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Tourist guides' perceptions of cultural heritage tourism in South Africa

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Abstract. Heritage tourism is a fast growing niche of cultural tourism worldwide. In Africa, several countries, including South Africa, place great emphasis on the growth of heritage tourism because of its potential for local economic development. Cultural and heritage tourism are being advocated as an important niche within the South African economy. This paper explores the perceptions of cultural heritage tourist guides in South Africa towards heritage tourism, it is argued that the country's National Department of Tourism must improve the poor governance and poor management of South African heritage assets, and enhance the preservation, transformation and segmented marketing of South Africa's cultural assets (at all levels of government) in order to sustain and grow cultural tourism in the future.

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1. Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2013) states that cultural tourism (of which heritage tourism makes up a large component) represents between 35–40% of all tourism worldwide, and is growing at around 15% per annum, approximately three times the rate of growth of tourism in general (Orbasli, Woodward, 2009). International tourism in Africa grew at 6% per annum between 2005 and 2012 (UNWTO, 2013) with cultural and heritage tourism earmarked "as one of the major growth markets in global tourism" (Tlabela, Munthree, 2012: 1). Notwithstanding the global economic recession and the effects this has on tourism, heritage tourism has become a significant sector within the tourism economies of the global South (Timothy, Nyaupane, 2009) and is regarded by many scholars as a 'new niche' or market of tourism (Jansen-Verbeke, McKercher, 2010; yu Park, 2014). Heritage tourism encompasses both the tangible and intangible aspects of both culture and heritage (Southall, Robinson, 2011), and various categories of what constitutes heritage (elements inherited from one's own past), arguably exist, as either: natural (ecological); cultural (anthropological and historical); or industrial (mining and manufacturing) heritage, and are found at specific sites throughout the world (Timothy, Boyd, 2006).

Timothy and Nyaupane (2009: 3–4) define heritage tourism as that which: "relies on living and built elements of culture and folkways of today, for they too are inheritances from the past; other immaterial heritage elements, such as music, dance, language, religion, foodways and cuisine, artistic traditions, and festivals; and material vestiges of the built and cultural environment, including monuments, historic public buildings and homes, farms, castles and cathedrals, museums, and archaeological ruins and relics". Other scholars define heritage tourism from a tourist perspective as "a subgroup of tourism, in which the main motivation for visiting a site is based on the place's heritage characteristics according to the tourist's perceptions of their own heritage" (Poria et al., 2001: 1048). Tourism policy makers in South Africa identify heritage tourism as a niche of cultural tourism and mark it out as a useful and sustainable avenue to expand the future tourism economy (DAC, 1996a, 1996b; RSA,1999, NDT, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). The value of heritage tourism is particularly appreciated in economically weak or marginal areas of the country where it can be a vehicle for energising tourism-led local development (Rogerson, 2002a, 2014, 2015; Rogerson, Nel, 2016; Rogerson, van der Merwe, 2016).

South Africa's National Department of Tourism (NDT) places heritage tourism high on the strategic agenda for developing the country's growing tourism economy and recently developed the *National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy* (NDT, 2012b). The main objective of this strategy is "to guide and provide strategic direction for the development and promotion of heritage and cultural tourism in South Africa… for the coordination and integration of heritage and culture into mainstream tourism… (although) the value and impact of this segment of tourism has not been fully realised, particularly the economic potential of heritage and cultural tourism products" (NDT, 2012b: 10; Ivanovic, Saayman, 2013).

Although strong policy support for cultural and heritage tourism is in place, so far there has been little academic work in the field of heritage and cultural tourism in South Africa as well as the wider region of Southern Africa (Rogerson, Visser, 2004; Rogerson, Rogerson, 2011; Rogerson, Visser, 2011; Visser, Hoogendoorn, 2011; van der Merwe, Rogerson, 2013; van der Merwe, 2014; Ivanovic, 2015; Hoogendoorn, Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson, van der Merwe, 2016). Tourist guides are key stakeholders and major role-players within the tourism industry and gaining insight into their perceptions of heritage tourism represents an important foundation for enhanced policy formulation (see de Beer et al., 2014). This paper seeks to investigate the perceptions of cultural tourist guides towards cultural heritage tourism development in South Africa. The paper begins by outlining the relevant literature on heritage tourism in Africa and South Africa. Next a brief contextualisation of cultural and heritage tourism in South Africa is given. The major discussion is focussed on the perceptions of cultural tourist guides in relation to cultural heritage tourism in post-apartheid South Africa. The conclusion offers suggestions of how to improve the status of cultural heritage tourism in the tourism policy landscape of South Africa.

2. Literature review

The importance of developing heritage tourism within sub-Saharan Africa, and South Africa, is recognised by several countries for promoting national as well as regional tourism development (Boswell, O'Kane, 2011; NEPAD, 2004, Rogerson, 2012). In order to promote and develop cultural and heritage tourism, The Cairo Declaration of 1995 stated that African countries needed to identify, develop and preserve a number of World Heritage Sites (WHS). Currently, there exist a number of notable African initiatives that use heritage tourism as a tool for promoting the growth and development of tourism as an economic sector, and in particular for developing tourism as an industry within growing economies. The heritage assets of Elmina, in Ghana, have great potential to enhance economic development (Arthur, Mensah, 2006; Mensah, 2015). In Zanzibar the tenuous relationship between World Heritage Site (WHS) status, local development and the management of heritage in Stone Town have been shown as valuable means to grow the economy (Bianchi, Boniface, 2002; Hitchcock, 2002). In Lamu Old Town, Kenya, key themes around the conservation of heritage and the commodification of heritage are explored and it is shown how valuable heritage tourism is and can be used as a means to create jobs and aid in assisting with poverty alleviation (Irandu, 2004). Community perceptions of the socio-cultural effects and impacts on Kenyan tourism, such as job creation and 'westernisation', are well articulated in heritage tourism (Okech, 2010). Increasingly, heritage researchers in Africa are interested in outlining the perceptions of residents to heritage tourism of these sites in the immediate vicinity of their residential space within urban areas. For example, Ghanaian residents perceive tourism mostly from a cultural perspective, which has implications for how heritage sites are managed, marketed and maintained (Yankholmes, Akyeampong, 2010).

Another important theme in heritage tourism scholarship links to that of sustainable tourism (Gravari-Barbas, Jacquot, 2013). Within Africa, Sarmento (2010) examines Fort Jesus, Mombasa as an example of how heritage tourism can be used as a catalyst for local economic growth and sustainable development. Spenceley (2010) notes how maximising the local economic benefits (and development) of heritage tourism may entail many problematic issues – these include a myriad of limiting factors such as lack of local ownership; an absence of or poor quality accommodation facilities; and the challenges associated with the availability of cheap imports and local labour in many African countries. In addition, it is argued there is a set of critical unresolved issues around how to make heritage more economically productive while conserving and protecting it against the negative impacts of tourism. Ali (2015: 3) has shown "that a heritage tourist's experience may significantly impact their nostalgia and their intentions to revisit and recommend" sites. This has strong implications for the sustainability and further development of heritage tourism.

Binns and Nel (2002: 236) contend 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". The largest amount of research on heritage tourism in sub-Saharan Africa relates to South Africa (Rogerson, Rogerson, 2011). Heritage, identity, memory and resident perceptions have been the focus of several investigations (Marschall, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014). In addition, the maximisation of the potential of heritage assets for urban tourism development (including in townships) has attracted much attention (Rogerson, 2002b; Rogerson, Visser, 2004; van der Merwe, 2013). Grobler (2008: 167) discusses "the politicisation of memorials, monuments, museums and historical sites that serve as tourist attraction" which directly impacts on heritage and cultural tourism practices in South Africa. This issue is currently problematic in the heritage landscape of South Africa (Maune, 2015; Smith, 2015) with many colonial and apartheid era statues being defaced, vandalised and removed in 2015.

Following international experience, heritage has also been identified as a potential tool for the development of sustainable tourism in South Africa (Duval, Smith, 2013) and the prospects of developing heritage routes for peripheral areas of the country have been documented (Snowball, 2010; Rogerson, 2015). In addition, other South African studies focus on how to repackage heritage tourism.

Shackley (2001) tracks the potential of Robben Island (one of the 8 UNESCO WHS in South Africa) and examines visitor perceptions to this iconic struggle/ liberation heritage attraction. The Cradle of Humankind (Maropeng) is another iconic cultural heritage site in South Africa, which has major potential for advancing heritage tourism (Magnussen, Visser, 2003; Naidu, 2008; Rogerson, van der Merwe, 2016). All these studies explore heritage tourism from particular stakeholders' points of view.

Further studies explore the use of heritage to improve urban areas from a visitor point of view (van der Merwe, Patel, 2005; Witz et al., 2005; Ivanovic, 2014) but with little or no consideration of what cultural tourist guides think about or how they have experienced heritage tourism in South Africa. Marschall (2006) analyses how memory has been used to represent heritage at The Hector Pieterson Museum and Memorial, while van der Merwe (2006) considers the impact and usefulness of environmental justice in representing heritage and urban renewal in urban tourism. The impacts and experiences of heritage tourism amongst tourists in urban centres has also been documented (King, Flynn, 2012, Marschall, 2012, van der Merwe, 2013; van der Merwe, Rogerson, 2013; van der Merwe, 2014); as well as a variety of work done around tourists' perceptions and experiences of specific heritage sites (Shackley, 2001; Newbury, 2005; Phaswana-Mafuya, Haydam, 2005; Baines, 2007; Weiss, 2007; Grobler, 2008; Naidu, 2008; Nzama, 2008; Bakker, Muller, 2010; de Jager, 2010; Spencer, Zembani, 2011; King, Flynn, 2012; Manavhela, Spencer, 2012; Tlabela, Munthree, 2012; Ivanovic, Saayman, 2013; Ivanovic, 2014; Khumalo et al., 2014; Masilo, 2015; Rogerson, van der Merwe, 2016).

Overall, one gap within the existing literature is to explore the perceptions and needs of cultural tourist guides within the heritage tourism sector. It is against this background of the rising policy importance of heritage tourism in post-apartheid South Africa that the main aim in this paper is to analyse the perceptions of tourist guides in South Africa in relation to heritage tourism and thereby offer policy recommendations so that a sustainable implementation plan can be developed. Indeed the paper is a response to the call made by Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher (2010: 191) for scholars "to develop a deeper understanding of the underlying forces that affect the sustainability of tourism and to understand how these interact in a site-specific context".

3. Cultural heritage tourism in South Africa

South Africa is renowned for the wealth of its cultural heritage assets and was hailed as "the rainbow nation" by former President Nelson Mandela, for the cosmopolitan and multicultural nature of its people and history. Heritage resources in South Africa are mediated by the *South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)* which is "a statutory organisation established under the National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999, as the national administrative body responsible for the protection of South Africa's cultural heritage. The Act follows the principle that the different levels of government closest to the community should manage heritage resources. These local and provincial authorities will manage heritage resources as part of their planning process" (SAHRA, 2015a). In 2015, in addition to 8 World Heritage Sites (2 cultural heritage sites; 2 natural heritage sites; and 4 mixed heritage sites) there are currently 59 National Heritage Sites, and 2862 Provincial Heritage Sites declared and officially recognised in South Africa. SAHRA's mandate "is to identify places and objects that have qualities, through their association to historical events, persons, organisations or scientific or social value so exceptional that their influence is felt across the country and deserves national acknowledgement.

Declaration as a National Heritage Site is an acknowledgement of these national, and often universal, values and aims "to protect the authenticity and integrity of these resources" (SAHRA, 2015b). A heritage site can be a physical place or area of cultural or historical significance, which can be a specific building, or place which houses the safeguarding and display of heritage artefacts, SAHRA is responsible for declaring something or some place as 'significant heritage' – according to the National Heritage Resources Act (25: 1999). The majority of these heritage sites are national monuments (94,5%); 3,3% are provincial monuments and 2,2% are constituted as 'other' (National Gardens of Re-

membrance; or 'declared' sites). Most heritage sites are buildings, whereas other categories include: archaeologically significant sites; battlefield sites; burial grounds and graves; geological sites; places; natural areas; and others [(1)] (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of South African Heritage Sites by type

Heritage Sites	Percentage
Buildings – 2678 sites	91.90%
Burial Grounds & Graves – 52 sites	1.78%
Archaeological sites – 48 sites	1.65%
Places – 39 sites	1.34%
Natural Areas – 37 sites	1.27%
Other – 23 sites (see endnote)	0.79%
Geological – 12 sites	0.41%
Paleontological – 9 sites	0.31%
Battlefields – 6 sites	0.21%
Monuments & Memorials – 5 sites	0.17%
Archaeological & Paleontological – 5 sites	0.17%

Source: Data acquired from SAHRA, analysed and reformatted by the author (SAHRA 2015a)

4. Methodology

In terms of examining the perceptions of tourist guides to the development of South Africa's heritage tourism landscape the study began with the creation of a national database of qualified and registered cultural tourist guides in South Africa. The survey research was undertaken from 2013 to 2014. An electronic survey eliciting the basic demographic details of cultural tourist guides, as well as their perceptions of heritage tourism in South Africa was designed, and administered over several months – using SurveyMonkey. As no official national database of trained and registered cultural tourist guides in South Africa currently exists, all the country's provincial tourist associations were approached for their databases of registered and qualified cultural tourist guides. For the purposes of this paper, the existing various provincial tourist guide databases were consulted and a random sample of 250 Guides (proportional to the geographical size of each province) of the 3969 cultural tourist guides identified, was chosen and engaged through email contact, to participate in this online survey. Of the 250 surveyed cultural tourist guides, 171 (68,4% response rate) completed the survey and successfully participated in the online survey process. Eight sites were chosen as case studies (Fig. 1). All are national heritage sites and The Cradle of Humankind is listed as a WHS in South Africa. The random sample of 250 identified cultural tourist guides included respondents from all South Africa's racial groups.

5. Findings and discussion

It was recorded that most cultural tourist guides who responded in the survey were white males (63,2%), married and between the ages of 50–59 (25,1%), many diversifying their skills, leaving their day-to-day jobs, and opening a tourist guiding company. The predominance of white males responding to the survey could be related to Internet usage and accessibility (which is still quite racially disparate in South Africa). Most of the respondents owned the business (62%); while 16% were co-owners; another 16% managed the tourist guiding company; and 6% were a partner in the business venture. The sample of tourist guides indicated that 94,5% of their tourists visited South African heritage sites between July to August, which represents the peak period for international tourism. Whether or not they owned the tourist guiding company or were salaried employees of the company, the respondents surveyed were qualified and registered as cultural tourist guides in South Africa.

5.1. Perceptions of heritage tourism

The cultural tourist guides were asked how important they felt heritage is in cultural tourism. As shown on Table 2 it was disclosed that 87,7% considered heritage was moderately or very important to the country's tourism economy.

Various reasons for why cultural tourist guides think heritage is important for tourism were given. Most cultural tourist guides had a positive perspective and offered the view that: *"our country has a rich heritage, in so much as we have a turbulent history, and our cultures are of a large diversity… we have an excellent Wildlife Heritage too"; "Preser-*

vation of heritage is critical for nation building and for individuals to understand their place in society"; and "*if you do not know something about a country's heritage and cultures, you cannot fully understand and appreciate the current situation in that country*". Many guides stressed the benefits of culture and heritage in attracting tourists who wanted to know more about South Africa and its people, and in the potential it has for local economic development. One response was that "*heritage is an important component of our economy and should be used to make our country some money!*" One respondent noted and cautioned that heritage is too underdeveloped and that South Africa was competing with well-established international heritage markets: "*if we market straight heritage, we will not be able to compete with Europe, as we are like the USA and Australia… too young*".

Table 2. Tourist guide's perceptions of the importance of heritage in tourism

Low Importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important
1.5%	1.5%	9.3%	20.0%	67.7%

Source: Author – from the online survey

Others were cynical and hesitant on placing so much emphasis on heritage tourism in South Africa, remarking that it "*depends on what you inherit. Natural heritage is much more important to me than cultural heritage. Natural heritage is important and relevant to a larger audience*". The context, quality and number of trained and informed tourist guides was highlighted as another issue – "*most of the tourist attractions are based on, or affected by a historical event, without the history – there is no context. Without context, the heritage and importance of the site/ attraction is lost*". A few cultural tourist guides indicated that other forms of heritage are more important that cultural heritage: "*my clients come to South Africa for its natural beauty and wildlife. Sadly, our concept of heritage has become a black/white issue, continuously entrenched by the current ruling party*". The crisis in 2015 around the defacing and vandalism of colonial and apartheid era statues and symbols in South Africa attests to this problem. Heritage remains a contested terrain in South Africa.

The sample of tourist guides were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (the most successful) to 8 (the least successful) of what they thought the 8 leading heritage and cultural tourist sites in South Africa were (see Table 3 and Fig. 1). Most cultural tourist guides (86%) found the Sterkfontein Caves – one of the 8 World Heritage Sites in South Africa the most successful tourist attraction (of the eight sites selected), whilst many of the cultural tourist guides (30,7%) consider the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication in Soweto as the most unsuccessful tourist attraction in South Africa. In addition, a total of 41,5% of the tourist guides indicated that The Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum was the most sought after heritage attraction and most visited site, amongst tourists they had guided, and thus most significantly influenced their business the most positively.

The Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum is an interesting tourist attraction and forms a large part of many tourists' itinerary, particularly amongst the township tourism and liberation/ struggle heritage tourism niches (Booyens, 2010; Khumalo et al., 2014; Masilo, 2015). President Jacob Zuma accompanied President Robert Mugabe there on a Zimbabwean state visit to South Africa in 2015. The NDT is working on developing a Liberation/ Struggle Heritage Route in South Africa (Weiss, 2007), of which places linked to Nelson Mandela or the struggle against apartheid – would be placed on the National Sites for cultural tourists to visit – with South African Tourism having recently created an App (called Madiba's Journey) for smart phones that tourists could download when visiting South Africa and discovering our heritage.

Fig. 1. Location of the Eight Heritage Sites, rated by the Cultural Tourist Guides in the online survey

Source: Author commissioned – created by Wendy Phillips

Table 3. Cultural tourist guide's ratings of whether they consider eight heritage sites as successful

Heritage Site	Very Successful	Successful	Neutral	Not Successful	A Failure
Maropeng, The Cradle of Humankind – Gauteng	20.0%	56.0%	12.0%	12.0%	0.0%
The Sterkfontein Caves – Gauteng	24.6%	61.6%	10.8%	3.0%	0.0%
The Big Hole (Kimberley) – Free State	16.9%	50.8%	24.6%	7.7%	0.0%
Cullinan Diamond Village – Gauteng	16.9%	52.3%	26.1%	4.7%	0.0%
Constitution Hill (Johannesburg) – Gauteng	18.5%	44.6%	23.1%	12.3%	1.5%
The Hector Pieterson Memorial & Museum (Soweto) – Gauteng	35.4%	35.4%	17.0%	6.1%	6.1%
The Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Soweto) – Gauteng	15.4%	29.2%	24.6%	21.5%	9.3%
The KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields – KZN	26.2%	46.2%	18.4%	7.7%	1.5%

Source: Author – from the online survey conducted

5.2. Barriers to heritage tourism development

The final aspect of this paper considers the obstacles identified by cultural tourist guides that hinder the development and advancement of heritage tourism in South Africa. Guides were asked: "in your opinion, what obstacles to growing heritage tourism in South Africa, currently exist'? The cultural tourist guides surveyed made 158 comments that were analysed and grouped into themes using content and thematic analysis (see Fig. 2).

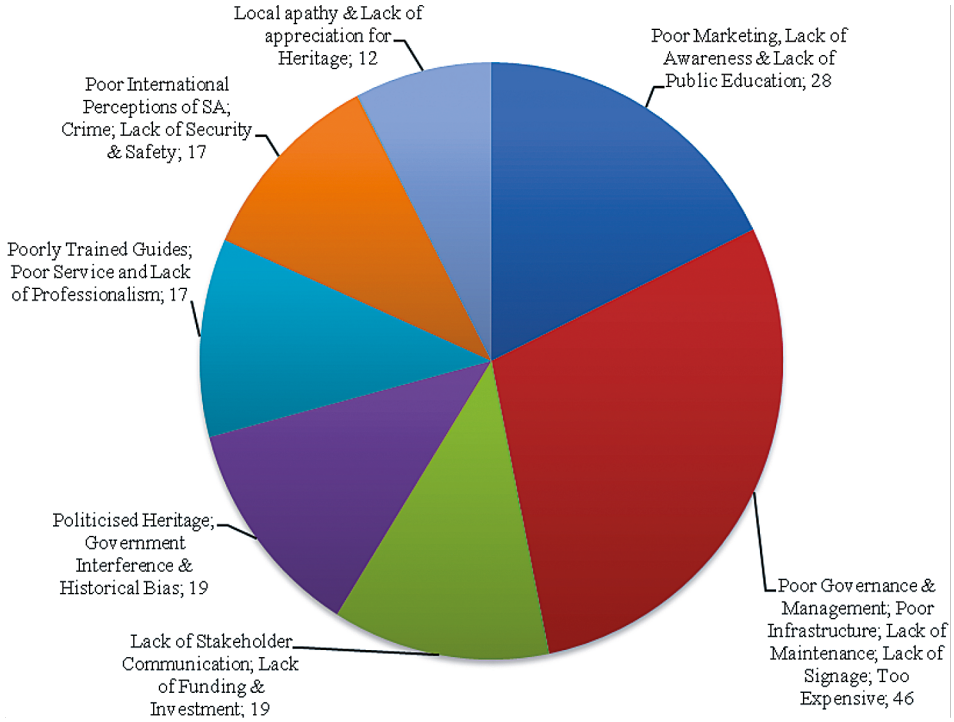

Fig. 2. Cultural tourist guides' views, by number of respondents, on obstacles to growing heritage tourism in South Africa

Source: Author – from the online survey conducted, 158 respondents

The first and major obstacle identified by the cultural tourist guides towards the growth of heritage tourism in South Africa relates to poor governance and poor management. Issues of particular concern surrounded the poor or lack of infrastructure; poor or lack of maintenance; poor or lacking signage and the entrance fees to heritage sites being too expensive. These issues are all mandates of the local government and tourism authorities within respective provinces of South Africa. The majority of respondents attributed these problems to lack of strategic planning and effective governance of heritage sites by the authorities and local government involved in administration and management of particular heritage sites.

Respondents said that: *"Heritage tourism can be our life blood if managed correctly and transparently"; "Heritage sites in the right hands of management and passionate people, can be one of the biggest draw cards of our country"; "Heritage is the backbone of tourism – the most important heritage is our own natural resources – as unlike Europe, we don't really have many major historical events or buildings or anything else to show people – I find most South African heritage sites too long a drive for people to reach" and "there is so much heritage in this part of the world but very little is done to promote and develop the facilities to accommodate tourists that want to come to the area to learn more".*

The second major obstacle relates to poor marketing, lack of awareness and lack of education about heritage tourism amongst cultural tourists. Respondents argued that: *"the government could do more research and find out more about what people expect from their local sites, some things could be made much better"; "heritage tourism needs to be extensively promoted"; "more needs to be done to promote other amazing sites (Lilies Leaf Farm) but it must not be too commercialised";* and one respondent was vehement about *"heritage tourism in South Africa having become synonymous with "guilt tourism", and that westerners are constantly being bombarded with the "you owe us" principle that applies throughout Africa"*. This last finding has serious implications for marketing and development of the heritage tourism industry in South Africa, for all stakeholders in the tourism sector of the economy need to ensure that marketing needs to be inclusive; promote tolerance and encourage openness in people wanting to see and experience South Africa's heritage.

Third, effective communication among stakeholders within the heritage tourism sector is another major stumbling block to the effective development and sustainability of heritage tourism in South Africa. This was linked to limited investment and lack of funding for heritage tourism sites. It was stressed that various role players in heritage tourism were not working together to build the heritage industry (Khumalo et al., 2014; van der Merwe, 2014; Masilo, 2015; Rogerson, van der Merwe, 2016). One respondent remarked that *"we should strive to use heritage to include and empower all stakeholders"*, and another saying that *"heritage tourism is about passion for history, the benefits, including financial will – naturally stem from caring and preserving heritage without the focus on profit"*. Most respondents surveyed conceded that they thought heritage could successfully be used as a driver for local economic development but that to realise its potential that the NDT and Provincial Tourism Agencies (PTAs) needed to invest large sums of money and time in developing heritage tourism in South Africa. One response was *"Heritage tourism is one of the parts of the engine that mostly powers the engine for the country to develop"*. The need for improved communication and a better relationship between tourism authorities and the Tourist Guiding community was highlighted. Significantly, 57,8% of respondents indicated that they had never heard of the *National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy* (NDT, 2012b) and would have liked to have been consulted and involved in the development of this policy.

The fourth major issue in developing heritage tourism in South Africa is the highly politicised nature of heritage in the industry. Many cultural tourist guides bemoaned the fact that certain heritage sites receive preferential treatment from government and that a biased history seems to be portrayed in many sites across the country. Indeed, it was observed as follows: *"I believe the heritage tourism market is a specialised tourist market and at this stage is dominated by the apartheid history of South Africa, i.e. more tourists would be interested in Hector Pieterson than the KZN Battlefields"*. Overall, many of the comments made by cultural tourist guides highlighted that some South African heritage is being promoted above others, and that this was linked to political gain for local leaders and authorities. This point was reflected in statements like: *"the government appears to be becoming increasingly selective on which aspects of heritage should be promoted/ commemorated, and forgets the role played by other groups of people"*.

Another issue raised in the obstacles South Africa faced, in the development of heritage tourism, related to the poor training of tourist guides as another major problem. Poor customer service and lack of professionalism were identified as major stumbling blocks in this respect with cultural tourist guides suggesting the need for upskilling and major programmes to 'retrain' heritage guides, as being beneficial in South Africa. It was stated that: *"Qualified Guides only should be allowed with tourist groups"*. Other issues raised by respondents centred on the poor international perceptions or image of South Africa, portrayed in the media or held by international tourists that focus on high levels of crime in the country. Typically, one guide commented *"People are too scared to come here… everyday they see how violent and unsafe South Africa is on the news… if it's not Xenophobia, then it is months and months of striking activity – like the Marikana Mine Killings; it destabilises the South African economy, and dissuades international tourists from wanting to come to our country"*. Many cultural guides have labelled the perception of poor safety and high levels of se-

curity risks that many tourists have about South Africa as a major hindrance for growing the heritage tourism industry.

The final issue that was flagged by respondents as a barrier for heritage tourism concerned local apathy towards heritage and the lack of appreciation of heritage by particularly the youth (Marschall, 2013; Masilo, 2015). It was argued that *"Heritage tourism is all about involving the community and educating the participating members. It is important to use all media forms to inform the public about these sites and to introduce local South Africans as well as international visitors of a clear goal for why they should visit this heritage site"*; Furthermore, this is linked to poor management and lack of maintenance, as alluded to earlier: *"There is no national pride to maintain heritage sites other than political idealism, many sites are a disgrace and it is embarrassing to take tourists there"*. One respondent argued, "*I think South African history should be restored back in the school curriculum as a subject (without politicising it), so that the youth can realise where they come from and be proud of their heritage, learn from it and move on to be proud citizens of South Africa*". Another said, *"Each cultural entity in South Africa needs to understand and appreciate other cultures' heritage. This might encourage more local tourism*".

6. Conclusion

Heritage tourism is an expanding niche of cultural tourism in South Africa. This paper has demonstrated that whilst cultural tourist guides are optimistic about the role that heritage tourism can play in developing local communities and the economy of South Africa, they raise several concerns that need to be dealt with and resolved, if the country's heritage tourism assets are to be maximised for purposes of local economic development. In particular, the findings disclose the need for strategic leadership, institutionally sound, sustainable management and responsible governance in the heritage tourism sector of South Africa. In addition, more effective and widespread communication must be promoted and fostered amongst all stakeholders in the tourism industry. Further, enhanced levels of funding and sustainable investments are necessary to bolster the development of the heritage tourism sector in South Africa. It is argued that expanded government funding is needed for better signage, improved infrastructure and for greater and more segmented marketing initiatives – so as to grow and sustain the cultural tourist base.

Training programmes need to be designed and instituted to certify and register cultural heritage tourist guides in South Africa. Also, greater regulation and monitoring of whether 'qualified' and 'certified' tourist guides taking heritage tourists to various cultural tourism sites needs to be enforced. Finally, and controversially it is disclosed that if South Africa is to grow its heritage tourism market, and if heritage sites are to become more self-sustainable and "significantly impact their nostalgia and their intentions to revisit and recommend" to family and friends (Ali, 2015: 3), greater tolerance and preservation of cultural and heritage assets needs to be acknowledged and enacted by all levels of government and society at large. Heritage is a contested landscape in contemporary South African tourism. In terms of growing its potential as a market niche from the perspective of the country's cultural tourist guides, heritage needs to be depoliticised and reimaged, so as to grow both local and international tourism markets for this niche of cultural heritage tourism.

Note

(1) These sites include Artefacts, Settlements & Ruins; Artefacts & Deposits; Bridges; Building & Battlefields; Buildings & Structures; Conservation Area; Cultural landscape & Building; Cultural landscape & Ruin; Landscape, Building, Paleontological & Natural Area; Place, Archaeological & Paleontological; Places & Cultural landscape; Shipwreck; Structures; and, Ruins.

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