



Less Visited Tourism Spaces in South Africa

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Abstract

Within the vibrant and expanding body of tourism scholarship around peripheral regions, there are limited geographical studies on locational issues. Notwithstanding a substantive contribution by geographers to understanding a cross-section of tourism issues the need exists to 're-spatialize' our understanding of tourism patterns in peripheral areas. It is against this backdrop that the purpose of this paper is to build upon recent analyses of South Africa's tourism space economy and investigate the location of 'less visited tourism spaces' in the country. Situated within an international literature on peripheral tourism this analysis reviews a range of indicators concerning less visited tourism spaces in South Africa. The focus is explicitly upon identifying the most marginal and in many respects most 'off the tourism map' local municipalities in South Africa as a counterpoint to previous works that identify across a range of similar indicators the most significant and leading spaces for tourism development. Overall, the paper represents a contribution both to an evolving South African scholarship on tourism geography, as well as to an expanding international literature around peripheral tourism spaces.

Keywords: Tourism space economy; uneven development; peripheral spaces; less visited tourism areas

Introduction

Understanding the contours and changing dynamics of the tourism space economy is one of the challenges facing tourism geographers (Pearce, 1979; Hall & Page, 2006, 2009; Hall, 2013a). For Africa, the broad picture emerges of the unevenness of the geographical development of tourism both at the continental scale and also on the intra-national scale of analysis. In South Africa, a number of recent investigations by geographers have interrogated aspects of the national tourism space economy (Visser, 2007; Rogerson, 2014a, 2015, 2016a, 2016b). The work so far undertaken discloses a picture of an essentially core-periphery spatial structure with South Africa's major urban areas the central hubs of the national space economy and the major beneficiaries of tourism development that has occurred particularly over the past two decades or so (Visser 2007; Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2012; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017).

The geographical unevenness of the benefits of tourism expansion has been a matter of mounting concern for national and local policymakers in South Africa. Increasingly, tourism has increasingly been viewed by the national government, as a vehicle for addressing the vagaries of spatially uneven development (Rogerson & Nel, 2016). In several statements issued from national policy-makers in tourism, commitments are made to address the issue of the spatially imbalanced character of the tourism economy and correspondingly to promote tourism expansion in the areas of the country which currently are seen as 'off the beaten track' of either domestic or international travellers. One policy focus is support for the promotion of rural tourism. During 2012, the national rural tourism strategy was launched with a vision of forging a "developed rural tourism economy" (Department of Tourism, 2012). The strategy offers an explicit focus upon boosting tourism expansion and of tourism impacts in the



country's least visited provinces and most undeveloped regions. Essentially, the geographically targeted regions for growth are the country's Priority Development Districts – now increasingly referred to collectively as the distressed areas - which correspond closely (but not precisely) to the boundaries of the apartheid-created former Bantustans or Homelands (Rogerson, 2015a; Rogerson & Nel, 2016).

Recently, in a number of investigations, the contours and make-up of the tourism economy of the distressed areas has been sketched (Rogerson, 2014b, 2015a; Rogerson & Hoogendoorn, 2014; Rogerson & Nel, 2016). Taken as a whole, these investigations point to a tourism economy in the distressed areas, which is strongly dominated by visiting friends and relatives' tourism as opposed to the more lucrative leisure or business forms of tourism. In addition, the existing works point to the overwhelming dominance of domestic as opposed to international visitors in these peripheral areas of South Africa's tourism space economy. Building upon this body of writings the focus in this particular analysis is squarely upon identifying in greater detail the patterns and micro-geography of South Africa's undeveloped and 'less visited' tourism spaces. Overall, the paper must be read as a contribution both to an evolving South African scholarship on tourism geography, as well as a modest contribution to an expanding international literature around peripheral tourism spaces.

Peripheral Tourism Spaces

Tourism development in peripheral regions and questions surrounding 'peripheral tourism' represent important themes in international scholarship. In a classic early contribution Christaller (1964) stated that peripheries undoubtedly are 'places for tourism' as tourists avoided agglomerations and centres of industry. Since the appearance of Christaller's (1964) much-cited study, the development challenges, planning and management of tourism in peripheral regions have been significant foci of research (Buhalis, 1999; Brown et al. 2000; Moscardo, 2005; Muller, 2016). In particular, the economic, social and environmental problems around peripheral tourism have been explored in a number of different contexts (Keller, 1987; Hohl & Tisdell, 1995; Hall, 2013b; Lee et al., 2017). Carson & Carson (2017: 103) point out that tourism destinations located in geographically remote or sparsely populated regions "are subject to quite distinct development constraints, including small and fragmented local industry players, distance to markets and decision-makers, and dependence on external investors". Indeed, with economic leakages often strong in peripheral tourism development and weak local multipliers Chaperon & Bramwell (2013) argue that the concept of dependency is valuable for providing insights into the relationships between core regions and peripheral tourism spaces. In Scandinavia the special importance of small firms in remote peripheral tourism development is highlighted most notably by Brouder (2013). Lifestyle entrepreneurs also can assume a significant role in the evolution of certain peripheral tourism destinations (Johannesson & Lund, 2017). Overall, it is evident that tourism trajectories in remote peripheral areas are "likely to evolve in different ways compared with destinations in urban or even other (less remote) peripheral areas that are within easy access from major population centres" (Carson & Carson, 2017: 103).

Economic restructuring and adjustments triggered by globalization often stimulate attempts by localities to broaden their economic base by embracing tourism either in circumstances of agricultural decline or resource base depletion (Buhalis, 1999; Hall et al., 2011; Bohlin et al., 2016). In many marginalized, peripheral or rural areas tourism is viewed increasingly as a critical sectoral driver for assisting local economic development, employment growth and welfare enhancement (Müller & Jansson, 2007; Brouder, 2013; Bohlin et al., 2016). Tourism expansion is considered to be one pathway by which marginal regions and localities potentially



can overcome stagnation or decline and rejuvenate themselves (Hall et al., 2011; Brouder, 2012a, 2012b; Lund & Johannesson, 2014). Innovation is of critical importance for growing the competitiveness of peripheral tourism areas as 'post-productive' spaces (Brouder, 2013; Carson et al. 2014). As Carson and Carson (2017: 106) point out tourism in remote areas mainly is "introduced as a new economic activity at times when traditional resource industries are declining and economic diversification and rejuvenation are urgently required". Across the European Union, tourism promotion in peripheral areas has been actively supported in order to galvanize the economic restructuring of marginal or declining rural areas (Wanhill, 1997; Saarinen, 2003, 2007; Pavilanskas, 2010-11; Bohlin et al., 2016). Likewise, in the case of Brazil, recent attention has been given to the role of tax incentives as a catalyst for tourism development in that country's peripheral areas especially the SUDENE region (Garsous et al., 2017).

Arguably, for marginal areas tourism, if suitably planned, this can be a new economic base or staple. Indeed, insights from Staples theory, have been used to advance understanding of remote tourism area development in the case of Australia (Carson & Carson, 2017). Nevertheless, for Brouder (2013) tourism development often is simply a last economic resort for many peripheral areas "by selling the only thing that they may have of appeal to people in the core – the idea of 'wilderness'" (Brouder, 2013: 15). In a useful contribution, Atkinson (2016: 199) draws our attention to the steady growth of tourism in arid areas across several regions of the world "due to a post-modern fascination with remoteness, barrenness, silence and solitude". Both the works of Muller & Jansson (2007) and of Saarinen (2007, 2014) show that in many rural places tourism has been selected or emerged through externally-driven processes as a major replacement activity to be stimulated through leveraging the asset of pristine environments. This phenomenon has been interrogated in an array of research investigations which have appeared over recent years variously about peripheral spaces in Australia, Canada, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, USA and Sweden (Keller, 1987; Hall, 2007; Müller & Jansson, 2007; Hall et al., 2011; Brouder, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Huijbens et al., 2014; Lund & Johannesson, 2014; Bohlin et al., 2016; Carson & Carson, 2017; Johannesson & Lund, 2017). Buhalis (1999) and Jewell et al. (2004) caution, however, that many peripheral regions enter into the business of tourism promotion without a full appreciation of the sector's development and management challenges a situation which frequently results in disappointing outcomes.

Tourism development in peripheral areas is considered to be both an opportunity and a threat, particularly in remote wilderness locations (Lee et al., 2017). Across the peripheral regions of developed countries, the promotion of tourism in regional development continues to be widespread albeit "with a more considered approach than previously" (Brouder, 2012a: 333). The policy focus progressively is shifting towards seeing tourism as one element for local and regional revival and its intersection with other (non-tourism) sectoral development initiatives (Saarinen, 2003, 2007, 2014). As Brouder (2013) stresses, the opportunities for peripheral localities to realise and maximise local economic potential from tourism may be curtailed because of external control of key decisions beyond the control of communities made by governments or private investors as well as urban consumer preferences (Brouder, 2013). In Austria the policy consensus is that in peripheral areas of the country tourism development should be anchored upon three basic principles namely environmental soundness, local value-added and social acceptance (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer, 1994).

Another different strand of writings on peripheral tourism recently has emerged. This body of work draws attention to the development of tourism in 'ordinary places' through a refocusing on local spaces. Condevaux et al. (2016: 6) view ordinary places as those including small and medium-sized towns with no established tradition of tourism, and which "seek in tourism a new way of developing or of economic and territorial relabelling". Such ordinary places are deemed



as “non-tourism” localities as they have not been identified or recognised as tourism areas and would include rural areas without coasts, mountains or obvious leisure tourism assets. These ordinary places are viewed as “becoming synonymous with ‘non-tourist place’ in the sense that there is nothing remarkable about it that makes it attractive” (Condevaux et al. 2016: 7). It is argued that the growth of tourism in these ordinary spaces can occur either through a logic of inventing a tourism area based on ‘ordinary-ness’ or through a process of diffusion from existing tourism areas towards local ordinary areas. Tourism in ordinary places thus is a component of what is also referred to as ‘off the beaten track’ travels (Delaplace & Gravari-Barbas, 2016). In his seminal study of tourism area life cycles Butler (1980) indicated that all places are potential tourism destinations. Within the vibrant and expanding body of tourism scholarship around peripheral regions one recent important study by Müller (2016) underscores the limited volume of geographical studies on locational issues. Notwithstanding a substantive contribution by geographers to understanding a range of tourism issues (Hall & Page, 2009) the need to ‘re-spatialize’ our understanding of tourism in peripheral areas is identified because of the limited extant scientific literature on the actual location of tourism. It is against this backdrop that the task in this paper is to extend Müller’s (2016) work by investigating in detail the spatial patterns of ‘less visited tourism spaces’ as a contribution to a knowledge gap about locational issues pertaining to peripheral tourism.

Methodology

In South Africa the availability of official sub-national data for economic development planning is limited in a parallel with the situation of many other African countries (Rogerson, 2013). Accordingly, for sub-national economic planning in the country, increased reliance is placed upon the local economic research data and modelling frameworks which have been developed by both international and local private sector research organizations, most importantly those of IHS Global Insight and Quantec. The research data-bases and outputs of these two private sector organisations are utilised widely by both national and local governments across South Africa to inform public policy making and local development planning interventions. For the tourism sector in South Africa, the only official data available to monitor the economic contribution of tourism at a sub-national level is at the scale of the country’s nine provinces. For a more detailed spatial analysis, researchers must turn to the unpublished data base provided by IHS Global Insight. This South African tourism data base represents a subset of the IHS Global Insight Regional eXplorer which is a consolidated platform of integrated data bases that provides at present the most useful data at sub-national scale, including down to municipal (and for major cities even at administrative region) level (IHS Global Insight, 2015). Data is collated regularly from a wide range of sources (official and non-government) with the primary data reworked to ensure consistency across variables and by applying national and sub-national verification tests in order to ensure that the model is consistent for measuring business activity (IHS Global Insight, 2015).

The local tourism data base of Global Insight is especially rich as it offers details of the tourism performance of all local municipal authorities in the country in respect of *inter alia*, the number of tourism trips differentiated by primary purpose of trip; bednights by origin of tourist (domestic or international); indicators of tourism spend; and of the contribution of tourism to local gross domestic product. From this data base information was extracted for this analysis for all 226 local municipalities and the eight metropolitan municipalities (City of Cape Town, eThekweni, Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay, City of Tshwane, Mangaung, and Buffalo City) in the country in order to track the least visited spaces of the country. The group of 44 District Municipalities were not included for analysis as these encompass the non-metropolitan local authorities. The data relates to 2015. Using Excel the lowest ranked 30 local municipalities were isolated across a range of different indicators to provide the basis of



this study of South Africa's least visited tourism spaces. No previous study of this kind has been undertaken for South Africa. Indeed, the focus in this exploratory analysis is thus explicitly upon identifying the most marginal and in many respects 'off the tourism map' local municipalities in South Africa as a counterpoint to several works that identify across a range of similar indicators the most significant and leading spaces for tourism development in South Africa (see Rogerson, 2013, 2014a; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017).

Results

Where are South Africa's least visited and most marginal tourism spaces? In order to answer this question the bottom ranked 30 local municipalities of the total of 234 municipalities are identified across a range of different indicators relating to total tourism spend, total trips and total bednights and then unpacked further by origin of trips, whether domestic or international, and finally differentiated by different purpose of trips looking at the three most important components namely, leisure, business or visiting friends and relatives. The data relate to the available data from IHS Global Insight for 2015.

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Table 1: Total Spend

Local Municipality	R1000 Current Prices	%National
EC135 Intsika Yethu	67797	0.0002862
EC444 Ntabankulu	64099	0.0002706
NC066 Karoo Hoogland	62249	0.0002628
NC081 Mier	59952	0.0002531
NC092 Dikgatlong	58354	0.0002464
EC144 Gariep	55879	0.0002359
NC064 Kamiesberg	53819	0.0002272
KZN215 Ezingoleni	53455	0.0002257
NC085 Tsantsabane	52111	0.00022
NC061 Richtersveld	51619	0.0002179
NC074 Kareeberg	50923	0.000215
NW393 Mamusa	48601	0.0002052
KZN253 Emadlangeni	46265	0.0001953
EC132 Tsolwana	45807	0.0001934
FS183 Tswelopele	45096	0.0001904
WC051 Laingsburg	44424	0.0001875
NW401 Ventersdorp	44341	0.0001872
EC103 Ikwezi	39436	0.0001665
EC128 Nxuba	38697	0.0001634
KZN254 Dannhauser	38450	0.0001623
NC086 Kgatelopele	37944	0.0001602
FS164 Naledi	32250	0.0001362
NC077 Siyathemba	32230	0.0001361
EC133 Inkwanca	26415	0.0001115
FS182 Tokologo	23957	0.0001011
NC076 Thembelihle	19271	>0.0001
NC067 Khai-Ma	19218	>0.0001
NC075 Renosterberg	18990	>0.0001
NC093 Magareng	17621	>0.0001
NC084 !Kheis	17132	>0.0001

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Table 2: Total Tourism Trips (includes Leisure, Business, VFR and Other)

Local Municipality	Total	%National
KZN285 Mthonjaneni	18137	0.00044594
KZN211 Vulamehlo	18077	0.00044446
NC092 Dikgatlong	17465	0.00042941
NC078 Siyancuma	15954	0.00039226



NC085 Tsantsabane	15866	0.0003901
KZN233 Indaka	14920	0.00036685
NW401 Ventersdorp	14626	0.00035962
WC041 Kannaland	12802	0.00031478
EC128 Nxuba	12043	0.0002961
EC144 Gariep	12035	0.00029592
EC107 Baviaans	12035	0.0002959
NC064 Kamiesberg	11941	0.0002936
NC086 Kgatelopele	11926	0.00029323
FS182 Tokologo	11844	0.00029121
KZN215 Ezingoleni	11638	0.00028616
NC074 Kareeberg	11614	0.00028556
NC061 Richtersveld	11216	0.00027579
EC132 Tsolwana	11118	0.00027336
EC133 Inkwanca	10960	0.00026948
WC052 Prince Albert	9697	0.00023843
EC103 Ikwezi	9118	0.00022419
NC067 Khai-Ma	8863	0.00021792
FS164 Naledi	8697	0.00021385
NC077 Siyathemba	8240	0.00020262
WC051 Laingsburg	7086	0.00017424
NC081 Mier	6654	0.00016361
NC093 Magareng	6598	0.00016225
NC084 !Kheis	4706	0.00011571
NC076 Thembelihle	4548	0.00011184
NC075 Renosterberg	4347	0.0001069

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Table 3: Total Bednights (includes Domestic and International)

Local Municipality	Total	%National
NC092 Dikgatlong	15778	0.00048958
FS183 Tswelopele	15168	0.00047064
KZN233 Indaka	14051	0.00043599
NC085 Tsantsabane	13782	0.00042764
NC078 Siyancuma	13194	0.00040939
FS196 Mantsopa	13142	0.00040778
NW401 Ventersdorp	12634	0.00039202
EC128 Nxuba	11255	0.00034922
EC133 Inkwanca	10533	0.00032682
EC132 Tsolwana	10364	0.00032158
FS182 Tokologo	10209	0.00031678
KZN215 Ezingoleni	9902	0.00030725



EC107 Baviaans	9692	0.00030074
NC064 Kamiesberg	9523	0.00029548
EC144 Gariep	9353	0.00029023
NC086 Kgatelopele	9297	0.00028849
NC061 Richtersveld	9164	0.00028436
EC103 Ikwezi	8764	0.00027194
NC067 Khai-Ma	8454	0.00026232
NC074 Kareeberg	8277	0.00025685
WC041 Kannaland	7184	0.00022293
NC077 Siyathemba	6913	0.00021452
WC052 Prince Albert	6693	0.00020769
NC093 Magareng	6154	0.00019097
FS164 Naledi	5933	0.0001841
WC051 Laingsburg	5420	0.00016819
NC081 Mier	4406	0.00013671
NC084 !Kheis	3965	0.00012305
NC076 Thembelihle	3937	0.00012218
NC075 Renosterberg	3496	0.0001085

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide the macro-scale indicators which monitor respectively the lowest ranked 30 municipalities in relation to total tourism spend, total tourism trips and total bednights. For each indicator the proportionate contribution of each local municipality to the national total is also provided. These three tables provide the broadest picture of South Africa's least significant tourism spaces. Table 1 reveals the marginalization of the 30 least important local municipalities in terms of estimates of tourism spend. Taken together these 30 most marginal spaces account for less than 1 percent of national tourism spend. At the bottom of the group of 30 local municipalities with the lowest amount of tourism spend are the five Northern Cape municipalities of Kheis, Magareng, Renosterberg, Khai-Ma and Thembelihle. Examining the list of 30 local municipalities with the lowest tourism spend the largest share – nearly a half (14 in total) – are from Northern Cape. The remainder include seven local municipalities in Eastern Cape, three each from Free State and KwaZulu-Natal, two from North West and one local municipality – Laingsburg – in the Western Cape. No local municipalities from Gauteng, Limpopo or Mpumalanga provinces fall into the lowest ranking on the basis of tourism spend.

Tables 2 and 3 present respectively the bottom list of ranked local municipalities in respect of Total Tourism Trips and Total Bednights. The category of Total Tourism Trips includes all the four categories of purposes of trips, namely business, leisure, visiting, friends and relatives (VFR) and other, which mainly incorporates health and religious travel. In total 11 local municipalities record in 2015 an estimated total of less than 10 000 tourism trips and three local municipalities based in Northern Cape have less than 5000 trips. Once again, as a whole, the most marginal tourism spaces of South Africa as shown on Table 2 in terms of total visits are headed by the cluster of Northern Cape local municipalities. The Northern Cape accounts for seven of the ten most marginal local municipalities and 14 of the bottom ranked 30 local municipalities. Of the rest, 6 of the lowest 30 municipalities are in Eastern Cape, four in KwaZulu-Natal, three in Western Cape, two in Free State and one in North West. As with the category of Total Tourism spend no local municipalities are found in the bottom 30 local municipalities from the three provinces of Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. A similar set of results are evident when examining data for the category of total bednights, which includes both domestic and international travel (Table 3). The three Northern Cape local municipalities

of !Kheis, Thembelihle and Renosterberg record the worst performance on both indicators. At the provincial scale of the lowest ranked 30 municipalities 14 are from Northern Cape, six from Eastern Cape, four from Free State, three from Western Cape, two from KwaZulu-Natal and one (Ventersdorp) from North West. As the total trip and bednight data is weighted nationally by the category of VFR travel Tables 2 and 3 indicate certain minor differences to the Total Spend data. One observation is that the two Western Cape local municipalities of Prince Albert and Kannaland are ranked in the bottom 30 municipalities for both Total Trips and Bednights but not for Total Spend. This suggests that the tourists that visit these particular local municipalities are higher spend than for example those either to the Northern Cape municipality of Karoo Hoogland or Mamusa in North West which both are ranked in the lowest tier for Tourism Spend but do not appear in the bottom 30 ranked local municipalities for either Total Trips or Bednights.

Table 4: International Trips

Local Municipality	Total	%National
KZN215 Ezingoleni	1736	0.00020566
KZN274 Hlabisa	1712	0.00020287
NC092 Dikgatlong	1686	0.00019973
WC051 Laingsburg	1665	0.00019731
EC442 Umzimvubu	1659	0.00019652
FS182 Tokologo	1634	0.00019358
EC137 Engcobo	1632	0.00019335
KZN214 uMuziwabantu	1587	0.00018804
KZN236 Imbabazane	1554	0.00018413
EC135 Intsika Yethu	1512	0.00017918
EC136 Emalahleni	1376	0.00016309
NC077 Siyathemba	1327	0.00015719
KZN294 Maphumulo	1247	0.00014775
EC444 Ntabankulu	1243	0.00014731
KZN253 Emadlangeni	1180	0.00013986
KZN283 Ntambanana	1177	0.00013941
EC126 Ngqushwa	1094	0.00012968
KZN233 Indaka	868	0.00010292
NC075 Renosterberg	851	0.00010081
EC138 Sakhisizwe	846	0.00010029
KZN211 Vulamehlo	830	>0.0001
KZN254 Dannhauser	828	>0.0001
EC128 Nxuba	787	>0.0001
EC132 Tsolwana	754	>0.0001
NC084 !Kheis	740	>0.0001
NC076 Thembelihle	611	>0.0001
NC093 Magareng	444	>0.0001
EC133 Inkwanca	427	>0.0001
NC067 Khai-Ma	408	>0.0001
EC103 Ikwezi	353	>0.0001

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Table 5: Domestic Trips

Local Municipality	Total	%National
NC092 Dikgatlong	15778	0.00048958
FS183 Tswelopele	15168	0.00047064
KZN233 Indaka	14051	0.00043599
NC085 Tsantsabane	13782	0.00042764
NC078 Siyancuma	13194	0.00040939
FS196 Mantsopa	13142	0.00040778
NW401 Ventersdorp	12634	0.00039202
EC128 Nxuba	11255	0.00034922
EC133 Inkwanca	10533	0.00032682
EC132 Tsolwana	10364	0.00032158
FS182 Tokologo	10209	0.00031678
KZN215 Ezingoleni	9902	0.00030725
EC107 Baviaans	9692	0.00030074
NC064 Kamiesberg	9523	0.00029548
EC144 Gariep	9353	0.00029023
NC086 Kgatelopele	9297	0.00028849
NC061 Richtersveld	9164	0.00028436
EC103 Ikwezi	8764	0.00027194
NC067 Khai-Ma	8454	0.00026232
NC074 Kareeberg	8277	0.00025685
WC041 Kannaland	7184	0.00022293
NC077 Siyathemba	6913	0.00021452
WC052 Prince Albert	6693	0.00020769
NC093 Magareng	6154	0.00019097
FS164 Naledi	5933	0.0001841
WC051 Laingsburg	5420	0.00016819
NC081 Mier	4406	0.00013671
NC084 !Kheis	3965	0.00012305
NC076 Thembelihle	3937	0.00012218
NC075 Renosterberg	3496	0.0001085

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Tables 4 and 5 seek to shed light on the different spatial patterns of the most marginal spaces as defined by both international and domestic trips. Given that the overall geography of international tourism shows distinct differences to that of domestic tourism it is to be expected that the rankings of the most marginal spaces would also exhibit certain differences. Table 4 shows the lowest ranked local municipalities for international tourism. In total 13 local municipalities record less than 1000 international trips with the least visited being Ikwezi and Inkwanca in Eastern Cape and Khai-Ma, Magareng and Thembelihle in Northern Cape. Overall, the number of Northern Cape local municipalities which are ranked in the listing of bottom 30 municipalities for international trips is much less marked than for Total Trips because of the cross-border travel, mainly from Namibia. Of the 30 least visited spaces by international tourists 11 local municipalities are in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, 6 in Northern Cape and one each in Western Cape (Laingsburg) and Free State (Tokologo) provinces. Turning attention to the patterns of visitation for domestic tourism a different profile



emerges. At the individual local municipality level at the bottom of the list are a group of four Northern Cape municipalities, namely Renosterberg, Thembelihle, !Kheis and Mier, and Laingsburg in Western Cape. At the provincial level of analysis a total of 14 Northern Cape local municipalities appear in the bottom 30; the remainder are from Eastern Cape (six), Free State (four), Western Cape (three), KwaZulu-Natal (two) and North West (one).

Attention turns now to unpack the least visited spaces of South Africa in terms of purpose of travel. Analysis is undertaken of the patterns for leisure (Table 6), business (Table 7) and VFR travel (Table 8). In terms of leisure trips 18 local municipalities record a total of less than 1000 trips for leisure purposes. The least visited spaces for leisure purposes in South Africa are headed by three KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities, namely Maphumulo, Dannhauser and Emadlangeni. Of the bottom ten least visited local municipalities for leisure half are found in KwaZulu-Natal. For the group of 30 local municipalities that all receive less than 1500 leisure trips a total of 13 are in KwaZulu-Natal, eight in Northern Cape, three in North West, two in Free State and Eastern Cape and one each in Gauteng (Westonaria) and Limpopo (Fetakgomo) provinces. No local municipality in Western Cape appears in the list of least visited local municipalities for leisure travel purposes. Business travel in South Africa is highly focussed on the major metropolitan centres which are the core business hubs in the country (Rogerson, 2015b). The least visited business spaces are a signifier of low levels of economic activity in the local municipality as a whole. The worst performing individual local municipalities are Ikwezi and Ntabankulu in Eastern Cape and Maphumulo in KwaZulu-Natal. For business trips of the 30 lowest ranked local municipalities 13 fall in KwaZulu-Natal, eight in Eastern Cape, six in Northern Cape, and one each in Limpopo (Aganang), North West (Ventersdorp) and Free State (Tokologo) provinces. The category of VFR travel represents the largest group of tourists and also exhibits the most distinctive geography of all the major categories of tourism in South Africa. It is a category of travel that has strong associations with the distressed areas and especially the former Homeland areas created under apartheid. One important influence impacting upon VFR travel is the actual population of particular municipalities. It is not surprising therefore to find the listing of the least visited municipalities for VFR travel linked to remote and sparsely settled rural areas. Of the ten least visited local municipalities for VFR the list is led by Mier, Thembelihle and Renosterberg as well as two Karoo municipalities in the Western Cape, namely Prince Albert and Laingsburg. Overall, of the 30 lowest ranked municipalities for VFR travel 14 are found in Northern Cape, six in Eastern Cape, five in Western Cape, three in KwaZulu-Natal and two in Free State.

Table 6: Leisure Trips

Local Municipality	Total	%National
KZN281 uMfolozi	1486	0.00019844
GT483 Westonaria	1459	0.00019479
NC067 Khai-Ma	1402	0.0001872
KZN244 Msinga	1387	0.00018525
NC092 Dikgatlong	1347	0.00017983
KZN227 Richmond	1343	0.00017932
NW393 Mamusa	1197	0.00015982
NC085 Tsantsabane	1167	0.00015585
KZN233 Indaka	1148	0.00015337



EC444 Ntabankulu	1054	0.00014079
LIM474 Fetakgomo	1023	0.00013668
NW381 Ratlou	1020	0.00013627
EC133 Inkwanca	934	0.00012472
KZN245 Umvoti	933	0.00012458
NC075 Renosterberg	897	0.00011982
KZN283 Ntambanana	851	0.0001137
KZN286 Nkandla	828	0.00011065
NC086 Kgatelopele	827	0.00011046
FS164 Naledi	816	0.00010902
KZN293 Ndwedwe	777	0.00010382
NW401 Ventersdorp	768	0.00010255
NC076 Thembelihle	709	>0.0001
KZN291 Mandeni	661	>0.0001
NC084 !Kheis	566	>0.0001
FS182 Tokologo	546	>0.0001
KZN242 Nqutu	484	>0.0001
NC093 Magareng	407	>0.0001
KZN253 Emadlangeni	406	>0.0001
KZN254 Dannhauser	337	>0.0001
KZN294 Maphumulo	219	>0.0001

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Table 7: Business Trips

Local Municipality	Total	%National
LIM352 Aganang	853	0.0001841
EC107 Baviaans	846	0.0001825
EC156 Mhlontlo	834	0.00018
EC141 Elundini	787	0.0001698
KZN214 uMuziwabantu	778	0.0001677
EC138 Sakhisizwe	765	0.0001651
KZN245 Umvoti	763	0.0001646
EC136 Emalahleni	754	0.0001626
KZN293 Ndwedwe	740	0.0001597
KZN435 Umzimkhulu	735	0.0001585
NC064 Kamiesberg	730	0.0001575
NC075 Renosterberg	725	0.0001564
KZN244 Msinga	721	0.0001556
NC084 !Kheis	718	0.0001548
NW401 Ventersdorp	695	0.0001499
NC061 Richtersveld	657	0.0001417
KZN211 Vulamehlo	571	0.0001232
KZN242 Nqutu	546	0.0001178
KZN215 Ezingoleni	546	0.0001178
KZN434 Ubuhlebezwe	521	0.0001124



KZN227 Richmond	456	>0.0001
FS182 Tokologo	411	>0.0001
EC133 Inkwanca	407	>0.0001
KZN254 Dannhauser	403	>0.0001
NC093 Magareng	358	>0.0001
KZN253 Emadlangeni	259	>0.0001
NC067 Khai-Ma	227	>0.0001
EC444 Ntabankulu	195	>0.0001
KZN294 Maphumulo	195	>0.0001
EC103 Ikwezi	192	>0.0001

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data

Table 8: VFR Trips

Local Municipality	Total	%National
KZN233 Indaka	11398	0.000457
NC073 Emthanjeni	11177	0.000448
KZN285 Mthonjaneni	11132	0.000446
NC085 Tsantsabane	11109	0.000445
FS182 Tokologo	9933	0.000398
WC034 Swellendam	9431	0.000378
NC078 Siyancuma	9391	0.000376
WC042 Hessequa	9143	0.000366
EC133 Inkwanca	8660	0.000347
EC128 Nxuba	7535	0.000302
NC086 Kgatelopele	7393	0.000296
NC067 Khai-Ma	7151	0.000286
NC061 Richtersveld	6842	0.000274
EC103 Ikwezi	6834	0.000274
NC064 Kamiesberg	6717	0.000269
EC132 Tsolwana	6572	0.000263
KZN215 Ezingoleni	6212	0.000249
NC074 Kareeberg	6097	0.000244
FS164 Naledi	5963	0.000239
EC144 Gariep	5945	0.000238
EC107 Baviaans	5352	0.000214
NC093 Magareng	4899	0.000196
NC077 Siyathemba	4790	0.000192
NC084 !Kheis	2934	0.000118
WC041 Kannaland	2845	0.000114
NC076 Thembelihle	2604	0.000104
NC075 Renosterberg	2558	0.000102
WC052 Prince Albert	2338	>0.0001
WC051 Laingsburg	2303	>0.0001
NC081 Mier	1831	>0.0001

Source: Based on Unpublished Global Insight data



Conclusion

Peripheral spaces of national tourism economies are important regions for research by tourism scholars. Currently, the international literature on peripheral tourism is mainly dominated by Northern works, which investigate either the challenges of tourism development in rural or wilderness areas, or of the role of tourism as potential catalyst for reviving the economic prospects of lagging regions. Studies of peripheral tourism spaces in the global South are not prominent in the extant literature.

Within specifically tourism geographical writings on peripheral spaces, an investigatory void identified by Müller (2016) surrounds locational issues. This paper has sought to address the neglect of locational issues by investigating the least visited tourism spaces of South Africa using municipal level data. This exploratory analysis casts research attention upon tourism (un-) development in a group of local municipalities that have barely received a mention so far in the growing stream of writings on South African tourism. The key findings in this analysis are of the identification of clusters of less visited spaces particularly in remote, rural areas of the Northern Cape, parts of Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. This broad picture must be elaborated upon, however, by the recognition of particular differences that emerge in terms of least visited spaces, both for domestic and international visits and especially so for the different purpose of travel. More specific, local level research is required to understand the specific underpinnings and detailed geography of the country's 'off the map' tourism spaces.

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