

Transforming the Frontier

Peace Parks and the Politics of Neoliberal Conservation in Southern Africa

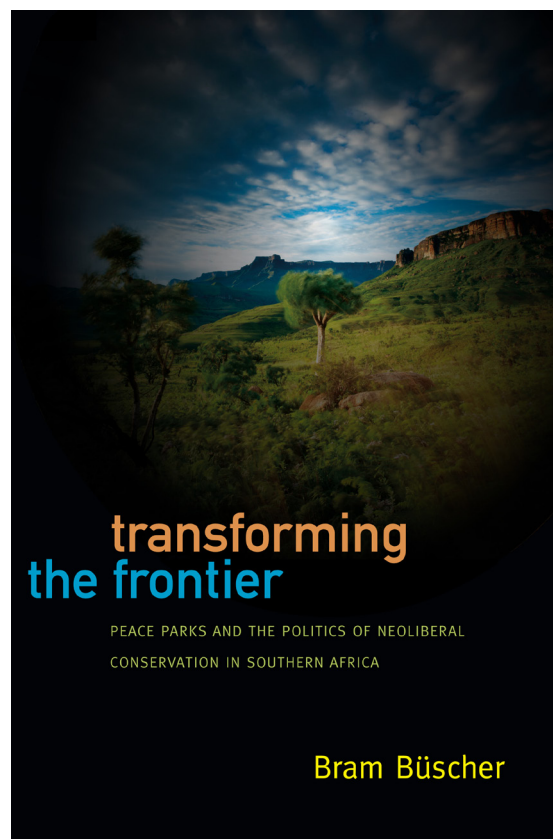
Bram Büscher

International peace parks—transnational conservation areas established and managed by two or more countries—have become a popular way of protecting biodiversity while promoting international cooperation and regional development. In *Transforming the Frontier*, Bram Büscher shows how cross-border conservation neatly reflects the neoliberal political economy in which it developed.

Based on extensive research in southern Africa with the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project, Büscher explains how the successful promotion of transfrontier conservation as a "win-win" solution happens not only in spite of troubling contradictions and problems, but indeed because of them. This is what he refers to as the "politics of neoliberal conservation," which receives its strength from effectively combining strategies of consensus, antipolitics, and marketing. Drawing on long-term, multilevel ethnographic research, Büscher argues that transfrontier conservation projects are not as concerned with on-the-ground development as they are purported to be. Instead, they are reframing environmental protection and sustainable development to fit an increasingly contradictory world order.

Bram Büscher is Associate Professor of Environment and Sustainable Development at the International Institute of Social Studies at Erasmus University in The Netherlands, and Visiting Associate Professor of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

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"Making a major contribution to political ecology, conservation studies, and the critical analysis of neoliberalization, *Transforming the Frontier* will appeal to a wide readership of anthropologists, sociologists, Africanists, historians, geographers, and those in development and environmental studies. Bram Büscher sheds new light on our understanding of environmental conservation and economic development projects by providing a truly brilliant critique of the intersection of conservation development and neoliberalization in southern Africa."

—**Paige West**, author of *From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive: The Social World of Coffee from Papua New Guinea*

"Bram Büscher offers an original approach to conceptualizing and examining neoliberal modes of government in action. He uses a richly grounded empirical analysis to shed light on a key puzzle with important political stakes: How are implausible win-win scenarios sustained despite their manifold contradictions, and what kinds of critical work are needed to puncture them? An excellent read."

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