



Growing Heritage Tourism and Social Cohesion in South Africa

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Abstract

Heritage and cultural tourism are notably one of the fastest emerging competitive niche tourism segments both locally and internationally. This paper explores the nature of heritage tourism as well as the concept of social cohesions before dealing with the questions of how heritage opportunities can be balanced with challenges that currently face South Africa. A line of inquiry is also followed where the future of heritage tourism in South Africa is interrogated and how it can be utilised to improve and support social cohesion and nation building. Due to the South Africa's apartheid history, cultural diversity of available heritage products is under-represented and consequently also under-performing despite being highly desirable by tourists (South Africa, 2012:16). An awareness of the ability of heritage and cultural tourism to contribute toward social cohesion has also been lacking despite research suggesting that South Africans have a desire to visit heritage sites but that the unavailability of information and inadequate communication between museum marketers, local authorities and the public, local tourists decreases the likelihood of them visiting these heritage sites. The development of multimedia presentations in different forms has done much to enhance the cultural heritage experience or tourist. However, this need to be linked to the skills development and training of heritage tourists guides to ensure that they are in sync with international developments such as the integration of information and communication technology during their interaction with tourists. The paper concludes that there is a need to better understand how heritage tourism interacts with other forms of tourism, such as shopping, sports, nature-based and cruise tourism in a context where heritage tourism has been found to be under-performing in the broader tourism market.

Keywords: Heritage, tourism, South Africa, culture, training.

The Context

Heritage and cultural tourism are notably one of the fastest emerging competitive niche tourism segments both locally and internationally. Over time, developments in heritage and cultural tourism have shown an increase in the number of travelers who are seeking both authentic and memorable experiences through meaningful interaction with local peoples and their cultures. According to the WTTC, travel and tourism continued to show resilience despite increasing and unpredictable shocks from terrorist attacks, political instability, health pandemics, and natural disasters (WTTC, 2017). It is further reported that for the period 2010-2016, growth in tourism has



continued to outpace that of the global economy. Cultural tourism generally has a faster growth rate than most other tourism segments worldwide. The OECD report (2009) for example shows that more than 50% of tourist activity in Europe is driven by cultural heritage and cultural tourism and today continues to do so. However, due to South Africa's political history of apartheid, the cultural diversity of available heritage products is under-represented and consequently also under-performing despite being highly desirable by tourists (South Africa, 2012:16). What has also become apparent is that there is lack of awareness of the ability of heritage and cultural tourism to contribute toward social cohesion and how this can be achieved.

Research Methodology

A literature review and meta - analytical approach methodology was followed in the crafting of this paper. We describe heritage tourism in South Africa and how it has been unable to grow optimally and contribute to nation building and social cohesion. We then established the context and related theories and ideas to it while rationalizing about the future of heritage tourism in South Africa and what is required to improve and support social cohesion and nation building. The literature review in this paper was of an exploratory nature due to the limited body of knowledge on the subject with regards to South Africa. The objective of this review was therefore to summarise and critically analyse relevant research and non- research literature on the topic under discussion. A secondary data research analysis was conducted which sought to fill a gap in the scientific body of knowledge on heritage tourism as a growth opportunity which can lead to improved social cohesion in the country.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's leading businesses and play a major role in global commerce. According to the World Tourism Organization the number of travelers has increased from 25 million in 1950 to 806 million in 2005 (Carolin *et al.*, 2015). Steyn and Spencer (2011) state that tourism is world's biggest industry, growing at compound rates of about 4% per annum. Tourism, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council accounts for 9.3% of GDP and 9.8% or approximately 1.5 million jobs in South Africa and is expect to rise to about 2.5 million or 13.2% of the total number of jobs in the country in 2027 (WTTC, 2017). Rosentraub and Joo (2009:1) point to the fact that: "The scale of tourism and its growth has attracted the interest of a large number of state/provincial and local government officials who have tried to determine if their communities could capture a large portion of its economic activity". With South Africa facing particularly adverse economic challenges, tourism has stood out as a silver lining on a dark cloud. This is also borne out by the significant policy tools support such as the National Development Plan (NDP) which recognise tourism as key to economic growth, employment and the national transformation agenda (South Africa, Strategic Plan 2015-2020). Rogerson (2014) notes that the National Development Plan (NDP) provides a strategic map for sustainable development acknowledge tourism as one of the central drivers of the country's economy. The NDP builds upon previous policy initiatives with Fourie (2011) pointing to the fact that the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA) also identified the tourism sector as one of the two priority sectors that required dedicated support to assist economic growth.

Numerous tourism scholars also support the notion that heritage tourism is not only of economic significance but also stands out for having an important role to play with the facilitation of reconciliation, inclusiveness, commemoration and the formation of a national identity (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Meskell and Scheermeyer, 2008; Grobler, 2008; Khumalo, Sebatlelo, and van der Merwe, 2014). Heritage and cultural tourism products are also notably the fastest



emerging competitive niche or products within international and most importantly domestic markets.” (South Africa, 2012: 15). According to the National Department of Tourism (NDT), research has revealed that a substantial proportion of the heritage and cultural resources in South Africa are located in semi-urban and rural areas (South Africa, 2012). It is also acknowledged that “many of these resources are poorly developed and the potential of this sector has not been properly realized” (South Africa, 2012:10). Honkanen and Mustonen (2007) acknowledges that people in urban areas want to consume tourism more than people living in rural areas. Urban centres have therefore seen significant growth in tourism in cities such as Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town (Rogerson 2013). The post 1994 South Africa has experienced the emergence of many cities as important centres of tourism consumption due to urbanization which has led to increasingly concentrated and populous cities.

However, due to the country’s apartheid history, cultural diversity of available heritage products is underrepresented and consequently also under-performing despite being highly desirable by tourists (South Africa, 2012). Awareness of the ability of heritage and cultural tourism to contribute toward social cohesion has also been lacking. Butler and Ivanovic (2016:65) also argues that “it is of significant importance that South African cultural heritage is representative of a nation rich in diversity”. Gordon et al. (2015) remark that sites of cultural or historical significance have the potential to attract particularly young visitors. Drawn from the results of a national survey by the HSRC it is shown that young South Africans in particular are interested in the nation’s history and heritage. This survey also concludes that the majority of young people has neither an awareness nor visited such sites. This finding is supported by research done by Masilo and Van der Merwe (2016) who found that South Africans have a desire to visit heritage sites but experiences a lack of information. 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. The question can therefore be posed as to what is required to develop heritage and cultural resources in ways which will raise awareness, among different targets groups to contribute to cohesion and simultaneously increase the global competitiveness of South African? This paper will now explore what constitutes heritage tourism and what are current dynamics which shapes heritage tourism which may have bearing on the questions raised. We will then briefly explore the concept of social cohesion in the context of current heritage tourism in South Africa.

Heritage Tourism

Jamal and Kim, (2005:56) argue that the shifting paradigms of tourism and globalization, restless populations and identity conflicts have made it necessary for researchers to better understand the concepts ‘heritage’ and ‘heritage tourism’ in particular. We pause briefly with the concept of tourism before exploring heritage and heritage tourism. Tourism can be defined as “the practice of traveling for pleasure, education or business. Tourism is also about tourist’s personality, attitudes, values and lifestyle. It incorporates new experiences, meeting people, places, traditions, culture. This is closely linked to psychology, which eventually examines motivation for travelling, individual needs and satisfaction” Simkova and Holzner (2014: 660). The conceptual notion of ‘heritage’ carries with it in the historical space particular values which are viewed as part of the cultural traditions of society (Wiendu Nuryanti, 1996). Heritage arguably plays a fundamental role in enhancing the identity of a region or nation, and can be considered a key vehicle for expressing both national and regional unity and cohesion. Heritage can also be defined as ‘that which a past generation has preserved and handed on to the present and which a significant group of population wishes to hand on to the future’ (Hewison, 1989: 16; Park and Stephenson, 2007).



Heritage tourism is viewed as part of cultural tourism and is regarded as one of oldest and notably widespread types of tourism globally. Records of ancient history show that Egyptians, Romans and other medieval aristocrats travelled to experience and appreciate places of significant cultural and historical value (Towner, 1996). There have been many debates around and interpretations of the word 'heritage'. Today the most commonly accepted definition among scholars' is reference to 'the present day use of the past' (Ashworth, 2003; Graham et al., 2000). Although purposefully broad, this definition includes both tangible and intangible features which may form part of the cultural landscape. Some observers and role players, including UNESCO, have thought it proper to include natural heritage into the scope of this definition (Boyd & Butler, 2000; Thorsell & Sigaty, 2001). As a form of travel, heritage tourism also includes visits to sites or areas of particular historical importance. This can consist of urban or built environments, dwellings associated with well-known individuals, monuments, rural and natural landscapes and specific locations or places of cultural significance where historic events may have occurred. Heritage tourism is due to its scope and richness of great global significance and is regarded as one of the most important types of tourism by attracting hundreds of millions of visitors every year (Timothy and Boyd, 2006).

Jamal and Kim (2005:58) contends that "since the notion of heritage is integrally related to the past (historicity), it can be argued that heritage tourism is intrinsically about life, existence, belonging and change – from the past into the present and future – it involves a performative act of appropriating, interpreting, and communicating aspects of the past through performance, storied texts, physical sites and material artifacts. It is these multifaceted dimensions that makes heritage tourism such an important part of tourism studies". According to Visser and Hoogendoorn (2012), following the 2009 elections, the South African national government has instituted significant changes in government to support tourism. This included the establishment of a stand-alone 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; DanteseSA and Mather, 2011; Okech, 2010; Rivett-Carnac, 2011; Rogerson, 2013).

However, 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. Visser and Hoogendoorn (2012: 67) have analyzed South African tourism policy and from the first tourism White Paper in 1996 to 2012 and concluded that that four key issues have consistently been in need of attention. These issues include the limited involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals in the tourism industry; uneven tourism investment across different regions marked by limited incentives, perpetuation of a highly uneven tourism space economy which restricted the impact of incentives and the slow pace of transformation of tourism in support of pro-poor development. Another attribute of heritage which is of major significance to tourism in South Africa and elsewhere is its political dimension. There is consensus among various tourism scholars that there are few social elements and types of tourism that are more hotly contested at so many levels (Hall, 1997; Timothy and Boyd, 2003; Timothy and Prideaux, 2004). One example is that of social or collective amnesia, where clear preferences of selective events and people occur, or a targeted intervention which ignore the history of certain groups of people. This has been a particularly emotional issue and examples globally range from the context of indigenous Africans in South Africa, Native Americans and African Americans in the United



States, Aboriginal peoples in Australia, and even the Chinese in some parts of Southeast Asia (Boniface and Fowler, 1993; Goudie et al., 1996). These examples are of particular groups of people who have at some point in history been oppressed by other ethnic groups who hold power. Those with power then ensure that particular people and events is de-emphasized or even written out of official history. Such a history often increases the complexity of heritage which may be viewed as divisive by those who was oppressed.

The popularity of tourism in South Africa has been linked with the bush experience, because of the fauna and flora that define South Africa, where tourists can enjoy the big five in a plethora of public and privately owned nature reserves. Saarinen and Rogerson (2015) noted that there has been a shortage of cultural tourism products in the past for Southern Africa, because of the strong domination of nature and wildlife oriented tourism products. Shackley (2001) contends that in 1999 Robben Island was declared one of South Africa's World Heritage Sites, together with Greater St. Lucia Wetland and the Sterkfontein fossil hominid sites. "In South Africa, as in other countries, cultural tourism is an industry that is closely linked to the nation's past. This past is many respects turbulent and characterized by intergroup contests for supremacy, military conflict, economic exploitation and cultural supremacy" (Grobler, 2008: 164). "Post-apartheid South Africa has seen the development of many new museums that have challenged the established idea of the museums and what should be placed on display. The Robben Island Museum and the District Six Museum, both in Cape Town, are both dedicated to telling the experience of apartheid. Heritage experiences have also been developed around the townships" (Crooke, 2005: 136). Ivanovic and Saayman (2013) noted that the main role of cultural heritage in tourism is learning about the past. Created by apartheid policies, African townships have hosted the struggle for liberation and have become important sites of heritage consumption post 1994. Township tours linked to cultural tourism are the dominant tourist demand that have opened up townships to the tourism industry. "Township tours offer sensory samples of ethnic diversity, visual traces of apartheid's deprivations, and memorials to resistance These three elements invariably form part of each township tour in a variety of permutations and with differing emphases" (Witz et al., 2001: 284).

Challenges and trends

The enormity of the economic impact of heritage tourism cannot be overstated. As one of the largest forms of tourism, visitors to historic places and the spending that accompanies them in the areas of accommodation and lodging, food, admission fees and shopping, contribute billions of dollar every year to the global economy and employ millions of people directly and indirectly (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). Heritage as a tourism product is also distributed across both urban areas and rural areas. Rural areas in South Africa have much to contribute to tourism due to its richness in natural landscapes and local cultural offering. However, developing rural tourism has particular challenges. Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003) argue, that since the success of tourism development often depends on commercial, economic and logistical issues such as the quality of the product, accessibility and infrastructure of the destination, availability of skills and interest of investors, rural areas may well be at a disadvantage compared to urbanized and more developed areas in most of these aspects. According to Nzama (2010) most rural areas in South Africa are characterized by under-developed infrastructure, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and inhabitants have a general lack of knowledge or understanding of tourism development matters. This is a similar scenario in other developing countries.



South Africa does invariably experience challenges of a political and institutional nature which relate to aspects of administrative complexity when dealing with less densely populated areas, a relative lack of policy co-ordination between tourism development and rural development, and the lower priority assigned by government which is in part due to the vastness and low population density of rural areas (Viljoen and Tlabela, 2007). Despite the importance of jobs and income that heritage attractions and events bring into communities and regions, perhaps one of the most significant stumbling blocks relate to the funding of the heritage sector. Linked to this is the sensitive matter of whether local people should be paying for access to and the use of their own heritage. Adding complexity to this matter, is the over-commercialization or commoditization of heritage and the consequential exclusion of people who cannot afford to pay user-fees. Fyall and Garrod (1998) also warn of the associated danger of the commercial side of site management that can potentially occupy too much time and effort, consume an inordinate amount of time and resources and result in less attention paid to other important tourism goals such as conservation and interpretation.

There is a recurring challenge related to the disparities in the diverse needs for both heritage and tourism. The commoditization of cultural heritage through tourism activities has revealed that the domain of tourism tends to thrive on the packaging of heritage resources for tourist consumption only for the purposes of tourism growth and development and not necessarily for the conservation of cultural heritage resources. The heritage sector has also been primarily concerned with the protection of heritage with little regard for the socio-economic opportunities resulting from the uses of heritage resources (South Africa, 2011). There may therefore be a lack of alignment to achieve mutual benefits for both heritage and tourism sectors which may also impact on improved social cohesion as one of the spin-offs of heritage tourism.

According to Masilo and van der Merwe (2016) some scholars believe that the element of entertainment and education ought to be considered as part of heritage tourism offerings. Hertzman, Anderson and Rowley (2008) refer to entertainment and education in the context of heritage tourism as 'edutainment heritage tourist attractions' (EHTAs). They consider 'edutainment' as "a hybrid form of attraction that seek to create a synergy between the educational value and the entertainment value of their heritage contents by using multimedia technologies" (Hertzman, Anderson and Rowley, 2008:155). Furthermore the nature of these EHTAs may be important sources of historical information and that tourists actively and critically engage with heritage representations at these attractions. The use of advance digital technology for tourism edutainment is also an important element which stimulates interest particularly among young people for who digital technology is an integral part of their lives. Chan (2009) for example noted that the museum is an amalgam of a sense of experience encounters (tangible and intangible) and museum experiences are derived from both service providers (quality of performance) and visitors themselves (quality experiences). He contends that heritage experience must be altered to adapt to technology, to respond to the changing customers. In addition multiple uses of heritage sites may also introduce the heritage experience to non-traditional heritage tourists.

Heritage tourism and social cohesion

To gain a better understanding of how heritage tourism relate to social cohesion we briefly pause and explore social cohesion as a concept. There are a wide variety of definitions for social cohesion and an even wider variety of indicators that are reported to be associated with social indicators. Moreover, opinions differ about the level at which social cohesion should be analyzed. Fenger (2012) states that social cohesion is a concept which is difficult to measure and hard to achieve. He also point to the fact that more than a century ago, Emile Durkheim, one of the



founding fathers of Sociology, also grappled with the concept of social cohesion and came to the conclusion that there was neither a clear definition of the concept of social cohesion nor was it possible to directly measure it. Questions have also been raised on whether social cohesion is an attribute of individuals, local communities, cities, regions or even countries. Despite what could be referred to 'fuzziness' that is connected with social cohesion as a concept, different actors in local communities have emphasized the importance of social cohesion. For instance, Job Cohen, a former mayor of the city of Amsterdam, once summed up his focus as a mayor in multi-cultural Amsterdam as "*de boel bij elkaar houden*" which means to 'keeping it all together' (Cohen, 2005). Other important actors within the international community have also assigned a great deal of importance to the concept of social cohesion.

The World Bank for example has stated that: "Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable" (World Bank, 1999). Even reports by the European Commission (2004, 2007) on economic and social cohesion were unable to provide a clear and concise definition of social cohesion but do suggest that employment rates, unemployment rates, poverty and education levels are important variables which influence social cohesion. Authors such as Rajulton et al. (2007:461-462) have also concluded that there is no universally-recognised definition of social cohesion and conceptualizations found in the literature are at times contradictory. However, despite the absence of a clear and concise definition, social cohesion is often understood as 'something that glues us together' which plays an important role in contemporary social and economic policies. Or, as Kearns and Forrest (2000: 996) state "[t]he kernel of the concept is that a cohesive society 'hangs together'; all the component parts somehow fit in and contribute to society's collective well-being; and conflict between social goals and groups, and disruptive behaviors, are largely absent or minimal". In many parts of the world, heritage has been used to improve unity and coherence of societies which assisted the building of shared values and could potentially play a role to achieve the same objectives in South Africa.

Heritage tourism is generally regarded as a positive contribution to strengthening community identity and social cohesion (Palmer, 1999). Heritage arguably plays a fundamental role in enhancing the identity of a region or nation, and is a major vehicle for expressing regional and national cohesion and unity (Park and Stephenson, 2007). Due to the South Africa's history, the cultural diversity of available heritage products is underrepresented and consequently also underperforming despite being considered as highly desirable by tourists (NDT 2012). Generally, an awareness of the ability of heritage and cultural tourism to contribute toward social cohesion and its ability to unite divided communities has also been lacking.

Multi-cultural societies such as South Africa pose a greater challenge due to the recognition that representations of heritage play an important role in the socio-culture and political landscape of the present (Lowenthal, 1985; Palmer, 2005; Wallis, 1994). Many theorists have contended that the notion that cultural heritage is often manipulated to portray contemporary representations which serve the present (Chronis, 2005), rather than portray realities from an objective past (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). The National Policy on South African Living Heritage (2009), argues in support of the promotion of social cohesion in a multi-cultural society where there is recognition of important and joint national symbols, rituals, and festivals that help to create national identity. This is where tangible heritage and intangible heritage are viewed as inseparable. There are several examples of national symbols and festivals which need to be recognized and safeguarded for their value as the living heritage of South Africans. According to the National Policy, symbols such as the national flag, national coat of arms, national anthem as well as sites of particular historical importance are among the symbols which need to be preserved. Certain important ceremonies and festivals also need to be



safeguarded and promoted to highlight the South African identity and culture (DAC, 2009). The building of unity and coherence through the way that our multi-cultural heritage is portrayed have the potential to act as the 'social glue' and the core of social cohesion by assisting with building unity and coherence in a South African society. In this space, principles which seek to rectify and address the limited involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals in the tourism industry; address uneven tourism investment across different regions marked by limited incentives and limit perpetuation of a highly uneven tourism space economy may indeed assist with the creation of the 'social glue' required for improved cohesion.

Future prospects for heritage tourism

There is mounting interest in the crossover between heritage and other sectors of the tourism industry. One of the most notable examples is the relationship between heritage and shopping. Thus far, work in this domain suggests that shopping and heritage make good bed fellows and do complement each other well (Marsh, 1991; Timothy, 2005). Globally, heritage settings are becoming important shopping destinations which provide very suitable platforms for selling locally produced articles and services. In many cases, renewal of historic urban areas can also be enhanced by shopping. Many examples can be found where shopping has become a catalyst for the redevelopment of inner cities and waterfronts (Ashworth, 2003; Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Craig-Smith, 1995; Orbasli, 2000; Wordon, 1996). The V & A Waterfront in Cape Town serves as such an example where a mixture of museums, shopping, restaurants, leisure activities, events and other attractions have been extremely successful in creating one of the most visited tourist destinations in South Africa. "Tourism's thirst for 'the new', reliance on local knowledge and low entry barriers have triggered further fragmentation, specialization and diversification" (Gibson (2009: 528). Tourism has also been shaped by the plethora of changes that have occurred in the macro environment especially driven by technology. According to Sifolo and Henama (2013: 1), "...technology has changed how people communicate and the way of conducting business globally, As a result, the tourism industry is continually changing due to advancements in information technology with specialized software's that are shaping the tourism industry and its sectors which includes accommodation, attractions, transport, travel intermediaries and government".

On the back of technology, 'disruptive innovation' business practices such as Uber and Airbnb has received much attention as it has changed how consumers consume tourism offerings. According to Henama and Sifolo (2017) technology remains one of the most powerful external forces which is shaping the world today and impacting on all aspects of life. This has also been true for tourism. "As a new approach to promote tourism destinations, gaming provides tourism organizations and destination marketers with an opportunity to create informative and entertaining setting for successful brand awareness, interaction and communication". The revolutionary force of technology has been supported by the greater assimilation of smart phones, and the emergence of both smart cities and smart citizens. Capdevila and Zarlenga (2015) describes the smart city concept as the development of a cities technological infrastructure which allows for the development of new business to emerge.

Discussion/Conclusion

There is a need to understand better how heritage tourism interacts with other forms of tourism, such as shopping, sports, nature-based and cruise tourism in a context where heritage tourism have been found to be under performing in the broader tourism market. Rosentraub and Joo



(2009:3) provide some guidance by saying that “the challenge in developing a successful tourism program lies in the selection of an appropriate set of amenities capable of (1) appealing to local residents whose political support is needed to approve the public sector’s investments; (2) attracting new residents (highly talented and productive human capital); and (3) attracting visitors that extend or advance a vibrant tourist economy”. Christie and Crompton (2001) further adds that the attractiveness and therefore the competitiveness of the tourism product will depend on the quality and the accessibility of the built assets and way in which the natural and cultural assets are managed and conserved. In addition, the commodification and presentation of the tourism product has become increasingly important because of the need for tourism to respond to popular consumer culture. Nzama (2010) noted that to ensure the commercial viability of the rural tourism product it is imperative that attention is given to product quality, marketing and investment in business skills. Governments play an important enabling environment to ensure that the tourism industry flourishes. According to Manuela Jr. and De Vera (2015: 11) “the tourism industry requires a diligent and deliberate public policy attention as well as an implementation strategy for realizing sustainable economic benefits for a country”. Depending on the different requirements for individual countries, governments need to primarily focus on providing supportive tourism legislation and policies.

In the context of heritage, intersectoral cooperation is of notable importance. Collaboration or partnerships between private, public and non-profit sectors, as well as between destinations, is crucial in achieving and promoting the principles of sustainable development (Boyd and Timothy, 2001; McKercher and du Cros, 2002). Better planning can be achieved when different agencies, owners and service providers work together to a set of common goals which do not function at cross-purposes. Traditional management approaches in the service industries have also been top-down and at times heavy handed. Recent planning models, however, have suggested a more democratic, inclusive and sustainable method to manage sites, personnel and visitors (Fyall et al., 2003; Shackley, 2001). This approach needs to be expanded to increase the limited involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals in the tourism industry. Democratic and inclusive management supports the participation in decision making and planning, as well as participation in the economic and social benefits of tourism. In addition to government officials, stakeholders in the realm of heritage tourism include site managers, land owners, destination residents, business owners and the tourists themselves.

All of these groups have important roles to play in heritage tourism development, and each person should be empowered enough to be able to make contributions (Aas et al., 2005; Mattsson and Praesto, 2005; Timothy, 1999c). This has the potential to stimulate the interest of disadvantaged individuals to experience different ways of life, discover new food and customs and visit heritage and cultural sites which is supportive of social cohesion. Hyung Yu Park supports this inclusivity approach by arguing that to maximize the potential of heritage tourism initiatives such as festivals and events as opportunities for community interaction and cohesion as well as tourism development in the urban context, local people need to be involved in the final decision of the extent to which traditional elements of festivals need to be transformed, commodified and promoted as special events for touristic consumption (Hyung Yu Park, 2014: 183). Ivanovic and Saayman (2013) noted that those responsible for providing the cultural heritage experience often lack a basic understanding of what the experience is and how it is formed. This implies that actors in the cultural heritage sector needs to collaborate and interact with professionals who specializes in creating and managing experiences to respond to the changing customer needs and tastes. Reportedly, the development of interpretation centres which include multimedia representations and audiovisual material such as pictures, music and film has done much to enhance the heritage experience, mixing it with entertainment for the enjoyment and benefit of tourists.



Linked to improving the effectiveness of such technology, is skills development and training of heritage tourists guides so as to ensure that they are in sync with international developments such as the integration of information and communication technology, in their interaction with tourists. Van Der Merwe (2016) noted that the poor training of tourist guides was raised as a major obstacle to the development of heritage tourism in South Africa. Finally, the advance of suitable digital technology may provide a very handy tool to start to address the problem highlighted by Struwig et al. (2015) where South Africans have a desire to visit heritage sites but that the unavailability of information and inadequate communication between museum marketers, local authorities and the public, local tourists decreases the likelihood of them visiting these heritage sites. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest and various others may increasingly play a role in tourism and can be instrumental to reach the majority of people and particularly young people who has neither an awareness nor visited heritage sites.

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