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Heritage tourism in the global South: Development impacts of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, South Africa

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Abstract
Heritage tourism is an increasingly popular form of tourism across many destinations globally. Maximising the opportunities from heritage tourism is a critical policy issue in the global South. Against a backcloth of the rising importance of heritage tourism for local development agendas across the global South this paper seeks to analyse the local impacts of one major new heritage development project operationalised in South Africa, namely the Cradle of Humankind. In the international context this heritage project is a state-led, infrastructure-led initiative introduced into an economically marginal area in search of pro-poor growth. The analysis suggests that currently this anchor project has not reached its anticipated potential for energising local development.

Keywords
Heritage tourism, local economic impacts, marginal regions, South Africa

Introduction

Tourism and recreation activities can exert positive impacts for local economies (Hall and Page, 2014). In terms of galvanizing regional and local development, Hall (2007) argues the role of tourism is a significant vehicle that must not be underestimated in advanced countries. Halkier et al. (2014: 1547) maintain tourism is "a central part of regional development

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strategies in many localities around Europe, not just in traditional coastal or mountain resorts, but also in areas without a strong track record with regard to the visitor economy''. The value of tourism is magnified especially in marginalized, peripheral or rural areas where it can be a driver for economic growth, welfare and employment improvement (Brouder, 2012a; Rogerson, 2002; Saarinen, 2007; Schmallegger and Carson, 2010). Tourism promotion is acknowledged as one way by which marginal regions can overcome economic stagnation or decline and potentially prosper anew as 'post-productive' places (Brouder, 2012b; Saarinen, 2007). This said, the record of planning for tourism as a 'new staple' for development in marginal regions so far has yielded mixed outcomes with some success stories alongside disappointments for many localities which had false expectations raised by tourism projects. Arguably, it is suggested that in marginal areas tourism success often is achieved only 'against the odds' (Brouder, 2012a: 333).

Heritage tourism is an increasingly popular form of tourism across many destinations in the global South (yu Park, 2014). Tlabela and Munthree (2012: 1) argue that cultural and heritage tourism now represents ''one of the major growth markets in global tourism''. For promoting local development opportunities in the global South heritage tourism is an increasing focus of attention, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa where several heritage sites in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe currently are anchor destinations for tourism expansion (Addo, 2011; Dantes e Sa and Mather, 2011; Okech, 2010; Rivett-Carnac, 2011; Rogerson, 2012). As yet, however, the local development impacts of heritage tourism attractions in the global South have garnered only modest scholarly attention (Madden and Shipley, 2012; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2010, 2011; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009). One example is Borobodur, Indonesia where Hampton (2005) dissects the role of local heritage sites in generating both benefits and costs for local communities. Likewise, around the Machu Picchu archaeological site in Peru, Larson and Poudyal (2012) point to the costs and benefits of tourism expansion and highlight the imperative for adaptive resource management strategies in the search of a sustainable development pathway. In Jordan, Comer (2012) debates whether the expansion of archaeological tourism at Petra is a driver towards 'development or local destruction'. The uneven distribution of development benefits to surrounding rural communities and limited poverty-reducing impacts are disclosed in analyses of the Borobudur (Indonesia) and Angkor World Heritage Sites (WHSs) (Cambodia) (Kausar and Nishikawa, 2010; Kausar et al., 2011).

Despite the status attached to inscription on the UNESCO WHS, from a range of international cases much controversy surrounds the tourism impact of listing and whether WHS designation necessarily translates into a successful tourism destination and with positive outcomes for local communities (see e.g. Cellini, 2011; Huang et al., 2012; King and Halpenny, 2014; Magnussen and Visser, 2003; Svels, 2015). This said, it is against this backcloth of the rising importance of heritage tourism for local development agendas across the global South that the task in this article is to interrogate the impacts of one major new cultural heritage development project operationalised in South Africa, namely the Cradle of Humankind. Evidence is interrogated from a range of sources including project planning reports, key stakeholder interviews, local tourism data and a survey of local accommodation establishments in order to determine the unfolding local development impacts of this particular heritage tourism initiative.

The role of heritage tourism planning in South Africa

In South Africa heritage tourism was identified early in post-apartheid planning as an important niche for tourism promotion and the diversification of the tourism product mix, offering unexploited potential for local tourism development (van der Merwe, 2013). Binns and Nel (2002: 236) maintain that "South Africa's natural and cultural heritage… is clearly one of the most appealing and rapidly growing tourist attractions in the world, (which) makes this sector, an area to which government, entrepreneurs and communities are currently giving serious consideration". Accordingly, as niche tourism planning expanded in significance for national policy-makers, heritage tourism has been given greater prominence (Ivanovic and Saayman, 2013; Rogerson, 2011).

The critical policy relevance of heritage tourism for South Africa is acknowledged in the National Department of Tourism's (NDT) landmark *National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy* (Department of Tourism, 2012). It is stated that the country wishes "to realise the global competitiveness of the South African heritage and cultural resources through product development for sustainable tourism and economic development" (Department of Tourism, 2012: 10). The central objective of this strategy (launched in 2012) is to give strategic direction for the development and promotion of heritage and cultural tourism in South Africa and furnish a framework for the coordination and integration of heritage and culture into mainstream tourism. Among its specific goals, the strategy aims explicitly to counter unevenness in the tourism space economy by assisting the spread of tourism into marginal rural areas (Department of Tourism, 2012; Rogerson, 2014a). Heritage tourism attractions are to be marketed both to domestic as well as international (long haul) tourists (Ivanovic and Saayman, 2013; Rogerson, 2015a).

After democratic transition several of the country's major cities and secondary centres seized upon heritage tourism as a vehicle for tourism expansion and as a contribution towards broader local development planning (Nel and Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson, 2002, 2013, 2014b; Rogerson and Visser, 2007, 2011, 2014). Among prominent examples of urban heritage tourism promotion are developments associated *inter alia*, with Robben Island in Cape Town, the Inanda heritage route in Durban, the 'Big Hole' in Kimberley, as well as several initiatives undertaken in Johannesburg, most importantly around Constitution Hill and the Hector Pieterson Memorial in Soweto (King and Flynn, 2012; Khumalo et al., 2014; Marschall, 2012; van der Merwe, 2014; van der Merwe and Rogerson, 2013).

Recently, a number of other energetic initiatives have been operationalised to leverage heritage resources for driving economic and social development through tourism in South Africa's economically less prosperous and marginal regions (Binns and Nel, 2002; Magi and Nzama, 2009; Rogerson, 2014a, 2015b). One of the most significant heritage tourism developments is around the Battlefields which are located in remote rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal where other economic activities are either limited or, in the case of mining, in decline (van der Merwe, 2014). Among the most significant project initiatives has been the start-up of the national Liberation Heritage Route which seeks to preserve the legacy of South Africa's long walk to freedom (Bialostocka, 2014). This ambitious undertaking is part of a planned transnational programme of heritage development and represents an anchor project for local economic development and tourism growth in rural areas (Bialostocka, 2014).

Much interest in contemporary planning surrounds potential opportunities for leveraging tourism expansion associated with South Africa's eight WHSs (Figure 1). Of these eight heritage sites, three sites are designated on the basis of their iconic natural attractions – the Cape Floral region, iSimangaliso Wetlands and Vredefort Dome – and one site, the Maloti-Drakensberg Park, is based on both of its natural and cultural (archaeological) attractions. The remaining four sites are recognised because of their significance in terms of cultural heritage. The most popular and well-developed is the iconic destination of Robben Island in Cape Town. Existing research on heritage tourism in South Africa concentrates upon questions of the management of heritage, issues of identity and the sustainability of heritage tourism attractions. With only a small number of exceptions, minimal attention is given to the economic impacts of heritage tourism in existing scholarship (van der Merwe, 2014; van der Merwe and Rogerson, 2013). One significant contribution is Duval and Smith (2013) who unpack the continued marginality and limited attractiveness (as indexed by recorded visitor numbers) of rock art heritage attractions in the Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site.

The Cradle of Humankind Heritage Site

Our specific focus is to examine the local impacts of tourism development taking place in association with the Cradle of Humankind, a WHS of cultural significance. The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (COH WHS) is styled a "geo-spatial tourism development project" and falls under the responsibility of the Gauteng Provincial government. The project was conceived and led as a partnership between Gauteng Province and the University of the

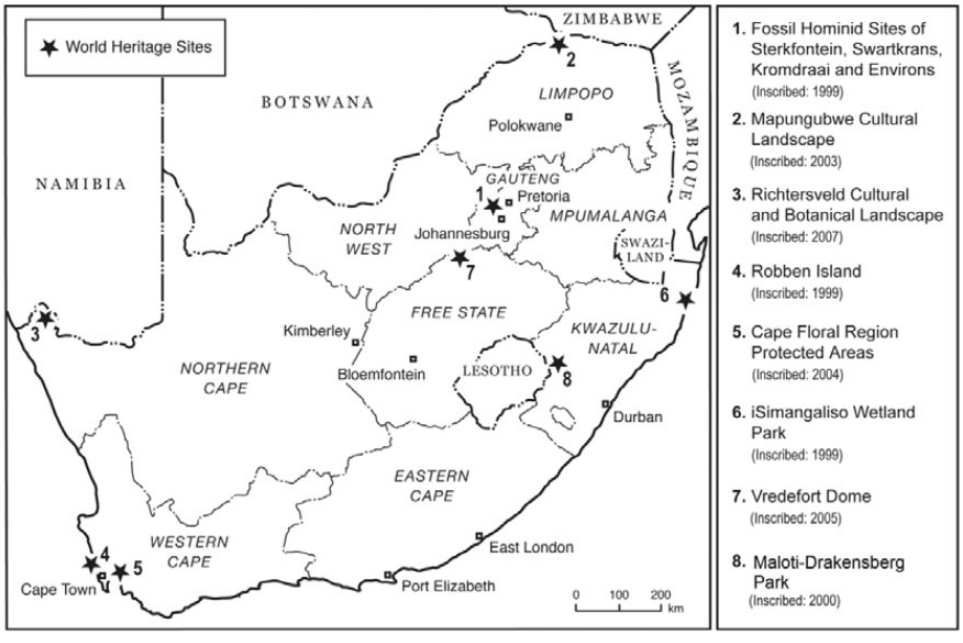


Figure 1. Location of South Africa's eight World Heritage Sites.

Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) because of the latter's long history of distinguished palaeontological research in the environs (Gauteng Province, 2001). It encompasses a band of around 40 globally significant palaeoanthropological sites which constitute a scientific treasure chest of information on human and cultural evolution (Pillay, 2010). The Cradle is situated in one of the poorest and marginal parts of the province. It is viewed a potential lever to regenerate the local economy of this economically depressed region. For one senior government official the project was launched "with two simple purposes in mind: to create jobs and grow the economy" (Kolisile, 2013: 3). However, this interpretation overlooks the critical conservation and educational objectives which are linked to this heritage tourism project (Gauteng Province, 2011).

From the project's inception, the Gauteng government recognised the tourism potential of the area and that WHS designation of the site was "seen as a way of leveraging tourism and economic development" (Randall Gross/Development Economics, 2011: 7). In addition, it was acknowledged that the cultural resources attached to the Cradle "must be accessed as a means for educating people in South Africa and worldwide about science and the origin of our species" (Randall Gross/Development Economics, 2011: 8). In the original project planning it was maintained:

> There is little doubt that the COH WHS is a key tourism destination for local, national and international tourist markets. Its tourism significance is not only relevant to Gauteng but to the whole of South Africa and therefore needs to be developed further in order for its full potential to be realised. The COH WHS is considered in light of its tourism development potential to be an important and significant area for investment. In view of this development potential, the site is significant in terms of contributing to South Africa's economic growth and development plan, and in a local sense to job creation, skills development and the establishment of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and new markets for local products. The potential is therefore for sustainable economic development that would significantly contribute locally, regionally and nationally (Gauteng Province, 2001: 17).

The WHS (Figure 2) is located in the north-west of Gauteng, an area experiencing economic downturn in local agriculture and mining activities when the decision was taken in May 1997 to nominate for WHS recognition. The UNESCO listing occurred in 1999. Together with the sites of Makapans Valley in Limpopo and the Taung site in North West province they constitute the UNESCO Fossil Hominid Sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and Environs (Pillay, 2010: 1). In an early analysis of the planning and conception of the project, Magnussen and Visser (2003: 78) maintained "the Cradle of Humankind incorporates many international best practice lessons and holds significant potential to function as a successful World Heritage Site". In addressing the existing limited facilities, at that time, for attracting heritage tourists these authors reflected positively on the lengthy but important process of consultations with various stakeholders that fed into the tourism master plan and commended the plan's objectives for forging a world class tourism and educational facility. The master plan recommended a radical departure from the traditional concept of museums as elite spaces for the collection, study and scientific research on cultural or natural artefacts and instead opted for the establishment of "dynamic, people-centred facilities which provide exciting interactive opportunities and recreational spaces, and which contribute to local economic development" (Magnussen and Visser, 2003: 84). For energising local development,

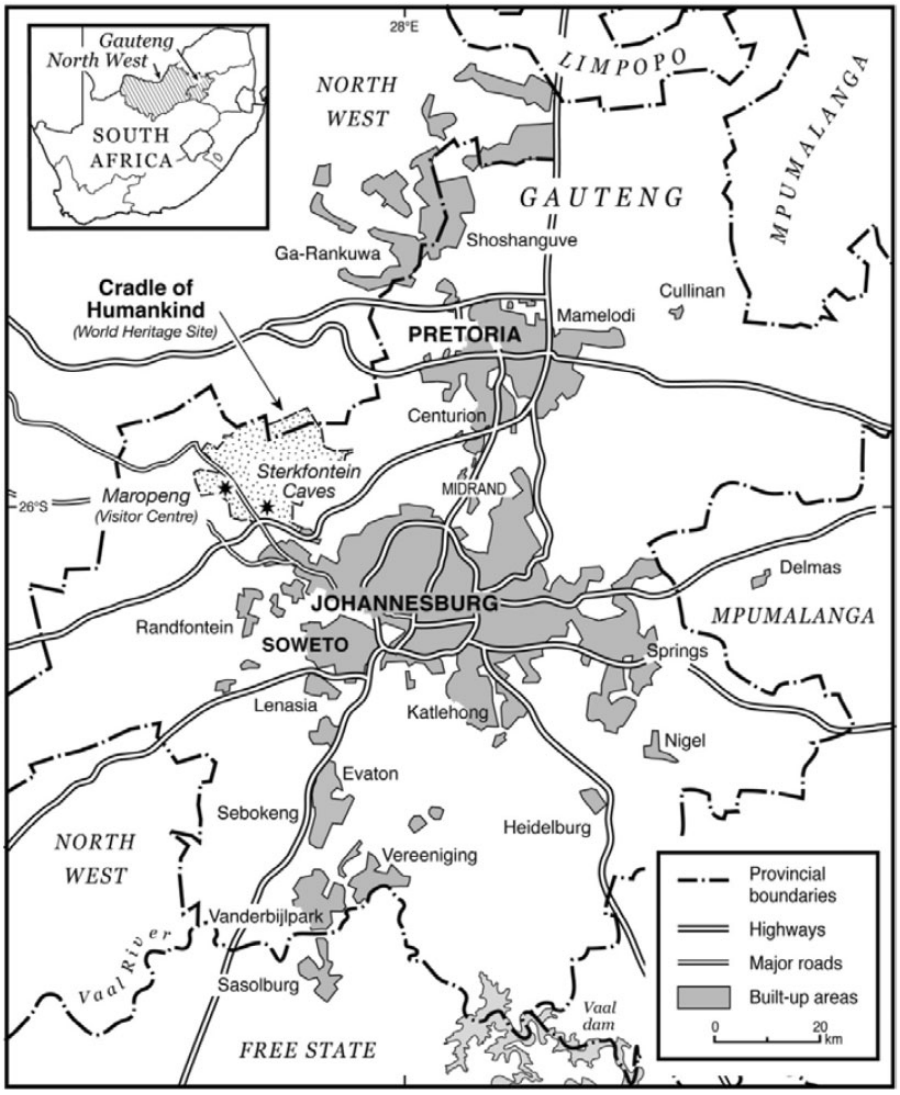


Figure 2. Location of Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.

importance was attached to the job opportunities linked to the construction phase of the interpretation centre, the upgrading of road infrastructure, and the subsequent expansion of permanent opportunities for employment linked to tourism growth. The inclusive nature of the original planning was mirrored in commitments that local communities would be prioritised for new local employment opportunities and support would be offered to existing and aspirant SMME entrepreneurs to maximise their potential capture of opportunities around unfolding tourism development. The ambitious mission of the COH WHS was described as follows:

> To invest in strategic economic infrastructure and crowd in private sector activity; to invest in visitor facilities creating

> a network of attractions connected by scenic routes; to maximize broad-based black economic empowerment and the development of SMMEs; to support local development projects; to consult with and involve all interested and affected parties in the management and development of the site. In addition, the mission of COH WHS is to conserve the uniqueness and integrity of the site and support further research (Gauteng Province, 2007: 6).

The actual infrastructural and tourism destination investments collectively termed the Cradle of Humankind include most importantly the official visitor centre at Maropeng, new tourist infrastructure at Sterkfontein, the Maropeng Hotel, and the upgrading of the road network in the area. Another element of infrastructure development is the planning and establishment of a suite of scenic routes through the site which connect diverse private sector attractions such as hiking, ballooning, fishing and horse trails, a range of restaurants and coffee shops as well as arts and crafts retail outlets. The Sterkfontein Caves represent the site of the longest continuous palaeoanthropological excavation in the world and encompass a human evolution centre with site facilities that were upgraded and opened to the public during September 2005. According to Naidu (2008: 182): "Maropeng is the so-called 'sales-pitch' for Sterkfontein and is the instrument through which the information is 'museified' and mediated to a popular audience" (Naidu, 2008: 182). The tumulus-styled building at Maropeng includes 2100 sq metres of orientation and exhibition space, an underground lake and boat ride that transports visitors back in time to when the Earth was first formed as well as an original fossil display area. In addition, the site offers education and conference facilities, a hotel and restaurant. At Maropeng, Naidu (2008: 205) suggests:

> Meaning is offered through a particular experience that is constructed for the visitor, where the logo narrative and architectural design are inextricably entwined with defining a new African self, rooted in the birth of humanity. The visit to the Cradle is robustly touted as a return to our common ancestral roots. The narrative and architectural representations are designed to reinforce each other, and are experienced by the tourist as much as the material artefacts, the actual bones, themselves assembled into the characters of Mrs Ples and Little Foot. Privileging certain representations of heritage, the Out-of-Africa Theory is appropriated and pressed into the homogenizing service of affirming an African identity, for the world at large, with Africa declared as the home of the world's ancestors.

Maropeng and Sterkfontein are "the cornerstone of the strategy to leverage in private sector tourism business activity into the COHWHS" (Gauteng Province, 2008: 39). With the opening of Maropeng in 2008 alongside the Sterkfontein site it was argued South Africa is positioned "as a premier tourist destination for hominid or early human fossil sites" (Naidu, 2008: 182).

Local impacts

In reviewing local development impacts, three sub-sets of discussion are given. First, at the outset, it must be appreciated the Cradle project was introduced into an area which by the 1990s already was an incipient destination for domestic tourism and recreation. Against this backdrop the second section turns to examine the contemporary phase of tourism impacts and focuses particularly upon the period 2006–2012. In assessing the Cradle of Humankind as a tourism destination, it must be acknowledged that the project functions in a complex policy environment and is impacted on by provincially driven-initiatives, private sector initiatives as well as local planning from the West Rand

District Municipality and the Mogale City Local Municipality. The third section reviews the recent tourism performance of the Mogale City Local Municipality, the so-termed City of Human Origins.

An emerging tourism destination

Although the tourism history of the Cradle and surrounds remains to be fully documented, by the 1930s the Magaliesberg area had surfaced as a recreational playground for the growing industrial and gold mining areas of the nearby Witwatersrand. Improved mobilities resultant from an expansion of car ownership, the growth of rail outings and as a location proximate to South Africa's fastest expanding market for domestic tourism, served to ensure the popularity of this recreational and tourism space. The period from the 1940s and especially post-1950s witnessed an expansion in the market of white domestic tourists. By 1972 the first national hotel guide for South Africa was produced and listed two establishments at Magaliesburg (South African Hotel Board, 1972: 186). During the 1970s and 1980s the area now known as the Cradle and its surrounds continued to expand as a focus for domestic visitors. By the early 1990s the area's scenic rural environment formed a recreational space around one hour drive from the rapidly expanding cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Further galvanizing the leisure attractions of the area was the expansion during the 1990s of a community of arts and crafts businesses which were established by a mix of both lifestyle and growth-oriented entrepreneurs.

The leisure tourism attractions of the area were boosted institutionally by the formation of various private sector associations which marketed a number of different attractions through development and promotion of a series of tourism routes (Rogerson, 2007; Stoddart and Rogerson, 2009). In 1987 the Crocodile Ramble was established by a small group of professional artists who intended to expand their sales to domestic visitors by the promotion of an arts and crafts route. By 2007 the Crocodile Ramble had 144 participants. In 1998, at a time when the Crocodile Ramble was moribund, a second route – the Magaliesberg Meander – was founded as another private sector initiative with a slightly different geographical focus albeit with overlaps with the Ramble. The village of Magaliesberg was at the heart of this route tourism initiative as its participants were enticed to 'meander' and enjoy the area's pristine beauty, wildlife, cultural and heritage sites. Early achievements of the Meander included being the first in South Africa to be demarcated by new signage. From humble beginnings in 1998 the Meander expanded rapidly such that by 2007 it enjoyed 119 listings from 95 product owners, including a number of agritourism enterprises (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014).

Importantly, many new tourism businesses established in the Cradle and surrounds were family businesses and founded for lifestyle considerations rather than profit maximisation. Several tourism businesses emerged as diversification strategies of entrepreneurs who were experiencing insecure livelihoods from commercial farming. These lifestyle entrepreneurs are viewed as important local change agents as they introduce new skills and ideas into a locality and see new value in local assets by initiating new tourism products which combine external markets with local knowledge. In addition to leisure travel, however, this area became established as a business tourism destination for corporate events, conferences and meetings (Rogerson, 2007). Several dedicated venues opened to target what has been shown as a growing business tourism economy in post-apartheid South Africa (Rogerson, 2015c). As a whole, it must be understood that at the time when

master planning for the Cradle was pursued, the locality already was offering an established range of different attractions and comprised a mix of different tourism businesses for both leisure and business tourists (Gauteng Province, 2001).

An evolving tourism destination

This sub-section draws upon the findings from contemporary visitor data to the Cradle, consultancy reports on tourism investment and trends in the area, an analysis of tourism data, the results from key stakeholder interviews with provincial management and a survey of accommodation establishments in the area.

Table 1 provides baseline data on visitors at Maropeng for the period 2006–2012. It is evident that the numbers of recorded visitors steadily expanded and reached a peak in 2010 when South Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup. Since 2010, however, visitor numbers have fallen with a small recovery in 2012. The vital educational role played by the Cradle is reflected in the high proportion of school visits which constitute a rising proportion of total visitor numbers. At Maropeng the share of school visitors grows from 30.3 (2006) to 41.5 percent by 2012 with similar findings for Sterkfontein (from 41 to 45.6 percent). This suggests that in the context of the downturn in long haul (international) tourism and domestic tourism since the global financial crisis, school tours contribute a higher proportion of total visitors. Correspondingly, the group of 'net visitors' who include tourists (foreign and domestic) as well as day visitors has reduced. The data on visitors signals that the Cradle attracts a steady unspectacular growth of mainly day visitors (Robertson, 2013). But, in common with many other South African heritage tourism products, it is currently not functioning as a strong destination on its own (Pillay, 2013).

Table 1. Visitor numbers to Maropeng, 2006–2012.

	No. of recorded visitors	School visitors	% School visitors	Net visitors
2006	105,308	31,893	30.3	73,415
2007	112,396	34,891	31.0	77,505
2008	130,791	46,070	35.2	84,721
2009	134,848	48,978	36.3	85,870
2010	142,985	49,651	34.7	93,334
2011	124,356	54,002	43.4	70,354
2012	127,287	52,851	41.5	74,436

Source: Maropeng Visitor's Centre.

Further insight into the nature and purpose of tourism in the Cradle area can be gleaned from the findings of 23 interviews conducted with local accommodation providers in the broader surrounds of the heritage project. In terms of source of visitors the average profile is 77 percent domestic tourists and 23 percent international. The group of international visitors is, however, divided almost equally between long haul foreign visitors mainly on leisure trips, and groups of regional African tourists mostly engaged in business tourism. The dominance of domestic tourists was reflected in the findings that for 85 percent of the interviewed establishments, the cohort of domestic visitors represented 60 percent or more of total visitors. For 76 percent of our sample, domestic visitors represent at least 80 percent of their clientele. Of the 23 interviews, in only three cases were international visitors the leading element and in two of these establishments it was regional African visitors rather than long haul international tourists that represented the major share of clientele. The interviews revealed the increasing importance of this regional African market with Botswana, Zimbabwe and Central African Republic among sources of visitors.

The purpose of tourist visits was revealed in the 23 interviews. The average across the survey was that business tourism (including

MICE tourism) constitutes approximately 69 percent of tourists in the sample of accommodation establishments with leisure visitors forming the remainder. This finding is indicative of the established importance of the Cradle and its surrounds for conferencing with many venues reporting a pattern of visitation of business tourists during weekdays and leisure tourists at weekends. For 80 percent of the interviewed accommodation establishments, business tourists represented at least 50 percent of all their clientele and for 60 percent of the sampled establishments, business tourism constituted at least 75 percent of their market. Overall, across the sample, leisure tourists formed an average 31 percent of visitors but for 40 percent of the sample leisure travellers were estimated to represent at least 50 percent of the market of these accommodation establishments. What these findings confirm is that the tourism economy of the Cradle and surrounds is strongly weighted towards business as opposed to leisure tourism and only a minority of establishments are dominated by leisure tourists. Indeed, interviewees were asked to estimate the proportion of their business that might currently be attributed to heritage tourists, mainly attracted by the area's palaeo-anthropological significance; the results showed for 78 percent of the sample that the impact was minimal.

Mogale City tourism

In terms of evaluating the nature and trends of tourism development in the area further understanding can be drawn from an examination of tourism data for the local municipality of Mogale City – self-styled as 'the City of Human Origin' – under which much of the Cradle area falls.

Figure 3 differentiates the purpose of tourism trips for Mogale City for the period 2001–2012. This discloses most tourism visits are overwhelmingly for purposes of Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), a form of domestic tourism with limited local spend (Rogerson, 2015d). Second in importance is the category of leisure tourists, the trends of which show marked fluctuations and only a 20 percent growth across the period 2001–2012. Finally, whilst the number of business trips is the smallest of the three categories, it is noted that it

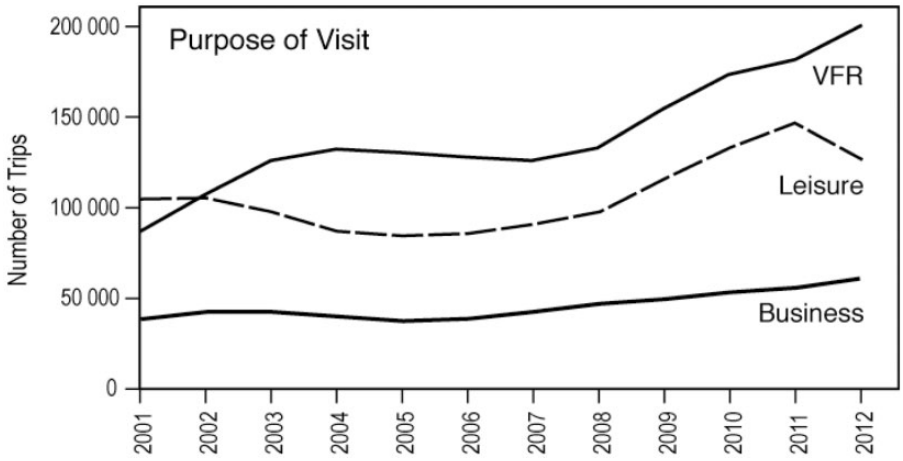


Figure 3. Mogale City: Purpose of tourism visit 2001–2012.
Source: Global Insight.

exhibited a steady growth trajectory with a 56 percent expansion between 2001 and 2012.

With the expansion in the number of tourism trips into Mogale City there has been a corresponding growth of tourism spend into the local economy. Table 2 indicates an almost continuous pattern of the expansion of tourism spend into the local economy since 2001 with a sharp spike in tourism spending after 2006, a period after the full establishment of the Cradle as a functioning tourism destination. The estimated contribution of total tourism spend in local GDP shows that for Mogale City the relative contribution of tourism to the local economy has been falling from a 17.6 percent share in 2001 to 13.3 by 2012. This suggests that whilst tourism is a significant sector for the local economy, its relative importance as compared to other sectors is seemingly in decline (Table 2).

Discussion

The broad tourism trends in the Cradle point towards a destination that is growing and making some progress. Nevertheless, given the considerable infrastructural commitments, this heritage tourism project has not so far been a major driver for local development. Key stakeholders confirm this assessment and point to several issues that underpin its modest performance. It was pointed out that "We have not managed in the South African context and within the global context to publicise and market The Cradle of Humankind as a place you must go to, making a point of pilgrimage to symbolically see where we all come from" (Hanekom, 2013). Disappointing visitor numbers is at the heart of understanding its current modest pro-poor local impacts. Direct estimated employment growth attributable to the project is 6000 jobs. In terms of indirect impacts the foundation planning documents highlighted potential local community benefits that would emerge from nurturing local SMMEs that could function as outsourced suppliers for goods and services to larger tourism enterprises in the area (Gauteng Province, 2001: 255). Difficulties of reducing leakages in tourism supply chains are recognised in terms of lack of skills and capacity in local communities, to supply the types of products and services required by growing tourism businesses with the outcome that most business opportunities are taken up by entrepreneurs external to the area. The survey of accommodation establishments revealed evidence of some local sourcing particularly of perishable food products but little mention was given of SMME take-up of opportunities in, for example, technical supplies, laundry or transport, which have been identified in other areas of South Africa as potential pathways for entrepreneurs in neighbouring communities to access tourism value chains. Only limited *ad hoc* programmes for supporting and upgrading local SMMEs with learnerships have been instituted. Implementation of a comprehensive SMME support intervention in the area so far has not been pursued (Robertson, 2013). However, one initiative is a community small business based upon the

Table 2. Mogale City: contribution of tourism to local economy, 2001–2012.

	Total tourism spend (R1000) current prices	Total tourism spend as % of local GDP
2001	1,092,881	17.6
2002	1,305,880	18.6
2003	1,354,335	17.1
2004	1,292,821	14.6
2005	1,414,542	14.2
2006	1,574,675	14.4
2007	1,793,157	14.4
2008	1,998,257	14.6
2009	2,079,129	14.1
2010	2,413,498	14.8
2011	2,802,828	15.7
2012	2,571,906	13.3

Source: Global Insight.

training of local unemployed youth in fossil-casting to produce souvenirs for sale at the visitor centres.

Conclusion

Maximising the opportunities from heritage tourism is a critical policy issue in the global South. As is the case for much of sub-Saharan Africa in South Africa considerable optimism surrounds the potential development returns from the formal accreditation of sites through the process of UNESCO recognition (Rivett-Carnac, 2011). The COH WHS is potentially a site of global significance and situated in a part of South Africa where there are currently insufficient or weak local economic drivers. Accordingly, the site has been planned as an example of a cultural heritage tourism project which is designed to catalyse local development opportunities.

At the outset of planning for the Cradle of Humankind project, expectations were raised that it would ultimately "make a significant contribution to growth in what is presently an economically depressed area" (Metcalfe, 2001: 2). This investigation, however, points to an assessment that this heritage tourism attraction so far has not reached its anticipated potential for energising local development. This said, for a number of years the jury must be still out whether WHS designation is enhancing the specific attractiveness of the area as an international tourism destination. In the wider international context of heritage tourism, the Cradle of Humankind must be read as a state-led, infrastructure-driven initiative which has been introduced into an economically marginal area which is in search of pro-poor growth. It is revealed that the local tourism economy of the broader area continues to bear the imprint of its past evolution with domination by business rather than leisure tourism, albeit VFR tourism is the largest actual generator of tourism trips. Overall, it must be concluded that the goal of 'inclusive growth' so far has been elusive primarily because of the disappointing contribution of the Cradle to local leisure tourism expansion and correspondingly for new tourism-led opportunities for employment and SMME development. Further empirical monitoring of the progress and impacts of this important cultural heritage tourism project is merited in order to offer appropriate lessons for practitioners – particularly those working in other parts of Africa – grappling with the planning of heritage tourism anchor projects.

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