Quarterly Journal of Jungian Thought,* 57(2), 2014, pp. 158-169.

56 Natal Parks Board, South African nature conservation and the Natal Parks Board, (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Parks Board, 1986); This information was also obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library.

Jack Vincent's leadership that Operation White Rhino was undertaken in the 1960s with Ian Player, who was the Chief Conservator for the Natal Parks Board in Zululand,[57] as supervisor of the field operations.[58] Operation White Rhino was the rescue of the southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) that involved capture, transport, and release of the rhinos and subsequent introduction to integrate them successfully to their new habitats that happened between 1961 and 1966.[59] In the period just after the Second World War, Natal held discussions with other provincial structures of the Cape, Orange Free State, and Transvaal concerning the kind of nature conservation management they intended to put in place.[60] The provinces of Cape, Orange Free State and Transvaal chose to have provincial departments[61] but Natal elected to put in place a semi-autonomous parastatal entity financially supported by the province.[62] The parastatal's activities would be controlled by a Board made up of staff "drawn from members of organised agriculture, the judiciary, legal fraternity, business community and non-governmental agencies".[63] These Board members would be people with a clear interest in nature conservation capable of bringing in their experience and skills to the Board led by a Director who would be an *ex officio* member.[64] John Geddes-Page succeeded Colonel Jack Vincent as Director in June 1963. During Geddes-Page's time, the Natal Parks Game and Fish Preservation Board was renamed the Natal Parks Board (NPB).[65] All major dams in Natal also came under the management of the NPB with respect to nature conservation and human recreation.

The Natal Parks Board was instituted as a semi-autonomous body "with its own governing board" in order "to free it from the bureaucratic controls

57 N Steele, *Take a horse to the wilderness* (Cape Town, T.V. Bulpin and Books for Africa, 1971), p. 41.

58 M Draper, "Zen and the art of garden province maintenance: The soft intimacy of hard men in the wilderness of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 1952-1997", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 24(4), 1998, pp. 801-828; S Brooks, "Human discourse, animal geographies: Imagining Umfolozi's white rhinos", *Current Writing,* 18(1), 2006, pp. 6-27; J Carruthers, "Operation Rhino", KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 1961", *Global Environment: A Journal of History and Natural and Social Sciences,* 2013, 11, pp. 195-196. N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*..., p. 127.

59 I Player, "Translocation of white rhinoceros in South Africa", *Oryx – The International Journal of Conservation* 9, 1967, pp. 137-155.; N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*... .

60 This has been obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library.

61 J Carruthers, "'Wilding the farm or farming the wild'? The evolution of scientific game ranching in South Africa from the 1960s to the present", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa,* 63(2), 2008, pp. 160-181.

62 This has been obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library.

63 This has been obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library.

64 This has been obtained from an undated Natal Parks Board document entitled: Brief history of Natal Parks Board from their Pietermaritzburg head office library.

65 M Draper, "Going native...", *Historia,* 48(1), 2003, pp. 55-94.

of direct government and to make it independent of political influence".[66] As part of this process, the Natal Parks Board moved to a greater reliance on tourism, and opened up game reserves as tourist destinations from the 1940s.[67] This enabled it to mobilise financial resources and public goodwill to support and thus strengthen its conservation efforts.[68] One of the reasons governance of conservation under the Natal Parks Board has been successful is the adoption of "management practices that are more closely related to those used by private-sector commercial organisations".[69]

However, the Natal Parks Board's attempts to consolidate its conservation efforts met with resistance from white private landowners and African communities from the 1950s into the 1980s.[70] For instance, there were forced removals of African people to create more space for game reserves.[71] Nick Steele chronicled the nature of the resistance in the case of Operation White Rhino:[72]

> The protracted operations to capture displaced white rhino began in an atmosphere of hostility and cynicism, emanating not only from the farmers, the government officials and the tribesmen, but also from a proportion of our colleagues. This painful opposition from some of our own men led to bitter arguments.

Ian Player's impression was that the resistance was severe except in a few cases including that of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a long-time supporter of wildlife conservation.[73] In the 1970s, under Buthelezi's leadership, the government of the newly declared homeland of KwaZulu put its own nature conservation body in place, that is, the KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources (BNR), that later became the KwaZulu Directorate for Nature Conservation (DNC). Steele moved from the Natal Parks Board to the BNR at Buthelezi's request. This conservation body claimed to include local communities in its conservation efforts, and argued that the local communities were the major

66 D De la Harpe, P Fernhead, G Hughes, R Davies, A Spencely, J Barnes, J Cooper & B Child, "Does 'commercialisation' of protected areas threaten their conservation goals?", B Child (ed.), *Parks in transition: Biodiversity, rural development and the bottom line* (London, Earthscan, 2003), p. 204.

67 S Brooks, "Images of 'wild Africa'...", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31(2), 2005, pp. 220-240.

68 D De la Harpe *et al.*, "Does 'commercialisation' of protected areas...", B Child (ed.), *Parks in transition: Biodiversity, rural development and the bottom line...*, pp. 188-216.

69 D De la Harpe *et al.*, 2009. "Does 'commercialisation' of protected areas threaten their conservation goals?", B Child (ed.), *Parks in transition: Biodiversity, rural development and the bottom line...*, p. 190.

70 M Draper, "Zen and the art of garden province maintenance: The soft intimacy of hard men in the wilderness of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 1952-1997", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 1998, pp. 801-828; AN James, "Institutional constraints to protected area funding", *Parks: The International Journal for Protected Area Managers*, 9(2), 1999, pp.15-26.

71 S Brooks, "Images of 'wild Africa'…", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31(2), 2005, pp. 220-240; S Brooks, "Human discourse, animal geographies...", *Current Writing*, 18(1), 2006, pp. 6-27.

72 N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*..., p. 127.

73 M Draper, "Zen and the art of garden province maintenance...", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 198, pp. 801-828.

beneficiaries of their natural resources. There was still substantial conflict, however, between the Bureau and local communities in some parts of northern KwaZulu. The BNR also had set aside its own formally protected areas, in addition to taking over reserves that had been under the jurisdiction of the NPB but were now geographically within KwaZulu's territory.

After the reintegration of the KwaZulu homeland at the end of the apartheid period, the Natal Parks Board and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation were amalgamated to form the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (NCS) in 1998.[74] This merger took place "after a protracted process of negotiation which reflected ... historical tensions" between Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's KwaZulu's Bureau of Natural Resources headed by Nick Steele at that time and the Natal Parks Board.[75] The name of the newly merged KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service was later changed to Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) and the first Chief Executive Officer was Dr George Hughes, formerly head of the Natal Parks Board. *Ezemvelo* is an isiZulu word that refers to nature or natural resources. Khulani Mkhize later went on to become the new Chief Executive Officer after some restructuring of the agency. This is the agency that currently manages around 8% of the province through 110 protected areas proportional to 7127.9 square kilometres of its land area[76] while overseeing biodiversity conservation in the rest of the province. These changes were instituted after the watershed 1994 democratic elections and were initiated by the then Member of the Executive Council for Environmental Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The main reason for this change was the need to streamline all conservation activities (a process that was not smooth for such a big organisation) to be under one umbrella body in line with the formation of the new KwaZulu-Natal Province. These institutional processes were not always smooth as for instance, Nick Steele chronicled the nature of conflict within the Natal Parks Board and among landowners as was the case with Operation White Rhino.[77] After the end of apartheid, new institutional

74 T Foggin & DO Münster, "Enhancing linkages between rural communities and protected areas in KwaZulu-Natal through tourism – abantu bayasizana (people helping people)", *Journal of Tourism Studies,* 11(1), 2000, pp. 2-10; R Emslie & M Brooks, *African Rhino: Status survey and conservation action plan* (Gland, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1999); PS Goodman, "Assessing management effectiveness and setting priorities in protected areas in KwaZulu-Natal", *BioScience*, 53(9), 2003, pp. 843-850.

75 M Draper, "Zen and the art of garden province maintenance...", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 198, p. 818.

76 T Foggin & DO Münster, "Enhancing linkages between rural communities and protected areas...", *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11(1), 2000, pp. 2-10; PS Goodman, "Assessing management effectiveness...", *BioScience*, 53(9), 2003, pp. 843-850.

77 N Steele, *Bushlife of a game warden*, pp. 6, 83.

processes for the governance of wildlife resources were "stitched" together by the various stakeholders, drawing on past practices and relationships.[78]

The historical development of the state conservation body in KwaZulu-Natal has faced multiple challenges as the organisation reacted to political developments in the country as well as the day to day challenges that were encountered in conservation efforts in the province. The author posits that the realisation that focuses on conservation of public protected areas only was not adequate for broader conservation of wildlife in the province was a turning point in the application of conservation efforts in Natal. This development changed the focus of the conservation authorities to seriously consider working with private landowners, not merely on the basis of enforcing regulations but also on the basis of a common understanding, shared goals and benefits. In this way, new institutional processes for the governance of wildlife resources were developed by the actors concerned. This is particularly evident in the development of conservancies in the 1980s.

The conservancy movement

The conservancy concept started in Natal in 1978 and it focused on privately owned agricultural land with the aim of conserving indigenous plants and animals. A conservancy is "a group of neighbouring mixed farms that, under auspices of the provincial conservation authority, are managed according to a single management plan and has a strong conservation ethic".[79] This was an initiative of the partnership between conservation authorities and private landowners themselves. Nick Steele was instrumental in the development of the conservancies in the then Natal Province when he came up with the "Farm Patrol Plan" in 1975.[80] Nick Steele worked for the Natal Parks Board from 1956. He started as a ranger and went up the hierarchy to become a senior warden[81] before falling out with the Board, thereafter he was removed from the more prestigious Zululand Game Reserves and posted to the Natal Midlands. Wels argues that the major motivation to start conservancies was the need

78 T Kamuti, "The fractured state in the governance of private game farming: The case of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa", *Journal for Contemporary African Studies*, 32(2), 2014, pp. 190-206.

79 N Smith & SL Wilson, *Changing land use trends in the thicket biome* ..., p. 3.

80 H Wels, "Fighting over fences: Organisational co-operation and reciprocal exchange between the Save Valley Conservancy and its neighbouring communities, Zimbabwe", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014); H Wels, *Private wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe: Joint ventures and reciprocity* (Leiden, Koninklijke Brill N, 2003), p. 23; H Wels, *Securing wilderness landscapes in South Africa: Nick Steele, Private wildlife conservancies and saving rhinos* (Leiden, Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015), p. 3.

81 N Steele, *Game ranger on horseback* (Cape Town, Books of Africa, 1968), p. vii.

to reduce and stop poaching on the participating neighbouring properties alongside conserved areas of land, by providing security for instance, along the joint perimeter of all the properties.[82] Steele subsequently left the NPB to start the rival KwaZulu homeland's conservation authority. Malcolm Draper notes that "the Natal Parks Board claims the credit for having 'developed the conservancy system (now used in other African states)' but makes no mention of Steele's name in regard to this boast".[83]

Nick Steele, while working for the NPB, designed the Farm Patrol Plan that suggested ways through which neighbouring farmers would join hands to tackle poaching in their efforts to conserve wildlife.[84] Farmers resisted some of the conservation efforts, and "the plan did not meet with the unanimous enthusiasm of the private landowners straightaway".[85] The first conservancy was the Balgowan Conservancy that was established on the 14th of August 1978.[86] The major tenet of the conservancy concept was the employment of game guards who would patrol the participating properties to stem poaching.[87] Neighbouring landowners would voluntarily pool their land and other resources for wildlife conservation.[88] The idea of conservancies became an important conservation strategy on privately owned land outside the public protected areas under the management of the Natal Parks Board.[89]

The Natal Parks Board provided extension services to game farmers, assisted them to publish *The Guineafowl Newsletter*, allowed meetings on their premises, trained game guards assigned to conservancies, and coordinated conservancy-related events. The number of conservancies in Natal grew up to 138 in the late 1980s covering approximately one million hectares equivalent to 17%

82 H Wels, *Private wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe*..., p. 18; H Wels, *Securing wilderness landscapes in South Africa*..., p. 3.

83 M Draper, "Zen and the art of garden province maintenance...", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 198, p. 817.

84 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 150; H Wels, *Securing wilderness landscapes in South Africa*..., p. 3.

85 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 157.

86 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 151.

87 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 151; H Wels, *Securing wilderness landscapes in South Africa*..., p. 4.

88 T Kamuti, The fractured state in the governance of private game farming...", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 32(2), 2014, pp. 190-206.

89 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 152; T Kamuti, "The fractured state in the governance of private game farming...", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 32(2), 2014, pp. 190-206; H Wels, *Securing wilderness landscapes in South Africa*..., p. 4.

of the province's land area that was patrolled by 420 game guards.[90] This number of conservancies rose to 168 in 1994 covering 1.4 million hectares of land in the province.[91] Landowners involved in conservancies formed the Natal Wildlife Conservancy Association in 1982 to represent their interests, for instance by publishing the newsletter and distributing it to their members to keep them abreast with relevant developments in their sector.[92] The idea of the conservancy was adopted by other provinces in South Africa and then by other countries such as Namibia and Zimbabwe.[93]

The formation of conservancies constituted consolidation[94] of land and marked a significant change in the geography of KwaZulu-Natal. Geographically, this meant a rearrangement to increase privately owned land holdings under conservation through bringing down internal fences, with potential to increase representativeness of biodiversity. Starting from the then Natal, the formation of conservancies and the Natal Wildlife Conservancy Association by private landowners can be seen as a form of adaptation to collective challenges faced at the time. The formation and running of conservancies is related to the concept of 'common-interest communities' of neighbouring landowners in the Great Plains of the United States of America. Here, due to the small scale and fragmented boundaries of the properties involved, landowners collectively took action to "enhance the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of grasslands and the populations that use them".[95] It would be attractive for the landowners to take advantage of economies of scale once they pool their resources together and share the costs as well as subsequent revenues.

Game farming started quite early on in KwaZulu-Natal and was actively stimulated by the Natal Parks Board through the provision of game animals originating from the protected areas, at first for free and later sold at game auctions. Game auctions hitherto remain an important feature of the relationship between private landowners and the conservation authority. These interactions resulted in quite close relationships between farmers and

90 Information obtained from an undated and unpublished article entitled; "Natal Parks Board: A summary of several key performance areas" obtained from the library of Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife on the 14th April 2011.

91 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 150.

92 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 152.

93 H Wels, "Fighting over fences...", 2000 (available at http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/handle/1871/50617, as accessed on 8 October 2014), p. 164; H Wels, *Private wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe*..., p. 24.

94 T Kamuti, "The fractured state in the governance of private game farming...", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 32(2), 2014, pp. 190-206.

95 AB Schutz, "Grassland governance and common-interest communities", *Sustainability*, 2, 2010, p. 2320.

the Natal Parks Board, later Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. Nevertheless, even given this close relationship, Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife still has difficulties in keeping track of what happens on game farms and experiences difficulty in enforcing legislation. For example, the introduction of non-native game species on farmers' properties such as colour variants of antelope species to cater for their current demand inevitably creates some tension with the conservation authorities.

Contemporary developments in wildlife ranching in KwaZulu-Natal Province

South Africa went through a constitutional process resulting in a negotiated settlement that occurred in two phases; the establishment of binding principles, and the implementation of the agreed principles into the constitution.[96] The de Klerk government began to repeal the body of discriminatory legislation, for example, through the Abolition of Racially-Based Land Measures Act, 1991 (Act No. 108 of 1991) followed by the amending legislation of 1993.[97] Of particular interest was the facilitation of the entrenchment of agricultural capital during the transition period in South Africa hitherto.[98] For instance, the Game Theft Act, 1991 (Act No. 105 of 1991) allowed farmers to own game subject to the provision of suitable fencing[99] and this spawned the growth of the private game farming sector. The democratic government elected in 1994 faced the challenging task of redressing the land imbalances without provoking a backlash from those holding onto the land, the majority of who were whites. As a result, the final 1996 constitution has a set of rights, safeguards or guarantees that are entrenched for all South Africans, while simultaneously stipulating measures to remedy and redress the injustices of the past.[100] Significantly, the constitution includes a property

96 N Haysom, "Negotiating the political settlement in South Africa: Are there lessons for other countries? Occasional Paper, *Track Two,* 11(3), 2002 (available at http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/11_3/index113.html, as accessed on 17 May 2010).

97 C Saunders & N Southey, *A dictionary of South African history* (Claremont, David Phillip Publishers, 2001), pp. xxvii, 121.

98 B Bernstein, "Commercial agriculture in South Africa since 1994: 'Natural, simply capitalism'", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(1), 2013, pp. 23-46.

99 B Child, "Private conservation in southern Africa: Practice and emerging principles", H Suich & B Child, *Evolution and innovation in wildlife conservation: Parks and game ranches to transfrontier conservation areas* (London, Earthscan, 2009), pp. 103-111; D Snijders, "Wild property and its boundaries...", *Journal of Peasant Studies,* 39(2), 2012, pp. 503-520.

100 C Walker, "The limits to land reform: Rethinking 'the land question'", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31(4), 2005, pp. 805-824; L Hamilton, "Human needs, land reform and the South African constitution", *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 33(2), 2006, pp. 133-145; B Cousins, "More than socially embedded: The distinctive character of 'communal tenure' regimes in South Africa and its implications for land policy", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 7(3), 2007, pp. 281-315; WG Moseley, "Neoliberal agricultural policy versus agrarian justice: Farm workers and land redistribution in South Africa's Western Cape Province", *South African Geographical Journal*, 89(1), 2007, pp. 4-13.

clause that guarantees private property rights based on the status quo during the transition.[101] The Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 is one such measure meant to redress the longstanding effects of the unjust land laws. Under this law, "expropriated land was to be returned, or alternative land provided, or compensation paid to those whose claims were valid".[102]

In addition, the World Bank Research Committee and the World Bank's Africa Region sponsored a research project entitled "*Nature Tourism and Conservation*" that was undertaken from 1999 up to 2002.[103] Kwazulu-Natal Province was selected by the World Bank to boost the Bank's capacity to offer appropriate policy advice to its target clientele at a global level concerning important environmental, social and economic issues linked to enhancement of nature tourism. The Bank chose the case study of the province with its affiliate organisation, the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) for this project to: "assess how various policy, institutional, and managerial alternatives can enhance nature tourism's contribution to biodiversity conservation, economic development, and social equity, with a particular focus on the intermediary role played by alternatives for increasing money flows from conservation activities".[104] This shows a continuation of market economy approaches to conservation in the province.

The consequences of the 1913 Land Act are the apparent land evictions that continued right up to 1991.[105] Countrywide, from 1960 to 1976, about 258 000 blacks were removed from "black spots" and the elimination of black squatters and labour tenants from white farms in particular, was prioritised by the then government, especially after the Natives' Trust and Land Act was instituted after 1936.[106] There were about 334 such black spots dotted around the province, and while working for the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) in the 1980s, Cheryl Walker chronicles the "plight of scores of farm workers and labour tenants

101 P Bond, *Elite transition: From apartheid to neoliberalism in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005).

102 C Saunders & N Southey, *A dictionary of South African History*..., p. 102.

103 B Aylward, "The actual and potential contribution of nature tourism in Zululand", B Aylward & E Lutz (eds.), *Nature tourism, conservation, and development in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa* (Washington, The World Bank, 2003), pp. 3-40.

104 B Aylward, "The actual and potential contribution of nature tourism in Zululand", B Aylward & E Lutz (eds.), *Nature tourism, conservation, and development in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*..., p. 3; For a critique of the World Bank's influence in South Africa see P Bond, *Elite Transition: From apartheid to neoliberalism in South Africa*..., pp. 155-191.

105 L Hamilton, "Human needs, land reform and the South African constitution", *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies,* 33(2), 2006, pp. 133-145.

106 FC De Beer, "The roots and complexity of the land issue and of land claims in South Africa", *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 29(1&2), 2006, pp. 24-34.

who were being evicted from white-owned farms in the Weenen district" [107] (part of the study area). About 1 570 233 farm dwellers vacated the farms due to evictions between 1984 and 1994.[108] In light of this situation, the South African constitution would strengthen procedures that allowed for "needs-based institutional critique" and strive to change institutions in line with satisfying needs, as compared to using the current "hegemony of (human) rights-based constitutions".[109]

Game farming on private land has effects on, and is inherently linked to biodiversity conservation, hunting, tourism, agriculture, land and agrarian issues, economic empowerment and rural development. In the study area, there is a case where land restitution has stalled because the previous white landowners bought into the idea of consolidating their properties to establish the Gongolo Wildlife Reserve (GWR) in the Gongolo area (see Image 2). Despite the land having been gazetted for land restitution (meaning that the land claims in the area were valid) the GWR Company at one time disputed the land restitution claims. A GWR official disputed the land restitution claims on the basis that there were "no Africans who had settled in the Gongolo area when the whites took over the land".[110] He referred me to one of the landowners; a fourth generation farmer who also sold one of his two farms to the GWR. The landowner agreed that when he was young he used to drive around with his father to look for people to come to work on their land.[111] Therefore, in their arguments GWR only recognised labour tenant claims. An official from the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) countered this argument by saying "Well look, taking over the land because it is vacant is a nice argument by white people, I do not know what they want, they want every centimetre occupied by black people, we do not occupy every centimetre of land but we use it".[112]

The high fences observed in the South African countryside due to game farming show that "arguably, the commons are best known as that which is being enclosed by capitalist entrepreneurs".[113] Wildlife as an inherently

107 C Walker, *Landmarked: Land claims and land restitution in South Africa* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2008), p. 2.

108 South African Human Rights Commission, "Inquiry into human rights violations in farming communities", (available at http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Reports/farming_inquiry_report_nat.PDF, as accessed on 20 September 2010).

109 L Hamilton, "Human needs, land reform and the South African constitution", *Politikon*: *South African Journal of Political Studies,* 33(2), 2006, p. 139.

110 GWR Official, interview, Tariro Kamuti (Researcher), Escourt, 21 August 2012.

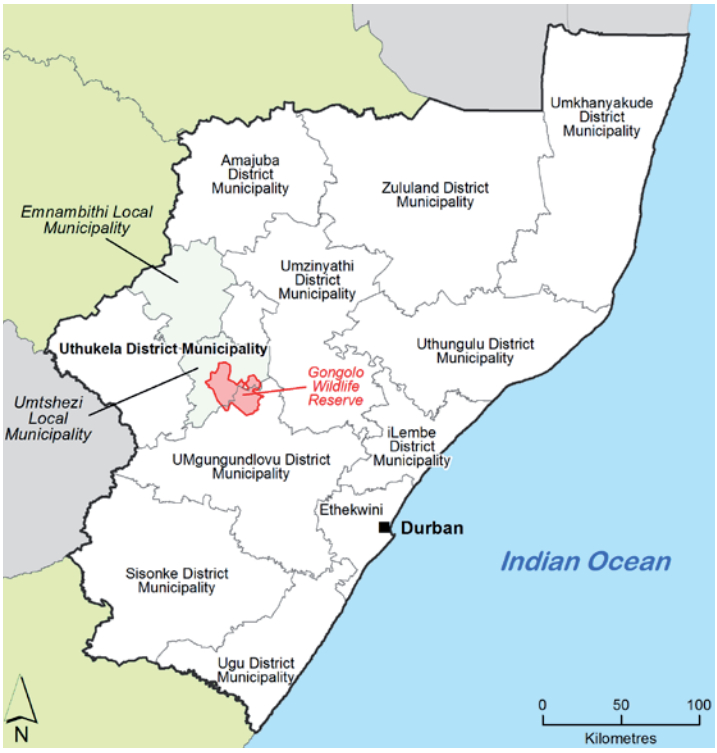
111 Landowner, interview, T Kamuti (Researcher), 21 February 2013, Mooi River.

112 RLCC official, interview, T Kamuti (Researcher), 9 March 2013, Pietermaritzburg.

113 E Berge & F van Laerhoven, "Editorial: Governing the commons for two decades: A complex story", *International Journal of the Commons,* 5(2), 2011, pp. 160-187; C Death, "The green economy in South Africa: Global discourses and local politics", *Politikon*: *South African Journal of Political Studies,* 41(1), 2014, pp. 1-22.

fugitive resource that cannot be completely compartmentalised[114] through game farming brings the dilemma of the use of the fence. The fence is used to curb human-wildlife conflict[115] but game farming thrives through preventing animals from escaping to ensure individual ownership as provided for in the Game Theft Act 1991 (Act No. 105 of 1991) that makes post-productive consumption possible. This situation is contrary to the environmental justice movement in South Africa that gravitates towards "social transformation directed to meeting basic human needs and rights".[116]

Image 2: The proposed Gongolo Wildlife Reserve



Source: T Kamuti, *Private wildlife governance in a context of radical uncertainty: Dynamics of game farming policy and practice in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa* (Amsterdam, Vrije University Amsterdam, 2016), p. 17.

114 P Kameri-Mbote, *Property rights and biodiversity management in Kenya: The case of land tenure and wildlife* (Nairobi, African Centre for Technology Studies, 2002), p. 230; S Jones, "A political ecology of wildlife conservation in Africa", *Review of African Political Economy,* 33(109), 2006, pp. 483-495.

115 MK Kesch, DT Bauer & AJ Loveridge, "Break on through to the other Side: The effectiveness of game fencing to mitigate human-wildlife conflict", *African Journal of Wildlife Research,* 45(1), 2015, pp. 76-87.

116 J Cock, "Connecting the red, brown and green: The environmental justice movement in South Africa", 2004, (available at http://146.230.128.54/ccs/files/Cock%20Connecting%20the%20red,%20brown%20and%20green%20The%20environmental%20justice%20movement%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf, as accessed on 27 February 2015).

Furthermore, the fence sets an exclusive boundary for a resource, and this is seen to be misplaced as "such boundary acts are always false attempts to shut-out ... translocal ties that in part 'constitute' those places".[117] Fences also led to fragmentation of wildlife habitats and this has even deepened through subdivision of land holdings to introduce game farming alongside conventional agriculture (for instance, a combination of cattle ranching and game ranching).

Similar contestations can also be seen in the context of Melissa Hansen's use of Lefebve's theory of the production of space to tease out the role of creation of spaces by the state through fencing to secure the iSimangaliso Wetland Park in KwaZulu-Natal Province, which in fact has alienated the local people.[118] In this study, it is the creation of "islands" of exclusive spaces by private individual actors using the available legitimate provisions such as the guarantee of private property rights, that has continued to alienate local people. This is a process that was also entrenched in the Cape Colony through the promulgation of the Fencing Act in 1883 and 1910.[119] This resonates with Noel Castree's reading of David Harvey when he refers to "the rich specificities of people and place".[120] Thus questions about indigenous rights to "self-determination"[121] in relation to this "geographical apartheid"[122] keep popping up.

Inappropriate regulation is blamed for low biodiversity conservation in countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana that require ranches to have perimeter fencing for the farmers to be able to use wildlife.[123] This requirement arguably causes the compartmentalisation of game ranches into mean sizes within the range of 8.2-49.2 km^2. Small game ranches limit natural ecological processes like immigration, emigration and predation that require intensive management, while overstocking is prevalent leading to

117 N Castree, "Differential geographies: Place, indigenous rights and 'local' resources", *Political Geography,* 23, 2004, p. 135.

118 M Hansen, "New geographies of conservation and globalisation: The spatiality of development for conservation in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, South Africa", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 31(3), 2013, pp. 481-502.

119 L Van Sittert, "Holding the line: The rural enclosure movement in the Cape Colony, 1805-1910", *Journal of African History,* 43, 2003, pp. 95-118.

120 N Castree, "David Harvey: Marxism, capitalism and the geographical imagination", *New Political Economy,* 12(1), 2007, p. 107.

121 B Coombes, "Defending community? Indigeneity, self-determination and institutional ambivalence in the restoration of Lake Whakaki", *Geoforum,* 38, p. 60.

122 N Castree, "Differential geographies: Place, indigenous rights and 'local' resources", *Political Geography,* 23, 2004, p. 133.

123 PA Lindsey, SS Romanach & HT Davies-Mostert, "The importance of conservancies for enhancing the value of game ranch land for land mammal conservation in southern Africa", *Journal of Zoology,* 277, 2009, pp. 99-105.

ecological degradation.[124] Hence, the suggestion to form conservancies is put forward to overcome some of the problems associated with the increase in game farming such as overstocking, targeting of predators and the genetic manipulation of species meant for hunting.[125] These problems have been exacerbated by the significant shift from livestock farming to game farming in southern Africa, partly as a result of legislative changes but also due to a number of ecological benefits that can be derived from conservancies. Conservancies include diverse habitats that have the potential to suit more species particularly large mammals that require larger areas. It is argued that the problem of persecution of predators as it occurs in small fenced game ranches would be solved if conservancies allowed a significant yield from the ungulate population, thus promoting a shift to ecotourism and high value trophy hunting (versus biltong hunting).[126]

KwaZulu-Natal Province includes about 6.5 million hectares of land under commercial farming. An estimated 82% of this land is suited for extensive livestock production, while only 18% is suitable for arable agriculture.[127] The terrestrial ecosystems support a diverse range of wildlife. This is one factor that has encouraged private landowners to invest in game farming as a viable alternative to conventional farming. The state and nature of ecosystems in KwaZulu-Natal are important as they form the basis for the wildlife production systems. In this case, the mix of the spectacular landscapes, rich biodiversity and prevailing climatic conditions make wildlife production systems attractive. It is important to bear in mind, however, that "there are differences in the way that social groups identify and value biodiversity-based services ... investment/disinvestment decisions [are] made in the context of a certain set of preferences, "value systems", moral structures, endowments, information, technical possibilities and social, cultural and institutional conditions".[128] This shows that the biophysical characteristics favourable to

124 JA Cousins, JP Saddler & J Evans, "Exploring the role of private wildlife ranching as a conservation tool in South Africa: Stakeholders perspectives", *Ecology and Society,* 13(2), 2008 (available at http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art43/, as accessed on 9 March 2010); PA Lindsey, SS Romanach & HT Davies-Mostert, "The importance of conservancies for enhancing the value of game ranch land for land mammal conservation in southern Africa", *Journal of Zoology,* 277, 2009, pp 99-105.

125 PA Lindsey, SS Romanach & HT Davies-Mostert, "The importance of conservancies...", *Journal of Zoology,* 277, 2009, pp 99-105.

126 PA Lindsey, SS Romanach & HT Davies-Mostert, "The importance of conservancies...", *Journal of Zoology,* 277, 2009, pp 99-105.

127 S Davis, "KwaZulu-Natal – economic overview", 2007 (available at http://sharondavis.co.za/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=56, as accessed on 21 July 2013).

128 U Pascual & C Perrings, "Developing mechanisms for in situ biodiversity conservation in agricultural landscapes", KN Ninan, (ed.), *Conserving and valuing ecosystem services and biodiversity: Economic, institutional and social challenges* (London, Earthscan, 2009), p. 151.

wildlife-based land use are only one aspect of the problem; decisions on actual wildlife production are influenced by a mix of different factors.

According to EKZNW, up to 80% of the priority biodiversity habitat in the province is found outside of the public protected area network, and only 53% of priority species were being conserved within the public protected areas.[129] Consequently, conservation targets were set to meet the shortfall by bringing in a certain number of hectares from either private, communal, municipal or government land under some form of formal conservation where the land use is secured and guaranteed to be used for that purpose. The stated target was to bring 1.4 million hectares or 14.5% of the area of the province under some formal conservation land-use so that there is adequate conservation of the province's biodiversity.[130] One of the major ways through which EKZNW interacts with game farmers in pursuit of conservation targets, besides regular inspections on private land, is through the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme.

The KwaZulu-Natal Biodiversity Stewardship Programme (BSP) was launched on the 21st November 2008.[131] The major drive behind the Programme was to encourage and support private landowners to seriously consider conservation on their properties. According to an EKZNW official working on the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, the issue for the organization was not the lack of a conservation culture per se, but rather the lack of security for conservation as a land use. The programme aims to target areas of biodiversity regardless of where they are found, based on the condition of the land. Criteria for participation include the presence of endangered species, the value of the potential ecosystem services, climate change adaptation, and management effectiveness. The BSP has been more successful in engaging private landowners than in extending its reach to land under a communal property regime. While the total acreage of communal properties may exceed the total acreage of private land under BSPs, the actual number of BSP projects involving communal property sites is smaller than the number on freehold land. However, EKZNW is aware that it has limited power in a context where landowners might have very strong economic requirements such as jobs, small businesses for generating income, and food production that is not the mandate of EKZNW. So EKZNW brings in partner organisations that can satisfy those needs to free up or enable the landowner to look at the

129 Information on the stewardship programme obtained from the EKZNW website (available at http://www.kznwildlife.com/index.php?/About-Stewardship.html, as accessed on 24 October 2011).

130 Information on the stewardship programme obtained from the EKZNW website (available at http://www.kznwildlife.com/index.php?/About-Stewardship.html as accessed on 24 October 2011).

131 Information obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Board: Annual Report 2008/9.

biodiversity aspect. The EKZNW official acknowledged this by saying, "it is hard for a hungry starving man to be concerned about the last threatened butterflies on his property as that same piece of land can be used for planting crops".[132]

An official from AFRA pointed out that the entrenched control over land by the white farmers cannot be easily wished away.[133] I had to reflect on this issue deeply, especially in light of what the interviewee described as a deeply entrenched position of farmers in the sector in relation to their stronghold on land spanning a number of generations. Farmers possess immense power over land which they use to their advantage despite the glaring signs of the need for land reform and transformation that could lead to empowerment of black people in the fledging wildlife sector. The need to address the imbalances in the ownership and access to natural resources in South Africa is glaring. This is because "inequalities are deeply embedded in everyday social life in systematic, but often taken-for-granted ways",[134] hence the need for pragmatic solutions.

A study in the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park area has shown that there may be negative economic impacts to the host communities that perpetuate the inequality in the industry.[135] Evidence from a study of "small-scale nature-based tourism as a pro-poor development intervention" in KwaZulu-Natal, indicates that even if the natural environment can be used to support a pro-poor approach to tourism development, it does not necessarily work as a solution or mean that far reaching changes will follow.[136] This is despite efforts to shift the approach from exclusion of African communities, sometimes driven by elites, to the promotion of their active participation in issues relating to their interests such as tourism.[137] Hence, questions regarding attachment to a place and a sense of belonging by African communities keep coming up when such

132 EKZNW official, interview, T Kamuti (Researcher), 25 October 2011, Pietermaritzburg.

133 AFRA official, interview, T Kamuti (Researcher), 9 November 2011, Pietermaritzburg.

134 B Korth, "Critical qualitative research as consciousness raising: The dialogic texts of researcher/researchee", *Qualitative Inquiry,* 8(3), pp. 381-403.

135 N Chellan & U Bob, "Sustainable tourism in the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park: A stakeholder analysis", *Alternation,* 15(1), 2008, pp. 290-315.

136 TE Hill, E Nel & D Trotter, "Small-scale, nature-based tourism as a pro-poor development intervention: Two examples in Kwazulu-Natal", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography,* 27(2), 2006, p. 163.

137 F Brennan & G Allen, "Community-based tourism, social exclusion and the changing political economy of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa", D Harrison, *Tourism and the less developed world: Issues and cases* (Oxon, CABI Publishing, 2001), pp. 203-222; A Muir, "Strengthening wilderness in South Africa: Strategy and programs of the Wilderness Foundation S.A.", *International Journal of Wilderness*, 8(2), 2002, pp. 4-8; M Draper, "Going native? Trout and settling identity in a rainbow nation", *Historia*, 48(1), 2003, pp. 55-94; M Draper, M Spierenburg & H Wels, "African dreams of cohesion: Elite pacting and community development in transfrontier conservation areas in southern Africa", *Culture and Organisation*, 10(4), 2004, pp. 341-353; S Brooks, M Spierenburg & H Wels, "The organisation of hypocrisy?...", W van Beek & A Schmidt (eds.), *African hosts and their guests* (Rochester, James Carey, 2012), pp. 201-224.

tourism developments are initiated in southern Africa and further deepening for example, "resistance to the creation of a biological reserve"[138] as witnessed in the Gongolo case.

Conclusion

The historical background of KwaZulu-Natal Province shows the gradual and systematic alienation of the African population from land and its associated natural resources through unjust systems of colonial conquest, forced removals, and apartheid. In the same vein, institutional processes that governed human-nature relations were altered or destroyed in favour of modified or new institutions. This was done for various reasons, one of which was to create reserves of labour to work in the imperial capitalist economic system.[139] This act of alienating African people from their land had an impact on their traditional economic and environmental management systems. Unequal and inequitable distribution of, and access to, resources in present day South Africa, including KwaZulu-Natal Province, is partly because of these historically induced imbalances . Due to its particular history, KwaZulu-Natal Province has inherited large areas of land under communal tenure and run by the Ingonyama Trust. However, a major portion of land and other natural resources in the province were transferred from the majority African population into the hands of the minority white population and subsequently privatised, as happened in other southern African countries. There are gaps in the integration between land under private tenure (largely white-owned) and communal tenure lands, thus setting in motion different streams of institutional processes in the governance of wildlife resources.

In teasing out the complex relationships between different state and private actors in this space, the author has argued that the contemporary changes in the geography of wildlife conservation are symptomatic of processes witnessed in historical geography characterised by the enclosure of land into private ownership, a process that is by no means confined to South Africa.[140] As part of the international community, South Africa is also not spared from globally induced forces that impinge on the local situation.[141] At the dawn

138 T Connor, "Place, belonging and population displacement: New ecological reserves in Mozambique and South Africa", *Development Southern Africa*, 2005, 22(3), pp. 365-382.

139 P Bond, *Elite transition: From apartheid to neoliberalism in South Africa*..., pp. 179-180.

140 JD Sidaway, "Accumulation by dispossession: The play of capital", *Human Geography,* 2(3), 2009, pp. 104-107.

141 S Narsiah, "Alternatives to neoliberal governmentality in South Africa", *South African Geographical Journal,* 89(1), 2007, pp. 34-43.

of democracy, the new government inherited a burden to improve the life of the previously disadvantaged. The question is how the improvement can proceed in a case where a few people control the lion's share of the economy? Nature-based tourism (now anchored on private farming) is seen as one of the economic sectors that can be used to unlock the developmental potential of an area and the wildlife sector can play a core function in these endeavours. The nascent role of the World Bank (representing global capital) has been quite instrumental, reflecting how it locally influenced the governance of the private wildlife sector through its involvement in South Africa's democratic transition in general and in nature tourism in KwaZulu-Natal in particular. As highlighted earlier, changes have taken place in the South African regulatory framework. These changes have serious implications for the private wildlife sector that is already showing some signs of post-productivism by constituting landscapes of consumption for a minority in the rural areas at the expense of the majority thereby exacerbating inequality. The role of the state has drastically shifted albeit in an economic structure that still reflects the old order.