Revista Română de Geografie Politică Year **XXV**, no. 1, **2023**, pp. **1-16**
ISSN 1582-7763, E-ISSN 2065-1619 DOI 10.30892/rrgp.251101-361

THE BANTUSTANS OF APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: TRANSITIONING FROM INDUSTRY TO TOURISM

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Citation: Rogerson, M.C., & Rogerson, J.M. (2023). The Bantustans of Apartheid South Africa: Transitioning from Industry to Tourism. *Revista Română de Geografie Politică*, 25(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.30892/rrgp.251101-361

Abstract: The Bantustans were created during the apartheid period of South Africa's history and represented one of the key pillars of planning for 'grand apartheid'. A major challenge was the promotion of economic development in these territories in order to give them a facade of economic legitimacy. Four of the ten Bantustan ethno-states eventually acceded to the grant of 'independence' which created a changed environment for territorial economic development. The article explores a transition in economic development planning by the apartheid state from Bantustan industrialization to a focus on tourism and casino resort developments as a potential driver of Bantustan economic progress. In terms of methods and sources the paper applies an historical approach that blends secondary sources with primary documentary material.

Key words: apartheid, South Africa, Bantustans, industrial decentralization, casino tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Research in political geography has been a limited topic of geographical scholarship in South Africa over the past three decades (McCarthy and Wellings, 1989; Christopher, 1994; Lemon, 2000; Christopher, 2002; Knight and Rogerson, 2019). One of the most notable foci for geographical researchers has surrounded the territories of the Bantustans (Lemon, 1991; Ramutsindela, 2001, 2007). The apartheid state in South Africa applied the term 'Homeland' or 'Bantustan' to refer to the mainly rural territories which were designated and

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reserved for Black Africans in terms of the government's policy of racial segregation (Lemon, 1976, 1987; Nyambi and Makombe, 2019). For Jones (1997, p. 31) during the period 1959-1991 "the bantustans were the central pillars of the apartheid edifice, designed to preserve white minority rule in South Africa". According to King and McCusker (2007) the utilization of space by the (white) apartheid state to segregate and control the African population is deeply rooted in South African history. Indeed, the origins of the Bantustans must be situated in the 19th century history of the "native reserves" of the Union of South Africa and of African land dispossession that occurred in South Africa's colonial years (Phillips, 2017; van der Merwe, 2017).

The territory of the Bantustans represented an elaboration of the scattered pockets of land – the native reserves – set aside for Black Africans by the racial partition of land in South Africa which occurred in 1913 and 1936 allocating to them (the majority of the population) only 13 % of the total land area whilst whites had the remainder (Ally and Lissoni, 2012, 2017; Lissoni and Ally, 2018). The making of the bantustans was underpinned by a racist ideology and represented a central plank of the geography of separation which was moulded during the apartheid period (Lemon, 1976; Southall, 1983; Lemon, 1987). It has been described as a "massive project in social engineering" (Beinart, 2012, p. 5). The Bantustans were institutionalised through the demarcation of territorial borders/boundaries to define these apartheid-created ethno-states (Ally and Lissoni, 2017). Arguably, from 1959 these impoverished and fragmented areas were recast as 'less developed countries' under the umbrella of Bantustans (Jones, 1997). According to Beinart (2012, p. 5) homeland or Bantustan policy "shaped the history of South Africa for about 40 years during the apartheid era". Through the repressive Bantustan system, the apartheid state could maintain African labour power as cheap labour for the benefit of white South Africa (Wolpe, 1972). Ally (2015, p. 969) views the leadership of the Bantustans as 'puppet regimes' ruling through the despotism of tradition. Not surprisingly, therefore, certain scholars see these areas as symbols of 'domestic colonialism' in South Africa (Nyambi and Makombe, 2019). The sham 'independence' awarded by the apartheid state to four of the ten Bantustans – Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979) and Ciskei (1981) - was rejected universally by the international community in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Southall, 1983; Aerni-Flessner and Twala, 2021).

In terms of the existing geography literature on the apartheid Bantustans major interest has pivoted around land-related issues, reincorporation, border spaces and of the symbolic significance of these spaces (Drummond, 1991a, 1991b; Drummond and Manson, 1991; Jones, 1997; Rumutsindela, 2001; Ramutsindela and Donaldson, 2001; Ramutsindela, 2013). The focus in this discussion turns to the challenges faced by the apartheid state in giving these ethno-states a sense of legitimacy through promoting economic development opportunities in these peripheral underdeveloped spaces. For the ten Bantustans as a whole much government attention initially concentrated on the possibilities for industrial development based on the cheap labour in these areas. With disappointments attached to the government-supported programme for industrial decentralization the opportunities for tourism and most particularly of casino tourism in the four nominally 'independent' Bantustans became a focus of policy attention. The article explores this transition in economic development planning by the apartheid state from Bantustan industrialization to tourism and casino resort developments as a potential driver of Bantustan economic progress. A chronicle of the transitioning in the Bantustans from industry to tourism has not been presented in extant tourism geographical writings (Rogerson and Visser, 2020). In terms of methods and sources the paper uses an historical approach that blends secondary sources with primary documentary material.

PLANNING FOR BANTUSTAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Prior to 1948 the economic base of the reserves was almost exclusively anchored on agriculture. By the 1970s, however, the agricultural economy largely had collapsed leaving large segments of Bantustan populations impoverished and looking for survival to income from migrant remittances linked to cheap labour on the mines and secondary industry (Phillips, 2017). In terms of addressing issues of economic development, the establishment of the 1951 Bantu Self-Government Act was coupled with the launch of the Tomlinson Commission, which was assembled in 1949 and reported its findings in 1955 (Union of South Africa, 1955). According to Hobart Houghton (1957, p. 14) the commission had been charged with “devising a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based upon effective socio-economic planning”.

The Tomlinson Report highlighted the desperate economic conditions of the reserves and set out a ‘comprehensive scheme’ for the development of these areas (Union of South Africa, 1955). These rural areas were shown to be in a state of economic collapse with the consequence that migration was rapidly growing to the country’s major cities. The policy findings were submitted to government in 1954. The leading problem in the reserves was identified as the paucity of non-agricultural wage opportunities. According to the analysis given in the report it was calculated 50 000 employment opportunities would need to be generated annually for the following 25 years to support economically the labour in these areas. The report’s core recommendations related to the need for developing industry and factory employment in these areas as a means for “the productive utilization of labour” (Union of South Africa, 1955, p. 131). The growth of a manufacturing base was therefore promoted for catalysing necessary job creation. It was stated that “industrial development will, therefore, occupy a central position in the general programme of development for the Bantu areas” (Union of South Africa, 1955, p. 131). The report of the Tomlinson Commission is widely considered as providing the geographical blueprint for apartheid planning (Hobart Houghton, 1957; Glaser 1987). By encouraging industrial growth in the reserves, it was hoped to stabilise the populations in these areas and correspondingly curb outmigration to the cities (Union of South Africa, 1955). The Report made a case for the provision of investment incentives in order to support industrial development as part of economic revival in these marginal areas of the space economy.

Although the national government accepted the general arguments of the Tomlinson Commission for supporting the development of the Reserve areas, it rejected the crucial recommendation that incentives be offered to ‘White’ industrial investors to invest inside what was considered a ‘Black area’ (Rogerson, 1988). In 1956 a government White Paper was issued and recommended that to maintain racial purity investment incentives be offered only at a series of localities which were adjacent to or bordering the Native Reserves. This policy position led to the development of the programme of what was known as 'border area' industrialization which was state supported from 1957-58. Over the ensuing decade, however, the programme of border area industrialization recorded only minimal progress. Accordingly, during the late 1960s when it was apparent that the declared border areas were not attracting large numbers of manufacturing investors another government commission was appointed to review the state of industrial decentralization.

THE PUSH FOR BANTUSTAN INDUSTRIALIZATION

During 1968 important changes were introduced to the planning of industrial decentralization after the 1967 report of the Riekert Commission. The objective of national government in making changes was to accelerate the pace of industrial development away from the country's major cities, and especially from the country's inland economic heartland around Pretoria and Johannesburg (Rogerson, 1982).

In a major policy reversal industrial investor could now qualify for incentives at a broad geographical range of new 'growth points' which were declared inside the former "native Reserves' (now re-titled as the 'Bantu Homelands'). The net effect was that the number of places where incentives were available expanded markedly. Investment incentives now were possible for investors at several growth points within the Bantustans (Rogerson, 1974). Among the most significant were centres such as Dimbaza (Ciskei), Isithebe (KwaZulu), Babelegi (Bophuthatswana), Umtata and Butterworth (Transkei), or Lebowakgomo (Lebowa). Seeking to provide a facade of economic legitimacy to these rural areas from the late 1950s and through to the early 1980s government therefore focused initiatives upon these areas as a central element of regional industrial development programming (Hirsch, 1984, 1987). During 1968 government launched what was popularly styled as 'a carrot and stick' policy in order to further the objectives of apartheid planning (Rogerson, 1982). In terms of the 'carrots', the packages of financial incentives available to investors were increased. The stick involved the introduction of a set of controls on industrial development taking place in certain parts of the country. Under the Physical Planning Act of 1967 (subsequently renamed the Environment Planning Act) coercive controls were applied to new industrial development occurring in certain 'proscribed regions', most notably the country's major metropolitan areas (Rogerson, 1982). Two key controls were introduced on industrial development in the affected areas which limited the zoning of new industrial land and sought to choke off the employment of additional African (Black) labour in factories most particularly in the industrial heartland around Johannesburg. By imposing a freeze on the numbers of workers that companies could hire, government sought to deflect labour-intensive industries away from these urban areas and to encourage them to relocate to the designated and preferred 'growth centres', including those for Bantustan industrialization (Rogerson, 1988).

This carrot and stick policy introduced in 1968 was the driver and basis for industrial decentralization planning for the next decade. Nevertheless, between 1968 and 1979 a number of other developments took place which affected the course of regional development planning and policy in South Africa. First, the slow pace of industrial growth at the majority of decentralized growth points encouraged government to further boost the value of incentives (Hirsch, 1987). The package of incentives included low interest loans for land/factory buildings, provision of leased buildings, income tax concessions, assistance with relocation costs of factories and key workers, railage rebates, rebates on harbour dues and price preference purchases by certain state or parastatal authorities (Hirsch, 1987). Second, during the 1970s a major marketing campaign was launched to attract international investors into South African manufacturing and encourage such foreign investors to take advantage of the multiple incentives on offer at Bantustan locations (Rogerson, 1987). The 'attractiveness' of the Homelands was further enhanced by new labour legislation which made trade union organization difficult and relaxed existing labour legislation affecting workers in these areas (Rogerson, 1991).

Some political analysts, such as Venter (1979), applauded the ongoing progress of factory openings and of industrial development in Bantustans such as Transkei. Nevertheless, it was evident by the late 1970s that the initiatives towards regional development and especially for industrial development were not attaining the desired objectives of apartheid planners including bolstering political structures in the Bantustans (Dewar et al., 1986; Addleson and Tomlinson, 1986). In particular, the numbers of jobs created in manufacturing within decentralized spaces was massively short of the targets which the Tomlinson Commission had set in its master planning for 'grand apartheid'. The total numbers of industrial jobs created through 25 years of incentive policies could not match even the numbers of new labour entrants annually coming onto the labour market in the Bantustans (Rogerson, 1988). In these circumstances of 'failed incentives and pressures for greater legitimacy of Homeland economies, the stage was set at the end of the 1970s for another overhaul of regional policy and of the industrial decentralization scheme (Tomlinson and Hyslop, 1987). A new regional development programme was introduced that included a massive boost to available industrial incentives and becoming perhaps the world's most generous set of industrial incentives at the time. In terms of this latest iteration of a strategy for regional industrial development strategy many observers view it as marking a retreat from the planning of 'grand apartheid' and of the establishment of 'separate' Black and White territorial units (Cobbett et al., 1985; Glaser, 1987).

What was proposed was a set of new planning or 'development regions' for South Africa a patch of economic regions which significantly crossed the divide between so-called 'White South Africa' (or 'common area') and the 'Black Homelands'. Indeed, Cobbett et al. (1985, 1987) argued that the revised 1982 regional programme was intended by state planners to provide the base for the future political and economic map of South Africa. Within this new framework for development planning, national government sought vigorously to further its long-established goals of promoting industrial decentralization and deflect manufacturers away from the existing metropolitan areas towards a set of designated 'growth poles' in peripheral regions of the country including (but not exclusively) the Bantustans (Hirsch, 1984; Dewar et al., 1986; Tomlinson and Addleson, 1987; Wellings and Black, 1987; Addleson, 1990; Platzky, 1995). The number of localities which were designated for support increased greatly, a move that would be one factor in the long-term 'failure' of the programme. Essentially, South Africa was instituting its own apartheid-warped variation of the strategy of 'growth centre' planning (Wellings and Black, 1986b; Rogerson, 1988; Platzky, 1995).

Consensus among international regional planning scholars was that, given the complexities of growth centre planning, it was prudent to concentrate government funding upon only a small number (two to four at most) of localities. From 1982 South Africa began planning for the sustainability of at least 60 localities as growth centres. Importantly, the majority of these 60 potential growth centres were not chosen on economic grounds but their selection was influenced by political considerations (Dewar, 1987). The inevitable consequence was that whatever funding was made available for regional development funding would be spread thinly such that its impact would be insufficient for any one of the selected growth centres (even those with economic potential) to reach a desired state of cumulative or 'self-sustaining' growth. Dewar (1987, p. 164) pinpoints that internationally it was generally recognized that in order to initiate the development of a growth centre "the provision of some form of economic incentive is necessary". The rationale for incentives is "to overcome the initial disadvantages of a new location which exist prior to the build-up of urban agglomeration economies". The international consensus was that incentives should be specifically tailored to attract the leading investors or 'growth pole' industry. In addition, the incentives would be temporary and "removed as soon as growth processes have been initiated" (Dewar, 1987, p. 164). Nevertheless, the South African practice diverged from international 'good practice' in several respects and these departures had important consequences for the track record of the policy as a whole (Wellings and Black, 1986a).

First, incentives were not designed for the specific requirement of particular industries (Dewar, 1987). Rather, they were applied in a generic or blanket fashion to all types of manufacturing and to all aspects of the production process. The international experience shows that a non-discriminatory incentive system will attract mainly industries that are either 'lame ducks' or branch plants (Dewar, 1987). The lame ducks represent industries that have been attracted only based on the incentives on offer. A problem with externally controlled branch plants is often they have a limited catalytic impact on welfare in the recipient location as a result of the fact that most production is in the form of 'routinised processes' which require, at best, low skill (and low paid) workers. In addition, a further problem with branch plants is that during times of economic downturn, these are often the first plants to be closed or to have their production downsized. All these problems were reflected in the experience of the decentralized areas of South Africa which received generous incentives and not least in the Bantustans (Wellings and Black, 1986a; Hirsch, 1987; Wellings and Black, 1987). For example, at Butterworth, most of the industries attracted to this Transkei Bantustan industrial growth point had headquarter offices outside the region with less than one-third being 'independent' enterprises. The linkages of these plants to the rest of the locality were limited such that overall multiplier effects were minimal (Dewar, 1987). A second departure from international good practice with incentive programmes was that in South Africa many of the companies that were pulled to decentralized growth points were, in many respects, dependent upon them.

Using the example of Butterworth Dewar (1987) demonstrated that nearly two-thirds of firms ranked the availability of concessions as the most important reason for selecting Butterworth for their plant location. This finding is indicative of the 'lame duck' syndrome of investors who were mobile, to the extent that their location choice was based only on incentive availability. Once again, this points to problems in the design of the incentives which were non-discriminatory and simply sought to attract any type of industrial investor irrespective of appropriateness or their short- or long-term multiplier impact for the locality/region (Dewar, 1987). An added problem with the non-discriminatory nature of incentives was that desired cumulative growth processes through inter-industry linkages were not emerging. Although the Bophuthatswana growth point of Babelegi was one of the most successful in terms of attracting a group of factories through the incentive system no evidence was found for inter-industry linkages and the development of agglomeration economies. The explanation was simple. The non-discriminatory nature of the incentive system produced at Babelegi a mixed group of factories which did not link together in any way – the group of factories included printing works, gate manufacturers, producers of baby clothes, military uniforms and wigs.

In an international comparative analysis, the labour incentives (along with other packages of grants and support for subsidized rentals, relocation costs) available in South Africa were viewed as extraordinarily generous (Cobbett et al., 1987; Rogerson, 1987). In many parts of South Africa, given the weak basis for labour organization, the incentives that firms could qualify for were at or even above the level of wages paid to low skilled workers. Incentive packages reached the point at which unscrupulous investors could simply 'farm' labour and thus theoretically make guaranteed profits at growth centres without producing or manufacturing anything at all! In other words, the amount of wages paid out to certain types of workers at growth points was less than the monthly cash payment that enterprises received (and was guaranteed for seven years) from the state. Abuses of the incentive system were increasingly exposed in the 1980s (Hirsch, 1987). Reports appeared of manicured industrial estates in the Ciskei Bantustan at which minimal production was taking place and yet factories employing vast numbers of cleaners and security guards. Worker exploitation, dehumanizing work environments and cheating of the state incentive system were widespread at many Bantustan growth centres. Some of the worst worker abuses were documented at Botshabelo by Cobbett (1987). Women workers, often the most marginalized and readily exploitable category of labour, were particularly vulnerable to the exploitative practices that were opened up for manufacturing capital to take advantage of labour at the Bantustan growth centres during the 1980s.

By the mid-1980s there was growing dissent around the government's industrial decentralization programme and most especially around the application of lavish investment incentives designed to attract industrialists away from the metropolitan regions into the decentralized spaces including peripheral Bantustans (Tomlinson and Addleson, 1986, 1987). Among criticisms were concerns about the escalating costs of the programme to the national fiscus in terms of funding for incentives to industrialists and accompanying arguments that these funds might be better applied to improve conditions (housing, services) in urban townships. The major beneficiaries of the investment incentives increasingly were acknowledged as foreign investors (mainly from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Israel) rather than local South African enterprises (Dewar, 1987; Rogerson, 1987; Pickles and Woods, 1989). In addition, little evidence existed at the majority of growth centres of signs of growth becoming cumulative and thus reaching a point at which government support and leverage would no longer be required (Addleson, 1990). Indeed, many growth centres showed absolutely no signs of growth at all, especially those that had been selected on political grounds rather than economic considerations and of demonstrated potential. Further, it was forwarded that the incentive programme was designed to prop up the state's failing apartheid project to support and give legitimacy to the 'economic independence' of the so-termed Bantustans (Addleson, 1990).

A chorus of critics made the point that the regional industrial development programme was highly costly, politically motivated, largely unsuccessful and wasteful of scarce development resources (Tomlinson and Addleson, 1987; Addleson, 1990). At the close of the 1980s an official rethink on regional policy was launched. It was led by a panel of experts appointed by the Development Bank of Southern Africa. The findings and recommendations of this study produced another revision of South African regional development policy with a substantial scaling back of the industrial incentive system. Most critically, the revised and much reduced incentive system removed the former favoured treatment which had been accorded to industrialists locating in the Bantustans. The consequence was a phasing-out of incentives which saw the closure of factories in these areas, resulting in 'abandoned industrial spaces', a consequence of the de-industrialization processes that took hold at many of the former privileged Bantustan growth points (Phalatse, 2000, 2001).

THE TURN TO TOURISM

The push for Bantustan industrialisation undoubtedly was the core focus of the apartheid state for most of the period 1948-1991. Arguably, however, there is a longer – albeit minor - history of tourism in the territories of the former Bantustans than for industrial development. In the beginning decades of the 20th century international tourism in South Africa was organized around the country's natural beauty, its wildlife attractions and, fulfilling the desire of many foreign visitors to experience at first hand so-called 'primitive' tribal life. As is shown elsewhere during the 1920s and 1930s the lure of seeing 'the primitive' resulted in small flows of international travellers into two areas of South Africa where 'native life' was offered as an attraction to tourists, namely the rural spaces of Zululand and the Transkei territory (Rogerson, 2019, 2022).

By the 1940s, however, and the beginnings of the apartheid state in 1948 this type of tourism was in decline. During the 1950s with economic development planning for the Bantustans dominated by the findings of the Tomlinson Report, almost no policy focus existed on tourism in these areas. The first policy interest around tourism promotion in the Homelands started to appear in the 1960s, which was the time when the apartheid state was initiating an institutional structure for the promotion of tourism in South Africa as a whole (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2022a). Following the 1963 grant of 'self-government' to Transkei there was recognition in South African parliamentary debates of the potential for developing tourism in the Transkei in order for international tourists to glimpse 'Africa in the raw' (House of Assembly Debates, 30 September, 1966). Moreover, there was also recognition of the urgent need for improving the standards of local hotels in line with quality and grading standards introduced in 1964-65 for South African hotels (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2022a). This was essential as it was noted there as a flow of tour buses travelling into Transkei as well as tours that included overnight stops within Transkei.

Greater policy interest for tourism development in the Bantustans was provoked during the early 1970s, a time when the limitations and disappointments of planned industrial decentralisation programmes in the Bantustans were becoming clear. In debates conducted in the South African parliament questions began to be posed about what government "is doing or intends doing in the future in regard to the promotion of tourism in the homelands" (House of Assembly Debates, 24 October, 1974: Col. 6255). The apartheid government indicated that one step was to devolve responsibility for tourism promotion to the Homeland governments themselves (House of Assembly Debates, 23 October, 1974). It was considered that such a change of control might "have a material influence on tourism in South Africa" (House of Assembly Debates, 23 October, 1974: Col. 6210). The detailed response given by the Minister of Tourism is revealing in terms of showing the government's concern for tourism development in the Bantustans during the 1970s. It was stated that in the case of Transkei discussions had been undertaken with the Bantustan leaders. The Minister stated as follows: "Tourism has already been delegated to them as a function. We are prepared to make our knowledge and training facilities available to them for the training of their own officials. We are prepared to cooperate with all the homelands, because I believe that tourism is a very valuable asset to them" (House of Assembly Debates, 24 October, 1974: Col. 6255). Especially optimism was expressed for the development of tourism attractions in the Transkei in particular with its attractive coastal attractions of the Wild Coast which had been a minor focus for domestic (white) South African travellers since the 1940s (Wildman, 2005). The small coastal settlement of Coffee Bay had grown on the basis of this leisure travel by domestic visitors (Wildman, 2005).

The major turn to tourism would not be led, however, by the natural scenic beauty of certain of the Bantustans. Under apartheid, South Africa's anti-gambling legislation, racist laws and Calvinistic puritanism had created ideal opportunities in the 1960s for the establishment of casinos in the surrounding countries of Southern Africa – Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. In particular, those opportunities had been recognized by the outgoing British colonial government in Swaziland which was cognizant of the potential of gambling tourism and the proximity of the South African market. Indeed, in 1963 (five years before Swaziland independence) the colonial state passed a Casino Act in Swaziland which laid the basis for the monopoly casino operations that would develop there and followed by Lesotho and Botswana (Crush and Wellings, 1983). This was a 'forbidden fruit' form of tourism, which came to characterize Lesotho and Swaziland in the 1970s". With the continued prohibition of casino operations under apartheid South Africa, the emerging "casino states" of Lesotho and Swaziland experienced a phase of considerable tourism expansion which lasted until the mid-1970s (Crush and Wellings, 1987). At its peak in 1975 the tourism inflow to Swaziland, based upon the casinos, was over 150 000 people, mostly South African tourists. Among others the work of Weaver (2000) situates this tourism development as part of a new political geography of tourism in Southern Africa during the 1960s and 1970s.

Further radical changes in the political geography of Southern Africa during the 1970s started to re-cast patterns of casino tourism in the region

(Rogerson, 1990; Weaver, 2000). Van der Merwe (2017: 11) highlights that a critical moment in the history of casino tourism in South Africa was the passage in 1971 of the Self-Governing Territories Constitution Act by the South African parliament. Under this Act "bantustans were given powers to write their own laws, and thus allowing for the legalization of gambling and establishment of casinos" (van der Merwe, 2017: 11). Beyond the legalization of gambling there occurred a raft of other laws which included the sanctioning of interracial relationships and pornography. Haines and Tomaselli (1992) write of the growing importance of 'vice capital' in South Africa which was facilitated by the granting of 'independence 'to several Bantustans. The spaces of these 'independent' Bantustans functioned "as pockets of permissiveness within an otherwise rather rigidly administered Calvinist-oriented state" (Haines and Tomaselli, 1992: 156). All the Bantustans were non-viable economic entities and struggled to attain financial independence, surviving only through massive subsidies provided by the (white) South African government. Indeed, with planning for 'grand apartheid', the concession of nominal 'independence' to several of the Bantustans of South Africa opened new opportunities for South African tourism capital to establish additional gaming-oriented resorts.

The successive award of 'independence' to Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979) and Ciskei (1981) re-cast the function of these areas within South Africa's political economy (Rogerson, 2004). The imperative need of the apartheid state both to legitimise Bantustan independence and to wean these impoverished areas from their revenue dependency upon South Africa produced what Crush and Wellings (1983, p. 691) have described as "an alliance of convenience" with tourism capital. By upholding the fiction of independent homelands the apartheid state "conveniently shelved its puritanical views and argued with scarcely concealed sophistry that it was within the jurisdiction of the homeland authorities to formulate their own position on these matters" (Grundlingh, 2006, p. 117). It is against such a backdrop that the leaders of the independent Bantustans entered into a marriage of convenience with South African tourism capital to exploit the loopholes created in gambling legislation which were provided by the bogus 'independence' of these territories (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2022b). The apartheid state officials turned a blind eye to substantial corruption malpractices by the rulers of Bantustans in connivance with South African hotel developers (Philipps, 2017). The growth of casino tourism in the four independent Homelands is viewed by Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) as an early form of rural tourism in these areas. This said, Rogerson (2014, p. 25) writes of the Bantustans as a case of rural slumland tourism: "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'" (Rogerson, 2014, p. 25).

The opportunities for Bantustan casino development were grasped in particular by Lucas Mangope, Bophuthatswana's president, and the Southern Sun hotelier, Sol Kerzner, who entered into what has been described as "a mutually beneficial relationship to create casinos within the borders of the bantustans" (van der Merwe, 2017: 2). Indeed, the 'independent' state of Bophuthatswana became the major locus for early casino investment by South African capital (Drummond et al., 2022). Following lengthy negotiations with the 'slumlords' of Bophuthatswana, Southern Sun concluded an agreement for exclusive gambling rights in the territory and began investing with promises to boost local tourism (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2022b). The first hotel/casino complex in the Bantustans was constructed at Mmabatho, the capital of Bophuthatswana, and readied for its opening to coincide with ‘independence’ celebrations in December 1977 (Drummond et al., 2022). The Mmabatho casino was followed by the much larger and more ambitious Sun City complex, which was proclaimed to match Las Vegas in its glitz and glamour (van Eeden, 2007). As is observed by Freeman (2014, p. 6) December 1979 “marked the opening of Sun City to an anticipative and a deeply disapproving world”. The Sun City casino was located just a two-hour drive from South Africa’s economic heartland and its major cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria (Rogerson, 1990). For the apartheid government Sun City was used “to legitimise the homelands and was a convenient tool to transfer the cost of subsidising the bantustans from state funds over to private investment” (van der Merwe, 2017, p. 21). Sun City served as a tourist magnet catering mainly to white South Africans and a few wealthy Blacks who travelled from the country’s major metropolitan centres to indulge in gambling and the other attractions on offer (Freeman, 2014). Sun City was designed in the lavish Las Vegas strip style, becoming the most notorious of all the Bantustan casinos with its roulette, slot machines, pornography, multi-racial sequined show revues and designer golf course (van Eeden, 2007). Grundlingh (2006, p. 117) observes that underpinning the attractions of the luxury casino resorts “was the allure of forbidden fruit – gambling, pornographic films and, more informally, prostitution across the colour line”. The political geography was important that the Sun City stood outside the borders of South Africa, which allowed it to circumvent the apartheid regime’s conservative social policies (Haines and Tomaselli, 1992; Freeman, 2014).

The decade of the 1980s witnessed a number of new casino openings and resort developments taking root in South Africa’s four ‘independent’ Bantustans. The location of these casino-resorts was influenced by fierce competition between the Southern Sun and Holiday Inn Groups which were seeking to negotiate market access to South Africa’s sources of major gambling, namely in the country’s largest cities. Following the opening of Sun City, the Holiday Inn chain responded by re-orienting its investments away from Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland and instead into the Bantustans, by developing a parallel casino resort to Sun City along the Wild Coast of Transkei, close to the Durban metropolitan area (Rogerson, 2004). According to Wildman (2005, p. 86) the main appeal of the Transkei casino “was its feeling of unreality – of being a pleasure palace far removed from the reality of apartheid” Indeed, tourism developers and Bantustan governments were facilitated to take advantage of the status of ‘independence’ as a means to circumvent South African government restrictions towards ‘morally dubious’ activities and to create ‘fantasyscapes’ (van der Merwe, 2017). The Transkei, as with other subsequent ‘independent’ Bantustans, “provided the ideal location for white South Africans to indulge themselves” (Wildman, 2005, p. 86). The corruption surrounding this hotel-casino development is catalogued by Streek and Wicksteed (1981).

The ‘casino wars’ of the early 1980s was pursued between Southern Sun and Holiday Inn as both hotel enterprises fought to maximise their access to the urban consumer gambling markets of South Africa through establishing competing casino resorts (Rogerson, 1990). The casino wars climaxed with the announcement that the Holiday Inn group had secured monopoly rights on gambling in the miniscule territory of KwaNdebele, which in 1982 seemed a candidate to become the fifth South African Bantustan agreeing to 'independence' (Rogerson, 2004). The significance of the casino development that was proposed for KwaNdebele was that it threatened to undercut the profitability of the Sun City complex (operated by Southern Sun) because it was favourably located less than one hour's drive from Pretoria, South Africa's capital city. It was this projected casino development that led to negotiations between Southern Sun and Holiday Inn for a rationalization of the casino industry in South Africa and which eventually led to the formation in 1983 of the Sun International group (Rogerson, 1990). The newly established Sun International group obtained control of all casino operations throughout Southern Africa (with the exception of the Hilton Hotel casino in Lesotho, which it took over one year later). The removal of the competitive threat of the KwaNdebele casino (which was never constructed) allowed Sun International to go ahead with renewed investments at Sun City as well as launching new casinos at Thaba 'Nchu (an enclave of Bophuthatswana) seeking to tap the gambling markets of the Free State and particularly of the city of Bloemfontein. The casino gaming economy of apartheid South Africa was under the monopoly control of Sun International; 17 casinos were established and continued to operate into the period of the democratic transition in 1994. These comprised of two different types of casino operations. First, were a small number of hotel-related casinos that followed the model which existed in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (Crush and Wellings, 1987). Examples of these hotel-related casinos were those which opened at the following Bantustan locations, namely Mmabatho, Mdantsane, Umtata or Butterworth. The second – and larger group – were casino resorts that were constructed with complementary hotels and entertainment leisure complexes. These were 'purpose-built' facilities and constructed at locations which offered good access to the lucrative markets of the leading urban centres such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban.

Under apartheid Sun City became a symbol of the opulence that (many) White South Africans enjoyed at the expense of the Black majority (Freeman, 2014). Nevertheless, Drummond et al. (2022) stress that Sun City assumed a critical role in promoting Bophuthatswana as a state 'independent' from South Africa. Van der Merwe (2017) maintains that this was largely achieved through the tourism attractions offered by Sun City and supported further by those of the nearby game reserve of Pilanesberg National Park. Although casino tourism and the entertainment complexes of Sun City (and subsequently Lost City) dominated the tourism economy of Bophuthatswana other 'niche' forms of tourism made an appearance in the Bantustans. One example was heritage tourism based upon the historical significance of Mahikeng with its associations with Robert Baden-Powell and the 217-day siege of Mafeking. (Drummond et al, 2021). A further case was of adventure sky-diving which surfaced as a popular activity in the surrounds of Mmabatho during period of late apartheid (Drummond et al., 2022). Finally, beyond leisure tourism it must be understood that the Bantustans were major recipients of VFR tourism, namely of visits by friends and relatives who were based and working in urban areas making return visits often to second homes and family in rural areas (Rogerson, 2014). Indeed, for the six Bantustans that did not accede to independence the phenomenon of VFR tourism was overwhelmingly the leading segment of the limited tourism that was taking place in these areas during the apartheid period.

CONCLUSION

This paper offers a modest contribution to the literature on the political geography of South Africa's Bantustans. The analysis has used an historical approach to interrogate shifts in economic development planning for these peripheral spaces. It was argued that initially apartheid planners placed great faith in the prospects for industrial development in these areas and offered substantial incentives for both local and international investors to locate their productive facilities in the Bantustans. With minor exceptions this planned strategy for bringing factories to the fields achieved little success and was subsequently jettisoned. Alongside the industrial programme, however, there emerged potential opportunities for leveraging tourism as an economic base for Bantustan development. The opportunities for casino-resort development were limited to the four Bantustans which acceded to 'independence' and thus allowed a changing function of these areas in the political landscape of South Africa. With the end of apartheid and democratic transition in 1994 the Bantustans were re-incorporated into South Africa which shifted once more the competitiveness of these regions for tourism development. Overall, this analysis contributes another chapter to the so far limited writings on tourism during South Africa's troubled apartheid years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the inputs given by Robbie and Skye Norfolk as well as Lulu White to the development of this paper.

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Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted and published online:
December 20, 2022	January 05, 2023	January 16, 2023