

Tourism policy analysis: the case of post-independence Namibia

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Abstract

Tourism policy is an important domain for tourism researchers. Despite its significance, the analysis and unpacking of the making of tourism policy has so far attracted only limited attention in the global South. This paper reports on the case study of tourism policy in post-independence Namibia. It is disclosed that policy development is led by professional knowledge in support of the leading interest groups in the country's tourism economy, namely large local and private sector enterprises. By contrast, the role of small firms (SMEs), which constitute the largest segment of tourism firms in Namibia, is marginal.

Key words: Tourism policy; Southern Africa: Namibia; SMEs; policy influence

INTRODUCTION

Southern Africa represents an emerging tourist region in the international tourism economy (Saarinen, 2009). Policy development for tourism therefore is of rising significance. Hall (2009:52) highlights the need for more detailed and sophisticated analysis of tourism policy making in the context of Southern Africa. Among the common challenges across the region of Southern Africa remains that of how to increase and expand the positive impacts of tourism to local communities (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Saarinen, 2009; Scheyvens, 2011). In one early intervention in African tourism policy scholarship Dieke (2000) identified the following areas for policy consideration when developing tourism in sub-Saharan Africa, viz., well-conceived and well-articulated but realistic tourism policy objectives; local involvement and control over tourism development; forging private-public sector partnerships for tourism development; raising gender awareness to enhance women's participation in the tourism sector; enhancing regional tourism co-operation and integration; the

availability and allocation of appropriate resources (e.g. financial, human, product); developing equity in tourism benefits-sharing; the availability of appropriate legal framework for tourism; and expanding tourism entrepreneurial initiatives / investment opportunities.

Across the context of sub-Saharan Africa government's role in directing tourism policy is to ensure that tourism can be a vehicle for transformation of the economy, society and polity of contemporary Africa, an issue which is of fundamental importance (Christie et al. 2013). The World Bank's African Region Tourism Study cites the cases of Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Cape Verde in stressing that government involvement in tourism can be a powerful and transformative development tool (World Bank, 2010:ii). Tourism is perceived to be a beacon of pro-business policies and reforms that can help development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as foreign investment. For the World Bank, this group of states demonstrate that when the public sector sets appropriate conditions – political stability, good governance, and an enabling

business environment – tourism yields substantial economic benefits (World Bank, 2010:2). Policy reforms that are required include regulatory framework assistance, tourism monitoring assistance, public/private dialogue, rapid tourism assessments and crisis response strategies (World Bank, 2010:13).

In common with much of sub-Saharan Africa national tourism policies across the region of Southern Africa have emphasized the need for tourism to be a catalyst for earning foreign exchange, especially through the activities of the private sector. Janis (2009: 8) asserts that “following globalization, tourism policies and strategies in Southern Africa tend to reflect a neoliberal development agenda that emphasizes the role of the private sector and global competitiveness, as measured by efficiency and foreign investments”. Nevertheless, there is also an increasing concern also for environmental issues as well as calls for wider community participation and benefit sharing (Rogerson & Visser, 2004, Saarinen, 2009).

One distinctive dimension of tourism policy in the region relates to policy development to uplift the role of previously disadvantaged communities in the tourism industry with South Africa’s initiatives for Black Economic Empowerment an excellent illustration. Other parallel policies have been applied also in Botswana and Namibia (Hall, 2009; Lapeyre, 2009) Although the level of conceptualization and implementation of these programmes for expanding local citizen involvement varies from country to country, the core objective of these forms of policy intervention in Southern Africa has been to address the economic dispossession and marginalisation of local citizens from tourism product development that occurred during colonial and apartheid periods. Arguably, the role of government within the tourism policy process varies from one country to the other depending on a range of variables that include the values influencing policy approaches (Christie et al. 2013). None the less, the

central point is that governments have the power to determine pathways for tourism development within countries. In particular, national governments can shape whether the trajectory of tourism development is one dictated primarily by foreign interests and capital or whether it might seek to promote the economic benefits of local people as well as preservation of social, cultural and environmental assets.

Against this broad backdrop, the objective in this paper is to undertake an analysis of tourism policy and policy processes in Namibia, which since independence in 1991 has witnessed a growing focus upon tourism in national planning. Methodologically, use is made of the case study approach, which has been “the predominant strategy used in studies of tourism policy”(Scott, 2011: 31). Although the case study approach has been criticised as overused by Hall & Jenkins (1995), a scan of recent literature reveals its continued relevance and popularity (see Scott, 2011; Castillo-Nechar, 2013; Wang & Ap, 2013). The discussion falls into two sections. First, the importance of understanding tourism policy and of policy processes is highlighted and critical scholarly contributions around tourism policy are isolated. Second, within this context, an examination is pursued of the key contours of tourism policy development within Namibia since independence. Overall, this paper offers a modest contribution to expand further our understanding of tourism policy in Southern Africa, a research theme which recent reviews of tourism scholarship within Southern Africa has identified as something of knowledge gap (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011).

TOURISM POLICY: SCHOLARLY DEBATES

Among others Scott (2011: 3) maintains that “tourism policy is an important area for study because of its practical and theoretical importance”. Colebatch (2002:4) states the study of tourism policy

is part of a group of adjectival policies in the sphere of “public policy” that focuses on the subject matter which could be tourism, environment or education and how public authorities deal with it. The concept “public policy” here refers to government so as to distinguish it from other policies such as company and organizational policies on employment, environment and advertising. It is conceded that tourism is a complex domain which touches upon a wide range of problem areas from biodiversity, to health, innovation, aviation and development. All these domains are the subject of public policy prescriptions or views at different geographical levels which range from global, continental, national and regional to local level.

Lawrence and Dredge (2007:7) define policy as a position, strategy, action or product adopted by government and arising from contests between different ideas, values and interests. Nevertheless, Hall & Jenkins (1995: 527) view tourism policies as more than what governments do. They emphasize that policy-making is a political activity, which is influenced by (and constitutive of) the economic and social characteristics of society, as well as by the formal structures of government and other features of the political system. In the tourism context, besides being a declaration of intent policy provides guidelines for tourism development actions. An overview of national tourism policies indicates that often they encompass objectives such as socio-economic development, employment creation and development of peripheral areas, and are increasingly directed towards achieving sustainable tourism development in the long term (Scott, 2011).

Hall (2008) isolates at least three core reasons for scrutinizing public policy, including tourism policy. First, is to understand the policy cycle in respect of the moulding of policy decisions and of their impacts; second, is to offer information about solutions to practical

problems and correspondingly to input this information into policy processes; and third is to appreciate and unpack the interests and values that are involved in policy and planning processes surrounding the tourism sector. During the 1990s, amidst concerns captured by the concept of “political modernisation” there was increased recognition of the “new spaces” in which tourism policy takes place (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011:5). The “new spaces” range from non-traditional and sometimes not so very explicit spaces in which discussions are shaped. These are spaces such as interaction between public and a private sector, between levels of government, within government corporations and statutory corporations in non-tourism spheres such as urban planning (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011). Stevenson (2013) avers that tourism policy making is essentially a social process which interactions and negotiations between various individuals and groups of people.

According to Scott (2011: 32) scholarship around the tourism policy field is “broad and fragmented”. This is a research arena which is occupied by various theories, concepts, approaches, and frameworks that have been drawn from a variety of disciplines. Overall, there are three distinct phases in the policy formulation process namely policy formulation, policy implementation and policy accountability. It is accepted that such a ‘linear policy cycle’ is simplistic and may not describe sufficiently the complex iterative process involved in crafting a tourism policy and which occurs at multiple levels of the state. Nonetheless, this simplistic cycle is useful when focusing on distinct phases of policy formulation. A significant recent strand in tourism policy scholarship has emerged around the role of governance as a lens through which to better understand tourism policy making and planning (Hall, 2011a, 2011b; Bramwell & Lane, 2013). Existing research around tourism policy provides useful insights into significant topics such as sustainability, destination management, power and political

struggles, branding, identity, collaborative approaches as well as various ethical and moral questions associated with tourism planning and policy construction (Scott, 2011:5). At one level, tourism policy can be discussed in terms of its sub-topics, theories and evolution with research clusters devoted to subject areas such as urban tourism, competitiveness, tourism governance and state intervention, and public-private partnerships.

Certain tourism scholars maintain there remains a need for a coherent collection of empirical work that explores the politics of tourism, and of the processes of tourism planning and policy making (Hall, 2005a). One recent example is the case of Philippines using an approach of network analysis (Dela Santa, 2013). The term 'policy' here refers to the general actions and outcomes of government which is influenced by ideological beliefs and political philosophy and culminates in decision-making. In particular, Hall (2009:51) states that in addition to the influence of political parties on tourism policies, industry organizations are also an important element in policy formulation and implementation. Recognizing the need to engage government and gain its support, the tourism industry has formed trade associations. Clarke (2004:196) highlights that SME participation in such organizations provides an ideal vehicle for drawing together otherwise disparate SMEs. Hall & Jenkins (1995:49) define an interest group as "any association or organization which makes a claim, either directly or indirectly, on government so as to influence public policy without itself being willing to exercise the formal powers of government". In the discourse of tourism policy formulation the term 'interest group' is often used interchangeably with the terms 'pressure group', "lobby group", "special interest group" or "organized interest" (Wray, 2009: 674). Generally, these terms refer to an organization which claims to either directly or indirectly influence public policy without itself being willing to exercise formal powers of government. Tourism

interest groups seek to have government policy developed in their favour. They operate at a number of different scales (international, national and local) and are classified according to their degree of institutionalization. It is the associations at national that have the potential to play a crucial role in policy formulation at a destination.

Among others both Hall (2008) and Scheyvens (2002) argue that the nation state as an entity has been weakened as a result of increasing economic liberalisation and global integration. Nevertheless, national governments still have a major role in tourism through policy and strategy formulation as well as regulation of the tourism industry. The traditional roles of government have increasingly shifted to the private and the volunteer sectors such that it is difficult to define public policy as a government action albeit it is argued that the state still determines the overall national policy objectives (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). As a process, policy extends beyond government to include other stakeholders such as the private sector tourism industry, tourist associations and even pressure groups. Indeed, increasingly policy is being seen as a social process and is progressively influenced by institutional context and by so-termed issue drivers such as actors, agencies and networks (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). The underlying assumption is that public policy, and indeed tourism policy, involves a process that is inherently iterative, reflective, multi-dimensional and multi-faceted which occurs in a dynamic environment. This issue is of central importance in the global context and more especially in the global South where the essential pathway of tourism development has fundamental implications for which groups in society and economy emerge as the beneficiaries of tourism development.

Arguably, tourism policy needs to be understood also in relation to wider economic policies. Kerr (2003: 31) points out that tourism can be subordinate to

wider economic policies. Telfer & Sharpley (2008:113) concur that tourism policy cannot be developed in isolation but instead needs to be integrated as part of a broader set of national development strategies. In other words, different government policies pertaining to the economy and other regulatory initiatives can indirectly determine the outcome of initiatives in the tourism sector. It is also important to take cognisance of the fact that governments have multiple roles in addition to public policy making such as coordination and promotion of entrepreneurial ventures, tourism promotion and protection of public interest. Nevertheless, various government ministries and departments handling issues pertaining to tourism tend to be fragmented and fail to coordinate policy processes among themselves preferring to adopt a 'silo' mentality towards policy development.

Tosun (2000) identified three major challenges that condition community participation in tourism which can also be applied to the sphere of policy formulation, namely, operational, structural and cultural limits. Operational limits occur in the form of lack or poor communication and information sharing as well as inadequate coordination between different policy levels and actors involved. Structural limits are power issues and differences and organizational barriers whereas cultural limits are culture and knowledge differences between tourism stakeholders. In a further useful contribution Janis (2011:25) introduces the concept of two fields of policy knowledge, namely professional policy knowledge and local policy knowledge. While professional policy knowledge is regarded as technical, systematic and rational, local policy knowledge refers to the perceptions of and experiences of the representatives of tourism enterprises concerning specific areas of tourism policy. This knowledge is often not written or available in easily accessible format. Such knowledge is gained by individuals or organizations involved in the generation, acquisition and

transformation of information. It is accessed through interviews and by informal discussions and observations. Some tourism practitioners with policy knowledge eventually assume important positions and play a significant role in policy formulation. Janis (2011:27) argues that such knowledge complements, diversifies and challenges conventional policy knowledge in the tourism policy process and this knowledge has theoretical and practical value for academic researchers, public policy practitioners and other policy stakeholders at different levels. This distinction between professional policy knowledge and local policy knowledge is especially appropriate in undertaking policy analysis in the global South.

THE NAMIBIAN CASE STUDY

In Namibia, tourism is the third largest contributor to GDP after mining and fisheries/agriculture (WTTC, 2006). The major tourist attractions consist of nature, landscape and cultural assets. In addition, Namibia offers diverse historical attractions through its heritage tourism which is considered underdeveloped. The heritage and cultural assets include ancient rock art and the pastoralist cultures of the Ovahimba and San people of the Kunene region and the Kalahari Desert respectively which are promoted as tourist attractions. Other historical and cultural attractions are linked to the country's German colonial legacy and are found in Windhoek and coastal towns such as Luderitz, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund. The mainstay of tourism is, however, nature-based tourism and 40% of the land is under some form of natural resource management comprising state protected areas (16.5%), communal conservancies (16%), freehold conservancies and private reserves (6%) and community forests (0.8%). Among others, the works by Novelli & Gebhardt (2007) and more recently, by Lapeyre (2009, 2010, 2011), Saarinen (2010), and Janis (2009, 2011) confirm that nature-based tourism is the essential anchor for

Namibia's tourism industry. A number of research investigations have been conducted on the Namibian tourism sector. Major work has focused on community-based tourism and pro-poor tourism (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Lapeyre, 2010;). These studies have contributed significantly to the discourse on tourism policy but do not discuss explicitly issues around the context of tourism policy-making and development, the associated power relationships and the role of different actors and institutions and the realities of decision making.

Overall, the tourism sector is considered to be one of the nation's largest job providers (MET, 2009). Currently, the Namibian economy is heavily dependent on mineral resources and needs to reduce this dependency by economic diversification, including through tourism. This suggests that tourism is poised to play an even larger role in the Namibian economy. Saarinen & Niskala (2009: 61) aver that "in general, tourism is considered to have major potential for employment and income generation in the country" According to Lapeyre (2011: 63) tourism is deemed a significant element of the Namibian economy which contributes directly 4.7 percent of GDP (and an estimated further 19.9 percent indirect contribution), 32 000 direct employment opportunities (and an estimated total of 114 000 indirect opportunities) and contributes 9.9. percent of all export revenues. In terms of tourist flows the majority of the arrivals are international visitors from Europe and USA followed by regional visitors from Angola and South Africa. International tourists are by and large leisure seekers whereas the majority of the regional tourists visit for a combination of reasons including business, leisure and visiting friends and relatives. The spending patterns of these markets differ remarkably with the overseas visitors spending twice as high as the regional tourists and almost four times as high as domestic tourists. The regional and domestic tourists patronise

the lower end and scale-scale forms of accommodation such as bed & breakfast establishments and cheaper self-catering facilities.

One of the most outstanding legacies of the colonial and apartheid era was that in terms of its ownership structure, at independence the Namibian tourism industry was 'lily-white'. The need for transformation, a change in the structure of the tourism industry and a sharing of the benefits of tourism, was urgent in Namibia. Structurally, the country's tourism industry is highly concentrated and dominated by a small elite group of large, mostly foreign controlled (mainly South African) tourism organizations. The large inbound tour operators (both Namibian and international) which control most tourist flow into Namibia and concentrate the major market share are Sense of Africa (which controls 50% of the tour operators' market), SWA Safaris, Springbok Atlas, Abenteuer Africa Safaris, and Namib Wilderness Safaris. Other operators specialize in niche markets such as 4x4 trips, independent and young travellers, backpackers and overland campers. Several of these tour operators are part of larger international groups or networks. For instance, Sense of Africa is a subsidiary of Tourism Investment Holdings Limited (Tourvest) a large tourism company listed on the Johannesburg stock exchange, while Springbok Atlas is a subsidiary of Imperial Holdings and Abenteuer a part of the World of Destination Management Companies.

Within the tourism economy of Namibia there is a burgeoning Small and Medium Enterprise sector (SME). Precise data on the number of SMEs in the Namibian tourism economy is unavailable, particularly in respect of the emerging black-owned tourism enterprises, many of which are unregistered informal or microenterprises (Nyakunu, 2013). It was estimated that in 2007 white Namibians owned 99% of all registered tourism enterprises and occupied 60% of all senior

managerial positions. By 2010 some improvement was in evidence with the share of fully black owned tourism enterprises rising to 6.6%, which consisted mainly of tour and safari, tour facilitators and bed and breakfast operators (Nyakunu, 2014). In certain respects the structure of the Namibian tourism industry resembles its South African counterpart in terms of comprising “a complex interaction of a large number of players, with a few large players and numerous SMMEs” (Rogerson, 2007:5). The absence of accurate ownership and monitored data on black tourism enterprises in Namibia, however, must be conceded.

This said, according to Lapeyre (2011) using global commodity chain theory, the existing ownership structure of the tourism industry in Namibia is concentrated in ownership terms in the hands of larger groups (national or international). Correspondingly “previously disadvantaged Namibians lack economic leverage to be fully involved in the largely white dominated tourism sector” (Lapeyre, 2011: 63). International and national tour operators not only control international tourist flows to Namibia, they also control flows within Namibia. Generic suppliers are strongly subordinated to tour operators who control the whole chain of national and local actors which provide tourism services that are eventually sold to tourists. Not only do they retain power over local service providers, they also capture most of the economic surplus (Lapeyre, 2009:129). The tourism commodity chain in Namibia is evidencing horizontal and vertical integration in the context of globalization and intense competitive pressures (Lapeyre, 2011). In

this complex and changing tourism commodity chain, it is argued that governance structures and power relations determine who influences the policy formulation process.

Overall, tourism is perceived as a tool for Namibians to make the transition from a natural resource exporter to an earner of foreign currency. Moreover, with appropriate planning, tourism can contribute also to poverty alleviation (MET, 2010) which is a key requirement for Namibia to reach Vision 2030, a 30-year planning framework which aims at providing a sound framework for sustainable development planning taking a long term perspective. The major policy tool guiding national development in all sectors is the National Development Plan (NDP). Various documents refer to tourism as a catalyst for development, national and regional harmony in Namibia (WTTTC, 2006; MET, 2008). Although on attaining political independence, the Namibian government recognized quickly the economic value of its tourist assets, it was 15 years before tourism attained a cabinet seat. This said, in (re) shaping the tourism economy since independence Namibia has crafted a raft of tourism-related policies. The Namibian government has released several policies, laws and made public statements at international and national levels targeting the tourism industry. Table 1 lists a number of significant government documents and policy statements on tourism much of which emanate from the country’s Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The implementation of the state’s vision and objectives in the tourism sector is conducted through this line Ministry.

Table 1: Namibian Government documents on Tourism

Government document	Year	Specific remarks in relation to tourism
White Paper on Tourism	1994	Tourism expected to revive and sustain economic growth, create employment opportunities, alleviate poverty and reduce inequalities in

		income.
Namibia Tourism Development Plan	1995	Tourism is expected to enhance economic growth, increase employment and income creation, alleviate poverty and promote protection of wildlife
Policy on the Promotion of Community Based Tourism	1995	Community-based tourism is expected to provide social and economic development in communal areas and to rectify past unequal ownership structure of tourism
Tourism Act, Consolidated draft	1996	Tourism should benefit all sectors of the Namibian population Recognition of conservancies with concessionary rights over tourism activities
Nature Conservation Amendment Act	1996	Devolution of wildlife and tourism rights to rural communities through conservancies with the aim of promoting sustainable use of natural resources and poverty reduction
First National Development Plan (NDP 1) 1995/6 -1999/2000	1996	Tourism is expected to enhance economic growth, increase employment and income creation and promote rural development
Second National Development Plan (NDP 2) 2001/2 -2005/2006	2002	Tourism is expected to enhance economic growth, increase employment and income creation and promote rural development Targets to establish 25 communal conservancies by 2005, target for tourism growth of 6% between 1999 and 2006
Namibia Vision 2030	2004	Tourism is expected to accelerate economic growth, alleviate poverty in rural areas through employment and provision of income opportunities to women
A National Tourism Policy for Namibia. First Draft	2005	Detailed description of how tourism can address national development objectives
First National Development Plan (NDP 3) 2007/8 -2011/12	2008	Tourism is expected to enhance economic growth, increase employment and income creation and promote rural development
A National Tourism Policy for Namibia.	2008	The aim is to provide a framework for the mobilization of tourism resources to realize long term national goals of NDP 3
Second National Development Plan (NDP 4) 2012/13 -2016/2017	2012	To create an enabling environment, improve education and skills management and health system Tourism is identified as one of the four strategic areas

Source: Adapted from Janis 2011:162

The 2008 national tourism policy highlights that it represents the consensus of a wide consultative process with those commercially involved in tourism non-governmental organizations and government officials. During its formulation a major workshop on the subject was held and followed by a series of bilateral discussions between officials of MET and other ministries, public bodies, communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector (MET, 2005). The policy is regarded as a compromise between a simple broad brush policy and a detailed version replicating other policy documents (Nyakunu, 2014). In terms of scope the policy straddles several aspects of the economy, environment and society as a whole. Overall, the national policy is guided by a vision of: “A mature, sustainable and responsible tourism industry contributing significantly to the economic development of Namibia and the quality of life of all her people, primarily through job creation and economic growth” (MET, 2008: iii).

Ten principles underline the national tourism policy. The guiding principles can be summed up as stipulating that:

- The Tourism policy will be driven by national interest and not by narrow self-interests;
- Tourism needs to be competitive regionally and internationally;
- Government recognizes private sector contribution towards government objectives and will facilitate its effective operation in global markets;
- Increased local participation and equity are essential to spread the benefits of tourism;
- Tourism development must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable;
- Government recognizes its role in the protection of the natural resource base;
- Government’s investment and operational functions in the tourism

sector would be in the areas of infrastructural development, marketing, education, and skills development;

- Tourism investment, development and promotion must be market-driven;
- Government intervention will be on the basis of national economic benefits; and
- The human factor is of primary importance in ensuring that standards meet requirements of present day national, regional and international tourism. (MET, 2008:2)

It was made clear that “Government will create an enabling environment by putting in place the political, economic, physical human and physical frame conditions conducive to development and by removing barriers. Regulations are also essential to protect communities from exploitation and land from overuse, as well as ensuring environmental sustainability, public safety and maintenance of standards” (MET, 2008:4).

In interpreting unfolding policy development it must be understood that following independence Namibia has received a significant amount of funding from international donors and NGOs. This support can be classified into programmes for biodiversity conservation and development programs on the one hand and tourism focused programs on the other hand. Major donors of the country’s environmental programs include the Government of Finland, the European Union, German International Development, USAID, Save the Rhino Trust International, and the Bank through GEF, Conservation International (CI), Peace Parks Foundation and IUCN. Lapeyre (2009) remarked that in these programs tourism is a by-product and the programmes often seem to be fragmented and dispersed among different donors with weak coordination.

Many of Namibia's policies surrounding tourism have been developed in isolation without taking into account policies developed in other sectors. As a result some aspects of the various policies are mutually supportive while others have created conflict. A central focus of the Namibia Tourism Board SME development programmes in tourism is to promote 'transformation' and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). These twin objectives are targeted to enhance the limited role of black entrepreneurs in the Namibian tourism economy. The conflict between the aims of increasing the participation of Namibians, particularly those from previously disadvantaged groups, and of developing tourism through encouraging foreign investment, is acknowledged in the country's tourism policy documentation (Nyakunu, 2014). Arguably, whilst the Namibian government considers tourism to be a strategic economic sector, there are shortcomings in the policy formulation process. Although SMEs are a vital component in driving tourism in Namibia they are seemingly not involved in the initial planning, formulation and implementation of the tourism policy. As a result, there is little understanding of the role that this fledgling sector can play in tourism policy planning and development in Namibia (Nyakunu, 2014).

This question is significant as Namibia has adopted a neo-liberal development agenda encouraging foreign investment in a context in which the majority of the population lack skills to engage effectively in tourism (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Janis, 2009; Lapeyre, 2011). The mass of Namibian SMEs have limited marketing and funding capacity which makes it difficult for them to compete with larger enterprises and this inequality in power extends also to the inability of SMEs to influence the process of policy formulation. Although the national government in Namibia has designed a range of programmes to support the growth of the tourism economy in the country and of the tourism industry, the mass of small tourism firms have received little support.

Indeed, the National Development Plan 3 (NDP3 from 2007 / 2008 to 2011/2012) was allocated a total budget of N\$110.9 million for activities such as training and skills, establishing a Tourism Advisory Council, producing national, regional and local tourism development plans for regions, local authorities and conservancies, and finally sourcing financial technical assistance to facilitate entry of formerly disadvantaged Namibians into the mainstream tourism economy. Significantly, in Namibia there is no dedicated institution for the support of tourism SMEs to parallel the activities of South Africa's Tourism Enterprise Partnership (see Rogerson, 2007, 2013).

Following an in-depth analysis of policy documents, government reports and reviews by different institutions Janis (2011:26) concludes that tourism policy in Namibia appears to have been based mainly on professional, expert knowledge produced by government officials, tourism consultants and officials in relevant donor and tourism organizations. In other words the policy process in Namibia was anchored fundamentally on conventional knowledge (statistics and reports, research and evidence), which has been legitimised by professional expertise and so-termed 'facts' as provided in official documents, legal standards as well as statistical material. With poor SME representation in associations there emerges an exclusive relationship between large business interests and tourism agencies which has restricted SME participation in policy formulation.

CONCLUSION

As Scott (2011: 33) avers policy analysis remains a "critical area" which requires further research in tourism scholarship. In Namibia the analysis of policy development reveals that a disconnect emerges between the aims of increasing the participation of Namibians – particularly from disadvantaged groups – and enhancing tourism competitiveness through welcoming foreign investors into

the country's tourism industry. Overall, the mass of tourism enterprises in Namibia – the group of small firms – have been historically marginalized in policy processes and largely this remains the case to the present-day. A core finding from tourism research in the global South is that the growth prospects of small firms commonly are constrained by the power and competitive dominance which is exerted by large tourism enterprises in local economies (Britton, 1982). The

domination of Namibia's tourism economy by a few large players reflects the consolidation that has been happening globally and locally in tourism over the past decade. It is mirrored in the construction of tourism policy in Namibia which is based mainly on leading interest groups and applying professional knowledge produced by government officials, tourism consultants and staff in the relevant donor and tourism organizations.

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