

# EYE ON AFRICA

MSU AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER  
**SPEAKER SERIES**  
LIVESTREAMED AT  
EYEONAFRICA.MATRIX.MSU.EDU  
REGISTER FOR [WEBINAR](#)



Speaker: **Maano Ramutsindela, University of Cape Town**

Topic: ***Africa's Borderlands: a Site of Environmentalism***

Date: **Thursday, October 29th, 2020**

Time: **12:00 - 1:30 PM (EST)**

Place: **Zoom Webinar: [Register Here](#)**

**All Are Welcome!**

## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Maano Ramutsindela holds a PhD in geography from Royal Holloway, University of London, where he studied as a Canon Collins Scholar. He is Professor in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science and Dean of Science at the University of Cape Town. Ramutsindela held the Mandela Mellon Fellow of W.E.B. Institute (Harvard), the Distinguished Hubert H Humphrey Chair of International Studies at Macalester College (St Paul, Minnesota), and Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia. He is the author of *Transfrontier Conservation in Africa: at the confluence of capital, politics and nature* (2007). His most recent main publications include *Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals* (co-edited with David Mickler, 2020); *Environmental governance and the (re-)making of the African State* (with Bram Büscher, Oxford Encyclopedia of African Politics 2019); *Greening Africa's borderlands: the symbiotic politics of land and borders in peace parks* (Political Geography, 2017); and *Green violence: rhino poaching and the war to save southern Africa's peace parks* (with Bram Büscher, African Affairs, 2016).

## ABOUT THE TALK

Social science research on African borders has paid attention to their evolution, imprint, and impact on the (re)making of the continent in the political, social and economic spheres. Studies have drawn attention to the ways in which people living on the edge of the state - borderlanders - have capitalised on conditions of African borders to advance their economic and political interests. However, our knowledge of how borderlands on the continent are integrated into broader global projects is still limited, yet these projects continue to define Africa. This talk focuses on African borders as a site of environmentalism. The concept of environmentalism is used here to denote a range of ideas and actions centred on the protection and management of the environment, and how they shape the relations between society and nature. The talk pays greater attention to three ways in which African borderlands are a fertile ground for environmentalism. First, they are characterised by property regimes that can be manipulated to achieve environmental goals. Second, the social conditions of borderlanders make the launching of environmental projects a logical developmental imperative. Third, and lastly, African borderlands constitute a transnational space on which the governance of nature is (re)negotiated between African states and eco-entrepreneurs, donors and non-governmental organisations. In this talk I conclude that environmentalism depoliticises African borders by presenting the emergent green lines as a "natural feature" of the African landscape.