



Land scarcity in Northern Namibia

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Land access is a major topic in the Namibian population, which can also be seen in political discourses. In North-Central Namibia, the ongoing Communal Land Reform aims at improving tenure security and thereby also hopes to promote sustainable investment in land.

Within this context, it is often argued that population growth is leading to an increased scarcity of land. However, this argument falls short of actual issues determining land scarcity in Namibia. In a context, where a large part of the population is still seen as depending on agricultural production, land scarcity has to be measured by different means to assess physical scarcity (population density, farm density, proportion of cultivated areas, or yield per person) as well as the perception of these different scarcities.

This paper aims to discuss the different notions of land scarcity and argues that by focusing only on the physical realities of increasing pressure on land because of population growth, important other aspects are neglected. In order to scrutinize those measures, the study will further look at the distribution of different land uses, changing land use practices as connected to changing labour availability and mobility. Special attention will thereby be given to the difference between land scarcity and fertile soil scarcity and their relation to labour availability.