



Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park: a review

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Abstract

Transfrontier Parks (TFPs) have been a key feature of nature-based tourism in many parts of the globe since the 1920s, with large expanses of land made available for this purpose. Although African countries are relative newcomers to this form of reserve, since the early 1990s there has been the rapid formation of TFPs -especially in southern Africa. The post-colonial/post-apartheid period has afforded countries the opportunity to develop tourism through the establishment of TFPs. An ambitious example was the establishment of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP). in 2002. Significant tourism development research over a range of themes has been carried out in this TFP, which straddles the borders of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Themes explored include carrying capacities, communities, management, political ecologies, conservation, travel motivations and poaching. Despite a sustained focus, the need to consolidate academic understanding of tourism in the GLTP through a systemic review is necessary and timely. This paper reviews the core tourism research foci of the GLTP, highlighting the disparity in geographical focus of investigations, being predominantly centred around South Africa. An argument is made for the need to understand the role and influence of each region equally. In addition, the paper proposes a consolidated research agenda for the future.

Keywords: Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tourism

Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, governments have relied mainly on national parks and nature reserves to conserve biodiversity (Barrett & Arcese, 1995; Carruthers, 2009). Yet many have argued that protected areas are not an adequate solution for biodiversity conservation (Miller, 1996; Hansen & De-Fries, 2007); this position is based on many protect areas being too small and fragmented to sustain the more mobile species (Hanks & Myburgh, 2015). In addition, chronic funding shortages coupled with inadequately trained staff, has made it difficult to safeguard the ecological integrity of isolated protected areas (Munthali, 2007). It has been further argued that fences around protected areas and arbitrarily drawn political boundaries have cut traditional migration routes for wildlife (Ferguson & Hanks, 2010). These weaknesses of protected areas have provided a compelling argument for a more comprehensive approach to biodiversity conservation.



Transfrontier parks (TFPs) have gained popularity for the purpose of protected area management (Duffy, 2006). Although the concept has a long history dating back to the early twentieth century, it has only gained traction on a global scale over the last three decades (Ramutsindela, 2007; Büscher, 2013). The concept of TFPs has become a dominant approach within biodiversity conservation in southern Africa. The stated/explicit objectives of the establishment of TFPs is to jointly manage and promote a culture of peace and regional co-operation, conserving biodiversity and promoting trans-border tourism as a means of fostering regional socio-economic development (Sandwith et al., 2001; Munthali, 2007; Hanks & Myburgh, 2015). Of particular interest to the discussion of this paper is the research on trans-border tourism and the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) (see figure 1) straddling the borders of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe as the subject of our analysis.

The aim of this paper is to provide a review of research at the confluence of tourism and protected areas in the GLTP. We argue that despite the shift in focus from national parks to TFPs, most current research in the GLTP continues to conceptualise tourism in bounded territorial terms. Thus, most scholars writing on tourism in the GLTP report from one side of the border and not based on the trans-border nature of the GLTP.

To explore the bounded territoriality of the GLTP, the paper first discusses the origin and background of TFPs in southern Africa. The methods used to construct the review are then explored. Tourism in the South African, Mozambican and Zimbabwean parts of the GLTP are examined and lastly, the discussion proposes future research agendas for tourism research in the GLTP.

The rise of Transfrontier Parks in southern Africa and history of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier

The concept of Transfrontier Parks (TFP) has a long history initiated in 1926 when the first bi-national park was established on the United States-Canadian border. The park set out to epitomise the good relations between these two countries (Van Amerom, 2002). By the late 1980s, the idea of TFP had taken root within the World Conservation Union (WCU) because of its purported success in enhancing biodiversity. The WCU initially identified 70 potential TFPs in 65 countries around the world, but by 2012, this figure had increased to 227 transboundary protected area complexes. These incorporate 3043 individual protected areas or internationally designated sites. In southern Africa, the ideal of contiguous TFPs was realised in the early 1990s when the late Dr Anton Rupert, a South African business magnate, made formal proposals for TFPs with the support of the late Prince Bernard of the Netherlands [Peace Parks Foundation (PPF), 2012; Spierenburg & Wels, 2010; Ramutsindela et al., 2011].

The establishment of TFPs was made possible by the Peace Parks Foundation—a non-profit organisation launched by Rupert in February 1997 specifically for this purpose. The formation of the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) and the signing of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement on 18 August 1999 provided impetus for the creation of TFPs in the region (Sinthumule, 2014). The post-apartheid political, socio-economic and historical circumstances also created conditions for the establishment of TFPs in the region (Ramutsindela, 2004). There are currently 18 TFPs of varying sizes that have been listed as proposed or legislated in the southern African region, with the GLTP being the most ambitious and well known (PPF, 2017).

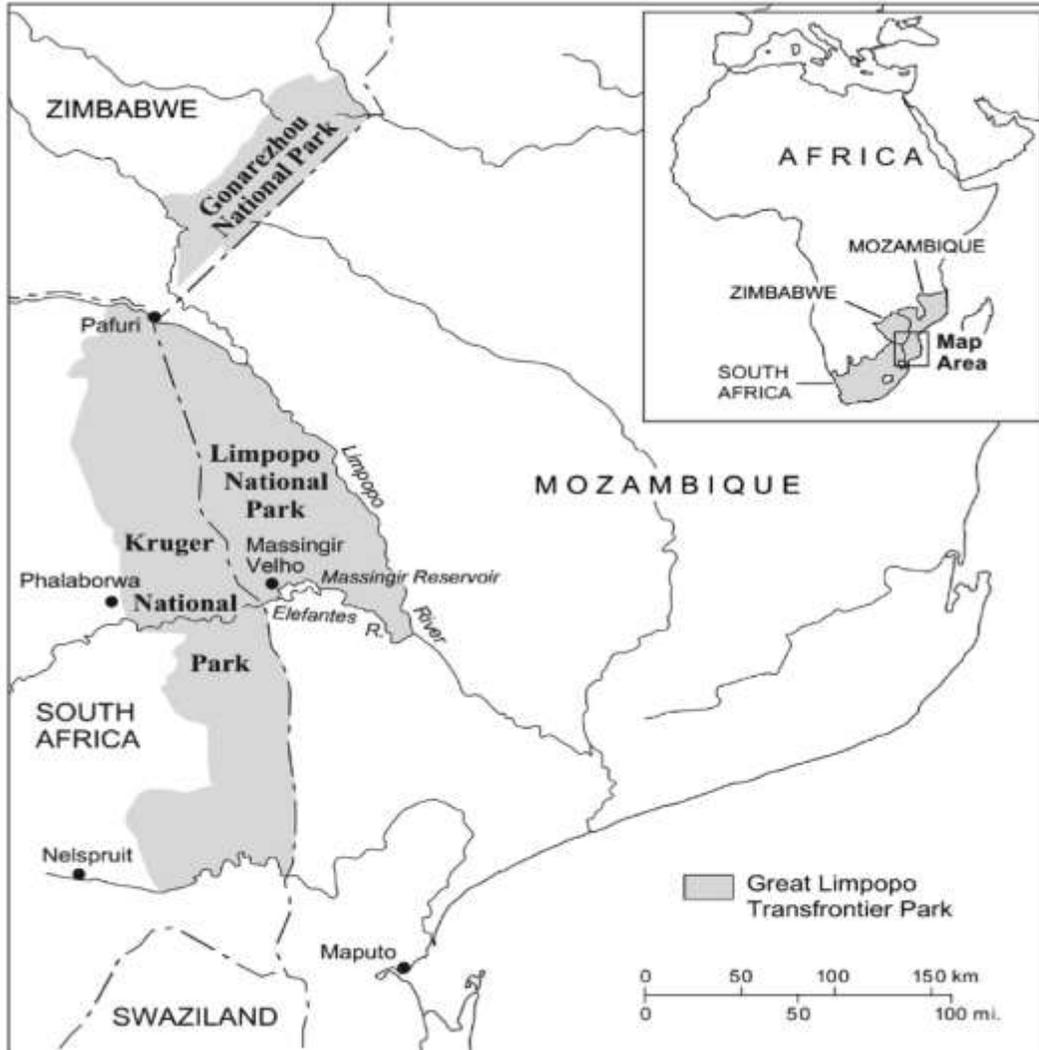


Figure 1. Location map of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

The GLTP has a history that dates back to the 1920s when General Jan Smuts first introduced the concept of ‘a wildlife tourism road through Africa, which would link the Kruger Park and Zimbabwe (then called Southern Rhodesia) (Mavhunga & Spierenburg, 2009). In the 1930s and 1940s, the idea of a mega-park was briefly revived in Southern Rhodesia with the establishment of the Gonarezhou Game Reserve (Wolmer, 2003). The concept of a mega-park never materialised, and the idea did not re-emerge until the 1970s, when an expatriate conservation biologist, living in Mozambique wrote a report advocating a Mozambique-South Africa conservation area (Tinley & Van Riet, 1991).

This report-sparked interest amongst members of the South African National Parks (SANParks) Board, but it was not to be until the 1990s that the board commissioned a feasibility study on the Mozambican side of the border (Wolmer, 2003). Historically, the Kruger National Park (KNP) was reserved as a ‘whites only’ leisure space under apartheid (Butler & Richardson, 2015). Meanwhile, the Limpopo National Park and Gonarezhou National Parks had limited tourism activities that went hand-in-hand with violent resistance from local communities often forcibly removed from



conservation areas (Ferreira, 2004; Milgroom & Spierenburg, 2008). The concept of the TFP became more appealing at that stage for a number of reasons. South Africa was re-emerging from the Cold War and apartheid rule in the 1990s, the Mozambican civil war ended and The Zimbabwean government was suffering reputation consequences because of its controversial land reform programme and the collapse of its fragile economy (Draper et al., 2004; Ramutsindela, 2004; Wolmer, 2003). All three countries were therefore looking for ways to improve their international image.

The dream of establishing a TFP was realised through an agreement signed by the governments of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa in November 2000 (Spenceley, 2006). The park covers an area of 100 000 square kilometres (66 000 falling in Mozambique, 22 000 in South Africa, and 12 000 in Zimbabwe respectively) (PPF, 2017). The park incorporates: the KNP and some neighbouring private protected areas and communities in South Africa; the Sengwe Corridor and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe; and the Limpopo, Banhine and Zinave National Parks in Mozambique (Wolmer, 2003; Chaminuka et al., 2012; PPF, 2017). The stated aims of the creation of the GLTP were to protect biodiversity over a wider region, promote alliances in the management of biological natural resources, enhance ecosystem integrity and natural ecological processes, to allow for the movement of migratory animal species, and to boost tourism in the area (Ferreira, 2004). It was also anticipated that the overpopulation of elephants in the KNP might be relieved by the creation of the GLTP (Ramutsindela, 2004).

However, this was to have adverse effects on the rural populations inhabiting the corridor regions (Ferreira, 2004). It had been anticipated that the transfrontier conservation region would - through the additional income created by tourism to the region - stimulate growth opportunities and jobs for the communities on the boundary of the park. However, studies reviewed in this paper have shown that tourism often has fairly limited potential to stimulate local incomes on a large scale.

Methods

The database for this paper was constructed by searching a variety of key words via a number of search engines such as Scholar Google and university library databases. The key words searched included combinations such as 'tourism + Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park', 'tourism + Kruger National Park', 'tourism + Gonarezhou National Park', 'tourism + Limpopo National Park', 'tourism + Parque Nacional do Limpopo' amongst others. Data from downloaded peer reviewed journal papers were entered into an excel sheet according to year, journal, title, authors, locality and themes. Papers were then categorised into themes discussed in this paper. Only using peer reviewed journal articles in this review allowed for a base-level analysis of quality research conducted in the study area. *Development Southern Africa*, *Koedoe* and the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* contained the most articles used for this review. The articles show the key importance of development agenda, conservation and sustainable tourism as core overarching themes in research on the GLTP. Research that focused on aspects other than tourism of the GLTP (such as biodiversity or conservation) were excluded.

In total, 54 articles were reviewed for this paper spanning publication dates from 1999 to 2019. The articles looked at tourism in the GLTP as a whole, or one of its component reserves e.g. KNP, Gonarezhou National Park or the Limpopo National park. The majority (43) of the articles were found to focus on the South African sections of the park, while 25 focused exclusively on KNP. Another 15 focused on the KNP and its immediate surrounding areas. Only three articles focused on the broader South African conservation context. Four of the articles focused purely on the Zimbabwean portions of the GLTP and two on Mozambique. The two articles on Mozambique



looked broadly at wildlife tourism in Mozambique, not exclusively at the Limpopo National Park. Five articles , discussed issues and challenges in the GLTP as a whole, although on closer inspection the papers were usually found to focus primarily on one section of the park and not holistically. By far the majority of articles have been written on the South African portion of the GLTP; this can be accounted for by the far greater volume of tourism received in this part when compared to the neighbouring countries reserves.

The review aimed to identify the focal points of the tourism research in these wildlife-protection areas and thereby sought to identify the gaps in current tourism research. Some themes that emerged included visitor profiling, visitor preference, improving on visitor experience, capitalising on visitor spending among many other themes. Each article was classified according to the region and reserves on which the research was directed as well as the central research question. Additional research questions, the methodology used for the research and the research participants or data source for the research were also used as criteria for categorising the research. Up to six themes emerged for the majority of the papers. Cross-references to research on parks in different countries were identified. Another objective was to identify research that spanned data sources or subject matter related to the whole GLTP; however it was found that most of the research was geographically contained within national boundaries. Further analysis looked at how the research foci changed over the timeframe analysed. Below is a discussion of the research emerging from each of the regional areas, as well as from the GLTP as a whole.

Tourism and South African part of the GLTP

In contrast to the regions of Zimbabwe and Mozambique that form part of the GLTP, the KNP located in South Africa has been the focus of a prolific number of studies. For this review, a number of themes emerged in tourism research on the KNP. The research changes over the 20-year (1999-2019) study period, from conservation as the overarching goal (in which keeping tourist numbers down was of benefit) to the need for increased tourism. The latter involved getting the park to meet visitor needs effectively, to generate a financially viable and economically sustainable conservation region (Ferreira & Harmse, 1999; 2014). This move paralleled the shift in the legislation and governance of National Parks in South Africa during the period that we reviewed. Where SANParks had in the past largely been funded by government subsidies and were not required to be economically self-sustaining; post 1994 this shifted and although there was stress on conservation of biodiversity, protected areas were also expected to become financially self-sustaining (Saayman & Saayman, 2006; Kruger et al., 2015).

This change in governance is echoed in the emphasis of the academic studies during this period (Kruger et al., 2015); these highlighted SANParks developed a commercialization strategy in 2011 to try to harness more visitor-spending within the network of national parks under their management (Kruger et al., 2015). Tourism itself became a focus of research, specifically its potential for more effective management to enhance the tourist experience and increase revenue became the emphasis in some of the literature (Kruger & Saayman, 2014; Kruger and Douglas, 2015). The improved tourist experience through professional game and nature guides, and additional products such as the creation of guided walking tours through the KNP were specifically investigated in terms of their capacity to enhance the nature tourism experience (Roberts et al., 2014; Saayman & Viljoen, 2016).

During the 1990s to early 2000s, in international academic theory, the themes of sustainable conservation and responsible tourism were gaining traction (Spenceley, 2008a; Biggs et al.,



2014). The influence of these foci can be seen in the articles that emerged on tourism in the KNP, notably the Spenceley (2005) study that investigated what sustainable tourism and sustainable conservation entail respectively. Factors relevant to sustainable nature-based tourism have been the subject of research both in southern Africa as a whole and specifically in the TFP (Spenceley, 2005; 2006). Spenceley (2005) made use of a Delphi convention technique to involve multiple stakeholders working in tourism in southern Africa to identify factors that were critical to sustainable nature-based tourism in this region. From this research, a sustainable nature-based tourism assessment toolkit (SUNTAT) was created (Spenceley, 2005). People with expertise in policy and planning, tourism, environment and conservation from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia were involved in the consultation process (Spenceley, 2008b). The aim was to identify essential factors for effective nature-based tourism in transfrontier conservation areas; numerous such factors emerged applying to the policy and planning, economic, environmental and social context (Spenceley 2008b).

The research findings can be broadly divided between studies with exclusive focus on tourism and the tourists themselves, versus those with a developmental emphasis. The latter have tended to look at the potential of tourism to contribute to economic development or growth or poverty relief for neighbouring communities. The themes that fall within these broad divisions are discussed below.

Tourism Management Focus

Of the articles that pay attention to the tourists themselves, much of the research has been centred on the demographics of visitors to the KNP (Saayman & Slabbert, 2004; Kruger et al., 2017), their spending behaviour (Saayman & Saayman 2006; 2009; Saayman et al., 2009; Saayman & Viljoen, 2016) and their preferences (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2008). Studies have also looked at the parts of the park that they visit and the duration of their stay (Kruger & Saayman, 2014). The accommodation they prefer (Leberman & Holland, 2005; Van Heerden, 2010), their shopping and restaurant visitations (Kruger et al., 2015) and their preferred tourism experience (Turpie & Joubert, 2001; Zhou & Seethal, 2011; Chaminuka et al., 2012; Saayman & Viljoen, 2016) have also formed key foci. The role of animal sightings and environmental quality in the level of satisfaction with the tourism experience have also been key focus points (Lindsay et al., 2004; 2007; Van Tonder et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2014; Hausmann et al., 2018). The majority of these studies have made use of questionnaire surveys administered to tourists. The stated aim of these surveys was that the results would contribute to better management of the tourism product and in turn the tourist's experience (Kruger et al., 2017).

The requirement for SANParks to be financially profitable in order to sustain conservation into the future has been the basis for various researchers' understanding of their management focus within (Saayman & Saayman, 2006; Ferreira and Harmse, 2014). Therefore a number of these articles make use of market research methods to measure what is effectively the 'customer satisfaction' of the nature tourist (Saayman & Slabbert, 2004; Saayman et al., 2009). Over the period reviewed, the number of articles appearing in journals that focus on management and tourism increased, examples include journals such as *The South African Journal of Business Management*, the *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, *Tourism and Hospitality Research* and the *Journal of Economic and Financial Science*.

Thus the tourist experience and tourist preferences have been the focus of extensive research from different perspectives (Van Heerden, 2010; Scholtz et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2014). The KNP is one of the top five destinations for tourists who visit South Africa, although there is increasing competition from a growing network of lodges in private wildlife protected areas or



private accommodation concessions in National Parks in the KNP and further afield (Engelbrecht et al., 2014). Further competition exists from nature-based tourism destinations in neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Engelbrecht et al., 2014). The KNP attracts over 1.9 million domestic and international visitors per year to a range of different accommodation facilities (SANParks, 2018; Biggs et al., 2014).

The main tourism product offered is the 'self-drive safari', but a number of camps offer guided drives such as Pafuri and Skukuza to name a few; some offer high-end accommodation with guided drives and there are a number of walking safaris, which are operated under strict supervision with accompanying rangers (Chirozva, 2015). A number of articles reviewed the success factors for tourism. Various survey-based research projects and tourists cited a variety of factors including: a memorable or high-quality experience, rest and relaxation, good service delivery, animal sightings, nature-based experience, photography and improving their knowledge about wildlife and nature, to mention a selection (Kruger & Saayman, 2010; Engelbrecht et al., 2014; Ferreira & Harmse, 2014). The importance of a sense of safety in visiting South Africa was investigated both from the perspective of disease risk and crime risk (Durrheim et al., 2001; Chuitsi et al., 2011).

Visitor profiling

A number of studies have profiled visitors to the KNP in order to look at who was visiting the park (Saayman & Slabbert, 2004; Kruger et al., 2017). During 2001 and 2002, it was found that the majority of the visitors were Afrikaans-speaking tourists who were married and had professional occupations (Saayman & Slabbert, 2004). A more recent demographic study of visitors to the KNP conducted in 2014 revealed the following visitor profile: "currently, the tourists visiting the KNP seem to be fairly homogeneous: they are mainly Afrikaans speakers from Gauteng (the economic hub of the country), in their forties, and well educated..." (Kruger et al., 2017). It should be noted that the time period over which the survey was carried out (between 27 December and 4 January 2014, the peak summer and year-end school holidays) coincides with the greatest amount of domestic tourism in South Africa.

In terms of the demographics of those visiting the KNP in 2013, the number of black South African guests that visited the KNP increased by 11.4% from 389 624 to 434 216, thus making up 25.5% of visitors (Kruger & Douglas, 2015). This increase is arguably because of the emergence of a black middle class in South Africa. It has been argued that many black South Africans feel little sense of ownership of the national resource that is wildlife-protected areas in South Africa because of their history as white recreational spaces discussed above (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). Furthermore, many local communities are constrained in their ability to access the park because of the fees and the need for a vehicle, although SANParks has set up some initiatives to address this (SANParks, 2008; Strickland-Munro & Moore, 2010; 2014; Ferreira & Harmse, 2014; Butler & Richardson, 2015).

Much research has focused on financing protected areas and the conservation of species through income generated by tourism (Lindsay, et al., 2004; Kruger et al., 2017). One study looks specifically at how much visitors would be willing to pay for a particular animal sighting, namely seeing wild dogs at their den. It was found that this otherwise rare sighting would generate substantial income and the argument of the authors is that this money could for example, be directly channelled into wild dog conservation. Funds could be used for education, awareness-raising and the re-introduction of wild dogs in other, mostly private, protected areas (Lindsay et al., 2004).



Communities, tourism and conservation

Another central focus of tourism research has been on the link between local communities and protected areas in the GLTP (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002; Mafunzwaini & Hugo, 2005; Snyman, 2014). A number of papers have looked at the ways in which the income and opportunities provided by tourism in the GLTP could benefit adjacent local communities (Morais et al., 2018). The potential availability of jobs generated by tourism in the region (Mafunzwaini & Hugo, 2005) and 'pro-poor tourism' (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002) have formed part of this focus. These articles assessed case studies to determine the type of partnerships and policy initiatives and that could enhance such transfer of benefits (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002). The need for good corporate governance, transparency, consultation, communication, education and trust for all stakeholders emerged as important in effective benefit transfer (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002; Ferreira, 2004).

While some researchers have focused on the potential for tourism to enhance development of local livelihoods in areas surrounding parks, others have been very critical of this concept (see Burns & Barrie, 2005; Saayman & Saayman, 2009; Spenceley, 2008a; Chaminuka et al., 2012; Saayman et al. 2012; Morais et al., 2018). The potential for communities to benefit from living adjacent to a conservation area has predominantly been researched within the South African context of the GLTP, with an exception to this being the case of the Sengwe Corridor in Zimbabwe (Chaminuka et al., 2012; Chuitse and Saarinen, 2017). Opportunities for local communities have been investigated, such as the potential for community tourism, community craft markets, village tours (Chaminuka et al., 2012; Morais et al., 2018) and tourist philanthropism (Burns & Barrie, 2005). The KNP has a "People and Conservation" section to its management division, which aims to stimulate socio-economic development in the communities bordering the park (Chaminuka et al., 2012).

According to Spenceley (2008a), nature-based tourism can benefit the poor living near the GLTP in four main ways. Firstly, it can enable participation of local stakeholders and businesses in both the formal and informal sectors. Secondly, tourism is an industry in which the customer comes to the product allowing local linkages to other businesses which can contribute to tourism. Thirdly, Spenceley points out that nature tourism is dependent on accessible natural capital, an asset that is at times in fact owned by the rural poor. Finally, tourism is a labour-intensive industry and therefore there is generally local job creation in occupations such as game rangers, cooks, waiters, groundskeepers and maintenance. These means of benefitting local communities will only be exhibited if tourism is managed in a sustainable, non-extractive way which considers local populations in an authentic process of consultation. In a practical sense, this means that the way tourism organizations manage aspects including procurement, training, employment and community engagement, as well as the ownership and management of the natural resources are of vital importance. It could be harmful to assume that these benefits flow directly to local communities, making management and governance of utmost importance (Brockington et al., 2008; Strickland-Munro & Moore, 2014).

Chaminuka et al. (2010) investigated communal grazing systems versus tourism in terms of providing livelihoods for southern African rural populations including those associated with the GLTP. Their paper viewed these competing livelihood opportunities as being at the 'wildlife-based tourism/livestock interface'. The study focused on villages in the Mhinga Traditional Authority in the Vhembe District of South Africa bordering the KNP and obtained livestock figures through dipping records and community preferences for wildlife tourism through focus groups and structured interviews. The main livelihood in the region has traditionally been based on communal cattle farming, maize cropping and small-scale fruit and vegetable production, as well as keeping of a few goats within 15kms of the fence of the KNP, it is a veterinary restricted area in order to



prevent the transfer of disease such as foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever, bovine malignant catarrhal fever, and TB between wildlife and livestock. Livestock keeping varied in importance across households interviewed. There is a dispute in Mhinga between cattle farmers and those households that favour ecotourism in the region; many of the cattle farmers view reserving land for ecotourism ventures as less profitable (Chaminuka et al., 2010).

Tourism and Mozambican part of the GLTP

The two articles that were identified focusing specifically on Mozambique both emphasize the potential of tourism as an economic growth sector. Kiambo (2005) provided an overview of the status of tourism in Mozambique and the post-war potential for growth. They indicated that tourism could potentially create employment, enhance investment, improve infrastructure and stimulate small business growth (Kiambo, 2005, 142). No follow-up research has yet determined whether this potential for growth from tourism has come to fruition, although a recent study by Rylance (2017) attempted to determine income generated through conservation areas for the country as a whole. However, the latter study noted the limitations caused by lack of available data. Some recommendations emanating from the Rylance (2017) research were firstly, that in order for Mozambique to attract more tourists it needs to be easier to visit (specifically cheaper visas and more accessible by road and air). Secondly, it was noted that easier means of investment should be provided for tourism investors. Finally, it was found that the product of wildlife safari tourism needs to be improved in this region (Rylance, 2017).

Tourism and the Zimbabwean part of GLTP

Of the articles reviewed for this paper, only two research papers focused on the Gonarezhou National Park exclusively (Gandiwa, 2011; Mutanga et al., 2017). Gandiwa (2011) researched the abundance and distribution of wildlife species, concluding that the southern part of the park has a greater abundance of wildlife for tourist viewing. Chuitsi et al. (2011) made use of tourists' gate entry statistics from 1991 to 1999 in order to identify how many tourists were visiting the park. They noted a decline in tourist numbers during this period concluding that political stability affects the number of tourists that visit the region.

The importance of effective governance, planning and management of tourism in protected areas was earmarked in a number of the studies reviewed, particularly in relation to the benefits of tourism being devolved to local communities (Chuitsi et al., 2011). In relation to local benefits, Chuitsi et al. (2011) found that the communities of the Sengwe corridor had in fact been side-lined in the development programmes; this raised some questions about the level of motivation for truly ensuring local benefits by the role players involved with management and implementation (Chuitsi & Saarinen, 2017). They interviewed members of the affected communities directly and the biggest concerns that were raised were "poor governance of the GLTFP programmes, lack of direct economic benefits to household and community levels, threats of livelihood displacement, restricted access to natural resources, inequitable distribution of tourism benefits, corruption by community representatives, ineffective problem animal control, technical knowhow, lack of capital and lack of clear guidelines for community participation in transfrontier tourism enterprises" (Chuitsi & Saarinen, 2017, 265).

Ecotourism is often noted to have potential to improve rural economies in southern Africa. Based on this premise, Chuitsi et al. (2011) evaluated ecotourism as a form nature-based tourism in that it ought to result in conservation of biodiversity while at the same time benefiting the communities



to whom the natural resources rightfully belong. Similarly, an article by Chirozva (2015) investigated the potential for entrepreneurial activities associated with ecotourism to provide additional or alternative livelihoods to people in communities bordering on ecotourist regions. Chirozva (2015) found that successful ecotourism projects can take time and financial investment to develop. Some initial projects include the manufacture of arts and crafts, the Shangaan Cultural festival, use of land and wildlife for accommodation and tourism (Chirozva, 2015).

Discussion

What emerged from the outset of this review was that while there has been prolific research on tourism in the KNP (within South Africa), far less has been carried out in the remainder of the GLTP falling in Zimbabwe and Mozambique largely because of lack of infrastructure and difficulty of access for researchers. Specifically, few studies have been conducted in either Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe and the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique. Even more neglected regarding tourism research are the corridor regions adjoining the GLTP. While some of the KNP research has extended to include the GLTP as a whole, this often provides far more detail on the KNP. The journals that feature relevant articles include those with a tourism and ecotourism focus, some featuring development, others emphasising conservation aspects, while a number have focused on tourism management. Themes that have emerged showed change over time and differ across regions.

For all of the countries forming part of the GLTP, the visitor profile is of interest as is the type of tourism experience offered in each region. Why people visit particular locations rather than others within the GLTP is also of interest. Sustainability also emerges as a theme in the tourism research, with some work focusing on the economic sustainability of tourism while other research emphasises the sustainability of the conserved environment. Other researchers have taken a holistic view of sustainability, including both the conserved environment and the economic role played by tourism. Narrow foci also emerged, with articles investigating tourism interest in specific species or activities or aspects of the tourist experience such as restaurants, accommodation or shopping. In terms of a future research agenda, there is enormous opportunity for a representative research focus. This includes significant scope for more detailed research to the GLTP areas outside of the KNP, as well as investigating domestic tourism to the Gonarezhou and Limpopo National Parks. Policy-setting agendas for tourism development also require deeper scrutiny that could result in improved co-operation between the three countries. The 'market research' style papers that have been conducted in the KNP could also be replicated in other parts of the GLTP; it would also be useful to identify how marketing could be expanded to the region as a whole. There is also scope to use methods other than questionnaires, to research how tourists experience nature tourism in the GLTP such as by analysis of images and comments on social media. Community-orientated research remains a key research opportunity, including identification and management of possible benefits for communities; improved profit-transfer to local communities also requires attention in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Potential future research topics could involve community-driven private partnerships for community beneficiation.

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