

Chapter 2

A Decade of Small Town Tourism Research in South Africa

Abstract There has been limited focus on small town tourism as a research focus in South Africa until the mid-2000s. However, since then, there has been a major multidisciplinary scholarly interest into this field of tourism and urban studies. Previous literature reviews mostly covered work done by geographers. This chapter reviews the expanded literature grouped into selected overarching themes that include the following: second homes; LED and developmental issues of small town tourism; economic impacts of tourism; nature-based tourism and rural dynamics; and niche tourism.

Keywords Second homes • Small town LED and developmental issues
Economic impacts of tourism • Nature-based tourism and rural dynamics
Niche tourism themes

2.1 Introduction

In the first review of small town tourism in South Africa, Donaldson (2007) started with a broad introduction about the geography of small towns in South Africa, in particular the policy environment (more specifically local economic development—LED). On this followed a focus on the then current thematic issues such as heritage development, the conservation of the built environment, tourism development and the hosting of arts and other locally themed festivals and events. Attention then turned to the emerging contours of a selection of impacts caused by tourism development, and more particularly, the problematic occurrence of second-home development and emerging processes of tourism-led rural gentrification were spotlighted.

With the exception of a few studies by a few specialists in the field of tourism marketing, the bulk of scholarly tourism research undertaken in a South African context over the past decade was done by geographers. Three recent reviews on tourism scholarship illustrate this by identifying specific focus areas in tourism geography. First, Visser and Hoogendoorn (2011) identified four overarching

themes: (1) responsible tourism; (2) pro-poor tourism impacts; (3) tourism as a vehicle for LED; and (4) the role of small medium micro enterprises (SMMEs) in tourism development. Second, Rogerson and Visser (2014) identified five clusters of research: (1) tourism and urban economic restructuring associated with the establishment of new products for leisure tourism; (2) the role of the accommodation sector; (3) slum tourism as a distinctive form of pro-poor tourism; (4) African cities as non-leisure destinations; and (5) informal sector tourism. Third, the most recent review (Hoogendoorn & Rogerson, 2015) adds research themes like tourism policy issues, local economic restructuring and urban tourism. Their thematic foci include regional tourism, nature tourism and various forms of niche tourism, namely heritage, culinary, gay and lesbian, spa, township, volunteer, backpacking, birding, agritourism and adventure tourism.

Spatially, the post-apartheid tourism boom has, in the main, perpetuated a skewed pattern of product provision for urban tourism, where the large metropolitan regions reign supreme. This is clearly reflected in academic debate and research (Hoogendoorn & Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson & Visser, 2011a, b, 2014; Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2011). These reviews do not all highlight small town tourism and those that do (Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2011; Rogerson & Visser, 2014) refer to a handful of studies under the umbrella of small town tourism geography. Although the incidence and impacts of urban tourism have grown and become increasingly recognised over the past ten years, this chapter argues that the imprint of urban tourism development is now emerging in smaller urban settlements in South Africa. This chapter casts a wider net to incorporate small town tourism scholarship across disciplines in South Africa over the past ten years by not only reflecting on geographers' scholarship.

The scholarly contributions on small town tourism over the said period can be grouped into five fields. First, the bulk of research has focused on second homes. Second, research into LED and developmental issues of small town tourism have continued to strengthen. Third are the investigations into the economic impacts of tourism, especially festivals. Fourth, nature-based tourism and rural dynamics have come to the fore. Fifth, niche tourism themes have appeared of which route tourism and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) are the most prominent. In addition, some new unexplored themes in South African contexts are covered elsewhere in the book. These include the branding of towns (Chap. 3), Africa's first "slow city" (cittaslow), Sedgfield (Chap. 4) and a renewed look at rural (small town) gentrification with the small town of Greyton as case study (Chap. 6).

2.2 Second-Home Research

The tourism theme on which the most scholarly papers have been produced over the past ten years, albeit mainly by two scholars (Gustav Visser and Gijsbert Hoogendoorn; the latter's doctoral research being the fulcrum of the activity), is second homes (see, for example, Hoogendoorn, 2011; Hoogendoorn & Visser,

2010a, b, 2011a, b, 2015; Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2015). Principally, their research argues that rising prosperity of the middle- and higher-income groups, mainly whites, combined with growth in leisure time explains the increased demand for second homes in small town South Africa, stimulating the onset of the post-productivist countryside (Ingle, 2013). Hoogendoorn (2011) has, however, made the link between labour migration of the poor and tourism migration, claiming that second homes is not a phenomenon of only the elite. Visser and Hoogendoorn have identified some noteworthy prospects for second-home research. These include a call for an historical look at the phenomenon, the context of these homes in relation to government services (e.g. water usage and traffic-related issues in peak seasons) and, oddly, a call for national policy on second homes, especially international second homeowners. Furthermore, investigations on issues of the so-called swallows, the non-residents and their migratory patterns are suggested. Finally, a critique of the neoliberal approach that will concentrate on the nexus between tourism and urban development, and the potentially desirable aspects of second-home development, must mainly look at the economic advantages and their role in a post-productive countryside.

Due to the scenic and attractive localities of second homes outside metropolitan and secondary city areas, small towns have served as fitting study sites to investigate those aspects of second homes that relate to the environment (Long & Hoogendoorn, 2013, 2014), the economy (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010a, b, 2011a) and the social dimensions and constructions of place (Van Laar et al., 2014). Spatially, the case study towns covered in such research are typically within reach of a metropolitan area, for example Hartbeespoort Dam (Baker & Mearns, 2012; Long & Hoogendoorn, 2013, 2014), Rosendal (Hay & Visser, 2014), Franschhoek (Van Laar, Cottyn, Donaldson, Zoomers, & Ferreira, 2014), Dullstroom (Hunter & Mearns, 2014), Greyton and Clarens (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010a), but they also included geographically isolated case studies such as Rhodes (Hoogendoorn, Marais, & Visser, 2009) and Nieu-Bethesda (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010a).

2.3 Festivals and Events

An extensive informational literature on festivals as tourist attractions has been produced, and Quinn (2005) has argued that the term ‘festival tourism’ has primarily been investigated in terms of economic potential. Although the focus here is on small towns in South Africa, it coincides with the international research focus over the past ten years. Cultural festivals have become important tools for tourism promotion in small towns. Indeed, Rogerson (2014) has assented that festivals, especially those staged in small towns, can be key levers for place-based LED. Local authorities view these events as significant platforms for marketing the tourism assets of small town economies as part of their strategies for LED and growth (Donaldson, 2007). In particular, the economic impacts of festivals and events have been studied on both town and regional scales (Ngandu, Gwenhure, &

Mbanda, 2014; Snowball & Antrobus, 2013; Van Wyk, Saayman, & Roussouw, 2013; Donaldson, 2011, 2012, 2015; Saayman & Rossouw, 2011; Van der Merwe, Saayman, & Saayman, 2009); market segmentations (Saayman, Saayman, & Joubert, 2012; Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis, 2011); and the management issues of organising festivals (Saayman, Kruger, & Erasmus, 2012a; Marais & Saayman, 2011). Furthermore, there have been investigations of motives for attending festivals as well as the experiences and viewpoints of festival attendees (*festinos*) (Saayman, Kruger, & Erasmus, 2012a, b; Kruger & Saayman, 2012a, b; Slabbert & Saayman, 2011; Saayman, 2011; Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis, 2010; Saayman & Kruger, 2010; Kruger, Saayman, & Saayman, 2009; Snowball & Willis, 2006a, b); the socio-demographic characteristics of attendees and their visiting patterns (Saayman & Saayman, 2006a, b); and who spends what at the events (Saayman, Saayman, & Slabbert, 2011; Saayman & Krugell, 2010; Saayman & Kruger, 2010).

Issues of the greening of festivals have received little attention apart from the study by Dobson and Snowball (2012) that reported that visitors were willing to pay an average of R2.30 more for tickets to fund a recycling programme at small town festivals. The measuring of community perceptions of the impacts of key festivals in small towns such as Oudtshoorn and Grahamstown (Viviers & Slabbert, 2012) has received scant attention. Some research has paid attention to the contribution of the transformational nature of art festivals as platforms for debating the goals and values of society in post-apartheid South Africa (Snowball & Webb, 2008; Snowball & Willis, 2006a, b). A single study has investigated the VICE model (visitors, industry, community and environment) as a crucial success factor in the sustainable development of any tourism destination (Van Niekerk & Coetzee, 2011).

In their application of omnivore/univore¹ hypothesis to the Grahamstown National Arts Festival as case study, Snowball, Jamal, and Willis (2010: 467) observed an “intriguing intermediate state between Bourdieu-like high culture univores and Peterson omnivores, which could have interesting implications for the development of social tolerance in multi-cultural South Africa.” When South Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2010, the Grahamstown Festival was scheduled to coincide with this global mega-event to augment the economic impacts. However, Snowball (2012) found that less than a quarter (23%) of the festivalgoers also attended World Cup soccer matches in nearby host city Port Elizabeth.

South African small towns host a total of more than 1000 festivals every year but typically not all are geared to attract visitors from outside the towns’ catchment areas. The exceptions are the three main national art festivals (Grahamstown in July, KKNK in April and Aardklop in October). The works by Saayman and Saayman (2006a, b) and Labuschagne and Saayman (2014) have shown that the location and the size of a town are vital determinants of the impact of an event on a

¹Cultural omnivores (generally higher-income and education groups) are consumers of a wide variety of both high and popular cultural goods. Contrarily, cultural univores have a narrower cultural taste and are less open and tolerant, and are more likely to exclude other cultures (Snowball, Jamal, & Willis, 2010).

host town and its region. In Chap. 7, selected small town festivals are compared regarding their economic impacts and visitor trends.

Sports events have been shown to make major capital injections into the local economies of metropolitan areas (Kotze & Visser, 2008). Similar to the many small town festivals, there are as many regional sports events and usually the festivals and sports events are aligned. Inexplicably, research on small town sports events has been limited to only a few studies. A Mafikeng case study demonstrated that sports tourism can improve the town's economic activity through the hosting of regular or small sports tourism events (Marumo, Lubbe, & Pelsler, 2015). Swart, Bob, and Arrey's (2008) study revealed that local communities along the Berg River are not involved in managing and planning the annual Berg River Canoe Marathon and that the event gave very few opportunities for locals to leverage any economic and social benefits associated with the event. Yet, Ingle (2008) has argued that the obscure small town Fauresmith should use the international and national media attention it receives during the annual 200-km endurance horse-riding event, by mounting a focused destination branding campaign.

A novel addition to festival tourism studies is the spotlight on the Matric Vac Festival, an annual post-matric rite-of-passage festival, held in November and December. According to Rogerson and Harmer (2015), "[T]his festival has parallels with similar rite-of-passage youth tourism festivals occurring in USA and Australia. It is shown this festival is a post-school rite of passage for mainly affluent, white youth in South Africa and focused geographically at a small number of coastal destinations where common themes are the provision of beach entertainment, organized parties, night clubbing and live music acts". The most popular venues are the small towns of Plettenberg Bay in the Western Cape, Umhlanga Rocks and Ballito in KwaZulu-Natal.

Other events are associated with towns entering competitions to be awarded town of the year status (see Chap. 4 for a discussion on the Kwela Town of the Year competition). A similar competition for branding exercises is the Volksblad Tourism Town of the Year Competition as a means of stimulating sustainable tourism in Free State and Northern Cape provinces (Hattingh & Kokt, 2013). Unlike Kwela Town of the Year, where the general public votes for a regional town to enter the national competition, followed by a round of voting, the Volksblad towns are shortlisted to ten by means of the public voting via SMSs. Thereafter, the sponsors adjudicate the ten towns based on a set of criteria and on the towns' presentations made to the adjudicators.

2.4 On the Margins of Small Towns: Water, Nature and Agricultural Environments

Although rural and conservation areas fall outside the scope of this book's theme of small towns, is it appropriate to reflect on how the conservation and rural areas surrounding the country's small towns are being presented in research. What follows is an overview of this particular set of the literature.

Studies of nature tourism and its impacts on nearby small towns and rural villages include those about investigating economic linkages (or the lack thereof) and economic leakages. Hunt, Rogerson, and Rogerson (2013), Rogerson C. M. and Rogerson J. M. (2014), and Rogerson J. M. and Rogerson C. M. (2014) view nature and agritourism as vital mechanisms for achieving the objectives of pro-poor tourism (see also, Hill, Nel, & Trotter, 2006) and as first steps towards maximising pro-poor impacts. However, Pillay and Rogerson (2013) point out that the coastal tourism economy of KwaZulu-Natal is characterised by a pattern of sourcing by hotels which, on the one hand is geographically localised but, on the other hand, is not pro-poor. Van der Merwe, Ferreira, and Van Niekerk (2013) contend that for rural, ecotourism and agritourism products to be successful, they must secure distinctive, innovative and spatially focused product packaging, marketing and promotion. A success story of doing this is the pairing of wine and food in Stellenbosch (Ferreira & Muller, 2013). Tourism development tends to favour the economic rather than a combination of ecological, economic and social dynamics. Regrettably, tourism studies on environmental and ecological linkages and impacts are rare in South African small town and rural contexts. Because poor “understandings of interlinks between coastal ecosystems by both public and private entities has led to short-sighted tourist investment which fails to consider beach capacity or resource constraints... [a]...participatory risk assessment of the tourism sector by interrogating land use-ecology interactions as necessary for optimal relationships between coastal uses and protection of coastal ecosystems” has been proposed by Ahmed and Nadasen (2013: 7).

Tourism strategies and initiatives have been linked to various national and provincial non-tourism-specific policies since 1994. The spatial development initiative (SDI) launched in 2001 was aimed to spur development in previously underdeveloped areas having significant potential. While the initiative initially focused on industrialisation, tourism development was included to help alleviate poverty. Tourism is currently an important component in six of the 13 SDIs. But the provision of necessary infrastructure has been identified as critical for developing tourism initiatives in these areas (Rogerson C. M. 2001, 2013a, b, 2014).

Traditional villages and small towns in the former Transkei homelands have been targeted for ecotourism and nature-based tourism, where these have emerged as a strategic focus of entrepreneurship and SMME development. Mazibuko (2007) examined tourism leakages in rural northern Drakensberg and showed how participation in tourism by the local African communities was severely limited and that blacks were mainly providers of labour. Similarly, a case study of Cork and Belfast, villages neighbouring the Kruger National Park, also shows no benefits to the local communities (Strickland-Munro, Moore, & Freitag-Ronaldson, 2010). On the other hand, the Wilderness National Park, located next to the small town of Wilderness, has shown to be a major tourism spin-off for the town, more so in terms of social impacts than economic gains (Saayman, Van der Merwe, Saayman, & Mouton, 2009).

Using Mpumalanga towns as case studies, Nieman, Visser, and Van Wyk (2008) proposed a three-factor instrument as a diagnostic tool to identify problematic areas for remedial action to manage sustainable tourism and prevent the leakage of

profits. Magi and Nzama's (2009) established the degree to which local communities from iSimangaliso perceive any benefit accruing from increased tourism activities in the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg World Heritage Sites and found that the communities were not fully conversant with the policies and strategies meant to enhance their participation in tourism activities. The study also revealed that community members were not generally keen on following a tourism-developmental path. But Mearns' (2012a, b) research found that there is a strong spatial association between community-based tourism and Peace Parks, which creates a mutually beneficial situation. Regarding community-based tourism in deep rural traditional villages, Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012a) located community-based tourism within a more general strategy of diversifying rural livelihoods and found that local culture becomes a tourism resource by using indigenous foods, arts and crafts as tourism attractions. Similarly, community-based tourism can play a role in poverty alleviation as discerned in a case study of Mpondoland (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012b). Decision-making, power and control in the tourism economy of many small towns are in the hands of a group of white tourism operators to whom accrue most of the local revenue stream from tourism, whereas the local impoverished communities feel excluded (Mograbi & Rogerson, 2007; Irvine, Kepe, De Wet, & Hamunime, 2016).

According to Spierenburg and Brooks (2014: 151) "[S]paces of privatised wildlife production, in the form of game farms, private nature reserves and other forms of wildlife-oriented land use, are an increasingly prominent feature of the South African countryside. Whilst there is a well-developed literature on the social impacts of state-run protected areas, the outcomes of privatised wildlife production have thus far received little attention". They argue that the socio-spatial dynamics of the wildlife industry, driven by capitalist imperatives, relate to the commodified production of nature and 'wilderness'. Emotional geographies of farm conversions to tourism-related game farms perhaps do not fall under the broad theme of tourism studies, but the political, social and land-use planning contexts thereof are intertwined with tourism development. The impact that such developments on the lives of farm dwellers in private game reserve initiatives in northern KwaZulu-Natal left was disempowerment and their lives effectively invisible (Brooks & Kjelstrup, 2014; Kamuti, 2016). Similarly, concerning the Cradock area, Mkhize (2014: 207) concluded that "the extreme nature of the historical land question and the continued dominance of a historically white land-owning class in the semi-arid areas render farm workers/dwellers structurally vulnerable to having their residential arrangements on farms terminated at any given moment".

The research domain of water-based tourism offers numerous potential research themes, for example whale-watching, shark-cage diving, swimming with dolphins, sea-kayaking, white-river rafting, resort camping and caravanning, mineral hot springs and spas and surfing trips to name a few. Marine-based tourism has the potential to promote and increase conservation efforts of marine wildlife when carried out in an appropriate manner (Wilson & Tisdell, 2003). Marine-based tourism activities are known for their conservation efforts, but they can also benefit areas economically, socially and mentally. Although marine-based tourism brings

economic benefits to coastal towns, there are also substantial costs involved in attracting large numbers of tourists to such towns (Davenport & Davenport, 2006). The costs associated with increased numbers of tourists in an area are both environmental and socio-economic (Maharaj, Hara, & Pithers, 2003). In this regard, De Witt (2014) calls for an understanding of the knowledge of tourists' perceptions regarding eco-efficient practices and further argues that these will provide tourism managers with insights how environmental awareness can be created and tourists' environmentally responsible behaviour can be promoted on the Vaal River, a major recreational and tourist attraction flanked by numerous small towns. Dive tourism at Sodwana Bay in Kwazulu-Natal (Mograbi & Rogerson, 2007) and Kleinbaai in the Western Cape (Leatham, 2014) are examples of niche tourism in small town South Africa. In Kleinbaai, more than 85% of overnight visitors in guesthouses mentioned shark-cage diving trips as reason for the visits (Leatham, 2014). Whereas McKay's (2013) study of the economic impact of river rafting on the Ash River estimated that then activity generates R1.6 million per annum directly for the local economy, a proposed mini hydroelectric power station threatens to destroy the rapids, ending all white-river rafting and slalom-canoeing tourism in the area. There are pro-poor impacts from dive tourism developments, the most vital being the creation of wage and employment opportunities for members of the local community (Leatham, 2014; Mograbi & Rogerson, 2007; Parhanse, 2007).

Regarding social and mental benefits, Saayman, Slabbert, and Van der Merwe (2009) found that the travel behaviour of visitors to South African marine resorts is the same as those identified in the international literature, namely resting and relaxation, enriching and learning experiences, participation in recreational activities, personal values and social experience. Concerning thermal spring resorts in the Western Cape, Boekstein (2013) found that only one of the eight in the province has a focus on health and wellness, the others primarily functioning as family leisure resorts. Potentially valuable natural resources, such as mineral-rich thermal spring water, are thus not being optimally used as tourist attractions in the province. The study of Tuwani (2011) applied tourism destination competitiveness as a proxy indicator of successful development of the resorts in rural Limpopo.

The natural environment does not necessarily serve as the main motivational factor for the adventure tourist as Giddy and Webb's (2015) study revealed for Tsitsikamma. Camping activity has a strong nature-based element but to date is an underresearched theme. Typically, the most popular camping spots in the coastal towns of Kwazulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape and Western Cape are generally filled to capacity during the Easter and summer seasons. Inland areas typically have a water-based or wildlife theme such as the many resorts and game farms in Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga. Van Heerden's (2011) study, the only one of its kind on this theme, found that Bela-Bela (formerly Warmbaths) in Limpopo offered only two major camping sites in the 1980s, but subsequently numerous sites have been developed within a 20-km radius from the town, some of which have four- or five-star ratings from the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA). In addition, Bela-Bela presents an excellent example of a post-productivist landscape. In using Ferreira's (1992) doctoral study as starting

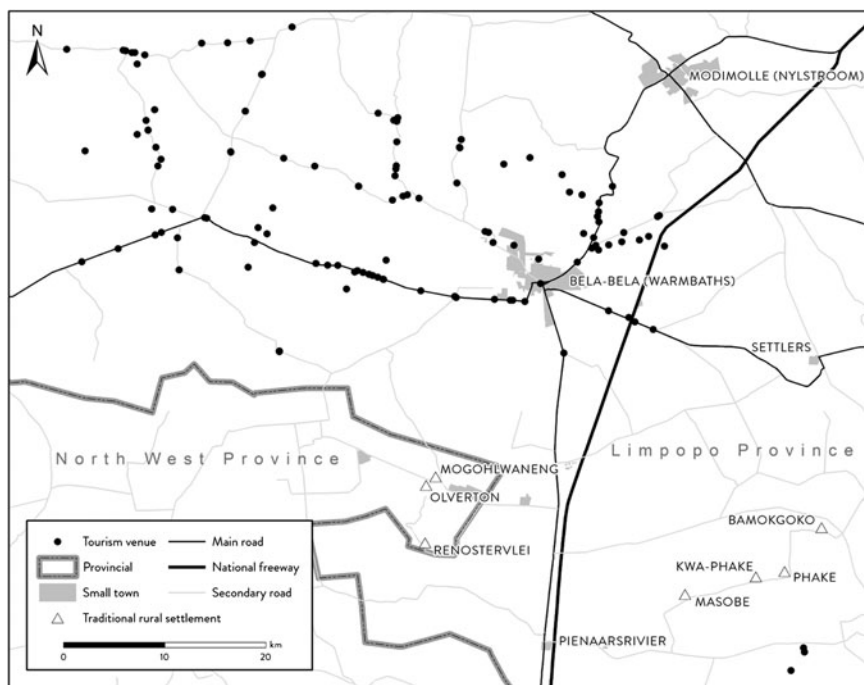


Fig. 2.1 Location of tourism venues outside Bela-Bela (data for compiling the map courtesy of Kevin Mearns) (Donaldson, 2017)

point, Donaldson (2017) explored the exponential growth in the tourism-related offerings such as holiday towns, nature reserves, water-based resorts surrounding the town. Where there were less than ten tourism-related venues by 1990 there were by 2017 in excess of 100 tourism venues (Fig. 2.1) and agricultural practices have in many cases been replaced by tourism-orientated practices.

2.5 LED and Tourism Development

It is noted in Donaldson (2007) that most research on small town tourism done prior to 2006 in South Africa concentrated on LED issues. The state-of-the-art review of LED in the country's small towns by the mid-2000s by Atkinson and Zingle (2004) (quoted in Human, Marais, & Botes, 2008) singled out the following trends:

- The role that the demise of rail transport played in the decline of small towns.
- The effect on rural towns of diminishing agricultural output, as well as a switch to game farming, a change that caused a decline in the growth of the dependent small towns.

- The growth of tourism towns.
- The growth of larger small towns.
- The link between welfare grants and the economies of small towns.
- The loss by small towns of their local government function after the amalgamated local government system came into effect in 2000.

The attention to LED tourism research has persisted over the past ten years (Hoogendoorn & Nel, 2012; Nel, Hill, & Goodenough, 2007; Nel & Rogerson, 2007; Parhanse, 2007; Rogerson, 2014, 2010; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2012—also see the review on LED by Nel (2001), (2005), Nel and Rogerson (2005), Rogerson (2006)). Although Houghton, Dlamini, and Mthembu's (2013) review on small town LED studies does not focus on tourism per se, the paper does provide a valuable background to "small town classification and the dynamics of change within towns, the policy arena which affects small town development, and the nature of Local Economic Development in small towns" (Houghton, Dlamini, & Mthembu, 2013: 13). Nel's (2001: 1015) earlier observation remains relevant, namely that "beyond the four metropolises, most cities and large towns are investigating LED options but little concrete progress has been made to date. Quite clearly the lack of resources, the tenuous fiscal position of many smaller centres and the shortage of skilled staff are all serious impediments to the successful pursuits of LED". Most small towns lacked capacity to set up functioning LED units and where operational they focused on non-tourism-related developments (Nel, 2001). For example, as is the case in many underresourced small town municipalities, the tourism strategy of the //Khara Hais municipality explicitly stated that the community's need for basic infrastructure, like water and roads, is often considered greater than the need for tourism infrastructure (Donaldson, 2007). Consequently, infrastructure projects which could enhance tourism development are often excluded from existing integrated development plans (IDPs) due to their lower priority. Small towns also have no standing committees for tourism development. KZN has encouraged the applications of a model of governance based on the principle of cluster investment strategy, where geographical groups of small towns assist with capacity constraints (www.kzn.org.za). In Gauteng (albeit a major conurbation), an audit of all the IDPs of local authorities revealed that they do not "respond to the needs of tourism sufficiently" (www.gauteng.net).

The decline in a small town's economic sectors, such as mining, can have positive spin-offs for tourism development (Najafi, Hamzeh, & Moqimi, 2014; Van der Merwe & Rogerson, 2013; Booyens & Visser, 2010). Despite the historical contexts of Kimberley as the town where the diamond rush started in the 1870s, the town is still not considered a tourist destination per se (Van der Merwe & Rogerson, 2013). Instead, it is a stopover en route elsewhere. Notwithstanding many efforts to put the Big Hole on the tourist map, "all policies and investments implemented by De Beers in terms of developing tourism and increasing the rate of tourists in Kimberley, have doomed to failure" (Najafi, Hamzeh, & Moqimi, 2014: 9). Pilgrims Rust, a whole town declared a national heritage area, is an exceptional example of tourism-led growth in a post-mining era that has sustained its tourist

numbers over the years. Adaptive reuse of specific historical facilities within this small town exemplifies heritage tourism based on the use of abandoned mine facilities so illustrating the advantage of tapping into local history (Nel, 2002). Today, however, due to poor management of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government (who owns most of the properties in the town), a mere handful of tourism establishments are still operational.

Another area of attention is the potential for linking small towns or rural communities in themed or branded routes for tourists (Department of Recreation and Tourism, 2012; Lourens, 2007; Parhanse, 2007). The tourism potential of heritage routes is often emphasised in LED strategies, where the routes are envisaged as providers of revenue-generating opportunities for conserving heritage assets. In this regard, the potential for economic development and heritage conservation of the Liberation Heritage Route has been explored by Snowball and Courtney (2010). Literary tourism routes based on stand-alone authors is another trail-themed area for study and application (Stiebel, 2013). The study of Van der Merwe (2014) questioned the heritage status of battlefields tourism in Dundee.

Most tourism-related studies are conducted with the consumer (the tourist) in mind. A notable exception is Prinsloo and Pelsers's (2015) case study of Mafikeng (North West Province capital) which investigated the impact and potential of tourism as perceived by the local population. They found a generally positive attitude among residents toward tourism development. The issue of tourism-led LED is synonymous with place-making as evident in the case study of Coffee Bay (Eastern Cape), where place-making determinants and processes applicable to the town entail "optimal use of resources that are unique to an area, for the economic (increased investment in the area, rise in tourists coming in, improved environments for fishing, establishment of a fully functional and beneficial fishing industry), social (improved well-being of local residents), community (infrastructure and livelihood within the town) and otherwise benefits" (Sitinga & Auroibindo, 2014, n. p.n).

Halseth and Meiklejohn (2009) point out that small towns constantly search for new activities to replace or supplement traditional economies. One of the most common strategies is tourism which is widely recognised as an instrument of LED. Until the 1980s, tourism-led LED was largely confined to the place-marketing activities of the traditional sea, sun and sand resorts of North America and Western Europe. The role of tourism SMMEs in the small town of Parys (Free State) has shown that there are a number of challenges for such enterprises in the town and these are probably not unique to this small town (Booyesen & Visser, 2010). They recommended that SMMEs focus on attractions in their development of tourism products. Specific market segments, such budget tourists and the family market, need to be explored. Nel (2005) argues that small towns must respond to job losses and crises and take advantage of new growth opportunities by initiating LED. Regarding SMME support from government, Nyawo and Mubangizi (2015) contend that although rural small town arts and crafts enterprises have high growth potential, this can only happen if municipalities, in collaboration with other stakeholders, can effectively support this sector.

Notwithstanding national government's acknowledgement of the essential role of local governments in supporting tourism development, they have been forced to introduce a number of supportive initiatives to capacitate these institutions (Gibb & Nel, 2007; Van Niekerk & Marais, 2008; Rogerson C. M. 2013a, b; Ingle, 2014). Despite policy implementation, there appears to be a lack of coordination of policy to harness the potential of tourism as a LED agent. Van Niekerk and Marais (2008) confirm one of the main obstacles to tourism LED in small towns, such in Philippolis and neighbouring towns, namely the lack of skilled people to manage some of the initiatives. Local policymakers are confronted by some fundamental unresolved issues relating to urban tourism and inclusive development in South Africa (Rogerson C. M. 2013a, b). These are:

First, is the extent to which local governments can be credited as drivers or responsible for the growth of urban tourism. ...Second, is the need for greater policy intervention to secure more inclusive growth linked to tourism. On the existing record the most promising areas for policy attention surround the strengthening the role of emerging black entrepreneurs in tourism supply chains as well as expanding their involvement in the direct ownership of new tourism products. Lastly, the expansion of urban tourism points to the need for improving capacity within South African local governments in order to regulate or control the tourism sector in responsible ways so as to at least preserve and potentially to improve the environment for the development and growth of existing and future tourism businesses (Rogerson C. M. 2013b: 198).

Rogerson C. M. (2013a: 21) points to the “need for widespread capacity building for local governments in tourism planning which must include both those local governments which are the leading destinations for tourism visits and those localities which are tourism-dependent local economies”. Similarly, the advantageous synergies between local authorities, value chains, private sector and donor funding are needed to strengthen LED portfolios of local authorities (Ingle, 2014). A case study of the redevelopment of the town of Alicedale has shown how the town revived due to the formation of strong public–private partnerships that concentrated on tourism-based development in collaboration with the community (Gibb & Nel, 2007). A key observation they made was that development is not just about planning by business (private sector) and government officials, but there needs to be a “significant amount of information transfer and much higher levels of community engagement” in the process (Gibb & Nel, 2007: 83). Attention to community participation in tourism development has been explored by Ramukumba, Pietersen, Mmbengwa, and Coetzee (2011). Their case study of towns and rural areas in the Garden Route found that interested groups’ participation depended on “power, objectives, and expectations from community participation and these shape their attitudes towards forms of community participation” (Ramukumba et al., 2011: n.p.n). They identified three levels in the process of tourism development, namely “(1) community participation in the decision-making process of tourism development in their areas, (2) community participation in the management of actual operating tourism projects in their areas, and (3) community participation in the actual development and marketing of tourism projects in their areas” (Ramukumba et al., 2011: n.p.n).

Florida (2002) contends that the clustering of human capital is a decisive factor in regional economic growth and it is key to the successful regeneration of cities and small towns. The role played by the creative class of small enterprises in fostering tourism-led developments is also well known, yet scantily researched (Ingle, 2010; Irvine et al., 2016). Private-led tourism development initiatives in Victoria West (Van Rooy & Marais, 2012) and Richmond (Donaldson & Vermeulen, 2012) all appear to be operating within a fragile partnership between the creative-class champions and the community. Some municipalities have seen the introduction of economic development agencies (EDA) and the implementation of small town regeneration models. The Aspire EDA in the Amathole municipal area is in this regard an outstanding example (McKibbin, Binns, & Nel, 2012; Xuza, 2012).

Some provincial governments have attempted to integrate the SDIs into their existing and new regional planning strategies, such as the Tourism Master Plan of the North West Province. They identified high-density (Hartbeespoortdam/Rustenburg) and secondary nodes (e.g. Klerksdorp/Potchefstroom, Mafikeng/Zeerust) to channel investment opportunities into tourism development. These areas are said to tie into the Platinum SDI (Donaldson, 2007).

Rogerson's (2007) analysis of tourism SMMEs in one of the poorer provinces in the country, Mpumalanga, produced a set of key policy implications (Box 2.1) possibly representative of issues experienced in other poorer provinces. In less well-off regions, such as the Karoo region (spanning a number of provinces), a custom-built spaceport would not be a far-fetched idea given the renewed status of the region and that this would profoundly affect the development of tourism in the arid interior (Ingle, 2011).

Box 2.1: Key policy implications for Mpumalanga

- The development of the tourism SMME economy is taking place within a context of the differential roles and patterns of international versus domestic tourism flows in the province.
- Long-haul international tourism is the leading driver of the provincial tourism economy and furnishes a range of opportunities for SMME development.
- The importance of opportunities for SMME development in relation to patterns of domestic and regional tourism flows must not be overlooked.
- The tourism economy is dominated numerically by SMMEs, the majority of which are owned by white entrepreneurs, a segment of whom would fall into the categorisation of lifestyle entrepreneurs.
- In common with the growth of tourism in South Africa as a whole, since 1993, there has occurred a surge in the birth of new tourism SMMEs across Mpumalanga, especially for accommodation provision.

- Among the new entrepreneurs in the Mpumalanga tourism economy are a small group of black tourism entrepreneurs, many of whom are targets of national and provincial government support programmes.
- Using indicators of occupancy and entrepreneurs' own acknowledgement of recent business performance, the tourism SMME economy is in a relatively healthy condition.
- A critical policy issue for provincial tourism relates to the shortage of labour with adequate skills in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- As a marketing-intensive sector, the improvement and enhanced marketing of the tourism products of Mpumalanga is essential.

Source: Rogerson (2007: 90)

The expansion and growth of enterprise development in small towns has been extensively investigated by Toerien and Seaman (2010, 2012, 2014) as well as a specific focus on tourism (Toerien, 2012). The ability to reap the benefits while managing the risks associated with increased pressure placed on Clarens as major tourism town is paramount in the town's future (Marais, Venter, De Gouveia, Campbell, & Myburgh, 2012). Overcommercialisation and its impacts on the character of the town, its services and equality in development are exacerbated by the introduction of three-storey Protea Hotel building which threatens the town with the loss of its popularity among visitors as a tranquil and scenery-rich destination (Marais et al., 2012). The uniqueness of attractions is well known to be a prime motivation for visiting a small town (Ferreira, 2007). So, Ramukumba (2014) investigated the potential economic and developmental impacts in cases, where iconic unique attractions exist or disappear. The cessation of the Outeniqua Choo Choo train service is a telling example of the latter (Ramukumba, 2014).

Regarding small tourism businesses (STBs) in George, Biljohn (2015: 1) found that a “disconnect exists between some support programmes and interventions, and the needs of STBs to access such opportunities” and the study furthermore “points to the need for the development of a programme evaluation model for local government programmes”. In another case study of George, Lamont and Ferreira (2015) discuss the challenges facing the management and development of tourism. They hold that the way in which decision-makers conceptualise tourism as a driver of economic development significantly affects management and ultimately policy development and delivery. Generally, local authority officials have a low status of understanding tourism and because of the “low budget allocation and the lack of clarity about its nature and interests, [tourism] is currently labeled as the Cinderella of service delivery” (Lamont & Ferreira, 2015: 1). It is evident that the duality of the tourism space economy remains intact throughout the country. In the Eastern Cape, for example, stark disparities exist between the relatively more developed but localised and nodal formal, urban-industrial, first economy system, and the relatively large but underdeveloped, poor, informal, rural, subsistence-based

agricultural economy of the province (Acheampong, 2016). This scenario applies to all the provinces that contain vast areas of former homelands.

A number of papers published by J.M. Rogerson have given invaluable insights into the neglected topic of tourism accommodation in small towns. Specifically, she has observed a significant shift in the geographical distribution of hotels and hotel capacities in South Africa (Rogerson J.M. 2013a, b, c). She found that an

increased spatial concentration of hotels within the category of the country's metropolitan centers and large cities as well as in the group of secondary cities and large towns. By contrast, a decline is evident in the hotel sector across the category of small towns as a whole. Between 1990 and 2010 in metropolitan areas and large cities, the net total of hotels increased by 216 establishments, and the numbers of rooms more than doubled. Smaller growth was recorded for the group of secondary cities and large towns, which show a net increase of 30 hotels and an expansion of hotel capacity of 3,805 rooms. Although the category of small towns reveals a net decline of 84 hotel establishments, an actual expansion in room capacity is recorded with an additional 3,297 rooms (Rogerson J.M. 2013c: 430).

She has also noted a decline of the number of liquor-focused budget hotels in small towns which have been replaced by other forms of accommodation. Two trends were observed. One, hotels in small towns simply closed down as a consequence of the broader economic decline of small town South Africa over the past two decades. Two, in small towns undergoing economic revival based on tourism-led development, the quality of local accommodation has been upgraded in the form of local guesthouses and the bed and breakfast establishments. A longitudinal historical study tracing hotel supply in the Free State identified three distinct eras with the closure of hotels since the 1970s emerging as a particular feature in small towns of the province. From the 1990s, the regional economy of accommodation has become more "complex with the appearance of new small-scale forms of accommodation which create new geographies of accommodation supply" (Rogerson J.M. 2013d: 430).

2.6 Connecting Small Towns Tourism Through Tourism Routes

High unemployment, isolated geographical locations, lack of infrastructure, lack of and/or the inability to exploit cultural and natural resources are some of the factors hindering tourism development initiatives in small towns located outside the weekend-trip zone of large urban nuclei. However, outlying areas can be integrated successfully into regional tourism plans. Tourist routes have been depicted as a sophisticated way of developing and promoting place-based cultural tourism. Smith (2015: 229) defines a tourist route as:

A route, usually presented through a map and signage, links attractions of a single theme that encourages a visitor to take in multiple sites in a relatively narrow geographic area. In effect, routes cluster attractions and serve as a navigation aid for visitors...The promotion of

a route offers a more critical mass of attractions than the *du jour* model and features joint promotion of participating businesses along the route. In some cases, the route may also link cultural attractions with local accommodation and food services.

Tourists following themed routes is no new phenomenon in tourism. The European Grand Tour, Route 66 and the Blue Ridge Parkway in the USA, the Silk Road across Asia and the Birdsville track in Australia are examples of routes that facilitate this form of tourism (Hardy, Beeton, & Carter, 2005). In the USA, for example, the California Highway 89 regional tourism model and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's project to preserve main-street heritage in three Midwestern towns have shown that local economies can be revived through a single strategy (Lapenas, 2002). Success depends largely on outside funding, getting public involvement and marketing existing resources. Route tourism according to Rogerson (2004) offers a promising potential vehicle for LED in many small towns and rural areas in South Africa. The rationale behind route development is to group products—such as arts and crafts, wine, built cultural heritage environments—to provide a diversity of experiences, hence aiming to influence tourist travel patterns. By nature, tourism routes are brands of the regions.

Most small towns in South Africa lost some level of autonomy during the municipal demarcation process in 2000 when South Africa's post-apartheid government embarked on a policy of rationalisation and re-demarcation of city boundaries. At the time, there were 791 local authorities which were reduced to 231. In such cases, it may be that "the loss of authoritative, political, informational, financial and organisational resources took away much of the discretionary power of the local communities" (O'Toole, n/d: 4). In many cases, local development groups have evolved to fill the void left by the former local government structures. Small towns previously competing with neighbours to attract investments and tourists must now capitalise on the strong cross-boundary effects—externalities—to define whether relations between municipalities turn out to be competitive or cooperative. Developing tourism routes to create a brand for a wider region is one way of achieving cooperation.

Present-day South Africa has no shortage of tourism routes. As a national industry in South Africa located outside metropolitan areas and playing a significant role in regional development, wine tourism is a renowned way of building a brand and selling a destination and experience (Ferreira & Hunter, 2017). Wine routes in South Africa are geographically concentrated in small towns within a radius of 150 km from Cape Town, attracting in excess of 18,000 visitors per year. Most routes are private enterprises resulting in a lack of cohesive marketing strategy for the region as a whole. Route 62 in the Western Cape is perhaps the best example to illustrate how the linking of various products across the province provides an overall experience for tourists. Greyton and neighbouring Genadendal are one of few towns which form part of a cultural historical route in the Western Cape. Small towns abutting the Gauteng conurbation are also reaping the benefits of the Provincial Blue IQ investment initiative, such as the Dinokeng Route that includes the mining town of Cullinan. The town has become a favourite stopover for

thousands of weekend motorcyclist on breakfast runs. Specifically designed architecture, local history and small town tourism routes are used to attract tourists to small towns located off main transport corridors. The Horizon Route in the south-western Free State links five historical towns, and many communities into a tourism experience that aims to change tourists' travel patterns between Gauteng and Cape Town. There is major tourism-development potential at Gariep Dam, Philippolis, Bethulie and Fauresmith which form part of the Transgariep Tourism route. However, according to Van Niekerk and Marais (2008), the integrated development plan (IDP) provides no clear concrete plans as to what is to be done.

The effectiveness of cultural and heritage routes is often questioned, because they are viewed as 'high culture' tourism resources and that generally do not attract large numbers of tourists (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2009). An example of previously disadvantaged communities being innovatively tied into a route is the Amakuze tourism route in KwaZulu-Natal. The route combines railways, nature and culture for tourists to experience the Amakuze tribal area's history, culture and natural heritage (Gardyne, Hill, & Nel, 2005). Another successful tourism route is the Midlands Meander in KwaZulu-Natal (Lourens, 2007). The route evolved as an unplanned LED initiative through the collaboration of a group of artists, potters and weavers. The success of the route is attributed to its serving a niche market, namely high-income day trippers and tour groups. The route has been criticised for being exclusive and for not tapping into the cultural experiences of Zulu rural traditionalism. It is expected to transform into a broad-based LED initiative (Rogerson, 2004).

The contribution of the private sector is illustrated well by the role played by Open Africa, an NGO aiming to optimise tourism, to create employment and to conserve the continent. A project that is "arguably the fastest and most cost effective development project in Africa" (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004: 77), the African Dream project had 34 routes in 2004 of which 12 were developed without, and 22, with community participation and involving 44 towns. A major weakness in this Web-based strategy is that Open Africa does not involve itself in any of the internal politics of a specific route, especially if there is no collective will within a community to successfully drive the initiative (Visser, 2003).

In a different context namely conservation, national policies have impacted on tourist routes. A case in point is the Trout Triangle in Mpumalanga. The history of trout fly-fishing in the Trout Triangle route comprising the five small towns of Dullstroom, Belfast, Machadodorp, Lydenburg and Waterval Boven dates back to the 1890s. Today, the trout-fishing industry is considered by the local authority to be an important tourist attraction, where tourism forms the primary economic base with commercial and recreational activities mainly centred around trout fishing (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010a, b). A study of the trout fishing industry in Rhodes determined that it directly generates about R5.7 million per annum and sustains a minimum of 39 direct job opportunities in the community (Du Preez & Lee, 2010). Dullstroom, as trout-fishing destination, attracts a variety of visitors not only who pass through the town to other regions, but also who consider the town as their final

destination. Potential visitors are lured to the town by induced tourism images based on trout fishing, the attractive natural environment and special events (Anna Elizabeth De Jager, 2010). Managing invasive species as well as the issuing of mining and/or prospecting rights are, however, posing serious challenges to the tourism industry. According to Juniors Marire (2015), the management of alien and invasive fish species such as rainbow trout and brown trout is the most controversial aspect of present-day biodiversity conservation policy in South Africa. The implementation of these new policies is said to be facing stiff opposition from the trout industry, of which tourism is central. In addition to the biodiversity policies is the issue of encroachment of mining into the triangle. Within the Trout Triangle, the National Department of Mineral Resources continues to issue mining and/or prospecting rights that contravene municipal land-use zoning regulations for tourism and biodiversity conservation. It has been predicted that as mining spreads into the Trout Triangle, much harm will be done to the level of fishing tourism as mining destroys tangible as well as intangible (goodwill) capital (Marire, Snowball, & Fraser, 2014).

2.7 Visiting Friends and Relatives

Apart from consultancy research reports, has there been surprising very little research conducted on tourist travel patterns and trends. Visser (2003) made reference to a highly uneven tourism space economy that limits the impact of investments in and involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals and communities, and towns outside the core nodes of tourism development. He laments South African Tourism's marketing approach to increase tourist flows and increase the length of stay, by arguing that "what needs to be addressed is how to persuade tourists to go to those parts of the country that are ignored by current visitation trends" (Visser, 2003: 287). So too has Cornelissen's work (2005:163) confirmed this lopsided picture in her study in the Western Cape showing that tourism is geographically focused, with tourist activities concentrated in a few locales and sub-regions—most notably Cape Town and other large urban centres. While studies and surveys done to track visitor patterns are mainly done by industry consultants, have such data informed academic scholarship (Maumbe & Donaldson, 2010) and debate, on the underresearched theme of one of the largest components of tourism economies, namely Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR).

Rogerson and Hoogendoorn (2014: 17) were the first to investigate various trends and impacts of VFR travel in South Africa. The VFR segment is "massively dominated by 'ordinary' or working-class travellers with the black population representing approximately 78% of national VFR travelers" (Rogerson, 2017: 469). VFR according to Rogerson (2016) account for 50% of travel to small towns and rural areas in South Africa. Rogerson's (2015) VFR research has linked this market to historical migration trends (forced through apartheid legislations). His research argues that there is still duality in small town tourism trends in the country: "On the

one hand are those small towns and rural areas which are located in the former apartheid Homelands. On the other hand are those more prosperous small towns and rural areas which formerly were constituted as part of so-termed space of former ‘White’ South Africa. These areas have starkly different legacies and their tourism trajectories still reflect the apartheid imprint” (Rogerson, 2016: 8). He found that many of the district municipalities—and by implication therefore rural homesteads, hamlets and rural small towns—in the provinces of Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and North West (so-called distressed areas) are important destinations for VFR travellers (due to being previously former homeland areas) (Rogerson, 2015, 2016, 2017). The research of Donaldson (2013) has in addition shown the importance of the VFR segment in the Western Cape where up to 20% expatriates were identified to be visiting friends and family during their stay in the province. VFR is therefore a vital component of the tourism industry in South Africa, especially in small towns and rural contexts, and which is often overlooked by marketing agencies in their tourism strategies.

2.8 Other Research Foci

There is a paucity of the ‘not so nice and not so sexy tourism’ research topics such as those addressing and critically reflecting on socio-political and racial aspects of social transformation processes in tourism. There are, however, a handful of debates on the periphery of these topics. Josefsson (2014: 258) has critically examined how game farms in Kwazulu-Natal’s Battlefields route safeguard and perpetuate a colonial present “whilst obscuring opportunities for other ways of interpreting and using the space of the farm”. In a case study of race and space in Prince Albert, McEwen and Steyn (2013: 8) argue that while the town’s social problems are reflected in local government documentation only, “the most prolific and audible public discourse is present in texts promoting Prince Albert as a tourist destination”. They further argue that:

Although whites are in the demographic minority in the town, the special access to dominant discourses about Prince Albert is utilised by semigrant power elites to actively promote discourses which support both white identity and material interests...[and it has been] shown how heritage and tourism serve white material interests in the town (McEwen 2013). Here we are concerned with the particular ways of knowing employed by semigrant power elites and how these ways of knowing, which construct Prince Albert as ‘charming’, ‘old world’ and ‘peaceful’, can be understood through the lens of race and power in the context of Transformation (McEwen & Steyn, 2013:8).

In Roebert’s (2014) rebuttal, “[T]he black magic of ‘whiteness studies’”, of McEwen and Steyn’s (2013) paper, he insists that white ‘semigrant’ tourist operators portrayed as a hegemonic ‘power elite’ by McEwen and Steyn are misrepresented. He furthermore asserts why there are “no grounds for asserting that these residents are using their tourist activities, under the banner of “heritage” and

“tourism”, as a means for establishing a segregated “apartheid-era” white control of the town and its resources” (Roebert, 2014: 1).

One aspect of South Africa’s post-apartheid transformation that sits uneasily with those driving development in the tourism industry, is place-name changes. Unfortunately, the impact of rebranding has been underresearched in tourism studies over the past decade. Contrasting outcomes (economic and sentimental) between racial groups in the town of St Lucia were observed when in 2007 the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park was re-branded as the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (iSWP) to market it as an indigenous and local product (Chellan, Mtshali, & Khan, 2013). Box 2.2 captures the duality of tourism beneficiaries between whites and blacks. However, it is not only place-name changes that evoke emotions. The world heritage status will also impact on strong place identities of communities. For this reason, Puren, Drewes, and Roos (2008) have called for an integration of intangible aspects, such as the sense of place of an area, into spatial planning in South Africa. They explored personal and symbolic meanings, as part of the sense of place of local inhabitants in the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site, especially in the context of renewed pressure for development.

Box 2.2: Politics of rebranding Greater St Lucia Wetland Park

“...it is the established White tourism accommodation owners that provide tourist’s packages to the area with international marketing links that have benefited most. In the town center, long-established eating houses and tourist sport, entertainment and recreational companies have felt a serious decline in business since the rebranding of the area. The worst felt effect of rebranding is on the local Black people of the area who felt excluded from the already ailing economy of the town due to them being confined predominantly to livelihood activities in the informal sector, seasonal and often contract forms of employment in the tourism industry. One of the important contradictions is the Park’s marginalisation of domestic tourism for nature conservation reasons which prior to the rebranding process was reportedly known to have had a positive impact on the town’s economy. Instead of maintaining a balance between local tourism and nature conservation principles, the Park’s authority chose to trade off the former in the interest of the latter by banning all forms of recreational and sporting activities that affect the environment. In addition an important political contradiction which the study highlights is the rebranding of the Park to an indigenous name which many of the predominantly local White residents in the town do not identify with. The area continues to be passionately marketed by its previous name and the town’s business community feels that this name is the brand which most tourists look for and identify with. In so far as embracing the new brand name, there appeared very little support for this amongst the White town’s people. However, whilst local Blacks welcomed the transformation taking place in terms of rebranding the area with an indigenous name, they were sceptical

whether any miracles as the name iSimangaliso suggests will be experienced in their lifetime as the global tourism focus of the Park for markets has not made any positive impacts on their lives in this tourist town”.

Source: Chellan, Mtshali, and Khan (2013: 27)

Aspects of educational tourism at university towns such as Stellenbosch (Hamilton & Ferreira, 2013) and volunteer tourism (individuals going on a working holiday, volunteering their labour for worthy causes—see Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004) are becoming increasingly popular forms of travel and warrant further investigation. A case study of volunteer tourists in Stilbay’s township, Melkhoutfontein, volunteers observed social issues such as high unemployment rates, drug dealing and abuse, violence, Aids, racism and the aspirations of South African youths. The volunteers’ activities were questioned regarding how their volunteering actually makes a difference to the people in Melkhoutfontein (Sin, 2009). Research foci on aspects pertaining to the negative impacts of volunteer tourism include a “neglect of locals’ desires, a hindering of work progress and completion of unsatisfactory work, a disruption of local economies, a reinforcement of conceptualisations of the ‘other’ and rationalisations of poverty, and an instigation of cultural changes” (Guttentag, 2009: 537). Moreover, Sin (2009) suggests research on the perspectives of the aid recipients of volunteer tourism and the power relations arising from volunteer tourism within host communities, and how different stakeholders negotiate their power or lack of it in attaining their own agendas. Educational tourism such as study-abroad programmes has introduced a complex array of opportunities for host destinations and international visitors (Hamilton & Ferreira, 2013; Donaldson & Gatzinsi, 2005).

Issues around green tourism and more specifically in the tourism accommodation sector is also only emerging as a theme of late (Fitchett, Grant, & Hoogendoorn, 2016; Hoogendoorn, Grant, & Fitchett, 2016). Hoogendoorn, Grant, and Fitchett’s (2016) investigation among Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal guest house owners in some small towns demonstrated that the majority of owners are aware of their impact on the environment and are interested in mitigating these harms.

One study has attempted to make a link between tourism development, the role of entrepreneurs and the gentrification of the small town of Greyton (Donaldson, 2009). Chapter 6 in the book revisits this case study further.

The application of geographical information systems (GIS) in tourism research in South Africa is surprisingly negligible despite GIS being offered at most universities in the country and its use at all levels in industry at all levels. Van der Merwe (2013) applied spatial multiple criteria evaluation in a GIS to aid the development of spatial policy and planning of cultural and food and wine tourism in the Western Cape. Another study investigated how agritourism can be planned spatially by means of GIS (Van der Merwe, Ferreira, & Van Niekerk, 2013). Gap analysis has also been applied to the Western Cape in GIS to inform tourism planning (Van der Merwe & Van Niekerk, 2013).

2.9 Conclusion

In the chapter on small town tourism in South Africa (Donaldson, 2007), I concluded by outlining a research agenda for urban tourism in small town South Africa which called for research concentrating on six themes: (1) monitor the outcomes of LED tourism projects; (2) a multi-sectoral, in-depth study on national and provincial non-tourism specific policies essential to identify certain linkages in policy attempts; (3) the much neglected research area of the conservation of the built environment calls for emphasis on the role and strategies that public institutions should play in conserving the built heritage environment with the aim to create a tourism-friendly heritage environment; (4) aspects of quality of life and the cultural and social outcomes of hosting of festivals; (5) comparative exploration of the success of tourism routes by looking at the nature, extent, impact (social, economic and environmental) at inter- and intra-provincial levels; and (6) issues of rural gentrification related to tourism development (Donaldson, 2007). Ten years on from that review, as was seen in this chapter, the growth of academic debates on issues of small town tourism has been remarkable.

While many studies have addressed these research themes, policy linkages and heritage conservation have not received much attention. The geography of urban conservation of the built environment and its importance to tourism development remains a much neglected research theme in South African tourism studies. While other disciplines have investigated aspects of small town heritage (Malcolm, 1998; Kemp, 2000), these studies tend to ignore the link with tourism development. Presenting a uniqueness, something that makes a town stand out from the rest such as being a winner of a Town of the Year competition or the first and only slow city or book town are ideal ways to brand and promote small town development. There has in addition also been scant attention paid to the role of branding of small towns and the interplay between the power elite and tourism development, and these aspects will therefore form the fulcrum of the remaining chapters in the book.

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