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## Common property struggles in the management of communal rangelands in central Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

*James Bennett, Department of Geography and Environmental Science,  
Coventry University, UK.*

*Andrew Ainslie, ARC, Grahamstown, South Africa.*

This paper takes as its starting point the assertion of Bennett and Barrett (2007) that current rangeland management in central Eastern Cape Province (former Ciskei) is characterised primarily by an 'open-access' approach supplemented by private grazing of enclosed arable fields where these are available. Using three case-study communities from the region, we examine the main barriers to management of rangeland as a 'commons' in relation to accepted common property theory. We highlight the general inability to define and enforce rights to particular grazing resources, as being of key importance, in the face of limited (spatially and temporally) grazing resources facing competing claims from 'outsiders'. This is exacerbated in some cases by diffuse user groups and inadequate institutional arrangements. Many of these problems have a strong basis in the legacy of apartheid policies such as forced resettlement and betterment planning.

Despite repeated attempts at several levels for clearer definition of resource boundaries through fencing we argue that besides achieving short-term employment goals, it is debateable how effective such a strategy has and will continue to be. Rather, we argue that the focus should shift to improvement of existing under-utilised resources (particularly arable lands), provision of additional resources such as grazing land (through restitution and redistribution) and water, and provision of effective policies that facilitate institutional development and mechanisms for the enforcement of local rules.