Rethinking slum tourism: tourism in South Africa's rural slumlands

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Abstract. Slum tourism is an expanding domain of research focused on organized tours to poorer areas of cities in the global South, such as South Africa's urban townships. The aim is to contribute towards a reframing of scholarship on slum tourism by directing attention to the phenomenon of tourism development occurring in rural slums or poverty areas of South Africa, namely the former rural Bantustan or Homeland areas. These rural areas are presently the focus of government attention for tourism promotion as part of economic upgrading and employment creation. The key findings are that the expanding tourism economy of these rural slumlands is dominated by domestic tourists rather than international visitors with most tourists engaged in VFR travel including trips to rural second homes. In addition, these areas are important foci for religious pilgrimage. In terms of international scholarship on slum tourism the paper offers the significant observation that the largest share of tourists originate in the country's urban township areas which are the attractions for international slum tourists. The destinations for visits by international slum tourists are therefore the essential source regions of tourists for visits to the rural poverty areas or slumlands of South Africa. This points to an imperative for broadening the research agenda of slum tourism to incorporate research which examines the tourism mobilities of ordinary residents of townships or favelas.

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1. Introduction

Among others Rolfes (2010), Steinbrink (2012) and Frenzel (2013) highlight the emergence and subsequent consolidation of a new niche in international tourism, namely the phenomenon of slum tourism. The essence of slum tourism is that it "describes organized tours to deprived areas" (Frenzel, 2012: 49). For Durr (2012) slum tourism must be considered a new variant of urban tourism and encounter between global North and global South wherein tourism intersects with spaces of urban misery and their representation. The central characteristic of this new phenomenon "is the touristic valorization of poverty-stricken urban areas of the metropolises in so-called developing or emerging nations which are visited primarily by tourists from the Global North" (Steinbrink et al., 2012: 1). This niche form of tourism is based upon the product of the guided 'poverty' or 'slum tour' which first became popular during the 1990s both in urban areas of Brazil and post-apartheid South Africa. Groups of (mainly) international tourists began to visit respectively the favelas and apartheid-created townships in order to observe people living in poverty. Over the past two decades there has occurred an expansion and geographical diffusion of slum tourism with its establishment and growth in several destinations of the global South, including India, Kenya, Mexico, Egypt and Namibia. Rolfes et al. (2009: 11) point out that "guided tours into the slums are slowly becoming a standard in the city tourism of the 'developing countries' or 'emerging nations'". As confirmed by Frenzel (2013: 117) "slum tourism is on the rise across the developing world".

Undoubtedly, it remains that "slum tourism is a young, dynamic and expanding field of research" (Koens et al., 2012: 232). Research on slum tourism has attracted the attention of scholars from a range of disciplines from tourism studies, sociology, anthropology, urban studies and human geography. Burgold et al. (2013: 101) assert that whilst "research on slum tourism began to develop only 10 years ago, it has already become an established field". From the outset the initial works were case studies of the development and workings of township tourism in South Africa, of favela tourism in Brazil and of similar phenomenon in India and Mexico. Much controversy and morally charged debates surrounded these tour activities. Magio (2012) questions whether slum tourism is philanthropic travel or the organised exploitation of poverty. Slum tourism critics assert that it was voyeuristic and that by turning "people's lives and miseries into a spectacle" was inherently exploitative (Basu, 2012: 86). Indeed, for the case of South Africa, township tourism was likened to social bungee jumping as "the bourgeois thrill seeker – driven by a certain appetite of fear – wants to directly experience a social divide in order to sensually fathom the height of a social fall – but without running a real danger of a hard landing" (Rolfes et al., 2009: 37).

The positive viewpoint emerges that slum tourism is educational, raises people's social awareness of poverty and as such is a precondition for change (Rolfes, 2010; Burgold, Rolfes, 2013; Kieti, Magio, 2013). Supporters of slum tourism point to the opening of opportunities for local entrepreneurs, empowerment and local economic development (Steinbrink et al., 2012). For example, in South Africa the grassroots potential for local development of township tourism is forwarded. Advocates portray it as a form of reconciliation through the political and personal narratives which are shared between residents, guides and tourists (Dickson, 2012). Considerable scholarly attention focuses on pragmatic issues of whether this form of tourism exerts pro-poor impacts and therefore contributes to improve the poverty situation in slum areas (Rogerson, 2008; Booyens, 2010; Koens, 2012; George, Booyens, 2014). As Frenzel (2013: 117) makes clear "slum tourism promoters, tour providers as well as tourists claim that this form of tourism contributes to development in slums by creating a variety of potential sources of income and other non-material benefits". Accordingly, questions of empowerment,

entrepreneurship and small enterprise development as well as the potential impacts of slum tours for re-imaging slum areas have come under critical scrutiny (Nemasetoni, Rogerson, 2005; Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Koens, 2012; Chege, Mwisukha, 2013; Frenzel, 2013; Steinbrink, 2013; Chege, Wewere, 2014). Further areas of work have encompassed issues of residents' perceptions of slum tourists, safety and security, as well as representation and authenticity in the narratives and practices of slum tour operators (Magio, 2012; Kieti, Magio, 2013; George, Booyens, 2014). The historical antecedents of slum tourism have been explored in the context of the global North (Steinbrink, 2012). Overall, with a widening spatial scope of slum tourism destinations and a broadened canvas of topics under investigation the touristification of slums is now a vibrant arena for academic enquiry (Burgold et al., 2013).

South Africa has been one of the most popular destinations for research on slum tourism (Rogerson, 2004, 2008; Booyens, 2010; Harvey, 2011; Dickson, 2012; Koens, 2012; Allie-Nieftagodien, 2013; George, Booyens, 2014). Many investigations have appeared on different aspects of the niche of township tourism which has consolidated as a significant element of South Africa's urban tourism product since the 1994 democratic transition (Rogerson, Visser, 2004, 2007). The purpose of this paper is to contribute towards a reframing of scholarship on slum tourism by directing attention to the phenomenon of tourism development in *rural* slums or rural poverty areas of South Africa. The difficulty of finding a universal definition of slums is widely acknowledged. The conventional definitions and discussions of slums are linked to urban development and to informal housing or areas of poor quality of housing characterised by multi-occupancy, poverty and overcrowding. Nuissl and Heinrichs (2013: 107) concede, however, "the indefinableness of slums as a spatial entity" as well as its relational character. Burgold et al. (2013: 99) acknowledge "slum settlements are not homogeneous entities, rather they are extremely diverse". Nevertheless, the term slum in practice is primarily confined to urban settings and viewed as "an urban phenomenon" (Nuissl, Heinrichs, 2013). Moreover, with the growth from the mid-1990s in touristic gaze on slum settlements, it is the urban which has dominated the expanding scholarship on slum tourism (Freire-Medeiros,

2009; Rolfes, 2010; Durr, 2012; Frenzel et al., 2012; Frenzel, Koens, 2012; Steinbrink, 2012).

The application of the term slum or slumland is not, however, coincident with the areas of greatest absolute poverty. In many countries where slum tourism destinations have emerged the largest concentrations of poverty occur not in urban but in rural areas. This is certainly the case in South Africa where the worst absolute levels of poverty are recorded in the country's rural areas, mainly those peripheral areas which constituted the former Bantustans and now are restyled as the country's 'distressed areas' (CSIR, 2013). Neves and du Toit (2013: 95) stress that poverty in South Africa "is not only widespread and persistent: it is disproportionately rural" and concentrated in the former Homelands areas. The task in this paper is to unpack the character of tourism development occurring in South Africa's rural (former Bantustan) areas which are South Africa's true slumlands. The discussion is organised into two major sections. First, as context, an examination is undertaken of the historical development of the Bantustans, the consolidation of these areas as South Africa's rural slumlands and of changing government policy towards promoting economic development in these areas. Second, the historical and contemporary nature of tourism development occurring in these areas is analysed. Overall, this paper represents a contribution both to the developing international scholarship around slum tourism as well as to expand a neglected facet of tourism geography in South Africa, namely the nature of rural tourism in the country's peripheral regions (Rogerson, Rogerson, 2011; Rogerson, Visser, 2011; Visser, Hoogendoorn, 2011; Rogerson, 2014).

2. South Africa's slumlands – underdevelopment and development?

Arguably, as Leibbrandt (2011: 101) asserts "given South Africa's history, rural communities in the periphery have always been the poorest of the poor". Currently the most chronic levels of poverty are recorded in rural areas of the country (CSIR, 2013). In particular the zones of worst deprivation occur

in parts of the country which were the former 'Native Reserves', the 13 percent of South Africa designated as 'black space' and subsequently became known as the Bantustans or Homelands. The 'Native Reserves' were the essential foundations for South Africa's exploitative labour system that was forged in colonial times and honed under apartheid. The making of these areas as cheap labour reservoirs and the role of migrant labour in the political economy of capitalist development in South Africa is dissected by Wolpe (1972), Magubane (1975) and Legassick (1977).
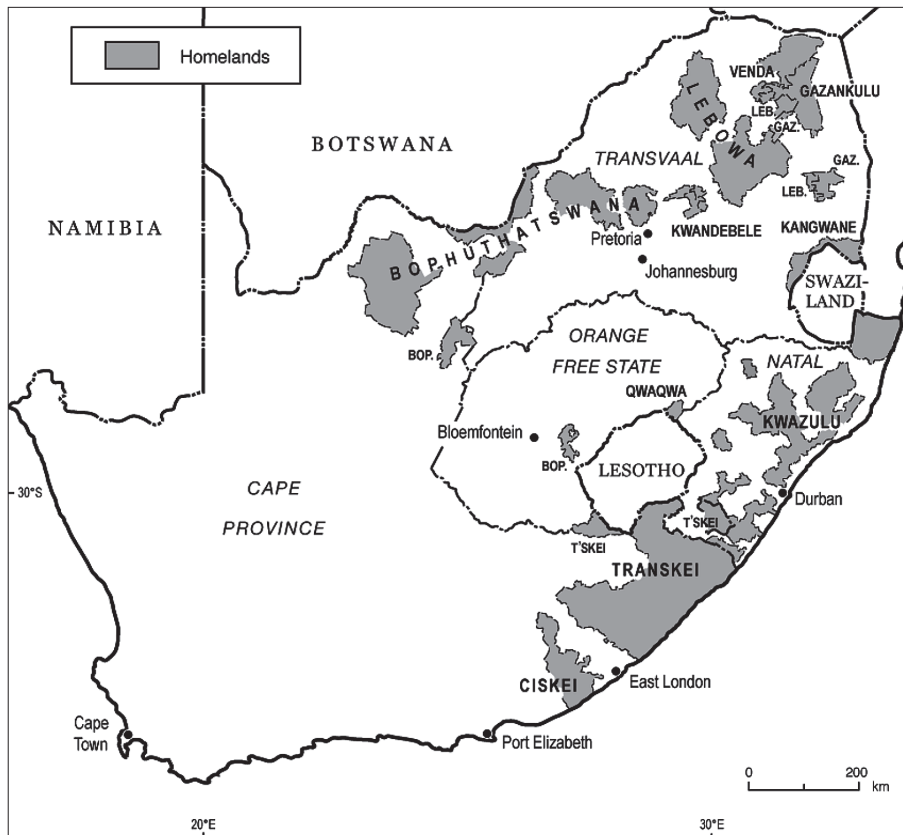
Fig. 1. The Homelands or Bantustan Areas of Apartheid South Africa

Source: Author

Essentially, these geographically marginal areas became cheap labour reserves which were fostered by colonial segregation policies and reinforced by apartheid planning (Fig. 1). Critically these areas functioned for the reproduction of migrant labour, albeit in a context of a progressive erosion of the rural economic base. Historically, the settlement and mobility patterns of the country's Black (African) population were moulded by the migratory labour system (Wolpe, 1972). Labour supplies were tied to a range of state mechanisms which created "a deliberate impermanence" into the urbanization of black South Africans (Clark et al., 2007: 35). Cheap labour power in South Africa hinged upon maintaining the oscillatory movements of (mainly male) black labourers. The system was strengthened further by the articulation and workings of South Africa's closed city programmes of influx control which was fashioned so as to constrain permanent black urbanization particularly in the country's so-termed 'White' metropolitan areas. In terms of South Africa's trajectory of capitalist development this coercive migratory labour arrangement became the basis for the apartheid political economy, keeping wages artificially low, as it allowed for the externalisation of "reproduction costs for the labour power needed in the urban-industrial centres of the country" (Steinbrink, 2010: 38).

From 1948 onwards Black South Africans were effectively stripped of their citizenship making them

legally citizens of one of the ten ethnically-based and nominally self-governing Bantustans or tribal Homelands. Under apartheid the Homeland areas experienced economic neglect, underdevelopment, forced resettlement and overcrowding. As explained by Clark et al. (2007) people were compelled to reside in these ethnically designed homelands where access to land was severely restricted by a process of 'villagization'. Under this regime communities were forcibly removed to peri-urban villages creating land shortages and resulting "in a transition from an agrarian to a cash-based economy that critically depended on migrant labour" (Clark et al. 2007: 36). Many Homeland areas became the sites of the forced exodus of established communities and their 'dumping' in remote and often barren rural slums. This massive exercise in social engineering was one of the cornerstones of calculated apartheid planning for 'separate' ethnically based Bantustans (Rogerson, 1995). In terms of grand apartheid planning for racialized spaces, the Homelands were encouraged to be self-styled autonomous states 'separate' from so-termed White South Africa. The fragmented undeveloped Bantustans were supposed to offer opportunities for advancement of the Black population and could even attain independence thus giving a veneer of legitimacy to white rule in the rest of South Africa. The formation of these ethnically defined enclaves fulfilled multiple economic and political objectives for the apartheid state. Above all, as both Wolpe (1972) and Steinbrink (2009) show, migrant labour from the Bantustans, areas that were both spatially segregated and governed in an authoritarian fashion, enabled and sustained a low-wage economy for the urban-industrial heartland of South Africa.

In an effort to provide a facade of economic legitimacy to these rural areas during the 1970s and into the early 1980s regional development policy aggressively focused upon these areas. The goals of regional development planning were conflated with those of apartheid social engineering. The apartheid state introduced a programme of industrial decentralization which included controls on the employment of Black (African) labour in factories in the country's major cities in order to shunt labour-intensive manufacturing out to 'growth points' in the Homelands (Rogerson, 1998). In addition, major government funding was channelled to build fac-

tory estates in the rural slumlands with lavish incentives on offer to lure domestic and international investors and use the cheap labour trapped in these areas. The aggressive Bantustan industrialization programme was highly controversial as it attracted 'fly by night' investors, often establishing ghost/sham factories in order to take advantage of generous state incentives and then closing them down when incentive programmes ended. In developmental terms, however, it was evident that the industrial decentralization programme, anchored upon footloose investors, failed ultimately to achieve local linkages and did little to reduce poverty as it was reliant upon the insecure and highly exploited work conditions of a predominantly female workforce. For a short period many 'factories in the field' sprang up as new features of the apartheid-engineered geographies of several Bantustans (Pickles, 1991). In 1991, however, this programme was suspended with evaluations pointing to few tangible long-term benefits for Homeland areas (Rogerson, 1998). For many of the Homeland growth points there followed a phase of deindustrialization as factory closures rendered these areas as 'abandoned economic spaces' (Rogerson, 1995).

Since the 1994 democratic transition the former rural Homelands have reintegrated officially into South Africa. Economically, they continue to be most underdeveloped and poverty-stricken areas of the country (Neves, du Toit, 2013). In administrative terms these are now incorporated as South Africa's 23 priority development districts or 'distressed areas' which are shown on ure 2. The 23 priority districts encompass the majority of land which was in the former Homelands. In developmental terms many (if not the majority) of these 23 districts are economically reliant on a combination of migrant remittances and government social grants which have been introduced since 1994. These areas are the most poverty-stricken, underdeveloped and marginal zones of the country (Neves, du Toit, 2013). Overall the 23 priority districts include more than 20 percent of the country's population and many districts are zones of outmigration with circular migrants continuing to flow to the country's largest urban areas in search of work opportunities (CSIR, 2013). They are characterised by massive infrastructure backlogs in respect of access to basic services such as water, sanitation and housing

(CSIR, 2013). National government is committed to creating sustainable work opportunities in these rural districts. Alongside job opportunities related to promoting small-scale agriculture and the provision/maintenance of basic services, the potential of tourism is under investigation (CSIR, 2013).
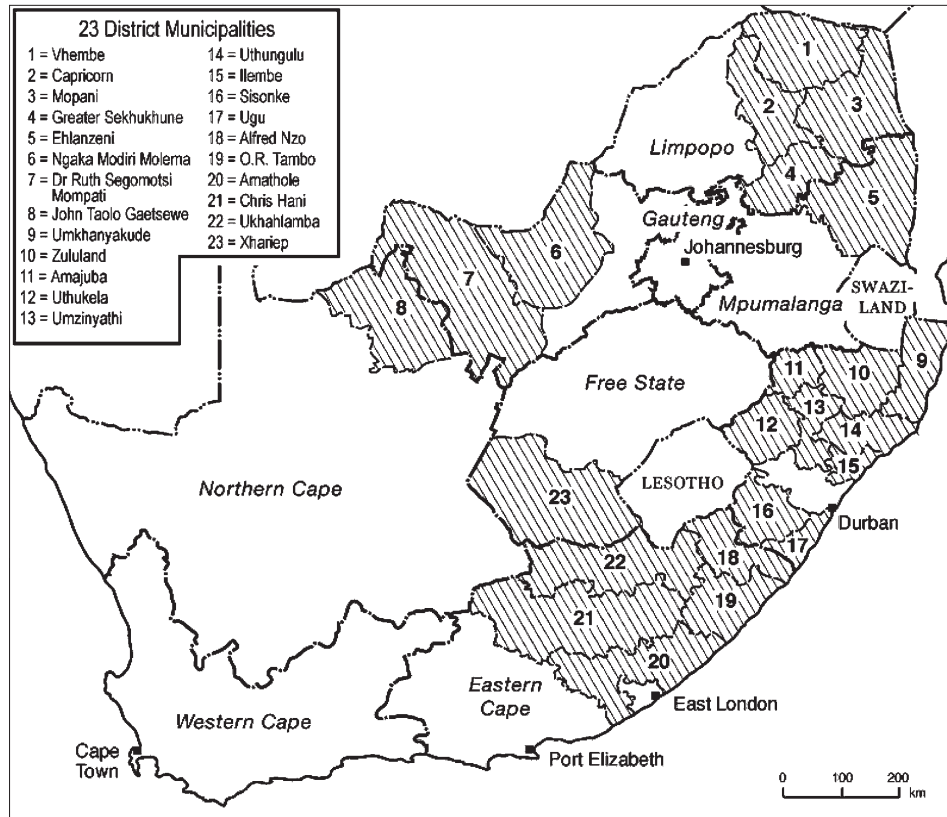

Fig. 2. The 23 Priority District Municipalities
Source: Author

Since South Africa's reintegration into the international tourism economy during the early 1990s and the expansion in the country's tourism industry, the tourism sector has become an important driver for local economic development in many parts of the country (Rogerson, 2002, 2013). Increasingly, tourism is viewed now also as a tool for addressing the challenge of uneven patterns of development of the South African space economy. The country's tourism space economy exhibits major geographical inequality with the benefits of tourism-led development captured mainly by a small number of urban centres (Visser, Hoogendoorn, 2012). In addressing this spatial imbalance the national Department of Tourism launched a series of policy initiatives "in order to ensure the geographic spread of tourism to rural areas and the involvement of rural communities" (Department of Tourism, 2012a: 6).

The 23 priority districts are targeted areas for government initiatives to spur rural tourism.

3. Tourism in the rural slumlands

Tourism development in the rural slumlands has a chequered history which involves at various times a number of measures which have been enacted to attract both white and black South Africans as tourists. Two sub-sections of material are presented. The first discusses briefly the development of slumland tourism to the Homelands during the apartheid period. The second focuses on the post-apartheid years and unpacks in greater detail the contemporary patterns of tourism for the 23 priority districts.,

3.1. Slumland tourism under apartheid

During the apartheid years Ferrario (1988) shows there emerged only a small group of mainly urban Black dwellers with interests in holiday travel. Nevertheless, because of racial segregation policies limited options were available for Black South Africans to experience leisure at a resort (Teversham 2013). Indeed, before 1962 there were no destinations for the more affluent groups of Black teachers or businesspeople, potential consumers of holidays or desiring to stay the night in paid accommodation in South Africa.

During the 1960s, however, the apartheid state turned its mind to the provision of dedicated recreational spaces for the country's Black population (Ferrario, 1988; Teversham, 2013). In 1967 the Manyeleti Game Reserve was opened to serve as a dedicated holiday resort for the emergent African middle class. Teversham (2013) avers it potentially also fulfilled a political function as rural holiday resorts might draw urban Africans back to the countryside and reconnect them with the rural landscape and thereby entice them to relocate back to their former homeland. This said, the Manyeleti resort, which became incorporated as part of the Gazankulu Homeland, was never a successful holiday destination not least because it was expensive and difficult to access (Teversham, 2013). For the small African middle class a much more popular leisure destination during the apartheid years was the beach resort which opened in 1970 at Umgababa 36 kilometres south of Durban. This resort offered a second holiday option which was available to African leisure seekers (Ferrario, 1988). Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the Umgababa holiday resort, favourably located near a railway station, functioned successfully to attract large streams of mainly urban visitors to the Zululand coast until the resort was badly impacted by a fire which destroyed many facilities in the 1980s (Teversham, 2013). A third leisure option was Boitaboloso, also known as Ramosa Riekert resort, which was developed at Zeerust close to the Botswana border and offered chalet accommodation as well as a youth centre (Ferrario, 1988). Beyond these state-sponsored resorts "about two dozen municipal or private facilities, often no more than open beaches or sim-

ple picnic grounds, were available to the Black public" for recreational purposes (Ferrario, 1988: 36).

Another different phase of slumland tourism was launched during the late 1970s when government initiatives began to apply tourism as a lever for local and regional development by seeking to attract white domestic visitors into the Homeland areas. In terms of South Africa's anti-gambling legislation, apartheid racist laws and Calvinistic puritanism ideal opportunities were created for the growth of casinos in the surrounding countries of Southern Africa. At the heart of tourism growth was the establishment of casino gambling which was the 'forbidden fruit' in apartheid South Africa. Such opportunities were grasped in particular by casino developments and entertainment complexes which were built in Lesotho and Swaziland in the 1960s (Crush, Wellings, 1983). With the concession of nominal 'independence' to Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda opportunities existed for South African tourism capital to establish casino-gaming resorts in these areas (Rogerson, 1990). In essence, the slumlords, the leaders of the nominally independent Homelands, were to be rewarded with casino developments in exchange for their agreement to sham 'independence'. This growth of casino tourism resorts offered legitimacy to the 'independence' of these areas as well as partially weaning these chronically impoverished regions off revenue dependency upon South Africa. In addition, they served also as a social 'safety valve' by according white South Africans access to leisure opportunities, including multiracial sex, soft pornography and gambling which were denied in the areas ostensibly defined as White space.

This changing policy environment precipitated a boom of hotel casino resort development in the four independent Homelands where by 1992 a total of 17 gaming/leisure resorts were established, the most lavish being the Sun City and Lost City mega-resorts (Rogerson, 2003). Further reinforcing the attractiveness of the Bophuthatswana resort of Sun City for both domestic and (potential) international visitors was the opening of a game reserve at the Pilanesberg National Park. Carruthers (2011: 3) observed that "it was expected that a game reserve adjacent to the hotel [Sun City] would provide an added attraction for tourists from Johannesburg and Pretoria". Overall, these casino resorts

and entertainment complexes, built by South African tourism capital, caused a wave of new tourism flows from the national core regions – mainly domestic travellers – to the peripheral Homelands areas (Rogerson, 1990). The most successful resorts were those situated close to and accessible to consumers in major metropolitan areas. In particular, Sun City in Bophuthatswana and the Wild Coast Sun in Transkei were the leading magnets for white pleasure seekers to enter these ostensibly Black areas (Rogerson, 1990). However, the monopoly of these peripheral regions for casino gambling was short-lived as with political transition there occurred the re-incorporation of these 'independent' areas back into South Africa. New national gaming legislation was enacted which allowed gambling at licensed casinos throughout South Africa, most importantly at an array of new casino developments constructed in the country's major cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban (Rogerson, 2003). Accordingly, the tourism asset base and attractiveness of the former Bantustan areas was eroded for (white) domestic pleasure travellers from the country's core regions as well as from the new flows of international arrivals coming into South Africa from the 1990s.

3.2. Contemporary tourism – policy and patterns

Rural tourism products around wildlife tourism are one of the traditional tourism attractions in South Africa for both international and domestic tourists (Briedenhann, Wickens, 2004). In addition, other popular rural attractions include visits to wine farms. Geographically, the focus and impacts of rural tourism have not extended into the poverty regions of the Homelands. Indeed, from 1994 until the late 2000s South African government tourism policy initiatives largely overlooked the extended promotion of rural tourism into the Homelands. Essentially national policy centred upon using tourism as a driver for foreign exchange earnings, job creation and economic growth (Rogerson, Visser, 2004). The hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup was a further strong policy distraction for national tourism stakeholders and decision-makers. Accordingly, whilst national government often expressed con-

cern about the problem of the uneven 'geographic spread' of the benefits of tourism development across the country limited policy intervention occurred for rural tourism, mainly around energising community-based tourism products, infrastructural improvements in the Wild Coast and the launch of tourism routes which included product offerings such as hiking and horse riding trails (Ndlovu, Rogerson, 2003; Rogerson, Visser, 2004; Ndabeni, Rogerson, 2005).

Rural tourism promotion began to attract national attention in particular with growing acknowledgement of South Africa's culture and heritage resources as a base for expanding tourism development in rural areas. The National Tourism Sector Strategy, launched in 2011, and the Domestic Tourism Strategy, launched in 2012, both stress the need for product diversification and the promotion of niche forms of tourism to galvanize the expansion of the South African tourism economy as a whole and especially in rural areas (Department of Tourism, 2011, 2012b). Further policy initiatives were brought forth in 2012 including the National Heritage and Cultural Strategy and Rural Tourism Strategy which were aimed explicitly to counter geographical imbalance in the tourism space economy as well as to assist the spread of tourism into rural areas especially the former Homeland areas (Department of Tourism, 2012c, 2012d). Among the most significant project initiatives has been the initial development of the Liberation Heritage Route which aims "to preserve the legacy of South Africa's long walk to freedom" (Bialostocka, 2013: 1). One dimension of this ambitious undertaking, which is part of a planned transnational programme of heritage development, is as a foundation for local economic development and tourism growth in rural areas (Snowball, Courtney, 2010; Bialostocka, 2013).

Nzama (2008) shows that in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal with close proximity to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park a number of initiatives have been launched to valorise local cultural and heritage attractions including the introduction of homestays offered to tourists wishing to spend more time with the local community. Although positive attitudes towards development of rural tourism have been disclosed, severe challenges also were revealed for the expansion of leisure tourism (Magi, Nzama, 2009). In particular, Nzama (2010) draws attention

to capacity issues and the fact that local community members have little knowledge of the tourism potential of the resources in their area and lack knowledge about how to package existing resources into tourism products. Other critical constraints relate to local communities being unaware of policies and strategies that exist to support their broadened participation in tourism and the capacity weakness of most local authorities for supporting rural tourism development (Nzama, 2008; Rogerson, 2013). Indeed, in efforts to grow the heritage potential of South Africa's rural areas Bialostocka (2013: 3) identifies "the general apathy, lack of leadership and understanding of tourism on the part of local government". This reinforces the contention of Briedenhann and Wickens (2004: 189) concerning "the lack

of capacity at local government level to assume its responsibilities in the rural tourism sector".

The contemporary state and patterns of tourism in the 23 priority districts can be explored through using the local level data base constructed by Global Insight which provides details for the period 2001 to 2012 of the tourism performance of all local authorities in the country in respect of *inter alia*, the number of tourism trips as differentiated by purpose of trip; number of trips and bednights by origin of tourist (domestic or international); and estimated tourism spend. This data base builds upon a range of sources including official tourism data and other local sources in order to generate estimates of trips, bednights and visitor spend for all local government areas in South Africa.

Table 1. Priority Districts: Growth of Tourism 2001-2012

	A	B	C	D	E	F
2001	7,585,502	32.8	47,724,248	30.3	10,575,898	16.5
2012	11,707,606	33.9	66,363,634	30.6	33,024,060	20.0

Explanation: A – total tourism trips; B – % national total, C – total bednights; D – % national total; E – estimated total tourism spend R'000s; F – % national total

Source: Author calculations from Global Insight data

Table 1 offers a picture of the growth of tourism in the 23 priority districts as a whole. Several important trends can be observed. Table 1 shows that between 2001 and 2012 there has been a net growth in absolute indicators for numbers of tourism trips, bednights and estimated visitor spend. The net expansion of trips and bednights was respectively 4.1 million trips and 18.7 million bednights or 53.9 percent and 39.2 percent growth. Over the period 2001-2012 a small shift occurs in the share of the priority districts of the national totals with expansion recorded in both indicators. By 2012 the pri-

ority districts account for an estimated 34 percent of trips but only 31 percent of bednights. Of critical note, however, is that the share of total tourism spend which is captured by the priority districts is much lower than the respective share of trips or bednights. This provides an important signal of the low value of the tourism trips taken to destinations in priority districts. On a positive note it is revealed that between 2001 and 2012 the share of tourism spend accounted for by the 23 priority districts doubles in absolute terms in this period and the relative share increases from 16.5 to 20.0 percent.

Table 2. Priority Districts: Growth of Tourism by Source, 2001-2012

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2001	6,916,108	35.8	672379	17.7	42173926	34.6	5594987	15.6
2012	9808115	37.9	1903088	22.0	55471077	38.4	11103885	15.4

Explanation: A – no of domestic trips; B – % national total; C – no. of international trips; D – % national total, E – total domestic bednights;

F – % national share; G – total international bednights; H – % national share

Source: Author calculations from Global Insight data

Table 2 breaks down the data of numbers of trips and bednights in terms of source of visitor, whether domestic or international. The category 'international' includes both the lucrative market of longhaul travellers to South Africa, mainly leisure tourists from Europe and the USA, as well as the market of regional African tourists, the largest share of which are involved in cross-border shopping/trading and business tourism rather than leisure tourism (Rogerson, Visser, 2006). It is shown on Table 2 that as indexed both by trips and bednights that the relative importance of the priority districts for international tourists as opposed to domestic tourists is decreasing in significance. These figures should also be read in relation to national data for domestic and international trips and bed-

nights which show that in 2012 domestic tourists account for 75 percent of trips and two-thirds of bednights whereas international travellers represent 25 percent of trips and one-third of bednights. It is shown therefore that priority districts as destinations are relatively more important for domestic travellers and under-represented in terms of their share of total trips/bednights for the category of international tourists. As a whole, the patterns of tourism to South Africa's rural slumlands are massively shaped by domestic visitors. Correspondingly, the underdevelopment of international tourism is observed in these areas notwithstanding the fact that many of the districts incorporate or neighbour major protected nature areas such as Kruger National Park and the iSimangaliso Wetlands Park.

Table 3. Priority Districts: Growth of Tourism Trips by Purpose, 2001–2012

	A	B	C	D	E	F	Other	%
2001	844,820	16.3	410,195	16.4	5,234,499	39.5	1,099,022	50.2
2012	1,413,959	20.8	668,082	16.3	20,996,551	40.0	1,221,574	46.2

Explanation: A – leisure; B – %; C – business; D – %; E – VFR; F – %;

Source: Author calculations from Global Insight data

Table 3 is particularly important for understanding the nature of tourism to destinations in priority districts. It shows the numbers of trips in terms of different purpose of travel with four categories of tourism, namely leisure, business, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and other, which is mainly constituted by religious travel and travel for health purposes. It reveals that in terms of absolute numbers of trips the largest proportion of tourism to priority districts is represented by VFR travel which is the largest component of domestic tourism in South Africa (Rogerson, Lisa, 2005). Beyond VFR travel, the next most significant purpose of travel in 2001 is the category other followed by leisure with business travel least significant. Disaggregating trips by purpose underlines the fact that 80 percent of trips to destinations across priority districts is accounted for collectively by the categories of VFR travel or other travel. By 2012 VFR remains overwhelmingly the most significant constituent of tourism in the priority districts. Between 2001 and 2012 the absolute growth of VFR trips was 15.7 million trips in total. In absolute numbers by 2012 it is significant

that the category other has been overtaken by leisure with business once again the least significant element of the tourism economy. Nevertheless, in looking at the relative contribution of the priority districts to the total national tourism economy it is observed that their greatest significance is for the categories of other and VFR travel followed by leisure and business. It is observed also that in relative terms between 2001 and 2012 the priority districts as a whole have expanded their significance as VFR and leisure destinations but have a reduced share in the categories of other and business travel (Table 3).

In accounting for these trends and patterns of tourism development in the priority districts as a whole several explanations can be offered. The dominance of domestic VFR travel relates to two historical phenomena. First, the limited options that were available until the 1960s for the emerging urban Black middle class consumer to undertake leisure trips meant that holiday periods tended to be spent visiting family and friends (Ferrario, 1988; Teversham, 2013). Second, and more importantly, the weight of domestic travel is accounted for

by the historical making and role of the Bantustans in South Africa's political economy and the continuation of oscillatory migrant flows in the post-apartheid period. The growth of VFR travel to Homelands represents the other side of the coin in terms of the establishment of South Africa's cheap labour economy based on migratory labour. With the transition to democracy many observers assumed circular migration between urban and rural areas would decline as people could settle permanently close to their urban places of work. This has not occurred, however, and circular migration persists on a widespread basis albeit in a different form as rural households restructure their way of organising migration (Clark et al., 2007; Steinbrink, 2010; Todes et al., 2010).

As pointed out by Lohnert and Steinbrink (2005) and Steinbrink (2009, 2010) the continuation of major flows of VFR travel to the former rural Homelands is the outcome of decision-making by 'translocal' households who seek to organise their livelihoods across considerable distances and bridge rural and urban areas. Indeed, the largest share of tourism in the rural slumlands is VFR travel which is undertaken by poor migrants moving between urban and rural

homes for purposes of household survival and reproduction rather than for recreational purposes (Hoogendoorn, 2011). In terms of international scholarship on slum tourism it is critical to observe the origin of these VFR tourists. It is evident that the mass of VFR tourists to the rural slumlands are residents of many of the same urban townships that international 'slum tourists' seek to visit in South Africa. A similar observation must be made of the significant flows to priority districts which are represented by the category other which is mainly accounted for by religious tourists. The rural former Homeland areas are major pilgrimage sites of a number of large African independent churches. The most important are Moria village (Limpopo), site of the Zion Christian Church and a number of sacred places in rural Kwa-Zulu-Natal of the Nazareth Baptist Church. At various periods of the year these (and other pilgrimage) sites attract large gatherings of church followers with the most important, Zion City, drawing an estimated one and a half million church members for several days during the Easter pilgrimage. The recent study by Saayman et al. (2013) confirms that a significant proportion of pilgrims to rural areas are actual residents of urban townships.

Table 4. Selected Priority Districts: Share of Trips and Bednights by Origin of Tourist

	A		**B**		**C**		**D**	
	2001	2012	2001	2012	2001	2012	2001	2012
ALL	91.2	83.8	8.8	16.2	88.4	83.6	11.6	16.4
Amatole	95.9	94.7	4.1	5.3	94.9	89.8	5.1	10.2
O.R. Tambo	95.5	93.0	4.5	7.0	94.3	86.5	5.7	13.5
Alfred Nzo	97.1	95.4	2.9	4.6	96.7	90.7	3.3	9.3
Uthukela	90.0	87.0	10.0	13.0	84.0	80.0	16.0	20.0
Uthungulu	92.3	89.8	7.7	10.2	88.4	84.8	11.6	15.2
Zululand	92.9	93.3	7.1	6.7	89.1	89.3	10.9	10.7
Sisonke	89.6	95.8	10.5	4.1	84.0	93.6	16.0	6.4
Ehlanzeni	70.8	61.1	29.3	38.9	71.6	67.1	28.3	32.9
Capricorn	95.5	79.2	4.5	20.9	92.1	81.6	7.9	18.4

Explanation: A – domestic trips; B – international trips; C – domestic bednights; D – international bednights

Source: Author calculations from Global Insight data

Table 5. Selected Priority Districts: Share of Trips by Purpose

	A		B		C		D	
	2001	2012	2001	2012	2001	2012	2001	2012
ALL	11.1	12.1	5.4	5.7	69.0	71.8	14.5	10.4
Amatole	7.1	6.1	3.7	3.6	84.7	86.9	4.5	3.4
O.R. Tambo	6.6	5.9	3.9	4.9	80.1	79.5	9.5	9.7
Alfred Nzo	1.9	1.6	1.9	2.0	86.7	87.5	9.6	8.9
Uthukela	13.3	11.4	6.6	4.6	71.2	77.1	9.0	6.9
Uthungulu	9.8	11.5	5.0	5.4	83.7	81.7	1.5	1.4
Zululand	7.5	5.9	3.5	2.9	77.9	81.0	11.1	10.2
Sisonke	13.6	4.7	5.7	2.4	78.9	92.2	1.7	0.8
Ehlanzeni	28.8	29.6	12.3	9.8	50.1	55.1	8.9	5.6
Capricorn	7.0	8.4	3.6	7.4	41.9	49.2	47.4	35.1

Explanation: A – leisure; B – Business; C – VFR; D – Other

Source: Author calculations from Global Insight data

In examining the contemporary nature of tourism in the former rural Homelands and now priority districts it must be acknowledged that the 23 priority districts are not homogeneous in respect of their tourism profile. This can be illustrated by constructing profiles for nine selected districts, namely Alfred Nzo, Amatole, Capricorn, Ehlanzeni, OR Tambo, Sisonke, Uthukela, Uthungulu, and Zululand which were chosen because of their different tourism assets (or lack thereof). The location of these districts is presented on Figure 2. Table 4 indicates the share of domestic versus international trips and bednights for all priority districts and the selected nine districts. Table 5 records for each of the nine districts the share of the four different purposes of travel (leisure, business, VFR, other) which can be looked at in relation to the proportion for the 23 priority districts as whole.

Tables 4 and 5 indicate certain variations in the character of tourism across the rural districts of the former Homelands. In terms of the source of tourists nearly all districts record 90 percent or more of visitors as domestic trips. The exceptional case is that of Ehlanzeni which includes the nature tourism attractions of Kruger National Park and its surrounds. Table 4 shows that the Ehlanzeni district records a significantly higher proportion of international trips and bednights than other districts. Differences are again evidenced between districts in terms of their profile of purpose of travel (Ta-

ble 5). It is observed that Capricorn district is distinguished by the dominance of other travel as it contains the pilgrimage site of Zion City. For leisure travel Ehlanzeni once again is an exceptional case because of its nature tourism attractions. Further, as the district contains the provincial capital, Nelspruit, it enjoys also a much stronger element of business tourism than is recorded across the priority districts as a whole. Finally, in deep rural former Homeland areas such as Alfred Nzo, Amatole, O.R. Tambo, Sisonke, Uthukela, Uthungulu or Zululand the extraordinary dominance of VFR travel in these local areas is in evidence. Indeed, in the most extreme case, Sisonke, in 2012 VFR travel accounted for as much as 92 percent of total trips for this rural destination.

4. Conclusion

This article seeks to bring fresh insight to a neglected aspect of South Africa's tourism geography, namely the trajectory and contemporary character of tourism development which is occurring in the country's former rural Homeland areas now incorporated as the major part of the 23 priority districts. These mainly rural areas of highest poverty in South Africa are presently the focus of much government attention for tourism promotion in order to sup-

port the goals of economic upgrading and employment creation (Department of Tourism, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). The key findings of this analysis are that the expanding tourism economy of these rural slumlands is dominated by domestic tourists rather than international visitors with most tourists engaged in VFR travel involving trips to rural second homes. In addition to VFR tourism the rural slumlands contain important sites for religious pilgrimages as well as, in certain areas, important tourism assets for wildlife tourism.

In relation to international scholarship on slum tourism the paper offers the important observation that the largest share of tourists to the rural slumlands are originating in the country's urban township areas. Accordingly, the mass of tourists to South Africa's rural slumlands are thus drawn from many of the same urban communities, such as Soweto, Khayelitsha or Atteridgeville, which are the attractions for international slum tourists. The destinations for visits by international slum tourists are therefore the essential source regions of tourists who visit the rural poverty areas or slumlands of South Africa. In final analysis this finding points to the imperative for a broadening of the research agenda of slum tourism scholarship to include research which examines the tourism mobilities of ordinary residents of townships or favelas.

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