

TOURISM POLICY, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION  
AND MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA

LEOCADIA ZHOU

TOURISM POLICY, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION  
AND MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA

by

Leocadia Zhou

A thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Geography  
in the Department of Geography  
and Environmental Science  
at the University of Fort Hare

January 2009

Thesis supervisor: Professor C.E.P. Seethal

Copyright by  
LEOCADIA ZHOU  
2009  
All Rights Reserved

To the memory of  
my mother, Rumbidzai  
and sister Fortunate

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The highest praises go to my strong pillar of strength and faith, Jehovah Elshadai, for enabling me to complete this work. This thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement and assistance of so many individuals and institutions. First and foremost, I thank my supervisor, Professor C. E. P. Seethal for his guidance, during this research. To the staff members and my fellow postgraduate students in the Department of Geography and Environmental Science go my sincere thanks and appreciation for your encouragement.

My appreciation also goes to the Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre at the University of Fort Hare for affording me a bursary to pursue my studies. The Kruger National Park Management also enabled this research by allowing me to conduct the research in the Park and granting me access to information. The work has also benefited immensely from the contributions of staff members at the Kruger National: Dr. S. Freitag-Ronaldson, Dr. L. Foxcroft, Dr. H. Biggs, Mrs. Thembi Khoza and Ms. Patricia Khoza.

I would also like to warmly thank my colleagues, Dr. O. Chabaya, Fransica Gwaze, Elisa Moyo and Tebo Moorosi for their unflagging

encouragement. Finally, my special thanks go to my sisters, Polite and Precious, and my brothers, Honest and Tinomuda, for their unfaltering love, support and encouragement.

## ABSTRACT

The Kruger National Park (KNP) management has recently made considerable progress in enacting new policies to address biodiversity conservation and management challenges. However, the interlinkages among the new policies to support biodiversity conservation and management have not been evaluated, particularly the principles and approaches, and how these interact in terms of policy decision-making at the economic and political levels. This study seeks to evaluate the interlinkages among the new policies and how they affect one another, as an avenue to promote a more integrated and comprehensive policy implementation. These policies include the tourism policy, the elephant management policy, and the water provision policy. At policy-making level, the integration of these three policies enhances the possibilities for balancing and controlling the pressures exerted on environmental resources. At the implementation level, it offers a framework for the coordination of the interventions of the policies in space so as to recognise and capitalize on their synergies. Given the inevitably multifarious and departmentalized nature of policy formulation in the KNP, there is a need for the analysis of interlinkages amongst policies. The conceptual framework

underpinning this study derives much from Briassoulis' (2004) policy integration. The research utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and focuses on selected camp sites within the Park.

The findings indicate that current procedures for tourism policy-making and implementation are weak, and little is done by way of impact assessment. This has been attributed to the lack of capacity at the KNP. The findings also reconfirm that policy-making is too fragmented. As a result, policy coordination and cooperation among park managers is weak. This study suggests that an environmental policy integration approach can lead to improved policy-making and implementation. Informed by the data collected from interviews, questionnaires and document analyses, a management framework has been developed to demonstrate how an integrated approach to Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) or management can help sustain the practice of wildlife tourism and support biodiversity conservation. It is concluded that greater realisation of integrated policy-making and implementation in the KNP can be achieved by establishing a formal coordinating office. However, a special feature of KNP policy-making is its widespread consultation system that can provide a fertile ground for enhancing EPI.