

Transformation in South African Tourism: A Geographical Perspective on the Eastern Cape

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Abstract

In the international scholarship about tourism small firms the most distinguishing feature of South Africa relates to transformation debates. This article represents a contribution to the vibrant literature around small tourism firms and change in the global South by analysing the geographies of transformation in one South African province, the Eastern Cape. An historical approach is applied to understand the spatial patterns of transformation as mapped in patterns of ownership of Black small-scale accommodation enterprises. The historical approach shows that different regulatory regimes regarding Black entrepreneurs and their involvement in South African tourism have existed at different times and especially under the influence of apartheid legislation and following democratic change. The formative period of Eastern Cape tourism during the first half of the 20th century witnessed the establishment of a tourism economy dominated by White entrepreneurs and most especially in the coastal areas. The apartheid period, however, allowed a small window of opportunity for Black entrepreneurs to establish tourism businesses in the former ‘reserves’ which would become the Homelands. It is shown that the former Homelands areas are currently the most advanced transformation spaces. This finding reinforces the view that whilst with the end of apartheid the Homelands formally ceased to exist their legacy remains inscribed on the character and geographical patterns of tourism small firm development in South Africa.

Keywords: small tourism firms; transformation, tourism policy; South Africa; Eastern Cape

Introduction

Geographical contributions are acknowledged as situated at the forefront of the early emergence and consolidation of tourism scholarship (Gill, 2018). One of the leading writers, Richard Butler (2004) pinpoints that because of its strong spatial focus and synthesizing approach geography scholars have exerted a foundational role in tourist studies. In addition, over a decade ago Hall and Page (2009: 4) asserted in a seminal review of research progress that “geographers have made a substantial contribution to the field of tourism”. As geographical research encompasses issues of place, space and the environment the discipline continues to add critical insights to the advancement of tourism studies (Gill, 2012; Kreisel, 2004; Saarinen, 2014; Rogerson & Visser, 2020a; Sin, Mostafanezhad, & Cheer, 2021; Stock, 2021). Among the topics that tourism geographers have made notable contributions are, *inter alia*, climate change, destination planning and management, entrepreneurship, heritage, innovation, local and regional development, mobilities, protected areas, public policy, sustainability, and tourism planning (Hall & Page, 2009; Brouder, 2013; Saarinen, 2014; Saarinen, Hall & Rogerson, 2017; Saarinen & Rogerson, 2021; Timothy, 2021). Most recently, several geographers have contributed to international debates about the ramifications of the

COVID-19 pandemic for tourism futures (Brouder, 2020; Butler, 2020; Hall, Scott & Gössling, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020; Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a, 2021b).

This paper examines one aspect of the development of tourism small firms, a theme on which geographers have made several critical inputs (Williams, Shaw & Greenwood, 1989; Shaw & Williams, 1990; Shaw & Williams, 2002, 2004a). Indeed, Yachin and Ioannides (2020) argue that the work authored by Williams, Greenwood and Shaw (1989) is the cornerstone for the emergence of international writings on tourism entrepreneurship which was conceptualized as a blend of consumption and production. Attention here concentrates upon small firm development in the South African tourism economy and of local policy debates occurring around ‘transformation’. Eastern Cape province is the empirical case.

In terms of approach, the study uses historical and spatial lens in order to interrogate the uneven geographical patterns of transformation which are unfolding in South Africa. The mining of archival sources – viewed as the raw material of history – is one of the major historical approaches for hospitality and tourism research and can shed fresh insights on contemporary issues (Power, 2018). The application of a spatial perspective represents one of the core approaches for research in the geography of tourism and in particular for interpreting change in tourism spaces (Hall, 2012). Geographers of tourism are major contributors to tourism studies in South Africa (Rogerson & Visser, 2020). In the extant literature on tourism geography, as reflected in reviews conducted by Visser (2016) and by Rogerson and Visser (2020b), no previous South African study applies a spatial perspective on transformation. The analysis builds upon a detailed audit of Black-owned accommodation enterprises in the Eastern Cape and supplemented by historical archival material on the tourism regulatory environment which is drawn from the collections of historical papers at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South African Institute of Race Relations papers) and the National Library, Cape Town (South African Railways and Harbours collections).

Essentially this is a contribution to tourism geographical scholarship on small firms and change in the global South and more specifically, to addressing current South African debates about transformation. Two major sections of material and discussion are given. The next section locates the study as part of the broader international literature on small firms in tourism. Attention then turns to a chronicle of the emergence of transformation debates in South African tourism followed by an exploration of the uneven and particular geographies of transformation as evidenced by the findings from the Eastern Cape research.

Locating small firms in tourism

Across the international experience one of the essential characteristics of the tourism industry is that it is mainly made up of small-scale enterprises and micro-firms (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2003; Thomas, 2004; Akbaba, 2012; Yachin, 2019; Trip, Fagadar, Badulescu & Badulescu, 2021). It is asserted by Pham, Coles, Ritchie and Jwang (2021: 2010) that micro and small enterprises “comprise the majority of the tourism and hospitality businesses globally and contribute heavily to the economic livelihood of many communities”. The ubiquitous nature of small tourism firms is reflected in the statement that such enterprises are “present in the remote rural periphery, the urban context and as a local flavour ‘clip on’ enterprise supporting and differentiating global corporate entities” (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2007: 12). For example, in Australia it is evident that small tourism businesses are essential to the country’s economy and development and “particularly in regional and rural areas where a majority of these firms are located” (Perkins & Khoo-Lattimore, 2020: 184). Likewise, as Shariff and Abidin (2020: 684) can observe, tourism small enterprises “play a vital role as the backbone in the Malaysian tourism industry”.

Small tourism businesses must be recognized as heterogeneous in character (Yachin, 2020). As Yachin (2021: 320) stresses tourism small firms “are not scaled-down versions of bigger businesses but rather embody an alternative manifestation of entrepreneurship”. According to Ateljevic and Doorne (2007: 13) small tourism firms are a dynamic agent of tourism development and growth as they “are normally associated with low levels of economic leakage, comparatively low barriers to entry and high levels of local networking, providing linkages between society and economy at the local level”. Shaw and Williams (2004b) provide several explanations for the proliferation of small firms and their dominant presence in the tourism economies of most countries. Among the leading reasons are that tourism markets exhibit low entry barriers, the significance of ‘lifestyle entrepreneurs’ for whom the business return may be as much social- as profit-related, the impacts of post-Fordist vertical disintegration of production, and that “the intersection of spatial fixity with small-scale niche or localized markets” further encourages small firm development in tourism (Shaw & Williams, 2004b: 55).

Small firm development in tourism is viewed especially significant for marginal and/or peripheral social, cultural and physical environments and “touted as the path for enhancing local economies and delivering more appropriate development” (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2004: 5). In many cases, such as Australia, family-owned small firms dominate tourism most especially in peripheral and rural areas (Kallmuenzer & Peters, 2018; Peters & Kallmuenzer, 2018). Importantly, often such family firms pursue social and environmental sustainability targets which go beyond regulations (Kallmuenzer, Nikolakis, Peters & Zanon, 2018). Arguably, whilst the activities of tourism small firms are unlikely to disrupt dominant economic structures “these small-scale businesses may have a meaningful contribution to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the localities where they are situated” (Yachin, 2020: 29).

Not surprising is that one of the most conspicuous issues regarding tourism policy internationally “has been the growth of small businesses” (Thomas, Shaw & Page, 2011). Over the past two decades research trends on small firms and entrepreneurship in tourism have been reviewed in a number of papers (Page, Forer & Lawton, 1999; Thomas, 2004; Ateljevic & Doorne, 2007; Thomas et al., 2011; Shaw, 2014; Fu, Okumus, Wu, & Köseoglu, 2019; Işık, Küçükaltan, Çelebi, Çalkın, Enser, & Çelik, 2019; Alhammad, 2020; Booth, Chaperon, Kennell & Morrison, 2020; Figueroa-Domecq, de Jong & Williams, 2020; Ratten, 2020; Thirumalesh Madanaguli, Kaur, Bresciani & Dhir, 2021; Trip et al., 2021). The consensus view appears to be that the research field has made certain strides since Page et al. (1999) labelled small businesses as *terra incognita* for tourism scholars. Nevertheless, in the early 2000s Koh and Hatten (2002: 21) still regarded the tourism entrepreneur as “the overlooked player in tourism development studies” arguing that “the tourism literature lacks coverage of the tourism entrepreneur”.

In terms of the uneven tempo of international tourism research Shaw and Williams (2002) point out that issues surrounding small firms were elevated as a research focus and most especially in the Global North. Lifestyle factors are given much prominence in this literature (Ratten, 2020; Tomassini, Font & Thomas, 2021) as is the growth in importance of innovation for the performance of tourism small firms (Brouder, 2013; Verreyne, Williams, Ritchie, Gronum & Betts, 2019; Bressan & Padriani, 2020). A critical finding from studies in the Global North is that local embeddedness is another key factor for the survival of tourism small firms (Brouder & Erikson, 2013). In terms of expansion, tourism small firms often are constrained by lack of capital or business-related skills and generally are viewed as exhibiting “low levels of entrepreneurial orientation” (Yachin, 2020: 20). This said, entrepreneurship is shown as a process that precedes innovation and ‘trigger forces’ around the “entrepreneur-opportunity nexus” are critical for our understanding of product innovations that occur in rural small

tourism firms (Yachin, 2019). Customers represent an often untapped but readily-accessible and significant knowledge base for learning opportunities by small tourism firms (Yachin, 2018).

Tourism entrepreneurship is fundamental to meeting several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including those for gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 12), and sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12). Some observers bemoan the fact that much policy research issues on small firms in tourism has remained “under-theorised and under-researched” (Thomas et al., 2011: 964). In particular, certain researchers’ direct attention to theoretical shortcomings in literature and debates specifically around tourism entrepreneurship which requires further more rigorous investigation (Yachin & Ioannides, 2020; Yachin, 2021). New theoretical developments are surrounding the application of the concepts of ‘entrepreneurial bricolage’ and ‘spatial bricolage’ in order to study processes and behaviours of tourism small firms and how “place-bound features create opportunities and challenges” (Yachin & Ioannides, 2020: 1005).

In the context of the Global South the writings by Dahles and Bras (1999a, 1999b), Dahles (2001), Dahles and Keune (2002), Hampton (2003) and Shariff and Abidin (2020) attest to the critical role of small firms as a vigorous and visible element of tourism economies. Policy and planning for tourism small firms is an essential component of sustainable tourism policy and planning (Adu-Ampong & Kimbu, 2021). Using case material from Indonesia Adams and Sandarupa (2018: 1) isolate the understudied role of local knowledge in nurturing the resilience of small-scale tourism businesses in what they style as “touristically-unpredictable times”. Indonesia is also the context for the research by Dahles, Prabana and Koning (2020) showing ways in which small tourism enterprises can offer a resilient pathway to sustainable development. For China, Liang and Bao (2018) emphasize that cultivating and encouraging local small tourism enterprises can be a potentially effective policy vehicle to alleviate poverty.

In the case of Kenya, Mshenga and Richardson (2013) identified that in some circumstances small business participation in tourism can help to diversify incomes and contribute to poverty reduction. Evidence from the career pathways of tourism entrepreneurs in Uganda discloses that “tourism can enlarge people’s capabilities, awareness and assets to control their own well-being” (Adiyia, De Rademaeker, Vanneste, & Ahebwa, 2017:105). In Ghana the relevance of understanding cultural practices and lifestyle motivations of small accommodation providers is discussed by Mensah-Ansah (2011). For Angola, Jacinto and du Preez (2018) pinpoint the vital role of tourism small firms in the development of tourism in a post-war context. Across much of sub-Saharan Africa the core constraints on the growth of small tourism and hospitality firms are disclosed as those of lack of access to finance, minimal tourist support services, lack of human capital as well as “inefficient institutions, low skill workforce and conflicting stakeholder interests” (Njinyah & Pendati, 2021: 174). Unfortunately, tourism growth can contribute to the existence of corruption which must be added as a further constraint on tourism small firm development for several African countries including Nigeria and South Africa (Koens & Thomas, 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020a; Alola, Alola, Avci & Ozturen, 2021; Jemirade, 2021).

Questions of entrepreneurial orientation among women-owned businesses and the importance of establishing strong business ties with government agencies in order to access resources have been explored in the resource-scarce contexts of Ghana and Nigeria (Ribeiro, Adam, Kimbu, Afenyo-Agbe, Adeola, Figueroa-Domecq & de Jong, 2021). Ngoasong and Kimbu (2016) investigate the ways in which informal microfinance institutions are critical supports for development-led entrepreneurship by providing micro-credit and development opportunities to small tourism firms in Cameroon. Based upon research conducted in Morocco



and Sierra Leone, Ngoasong and Jafari (2021) show that tourism growth affects the low-income segment of urban populations by offering opportunities in tourism to enable income growth. It is argued that there are three ideal determinants for micro-entrepreneurship in urban tourism, namely an enabling institutional environment, entrepreneurial agency, and development-led policies by government to facilitate pro-poor development. African research reveals that policy support for collaborative networks can enhance women entrepreneurs' human capital management and correspondingly increase their resiliency and that of their tourism businesses (Kimbu, Ngoasong, Adeola & Afenyo-Agbe, 2019).

For the resource-scarce contexts of the Global South business and structural resources are shown to be positively related to the success of tourism small firms pointing to the need to develop social networks and ties to offset the lack or weakness of government support (Campbell & Kubickova, 2020). The exploitation of networks and embeddedness can be vital determinants of the successful growth of women-owned businesses, including tourism small firms (Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2019). Recent work in Ghana and Nigeria points to the fact that context is an important determinant of leadership performances in tourism and that entrepreneurial journeys may be fruitfully explored through the theoretical lens of post-structural feminism (Kimbu, de Jong, Adam, Ribiero, Afenyo-Agbe, Adeola, & Figueroa-Domecq, 2021). In the Global South environment it is widely accepted that the common economic objectives of increased earnings, foreign exchange, investment, employment opportunities as well as the minimization of adverse social and cultural effects might be appropriately achieved through the promotion of an environment for supporting small tourism firms rather than large enterprises (Dahles & Kuene, 2002; Roe, Goodwin & Ashley, 2004). Nevertheless, it is evidenced that whilst tourism small firms in the Global South are highly susceptible to various hazards resulting in risk concerns, their uptake of insurance as a risk management strategy is limited for various reasons (Dayour, Adongo & Kimbu, 2020). Cambodia provides one example where climate change resilience is vital for local tourism small firms (Ngin, Chhom & Neef, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the multiple management challenges which are confronted by tourism small firms and underlines further the importance of government interventions in support of tourism entrepreneurs (Rogerson & Baum, 2020; Dayour, Adongo, Amuquandoh & Adam, 2021; Sobaih, Elshaer, Hasanein, & Abdelaziz, 2021).

In an extensive literature review of published international research about tourism entrepreneurship İşik et al. (2019) demonstrate that South Africa is one of the leading scholarship destinations in the global South for small tourism firms. The country is by far the most important research base in the setting of sub-Saharan Africa, a finding that confirms earlier reviews of African tourism research (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011). Township tourism has been the focus of several investigations on the challenges facing the evolutionary development of small firms and their role in poverty alleviation (Koens & Thomas, 2015, 2016; Hlanyane & Acheampong, 2017). Other studies have looked variously at the role of small firms in niche forms of tourism accommodation services (Visser & Van Huyssteen, 1997, 1999; Nuntsu, Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2004; Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw & Chipumuro, 2012), business linkages (Kirsten & Rogerson, 2002), sustainable development (Litheko, 2021), local economic development (Booyens & Visser, 2010), and questions of business support for tourism small firms (Rogerson, 2004a, 2017). Recent studies have demonstrated that the COVID-19 pandemic exposes the precarity of the operators of tourism small firms and often their lack of resilience to respond to it through measures for business adaptation (Booyens, Rogerson, Rogerson & Baum, 2022).

One consistent theme in South African scholarship on small tourism firms is the recognition given to the subordinate position which is occupied by Black-owned small tourism

establishments in the national tourism economy (Rogerson, 2005). Accordingly, a major stream of writings in South African literature on tourism small firms has been catalysed by government policy developments surrounding transformation (Rogerson, 2003, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d, 2004e, 2008; Magi, 2010; Mofokeng, Giampiccoli & Jugmohan, 2018). Among recent contributions are works investigating the factors both limiting and promoting the involvement of Black-owned small enterprises in tourism supply chains (Adinolfi et al., 2018; Harilal & Nyikana, 2019; Giddy, Idahosa & Rogerson, 2020). Further, the potential role of government public procurement and maximizing local municipal assets as vehicles for leveraging opportunities for transformation also have come under scrutiny (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019, 2020b).

Transformation and South African tourism

Arguably, within the evolving corpus of international scholarship about tourism small firms South Africa occupies a distinctive position. The country's distinctive situation derives from national government commitments to implement policies of 'transformation' which is targeted towards shifting the racial balance of ownership and beneficiaries from tourism development. As Adinolfi, Jacobs & Tichaawa (2018: 89) affirm "tourism is a sector that ideally provides outstanding opportunities to support transformation".

Under apartheid it has been shown that the tourism economy of South Africa emerged and expanded with the dominance by a cohort of White entrepreneurs and more precisely of large White-owned enterprises (Rogerson, 2008). As one example, the tourism economy of apartheid Johannesburg – South Africa's largest city - was exclusively established and operated by White entrepreneurs (Rogerson, 2021). The only exceptions occurred in so-called 'non-White' racialized spaces (as defined by the Group Areas Act of 1950) with the most striking being the operations there of the apartheid phenomenon of so-called 'non-White' hotels (Rogerson, 2020). Nationally, the regulatory or legislative context therefore conditioned the geographical patterns of establishment and racialized operations of tourism enterprises across most of South Africa until 1994. In the country's urban areas Black entrepreneurs were permitted to operate tourism businesses only in those spaces which were designated as Indian or Coloured areas by apartheid legislation (Rogerson, 2020). Since 1994 direct support programmes have been enacted by national government to extend the business ownership base by Black South Africans disadvantaged by apartheid and formerly largely excluded from participation in the country's economy. An institutional structure was set up by national government post-1995 for the delivery of both financial support services and non-financial support (training, skills, information) in terms of business development services. An array of national government programmes were introduced for small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME) development which were generic in character rather than sector-specific in design (Rogerson, 2004f).

Transformation policy in tourism to address the apartheid legacy of disadvantage has a historical record which spans nearly two decades (Abrahams, 2019). As has been argued elsewhere the policy imperative for transformation in tourism moved sharply up the South African agenda after a visit in 2000 by the Minister to the Tourism Indaba in Durban where the issue was clear that the country's tourism sector was overwhelmingly dominated by established white entrepreneurs (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2019). In a historic document signed during 2001 the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA, 2001) issued an industry charter of empowerment and transformation which represents a commitment to the objectives of furthering Black Economic Empowerment in tourism. The Charter identifies five routes or components of a strategy designed to empower black South Africans in the tourism industry, one of which was an expanded role for Black-owned tourism small businesses (Abrahams,



2019). In the 10 Year review of tourism which was produced by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2003: 48) one of the essential challenges for the country's tourism industry was identified as "the need for it to be transformed from one that is white dominated to one that is owned equitably by the majority of South Africans". Much optimism surrounded the introduction and implementation of Black Economic Empowerment programmes with tourism viewed as "one industry where we have the chance to overcome the racial divide" (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2003: 48).

During the early 2000s the structural organization of the South African tourism system was conceptualized as a three-tier hierarchy of enterprises (Rogerson, 2005). At its top were the operations of large enterprises which are responsible for South Africa's leading hotels, travel and tour agencies, transportation, casinos and conference venues. Numerically, the largest proportion of the tourism business hierarchy was constituted by two sets of tourism small firms. The middle tier was represented by groups of established, predominantly White-owned tourism small firms which operate a host of different establishments from travel and touring companies, restaurants, small hotels, self-catering and resorts, game farms, bed and breakfasts or backpacking hostels. Many of this group of small firms are typically family-owned enterprises and originated by lifestyle entrepreneurs particularly at coastal destinations (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020b; Booyens et al., 2021).

At the bottom rung in the South African travel and tourism industry was the emerging Black-owned tourism economy, a mix of formally registered micro-enterprises as well as 'informal' tourism enterprises. Arguably, in terms of their character and business challenges this last grouping of enterprises exhibits parallels to the situation of tourism small firms discussed in other resource-constrained environments of the Global South where the motivation for business establishment usually is for self-employment or household survival rather than lifestyle considerations (e.g. Campbell & Kubickova, 2020; Ngoasong & Jafari, 2021; Njinyah & Pendati, 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2021). It is this lowest stratum of tourism businesses - established and operated by Black South Africans - that has been the focus of national policy initiatives for 'transformation' and institutional support for uplifting into the mainstream economy. Progress of transformation was considered, however, as disappointing. The 2011 National Tourism Strategy acknowledged the pace of transformation in the tourism industry had been very slow "with few black entrants in the market, and big and small business still largely dominated by white people" (Department of Tourism, 2011: 25).

Over the past decade national government tried to leverage the growth of Black-owned tourism SMMEs through a range of different kinds of initiatives (Giddy et al., 2020). These have included improving infrastructure especially in rural areas with tourism potential, promoting new 'alternative' forms of tourism offering specific opportunities for Black entrepreneurs, tourism business incubators, expanded support and commitment for community-based tourism as well as direct and indirect support initiatives to tackle the key constraints facing emerging tourism entrepreneurs. In a recent assessment of the state of transformation Abrahams (2019: 821) cautioned "whether the transformation process has resulted in a compliance culture or if indeed it is aspirational in driving change that is forward thinking, innovative and truly all inclusive". The focus narrows in the next section to review the progress and the geography of transformation regarding Black-owned tourism small businesses in Eastern Cape province.

The Eastern Cape case study – Locating transformation spaces

The Eastern Cape is one of South Africa's least visited provinces for leisure tourism despite a rich base of tourism assets particularly around the coastal areas (Acha-Anyi, 2020; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020c). As much of the province would be classed as "economically-distressed"

with high levels of unemployment and poverty the region would be fall into the category of ‘resource-constrained’. Much of the province would be described as peripheral in terms of the South African space economy (Rogerson, 2019). In order to interpret patterns of transformation in Eastern Cape an understanding is required of the historical trajectory of tourism development in the province. A comprehensive history of tourism development in Eastern Cape remains, however, to be written. Early themes would include the 19th century development of health resorts such as Cradock and of mineral spas such as at Aliwal North (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021c) and of the aspirations of Grahamstown, South Africa’s second largest town until the 1870s, to become a holiday resort (Davidson, 2000).

A major chapter in the historical development of Eastern Cape tourism would be the early 20th century growth of coastal resorts which were stimulated by the expansion of a national rail network following Union in 1910. This was accompanied by the energetic promotional activities of South African Railways and Harbours (SAR & H) administration which for the three decades took on the role of lead agency responsible for building the country’s tourism economy (Foster, 2003). The establishment of long distance rail services linking to the major inland centres of Johannesburg and Pretoria resulted in seasonal migrations and patterns of leisure time usage that nurtured “the development of coastal resorts within easy reach of the train lines, which were promoted by SAR & H publicity material” (Foster, 2003: 666). This resulted in the appearance of ‘fashionable resorts’ which included Port Elizabeth, East London and Port St Johns. Accommodation services expanded to reflect the consolidation of a tourism economy. In 1924 *The Illustrated South African Hotel Guide* listed 17 hotels in East London, 15 establishments in Port Elizabeth and two each in Cradock, Port St Johns and Grahamstown (South African Railways and Harbours, 1924).

Promotional material targeted at overseas visitors to South Africa in the 1920s lauded Port Elizabeth as a “popular holiday resort, having in Humewood an asset of considerable value” (South African Railways & Harbours, 1929: 9). Much attention was given to the safety of local sea bathing amenities and nearby of “several fine motoring routes” (South African Railways & Harbours, 1929: 10). East London was commended for its opportunities for surfboard riding, opportunities for boating and fishing and a “climate that is consistently invigorating” (South African Railways & Harbours, 1929: 10). Finally, Port St Johns which was accessible by the Railways road motor service was described as “one of the beauty spots of the country” (South African Railways & Harbours, 1929: 11). Similar publicity material and pamphlets were produced in the 1930s to boost further the tourism bases of these centres. One 1937 booklet highlighted East London as a “year-round popularity as a seaside holiday playground” and “the gateway to the huge Transkeian native reserve” (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 14). Port Elizabeth was described as a “foremost seaside resort which enjoys perennial patronage” and “among its outstanding attractions is a snake park, wherein reptiles indigenous to Southern Africa are seen” (Carlyle-Gall, 1937: 14). Further strengthening the local tourism asset base occurred with the establishment in 1931 of Addo Elephant National Park (Skotnes-Brown, 2021).

Although there is no data to index tourism flows for this period of the emergence of coastal tourism resorts the expansion of tourism was evidenced in the further growth of a range of accommodation services in these centres. Arguably, this historical phase in the development of Eastern Cape tourism laid the foundations for the growth of an economy of White-owned business establishments providing accommodation, tour services and attractions. Nevertheless, this pre-1948 period is notable also for the initial appearance in King William’s Town and Queenstown of accommodation establishments which were Black-owned, perhaps the earliest examples of Black ownership of tourism small enterprises. This finding underscores the value of archival research in providing a fresh perspective on debates relating to Black Economic

Empowerment and transformation of South Africa's tourism industry (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2019).

1948 was a watershed year for the historical development of tourism in the region of Eastern Cape. With the implementation of apartheid policies, the local tourism economy increasingly became consolidated around the market of domestic rather than international tourism. It was observed that the coastal centres of Eastern Cape and most especially East London, Port Elizabeth and Jeffrey's Bay, emerged as popular destinations in the 1950s and 1960s for the market of (mainly) domestic caravanners (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021d). Of significance was the introduction of apartheid legislation which effectively blocked participation by Black South Africans in the tourism economy. As occurred in other parts of South Africa, local hotels became exclusively for White patrons and only run by White entrepreneurs. With the extension of hotel apartheid, the only facilities in cities available to 'non-Whites' were 'non-White hotels'; by 1962 the records of the South African Institute of Race Relations show there was one such hotel for 'non-Whites' each in East London and Port Elizabeth (Keyter, 1962).

Beyond the cities a change began to occur in the legislative environment which would impact Black-owned businesses. This change accompanied the implementation of 'grand apartheid' planning and the making of the first 'self-governing' Homelands with Transkei the pioneer 'model' (Stone, 1969). Ally and Lissoni (2017) stress that the Homelands were creations of apartheid and established as ethnically-defined territories for Black South Africans in order to deflect demands for full political representation. During the 1960s Hart (1972) shows there emerged a dichotomy in the legal environment affecting African (Black) business. Under apartheid planning official policy in the 'reserves', such as Transkei, "is directed towards the active encouragement of an entrepreneurial class, whereas African businessmen in the urban areas are being faced with increasingly severe legal obstacles" (Hart, 1972: 94). The Bantu Investment Corporation Act (No 34 of 1959) constituted "the first official attempt to provide direct assistance" to Black entrepreneurs with the Corporation's activities exclusively targeted geographically to the 'reserves'. This was followed by the activities of the Xhosa Development Corporation (XDC) which functioned from 1968 in Transkei and Ciskei (Hart, 1972: 98). Within the bounds of these mainly rural Homeland spaces different regulatory regimes were in existence that permitted (and even encouraged) Black entrepreneurs to operate a range of small businesses (including tourism) which they were not allowed to run in the racialized geographical spaces defined as 'White' South Africa (Hart, 1972). Further impetus for the growth of Black ownership of tourism establishments in these peripheral spaces was through the activities of several Homeland Development Corporations (such as Transkei Development Corporation, Ciskei Development Corporation) which took over the operations of many formerly white-owned tourism businesses in some areas (Stone, 1969; Hart, 1972; Wildman, 2005).

During the 1970s the annual surveys of the South African Institute of Race Relations reported on such developments. For 1972 it was reported in House of Assembly debates for 29 February by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development "that 18 hotels or motels had been acquired from Whites in the Transkei while one had been built by the X.D.C. and one by an African person or company" (Horrell, Horner, Kane-Berman & Margo, 1973: 197). The outcome was the later coexistence in the 'independent' Homelands of Transkei ('independent' 1976) and Ciskei ('independent' 1981) of a form of rural tourism led by large gaming casinos and resort complexes owned and operated by White South African capital and operating alongside an emerging economy of small Black-owned tourism establishments (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). Democratic change in 1994 resulted in the reintegration of the Homelands into South Africa and further shifts in the regulatory environment including the

opportunity for Black entrepreneurs now to operate tourism firms beyond the confines of the peripheral spaces of the Homelands.

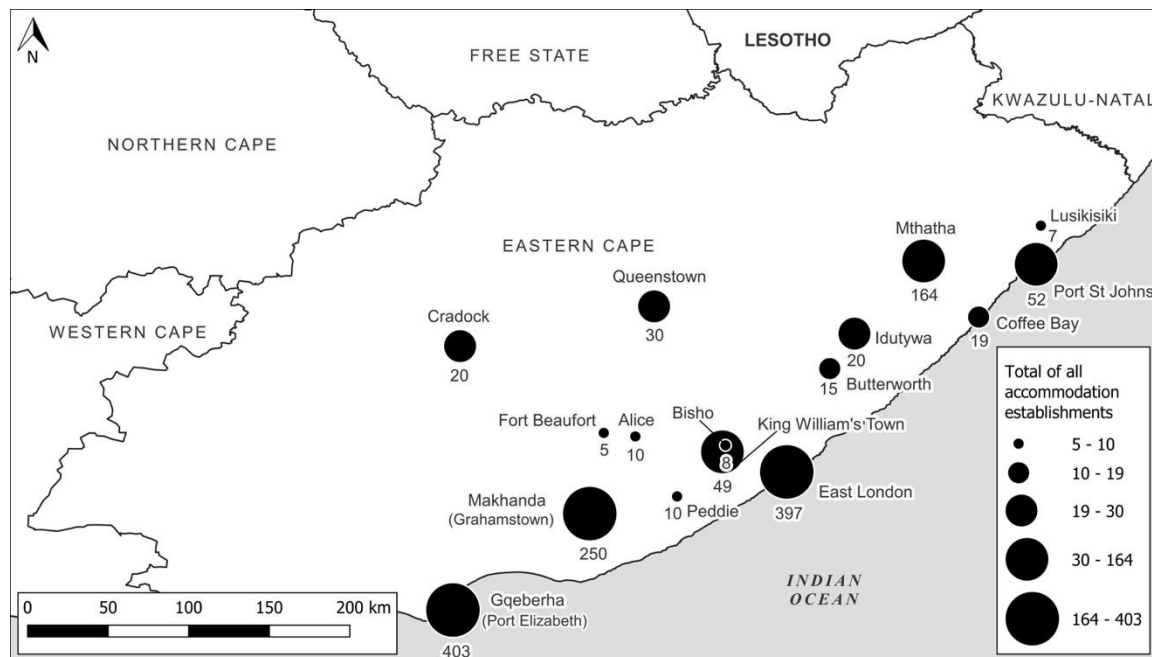


Figure 1. The major geographical clusters of accommodation establishments (Source: Authors)

The relevance of this historical context and discussion about the development of tourism in Eastern Cape can be appreciated in an examination of the contemporary patterns of Black-owned small enterprises in tourism across the province. For 2018 data was collected from official sources, most importantly the data base of Eastern Cape Tourism and Parks as well information provided by local tourism offices of the numbers of accommodation establishments in each of the major centres of Eastern Cape province. The numbers of Black-owned establishments in each locality was obtained from survey questionnaires completed by local officials and tourism offices. In total 1459 establishments were recorded in the accommodation audit for 2018. Figure 1 maps the data on numbers of establishments. This reveals clearly that the largest clusters occur in the major coastal centres of Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) and East London followed by Makhandha (former Grahamstown) and Mthatha, the provincial capital. Smaller clusters are recorded for Port St Johns, Queenstown and King Williams Town. Overall, the two major cities account for 54.8 percent of accommodation establishments and together with Makhandha and Mthatha represent as much as 83.2 percent of (formal) accommodation service enterprises in Eastern Cape.

Figure 2 provides a lens upon a different geography of accommodation services in the Eastern Cape. It shows a mapping of the landscape of Black-owned tourism accommodation establishments as an indicator of transformation. As compared to the highly concentrated pattern of accommodation establishments as a whole Figure 2 reveals a dispersal of Black-owned establishments. In total 333 or 22.8 percent of accommodation establishments could be identified as Black-owned. The spatial distribution of these establishments shows that the largest clusters are in Mthatha (36.0 percent) followed by East London (20.7 percent), Grahamstown (9.0 percent) and King William's Town/Bisho (9.0 percent). The most striking finding is the very low number of Black-owned accommodation establishments which were recorded for Gqeberha. This is a signal of the difficulties of Black-owned small enterprises to penetrate the tourism market of Eastern Province's largest city. As compared to Cape Town,

Durban or Johannesburg the opportunities for transformation through township tourism were limited by the relatively low numbers of international tourists to Eastern Cape. The relatively low number of Black-owned establishments in Makhanda is noteworthy for of the 30 Black-owned businesses 18 are homestays which have been a major focus for promotion by the Eastern Cape provincial government.

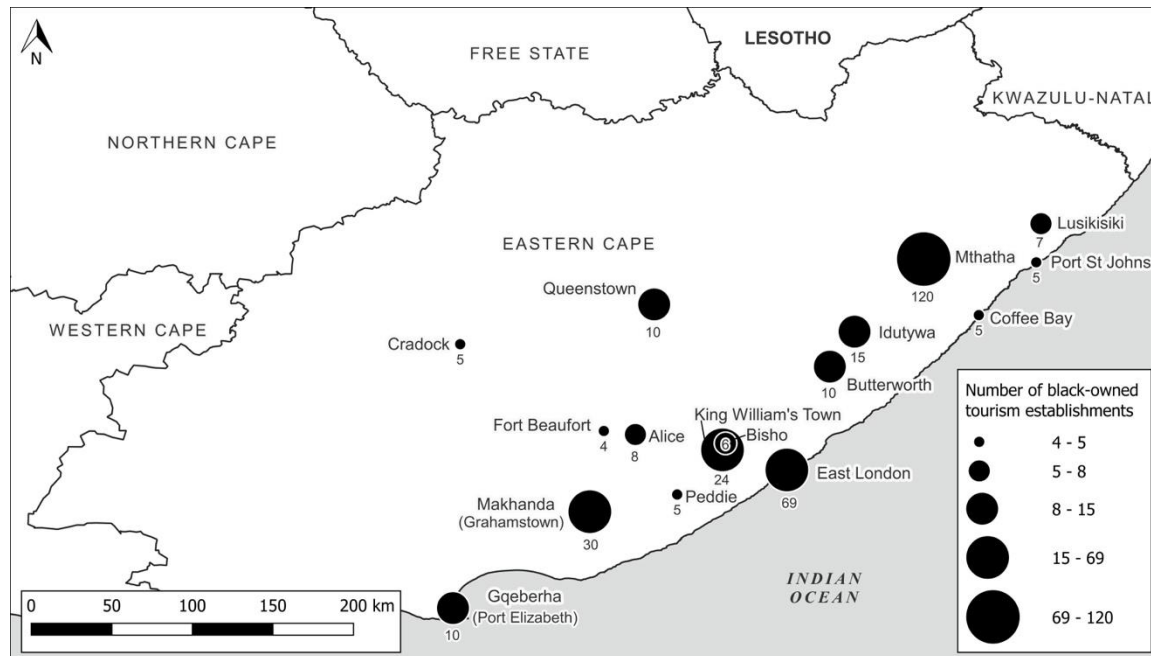


Figure 2. The Geography of Black-Owned Accommodation Services in Eastern Cape (Source: Authors)

Figure 3 shows what can be called the ‘transformation spaces’ of Eastern Cape. It maps the share of Black-owned tourism accommodation service establishments as a proportion of all accommodation services. The most striking findings confirm the imprint of apartheid on tourism and spatial development in the province. First, the lowest levels of transformation are recorded in the earliest established tourism nodes of the Eastern Cape, namely the cities of Gqeberha and East London, the small towns of Grahamstown and Port St Johns. All these centres record a proportion of Black-owned enterprises which is less than that for Eastern Cape as a whole (22.8 percent). Arguably, in these spaces White owned accommodation owners established a dominant presence and ‘crowded out’ potential new entrants into the tourism markets in these areas. The strength of White ownership can be attributed further to the history of regulatory protection enjoyed under apartheid.

Second, in striking contrast to these are those places which record the highest levels of transformation as indexed by share of Black ownership of accommodation services. The analysis reveals the greatest levels of transformation are found in the towns and small towns of the former Transkei and Ciskei Homelands. At centres such as Mthatha, Lusikisiki, Alice, Butterworth and Idutywa the vast majority of accommodation service establishments are Black-owned. Arguably, these transformation spaces reflect a history of Black involvement in tourism which pre-dated democratic transition and the implementation of policies for Black Economic Empowerment and transformation. With 120 Black-owned accommodation service establishments and representing approximately three-quarters of the accommodation base of the town, Mthatha could be viewed as the ‘showcase’ for transformation in South African tourism

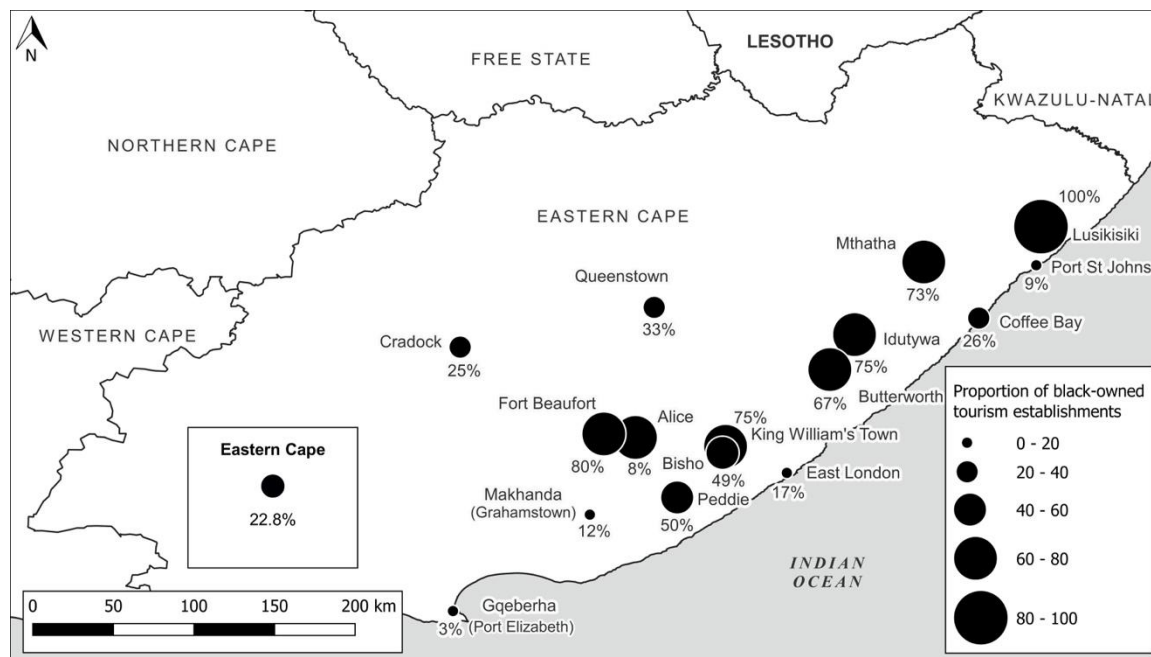


Figure 3. The Geography of Transformation in Accommodation Services in Eastern Cape (Source: Authors)

Conclusion

Arguably, within international scholarship the debates surrounding transformation are the most distinguishing feature of writings about tourism small firms in South Africa. The aim in this paper was to insert a geographical perspective on transformation in order to identify both its uneven progress and the 'transformation spaces' of change in the tourism landscape. The Eastern Cape provides an interesting research canvas for such an investigation as much of the territory of the province derived from the former self-governing and subsequently 'independent' Homelands of Transkei and Ciskei.

By adopting an historical approach, it was shown that different regulatory regimes regarding Black entrepreneurship in tourism have existed at different times and especially under the influence of apartheid legislation and following democratic change. The formative period of Eastern Cape tourism during the first half of the 20th century witnessed the establishment of a tourism economy dominated by White entrepreneurs and most especially in the coastal areas. The apartheid period, however, allowed a small window of opportunity for Black entrepreneurs to establish tourism businesses in the former 'reserves' which would become the Homelands. This window of opportunity allowed the revival of an earlier tradition of a few pioneers in terms of Black entrepreneurship in tourism that existed in the pre-1948 period (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2019). The geographies of transformation as disclosed in this investigation of the Eastern Cape cannot be understood without an historical base. It is evident that the former Homelands areas emerge as the most advanced transformation spaces. This finding reinforces the view that whilst with the end of apartheid the Homelands formally ceased to exist their legacy remains inscribed on the character and geographical patterns of tourism small firm development in South Africa.

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