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Determining the state of cultural tourism in South Africa

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MEASURING & VALUING SOUTH AFRICA'S CULTURAL & CREATIVE ECONOMY

South African Cultural Observatory

Determining the state of cultural tourism in South Africa

Research Report

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(First Draft)

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Executive Summary

This paper seeks to determine the state of cultural tourism from the lens of the South African context. In essence, apart from being descriptive in nature, the paper also seeks to be analytical in framing how cultural tourism as a field or sector of operation can be enhanced. Ultimately, through these aims of this paper, implications are made that can encourage domestic and international tourists in their full participation within activities linked to cultural tourism. This paper arrives to these aims and desired implications through a document analysis of empirical and non-empirical work documented around cultural tourism in South Africa. The document analysis allowed for a process of surveying the terrain of the field of cultural tourism in South Africa. Based on the document analysis, strategies are proposed in enhancing cultural tourism in South Africa not only as a field but also as a sector.

Key words: South Africa, cultural tourism, culture, development

1. Introduction

Within the context of developing countries such as South Africa, the tourism industry is argued to be a historical driver in economic development (Apleni, Mxunyelwa, & Vallabh, 2017). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), tourism accounts for 9.3% of the Gross Domestic Product and accounting for 9.8% (or approximately 1.5 million jobs) in South Africa which is expected to rise to about 13.2% (2.5 million jobs) by 2027. In essence, this has led to a resounding agreement of the importance of tourism (e.g. Jugmohan, Spencer & Steyn, 2016; Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015; Titus & Spencer, 2015) due to the emphasis not only for economic and social development and the potential image that can be created not only locally, regionally and internationally of the country. Within the aspect and emphasis for advancing tourism, there is also recognition of the importance of cultural tourism (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015; Titus & Spencer, 2015).

Cultural tourism denotes the type of tourism that attracts tourists to visit a destination to experience local culture (Ezeuduji & Rid, 2011). This emphasis here is also on using the local cultural heritage as a potential to not only benefit local communities but also to advance this to wider domestic and international community. Christie, Fernandes, Messerli, & Twining-Ward (2014) argue that cultural tourism presents a substantial opportunity for tourism growth. For instance, according to Rogerson (2012), many African countries are using cultural tourism as a niche product in order to diversify their tourism economies.

In South Africa, researchers found that cultural or heritage sites provide a rich diversity which attract young tourists (Butler & Ivanovic, 2016; Gordon, Struwig, & Roberts, 2015). However, Masilo and Van der Merwe (2016) found that there is a lack of awareness and information on the value of the cultural or heritage sites in which tourists may have a desire to visit. According to Viljoen and Henama (2017), inadequate communication between museum marketers, local authorities and the public is seemingly to blame for the dilemma of a lower likelihood that tourists will visit heritage sites. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks not only to explore the state of cultural tourism in South Africa, but also advance a multi-stakeholder agenda to areas where focus should be directed in improving cultural tourism.

The rest of this paper follows a structure. First, definitions of cultural tourism are presented to start the paper. Second, a literature review is presented that includes the literature covering the a) the South African strategies of development of culture in general, tourism and the cultural tourism sector; b) the role of the state of development of cultural tourism in South Africa and finally, c) research of cultural tourism conducted in South Africa. Finally, directions for the future development of cultural tourism in South Africa are made.

2. Defining Cultural tourism

A multiplicity of definitions exists around the concept of cultural tourism. This has led some to view cultural tourism to considered as a “contemporary process through which human societies engage with, and make use of their past” (Light, 2015, p. 144). Research also indicates that, cultural tourism encompasses both the tangible and intangible aspects of both heritage and

culture (Southall & Robinson, 2011; Waterton & Watson, 2015). This implies that, cultural tourism would involve visiting places of historical interest and significance such as castles, monuments, and museums (Southall & Robinson, 2011). Saarinen and Rogerson (2015) posit that cultural tourism is perceived as one of the major development opportunities for Africa. On the other hand, Gupta and Dada (2014) position cultural tourism as an agent of sustainable development, illustrated in the core values of public education, respect for diversity, authenticity of programmes or projects, and preservation of heritage. Critical to these definitions (though not exhaustive), is the aspect of advancing those artefacts that are linked to culture and cultural heritage for the purpose not only advancing economic but also social capital.

3. South African strategies of development of culture, tourism and cultural tourism

Researchers (e.g. Saarinen, 2011; Saarinen & Rogers, 2014) posit that tourism should be used for socio-economic development and empowerment of local people or communities which both explicitly and implicitly places strong emphasis on cultural tourism providing possibilities for inclusive business models. As a result, studies indicate that, South Africa has focused on the potential to maximize cultural and heritage assets in order to promote local economic development through tourism (e.g. King & Flynn, 2012; Marschall, 2012; Rogerson & van der Merwe, 2016). The National Department of Tourism (NDT) has developed a cultural tourism strategy that was aimed in guiding and providing strategic direction for the development and promotion of heritage and cultural tourism in South Africa (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013; NDT, 2012). However, the value and impact of this tourism strategy has not been fully realised, particularly the economic potential of heritage and cultural tourism products (NDT, 2012). Although evidence exists that support a strong policy of cultural tourism (Rogerson & van de Merwe, 2016), the cultural tourism landscape within post-apartheid South Africa is faced with challenges, some of which have their roots to the colonial and apartheid era, there is emphasis for continuous improvement and renewal of the cultural tourism sector (Maune, 2015; Smith, 2015).

Nevertheless, Manwa, Moswete and Saarinen (2016) note the connection between culture and tourism which is rooted to the rich and diverse ethnic cultures, heritage resources and vibrant urban lifestyle that exist in South Africa. This therefore means, in order to develop cultural tourism, emphasis should be placed on developing the a) physical resource infrastructure, b) heritage sites and c) places of national symbols (Light, 2015). In addition, Rogerson (2015) echoes that the diversification of tourism products towards people, local cultures and urban setting is more actively promoted through policy making and tourism initiatives. Policy and planning initiatives to support cultural tourism have emanated from national and local scales of government. At the national scale, the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996), stated that the competitive advantage of the country is no longer based on natural elements only, but increasingly the need to include culture as well as built environments. These policies view cultural tourism as a viable strategy that can be used not only for poverty alleviation but also inclusive growth and socio-economic development (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015).

4. The role of the state in the development of cultural tourism in South Africa

According to Butler and Ivanovic (2016), South Africa is a rich country with an exceptional portfolio of diverse cultural heritage attractions. Despite this, South Africa still needs to maximise its potential for the future. This potentially happens within the current context of calls for the democratisation and transformation especially of the heritage sector in post-apartheid South Africa. Marschall (2012) acknowledges the heritage landscape as complicated and one needing careful consideration especially when enacting reforms. Other researchers, such as Cheer and Reeves (2016) argue that the politicisation of the heritage sector and its need for transformation is one that can be problematic.

This is most evident in contemporary South Africa with campaigns such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall that aim to decolonise heritage and history. A study conducted by Portia, Reichel and Cohen (2012) explored the aspects of tourist perceptions of heritage, resources and sites, and found that tourists regarded heritage as significant to human culture. Despite the South Africa's political transition that has been accompanied by the

attempts to re-negotiate the meaning of the country's past and validate the post-apartheid order (Baines, 2007). At the core of all this, the need of developing a representative South African identity remains at the forefront of political debate (van der Waal & Robins, 2011).

Studies indicate that South African heritage sites convey the universal message of human liberation, resistance and freedom which strongly resonate with tourists from all over the world (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013; Sather-Wagstaff, 2008; Soudien, 2015; van der Merwe, 2013). For instance, the cultural tourism attractions of Constitution Hill Precinct and The Hector Peterson Memorial and Museums in the metropolitan Johannesburg, were built for this purpose, and to represents iconic heritage sites within South Africa (Khumalo, Sebatlelo & van der Merwe, 2014). Research centered upon the power issues and neo- liberal policy making in the Southern African tourism landscape (Saarinen, 2016), emphasises ethically driven policies that would ensure sustainable utilisation of culture and other resources on tourism development (Moswete et al., 2016). Cultural tourism is viewed as offering considerable potential to contribute towards employment creation, therefore, in order to avoid potential negative impacts of evolving cultural tourism the need to create platforms and models for local participation is prioritised (Lenao, 2016; Moswete et al., 2016).

In an attempt to develop cultural tourism, the South African national government has instituted significant changes in government to support tourism (Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2012). This included the establishment of a standalone Ministry of Tourism, which points to an acknowledgement that tourism has grown in stature and requires dedicated support from government. The drafting of a Heritage tourism strategy in 2011 by the newly created National Tourism Department also reflects the acknowledgement of the importance of heritage tourism and provides a framework for both the integration and coordination of heritage and culture into the tourism main stream. Policy developments which support tourism at local level have increasingly embraced heritage tourism with many heritage attractions being promoted as anchor destinations for Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives. (Addo, 2011; Dantese, SA, & Mather, 2011; Okech, 2010; Rivett-Carnac, 2011; Rogerson, 2013).

On the other hand, others (Manwa, Moswete, & Saarinen, 2016; Stone & Nyaupane, 2014) are of the view that in order to have more balanced cultural tourism development, there is a need to understand communities and their specific cultural (and natural) resource values, priorities as well as internal and external dynamics. Hüncke and Koot (2012) posit that tourists searching for authentic cultures reflected in the expectations of a pristine and exotic lifestyle, and their accompanied search for local communities and their process of development. As a result, Spencer and Jessa (2014) called for the development of a creative tourism strategy, forming part of a wider cultural heritage tourism plan in South Africa, to be implemented for cultural regeneration. The authors further argued that this will provide an avenue for economic and skills development and raise the overall creative profile of the destination.

On the contrary, a study conducted by Nkwanyana, Ezeuduji and Nzama (2016) on cultural heritage tourism in South Africa, found that the majority of community members were not sure that cultural heritage tourism development does raise individuals' cultural awareness; enable income generation; support infrastructure development; and uplift living standards in the communities. It can be induced therefore that these perceptions to the cultural tourism development may be the reason why local community members are reluctant to participate in the cultural heritage tourism activities. The authors (Nkwanyana et al., 2016) recommended that supporting collaboration amongst local actors, creating opportunities for local employment, allowing local access to services and infrastructure used by the tourists, supporting local participation and enabling institutional capacity-building that supports active local participation, are ways to foster inclusive cultural tourism development.

5. Research of cultural tourism in South Africa

Research studies conducted on cultural tourism in South Africa help provide an insight into understanding better the state and the field of cultural tourism. This can assist in potentially identifying major development opportunities to improve the state of cultural tourism (Jugmohan et al., 2016; Nkwanyana et al., 2016; Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015). Recently, Ezeuduji, Mdiniso and Nzama (2017) conducted a study to assess perceptions of communities in Kwa-Zulu Natal of South Africa on nature reserves as a tourism development priority. The

found that community members perceived nature conservation more favourably, which will enable them to enjoy more direct tourism benefits and improvements in their area (Ezeuduji et al., 2017). On the other hand, using a mixed methods approach to investigate the case of The ‘Big Hole’, Kimberley as an example of industrial cultural tourism in South Africa, van der Merwe and Rogerson (2013) found that despite optimism and major investment into heritage tourism at the local level, heritage tourism is under-performing. This finding was attributed to limitations in local tourism marketing, poor budgeting, lack of leadership, and little or no strategic planning for tourism. The results of this investigation confirm those of Tlabela & Munthre (2012:1) that in South Africa “the value of culture and heritage as potential tourism products has not been fully utilised to accrue mutual tourism benefits that ultimately benefits local communities.”

Various researchers (e.g Khumalo et al., 2014; van der Merwe, 2014; Masilo, 2016; Rogerson & van der Merwe, 2016), noted that effective communication among stakeholders within the heritage tourism sector is a major stumbling block to the effective development and sustainability of cultural tourism in South Africa. This observation was linked to limited investment and lack of funding for heritage tourism sites. On the other hand, Marschall (2013) and Masilo (2016) found that the lack of appreciation of heritage and culture by particularly the youth contribute to lack of cultural tourism development. In addition, van der Merwe (2016), found that the highly politicisation of certain heritage sites in South Africa serves as an obstacle for the development of cultural tourism. The respondents in the study further alluded that certain heritage sites receive preferential treatment from government and that a biased history seems to be portrayed in many sites across the country. According to van der Merwe (2016) these findings disclose the need for strategic leadership, institutionally sound sustainable management and responsible governance in the heritage tourism sector of South Africa.

6. Directions for future development of cultural tourism in South Africa

Despite policy and other support, tourism in South Africa faces a number of challenges which need to be addressed to realize the sector’s potential to contribute to the growth of the South African economy (Viljoen & Henama, 2017). From this study, it is gathered that for an

effective development of cultural tourism in South Africa, local communities' active involvement and natural resource management should be prioritised. This finding is supported by previous studies which found that motivation for locals 'active involvement in tourism are critical to successfully integrate local communities into their tourism development (Ezeuduji & Rid, 2011; Mdiniso et al., 2017; Nkwanyana et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Viljoen and Henama (2017) advocated for awareness and education about cultural sites in South Africa to be prioritised. This stems from the finding by van de Merwe (2016) stating that all stakeholders in the tourism sector of the economy need to ensure that marketing needs to be inclusive, promote tolerance and encourage openness in people wanting to see and experience South Africa's heritage.

There is also need to encourage the development of entrepreneurial pursuits that promote the development of cultural tourism. There is recognition and argument that encouraging entrepreneurial ventures to be an important engine for economic growth (Bruwer, 2013). Compounding benefits also include contribution to the GDP, employment creation, poverty reduction and addressing aspects around a quest for social justice (Cant & Wiid, 2013). For instance, the Eastern Cape province of South Africa has high levels of unemployment and is one of the poorest provinces in the country. However, the same province has significant potential as a source of advancing the cultural tourism agenda given its history, geography and activities.

Technology can also be linked to improving the state of cultural tourism in South Africa. There is acknowledgement of the importance of technology in improving not only work processes but also quests of service delivery (Limbu, Jayachandran, & Babin, 2014). Despite recognition that if not done correctly these quests of improving work processes and service delivery can be negative (Diaz, Chiaburu, Zimmerman, & Boswell, 2012) the role of technology within cultural tourism cannot be under-estimated. Areas of interest could be in focussing on the use of (as is done in other contexts) a) *sensors*; b) *big data*; c) *analytics*; d) *artificial intelligence*; e) *algorithms*; f) *robots* and finally, g) *automation of work processes* (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Davenport & Kirby, 2016) to extend to the cultural tourism

sector. South Africa cannot be left behind to advances happening where technology is being adopted in improving the development of national sectors (Calitz, Poisat, & Cullen, 2017).

Rural areas in South Africa have much to contribute to tourism due to its richness in natural landscapes and local cultural offering. However, according to Nzama (2010) most rural areas in South Africa are characterised by under-developed infrastructure, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and inhabitants have a general lack of knowledge or understanding of tourism development matters. This means, in order to ensure the commercial viability of the rural cultural tourism product it is imperative that attention is given to product quality, marketing and investment in business skills. Other rural-based studies have pointed out that while cultural tourism can provide development opportunities in rural areas, it is important that the principles and practices of sustainable tourism development are emphasised and implemented (Mamimine & Madzikire, 2016; Monaheng, 2016; Saarinen, 2016).

7. Conclusion

Cultural tourism in Southern Africa has been found to be beneficial for local communities and has the possibilities to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of people, especially in the remote or peripheral regions where there are limited alternative economic options to tourism (Lenao, 2016; Moswete et al. 2016). Previous research addresses the development and the utilization of culture in tourism and tourism products, however little has been said impacts of cultural tourism in South Africa. As the use of cultural heritage attractions to act as vehicles for political narratives to be transmitted has been noted by van de Merwe (2016), the authors of this paper emphasises that, the South African government need to foster collective identities, overtly political discourses that perpetuate lack of diversity must be distanced from cultural heritage attractions (Butler & Ivanovic, 2016).

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