

Durban—A Tourism Mecca? Challenges of the Post-Apartheid Era¹

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important and fastest growing industries in the world, and it has become an integral part of economic development policies in both developed and developing countries (Hall, 1995; Hoffman, Fainstein and Judd, 2003; Chuang and Huang, 2004; Thomas, Pigozzi and Sambrook, 2005). South Africa in general, and the city of Durban in particular, (the focus of this paper), have not been immune to these trends (Allen and Brennan, 2004; Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson and Visser, 2006). Policymakers enthusiastically pursue the development of tourism-orientated facilities in the hope of attracting foreign exchange, generating economic growth, creating jobs and diversifying the economy (Beauregard, 1998, Judd and Fainstein, 1999). As a service industry it is generally argued that tourism is labour-intensive and that one of the major impacts of tourism development, especially at a regional and local level, is job creation. Tourism is seen by government, as well as the private sector, as a way of contributing to the economic prosperity of countries, regions and local areas (Youell, 1996). Additional multiplier effects are often cited to capture secondary effects of tourism spending (Yuan, 2001).

Given the dynamic nature of tourism, it has become increasingly critical for tourism policies to be monitored and evaluated. Popular support for tourism policies is slowly being replaced with some doubt about the success of government policies and programmes in terms of realising promised outcomes (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). Tourism policies have been criticised for not giving sufficient attention to the involvement of local residents in planning strategies. Quite often major tourism projects are conveniently fast-tracked for political expediency (Gunn, 1994; Diagne, 2004). The nature of tourism in any given community is the product of complex interrelated economic, political and social factors (Peck and Lepie, 1989). The Durban experience is no different.

This paper examines the changing fortunes of Durban as a tourist city from the apartheid to the post-apartheid eras. Both qualitative and quantitative methods

were used in this study, and this offered a wider comprehension of tourism dynamics in Durban. The main data source comprised of policy guidelines, tourism reports, minutes of meetings, and the printed mass media. This was complemented by qualitative interviews with key participants in the tourism industry in Durban.

Tourism is a major economic activity in the city of Durban (or eThekweni as it is known in the post-apartheid era), situated on the east coast of South Africa in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Durban is bounded by the Indian Ocean on the east, and the warm Mozambique Current contributes to its pleasant climate, especially during winter. Durban has a subtropical climate with temperature ranging from 16°C to 25°C during winter, and between 25°C and 32°C during summer. Durban is fortunate to be one of the three most significant cities in South Africa, particularly because its spatial characteristics have always placed it in a favourable position and the local economy has benefited tremendously from the development of the port.

Durban has long earned its prime position as one of South Africa's most popular year-round tourist destination due to its expansive beaches, warm ocean, sunny climate and rich and diverse cultural heritage. Durban also has Africa's busiest harbour. It is claimed that Durban offers international and domestic tourists unique environmental assets, exciting waterfront developments, impressive conference facilities, sporting and other major events—all supported by a well-developed city infrastructure, transport and communications systems and world-class commercial and financial services (Durban Metro, 1999).

The Durban region is facing numerous problems, including unemployment, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, economic inequalities, and high levels of crime. There are great expectations that the expansion of the tourism sector will help address some of these problems. Durban generates R3 billion annually from domestic tourism, which is the city's main source of tourism revenue and supports an industry which is estimated to provide direct employment to over 65 000 people (Creemers and Wood, 1997). Durban generates R12 million annually from foreign tourism. The international market is also changing with growing interest in historical, cultural, ecological experiences as well as "sun and sea" holidays. Durban also is the gateway to other attractions in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) for foreign tourists, viz. the Drakensberg Mountains, the Midlands Meander, the battlefields of the Anglo-Zulu War and Anglo-Boer War and the North and South coasts (KZNTA, 1998).

This paper will reveal that historically tourism has been an important economic activity in Durban. However, in keeping with the dictates of apartheid, the city catered largely for the needs of the white minority, while those of the black

majority were largely ignored. As South Africa began to embrace a new non-racial democratic order in the early 1990s, the tourism industry in Durban struggled to adjust. Problems of high levels of crime and grime compounded the situation. A number of strategies were adopted to promote Durban as a tourism destination. However, the economic impacts of tourism in Durban have been highly variable. Tourism in Durban is faced with the challenge of responding to a changing market, addressing problems of crime and grime, and investing in infrastructure.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN DURBAN

In the eyes of white explorers and their descendants, the area around Durban has been synonymous with travel and tourism for a period which began before the origins of the city itself. Early visitors to the recorded in their diaries comments on the beauty of the sun-washed coast, where a subtropical forest of banana palms, cotton-woods and coastal bush swept down to broad sandy beaches, clear lagoons and a sparkling sea (Grant and Butler-Adam, 1992:205).

The economy of Durban has depended significantly on its popularity as a seaside resort. Durban had a large stretch of safe bathing beach, and an amiable subtropical climate, which influenced the development of tourism into a major industry. Historically, Durban has played a very important role as a tourist destination for a broad spectrum of tourists, with most of the focus having been on its beachfront areas.

During the early nineteenth century the main Durban beachfront was the current Victoria Embankment and Bay/harbour but emphasis was later placed on what is now called the 'Golden Mile' (Figure 1), i.e., the area from Addington to the North Beach (McCarthy, 1997). Since the early 1900s the Council recognised the beach as Durban's major tourist asset and encouraged the development of supporting tourist infrastructure e.g., hotels. As a result Durban became a premier holiday resort in Southern Africa, attracting 15 000 tourists in 1908 (Maharaj, 1996).

The marketing of Durban as a tourist destination was essentially initiated by the formation of the Beach and Entertainment's Committee, comprising of the Durban Retailers Council, Durban Chamber of Commerce and Messrs Thomas Cook and Sons in conjunction with the Railway Administration in 1914. A more intensive marketing campaign was to follow resulting in the formation of the Durban Publicity Association in 1923, funded by the Town Council and the Railway Administration. The Council acknowledged the importance of providing railway transport in particular as a means to stimulate the industry (Maharaj, 1996).

There was a strong interdependence between the local tourist industry and the

provision of transport facilities, particularly railways in Durban. In fact an alliance had developed between the railway authorities and the local state in promoting tourism in the city. In July 1922, the Council adopted the suggestion of the borough's Musical Director that a meeting should be convened of the heads of various business houses in Durban. The meeting was to discuss ways in which to give greater publicity to the various attractions of Durban, as well as to consider extending the winter season, or creating an additional one from December to May. This meeting was followed by the formation of the Durban Publicity Association (Maharaj, 1996). A brochure issued under the joint auspices of the Durban Publicity Association and the South African Railways and Harbours Administration, entitled "Delightful Durban—South Africa's Seaside Resort", extolled the advantages offered by the city to holidaymakers:

As a pleasure, health and holiday resort Durban stands pre-eminent in the Union of South Africa. It is a national playground for old and young. During the fashionable winter season (May-September), when climatic conditions are ideal, visitors flock hither from all quarters of South and East Africa and Rhodesia to enjoy the delights and diversions of the Ocean Beach, where the sunshine, for which South Africa is famed, is tempered by cooling breezes from the sea.

A magnificent sweep of ocean frontage of over three miles, to which extensions both northward and southward are now in progress, distinguishes Durban as a seaside resort. One compares it not unworthily with popular European resorts, yet sees in it some indescribable quality peculiar to the town.²

While tourism continued to expand and flourish in Durban, until 1990 the benefits, both economic and recreational, accrued largely to whites because of the apartheid legacy.

APARTHEID LEGACY

In terms of the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Separate Amenities Act (1953), the best beaches, hotels, tourist attractions were reserved for the exclusive use of whites. In keeping with the pattern of both public and private investment that characterised the apartheid era, tourist-related products were developed on a significant scale along the 'Golden Mile' from the 1950s to the 1970s culminating in significant investment by the Durban City Council in the early 1980s (McCarthy, 1997; Preston-Whyte, 2001).

Hence, apartheid laws ensured that tourism along Durban's coastline was almost exclusively a white phenomenon. Depending largely on a small proportion of the population belonging to a higher-income bracket, Durban was marked as the playground of South Africa, a place where the fun never sets for white people

who could relax on the beach. The spatial structure of Durban was fragmented and worked well for those who had access to facilities while the majority of the population, being low-income Africans did not (Pillay, 1996). A major consequence of apartheid planning and its racial complexities was reflected on the socio-spatial organisation of the city:

The most blatant and challenging complexity lies in the simultaneous concentration of First and Third World characteristics inherent in Durban. Embedded, for example, in Durban's beachfront are on the one hand the crown jewels of advanced industrial capitalism; and on the other hand the crude elements of a Third World city (Grant and Butler-Adam, 1992:210).

Since South Africans were not welcome anywhere else, Durban was perceived as a good place to visit. Whites were able to visit segregated beaches "to enjoy the sun, sea and relatively cheap hotel accommodation in an uncrowded environment".³ During apartheid the price structure for accommodation was reasonable for the average white South African, an advantage as a result of not many foreigners coming to the country and South Africans being portrayed as outcasts overseas.⁴ Durban was marketed as a prime sea destination, drawing attention only to tourism products based mainly in white areas while other assets were either marginalised or not advertised. This proved convenient since there was no demand for anything other than beaches. This was further encouraged by the low hotel rates that were offered in an attempt maintain high occupancies.

STRESSES AND STRAINS OF TRANSITION

Although there was resistance from conservative whites, the city was forced to open up its beaches to all races in 1989, one of the most significant attempts to dismantle the policies of apartheid. Consequently, traditional low to middle class conservative whites from the interior of South Africa no longer valued Durban as a place to visit due to negative press coverage, which projected the city as being overcrowded with blacks. Furthermore, the period that followed was characterised by racial tension (Durrheim and Dixon, 2001; Preston-Whyte, 2001).

Significantly, a study conducted by the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Durban-Westville in 1988 revealed that relative to population sizes, the white tourist population would decrease and the black population would increase. At the time, realising the potential of the black tourist market was largely dependent on their economic status, the provision of recreational facilities and accommodation for mass tourism, and planning and developing tourism facilities to meet the needs of this emerging market (Butler-Adam, 1988).

In December 1994, 80 percent of the rented accommodation, i.e., holiday flats, timeshare and hotels were occupied by blacks, coloureds and Indians. This had definitely affected the long-established white market, especially the blue-coloured conservatives who had invested in the Durban area. Like many of the foreigners, whites preferred to bank their timeshare weeks and take their holidays in Cape Town rather than in Durban:

Despite its warm waters, safe swimming beaches and year round good weather, the coastal city of Durban has lagged in the chase for the local and international holiday and tourism market. Relying on the momentum created by its beachfront boom of the 1970s and 1980s, Durban has slipped insofar as key city centre attractions are concerned. . . . Over the past 15 years, Cape Town has managed to create a thriving tourist economy out of its V&A Waterfront project . . . Durban has had to settle for second place (Frost, 2005:1).

With 55 percent of the timeshare owners in Durban banking their space with RCI Southern Africa, only two percent of them indicated that they would return to Durban. About 1000 families (equating to about 4 000 people) opted to go to Cape Town (*Mercury*, 9/2/95). Crime, vagrants, street children and overcrowding were regarded as the major impediments to tourism growth in Durban.

Durban was perceived as the dirtiest city in the country and subsequently was labelled 'Dirty Durbs'. There was a media outrage about conditions on the beachfront. The beach looked like it had been "hit by missiles armed with litter-warheads" (*Mercury*, 25/10/91). People were arriving in busloads "at all hours of the night, showing complete disregard for those living on the beachfront . . . they shouted, sang, danced . . . cooked on the beach and drank alcohol" (*Mercury*, 25/10/91). In 1992, 100 000 people gathered on the beachfront on New Years Day. Articles directed mainly at a white readership described Durban as a "holiday resort suffering from the increasing overcrowding of blacks and Indians in its beaches" (*Daily News*, 3/1/92).

In 1993 Durban's hotel and restaurant industry and the regional chamber of commerce pressured Council to "clean up its act on the beachfront . . . because the uncontrolled hawking and rising crime was destroying the heart of tourism" (*Mercury*, 18/10/93). The Durban City Council had already established the Beachfront Task Force in 1991 to combat the issue of rising crime along the beachfront. The function of the organisation was to improve the appeal of Durban to tourists by tackling the problem of litter, hygiene and crime (Dayanand, 1996).

Following the 1994 democratic elections, racial tensions subsided and efforts were made to "unlock the potential of the local mass market" and to promote a "strong local atmosphere which in itself is an attraction" (*Mercury*, 13/1/94). According to Jacob Zuma, the provincial Minister of Tourism, "tourism bodies

need to stop advertising in ways that reinforce the image that black means poor". He urged that black people need to be involved in the tourism industry as tourists and in terms of employment (*Daily News*, 17/8/94).

On New Years Day in 1995, 100 000 people gathered on the beachfront once again. Durban had made a transition. The associated crime, vandalism, racial friction and litter of the previous years had become much more controlled (*Daily News*, 2/1/95). The post-election period followed with an influx of foreign tourists. Additional benefits such as the hosting of the semi-finals of the Rugby World Cup had significant spin-offs for the city (*Mercury*, 12/6/95).

However, the euphoria of the democratic transition passed and the city's image started to slip once again. By the late 1990s the beachfront had acquired a reputation of being tacky and unattractive. In spite of efforts to combat crime and upgrade the beachfront, Durban was still perceived by foreigners as 'decaying' and 'stagnant' because of the converting of "flagships hotels into routine budget inns with routine franchising ruling the scene. These days only the brave or the suicidal would walk on the seashores, Gillespie Street and its alleys after dark . . . and in Marine Parade, those carefree strolls along the promenade, gazing at bikinis and dodging timeshare sellers are now pleasures of the past" (*Saturday Star*, 27/2/99). Not surprisingly, restaurants began to move to the suburbs (Preston-Whyte, 1999), where the emergence of major shopping malls began to attract businesses and clientele from the central business district and beachfront areas (Michael and Scott, 2005).

It was common knowledge that the tourism industry in Durban depended primarily on its ability to attract white, middle-class visitors to Durban. It was around this particular market that Durban's main attractions and holiday accommodation were developed, and it was upon this foundation that other aspects of the industry were built. With shifts in both the international and domestic markets an effort had to be made to reposition tourism in the city. This may well require new tourism attractions in Durban which were appropriate for the African population who constituted the core of Durban's domestic market and were likely to fundamentally alter the tourist landscape in the city in the course of the next decade. Otherwise, the tourism industry in Durban will "simply perpetuate past divisions thus undermining efforts to establish a more inclusive and socially responsible tourism" (Goudie *et al.*, 1999: 22).

By focussing on wealthy, international tourists, the large domestic tourism market of the city was being ignored (Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998). The challenge for transformation was recognised, but the tourism industry in Durban was yet to demonstrate whether it could progress beyond apartheid. The most serious threat to tourism was unemployment and the alienation of the majority of African

people from the industry. Because of the legacy of apartheid, there was still a strong perception among African people in the city that 'tourism is a white preserve'. Durban has been left with the challenge of having to re-invent itself as a tourist destination. Hence, throughout the 1990s it initiated different tourist promotion strategies.

TOURISM PROMOTION STRATEGIES

In order to successfully promote its tourism opportunities, Durban attempted to enhance its image and appeal by promoting its sports, convention and cultural attractions.

Durban as Sporting Mecca

The marketing of Durban as a sporting destination started in 1991 with the staging of the first leg of the International Powerboat Racing Grand Prix in the Durban harbour, under the campaign name of 'Durban for Sport'. This was done in the belief that sport can be used as a medium to bring people together. The event was viewed in 60 to 70 different countries and it was estimated that over 150 million people all over the world saw Durban and her harbour (Dayanand, 1996).

In 1991 Durban together with 15 other cities world-wide (including Cape Town and Johannesburg) also tendered a bid to stage the 2004 Olympics. In January 1994 Cape Town was chosen as the South African candidate city for the 2004 Games bid. Although there was much disappointment, the reality was that Durban did not have the infrastructure to host an event of such magnitude.

However, since then Durban was not deterred from tendering for other international events. Durban's climate, hotel infrastructure and spatial suitability (the King's Park Complex) was believed to place Durban in an advantageous position to host major international sports events. Efforts have been made to promote the city as an "all-year-round" sports and holiday resort. The success of Durban's mid-year sporting season with events such as the Comrades Marathon, Rothman's July (horse racing) and the Ocean Action (surf events) being held in June and July, meant that December-January was no longer the only prime tourism season.

The physical coastline, the climate and the proximity of the main beaches of the city is geared toward beach sport. Durban is host to the Gunston 500, which is the world's longest running professional surfing championship (originally known as the Durban 500, the event has been taking place since 1969). The Gunston 500 has attracted a large number of international surfers over the years and is the

most significant part of the Ocean Action (*The Independent on Saturday*, 17/7/99). The Ocean Action has brought major benefits into the city. In 1998, for example, 1.2 million people attended Ocean Action events, generating an estimated R204 million for the economy of Durban (UDW, 1999). In addition, the city annually receives free international publicity as a result of the Ocean Action projecting Durban as a fun destination (*Mercury*, 15/10/96). In 1999 the Metro Mayor hailed the festival as having been a “tremendously successful event that boosted the city’s economy and image” (*Mercury*, 20/7/99).

Such events and the general promotion of Durban’s beach culture resulted in the city having “piggy-backed on the California style” of beach life characterised by surfing and sunbathing. While these festivities have previously been a white phenomena, they are now geared to appeal to a broad spectrum of people who have a range of activities from which to choose (*The Independent on Saturday*, 17/7/99). The beachfront’s declining image received a significant boost as a result of these events. They have opened up opportunities for a number of small businesses (through the hire of kiosks to sell food and other goods) and free entertainment to thousands of Durban’s residents. This was viewed as a good example of how an entrepreneurial approach to sport and recreation can help boost investment and generate economic growth (Centre for Development Enterprise, 1996).

The marketing of Durban as a sporting city is an example of urban regeneration. It reinforces civic pride amongst residents, giving them an opportunity to participate and enjoy a sense of ownership. It can also be classified as a special event that creates a spectacle and in turn draws tourists. Sport has the ability to create media hype, raise the profile of an area and attract crowds during off-season periods (KPMG, 1999).

Durban as World Class Convention Destination

The most significant change that came about in Durban in 1997 was the International Convention Centre (ICC) and the marketing of the city as a conference destination. The debate surrounding the need for an international convention centre in Durban spanned 25 years before its development materialised (Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998).

The ICC was developed and funded completely by the Durban City Council with the intention of creating employment opportunities, reviving the depressed hospitality industry and boosting the local economy (Pillay, 1996; Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998). The ICC has given Durban international status and it received recognition as a convention city. The opening of the ICC has had a number of

spin-offs in terms of new tourism infrastructure and the upgrading of the city. The city of Durban benefits from conferences through revenue from hotels, restaurants, etc. Through extensive international exposure via the media and from the experiences of delegates visiting Durban, the city's economy has experienced a boost in terms of international investment and tourism. Durban has been host to several renowned international events such as the Non-Aligned Movement conference and the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting.

Since August 1997 to September 1999, the ICC held 655 events and hosted 402 000 delegates. The ICC hosted 54 large conferences (over 300) delegates. 27 were international, with 19 000 delegates equivalent to 142 500 bed nights, spending R150 million. 27 national events were held, hosting 15 000 delegates, equivalent to 57 750 bed nights, spending R26 million. The total direct impact of the ICC to the Durban economy was R170 million and the multiplier effect which was 7 to 8 times the initial spend meant that the total economic impact was R704 million. The value of other events to the ICC was R25 million. Using the same multiplier, this would have created another R100 million impact. Therefore the total impact of all types of events was approximately R800 million (International Convention Centre, 1999). Apart from the fact that conference business tends to be less seasonal than general tourism, the ICC also has the potential to encourage tourism activities during off-peak seasons.

Although Durban has attracted high profile conventions since the establishment of the ICC that have had positive impacts on the city, Durban is still not the world's best convention centre. Durban lacks a number of key requirements for a successful convention destination as a result of crime, grime and limited attractions. Durban's product line as a city is weak. While linkages to the rest of the province is considered a strong selling point, Durban as a product itself needs to develop. The city needs to capitalise on the ICC as an asset and develop strategies that will inform future growth.

Durban—A “Melting Pot” of Culture

More recently, there has been an increasing focus on eco-tourism and cultural tourism in Durban. The promotion of arts and culture serve not only to attract visitors but also to cater for the local population. The reason for the change in trends is twofold. Firstly, the rise of Cape Town as a result of the waterfront development, the increasing number of timeshare resorts that have been established (an industry that was not available 15 years ago) has left tourists with many more options. Durban's market share is now significantly smaller, even more so with South Africa's tourism industry opening up to the rest of the world.

Competition with other localities has made Durban the fourth choice of international tourists, after Johannesburg, Cape Town and the Kruger National Park. Furthermore, the city only attracts 9 percent of international tourists (Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998).

Durban realised there was a need to increase its market share. However, the key to the city's success lies in its ability to promote attractions that are unique to Durban. Hence, Durban is now portrayed as a multicultural city—South Africa's true African city in contrast to Cape Town, which is perceived as being cosmopolitan. Durban is believed to have one of the richest cultural mixes of all cities in South Africa.

In 1996, a lecturer from University of Durban-Westville, Richard Pithouse suggested that a calendar of festivals reflecting the multi-cultural diversity of the city should be developed. He suggested that improving and expanding festivals and holding events will create positive media attention locally and abroad. Festivals have the potential to generate off-season tourism, they can revitalise decaying urban areas by promoting a more positive image and can draw a broad spectrum of people (*Daily News*, 6/12/96). He suggested a KwaZulu-Natal arts and culture festival displaying events from Zulu and Indian dancing "home-grown jazz and grass weaving, to feisty crab curry, potjiekos and samp and beans . . . culminating in a carnival procession through the streets of Durban" (*Daily News*, 6/12/96). The Standard Bank National Arts Festival held in Grahamstown every year generates approximately R25 million in eleven days. If a cultural event of similar magnitude could be staged in Durban, it could have significant spin-offs for the economy (*Sunday Tribune*, 24/1/96).

Art and culture is an integral part of the tourist product and has the ability to boost the local economy. With six of the country's best museums, an art centre and the Playhouse performances, Durban has a unique cultural mix. In addition, the city has Zulu villages, battlefields, temples and arts and crafts routes. Guided tours through the townships and to shebeens and cultural villages have gained significant interest in recent years (*Daily News*, 6/12/96; *Sunday Tribune*, 8/12/96). Zulu heritage is the single largest draw card for Durban and the province at large provided a clearly identifiable marketing strategy.

However, Durban is not capitalising on its strong cultural component. It is necessary to refocus on African culture—showcasing art, music, galleries, cuisine and museums. More recently, there is increasing recognition of the influence of festival and events with the primary target market being the local residents. The key factor, though, is the participation of the local population in events and festivals. The Victoria Street Market, Warwick Avenue, Grey Street, the BAT Centre and the African Art Centre are good examples of how shopping and archi-

ecture may be linked to the promotion of cultural tourism (KPMG, 1999). According to KPMG (1999: 47), “the presence of artists, architects and actors has become a characteristic of inner city regeneration . . . culture is the fabric of a city and its lifeblood”.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Tourism represents a major economic activity, and plays a significant role in the national economy of many countries. The major impact of tourism on local people is the creation of jobs (Williams and Shaw, 1991; Yuan, 2001). However, tourism related employment is often regarded as low-paying, low-skilled and unstable (Maharaj and Ramballi, 1998; Williams, 2001).

Although tourism is labour-intensive in most counties it is subjected to seasonal fluctuations (William and Shaw, 1998). This is particularly evident in Durban, where the number of non-permanent employees is amongst the highest in the tourism sector, and this is largely due to the seasonal nature of tourism. Large discrepancies also exist in income levels in tourism-related employment. White employees earn an average three times more than black employees (NALEDI, 2000).

In Durban, extreme disparities exist in the distribution of labour market opportunities, especially in terms of race and gender within the tourism sector. The legacy of past discriminatory laws deliberately excluded black people from key jobs, training and development opportunities, and property ownership. With regard to employment in the tourism sector, black employees generally hold semi/unskilled positions, while white employees are employed at higher paid managerial and administrative levels. A major shortcoming in the tourism industry in South Africa is inadequate education and training opportunities. The previously disenfranchised groups remain highly disadvantaged and the task of levelling the playing field is a massive one. There as an urgent need, through training and educational policies, to develop “an indigenous managerial class” (Jenkins, 1994:6).

In terms of the accommodation sector, room occupancy for hotels in Durban had declined between August 1999 and August 2000. This was because a large number of domestic tourists visiting Durban tend to stay with friends and relatives. The emerging black tourists and some international tourists perceive the accommodation in the city as being unaffordable. Restaurants and takeaways in Durban are also regarded as being too expensive and therefore many tourists tend to bring their own food and beverages.

Another concern is that because of the large number of foreign-owned hotels

in Durban, the tourism industry encounters leakages from the economy. Leakages in the tourism industry occur when foreign capital is invested in country's tourism industry, and interest payments, rents or profits are paid to those outside the country (Mill and Morrison, 1985). The money that is leaked from the host economy must be deducted from foreign exchange earnings to determine the true economic impact of tourism in Durban. Local ownership and control should be encouraged since foreign-owned chain hotels will be "staffed, stocked and furnished by people, food, furnishings, fixtures and equipment from a central foreign source"(Mill and Morrison, 1985:224). Also, foreign-owned hotels prevent local employees from reaching higher positions of responsibility.

CHALLENGES FACING TOURISM IN DURBAN

Tourism in Durban faced a number of challenges, including responding to a changing market, addressing problems of crime and grime, and increasing investment in infrastructure.

Responding to a Changing Market

Due to past racial legislation, tourism in Durban has been regarded as a missed opportunity for the majority of people in South Africa, and more specifically Durban. A major problem facing the industry is the poor involvement of previously disadvantaged groups in the tourism sector. This is attributed to the fact that the majority of people have not benefited from, or have been exposed to, the industry, and hence perceive the industry as a "white man's preserve". As a result the tourism industry does not cater for the emerging black market in terms of its facilities and services. As emphasised earlier, this was because Durban's main attractions and accommodation establishments were developed to attract the white middle-class visitors. Even the much vaunted uShaka Marine World was found to be too expensive, where only the entrance fees for all the facilities cost R360 a day for an average family of four in 2004 (Gangaram, 2004).

While the majority of people have been excluded from delivering the tourism product, this forms a compelling reason to involve the entire nation in becoming a team of tourism service providers. Local decision-making should be more accountable to local people (Wilson, 2001). The obvious market potential of blacks suggests that they could and should constitute a significant part of the existing tourism industry in Durban.

Tourism in Durban is currently being accused of "promoting Cadillac tastes in bicycle societies" (Allen and Hamnett, 1995:208), and should move away from

being a “foreigner’s industry creating facilities for a privileged elite which many indigenous people would never be likely to afford”(Jenkins, 1994:5).

Crime and Grime

Problems of crime and grime are aggravated by overcrowding along the beachfront during the peak holiday seasons. Overcrowding also reduces the number of toilet and washing facilities for visitors, and increases the amount of litter in the area.⁵ This contributes to feelings of insecurity and the probability of crime, and acts as a deterrent to users of the beachfront (Data Research Africa, 1999). Crime not only deters potential tourists but also undermines the confidence of investors who want to develop tourist infrastructure. Safety and security are compulsory conditions for a successful tourism industry (Pizam *et al.*, 1997; Ferreira and Harmes, 2000).

The high level of crime must be viewed against the high levels of unemployment and inequality in South Africa. According to the latest human development report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003:5):

About 48.5 percent of the South African population (21.9 million people) currently falls below the national poverty line. Income distribution remains highly unequal and has deteriorated in recent years. This is reflected in the high Gini-coefficient, which rose from 0.596 in 1995 to 0.635 in 2001. The Human Development Index (HDI) for South Africa moved from 0.72 in 1990 to 0.73 in 1995 to 0.67 in 2003. Poverty and inequality continue to exhibit strong spatial and racial biases.

There is also a view that the crime issue has been over-exaggerated to a certain extent, and that it reflected latent racist tendencies. Prejudice on the part of whites against living and interacting with blacks emanated in part from apparent cultural conflicts and ignorance, as well as a concern that standards would decline. However, Christie (1987) has argued that blacks moving into formerly white recreational and residential spaces wanted to improve their quality of life, and they therefore would not want standards to drop.

Racial prejudices were the result of decades of apartheid separation that contributed to suspicion and friction between groups. Furthermore, segregation has been deeply entrenched in the social fabric, and was further reinforced by the socio-economic differences between blacks and whites (Durrheim and Dixon, 2001). Hence, there was also an urgent need to break down social barriers:

The tragedy of apartheid is that it has worked so well: for most South Africans, of whatever ‘colour’, inter-racial mixing is still regarded with suspicion, mistrust and fear. It is this fear

of the unknown which is at the heart of much prejudice and xenophobic feeling (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1992:290).

It would appear that many areas on the beachfront have been neglected by landlords and the local authority in terms of provision of services and amenities. A concerted effort is required from the private and public sectors to halt the physical decay in such areas and to facilitate general upgrading. This will help dispel the negative perceptions of such areas. This must be accompanied by strategies to severely penalise perpetrators of crime, finding more innovative means to provide opportunities for the unemployed and educating local people about the importance of tourism.

Infrastructure

In order to achieve the status of a successful tourism destination, a great deal more investment in infrastructure is required in Durban. Foreign tourists tend to stay longer in Cape Town and Gauteng because Durban lacks a lot of tourism infrastructure that the other cities have built in the last decade. Durban needs to adopt an alternative strategy to being marketed as a gateway to the rest of the province. Durban cannot be a gateway and a destination city. Development of more tourism infrastructure could assist in overcoming this problem.

In a study conducted by Graham Muller Associates (1997), the following were some of the factors identified as being responsible for the delays in tourism infrastructure development:

- i) Tourism infrastructure is viewed by banks as a risky investment and is usually financed by equity only, which is not in keeping with international norms. The unwillingness of banks to finance tourism infrastructure is a major impediment to development.
- ii) In spite of having relatively good infrastructure and a wealth of accessible, unique cultural and natural attractions, none have been developed to the point of being recognised as “must-see” attractions in Durban. Even where sites have been secured for development, it is difficult to attract operators and investors. A pro-active approach to packaging various investment opportunities would attract investors.
- iii) Foreign investment is required not just in terms of the venture capital required for larger projects to proceed, but also with regard to international expertise and linkages to global marketing networks, which will inevitably facilitate the development process (Graham Muller Associates, 1997).

World trends reflect the need for experiential tourism by catering to backpackers, hikers and promoting cultural and sporting events. People want to go to a unique destination that has a certain amount of mystique. As suggested by corporate consultant Tom Dennen, the city should concentrate on marketing viable

resources rather than creating waterfronts and the like, which result in resources being dissipated (*Mercury*, 22/10/98). Durban needs creative location and culture-specific initiatives to bring tourists into the city.

CONCLUSION

Social, economic and political factors influence the development of tourism in any community (Peck and Lepie, 1989). If it were not for its apartheid history, South Africa would have been one of the most visited places in the world. For people to be active in tourism, they should have reasonable incomes, leisure times, means of transport and freedom of movement. The policy of apartheid deprived all South Africans, except whites, of such benefits (Mkhize, 1994). The Durban experience was no different. It is evident from this paper that Durban is one of South Africa's leading year round tourist destinations and offers international and domestic tourists exciting beach-related activities, impressive conference facilities, and other major events. Durban's beachfront and Golden Mile have afforded the city with the opportunity to unleash its tourist potential. While this provided a significant drawcard for tourists, the move toward democracy in the 1990s provided many challenges, the most enduring of which was the need to cater for the emerging Black tourist market.

A serious threat to tourism in Durban is unemployment and alienation of the majority of African people from the industry. The popular conception of the tourism industry is that it employs a higher level of part-time and seasonal workers, and offers mainly unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Hence, a major challenge facing the promotion of tourism in Durban is the need to get local people to buy into the idea of pursuing tourism as a form of economic and urban regeneration activity. Changing the mindset of local people is crucial to the success of the tourism industry. Developing a culture of tourism should begin at grassroots level.

The success of Durban's tourism industry will be influenced by the ability to reduce the level of crime in the region. Durban's declining tourism image was related to the increasing problem of crime and the inability of authorities to effectively market the city to the domestic tourist market. Urban decline is sometimes causally linked to a changeover of power and racial composition of the city's population, and it is associated with a whole range of problems ranging from crime to delinquency (Beauregard, 1989). The poor planning of tourist facilities and attractions has exacerbated this problem. There was a failure to recognise the need to create a strategy that would not only draw the domestic market but also revive the declining foreign market by providing them with the opportunity to experience the uniqueness of Durban.

Greater emphasis should be placed on tourism policies that sustain growth through redistribution. This can be done by implementing linkage policies which guarantees that benefits are channelled directly to the disadvantaged communities in Durban. This would ensure that the more pressing problems in the community surrounding the metropolitan area (housing shortages, the lack of services and educational and recreational infrastructure, the huge informal settlements, etc.), can be alleviated. If such policies are to be effective, then the public and the private sectors need to commit much greater resources to community development projects than in the past.

NOTES

1. A version of this paper was published in Dehooorne, O. and Joseph, P. (eds), 2006: *Iles et Tivages Tropicouze: Environnements et Developpements Touristiques*, Université des Antilles et de la Guyane (Martinique).
2. “Delightful Durban—Sunny South Africa’s Seaside Resort”, advertising pamphlet issued under the joint auspices of the Durban Publicity Association and the South African Railways and Harbours Administration, pp. 11–12.
3. Interview with Margaret Winter, Councillor, Durban Metropolitan Council, 17/11/99.
4. Interview with Peter Bendheim, Director, Durban Metropolitan Communications Department, 17/11/99.
5. Interview with Karen Kohler, Research Coordinator, KZNTA, 15/01/02.

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