

**CONSERVATION AND POPULATION DISPLACEMENT: A COMPARISON OF THE SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES UPON RESIDENTS IN  
MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate what the effect of expanding conserved areas in southern Africa has upon local inhabitants in these areas. In particular, it will examine how removal, or a change in ownership of land may impact upon socio-cultural patterns of identity, or 'place'. The paper will make use of two case studies: the creation of a Transfrontier Park in Mozambique, and the expansion of the Greater Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The socio-political history of each area will be discussed in order to isolate the varied forms of indigenous land use and ownership in each area. The paper also seeks to address comparative research opportunities between social and ecological scientists.

The planned Greater Addo Elephant National Park (GAENP) in the Eastern Cape, as well as the Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) in Mozambique (which adjoins the Kruger National Park), like many other parks in Africa, function within two contextual frameworks. The first is a macro-political one, where the creation of ecological reserves in southern Africa can be associated with a history of direct state intervention in the lives of rural inhabitants. In South Africa, the creation of illegitimate homeland states in South Africa, as well as the forced resettlement of people in post-colonial states such as Mozambique (Munslow 1984), has resulted in the forced separation of kin and clan over national borders, the sedentarising of many mobile indigenous herders, and removal of the ancestral lands of numerous ethnic and linguistic groups.

Current parks function within a different milieu. Both the TFCA and GAENP have been partially funded by global corporations, and have been marketed to a largely foreign clientele. The impact of globalisation upon local access to land has been described by Appadurai (1996: 39) as the 'deterritorialised world' - which refers to the lack of fixed geographical space required for global corporative transactions, as well as the increased levels of competition between groups for access to scarce land. The innumerable scenes of conflict in many nations in the globalised world are indicative of the intense economic and cultural ties that people foster towards land. Those who can make claims to lost territories have often tried to re-claim their heritage, despite the fact that these claims are not always authentic, and may be based more upon indeterminate feelings of belonging than a factual historical occupation of land. In spite of this, the increased number of such instances are indicative that those who have lost access to a home-based territory in the past, thrive on the need for some form of contact, or memory of such a homeland, and will try to recapture such a loss, often through violent means (see Sharp 1998 and Comaroff 1998)

The impact of deterritorialisation, and the ensuing competition for lost territory, thus holds important consequences for newly created ecological reserves. This means that the academic analysis of deterritorialisation - either by anthropologists documenting the loss of land, or by ecologists managing and creating newly conserved tracts of land - is a joint concern that demands an exploration of the role that land and territory play in the lives of the inhabitants, or ex-residents, of conserved areas in Africa.

Research for this paper has been spread over a period of five years - from 1999 to the present. Fieldwork in Mozambique was undertaken in 1998-2000, which included a period of residence among the Maluleke community in the northern province in South Africa, as well as in Pafuri, located in the Gaza province of Mozambique. In the latter instance, time was spent in one particular settlement near the border of South Africa and Zimbabwe (Pafuri, or Crooks Corner <sup>2</sup>). In total, a period three months was spent in Mozambique and South Africa (Connor 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> The name 'Crooks Corner' originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where groups of professional elephant hunters, bandits of the Portuguese frontier and slave traders in search of native children used the dense

Research in the Eastern Cape has amounted to the same period of time as that spent in Mozambique. The main purpose of research was to develop a social framework (see Connor 2001) for the planned GAENP area, as well as a resettlement action plan (or policy framework) for the World Bank <sup>3</sup> (Huggins et al 2002). Surveys were conducted in 44 farms in the area – speaking to a total of 44 farmers and 124 workers in order to develop a profile of age, gender, work experience, wages and stock numbers in the planned GAENP area. More intensive fieldwork, which will cover the oral history of land occupation, place and identity in the region, is currently underway.

The paper is divided into four sections: the first will discuss the differences and commonalities between social and ecological science, and how each have responded to the social concerns underlying many conservancy areas in southern Africa. The second will focus on two instances of ecological land acquisition – in Mozambique and the Eastern Cape province of South Africa – and will explore the meaning that land use and the occupation of territory has upon the residents of each area. The last section will extend the debate concerning deterritorialisation and comment on issues of identity, ‘place’ or belonging in these conserved areas.

### **At an impasse? Social and ecological science**

The relationship between the natural environment and cultural change has long been the subject of anthropological inquiry, mainly through cultural ecology and cultural materialism. These ‘old ecological’ theories, as Kottak (1999: 23-24) has coined, were criticised for their widespread concern with equilibrium. Social and cultural life systems were analysed according to the maintenance and adaptation of human beings to an external natural environment, a space that was somehow removed from the rigours of everyday life – rather than an embedded and meaningful interaction with a specific (eco)system. The role of local inhabitants in such ecosystems were thus measured according to the limitations set by their surroundings, in which the all encompassing balance of the natural environment (using selective resources management) was considered tantamount.

Presently, the anthropological study of the relationship between the natural environment and the cultural representation and human use of such a space is notably different, as it is clear that ecology itself has entered a far more public, and power laden context. Current studies of conservation in anthropology point out that the environment is one of the most contested forms of debate (Milton 1993). Conserved areas of

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bush around the confluence of the Limpopo and Levuhu rivers as a hideout (Stevenson-Hamilton 1937: 96).

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank (in Huggins, de Wet and Connor) mentions 10 principles of resettlement, which state that the responsibility of resettlement should rest with the developer of a project. A few of these principles are: avoiding or minimising resettlement; genuine consultation and participation; assistance in and compensation for relocation; resettlement as development.

land, in particular, are subject to high levels of disagreement regarding the amount of human control (whether of an indigenous or developmental nature) allowed in natural systems (Croll and Parkin 1992). The public nature of these debates, as well as the reliance on global media, tourism and international financial corporations (such as the IMF and World Bank) as a means of support, emphasise the controversy surrounding conservation: whom, and under what circumstances, may regulate the control of natural resources? Both social and ecologists scientists have differing opinions concerning the impact of ecological reserves:

Environmental anthropologists focus on giving voice to the original, or indigenous inhabitants of landscapes and often provide detailed examinations of local mechanisms of landscape control and natural resource utilisation, which contrast with the controlled mechanisms of western industrial power. What is common to this approach is, as Kottak (1999: 25) mentions, an 'acknowledgement of...the impact of differential power and statuses in the post-modern world'. More specifically, it is the use of the theory of post-materialism which has gained the most popularity. Proponents of this theory hold that ecological movements, and conserved landscapes, are only luxuries which are available to the few – those who have the highest degree of control over their environments (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997: xv). This agrees with the theories of Grove (1995) who refers to the ecological drive to secure landscapes for conservation as 'green imperialism', as well as Curruthers (1995: 100) in the Kruger National Park, where the systematic exclusion and forced removal of thousands of residents from the park created the impression that national parks were manifestations of Apartheid and Afrikaner identity. The use of these theories within anthropology has thus compared the creation of many new conservancies and the corresponding search for untouched, and 'wild' areas of the globe, to many ill-fated development projects which have attempted to increase Northern consumption of goods and raw materials produced in poorer, 'third world' countries of the South (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). To anthropologists, thus, the challenge is not only to devise a way in which indigenous models of knowledge can be incorporated into mainstream ecological science, but also to put forward a more self-reflexive and socially sensitive means of conservation than is currently in practice.

Ecological debates, especially in reserves in southern Africa, have traditionally made extensive use of two ideas - what Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997: 82-93) refer to as 'deep ecology', and 'wilderness' theory. According to post-materialism, deep ecology is premised on a biocentric perspective, which assumes that an anthropocentric (or human) use of nature is essentially exploitative. In this sense, the effects of industrialisation, western methods of farming, or the widescale decimation of wildlife, are rejected in favour of a restoration of unspoilt wilderness, as untrammelled by the effects of human influence as possible. In a similar vein, the wilderness movement draws upon mainly American ideas of exploration into the wild frontier zones of the early settler republic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Rob Marshall, the founder of the wilderness society in the USA, rejected organised western methods of agriculture and culture, and favoured an image of the archetypal aboriginal wanderer, living in perfect harmony with their

surroundings. Early preservationists in America thus came to believe that that the original sin of separation from nature could only be redeemed through a wholesale personal identification with it (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997: 78). In this view, the role of the human race in ecosystems is that of stewardship – controlling the amount, type and quality of human influence that may be allowed into reserves. The use of these basic proponents, according to many social scientists, have become the primary means of landscape and reserve management in many reserves in post-colonial Africa.

In response to these ecological ideas, anthropologists, historians and other social scientists have traced the use of conservation as a science to the expansion of imperial power in Africa during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Studies such as those conducted in Guinea (Fairhead and Leach 1996), by Curruthers (1994 and 1995) and Beinhart (1996 and 1984) in South Africa and Moore and Vaughn in Zambia (1994) have explored the impact of conservation theories in Africa, which often led to the characterisation of African farmers and pastoralists as agents of desertification, overgrazing and soil erosion. These cases have pointed out that these theories of land protection either led to the expulsion of residents from newly declared conservation areas, or placed a severe limitation on the use of natural resources by local inhabitants. In both cases, social theory has held that conservation has been responsible for many cases of forced removal, land hunger and economic insecurity in the past and thus can be placed in the same category as many colonial manoeuvres to acquire land for purposes of political power.

The debate between social and ecological theory has continued to cause a great amount of controversy in conservation science, and have resulted in a number of heated exchanges. Given their tendency to support local action, anthropologists have been accused of using Marxist and neo-populist dogma to create a misrepresentation of ecology and ecological theory (Spinage 1998: 274). Ecologists have mentioned that the accusations levelled against them may as well be directed to anthropologists and other social commentators as well, as both are guilty of excluding the other. Ecologists have not excluded social action from reserves on a mere whim, Spinage writes, but because human influences such as pollution and poaching are clearly created by people within or directly adjoining a protected area - the prevention and management of which is clearly ecology's main profession.

What is true, however, as anthropologists, have pointed out, is that the ecological management of reserves does not emanate from a value neutral context. Many existing reserves are deeply embedded in political and social contexts of conflict, dispossession and poverty, their very existence creating the problems of pollution and poaching that ecologists are trying so hard to prevent. Accordingly, with the pressures of deterritorialised world, and the many land claims that accompany the creation of many ecological reserves, ecological scientists have often sought a revision of previously held theories of landscape management. Current theories of disequilibrium, in particular, doubt the assumptions that natural systems are inherently stable and some kind of 'pristine' relic of the past (Fairhead and Leach 1996: 119). Forman (1995) views elements of human landscape patterning, such as fire agricultural and settlement, as playing

a dynamic role in promoting system diversity and flux. Practically, these theoretical changes have been echoed in the very manner by which conservationists, as policy makers, respond to the social challenges of their neighbouring communities. In southern Africa, the inclusion of local inhabitants into wildlife management (such as the CAMPFIRE initiative in southern Zimbabwe), as well as a recognition of the dire consequences that forced removals from reserves have had upon the economic security of local inhabitants (such as in the Kruger National Park in South Africa), has forced conservationists to look more closely at the consequences of boundary control and expansion (Fourie 1994 and Loader 1994)

It is clear that current ecological debates take place in a vastly different context than in the past, and have brought about some changes in ecological management, both in theoretical and practical terms. The contemporary global demand for protection of threatened environments, as well as the value of indigenous knowledge systems within these landscapes, are intrinsically valuable to both social and ecological scientists. Both paradigms have clearly influenced the other – ecologists are now more aware of the consequences that the creation of new reserve may hold for local inhabitants and are more willing to engage with public debates regarding the degree of human influence to be allowed in these ecosystems. Anthropologists, similarly, have found it useful to analyse ecological science and techniques of landscape management before making any collective judgements about the treatment of indigenous inhabitants. In particular, Beinhardt (1996: 55) mentions that environmental historians and ecological anthropologists may find themselves on shaky ground if concepts that have been used to criticise ecology in the past are simply re-used in the present.

While it may be true that ecologists have mis-represented the actions of herders or agriculturalists as being the prime cause of overgrazing, or desertification, it is erroneous for environmental anthropologists to generalise all local action in opposition to ecological management of reserves. This paper will point out that not all local inhabitants in and around reserves are homogenous in their response to ecological concerns such as overgrazing or degradation, and that the interaction between inhabitants and ecological officers is far more complex, and varied, than suggested by an automatic representation of ecology as the ‘guilty’ party in social interaction. This means that the complexities inherent in the differential layers of historical land use and occupation, as well as the varied interaction between farmers, workers and conservation authorities need to be captured.

Against this background, and from an anthropological perspective, this paper will now turn to an analysis of two new reserves in Southern Africa - one in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa, and the other in the northern reaches of South Africa and Mozambique. In both cases, the meaning that a change in land use and/or ownership may hold to the local inhabitants of these parks will be discussed and will draw extensively upon the colonial history of both areas. Most importantly, the case studies will provide an opportunity for readers to appreciate the complexities of local action and history in order highlight the potential impact of new ecological reserves upon residents in these areas.

## **Mozambique and the creation of a Transfrontier Conservation Area**

As many instances of forced removal, or exclusion from ecological reserves in Africa have demonstrated, the creation of conservation areas may often polarise local (social) issues from global ecological initiatives. This is particularly true of the TFCA created in Mozambique – despite a decision to leave human settlements inside the reserve intact and to provide residents with the choice of leaving (with compensation) or remaining. Media coverage of the Park reported huge inconsistencies in the treatment of local residents in Mozambique. According to a survey conducted by the University of the Witwatersrand, (Mail and Guardian 26 April 2002), only 40% of the 84 household heads surveyed in the upper Limpopo valley had ever heard about the Transfrontier initiative, while another 83% of residents indicated that they had never been consulted about the possible consequences that the Park could hold for their homes and families.

The TFCA in Mozambique has erected a 52-kilometre fence on the southern side of the Limpopo River, around what is termed the Limpopo reserve. This fence, which covers an area of 35 000 hectares, serves to limit the movement of large mammals over the Limpopo river and confine them to the ambits of the Transfrontier Zone. However, the fence has also excluded residents from an important source of water and arable land near the river, which also contains valuable natural resources, such as ilala plantations and thatching reed. With the existence of this fence it will become particularly difficult for families to continue agricultural activities and harvest natural resources, both of which are essential for survival for those communities along the Limpopo river<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the veracity of these issues, the situation in Mozambique is far more complex than suggested by a simple exclusion of local action by conservationists in this TFCA. To place ecology and the needs of local actors at opposite sides of a continuum would inevitably create the impression that both parties respond exclusively to the other. In Mozambique, people do not respond congruously to an ‘outside’ influence (ie: that of conservation), but as the history of local settlement demonstrates, have developed imaginative strategies to deal with instability, war and natural disaster. As this section will demonstrate, both the people within the present TFCA as well as conservationists in South Africa do not function within a value neutral context, as both parties have developed very similar romantic assumptions concerning Mozambique as a ‘home’ and ‘wilderness’ site.

These statements may be explained through an examination of the history of one particular region within the recently proclaimed TFCA. Pafuri, an area that contains two prominent border settlements, is located near the borders of South Africa and Zimbabwe, and has attracted a high number of returnees (displaced

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<sup>3</sup> Given these restrictions, it is not surprising that many Mozambicans have chosen to re-locate themselves outside the TFCA.

by the Mozambican civil war) from South Africa and Zimbabwe. To these displaced communities who claim origin from Mozambique in South Africa and Zimbabwe, Mozambique is perceived as being an unspoilt area of ancestry - a view which entrenches gender roles and places emphasis upon subsistence farming and cattle ownership. To those who visit relatives and friends in Pafuri, life in Mozambique creates a certain romanticism on the part of the observer, who often live in overburdened and crowded settlements in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The ecological version of life in Pafuri may be illustrated by providing a short history of the Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa. The KNP is the oldest, as well as the largest national park in Africa – it was established in 1926 and covers a total of 1 948 528 hectares. As Curruthers (1995) illustrates, the region of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Transvaal has often assumed the image of an uncivilised wildlife paradise in the minds of white South Africans. Historically, the creation of the KNP, like parks in the United States (such as Yellowstone), provided a mechanism to promote national feeling and unify South Africans against the ‘evil’ influences wildlife decimation and land degradation – imperfections which were placed squarely on the shoulders of African occupiers of land. Many white visitors to the KNP, such as myself, have subsequently enjoyed the absence of human interference in the park – a romantic notion that is easily exaggerated through a contrast with the overcrowded and polluted settlements in the areas surrounding the park (through which one must inevitably travel before reaching paradise).

During the 1990s the KNP has experienced a sharp increase in the number of elephants, which has resulted in a decline in the quality and quantity of forage available to these large herbivores. Subject to great public debate and concern, the KNP chose to cull a number of these animals on a yearly basis. In 2000, however, this practice was stopped, due to a proposed amalgamation of the KNP with other reserves in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, essentially creating a huge park that would span the borders of all three countries. After extensive political debate and lobbying in all three countries, this Transfrontier Park, which had been in the pipeline for at least a decade prior to 2000, was eventually formally proclaimed in 2001 – the occasion being marked by the release of a number of elephants from the KNP into Mozambique<sup>4</sup>.

For conservationists, the suitability of Mozambique for a TFCA has been strengthened by the fact that the residential populace in this country are fairly thinly spread over a somewhat dry savanna, and mainly active in the riparian areas of major watercourses. Furthermore, the absence of large mammals such as elephant, rhino and buffalo (being decimated by poaching and war) in this area has motivated the extension of the KNP into Mozambique – the creation of which presumably would re-create a pre-colonial abundance of wildlife and natural beauty. The Mozambican side of the TFCA includes a core region that is similar in size to the KNP in South Africa – the main conservation area being the hunting reserve of Coutada 16, excluding the Limpopo river to the north east and the Massingir dam to the south,

as well as the Gonarezhou reserve in Zimbabwe. A second area, which will be managed for conservation use as a private concession zone, includes Gonarezhou, as well as Bahine, Zinhave national parks and the Massingir area in Mozambique. Notably, Coutada 16 has gained a reputation as a hunting reserve (under the control an independent South African company) for ‘canned’ lion hunting.

Similarly, like white conservationists and middle class tourists in South Africa, people resident in the previous Bantustan state of Gazankulu (which was designated as a semi-independent ‘homeland’ for Tsonga speakers) have also harboured romantic notions concerning Mozambique. Specifically, oral and written historical sources (see Harries 1987) reveal that Gaza province (which is mainly composed of Tsonga speakers) and more specifically Pafuri, has long functioned as an image of home to many displaced communities in Mozambique and surrounding countries. Cross cutting ties of lineage, in particular that of the Maluleke (who occupy land along the Limpopo river) in Mozambique, are shared by clan members in both South Africa and Mozambique, and remind many who have been removed from their country of origin that they have a common history of war and displacement.

This clan grouping stems from a common geographical area spanning the borders of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which was inhabited before and during the upheavals associated with the *Difequane* (and particular that of Shoshangane<sup>5</sup>) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to a dispute over succession between two brothers, this original clan then split in two – one brother occupying the eastern side of the present state border in Mozambique, the other residing in the western side of the border in the present northern KNP area (around Punda Maria).

Although resident outside the proclaimed Mozambican State in 1897, the Maluleke remained part of the social and cultural life of their dispersed clan. The South African Maluleke were eventually removed from their land in the KNP in 1976, and were resettled in a village (by the name of Makuleke) outside the park, 200 kilometres south-west of their original home. National boundaries have also split the Maluleke into Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively. Despite these divisions, however, the Maluleke in South Africa and Zimbabwe still foster an image of the upper Limpopo river as an ancestral home of origin, and as Harries writes, ‘their golden age, which is always contrasted with the bleak conditions of their present existence, provides the community with a sustaining and guiding myth’ (1987: 111).

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<sup>4</sup> These elephants have now escaped back into the Kruger National Park

<sup>5</sup> Shoshangane (or Manucusse) was a Ndwande (a far northern Zulu clan) warlord who is credited with the establishment of the Gaza empire in southern Mozambique. This kingdom was a typical Nguni polity, which provided an umbrella-like sovereignty over tribute paying subjects such as the Maluleke.

This myth is cemented and supported by various features of life in Mozambique. Close affinal ties between communities in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, as well as the relaxation of visa regulations, allow frequent visitation to Mozambique, where the open spaces of this country contrast starkly to overburdened tracts of agricultural land in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Similarly, the abundant tracts of riparian forest hold special significance for healers (or *n'angas*) in South Africa.

Border commuting assumes many forms – women from Zimbabwe regularly harvest reeds and ilala palm-wine plantations in Mozambique, while Mozambicans crossing over to South Africa have vested employment opportunities in South Africa. A few men in Pafuri even indicated that they had wives on both sides of the border, a practice that provided them with a safe haven during the Mozambican civil war, and still serves to cement ties between related clan members in South Africa and Mozambique. Unlike South Africans, Mozambican residents have not suffered the disasters associated with agricultural 'betterment' practices, which involved stock culling and forced resettlement into the previous homeland states of Venda and Gazankulu.

In addition, the remoteness of Pafuri as a frontier region has also served to create very different features of political power in Mozambique, compared to South Africa. This area of Mozambique is not only known as a region that falls outside the ambit of large ecological reserves (such as the KNP), but outside of political authority in general: residents in Mozambique are still subject to the whims of a corrupt border police and an authoritarian *chefe do posto* (regional administrator), whose administrative area is geographically isolated from the district capital in Xai Xai. This image of an untouched and isolated backwater is echoed in the colonial history of Mozambique. Unlike South Africa, the Portuguese did not exert as powerful a political force, as they did not have the economic strength to purchase land for the creation of homelands (or native reserves), or for the use of political power to subvert the influence of local inhabitants (as was the case with Apartheid laws in South Africa). Instead, colonial force was exerted much more indirectly, through a replacement of chiefs with Portuguese settlers or sympathetic *indígenas*<sup>6</sup>. Village headmen were often used as agents, or intermediaries for Portuguese rule, which created a distinct class of government supported *régulos* (who later came to be classed as district governors).

However, it is the extent to which labour migration has featured in the history of most individual working lives in Mozambique that has cemented the image of Mozambique as a 'home' to many Tsonga speakers who came to reside in South Africa (Harries 1994) and has played a prominent role in shaping the use of land in Gaza province. The Witwatersrand Labour Association (Wenela), which was created in 1901, was

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<sup>6</sup> While Portuguese colonies were still considered as part of the mother country, the inhabitants of Mozambique were classed as *indígena* and *não-indígena*. The former were not considered 'civilised' and were placed under the control of a *régulo* (Newitt 1995: 387).

granted concessionary rights to use the region south of the Save River (notably the same region occupied by the current TFCA) as a labour reserve for South African mines. Gaza province became the primary source for over 65% of all mineworkers in South Africa, and continued to dominate the lives of residents from 1901 until its closure in 1975 (see Covane 1996).

Labour migration in Mozambique has followed very different patterns to that of South Africa. Mozambican workers could not return to their homes regularly, and were subject to a restrictive labour agreement in a foreign country, which tied them down for at least three years. This meant that they could not send money home as often as their South African compatriots could, and increased the reliance of Mozambican families on agriculture, rather than cash for food. Consequently, this has strengthened the role of women as rural labourers and providers. In many cases, long term labour contracts popularised polygyny, which provided a larger and more reliable female labour force in the absence of a male provider (Covane 1996: 146). The reliance on female labour and subsistence agriculture can still be seen in the present – women are responsible for hoeing, weeding and food production, and the largest tracts of farming land are occupied by those men with the most wives and daughters.

Collectively, the main features of life in Pafuri - where residents are dependent on dryland farming and natural foods for their survival, as well as representations of the 'good life' in Mozambique in the minds of many visiting South Africans- has cemented the idea of Pafuri as an untouched and wild area. However, upon deconstruction of this myth, it appears that the images of conservationists and local communities in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique may be based more upon memories of the 'good life' rather than hard evidence. Residents in Mozambique have certainly not been exempt from social disruption, and have been badly affected by war, dislocation and state resettlement. Border villages in Pafuri in particular, have been subject to communal farm ventures by the Frelimo government after independence in 1976. Munslow (1984: 211) refers to the creation of these villages as a form of 'crisis management' – being a response a variety of factors such as the civil war (where Frelimo would group villagers together for purposes of defence), natural disaster and flooding (in February 1977 and 1984) as well as self motivated physical movement of residents to the fertile upper Limpopo valley. Such overwhelming evidence of movement to and from geographical locations has cemented a marked transitory nature of occupation in Pafuri.

Even when fieldwork was done during 1999 and 2000, it was well known to outsiders that the residents of one particular settlement near the national border of Zimbabwe and South Africa preferred to move the sites for their homes regularly, depending on their proximity to fertile patches of land and pools of water, near the river. Although the Limpopo regularly floods its banks, the deluge in 2000/2001 presented a particular challenge to residents of this village – not only had their fields disappeared under the floodwaters, but their huts and possessions as well. After this calamitous event, residents once more had to shift their residential and agricultural sites to more suitable locations.

The innate mobility of 'settlement' in Mozambique does not invalidate the myth of origin as perceived by displaced communities. On the contrary, memories of the 'good life' in Mozambique are cemented and aided by continual movement of visitors to and from Pafuri. People in South Africa have not harboured ideas of Mozambique as a home away from home due to their fixed positions in their home countries, but because the permeability of border zones, as well as shared kinship linkages, encourage mobility. In Pafuri itself, it is also clear that physical movement of people in Mozambique, based partly on the instability of the climate as well as numerous instances of forced removal, is far safer than a state of immobility. Covane (2001: 55) mentions that many people in the Limpopo valley have developed survival strategies in order to cope with climatic instability, including marriages between families from different ecological zones. Furthermore, commuting between countries is intrinsically useful in order to benefit from cheaper and accessible goods in South Africa compared to Pafuri.

More importantly, Pafuri contains diverse opportunities for many impoverished communities to retain control of their lives, and make choices that stand apart from the controlling influence of politicians and state officials. Residents in Pafuri are very much aware of the limitations that political processes, such as the Transfrontier Park, may impose upon their lives – but the amount of economic possibilities created through free movement across borders, as well as a continued investment into dryland agriculture as a primary means of subsistence, also presents an alternative: that they are agents that are not irrevocably caught up in issues over which they have no control. It is for these reasons that it is vital that the residents of the upper Limpopo valley be allowed to continue to access land, natural resources, and cross-border movement as they have done in the past.

The creation of the Transfrontier Park, however, has placed the control of land and the right of ownership outside the reach of most ordinary citizens of Mozambique. Formal ownership of land is limited to the modern Mozambican state, and can be leased out to potential owners and contractors (O'Laughlin 1995). As was the case with Wenela in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it appears that land destined for the Transfrontier Park has been re-distributed to outside parties at will, further decreasing security of tenure in an area which has been occupied by residents for centuries. In this respect, Myers (1994: 607) as well as Myers and West (1996: 29) note that land concessions in Mozambique have been rather haphazardly distributed in the last five years, the occurrence of which has created a new category of landless and marginalised individuals. In these circumstances, it appears that residents in Pafuri will once again have to negotiate the physical and imaginary boundaries that have been created around them, and once again, will paradoxically make use of precisely the same romantic image of life in Mozambique which has attracted so many investors and visitors to the area in the first place.

## **The Eastern Cape and the Greater Addo Elephant National Park**

The value of comparison between the seemingly geographically distant areas of the TFCA in Mozambique, and the Greater Addo Elephant National Park (GAENP) in the Eastern Cape might not be directly evident to readers. However, the creation of conserved areas in Africa has resulted in many instances of displacement – where residents are either forced to leave (as was the case with Makuleke in 1976) or compelled by the gradual encroachment of conserved land (as in the Eastern Cape). Those who have been displaced face far more than a socio-spatial change of place. Displacement disrupts established social relationships, marginalises individuals even further through illiteracy and land hunger, and as is evident in both the case of the TFCA, while policy makers do not seem to prioritise development for those who are to be displaced, often leading to fierce opposition to a complicated multi-national endeavour. This seems to be especially true of the GAENP.

Like the KNP, the original Addo National Park hosts a significant elephant population – the remnants of the last significant herd of elephants that inhabited the Eastern Cape during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Addo has also experienced a quick increase in the numbers of elephants, and due to the small size of the reserve, has chosen to expand conserved land into neighbouring farming areas. South African National Parks (SANParks) have established a formal initiative to create the GAENP within the next five years, involving a number of social, economic and ecological experts, as well as the World Bank. Kerley and Boshoff (1999: 46) describe the proposed park as being one of the most diverse in the world – including six of the seven biomes that occur in South Africa – as well as having the potential for increasing socio-economic development in the economically depressed Eastern Cape. Although the exact boundaries of the park remain uncertain, the proposed GAENP will be roughly 398 000 hectares in size, consisting of a 341 000 hectare terrestrial zone and a 57 000 ha marine reserve. The terrestrial zone would form a continuous conservation area of almost 200 km in length, about 30km at its widest and 10km at its narrowest – forming the third largest park in South Africa (<http://www.upe.ac.za/zoo/addoone.htm>).

Unlike the TFCA, the process of land acquisition in the GAENP has been much more complicated, largely because land ownership (as well as the right to occupy land) in South Africa has been subject to an exhaustive land reform process after 1994. In terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, for example, claimants may register a land claim on a property that they were dispossessed of after 1913. In addition, according to the Labour Tenants Act of 1996, a person who was a labour tenant (not a labourer) has the right to occupy that part of the property upon which he was residing. In the GAENP, these land reform measures created the expectation (with social consultants) that SANParks, as an organ of the state, would adhere to policies of land reclamation. However, especially during the early years of land purchases for the GAENP, this has not been the case. The GAENP had been conceived by conservationists in South Africa prior laws of land reclamation were instituted after 1994 and has

subsequently been purchasing properties based upon a 'willing seller/willing buyer' basis, which requires that a farm be cleared of all previous inhabitants upon transfer to a new owner.

The problematic nature of the future GAENP may be illustrated by the concern that has been expressed by a number of social and economic consultants as to the impact of the proposed expansion, especially among farm workers, which are regarded as being among the most vulnerable of rural South Africans. As a result, two studies were commissioned – a Social and Economic Impact Assessment, completed in 2001 (Connor 2001) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (Huggins, de Wet and Connor 2002), which was submitted to the World Bank.

The issues raised by these reports primarily comment on the lack of organised resettlement and compensation procedures in the GAENP – as would benefit most parties affected by Development Induced Displacement (DID) projects with the intervention of the World Bank. Many farm labourers have thus been left without recourse to employment, homes, stock and a variety of privileges accumulated whilst in the employ of a farmer.

In addition, the situation of farm workers in the GAENP, unlike Mozambique, has been exacerbated by the relationship that exists between labourers and farmers. The occupation of land in this area of the Eastern Cape has been associated with the vested ownership of white, middle class farmers and the use of a largely illiterate and landless labour force, as Manona (1988) illustrates – and not with a largely independent group of subsistence farmers. As the history of the Eastern Cape illustrates, the lives of farmers and workers have been irrevocably tied together as the users and occupiers of land:

For farmers, the use of local labour and the expansion of successful small stock ventures in the GAENP area has been closely associated with the rise of Afrikaner nationalist identity in South Africa. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the imposition of Dutch rule in the Cape, large numbers of *trekboers* (lit. mobile farmers) found new independence in the frontier regions of the Eastern Cape. Among the local inhabitants, the Khoi Khoi were represented by various groups of mobile small stock herders in the area, none with a strong enough ruler to unify them, not to present any great threat to the trekboers. The lack of stable territory, and the possession of stock deemed valuable by trekboers, meant that the mobile Khoi were the first to be dispossessed of land. Frontiersmen were free to use varied ways to force the Khoi into service – by apprenticing children or seizing captives (Newton-King and Malherbe 1981: 7) - but the most common means of securing labour was through simple agreement between Khoi and farmers. In this manner, the Khoi could retain their stock, stay with their families on particular farms, and foster payments in kind (such as stock accumulation and labour indenture).

Groups of Xhosa resident in the Eastern Cape frontier during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century were in a much more powerful position than their Khoi neighbours. Despite the fact that most Xhosa communities had fled earlier wars of succession and fragmentation among clan groupings in the east, small nodes of relatively

stable communities were created – largely based on a system of barter with farmers, which enabled many Xhosa to enter into sharecropping (or labour tenancy) arrangements with trekboers (see Giliomee 1989). Due to their stability and freedom of movement, residency in these settlements (especially in the upper Sundays River Valley around the present town on Kirkwood) became attractive for both Khoi and Xhosa.

However, it is the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that impinges more directly upon the present lives of farmers and workers in the GAENP area. During this period of time, farmers came under increased pressure from an influx of European settlers during the early 1800s, as well as series of restricting laws imposed by the British, which constricted the availability of land. With the expansion of larger farms, smaller (and poorer) farmers started sinking into debt, while others lost their land and reverted to labour tenancy on more economically secure territories. During this period of time, the activities of what may euphemistically be termed ‘frontiersmen’ became entrenched in the oral history of the upper Sundays River Valley area.

Tales such as that of the notorious Phillip Weyer<sup>7</sup>, a German immigrant who accumulated property behind what many refer to as ‘Henderson’s *berg*’ (mountain) can be used to illustrate the conflicting positions of many farmers during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Left alone with his mother and siblings after their father abandoned them in Port Elizabeth, young Phillip heard of some money to be made through trading in the Sundays River Valley area. He then met a Jewish trader, who taught the young man all he need to know about trading and left him his ox wagon. Phillip then started a trading post in Darlington (which was unfortunately flooded through the creation of Lake Mentz in 1929), from where he gradually started accumulating properties. Local farmers, however, still harbour resentment against the family of Weyer, whose ownership of property was established through a process of expropriating debt from local farmers. The ‘character’ of Phillip, according to some farmers, has been carried through to the present generations of Weyers in the area, who are said to be just as sneaky (and wealthy) as their ancestor.

The many versions of this particular narrative, and many like it in the area, illustrate the close relationship that many farmers have towards their land, their right to occupation (according to them) being established through generations of struggle and economic poverty. The value that many farmers place upon their property also explain why many owners feel embittered and disempowered by the sale of property to the future GAENP. In this sense, many farmers in the GAENP have similar relationships with their property as many residents in Mozambique have with theirs. Albeit in different ways, both parties have occupied land for generations, and regard their occupation of land as their ancestral right. Similarly, many myths of occupation, such as that of Phillip Weyer, and that of the Maluleke, have been embellished and expanded in order to justify their varied forms of ownership.

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<sup>7</sup> All individual names are pseudonyms.

However, for farm labourers in the future GAENP area, the situation is very different, since the forebears of current farm ‘workers’ have been dispossessed of land at numerous stages during their past. For those who can recall a childhood on a site that had been occupied for at least three generations (for more about 100 years), the event of complete displacement from these sites is more recent. For others who have been involved in intermittent farm labour since the establishment of mission stations of Bethelsdorp in and Enon in 1812, the area of Lake Mentz (the dam which consumed Weyer’s trading store) has become particularly significant due to the development of long term employment prospects in the region.

These missions provided safe havens for groups of people who were dispossessed of land at an early stage of colonial occupation, and those who became disillusioned about working conditions on farms (Newton King 1981: 25). In addition to missions, people also came to reside in many settlements around towns such as those in between Uitenhage and Somerset East, which contained a number of Xhosa, Khoi and a few white *bywoners* (poor tenants) who had found access to employment in the area <sup>8</sup>. The building of Lake Mentz and the Sundays River Irrigation scheme in 1929 provided life to the district – not only were farmers assured of the provision of water and irrigation for the burgeoning citrus industry, but people assured of farm work for the next few decades. Unfortunately, however, the expansion of small stock farmers unfortunately meant that those who occupied freehold land and who had built up a sense of ‘community’ (or place) had to be dispossessed to make way for the expansion of the irrigation scheme.

In 1906, the Sundays River Valley passed a resolution that “no native, coloured person, coolie or chinaman (*sic*) should be allowed to hold land as owner, tenant, or sub-tenant with out the permission of the Company (ie: Sundays River Irrigation)” (Meiring 1959: 45). The narratives of those people (ie: workers) in the Lake Mentz area who had occupied these settlements during their childhood, can clearly recall their expulsion from these areas and residents in these areas were free to graze their stock and plant some crops without much interference.

Government records of the 1950s to 1980s reflect the rising uncertainty of the Native Commissioner and his employees concerning the situation in Kirkwood. In 1957, 3500 people were recorded as residing in five unwanted ‘black spots’ around Kirkwood. The two main settlements near the town of Kirkwood were subject to particular attention from the Native Commissioner in Cape Town, who did not want the ‘black’ residents of Beersheba interfering with the lives of ‘coloured’ communities in Enon. The remaining four ‘black spots’ around Kirkwood presented a similar problem to local government structures, as natives were occupying land without the approval of the state, and consequently, were free to use the land as they saw fit. According to the 1945 Native Consolidation Act, people residing in these settlements had no status or right to reside in the Kirkwood area at all, since most were only itinerant

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<sup>8</sup> The co-existence of many people who found themselves in similar conditions of economic depravity created a slow dissipation of ethnic and linguistic boundaries and created an indeterminate mixture of people later labelled as ‘coloured’.

workers, not permanent employees on farms. The only logical outcome for the State was thus to destroy these settlements and re-claim the land for agricultural purposes.

Among the narratives collected thus far from ‘workers’ in the Lake Mentz/Kirkwood area, some individuals can recall their co-residence on properties outside Kirkwood (some of which have been purchased by SANParks), from where they were displaced. One particular farm worker, Alec Draghoender, recalls that ‘every family had their own little piece of land – we did not live on top of one another. Then a jeep came and said that we should get rid of their animals, so the cattle and sheep were sold from 5c to about R2 per animal. We took a few years to leave, because we didn’t know where to go, because all our stock had been sold and our lands taken over by a white man’. Grant (1993: 32) indicates that by April 1960 it was estimated that over 2000 people had been moved from these sites<sup>9</sup>. Residents were not given the choice of leaving or staying, but were systematically forced out of the area over a period of three years, some leaving once or twice, and then returning to build shacks on their old housing sites. Some pursued farm employment elsewhere, but most were simply dumped in the locations surrounding Kirkwood. The following excerpt from a letter addressed to the Secretary for Native Affairs in Pretoria, from the Secretary of Miskraal Location in 1958, reflects the conditions under which people were forced to move:

“Although he say that we (should) must go to Bonterug (an informal settlement in Kirkwood) he divided us others to the farms - he want only old mothers to the location. We have no waggons to load our articles...that place have no water and firewood and the building woods, there is no road even the doctors hardly go there, that place it has no veld for our goats and cows, it four times removing us from this place and yet its our expense to build these houses and we pay for the water...”

However, for those who did not move to Kirkwood, but to farms near Lake Mentz, the importance of these working (ie: farm) sites are placed on a similar par as their previous occupation of ancestral land. After forced removal, permanent employment on farms, though scarce, offered a home similar to those occupied on past sharecropping and labour tenancy sites – with a house, a menial salary and rations. Despite suffering from a distinct lack of free movement from the confines of a controlling farmer, as well as being subject to forced labour indenture, an elderly farm worker (interviewed near Lake Mentz) still considered the farm where he had worked for more than 40 years as his ‘true home’. Here, he was allowed to keep cattle and gained valuable farming expertise from the landowner. In his words: *‘Ek is geleer- ek is gaar ‘ daardie slimgeid hulle het my gevoer’* (I have been taught – I am cooked – they (the farmers) fed me on their cleverness).

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<sup>9</sup> Most population displacements in South Africa occurred as a result of the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Acts of 1950, 1957 and 1965, which resulted in the forced removal of many urban residents to suitable locations on the outskirts of cities, or to ethnically suitable homeland (or Bantustan) states in South Africa

Although many people did find a second home on farms near Lake Mentz, it would still not be appropriate to view the homes of people who are currently working and living in this area as stable and permanent sites of habitation. Farmworkers have multiple 'homes' and are negotiators and participants in many different life worlds: Some are displaced regularly from farm to farm, and do not settle in one farm long enough for their children to receive a stable education, or to accumulate possessions or stock. Many of these unwanted labourers are simply dropped off on the nearest main road by employers, from where they can search for their next contract. Others, who have access to stable employment, often have homes in town (built for their retirement) as well as on a farm. In addition, most workers can recall their childhood and removal from past tenancy sites. Lastly, there are those individuals – both farmers and workers - that have been removed from properties purchased by SANParks during the past 6 years.

However, as Olwig (1997: 33) mentions, despite the fact that the lives of farm workers are diverse and multi-sited, it would be erroneous to view their varied 'homes' as being characterised by complete disjunction and transience. By focusing on the relationships that people have with others – on nearby farms or in towns – and with other places (like past sites of removal) it is possible to detect places of more permanence. Here people have had more opportunities for economic independence and less interference from an employer – whether on a farm, in a nearby town, or on an ancestral site. All of the different categories of 'home' and place among people in the Sundays River Valley thus create an impression of an intricate network of overlapping sites, connected by travel, memories and social relationships.

Elizabeth Colson (1999: 4) has argued that the phenomenon of rootlessness (or deterritorialisation) is extraordinarily diverse. In the GAENP, there are a great variety of people "who find themselves in qualitatively different situations and predicaments". In the GAENP these predicaments are contained not only through disruption from one site to another, but from many geographical sites and throughout different eras of the past. The connection of workers to various sites in around the future GAENP area thus does not only represent a connection to a single 'place', or property, but a connection to a district, with a number of intersecting relationships with people in a variety of peri-urban and rural sites. Unfortunately, however, the continued existence of workers in the district of Lake Mentz, in the upper Sundays River area is under threat and is declining rapidly due to the loss of small stock farms to conservation related enterprises – of which the GAENP is the major player.

Furthermore, the displacement of farmers and farm workers from their properties in the future GAENP area thus represents something different than the more regular moves from farm to farm, and from towns to farms – whether in the capacity of long term farm employees, or as irregular piece workers. The creation of the GAENP can be likened to those instances of removal followed by the Apartheid Government around the so-called 'black spots' around Kirkwood in the 1950s. Like their experience of such a removal in the past, farm workers displaced by the GAENP often do not know where to go once a property has been transferred, usually because their stock has to be sold, and their social connections with

the district be terminated once they leave. In a district where workers are constantly struggling to maintain residency on a farms and where even seasonal work on citrus and mohair farms has declined (due to the importation of labour from places such as Lesotho), displaced workers are thus at the mercy of SANParks.

With the start of a process of public participation in 2000, SANParks have recently embarked on a process of work provision in the GAENP area in 2002. A number of ex-farmworkers have been absorbed onto a few jobs in the planned conservation area, and a few work teams (on six monthly contracts) have been organised to break down homesteads and fences on those farms that have been purchased. Whether the origins of these contract employees have been verified as ex-farm workers, and whether ex-farm employees will manage to find employment among the diminishing number of farms in the area after their contracts expire, has not been specified by SANParks. More importantly, though short-term employment does offer a measure of relief, the loss of land, income and security suffered will definitely have to be circumvented by a more long-term solution to replace the advantages that workers have lost.

### **Place, belonging and the consequences of population displacement**

This paper has raised a number of issues, which will have to be explored at length by research in the near future. The first of these is that due to the multi-sitedness of the GAENP site, where farms are often hundreds of kilometers apart, mobility of the researcher is essential. Unlike Marcus' (1998) 'imaginary' of ethnographic research and writing, this research project is not only multi-sited in its approach to people in the GAENP area, but is multi-sited because fieldwork conditions dictate how fieldwork and ethnography should take place. The mobility of farm workers, from past sites of origin to present places of work, as well as the flexibility of association with a diverse range of people in towns, farms and conservancies, demands a certain mobility on the part of the researcher. This does not only refer to geographical mobility, but mobility of association, as well as the ability to shift allegiance from conservationists to farmers, from farmers to workers, and from conservationists to workers.

Secondly, this paper forces a reconsideration of space and place – how is it possible that people negotiate a sense of belonging when they are participants in so many life worlds? Do people in these varied situations have ideas of belonging and identity? This paper has indeed shown that it is possible for people to have conceptions of home that are connected to varied sites, as well as to a district, where the relationships forged with farmers and other workers create a sense of belonging. What makes these sites so special to people, like the myth of home-coming common to many of those who visit Mozambique, is that the very experience of helplessness in the event of displacement creates a prominent memory of the 'good life' for many farm workers, which increases (rather than decreases) their attachment to the site.

In this respect, Lovell (1998: xii) uses the idea of 'belonging' as an idiom to refer to people who 'care more about sentiments than origins' which is common to many people who have ongoing and historicised experiences of dislocation, displacement and spatial movement. This may not be connected to a specific place or territory and is much more complex than the identity connected to an ethnic group - in that even through complete and ongoing displacement from a territory or home a meaning can still be derived from the event of removal itself. Similarly, Malkki (1995) applies the idea of belonging to refugees in Tanzania, who like the farm workers in the proposed GAENP area, have been stripped of the specifics of culture, place and identity.

In addition, this paper also reconsiders use of the generally accepted category of farm 'workers'. Like that of 'refugees', the label of 'worker' is one dimensional, and fixes the experience of people to only one sphere – that of a farm employee - without consideration of the totality of their lives apart from farm work. 'Labourers' do not only have a connection to farms in terms of being 'workers', but also foster a sense of belonging to other kinds of spaces as *people*. Like many retirement homes in towns, homes of long-term farm employees are still valued because they are situated outside the constant control of the farmer, where people have made extensive investments into small stock and material possessions, and are much more at ease. Similarly, memories of those who have been displaced from ancestral land are usually based on the idea of a free and unfettered life, uncomplicated by the demands of a white landowner.

Similarly, people in Pafuri do not foster a connection to ancestral land because they are 'refugees' returning to their place of origin. Unlike other places in Mozambique, Pafuri has had a high rate of return because the area is highly heterogeneous and has a reputation for mobility and border transience. The myths of ancestral belonging have thus been created through a variety of factors – including the pictures of a wilderness paradise built up by conservationists, visitors and kin (such as the Maluleke), and from different locations in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique.

In conclusion, as Cernea (2000), de Wet (1995 and 2002) and Scudder (1993) point out, those affected by displacement face a range of obstacles. Displacement from established homes and neighbourhoods often disrupts social relationships, which means further isolation and economic impoverishment in a new environment. In cases where people are not displaced by a project, as is the case in the Transfrontier initiative, people still experience a distinct lack of autonomy and control over their daily lives, political decisions being out of their control. Often these people are already marginalised by illiteracy and land hunger, as the residents in the GAENP are, which further reduces their chances of public participation, or being recipients of any of the benefits attached to a Park.

In the 'deterritorialised' world described by Appadurai, the removal of these familiar markers of belonging, through the combined effect of a new park as well as historical experiences of displacement or marginalisation, may hold far reaching ramifications for the future of these reserves. As was the case with

the Maluleke in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, who were removed from the KNP in the 1970s and then successfully claimed back a portion of the Park in 1999, intense opposition to conservancies, as well as ensuing land claims, may be future result of exclusion from ecological decision making. In many other instances where people are not as empowered as the Maluleke to voice their opposition, such as subsistence cultivators on state land in Mozambique, as well as the farm workers in the GAENP, parks may become virtual 'white elephants', playing host to thousands of tourists while diminishing the long-term economic prospects of many illiterate residents.

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