



**How a matrix or network of small scale and interconnected
tourism projects could help revitalize the regional economy
of the Karoo.**

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Introduction

- This paper explores how a nexus of tourist routes and projects could re- inspire the regional economy of the Karoo
- Transport routes made the present spatial economy of the Karoo
- Will also explore the reasons for the need for “a reflexive modernization of the regional space” (Jardaus *et al.*, 2007, p.6).
- Reflexivity also needs to extend to governance too

- Proper modernization also depends on a deep respect for ecology and for the need for sustainable development
- Therefore, by responding as individuals and communities; the space and even governance itself of the Karoo can be revitalized for the future

Past regional planning in the Karoo

- Development along major transport axes
- “Centre-periphery model of development” (John Friedmann 1966)
- Core-region values and norms can completely subvert and undermine regional ones
- Growth Pole theory (Perroux 1949): Good Hope Plan of 1981- De Aar
- Stöhr and Tödtling (1978) show how peripheral areas have many challenges around economy, space and jurisdiction

- Regional planning is about natural systems, economies and lifestyles” (Dewar and Kiepiel, 1996, p.12).
- Thus concern with the whole
- White papers (provincial governments) encourage an enabling environment to obtain sustainable development
- Imaginative use of mountains can also lead to a reflexive modernization of the region (Jaudas *et al.* 2007, p.9).
- Integrated public transport strategy a *sine qua non*

Regional tourism planning

- Christaller (1963) argued that tourism can be a means of obtaining economic development in peripheral regions
- Place-making is also central to tourism development (Gunn, 2002, p.63)
- Southgate and Sharpley (2002, pp.241-244): “physical carrying capacity” and “saturation limits” of the land

- Route tourism has significant potential for the Karoo, in that there are enough existing routes with good enough attractions en route.
- Kiepiel (2006, p.4 and p.6) writes about how tourism can be allied to corridors

Bioregional Planning

- Global Biodiversity Strategy (WRI, IUCN, and UNEP) in 1992 emphasizes ecosystem integrity, habitat requirements and the inclusion of human communities
- Sale (1984, p.168) states that “a bioregion is a part of the earth’s surface where rough boundaries are determined by natural rather than human dictates....”
- Also ties in with protecting the sense of place of the Karoo

- JM Coetzee and Voëlfontein: words such as “imagination...kingdom...love...mysteries”
- Sense of place also extends to how people regard their own places (Spocster 2012, p.13)
- Lost sense of place: *Karretjiemense* and their need to “reassert themselves in their place and space” (De Jongh 2002, p.460).

The present situation of the Karoo:

- Multiplicity of issues facing the Karoo
- Fragmented provincial jurisdictions not helping
- Some experts have called for a “Karoo region”
- Karoo towns possess a unique place identity (Ferreira 2007, p.191)
- The Karoo has notable protected areas
- “Vast development potential” (Atkinson 2009, p. 2)

- Many Karoo towns founded before 1900 (Fransen 2006)
- Author highlights 13 most prominent towns, from an architectural and aesthetic viewpoint

Methodology

- Study area limited to Great Karoo
- Qualitative mostly and a case study
- Study is context-bound
- Textual or image based observations
- The books show interests in mountain climbing, warfare and literature
- Van Manen, 1990, p.101 lived experience: spatiality and temporality (mainly memory and space)

- Detailed map and satellite photograph analysis
- Extensive literature search
- Mountaineering opportunities

Findings

- Karoo a bioregion/ and special administrative area
- Proposed tourism bases: museum of the Karoo, cultural tourism centre, adventure centre, fossil centre
- Five proposed routes (4 within 300km of Beaufort West and 1 multi- day route)
- Further activities: architectural, mountain tourism, Anglo-Boer War, literary, endemic plants, agri-tourism
- A functional public transport system should be activated soon in the Karoo (1st prize for trains, 2nd for buses)

Conclusion

- Karoo could be revitalized as a regional space and economy, through a nexus of interconnected tourism projects
- Karoo's ecosystems fragile and its people disconnected from the cores, where provincial legislatures are situated
- Attention needs to be paid to the wisdom of declaring the Karoo a bioregion
- At present the Karoo's many and varied assets are not being utilized optimally
- A remarkable area deserving a remarkable status