

Editorial

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New perspectives on Southern African tourism research



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Southern Africa is in general terms geographically defined as the most southern part of Africa including nine countries (South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi). Southern Africa is a well-known nature based tourism destination for long haul visitors from the global North intending to view the "Big Five" game species (Spenceley, 2010). Despite the predominance of nature based tourism, Southern Africa also presents a number of other attractions to tourists, including cultural tourism (Manwa, Moswete & Saarinen, 2016), heritage tourism (Rogerson & Van der Merwe, 2016), adventure tourism (Giddy & Webb, 2016), volunteer tourism opportunities (Rogerson & Slater, 2014) and business tourism (Rogerson, 2015). It is therefore apparent that the tourism industry is one of Southern Africa's main economic drivers, and is set to face a number of challenges in terms of sustainability and development in future (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2014; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010). Among a suite of challenges are the issue of building competitiveness, addressing poverty and inclusion, and dealing with the impending threat of climate change on the Southern African tourism industry (Fitchett, Hoogendoorn & Swemmer, 2016; Hoogendoorn & Fitchett, 2016; Hoogendoorn, Grant & Fitchett, 2016; Hottola, 2009; Manwa, 2011; Mbaiwa, 2005, Magole & Magole, 2011).

Notwithstanding these challenges given the considerable growth and maturation of tourism research in Southern Africa over the past 15 years following Magi and Nzama's (2002) call for more focussed research on tourism, a variety of topics investigated and in some cases reaching saturation (see Hoogendoorn & Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson & Visser, 2011; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011; Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2011; Visser, 2016), a number of investigatory oversights remain prominent. This special issue therefore attempts to make a focussed contribution to these blind spots through focussing on a variety

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of topics mostly from South Africa but also with contributions on Namibia and Botswana. More specifically, this special issue attempts to address the unevenness of tourism research globally, especially as the global South remains under researched in comparison to the global North, despite the growth of tourism. These papers are outlined in the special issue as follows.

Fitchett, Hoogendoorn and Robinson explore data challenges in the application of standard Tourism Climatic Indices (TCIs) on the African continent, which have prevented the application of quantitative approaches to determining climate change threats to tourism. They present an approach to reweighting the index to allow for the TCI to be calculated for locations which do have sunshine hour records. This ultimately facilitates the more widespread use of the TCI in determining the climatic suitability of African destinations. Rylance and Spenceley provide a comparative analysis of inclusive business approaches of two enterprises in South Africa and Namibia. They furnish evidence in terms of what kinds of business approaches may or may not benefit local impoverished communities in the tourism sector of Southern Africa. Next Booyens and Chris Rogerson investigate the linkage between responsible tourism and innovation in the case of the Western Cape province of South Africa. In this paper they specifically identify social and structural innovations that have specific consequences for responsible tourism in addition to policy responses. Visser provides an historical analysis of the urban leisure and tourism-led redevelopments of central Cape Town in South Africa. This paper in particular is a cautionary example for other African cities that want to implement leisure and tourism based developments as part of inner city renewal.

Saarinen looks at craft tourism and craft markets as a specific form of cultural tourism. The craft market in Windhoek, Namibia is used as a case study and makes particular mention of the economic impacts of craft markets in terms of its benefits and pitfalls for local residents. Turning to heritage tourism Chris Rogerson highlights the failure of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to enhance and sustain tourism infrastructure in the case of the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa. The PPP did not create broader community benefits anticipated; main reasons for these failures are noted as demand risk and lack of continued visitation flows. Evidence from this experience will ideally advise future PPP tourism initiatives. The question of the gendered dimensions of tourism are explored by Hirtenfelder. Using case material from an ecotourism camp in Botswana the gendered roles of cooking in and outside the tourism industry are disclosed in terms of how men are able to maintain gender roles by not cooking at home, but become capable cooks in the tourism industry, while women are still expected to cook both at work and at home. The collection closes with two research notes respectively by Jayne Rogerson exposing the lack of research on the internationalization of hotel brands in the global South and by Julia Giddy who explores the potential for adventure tourism development in Southern Africa, despite the general lack of research. This research note specifically points towards managerial and developmental issues that the adventure tourism industry may face in future.

Overall, we believe that the papers in this collection go some way to addressing important gaps in Southern African tourism research. This said, there are a number of issues that require further investigation in the Southern African context. Examples of future research could be conservation/biodiversity and tourism, understanding issues around the poaching of wildlife such as rhino, elephant and lion and its impact on the Southern African tourism industry, and the importance of technology in Southern African tourism through social media. More importantly, the vast majority of research on Southern Africa is focussed on South Africa and to a lesser extent Botswana, whereas the other Southern African countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia remain chronically under researched in comparison and require attention.

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