

## **Conservation, Sustainable Tourism in Post-colonial Southern Africa.**

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The establishment of national parks and wildlife reserves has provided an environment in which wildlife populations have some protection from poachers and expanding human occupancy. However from a biogeographical standpoint the present system of parks and reserves in Africa comprises a disparate and disconnected chain of habitat "islands", an arrangement that has not only blocked 'natural' wildlife migration patterns, but has placed rare or threatened species at risk due to the lack of genetic mixing (Shroeder 1999). In the post-colonial era Southern Africa has the potential to capture an increased share of the world tourism market by fostering regional sustainable tourism through Trans Border Conservation Areas and to capitalize on the economic and social benefits from increased regional management of natural and wildlife resources.

This paper focuses on the global and continental context for transfrontier conservation areas, the roots of conservation ideologies, the link between conservation and tourism, the geographical dimensions of the region's natural resource management policies, the factors that constrain and influence the realization of the 'dream'. The Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (Gaza-Kruger –Gonarezhou) serves as a case study with special attention being given to the risks in sharing a natural resource base between neighbouring states of unequal development level and varying political stability. Lastly the principle of co-existence of neighbouring states is debated and its implications for peace park development are discussed.