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Sustainable development of parks: investigating the trade-offs in the conflicting development process of parks: the case of the Mshenguville Park, Soweto

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2017

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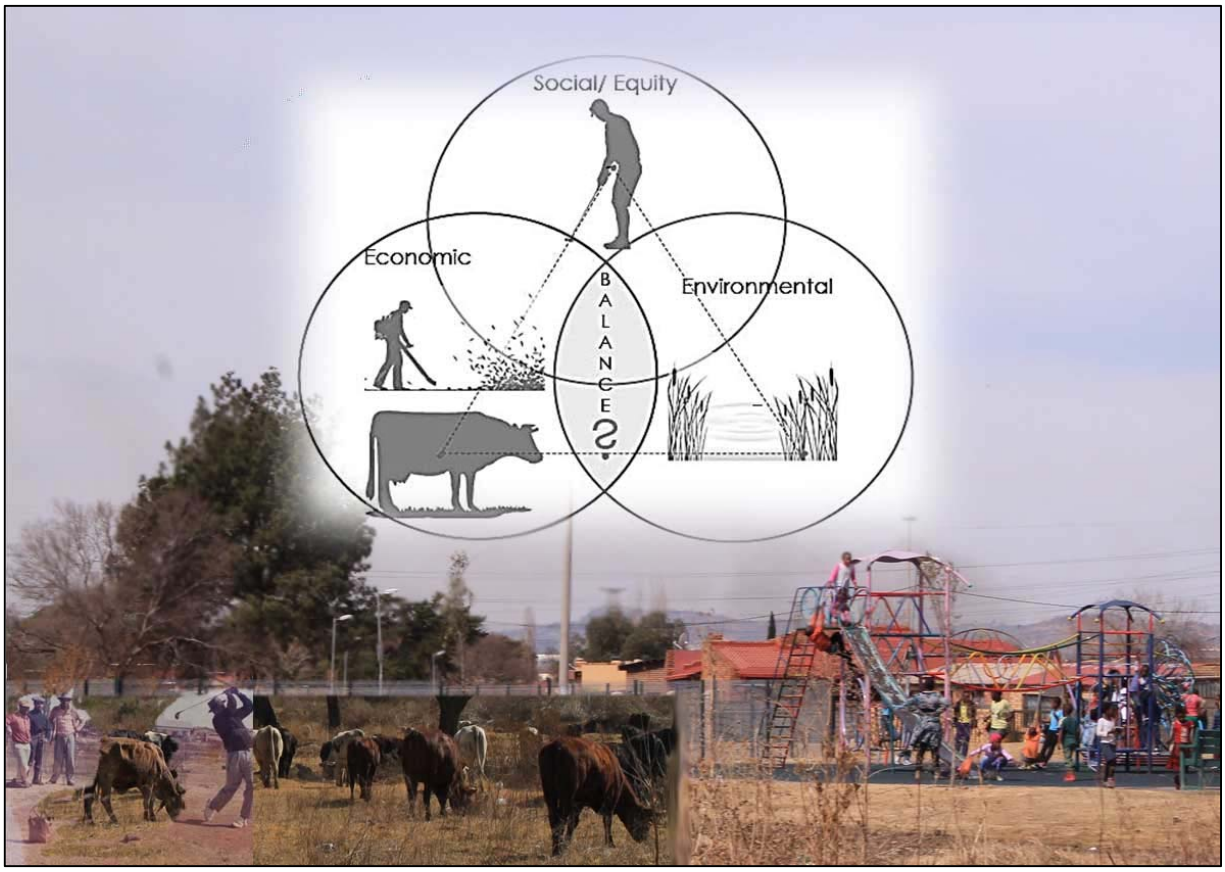
Mkhomazi, Zethuzonke Bella (2017) Sustainable development of parks: investigating the trade-offs in the conflicting development process of parks: the case of the Mshenguville Park, Soweto, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/24098>

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Sustainable development of parks:

Investigating the trade-offs in the conflicting development process of parks:

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September 2017

Abstract

A sustainable approach to development brings together social, economic and environmental aspects. However this does not occur in a vacuum, development decisions take place in a palimpsest of underlying decisions and a myriad of conflicting uses and tensions. The sustainable development of parks entails making trade-offs within a conflicting environment. This study reflects on officials' practices in the processes of park developments. It evaluates the decision-making terrain for park developments to understand the challenges, the advantages and the limitations in achieving an integrated and sustainable park. To this end, I have reviewed JCPZ (Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo) officials' practices in the park development of an urban wetland in Mshenguville, Soweto. The methodology used for this paper is mainly the case study approach and reviewing archival documents used for the development process. What makes this case study interesting is that this park has some contested, proposed and appropriated land uses such as golf, cattle grazing, and an eco-park. The research report mainly shows that a balance or win-win approach to development is not easy to attain especially in highly contested developments but rather a compromise can be reached provided that the other forces (stakeholders) within the sustainability triangle (particularly social, economic and environmental) persistantly negotiate their space to be included in the development plan.