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"The Political Ecology of Human-wildlife Conflict: Producing Wilderness, Insecurity, and Displacement in the Limpopo National Park"

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Like conservation-induced displacement, human-wildlife conflict (HWC) has potentially negative implications for communities in and around protected areas. While the ways in which displacement emerges from the creation of "wilderness" conservation landscapes are well documented, how the production of "wilderness" articulates with intensifications in HWC remains under examined both empirically and conceptually. Using a political-ecological approach, I analyse increases of HWC in Mozambique's Limpopo National Park (LNP) and the subsequent losses of fields and livestock, as well as forms of physical displacement suffered by resident communities. While intensifications of encounters between wildlife on the one hand and people and livestock on the other result in part from increases in wildlife populations, I argue that HWC and the ways in which it constitutes and contributes to various forms of displacement results more centrally from changing relations between wildlife and people and the power and authority to manage conflict between them. Both of these contributing factors, moreover, are the consequence of practices that aim to transform the LNP into a wilderness landscape of conservation and tourism. HWC and its negative impacts are thus not natural phenomena, but are the result of political decisions to create a particular type of conservation landscape. (Text from author's abstract)

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