



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Travelling technologies of the environment: Knowledges of water management and the transformation of land in South Africa

Project funded by own resources

Project title Travelling technologies of the environment: Knowledges of water management and the transformation of land in South Africa

Principal Investigator(s) [Macamo, Elisio](#) ;

Project Members [Zimmermann Merron, James Lawrence](#) ;

Organisation / Research unit

Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften / Afrikastudien (Macamo)

Project Website <http://zasb.unibas.ch/research/phd-projects/james-merron/>

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While global in their extent and consequences, the scientific concepts used to manage natural resources are applied differently across regions and legitimized through distinctive cultural meanings and sociological circumstances.

Natural resource management was once the providence of governments and inter-governmental organisations. Following the decentralization of governing institutions, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) are taking the lead in natural resource management, emerging ostensibly to test, monitor and provide feedback on tools that are aimed at managing resources at the lowest possible level. Socially, scientifically and technologically concentrated around centres of knowledge production, 'experts' systematically articulate innovative concepts in order to become progressively institutionalized. Because the results of these new approaches are largely unknown, a 'trust building' is highlighted at the access points at which 'stakeholders' and experts discuss new concepts and approaches. This research seeks to understand the arrangements within which groups and organisations make use of "green technologies". Going beyond what the literature can provide, the project is based empirically on interpreting the conditions in which 'trust' is used to mediate social relationships with new technologies. Data will be collected through a method that involves prolonged fieldwork with long-term participant observation and face-to-face interviews with key social actors within a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The analysis is based on training within the framework of the Doctoral Programme North-South and is focused on theoretical and methodological challenges in interdisciplinary area studies.

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Add publication

Add documents

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