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## TOURISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: EVIDENCE FROM APARTHEID JOHANNESBURG

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**Abstract:** Racial discrimination in tourism has garnered only a limited scholarship with most research concentrated on the United States experience. Apartheid South Africa provides the setting for this examination of racial discrimination in tourism. Using archival sources the unfolding of racial discrimination in tourism is documented for apartheid Johannesburg. Attention centres on issues surrounding discrimination regarding visitor attractions and racially-segregated hospitality services including for accommodation and eating-out options. The study is novel in contributing to the limited historical writings outside the USA on issues of racial discrimination in urban tourism.

**Key words:** racial discrimination, apartheid South Africa, Johannesburg, visitor economy, accommodation and hospitality services

\* \* \* \* \*

### INTRODUCTION

Discrimination, as defined by Farmaki and Kladou (2020), represents the practice of treating someone or a particular group in society less fairly than others. The writings of economists and sociologists have demonstrated that discrimination incorporates the spheres of racial attitudes, legislation, social relations, employment, residential patterns, and criminal justice (Lang and Spitzer, 2020; Small and Pager, 2020; Jones et al., 2024). Although there exist multiple potential grounds for discrimination the most commonplace are gender, sexuality, religion, and racial or ethnic origin (Banerjee, 2021). For Bernard et al. (2023, p. 135) race “refers to a social construct and can be defined as the categorization of humans based on their skin tone, physical appearance (ie nose shape or hair texture) and/or language”. According to Jernsand et al. (2023, p. 821), however, race “is a socially constructed category with real consequences

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\* Corresponding Author

and has historically been used as a mechanism of power, creating hierarchies of privileges". Race functions as a tool to maintain privilege and uneven power relations in societies (Banerjee, 2021). For Arrow (1998, p. 91) racial discrimination "pervades every aspect of a society in which it is found". Li et al. (2020, p. 1) pinpoint that racism is recognized as a key driver of unfair inequalities in power, resources, and opportunities across different racial groups. Stephenson (2004, p. 64) identifies racism as traditionally defined as "a process by which individual and groups popularly categorize and stereotype those whom they feel are inferior" with the result being the production of "a stigma of otherness".

Apartheid South Africa "presents a unique case study within which to study the effects of discrimination" (Pellicer and Ramchod, 2023, p. 1). The racial ideology of apartheid represented one of the most important distinguishing features of South African political and spatial structures, resulting in low levels of civil rights on a world scale, international condemnation, and sanctions. Beinart and Dubow (1995) point out that segregation and racial discrimination have a long history in South Africa and existed long before 1948 which marks the commencement of the apartheid era. Although the history of racial discrimination in South Africa dates to the colonial periods – including of both Dutch and British rule – racial discrimination intensified with the 1948 elections which brought the National Party government to power with apartheid its signature policy.

Under apartheid a series of laws were enacted to formally entrench racial separation and discrimination which spanned every dimension of political, economic and social life (Maylam, 2017). The South African government implemented a comprehensive apparatus of mechanisms for enforcing racial discrimination against 'non-Whites' (Lemon, 2016). The Population Registration Act of 1950 is considered the "first apartheid law" (van Rooyen and Lemanski, 2020, p. 22). It was the lynchpin for the country's rigid system of racial stratification which required all South Africans to be registered and assigned to an official race category. The architects of apartheid racial classification "recognized explicitly that racial categories were constructs, rather than descriptions of real essences" (Posel, 2001, p. 87). The category of 'non-White' encompassed Africans, Coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians. As noted by Pellicer and Ramchod (2023, p. 1) to be "classified as 'White' as opposed to 'non-White' led to radically different experiences in virtually all facets of life", including for participating in tourism. One major difference related to the everyday (im-)mobilities of the African population which was subject to a battery of controls on movement including through the pass laws and curfews (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2024a).

This study is novel in its intention to address the knowledge gap in historical literature on urban tourism that relates to issues surrounding racial discrimination. The aim is to document the unfolding of racial discrimination and its implications for 'non-White' travellers to Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city. More specifically, the period under scrutiny is the decade of the 1960s, which is sometimes referred to as the years of 'high apartheid' when the implementation of racist legislation and controls was at its most severe. Overall, this article represents a contribution to the somewhat limited international literature from destinations outside of the United States of the impacts of racial discrimination in tourism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

An array of issues surrounding inclusion and marginalization are commanding growing attention within tourism scholarship (Slocum and Ingram, 2023; Khoo et al., 2025). It is evident that marginalization is a consequence of the pervasiveness of discrimination in various forms within the tourism industry. Unquestionably, racial discrimination is regarded as one of the leading sources of marginalization within tourism (Zhou et al., 2022; Bernard et al., 2023). As posited by Dönmez and Aylan (2022) discrimination in tourism can arise from various factors including age, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical appearance, as well as race. Indeed, race forms one dimension of the myriad factors that generate marginalization in tourism and which in turn coincides with different forms of discrimination (Struwig and Du Preez, 2024). For Kennedy (2013) racial discrimination is one of the most under-analyzed issues in researching barriers to participation in tourism. Likewise, in the opinion of Korstanje (2022: 48), literature which examines “cases of racism in tourism and hospitality does not abound”.

Discrimination in the sharing economy has been disclosed in several investigations including on grounds of race (Edelman et al., 2017; Cheng and Foley, 2018; Cui et al., 2020; Farmaki and Kladou, 2020; Bunel et al., 2021; Zhu and Yasami, 2021). In one large-scale international study on Airbnb, it was pinpointed that discrimination impacted the prices that could be charged by hosts and concluded “consumers prefer to stay with White hosts, which allows them to charge higher prices for their listings” (Jaeger and Slegers, 2023, p. 45). In France discriminatory behaviour towards ethnic origins is documented as highly prevalent in guest houses and camp sites. Using a correspondence test the research conducted across various forms of leisure accommodation services by Bunel et al. (2021, p. 32) concluded that “there is strong discrimination regardless of the type and location of accommodation, based on suggested ethnic origin and reputation of the neighbourhoods where clients reside”. Argues Zhou et al. (2022) racism, as manifested in racial discrimination, is one of the major sources of discrimination in the tourism and hospitality sector. None the less, as is observed by Jamerson (2016, p. 1040) critical tourism research around race “appear relatively late to the development of tourism scholarship”. Similarly, Jernsand et al. (2023, p. 821) avers that “the intersection between race and tourism has long been neglected in tourism research”.

For the tourism sector Ndeke (2022, p. 621) contends that from an historical purview “racism is traceable to the late 19th-century Jim Crow era” in the USA. Kenna (2024, p. 33) states that “Jim Crow was the name used to describe a ‘racial caste system’ which many historians identify as beginning in 1877 and ending in the mid-1960s after the adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964”. Althoff and Reichardt (2024) assert African Americans have faced a long history of economic oppression and racial discrimination in the United States. Throughout the country’s early history, slavery was legal – until around 1800 in Northern States and until the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) in the South. Following soon after the end of slavery “Southern states created racially oppressive regimes that limited the economic progress of newly freed Black families – a set of institutions known as Jim Crow” which included restrictions on economic and geographical mobilities (Althoff and Reichardt, 2024, p. 2279).

Centred on the Jim Crow era Alderman (2013, p. 376) flags “the highly discriminatory history of mobility and hospitality in the United States”. The

stringent application of Jim Crow segregation marginalized the growing African American middle class in the US travel and tourism industry (Jackson, 2020). In their overview of the history of tourism and racism in the United States Slocum and Ingram (2023) bemoan the fact that too little research has been conducted around the nexus of tourism and race. This point was reinforced again more recently by Dillette et al. (2024, p.1) who stress “the historical neglect of racial inequity in tourism scholarship”. These authors issued a call for greater attention to be given to issues around institutionalized or systemic racism. Pernecky (2024, p. 1202) reiterates recommendations made by other researchers to “do better in acknowledging the invisibility of race within historical and contemporary tourism geographies”.

In recent years a small upturn of scholarship around racial discrimination is observable and engaged with issues around tourism as context for reflecting on marginalization (Jernsand et al., 2023; Khoo et al., 2025). Racial discrimination in tourism has been under scrutiny in contemporary United States with notable works being Hudson et al. (2020) on the racial acceptance of African-American tourists in South Carolina. In a revealing analysis of recent Filipino travel to the United States Suñga et al. (2022) pinpoint that racial discrimination influences travel behaviour as Filipinos tend to avoid places where there are high incidents of racial discrimination. Baker (2022) applies the concept of a ‘racial regime’ for examining the ramifications of racial inequalities and discrimination in the United States. A racial regime is defined as a system of rules – formal and informal – based on race and which essentially function to sustain and reproduce racial inequalities in society. How race impacts the tourism industry is a theme of mounting concern most especially in the USA with the emergence of the movements of Black Lives Matter and the Black Travel Movement (Lee and Scott, 2017; Benjamin and Dillette, 2021). According to Peters (2021) the emergence of the Black Travel Movement “is a development that responds to persistent issues of restricted movement and the White racialization of travel”.

Scholarship that seeks to understand differences in travel behaviour based on race is on the increase (Philipp, 1993; Lee and Scott, 2017; Lee, 2024). Explanations have been linked variously to concepts of marginality and ethnicity, discrimination and racialized spaces (Floyd, 1998; Jackson, 2020). Benjamin et al. (2024) stress that Black travelers often are treated as a group with homogeneity but like any other racial group American Black experiences are not monolithic. Unquestionably, the record of the United States offers the best documented set of case material and theoretical debates relating to historical racial discrimination in tourism (Alderman and Modlin Jr., 2014; Hall, 2014; Tucker and Deale, 2018; Duffy et al., 2019; Jackson, 2020; Dillette and Benjamin, 2022; Bottone, 2023; Benjamin et al., 2024; Jones et al., 2024; Thomas and Love, 2024). Outside of the United States context much less research has been pursued on racial discrimination in tourism. One of the earliest research investigations related to the racialised boundaries in travel and tourism as affected ethnic minorities, such as the Black Caribbean community in the United Kingdom (Stephenson and Hughes (2005). Questions around racism and discrimination in tourism in Australia have been explored by Ruhanen and Whitford (2018).

In a Global South study, racism is evidenced in tourism promotion linked to indigenous peoples in Brazil (Gonçalves et al., 2022). One of the few historical



investigations for the Global South is Lowrie's (2023) insightful study of the impact of racial discrimination in shaping the colonial landscape of hill stations in interwar Malaya and the Philippines. Discrimination in the setting of South Africa also has attracted some attention from tourism scholars (Musavengane, 2019). In an early contribution Jayne Rogerson (2017) examined the historical struggles around racial segregation on South African beaches during the apartheid period. Cape Town tourism during the 1960s has been the focus of the only city-scale investigation of racial discrimination with findings pointing to discrimination regarding both visitor attractions and accommodation (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2025). A pathbreaking study by Struwig and du Preez (2024) shows that, notwithstanding the abolition of legislated racial discrimination, marked differences continue to exist among different racial groups in destination preference in South Africa. Arguably, they maintain that symbolic boundaries forged due to historical segregation policies, fostered a 'travel habitus' which persists today despite the removal of legislative constraints on mobilities. It is posited that whilst discriminatory policies may have been removed, the symbolic impact of such practices remains and affects activity and destination preferences (Struwig and du Preez, 2024).

## METHODS

This study was undertaken through the application of different research methods. First, a bibliographical analysis was conducted of existing literature on racial discrimination in tourism. As is demonstrated in the previous section the body of current scholarship around contemporary issues of racial discrimination in tourism is dominated by studies in the United States. Beyond that literature, research and writings on racial discrimination in tourism are relatively sparse. A critical influence upon the strong scholarship in the USA is the historical legacy of the Jim Crow era. Rogerson and Rogerson (2020, 2024b) identify certain similarities of tourism and travel between the period of Jim Crow segregation in the USA and that of apartheid South Africa.

Second, the research on Johannesburg applies primary documentary source materials drawn from archives. Unquestionably, the practice of archival research is a valued research method in geography most especially in respect of research investigating historical influences on contemporary places (Wideman, 2023). For political geography studies Byron et al. (2024) interrogate the utility of archives. These authors argue that archives invariably are incomplete records. They therefore point to the merits of attending to the 'gaps' and finding 'fillers' such as newspaper reports to supplement the archival record. In the view of the political geographer Timothy (2012, p. 403) "archival data help develop understandings of how tourist destinations grow and decline". Moreover, archival material can shed valuable insight into issues surrounding the 'darker' aspects of tourism development, including in this case around racial discrimination.

This research builds upon primary documentary sources obtained from the Historical Papers collections at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg where use is made of the archival documents of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). Additional historical documentation has been sourced from the manuscripts of the Harold Strange Collection of African Studies, Johannesburg Public Library. For this investigation 'fillers' to supplement the archival material include reports and articles which appeared in

The Bantu World newspaper, which was a weekly outlet published in Johannesburg from the 1930s and targeted at the readership of the emerging black African elite and middle classes (Switzer, 1998; Rogerson, 2024a).

## **FINDINGS**

As is documented in several investigations racial discrimination permeated every facet of life for Africans in Johannesburg and most especially during the period of high apartheid in the 1960s and into the early 1970s. Across the spheres of housing, education, employment, public transportation and urban rights everyday life in Johannesburg was conditioned by the imprint of racism and discrimination (Pirie and da Silva, 1986; Pirie, 1986, 1992; Crankshaw, 2005; Wood, 2023; C.M. Rogerson, 2025). Crush (1992, 1994) highlights the notable contributions which have been made by South African historical geographers towards excavating the hidden spaces and worlds of marginalized racial groups as well as the lives of the common people in Johannesburg. Pirie (1986, p. 41) avers “the historical geography of the dominated classes in urban South Africa features planning to achieve the ideological and material ends of race-tainted capitalism”. The study findings are organized in terms of three sub-sections of discussion. The first gives a context of Johannesburg’s emergence as a tourism destination. In the second and third sub-sections attention narrows to document the effects of racial discrimination upon the landscape of urban tourism respectively for (a) visitor attractions and, (b) accommodation and hospitality services in Johannesburg.

## **JOHANNESBURG AS TOURISM DESTINATION**

The dramatic transformation of the settlement of Johannesburg from its foundation in 1886 as a dusty mining camp to South Africa’s leading manufacturing and commercial heart occurred within a short time-span of four decades (Van Onselen, 1982). Prosperity was anchored upon the economic base of gold which attracted investors, opportunists and workers as the city became a site of unprecedented modernity within a few decades of its genesis as a mining camp. Johannesburg’s development trajectory was unlike that of other South African cities because, as Foster (2012) points out, it did not originate as an agricultural centre or colonial entrepôt, but as a gold mining settlement camp. The city’s mining-driven economy experienced a spectacular boom such that it could be observed that Johannesburg entered the 1920s and 1930s with a “bravura supporting an appetite for the construction of modernist multi-storey buildings, upmarket retailing and impressive skyscrapers with the city being styled a ‘Wonder of the Modern World’ (Grundlingh, 2022, p. 775).

By the onset of the apartheid era, gold mining – the *raison d’être* for Johannesburg’s foundation in 1886 – was declining in significance. During the post-World War 2 years the city consolidated its position as South Africa’s largest manufacturing centre and leading focus of national commerce and finance (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). Within this expanding urban economy, only a minor contribution was made by tourism. This situation mirrored the sector’s limited role at this time in the national economy. Promotion of Johannesburg as a tourism destination was undertaken by the municipal-funded Johannesburg Publicity Association which was founded in 1925. The limited activities of this organisation included the running of a visitor bureau as well as producing tourist handbooks and guides (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2019).

In the 1950s and 1960s the association continued to build and extend its ongoing publicity initiatives for encouraging the further development of (mainly) leisure tourism in the city (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021).

One indicator of Johannesburg's rise as an urban tourism destination was the growth in the number of accommodation service establishments in the city. The listings of hotels in the annual Rand-Pretoria Directory signal a steady – if unspectacular – expansion in the growth of hotel accommodation in the city from a total of 84 hotels in 1950, to 93 by 1955 and reaching 103 by 1960 (J.M. Rogerson, 2018; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2018). In urban tourism destinations the extent and condition of accommodation infrastructure and facilities usually represents an important influence both on visitor experience and on local competitiveness (Mandić et al., 2018). Although the need for establishing an appropriate tourism infrastructure for visitors had been acknowledged by the municipal authorities in Johannesburg, the city's hotels, restaurants and visitor bureaus were used by mainly domestic tourists, city residents, and a small flow of international visitors to the city (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). The racial hue of these visitors was almost exclusively white.

The actual state of tourism infrastructure that conditioned the experience of 'non-White' visitors to Johannesburg during the first two decades of apartheid was unpromising. Most African visitors to Johannesburg stayed as guests of friends and relatives who were living in the city and therefore outside of the network of commercial accommodation services. Exclusion was reinforced by apartheid legislation around job reservation which blocked a large section of Africans from better paying jobs and therefore of them even being enabled to afford the means of travel for leisure purposes. It was in response to a growth during the 1950s and 1960s in the flows of African travellers and of their need for information on navigating the hostile apartheid landscape of tourism that the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) researched and produced a series of guidebooks specifically targeted to provide tourism and travel information to 'non-White' travellers in South Africa (Keyter, 1962; Suttner, 1966, 1967; South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968). For casting light on racial discrimination in Johannesburg tourism the most useful are two national guidebooks produced in 1962 (Keyter, 1962) and 1968 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968) and the two guidebooks specifically on Johannesburg (Suttner, 1966, 1967). In this analysis these four SAIRR guidebooks provide insight into the impact of apartheid legislation and racial discrimination as reflected in visitor attractions and accommodation and hospitality services in Johannesburg.

### **ATTRACTIONS – PLACES OF INTEREST**

The earliest marketing guides for Johannesburg stressed the excitement for visitors to enjoy 'the sunshine city of gold' and experience the city's exhilarating climate (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931). During the 1930s and 1940s the activities of the publicity association were geared primarily to serve domestic visitors coming into Johannesburg for business, visiting friends and relatives, or increasingly for leisure purposes. In addition, the agency assisted the small flow of international (mainly American) tourists who were stopping over in Johannesburg usually en route to Victoria Falls having arrived by ocean steamship at Cape Town (Wolf, 1991).

It is observed that the places of interest which were marketed for these white tourists comprised visits to Johannesburg City Hall, the public library, geological museum, the Union observatory, sports events and the city's rich theatre, music and cinema offerings (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1957). Further attractions that were highlighted included the annual Easter agricultural show as well as Christmas shopping. For international travellers the opportunities for underground visits to gold mines and on Sundays to experience the spectacle of 'native war dances' at a gold mine were given considerable attention (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1947). During the first decade of apartheid, despite national government's lack of interest in tourism promotion, the agency continued its activities of promoting Johannesburg as a (mainly) leisure tourism centre (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). The places of interest pinpointed for domestic visitors included now the local Zoological gardens, parks, shopping and nightlife; for international tourists the list included the potential for visits to diamond cutting factories, gold mines and 'tribal dances' (J.M. Rogerson, 2018).

Although ignored by the promoters of the visitor economy of Johannesburg there is evidence from as far back as the 1930s of the appearance of flows of 'non-White' visitors into the city (C.M. Rogerson, 2024). The reasons for this growth were similar to those for white visitors and indeed were typical of any large multi-purpose urban tourism destination, namely a growth of travel for leisure, business, health and visits to friends and relatives. It is observed that the list of places of interest in Johannesburg which were recommended in the SAIRR guides for African visitors to the city showed some similarities as well as certain noteworthy differences to those suggested for groups of white domestic tourists or international visitors. The guidebooks proclaimed that "Johannesburg is a city rich in places of interest to suit every taste" (Suttner, 1967, p. 27). The city's prime tourist attractions were profiled as the Johannesburg Zoo and several museums, most notably the African Museum, Geological Museum, War Museum, Transport Museum and the Art Gallery. Other sight-seeing places of interest in Johannesburg included the Albert Herzog Tower, the Stock Exchange, the Planetarium at the University of Witwatersrand, and the historical mining exhibition about gold, diamonds, coal and copper hosted by South Africa's largest mining concern, the Anglo-American Corporation. A wander through the various municipal parks of Johannesburg was another recommended activity for 'non-White' visitors. Another listed place of interest was Jan Smuts Airport, the only international air terminal in South Africa, where visitors could watch "the numerous departures and arrivals from and to South African towns and countries outside its borders" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968).

Apartheid discrimination was evidenced in various of the listed places of interest. The guidebooks cautioned potential visitors to these tourism assets of Johannesburg of the specific times and days which were available for 'non-White' visitors. For example, Thursday was their only allocated visiting day to the Albert Herzog Tower and Tuesday for the Planetarium. At the airport there was a designated separate viewing gallery for 'non-Whites' and with refreshments obtainable in "a special non-White lounge" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p. 76). For visits to municipal parks, it was cautioned that most facilities in these parks were reserved exclusively for white patrons. Indeed, at the popular Zoological Gardens in Johannesburg no refreshment

facilities were open for purchase by Africans of food or drinks as the one former kiosk dedicated for sales to Africans had been closed (Suttner, 1966).

Two tourism products were specifically recommended for African visitors. First, was the broadcast house of Radio Bantu, which provided ethnically organised services in Zulu, Xhosa, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Tsonga languages. The South African Broadcasting Corporation launched Radio Bantu in 1960 as a fully-fledged radio station for African listenership, albeit intended as the apartheid state's propaganda channel, its vernacular radio found resonance among African listeners (Lekgoathi, 2009). Second, was a recommendation for Dorkay House, described as a place which "African visitors, in particular, will enjoy" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p. 76). This building was a cultural centre, the headquarters of the African Music and Drama Association as well as of Union Artists, which provided instruction on various arts and where, with permission, visitors could watch play rehearsals (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968). Dorkay House was located adjacent to the Bantu Men's Social Centre, a central social space for African recreation and learning in Johannesburg (Badenhorst, 2003). The Bantu Men's Social Centre assumed vital social, political and cultural roles in the lives of (Black) South Africans from its foundation in 1924 until its forced closure in 1971 as a consequence of its location which fell foul of the restrictions of the Group Areas Act. In 1970 a similar fate befell Dorkay House which was forced to seek new premises for the production of African plays because of the Group Areas Act zonings (Maine, 1970).

The silences in the SAIRR guidebooks on Johannesburg for African visitors are equally of interest. It is observed that for 'non-White' visitors to the city the SAIRR guidebooks of the 1960s provide little mention of the city's night-time economy, a theme stressed as an asset in the marketing of Johannesburg which was directed at white visitors (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). Likewise, there is no focus upon the city's shopping and entertainment attractions which again were highlighted as a major drawcard for (white) domestic visitors to the city as well as for visitors to Johannesburg coming from the surrounding colonial territories of Rhodesia and Mozambique. Finally, it is not surprising to note that visits to gold mines, opportunities to experience 'Native life' and of organized 'war' dances performed by migrant workers at mines, which were heavily marketed to international tourists - were not among the attractions of interest in the SAIRR guidebooks which were produced for the (mainly) middle income group of 'non-White' travellers to the city during the 1960s. That said, it is interesting that the national guidebook produced in 1968 by SAIRR did make mention that "On Sunday mornings visitors can see the well-known tribal mine dances, held at various mine compounds in turn" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p.76).

### **HOSPITALITY SERVICES**

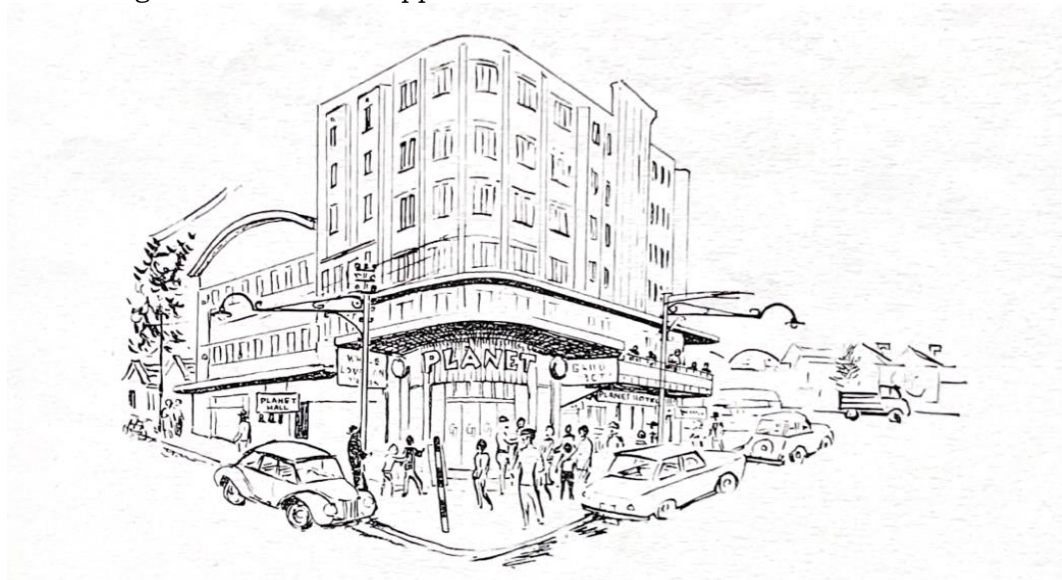
In Johannesburg the implementation of apartheid legislation created a challenging policy environment for urban tourism accommodation and particularly for the operations of the city's hotels (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). The confluence of the Group Areas Act and the Reservation of Separate Amenities legislation resulted in racially designated spaces being demarcated across South African urban areas, including Johannesburg the country's economic heart (Kirkby, 2022). Together these two pieces of apartheid legislation

re-cast the foundations for hotel development in the city by requiring the provision of separate accommodation service facilities for ‘non-Whites’ (Africans, Indians, Coloureds) as opposed to ‘Whites’ (C.M. Rogerson, 2020). This separation would be achieved through their establishment and operations in spatially discrete Group Areas and for Africans in designated township areas. During the 1950s government policy made clear that accommodation facilities for Africans in urban areas could be provided only in segregated township spaces. By the early 1960s the majority of Johannesburg’s 90 hotels were situated in or around the central areas of the city and remained for the almost exclusive use either by white domestic visitors or the small numbers of international tourists. On rare occasions the city’s upmarket Langham Hotel fulfilled the special function of discreetly hosting ‘non-White’ visitors from abroad but only at the specific behest of national government (Keyter, 1962). This situation was occasioned because of the limited number of ‘non-White’ hotels that existed in Johannesburg and the complete absence of any such accommodation in Pretoria, the national capital (C.M. Rogerson, 2020).

For ‘ordinary’ African leisure or business travellers to Johannesburg the commercial accommodation service options were minimal. In 1962 the South African Institute of Race Relations issued the first of its national guides on holiday and travel facilities for ‘non-Whites’. At this time, it was stated there were only two hotels which catered for ‘non Whites’ in the entire Transvaal province. The seven-bedroom two-bathroom New Yorker Hotel offered accommodation for all non-Whites and on Thursday and Friday evenings organized dances and social evenings. The hotel was located 20km from Johannesburg city centre at Kliptown a multi-racial area of freehold settlement and one of the few surviving places where Africans in urban areas of apartheid South Africa could own property. Until 1970 it lay outside of Johannesburg municipal boundaries and therefore beyond the reach of municipal authority (C.M. Rogerson, 2024b). In this hybrid urban space (now part of Soweto), a place where different racial groups lived, the hotel opened its doors to guests in 1959. The New Yorker represented one of the small cohort of ‘non-White’ hotels which were newly established in city areas of apartheid South Africa in response to the introduction of legislation requiring racially-segregated hotel spaces (C.M. Rogerson, 2020).

Marginally closer to downtown Johannesburg was the 18 room Marabe Hotel in Orlando township (part of Soweto) which provided 16 single rooms and two double rooms and offered bed-only rates but meals on à-la-carte basis (Keyter, 1962). Unlike the Kliptown New Yorker Hotel, no organised entertainment was made available to guests. Beyond these two establishments the Salvation Army Home in Orlando, a youth hostel that catered only for Africans, was willing to take in “temporary visitors who are unable to find accommodation elsewhere” (Keyter, 1962, p. 36). The important caveat was given that such temporary visitors would be accepted only after they had obtained the required visitor permits from the registration officer at the city’s Non-European Affairs Department. This visitor permit requirement dated back before apartheid to 1945 and was an element of South Africa’s influx control legislation (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2024a). Under this legislation for racial control of movements, Africans visiting an urban area outside of their normal residential areas were required to obtain such a permit within 72 hours of arrival – in this case – in Johannesburg.

Unless staying with friends and relatives the only remaining options for Africans to secure accommodation in South Africa's commercial heart was at one of the dreary single-sex hostels which were built primarily to accommodate flows of migrant workers into Johannesburg. The historical growth and spatial development of these hostels in Johannesburg is detailed by Pirie and da Silva (1986). In 1962 four of these hostels did offer temporary spaces, often in bunk-bed style accommodation with typically up to ten persons a room. The four men's hostels were those at Denver, Wemmer, Wolhuter and George Goch. The Wemmer Hostel accommodated 2800 men with four or more inmates per room and catered only for Africans and accepting "temporary visitors to Johannesburg who are unable to find accommodation elsewhere" (Keyter, 1962, p. 36). Similar provisions applied at the even larger hostel at Denver which hosted 3300 residents once again with four to ten persons a room. At Wolhuter Men's Hostel the restriction was imposed that only relatives of permanent residents of the hostel would be offered temporary accommodation which was generally free of charge. For African women visiting Johannesburg the nearby Wolhuter Women's Hostel was available for temporary accommodation albeit with a charge of 5 cents a night and no meals supplied.



**Figure 1.** The Planet Hotel, Fordsburg, Johannesburg  
(Source: Suttner, 1967, p.1)

The working-class suburb of Fordsburg, a designated Group Area for Indians close to the inner-city of Johannesburg, was the location for the first tourist quality standard accommodation accessible for 'non-White' visitors (C.M. Rogerson, 2020). In an historical account of the development of Fordsburg Rugunanan (2022, p. 97) highlights the area's vibrancy during the 1960s when it was a mixed society of Africans, Coloureds and Indians. The opening of the Planet Hotel took place in 1964 and was described in press reports as "like a touch of the Orient" (J.M. Rogerson, 2018, p. 8). The accommodation facilities at this hotel included two suites, six rooms with private bathrooms, 32 rooms without private bathrooms and 18 additional bedrooms. The hotel boasted five

floors with lifts to all floors and with a first-floor dining room and second floor with public lounges, private lounge facilities and an entertainment hall (Figure 1). In the basement the Planet Hall functioned as a social venue and could accommodate 500 people. On the ground floor was the reception and a travel agency – one of the few in the South Africa available to assist ‘non-Whites’ (Suttner, 1966).

The Planet Hotel became the base for visiting ‘non-White’ celebrities to Johannesburg – both international and local – including sports men and entertainers (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2021). During its 1960s heyday also “the hotel was a venue for dinners and dances” (Mayat, 2013, p. 61). As a centre for social interaction and entertainment, people congregated “around the Planet Hotel, which hosted jazz sessions” (Rugunanan, 2022, p. 97). The hotel’s important role in African society is marked by its commemoration in the poetry of Oswald Mtshali, whose works mirrored the harshness of everyday experience during the hostile years of high apartheid. For example, in *The Detribalised*, a sarcastic commentary on Africans who had lost their traditional link with life-giving tribal cultures and became politically uninvolved, Mtshali (1971) reflects on the lifeworld of one such urban African with a wife, two children and a girlfriend:

He takes another cherie  
to the movies  
at Lyric or Majestic.  
They dine at the Kapitan  
And sleep at the Planet (Mtshali, 1971, p. 66).

Throughout the 1960s restricted options continued for accommodation for African leisure visitors as well as for growing numbers of commercial travellers coming to Johannesburg. During the latter half of the 1960s at the Marabe Hotel in Soweto potential visitors were advised of challenges as this establishment which catered for Africans but had no telephone. Potential visitors were informed that “the proprietor can be contacted at the Marabe Garage, Orlando East, by dialling 981 and asking for 86” (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p. 74). Beyond the three ‘non-White hotels’ in Johannesburg, visiting Africans to the city could only obtain accommodation through the network of hostels. The SAIRR Guidebook entry for the Denver Bantu Men’s Hostel noted it had 3300 residents with four to ten men a room and indicated that temporary residents “may be accommodated at 7 cents a day for a maximum of three weeks but only if visiting Johannesburg for medical treatment” (Suttner 1966, p. 3). Likewise, at the city’s Wolhuter Bantu Women’s Hostel where two to ten persons were accommodated per room, temporary stays were possible if accommodation was available. The caution was made, however, that in these municipal hostels beds were provided but (except in the women’s hostel) “no mattresses, pillows or bedding” (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p. 75).

By the mid-1960s the racial unevenness in facilities for White as compared to non-White visitors to Johannesburg was stark. In a national guide of accommodation establishments produced in 1965, 124 accommodation suppliers were listed for Johannesburg with a total available capacity of 7718 bedrooms all of which was for use only by White patrons (The Hotel Guide Association, 1965). By comparison, for ‘non-Whites’ a total of 81 bedrooms could be accessed in four licensed hotel establishments. It should be added that of the

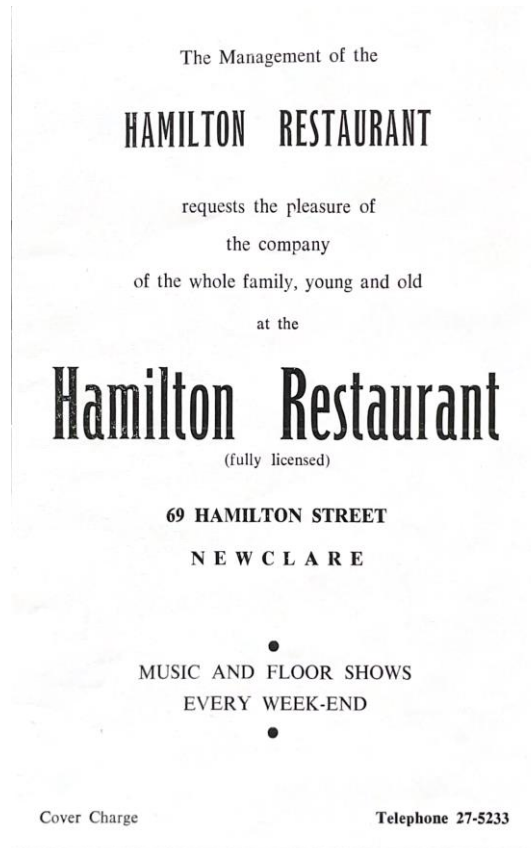


124 white establishments listed in the guide 22 hotels (17 percent) indicated in their entry under 'facilities' that alongside garages, telephones in bedrooms and allowing dogs to overnight was that provision might be made for stays by "non-white servants" mainly drivers or domestic nannies. In short, the inequality of available accommodation service facilities exemplifies once again racial discrimination and the making of the racialized landscape of urban tourism forged in the years of high apartheid when the application of racist legislation was at its most stringent across South Africa. The 'inhospitality' of the arrival infrastructure in Johannesburg towards persons of colour visiting the city is most evident and in marked contrast to the mass of hotels in Johannesburg which offered an openly hospitable space and welcome mat for potential white guests.

The state of the infrastructure in terms of a racialized landscape of hospitality was equally unwelcoming for Africans and their visitors to Johannesburg. The enactment of petty apartheid restrictions in terms of the Separate Amenities legislation impacted the operations of the city's racially segregated restaurants. The potential options for eating-out by middle class or elite African visitors to Johannesburg were reduced and increasingly sparse (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968). Of special mention was Kapitan's restaurant in central Johannesburg, which was an apartheid oasis and one of the few social environments where racial intermingling occurred. This (South African) Indian-owned restaurant was patronised by Indians, whites, coloureds and African professionals including Nelson Mandela among its regular clientele (Hanes, 2006). The SAIRR Egoli guidebook highlighted the eating possibilities available at the Non-White concourse of Johannesburg's Park station which "is fast becoming a centre of Non-White social life as well as the transportation nerve-centre of the community" (Suttner, 1966, p. 17). It was described that this location "has become the meeting place of non-White businessmen, journalists and others who appreciate first-class service" (Suttner, 1967, p. 17). At the hub of this elite social centre was a large modern restaurant with 200-250 person-capacity in a garden setting and with tables "set with soft napery and gleaming silver" (Keyter 1962, p. 39). The 1968 national guidebook further recommended the Non-White concourse at Johannesburg railway station to visitors for its popular restaurant which had consolidated as "a meeting-place for business and professional men and others" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, p. 75).

Outside of the railway station only a small number of restaurant options existed in Johannesburg inner-city that could be accessed by Africans during the apartheid 1960s. In Fordsburg two so-termed 'first-class' restaurants were available at the Planet Hotel, one served meals à la carte, the other with a daily set menu. Close-by also in Fordsburg was 'Gaylords' which advertised "exclusive meals and entertainment in cool candlelit surroundings" (Suttner, 1967, p. 11). At the Hamilton restaurant in Newclare 'non-Whites' were welcomed and with the weekend attraction of music and floor shows (Suttner, 1967, p. 8). The elevated status of these two restaurants in the hospitality landscape is signalled by their marketing activities in the 1960s (see figure 2). Cheaper eating-out options for the mass of Johannesburg's African residents and visitors existed with the city's network of so-termed 'Native eating houses' which were situated mainly on the urban periphery, near industrial areas or close to mines. The origins of these establishments can be traced back to the earliest days of

Johannesburg as a gold mining settlement (Rogerson, 1988a). The mass of these licensed eating-houses provided meals for lunches and suppers; the most common food offered was porridge and meat served in various ways. Prices varied dependent on size of portion and type of dish that was selected (Suttner, 1966). Overall, the evidence is that the food served was generally unpleasant and availed in unhealthy conditions which made the Native eating houses an unwelcoming option except for patronage by those geographically marginalized or on lowest incomes (Rogerson, 1988a).



**Figure 2.** Restaurant Marketing for 'Non-Whites' in Johannesburg  
(Source: Suttner, 1967, p.8)

The shortcomings of the hospitality offerings provided by the eating house trade created market opportunities for hospitality providers in the informal economy (Rogerson, 1988b). Most important was the initial example of a fast-food trade which was the business of the coffee-carts (Cobley, 2021). The chequered history of the rise and fall of coffee cart trading in Johannesburg extends over three decades from the trade's initial emergence in the 1930s to its demise in the late 1960s (Rogerson, 1986). The coffee-carts were small mobile stalls which were daily trundled through the streets of Johannesburg from inner township areas such as Sophiatown to trading pitches in the 'white' city. Typically, the carts would be constructed of the detritus of an industrializing city

using three-plywood from discarded tea-chests, short lengths of galvanized iron from cases, scraps of roofing material and pieces of former sacking and packaging cases. During the 1950s the distances between black residential areas and the downtown area of Johannesburg increased as a result of the forced removal of residents from inner-city areas, most notably from Sophiatown to the distant townships of Soweto (Lodge, 1981; Hart and Pirie, 1984; Pirie and Hart, 1985; C.M. Rogerson, 2025).

One consequence of spatial distancing was a structural transformation in the carts as the wheels came off. Following the implementation of urban apartheid population removals, the formerly mobile cart became a fixture as immobile kiosk on Johannesburg sidewalks (Rogerson, 1986, 1988b). In the apartheid years Johannesburg authorities took a hostile attitude towards the growth of this African-owned informal trading which functioned in areas of so-called 'white space' in the city. The municipality waged a vigorous campaign and destroyed the coffee-cart trade in 1965 therefore putting a further constraint on the hospitality service options for African residents as well as their visitors in the racialized tourism landscape of Johannesburg.

## CONCLUSION

Unquestionably, racial discrimination is one of the critical factors which contribute towards marginalization in tourism (Slocum and Ingram, 2023). The extant international scholarship on the workings of racial discrimination in tourism mainly concentrates upon the United States. The implementation of apartheid planning in South Africa from 1948 provides the setting for this investigation of racial discrimination in the urban environment of Johannesburg. The study is therefore novel in contributing to the limited historical writings outside the USA on issues of racial discrimination in tourism and fills a gap in our understanding of its ramifications in South Africa's major city. The mining of archival source material has been demonstrated as a valuable base for providing insight into the racialised tourism landscape of apartheid South Africa. It has been shown in this analysis that racial discrimination meant that, in many respects, Johannesburg was an inhospitable and unwelcoming destination for 'non-White' travellers during the 1960s. African travelers in particular experienced discrimination in terms of reduced access to attractions in the visitor economy, difficulties in securing commercial accommodation and of limited options for eating-out in South Africa's major city. In final analysis, this research underscores a need for conducting further historical studies into racial discrimination concerning urban tourism.

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## TOURISM EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DYNAMICS IN WILDLIFE DESTINATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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**Abstract:** This study takes on a micro-institutional perspective to examine tourism employment and entrepreneurship dynamics within a complex socio-political and environmental Transfrontier Conservation Area context, using three destinations across Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Drawing insights from in-depth interviews with tourism businesses, governing authorities, and community organisations, the study highlights how institutional structures shape employment opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures. The findings reveal that while residents are employed in hospitality and conservation-related roles, their participation remains limited to specific roles in tourism. Moreover, despite the growth in local tourism enterprises, these ventures show a lack of diversification, often replicating existing business models. Skills development initiatives exist but are largely ad hoc, addressing immediate business needs rather than fostering long-term growth and innovation. The study advocates the need to critically reassess how employment and entrepreneurship are conceptualised and supported in wildlife tourism in southern Africa and provide insights for the long-term planning of wildlife tourism in fostering an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient industry

**Key words:** employment, entrepreneurship, institutional theory, wildlife tourism, youth empowerment

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism, and subsequently investment and policy support, is premised on its capacity to spur job creation and entrepreneurship development through the tourism value chain (Adiyia et al., 2017; van der Merwe and Slabbert, 2025). Yet, Adiyia et al. (2017) point out that the difficulty for many small and micro businesses operating in peripheral areas of developing nations is to establish their own market and tourism provides the opportunity to tap into an already-existing value chain. Tourism employment and entrepreneurship support the livelihoods of many individuals, families, and regions (Mooney et al., 2022; Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2020a), more so in tourism-dependent destinations with very few alternative job opportunities. While the economic contribution of tourism has been well documented by authors such as Tamene and Wondirad (2019), Souza et al. (2019), Lekgau and Tichaawa (2020b), and van der Merwe and Slabbert (2025), the issues of employment and entrepreneurship have been broadly examined under economic impacts, with their nature and dynamics largely lacking in recent literature. Similar sentiments have been put forth by numerous scholars acknowledging the neglect of workforce themes within the scholarship of tourism (Adiyia et al., 2017; Mooney et al., 2022; Ladkin et al., 2023). Moreover, existing studies on tourism entrepreneurship in the Global South tend to focus on challenges, opportunities, and institutional constraints faced by these enterprises (Eijdenberg et al., 2018; Madanaguli et al., 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to advance the scope of literature by examining the tourism employment and entrepreneurship dynamics within the context of wildlife destinations in southern Africa. This is particularly important, considering the potential of wildlife tourism, socioeconomic realities of tourism communities in wildlife destinations and the strategic policy interventions and national and international investment into these destinations. As such, we draw attention to three countries that are part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area: Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These three countries are established wildlife destinations and have strategically leveraged wildlife tourism to support community livelihoods (Tichaawa and Lekgau, 2024a).

The rich biodiversity of sub-Saharan Africa is a key driver for wildlife tourism development (Mokgalo and van der Merwe, 2022; Tichaawa and Lekgau, 2024b). In particular, southern Africa is the leading wildlife tourism destination, with governments in the region leveraging these natural resources for inclusive economic growth and poverty eradication (Rylance and Spenceley, 2017; Stone and Nyaupane, 2017; Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2020). This is largely due to the prominence of protected areas, the subsequent emergence of wildlife tourism, and the growing vulnerability of surrounding communities (Mokgalo and van der Merwe, 2022). Regarding the latter, it is reported that people residing in wildlife (rural) destinations face a complex and changing landscape affected by high levels of multidimensional poverty, lack of livelihood diversification opportunities, the lingering effects of the previous crisis, and increasing pressure from the natural environment as a result of climate change (Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2020; Jones et al., 2024). These issues are operating within the broader scale of intersecting socioeconomic, political, and environmental challenges in wildlife tourism destinations (Harilal and Tichaawa, 2024; Jones et al., 2024). Consequently, governments in these regions encounter the challenge of simultaneously addressing pressing biodiversity conservation objectives,

economic development, regional cooperation and development goals (Mokgalo and van der Merwe, 2022; Tichaawa and Lekgau, 2020, 2024b), with wildlife tourism underscored as a strategic lever to attaining these goals. However, the examination of wildlife tourism in achieving sustainable livelihood outcomes has only been examined sparsely in a transfrontier conservation area context, in which case wildlife tourism and conservation are developed and managed on a much wider regional scale, thereby necessitating the examination of the local context.

In this paper, we adopt an institutional theory perspective, recognising that all social-economic processes, including those relating to tourism planning, development, and implementation, are dependent on the various existing institutions that are represented as a complex interplay of economic, political, social, and cultural factors (Lavandoski et al., 2016b). As such, employment and entrepreneurship characteristics, patterns, and issues operate within a broader institutional environment. Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, the world's largest transfrontier conservation area, with goals directed to conservation, economic development, tourism growth and regional cooperation, thereby providing a valuable context to understand the operations of employment and entrepreneurship using a cross-country analysis. In doing so, the study adopts a qualitative approach to gather deeper insights into the lived experiences and realities of host communities in the destinations, in relation to the labour and entrepreneurship landscape in the three countries. Accordingly, the study makes a modest contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by providing empirical insights on employment quality in wildlife destinations and the nature of productive and innovative local tourism enterprises. Furthermore, the study findings are able to support the strategy planning and implementation for fostering an inclusive tourism environment that supports sustainable employment and entrepreneurship.

## **INSTITUTIONAL THEORY**

The institutional theory considers organisations and their subjection to their institutional environment (Eijdenberg et al., 2018). The institutional environment, which is crucial to the development of destinations, organisations, and businesses, is guided by internal and external institutional logics (de Groisboi, 2016; Lavandoski et al., 2016b; Soares et al., 2021). Internally, these include corporate positions, practices and procedures of businesses as guided by regulatory structures (i.e., policies and laws), educational systems and public opinions whereas external institutional environment refers to the assemblage of consumers, suppliers, partner organisations and regulatory agencies (Soaves et al., 2021). As such, while several scholars have offered various definitions of 'institution', we follow that presented by Lavandoski et al. (2014) as the 'rules of the game or humanly devised structures' that shape and influence economic actors. Relatedly, de Groisboi (2016) considered organisations as open systems, influenced by the regulations, socially constructed belief systems and norms (i.e., institutional environment). Scott (1995; 2008) defined the three institutional pillars guiding the behaviours of organisations, as (i) the regulative pillar which includes formal rules, policies, and laws that provide explicit

direction and guidance to organisations, (ii) the normative pillar which refers to the informal rules that are guided by social standards and values, and (iii) the cognitive pillar which is understood as organisational behaviour guided by cultural elements (such as abstract meanings and social rules).

The institutional theory posits that, over time, organisations within the same sector will start to become more similar to one another owing to the shared institutional environment (de Groisboi, 2016; Lavandoski et al., 2016b; Eijdenberg et al., 2019). This process of homogeneity was termed ‘institutional isomorphism’ by Di Maggio and Powell (1983). This institutional isomorphism occurs as a result of institutional pressure and is categorised as coercive, normative, and mimetic, relating respectively to the regulative, normative, and cognitive institutional elements (Lavandoski et al., 2016a). Coercive isomorphism arises from formal regulations, such as laws and penalties, which enforce compliance among organisations (Lavandoski et al., 2016b; Soares et al., 2021). Normative isomorphism, on the other hand, stems from professionalisation, driven by educational institutions and the dissemination of information through entrepreneurial and professional networks that promote standardised regulations and practices within the sector (Lavandoski et al., 2016a; Soares et al., 2021). Mimetic isomorphism, in contrast, emerges from societal expectations, where organisations imitate the behaviours, successes, and strategies of others, particularly industry leaders (Lavandoski et al., 2016b; Soares et al., 2021).

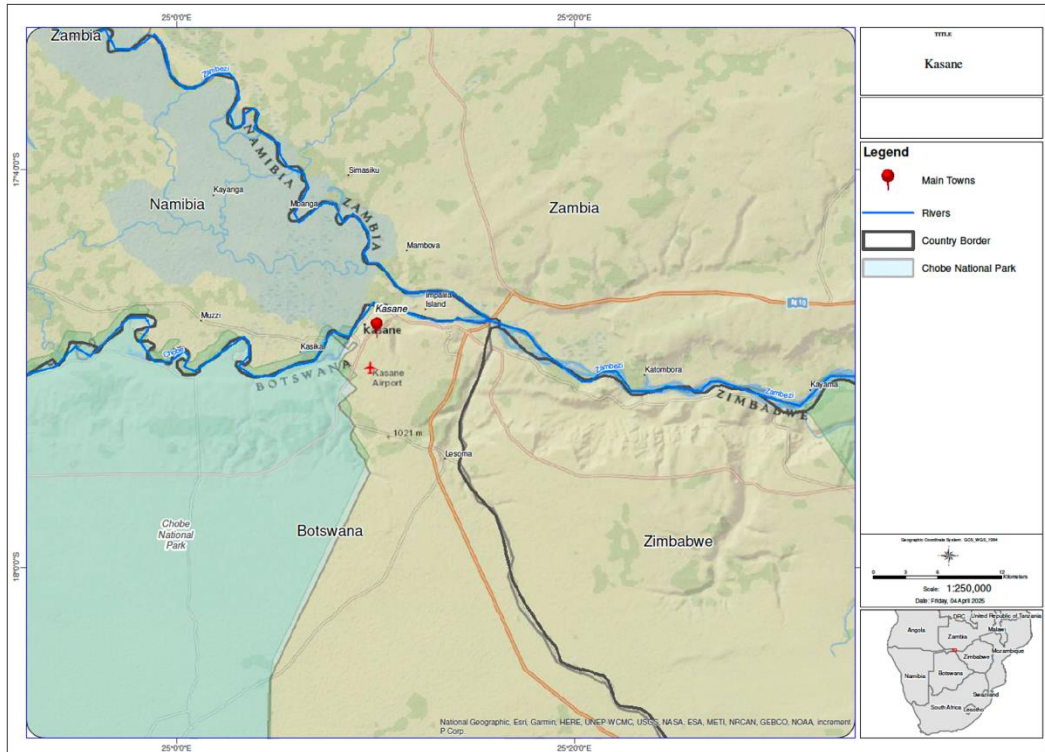
The institutional theory has long been used to understand the influence of the institutional environment on the workings, practices, and realities of entrepreneurs (Su et al., 2017). Largely, this theory has been utilised to examine the development patterns of entrepreneurs, often within a single-level context (Zhai and Su, 2019). We seek to ground this theory within a transfrontier conservation area context, whereby stakeholders are influenced by national policies, strategies, and ideals, as well as the collaborative governance structure of the KAZA TFCA arrangement. Furthermore, these contexts are influenced by wildlife tourism and conservation norms, practices, and concerns. As such, this theory becomes useful in providing a lens through which to explore employment and entrepreneurship patterns, characteristics, and challenges across multiple countries.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study sites**

Data were derived from in-depth interviews with wildlife tourism and conservation stakeholders in Kasane (Botswana), Livingstone (Zambia) and Hwange (Zimbabwe). These three areas are key towns in the KAZA TFCA owing to their proximity to prominent wildlife tourism attractions, which has spurred their development and targeted investment. Kasane is a small village in Botswana situated near the national borders of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia (Rylance and Spencer, 2017). Largely, (wildlife) tourism activity is concentrated in the Chobe district, home to renowned attractions such as the Okavango Delta, Moremi Game Reserve and the Chobe National Park (KAZA TFCA, 2024). Kasane is the administrative capital of the district and is considered its tourism hub alongside Maun (Rylance and Spencer, 2017; Stone and Nyuapane, 2018). The tourism industry in this town is built on its proximity to the Chobe National Park, which boasts the largest concentration of biodiversity in the continent, and

the Zambezi River, as shown in Figure 1 (Stone and Nyuapane, 2017; Tichaawa and Lekgau, 2024a). Both the park and the river systems ensure the presence of diverse and attractive wildlife, thereby fostering the development of a wildlife tourism industry (Blackie et al., 2023).



**Figure 1: Kasane**

The second study area is Hwange National Park and the surrounding communities, as seen in Figure 2. Hwange National Park is the largest protected area in Zimbabwe and houses the biggest concentration of African elephants in the country (Mushawemhuka et al., 2018; Dervieux and Belgherbi, 2020). Wildlife tourism in Hwange occurs in the national park as well as the game parks that offer hunting safaris (Muboko et al., 2016; Mushawemhuka et al., 2018). There are a number of lodges and camps developed in Hwange, adjacent to the park, to accommodate the growing number of tourists to the area (Mushawemhuka et al., 2018). Additionally, tourism is further boosted owing to its proximity to the Victoria Falls, where tourists can take day trips to either one of the attractions (Mushawemhuka et al., 2018; Dervieux and Belgherbi, 2020).

The third study area, Livingstone, was established in 1905 and was named after the famous Scottish missionary and explorer, Dr David Livingstone (Bwalya-Umar et al., 2016). Livingstone is dubbed the tourism capital of Zambia and considered the premier tourist destination in the country (McLachlan and Binns, 2014; Bwalya-Umar et al., 2016).

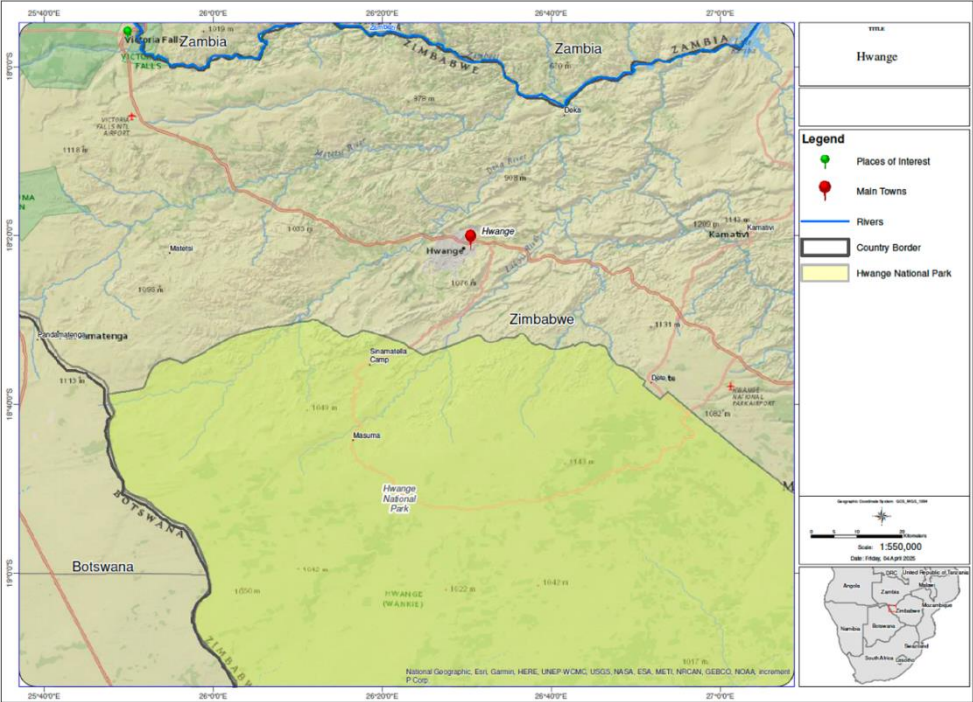


Figure 2. Hwange

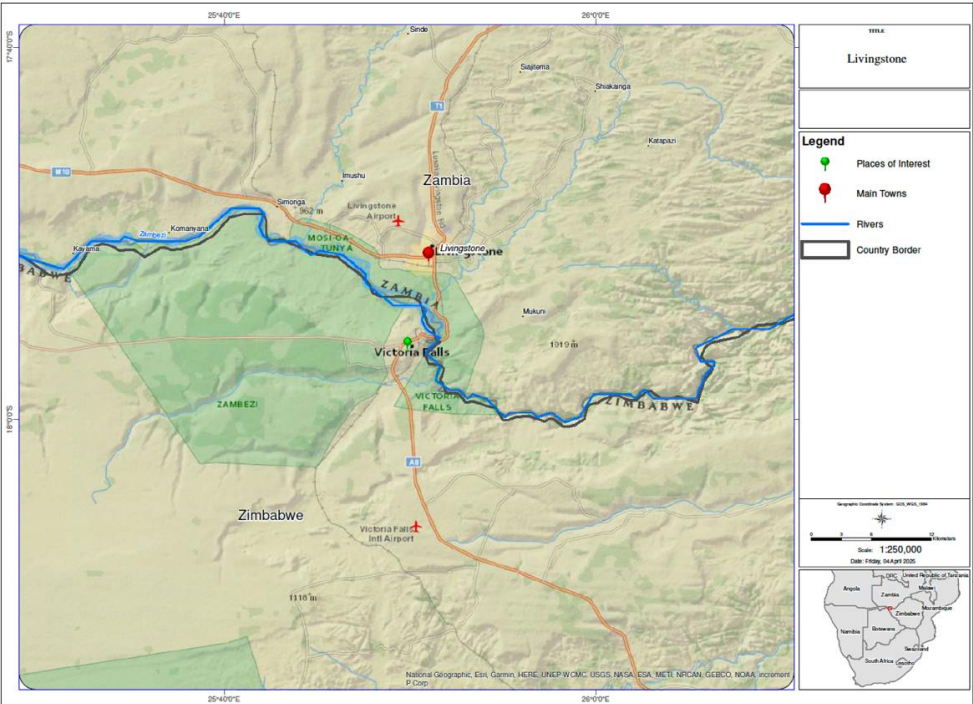


Figure 3. Livingstone



This is largely due to its proximity to the Victoria Falls (see Figure 3), a UNESCO world heritage site, located partly within the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, which is the second most-visited national park in the country (Bwalya-Umar et al., 2016). Victoria Falls is the country’s most visited attraction and has spurred the development of tourism in Livingstone (Nsanzya and Saarinen, 2022). Tourism has become the leading economic sector in Livingstone, transforming it from a ‘ghost town’ in the early 2000s due to the investments made in the tourism industry, which stimulated its development (McLachlan and Binns, 2014; Nsanzya and Saarinen, 2022). Additionally, the growth of tourism in Livingstone was further driven by the political instability in Zimbabwe, which led to international tourists preferring to visit Victoria Falls from the Zambia side (McLachlan and Binns, 2014).

The tourism entities in the three study areas are largely multinational (and international) hotels and tour activities that largely centre on wildlife viewing and interactions, hunting safaris, adventure activities (such as bungee jumping and abseiling), and boat cruises (Tichaawa and Lekgau, 2024b). To a large extent, the tourism sector supports the livelihoods of most residents through direct and indirect employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in transport, food and beverage, retail, and accommodation subsectors. However, this is more so in Zambia and Botswana, whereas subsistence farming is still the predominant livelihood strategy in Zimbabwe (Dervieux and Belgherbi, 2020; KAZA TFCA, 2024).

**Research approach**

As economic phenomena, the complexity of employment and entrepreneurship necessitates complex knowledge (Radovic-Markovic, 2023). Subsequently, the researchers employed a constructivist qualitative research design to support the exploration of micro and meso-institutional dynamics of employment and entrepreneurship in the three communities. Typically, a constructivist research approach centres the perspective of the research participants and how they view the research phenomenon, a necessary approach when employment and entrepreneurship have largely been quantitatively measured, which (in the case of the study area) cover the nuances related to context, state of tourism development, (policy) intervention and a myriad of other factors. Participants were selected purposely based on their involvement and role in tourism development and conservation. In this regard, in-depth interviews were held with owners of tourism businesses, community leaders, and representatives of governing authorities in all three countries. Additionally, interviews were held with community representatives, including community leaders and tourism employees. It is important to acknowledge that data collection in Hwange only included interviews, owing to the fact that the geospatial characteristics could not allow for a focus group discussion for this study. Table 1 below delineates the research participants involved in the study.

**Table 1.** Study participants

| Study sites                         | Key stakeholder                          | No. of participants |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>Kasane (Chobe National Park)</b> | Tourism businesses (informal and formal) | 12                  |
|                                     | Community representatives                | 7                   |
|                                     | Community trusts representatives         | 3                   |

|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
|  | Conservation agency representatives              | 2         |
|  | Tourism governing authority representatives      | 1         |
| <b>Livingstone<br/>(Victoria Falls)</b>      | Tourism businesses (informal and formal)         | 10        |
|  | Community representatives                        | 4         |
|  | Conservation agency representatives              | 2         |
|  | Conservation governing authority representatives | 2         |
| <b>Hwange<br/>(Hwange<br/>National Park)</b> | Tourism businesses (informal and formal)         | 6         |
|  | Community representatives                        | 5         |
|  | Community CAMPFIRE representatives               | 3         |
|  | Tourism governing authority representatives      | 1         |
| <b>Total:</b>                                |  | <b>58</b> |

Data collection occurred between June and September 2024. In some cases, the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in local languages (Setswana in Botswana and Bemba in Zambia) and were recorded with the permission of the research participants. Recordings of the interviews and focus groups were translated and transcribed verbatim. The researchers read the transcripts over several times to ensure that the meanings and views of the participants were accurately captured, as well as to assist in comprehending the information and the related context in which it was provided. Thereafter, Atlas.ti was used to analyse the data through the coding and thematic grouping of the codes. The next section presents the themes derived from the interviews.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Scope of tourism employment**

Wildlife tourism is the leading economic sector in the three case study sites. Generally, there was an overwhelming consensus that the sector is the largest employer in the three towns. For the most part, many of the employed residents worked in accommodation, tour guiding (in the national parks or the boat cruises in Botswana and Zambia), and travel service companies, as well as in the CBO's establishments. Most of the participants make mention of housekeepers, receptionists, chefs, entertainers, and tour guides as the prominent jobs available for members of the community, as shown in the quotes taken from community leaders in Zimbabwe and Botswana, respectively:

"Even within the companies or the camps, within themselves, you find that as the business grows, managers don't always have the free liberty of time to host the guests because of other business[es] to attend to. So that opens up a job post [for] people who are into guest relations as and also good entertainers. That opens up a fair post for having a host or a hostess, someone who can sit and interact with the guests and let them get to know more about the culture, the environment, and the place at hand." [P40ZW]

"Tourism has created opportunities for development because it is a source of income for people, many people are employed in the tourism sector, as tour guides, as receptionists in hotels and others doing different activities in the hotel, others are chefs others drive the boats. Other people have built guest houses and hotels., providing accommodation." [P10BW]

Certainly, several countries in southern Africa have introduced policies and incentives to ensure that multinational companies, which make up the majority of tourism establishments in the three study sites, prioritise local hires (Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2020b; Tichaawa and Tichaawa, 2024b). The consequences of such regulative and normative institutional pillars on tourism establishments in Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe can be seen in this study.



The presence of such companies is determined by the political environment, which explains the differences in participant perception on tourism as an employer in the three countries. In Zimbabwe, the primary focus was on the informal establishments that emerged as a consequence of wildlife tourism. This phenomenon can be attributed to the comparatively limited development initiatives driven by international investments in the country, as it was perceived as a political risk for foreign investors (Makone, 2025).

Moreover, community-based organisations (CBOs) such as trusts and CAMPFIRE have established their projects geared towards community development, which offer further employment opportunities in the community-owned lodges in Botswana, the traditional Mukuni village in Zambia (that hires local performers for international guests) and the conservancies and their anti-poaching units that require administrators, trackers and hunters in Zimbabwe.

“And we [as the community trust] employ people. It's more like a lodge where they are based, we have our people working there in a camp inside, and we have everybody. They even gain skills, some know-how to do the skinning, some are trackers - they do track animals, some of them are assistant hunters, and some are escort guys sent by the community. So all those people like getting paid, we have got drivers [and] operators. So that is how we operate.” P5BW

“There's [the] conservancy, they create a lot of employment creation, and because of the community, they get a lot of some of the benefits. Directed benefits, because when the local authorities are administrators, they employ locals.” [P33ZW]

“Opportunities such as companies that offer anti-poaching units, which allows an increase in employment Safari camps opening and employing local people from the area.” [P26ZW]

CBOs, as policy initiatives developed to diversify and support communities' livelihoods through the sustainable use of natural resources, have been under inquiry in tourism and conservation research (Adeyanju et al., 2021; Cassidy, 2021; Mokgalo and van der Merwe, 2022). These studies underscore substantial inconsistencies in these programmes and their outcomes. The findings presented in the study acknowledge their importance in diversifying the number of job availabilities in these communities. However, the findings also suggest some institutional isomorphism in these CBOs (which could be a product of the wildlife tourism context) in that they often establish similar community enterprises. Furthermore, the findings also allude to the differences in the implementation of the Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) policy. A few local participants in Zambia were of the view that local community members were disadvantaged in employment opportunities in Zambia. A small number of them disagreed with the assertions of the larger tourism stakeholders on the contribution of tourism to local employment, which could be partially consequential to the lack of a collective community voice. One such participant mentioned:

“People are angry because most people that are being employed here are from the outside. Yes. So that itself creates a gap in conservation because there's no way you promised me that you're gonna give me a job, and you don't give me, and you expect me to respect that elephant.” [P17ZM]

The underlying effect of misleading narratives is the consequential attitude and behaviours towards wildlife, as the participants suggest being one of the

contributors to human-wildlife conflicts. In Zambia and Botswana, some participants further allude to the seasonal nature of tourism employment in these study areas, dependent on the volume of tourists at specific times. Most notably mentioned seasonal jobs included the waiting staff and housekeeping staff. This temporal nature (or the lack of stability) of employment was reaffirmed with the pandemic, where many such workers were made redundant.

### **Scale of entrepreneurship ventures**

Similarly, the centrality of tourism in the region's economy has spurred on many entrepreneurial activities, from locals establishing their own lodges, tour guiding companies, and souvenir selling and food and beverage provision, operating in both the formal and informal economy. For instance, one participant in Botswana had the following to say:

"Yes, because many people have started their own businesses. They employ other people, you know, many people are working in tourism this year. Yeah, I think it has created a lot of opportunities." P7BW

In Zambia, some participants raised concerns about the limited understanding of tourism and how to enter the tourism industry beyond souvenir selling. For example, one participant aptly stated:

"There's many ways but I feel mostly like people from the community, they do not understand how they benefit from it [conservation]. The best example I give most people is a tourist doesn't come with tomato, a tourist doesn't come with onion, a tourist doesn't come with charcoal." [P19ZM]

Small local enterprises are the backbone of the many economies in southern Africa (Madanaguli et al., 2021). However, it is clear that many of the establishments were developed as a normative response (isomorphism) to the presence of wildlife tourism in the region. While this may yield some economic returns, these establishments have yet to tap into the full potential of wildlife tourism due to several reasons, of which the participants pointed to lack of knowledge about the tourism value chain and how and where to feed into it. Regardless, participants, when discussing entrepreneurial opportunities in wildlife tourism, recognised the dominance of women in this regard in Zimbabwe, particularly in the informal sector.

"It's mostly women who've benefited when tourists come through, they're the ones who sell their wares along the roads. We also have some markets, some flea markets rather, which are along the way, and it's mostly women will be selling their wares. Even when it comes to employment, we have got female operators who were employed for tourism." [P34ZW]

Furthermore, the entrepreneurial opportunities extend to community cooperatives, which have gained further exposure through the tourism industry. Through observations during fieldwork, it was evident that certain souvenirs were directed toward certain genders. For instance, women predominantly operated weaving works, while sculptures (made of natural minerals) were predominantly sold by men. A few participants in Botswana mentioned that they sourced their materials and souvenirs from Zambian suppliers. Similarly, some participants in Zimbabwe pointed to the weaving cooperative in their community, as shown in the quote below:

"We have seen cooperatives opening through small projects we have like the weaving weaved basket from the women. We have what you call, the curio. What you call them, they act, they add sculptures, the sculptures which are

being made by the men in the form of animals. You have different wild animals being made through wood.” [P41ZW]

Such findings align with the existing literature, stating that women constitute a significant portion of entrepreneurs in the Global South (Kimbu et al., 2024). Similarly, while there is a presence of local entrepreneurs in the study areas, many of these enterprises are micro to small-scale and are unable to realise the hope placed on them to provide additional employment opportunities to surrounding communities.

In addition to the recognition of tourism as the largest employer, most participants alluded to the additional opportunities due to the growth of the tourism industry in the region. Indeed, many of these views were discussed under the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery of the sector. The importance of tourism as an employer was reemphasised during the crisis (owing to the lack of feasible livelihood and economic options) and the opportunities that exist to spread the contribution of tourism by stronger local linkages within the tourism supply chain.

“It [tourism] is the source of jobs. It creates employment in a lot of communities. Not only in your own communities but also on an international scale. What do I mean? People that are coming from far, from other countries, transported by airlines create jobs.” [P30ZM]

### **Tourism training and skills development**

Training and skills development were frequently alluded to as important consequences (and predictors) of tourism employment and entrepreneurship in the study areas. Largely, training and skills development were discussed in the context of job training and the opportunities provided by companies in skilling community members in tourism and hospitality services. Some quotes to exemplify this include:

“It grooms people. We also have whereby we need to get attachees [interns], especially from the community, and help them learn a lot of different departments before they graduate or they finish their school, and it helps a lot” [P38ZW]

The training of staff exemplifies the normative isomorphism between tourism and conservation establishments, adhering to industry standards (and educational systems). Additionally, mimetic isomorphism supports social transformation within the communities they serve. Pertaining to training, the findings point out that certain jobs require specific skills such as nature guiding. In this regard, participants recognised the importance of leveraging local knowledge in the training sessions. On-the-job training is further extended to casual staff, with some participants stating that while they may not have the capacity to employ these individuals permanently, there is a list of trained casual workers available when needed. One hotel manager had the following to say:

“So you find that we need extra hands most of the time, and we don't look very far. there are people that we are training, and even if we cannot accommodate them in our staff complement, we know where to find them when we need extra humans on the ground.” [P5BW]

However, a few managers expressed some concerns with this approach, noting that while staff training enhances their employability, more often than not, training is done ad hoc and as per immediate business needs. Accordingly,

a skills gap still exists in the industry, considering the long-term growth of the business and the kind of skills required from locals. The quote below accurately captured such sentiments:

“But you find that it's now very busy. But in terms of skills, we are employing to meet the business needs and not necessarily focusing on the proper skills required to be in the setup, you know, so we're just employing people who are available to work, but how we have sorted out is what I mentioned earlier that we are in the process of training a lot of people and we are not, you know, we hire temporary workers, pay them and then train and we're training them through the process as well. So it's a challenge. Yes, it's been a challenge in getting people with the right skill set, but again, you know.” [P7BW]

This underscores some questions on the long-term planning of wildlife tourism and conservation operations, as the efforts are geared toward addressing immediate goals of employment creation and community livelihood support, which compromises the long-term goals. Moreover, considering the challenges facing both tourism and conservation in the region, it is important to consider who is providing the training and the purpose thereof. The findings suggest that training is required for wildlife tourism establishments to ensure that service meets the expectations of (international) tourists. For community and conservation stakeholders, this training and skills development is aligned with community development (and livelihood diversification through tourism) and conservation goals, which are influenced by similar policies, though the implementation is dependent on the resources of the stakeholders. The investment in skills development programmes is also to gain legitimacy amongst the stakeholders, particularly tourism businesses, as well as CBOs that are constantly in pursuit of legitimacy owing to their use of resources available for community gain (Adeyanju et al., 2021; Cassidy, 2021; Mokgalo and van der Merwe, 2022).

Many participants concurred on the significance of training to grow the livelihood diversification opportunities within the wildlife tourism sector. However, some participants opined that this training enhanced local agency, particularly considering the lack of meaningful (or effective) political support in Zimbabwe and Zambia, as well as the limit of such support in Botswana. In this regard, a participant in Zimbabwe remarked:

“They are managing those skills and transferring to the local community, because at the end of the day, it will be the local people who are doing it for themselves, having all necessary skills, and they can know how to treat them and what to do if they react.” [P33ZW]

The findings support those of Eijdenberg et al. (2018), that the political and economic environment plays a role in enabling and inhibiting economic actors, such as entrepreneurs and CBOs. In the case of these countries, where the political environment has led to a lack of political trust, tourism stakeholders such as CBOs have responded by skills training to legitimise the role of communities as an economic stakeholder in wildlife tourism. In Botswana, some participants mentioned training in filming wildlife as an alternative use of existing resources. One accommodation establishment has partnered up with such a school, as demonstrated in the quote below:

“In terms of opportunities, I would say that, well, a lot of entrepreneurs and locals are starting to learn more about tourism. So, we are seeing a lot of people gaining interest in the tourism sector and open, whether it's tour

operators, local tour operators, and then I think you've seen the sign offside, we have a wildlife, film school. So we, I believe that they're being trained to be able to make our own documentaries rather than somebody coming in from the outside and doing that. So, in the next few years, I think we'll be seeing a lot of documentaries by Batswana." [P10BW] This is arguably an innovative means to operate within the wildlife tourism sector, particularly considering the concentration of residents within a narrow scope of tourism activities.

### **Institutional constraints to entrepreneurship growth**

Owing to the role of local entrepreneurs and SMMEs in the local economy, as well as the attainment of the conceptualised benefits from wildlife tourism and the TFCA, an exploration into the realities of these enterprises becomes pertinent. While participants recognised opportunities in tourism as the primary reason for the establishment of their enterprises, many of them alluded to the difficulty in growing their enterprises to the next phase of their respective business development. For instance, a few of the small-scale accommodation providers mentioned the difficulty in broadening their scope of operation by opening up new accommodation in other parts of the towns (in Kasane and Livingstone), as seen in the quotes below:

"The challenge is to acquire land in Kasane. It's a challenge, because Kasane, as you can see, is just a small town and the rest is at the National Park. So as everything is low, and you know, the land opportunities are very scarce, but we do compete." [P11BW]

"So we want [to] avoid a situation where communities are growing and are suppressing the protected area so that means we are monitoring aspects." [P21ZM]

Largely, this constraint is due to the land management structure as the two towns are in wildlife management areas, zoned specifically for conservation, facilitating eased wildlife movement and tourism activity. As such, acquiring new land is a cumbersome process. In Botswana, this is partially a result of the Kazangula Redevelopment Plan, whereas in Zambia, this was to avoid further development in wildlife corridors. Certainly, in the case of Zambia, representatives of governing authorities mention the expansion of the human population, and tourism enterprises typically mean expansion into the conservation spaces, which then increases the likelihood of a human-wildlife crisis. Additionally, several concerns were raised on the limited scope of entrepreneurial pursuits by the local residents. In Botswana, most locals were either tour operators, food vendors, or souvenir sellers, while in Zambia, there were very few tour operators, with most of the local entrepreneurs selling souvenirs to tourists. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, much of the entrepreneurial activities involved food as well as arts and crafts. The lack of diversification in tourism operations thereby leads to substantial competition amongst the local entrepreneurs. Some quotes illustrating this concern are presented below:

"What [the government] is doing, empowering the youth without looking at how many people are going to [be] empowered and [go] into the same industry? So where's the market? You end up instead of selling your product \$30 because there are too many, you going to drop your prices so that at least you can run with that. You will be running at a loss, assuming [you are] operating. We cannot sustain that." [P15BW]

The lack of diversification in tourism entrepreneurship and increased competition could stem from the imitation of local entrepreneurs, where residents replicate existing business models (e.g., accommodation, tour activities, and craft markets) rather than innovating new tourism products. Moreover, advertising and marketing were noted as key priorities for the growth of tourism SMMEs in the study areas.

“Particular like, I’ll start that from this market particular from this market, we need advertising like us, for us to motivate like myself, for me to motivate other artists out there, I need to have a business so that I also give business to others who make like this other stuff so that we can grow in our industry.” [P23ZM]

While a large share of the discussion around marketing was centred on the need to increase tourist arrivals and, therefore, tourist patronage to SMME establishments, some participants in Zambia further lamented the lack of support from neighbouring (and established) businesses in raising awareness of smaller businesses. Notably, the literature on nature-based tourism and economic transformation points to the importance of economic linkages to fit rural entrepreneurs into the tourism value chain (Madanaguli et al., 2021; Tichaawa and Lekgau 2024b). However, the findings indicate some variation in the manner in which this is accomplished across different study settings. In the case of Zambia, these linkages are partly driven by the desire to disseminate economic opportunities among the local population. However, it is acknowledged that the costs of business are a significant factor in determining the extent to which this is achieved.

### **Youth empowerment**

Youth empowerment is a key priority focus, owing to the predominantly young population of these countries. The primary challenge in these case study areas is the lack of adequate employment opportunities for the younger adult population and the limits of tourism establishments to absorb them all, as captured in the quote below:

“The challenges that we have here, number one, like I said, there [are] a lot of people, young people, coming here to look for jobs, the jobs that they’re looking for, they’re not enough and then actually they contribute to increasing the population. And an increasing population means more unemployment.” [P11BW]

Responses from the interviews highlighted some of the initiatives to empower the youth in the study areas. To an extent, training and skills development was one of the key initiatives:

“We have those young ones, youth didn’t go further for more studies. Now we separate a certain percentage off so that you can engage them in tourism training, like professionals, chefs, desk, front desk.” (P10BW)

Additionally, education was deemed crucial in Zambia, with participants affirming the importance of imparting knowledge and skills on the opportunities in the tourism and conservation value chain. In this regard, education included instilling positive conservation behaviours in the youth. This aligns with existing research on the importance of education in legitimising the role of communities within wildlife conservation and tourism in the regions (Del Rey et al., 2022; Al Balushi and Ambusaidi, 2023). For instance, Del Rey et al. (2022) state that education is a prerequisite for communities making informed decisions based on scientific facts related to conservation and tourism policy and implementation strategy. In this study, this education refers to capitalising on the current

economic opportunities, with a few participants suggesting that education should be geared toward widening potential economic opportunities.

Finally, financial assistance to start business ventures was mentioned by the participants in Botswana and Zambia. This was done through government agencies such as the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) in Botswana and initiatives such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia. See the description of LEA below:

“So that is that. And then also, that is businesses, especially for the young people, you realize that there are schemes that are offered by the government. So young people, let me say youth get funds from the government. And then they are helped to start small business and most of these businesses there, they actually tourism related. So, they these are the organization is called, is the LEA. It's called Local Enterprise Authority. So you go approach them, you give them a business proposal, and then they find you. So most of these projects that are given, like, brought forward, they are tourism related, because that's where there is actually a living.” [P4BW]

However, there were concerns highlighted in these programmes. In Botswana, while several participants applauded the contribution of LEA to funding and supporting youth-owned businesses, a few participants questioned the long-term sustainability of these programmes when most youth-owned enterprises are concentrated on a very narrow scope of tourism (tour operations or activities), thereby leading to high levels of competition. Notably, in Zambia, concerns related to these programmes were directed to the difficulty in accessing these funds. This concern is compounded by the difficulty in accessing funds through banks and other financial institutions:

“We just don't have access to funds. Because for me to apply, of course, I [have to] go to the bank, they want to see my bank statements what but I just started and I'm trying to do so how, how will I show them the bank.” (P29ZM) Unfortunately, access to funding for SMMEs has been a long-acknowledged concern in tourism entrepreneurship literature (Rogerson et al., 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study sought to explore the employment and entrepreneurship dynamics in wildlife tourism in three destinations in southern Africa. The institutional approach to exploring employment and entrepreneurship is one which has yet to be fully realised in tourism research, more so within the context of multi-country collaborative agreement centred on regional economic and tourism growth, development and conservation. The theory provided a valuable theoretical basis to understand the employment dynamics in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe by demonstrating how coercive isomorphism was seen in employers who were required to hire or provide job opportunities for local residents. However, this was dependent on the level of tourism development in each country and the manner of implementation of tourism policy, particularly directives geared at local development. Additionally, coercive isomorphism was shown through the land zoning policies, which restricted the expansion and growth of tourism establishments. Normative isomorphism was evident in the training of tourism staff to ensure professionalism in the sector, seen in the efforts of CBOs to provide employment opportunities for locals and capacity-

building initiatives. Mimic isomorphism was established through the residents' entry into limited jobs in wildlife and enterprises.

Accordingly, the findings have implications for the long-term planning and development of tourism in this region. Certainly, while skills development is a vehicle used to equip locals with tourism skills, these programs often address short-term needs, having implications for both business and destination growth and development. The importance of entrepreneurship for innovation has been widely acknowledged (Madanaguli et al., 2021) and in the case of these rural regions in southern Africa, there is a need to leverage the natural resources and the potential of entrepreneurship to diversify both livelihoods and tourism offerings to foster an inclusive and competitive tourism sector. Similarly, succession planning emerged as an important agenda that needs to be addressed in the future to ensure a sustainable and decent workforce in wildlife tourism operations in the destination.

While the current study focused on the structure and characteristics of the employment patterns, one of the major limitations was the lack of depth in examining the working conditions of tourism employees in wildlife destinations, a matter severely neglected in tourism research. Another limitation was the lack of further interrogation of the gendered perspectives and experiences in tourism employment and entrepreneurship dynamics. Arguably, these limitations provide avenues for future research to comprehensively examine the sustainability of tourism and entrepreneurship in wildlife destinations.

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## SHOPPING TOURISM IN GDANSK

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to present research findings on how shopping tourism influences the amber market in Gdansk, specifically by comparing customer flow on regular workdays and national free days. The study aims to determine whether shopping tourism - particularly amber gemstone shopping - fluctuates based

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on the population's free time. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, a range of statistical methods were applied. The comparison method was used to synthesize results from various data points to form statistically robust conclusions. Descriptive analysis provided a summary of event counts, while data segmentation based on calendar dates allowed for differentiated insights on client behavior across workdays and national holidays. Additionally, graphical charts illustrated the frequency distribution of client visits, offering a clear visual representation of shopping patterns. The findings indicate that national holidays significantly influence customer traffic for amber shopping, resulting in noticeable shifts in visitation patterns. Statistical analysis demonstrates that client flow to amber shops increases on national free days compared to regular workdays. This shift suggests that shopping tourism for amber is sensitive to the availability of free time among the population.

**Key words:** Shopping tourism, Amber Gemstone, Polish national free days

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## INTRODUCTION

Shopping tourism has emerged as a critical sector for destinations seeking to generate significant economic impact through competitive positioning. We can define shopping tourism as a modern type of travel that prioritizes shopping, which has become an important factor in individuals' decisions to go somewhere away from their usual environment. Tourists engaging in shopping tourism seek enriching, memorable experiences and often favor destinations offering key attributes such as cultural attractions, climate, affordability, safety, accessibility, and active government promotion. These tourists often combine shopping with local exploration, culinary experiences, and sightseeing, underscoring the need for destinations to provide a safe, affordable, and accessible environment that enhances the appeal and satisfaction of the shopping tourism experience (Lee and Choi, 2019).

In addition to its wealth of tourist attractions, Gdansk's prominence in amber shopping further enhances its appeal as a tourist shopping destination. Recognized as one of the world's leading centers for amber trade, the city has earned the title of the "Amber Capital of the World." This status is reflected in its numerous shops and workshops dedicated to amber craftsmanship and commerce, which play a significant role in the local tourism landscape (Piatkowska, 2017; Studzieniecki, 2022; Cudny et al., 2023).

This study examines the flow of tourist visitors to amber shops in Gdansk by observing variations in customer activities based on their leisure time. The strong position of Gdansk in the amber trade not only underscores its historical significance as a commercial hub but also enhances its attractiveness as a popular tourist destination. This unique characteristic positions Gdansk as a focal point within sustainable tourism strategies, emphasizing the intersection of shopping tourism and cultural heritage. By leveraging its rich amber trade, Gdansk effectively attracts shopping tourists seeking authentic experiences,

contributing to the city's economic vitality and cultural preservation (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2018).

This study focuses on analyzing customer flow in six selected amber shops within Gdansk's historic Old Town over three distinct dates: April 25, May 2, and May 9. These dates were strategically chosen to differentiate customer numbers based on workdays and a national holiday, as April 25 and May 9 were regular workdays, while May 2 was a national holiday in Poland. To observe the contrast, customer entries were tracked during specific time intervals each day, providing insight into how tourist shopping behavior varies according to the type of day.

Among the selected shops, four are located on Mariacka Street, called Amber Street (pl. Mariacka), a popular and scenic area highly admired by visitors. These shops - BG Amber, Dawid, A2 Amber House, and Image Silver - are situated within Gdansk's renowned amber district, where tourists often spend time enjoying the ambiance. In contrast, the other two shops, Amber Art on Długa Street and Millenium Gallery on Długie Pobrzeże, were chosen for their unique locations outside of Amber Street, positioned among a variety of other retail stores. This setup allows for a comprehensive analysis of customer flow across different types of shopping environments within the Old Town.

### **THE AIM AND METHODS OF RESEARCH**

The research was conducted over three specific dates (April 25, May 2, and May 9) to assess variations in the number of clients visiting selected shops. These dates were strategically chosen to contrast visitation patterns on different types of days: April 25 and May 9 were regular workdays, while May 2 was a national holiday in Poland. Observations focused on tracking the number of clients entering the shops over designated time intervals throughout each day. Among the selected shops, four are located on Mariacka Street, a popular and scenic area highly admired by visitors. These shops - BG Amber, Dawid, A2 Amber House, and Image Silver - are situated within Gdansk's renowned amber district, where tourists often spend time enjoying the ambiance. In contrast, the other two shops, Amber Art on Długa Street and Millenium Gallery on Długie Pobrzeże, were chosen for their unique locations outside of Amber Street, positioned among a variety of other retail stores. This setup allows for a comprehensive analysis of customer flow across different types of shopping environments within the Old Town.

To achieve a comprehensive analysis (Wendt and Bógdał-Brzezińska, 2018a), several methodological approaches were employed:

**Comparative Analysis:** This method was used to contrast client numbers across the selected dates, enabling a clear understanding of how the visitor varies depending on the type of day.

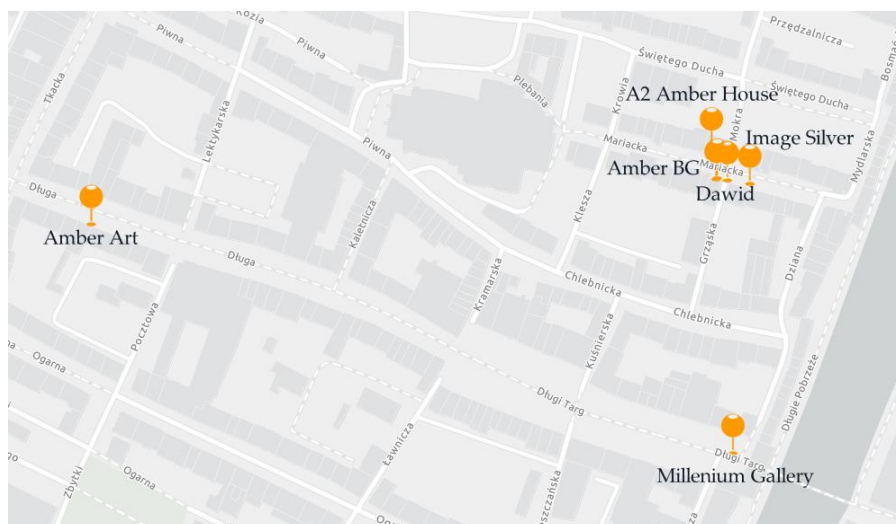
**Descriptive Analysis:** This approach was applied to provide a coherent summary of the collected data, ensuring the integrity and consistency of observations.

**Categorical Division:** Client numbers were differentiated by specific calendar dates to observe the impact of workdays versus free days.

**Graphical Representation:** Visual tools were utilized to illustrate the findings, facilitating clearer comparison and interpretation of visitation trends across different dates.

## AMBER SHOPPING TOURISM IN GDANSK

Gdansk is located on the northern coast of Poland along the Baltic Sea, at 54°22' north latitude and 18°37' east longitude. This strategic position has historically made Gdansk a vital hub for both land and maritime trade routes. The nearby Martwa Wisła (Dead Vistula) River, a branch of the Vistula River - one of Poland's largest rivers - connects Poland to Central and Western Europe, facilitating the city's trade development. Specifically, Gdansk's access to the Baltic Sea and its inland waterways has played a critical role in the city's economic and commercial growth. These geographical features have been central to establishing Gdansk as a prominent trade and tourist center (Wendt and Wiskulski, 2017; Pantea et al., 2024) (Figure 1). Additionally, Gdansk is one of the world's foremost centers for amber trade, earning it the title "World Capital of Amber" (Wendt, 2010; Kosmowska-Ceranowicz, 2012; Olszewski-Strzyżowski and Wendt, 2018). Amber plays a major role in Gdansk's touristic appeal, with numerous shops and workshops dedicated to amber craftsmanship and trade.



**Figure 1.** Gdansk location map

## Formation of Amber

The Polish term for amber, "bursztyn," is derived from the German word "Bernstein," which translates to "burning stone" (bern = fire, stein = stone). This etymology reflects the historical significance attributed to amber's distinctive characteristics. In Russian, amber is referred to as "yantar," a term that highlights the gem's cultural and historical importance along the Baltic and Kaliningrad coasts, where it has been highly valued for centuries.

The process required for amber formation spans a very long period and is generally thought to have occurred between the Cretaceous Period (approximately 100 million years ago) and the Eocene Epoch (around 50 million years ago). Amber is believed to have originated from a forest that covered large areas of the Scandinavian Peninsula, Finland, Karelia, and the Kola Peninsula to the north of Samland, collectively known as Fennoscandia. For many years, the source of amber was thought to be an extinct pine tree, *Pinites succinifera*.

However, it has recently been suggested that a tree related to the umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys*) may have been the resin producer.

Amber forms from fossilized tree resin that was originally produced as a defense mechanism in response to injuries or fractures in the bark. Resin seals wounds and protects the tree from external threats, including insects (Edwards et al., 2007). Its sticky nature also attracts small invertebrates, such as insects, which become trapped in the resin and are then preserved as inclusions (Jenkins Shaw et al., 2022). These inclusions are typically covered by subsequent resin flows, leading to layers of entombed specimens. Fresh resin gradually loses its volatile oils and hardens through a process called polymerization, after which it is known as "copal." Copal is the first stage of amber formation. When the tree dies, the copal becomes buried in the soil, where it remains for millions of years, undergoing further polymerization to transform into true amber. The resin's antiseptic and antimicrobial properties protect any trapped organisms from decomposition, allowing for extraordinary preservation in the fossil record, occasionally even preserving soft tissues (Fowler, 2018; Wolfe et al., 2009).

### **Amber Gemstone Classification**

According to the International Amber Association from Gdansk, Poland, there are several classifications of the Amber Gemstone:

- Natural Baltic Amber (Succinite) - Gemstones that went through mechanical treatment, without changing their natural properties (grinding, cutting, polishing). It retains its original chemical composition and physical properties.
- Modified Baltic Amber (Succinite) - Gemstones that were put through thermal or high-pressure treatment, changing their physical properties such as the degree of transparency and color or shape.
- Reconstructed (pressed) Baltic Amber (Succinite) - Gemstone made of Baltic Amber pieces that were pressed in high temperature and under high pressure without adding components.
- Bonded Baltic Amber (Succinite) (doublet, triplet) - Gemstone consisting of two or more parts of natural, modified or reconstructed Baltic Amber added together with the use of the smallest possible amount of a binding agent necessary to join the pieces.

### **Amber Shopping through Tourism**

Gdańsk, recognized as the World Capital of Amber, boasts a rich array of shops specializing in this unique gemstone. In the Old Town alone, there are 19 amber shops, each offering a variety of products that highlight the beauty and versatility of amber. Additionally, the Przymorze area features three shops that specialize in amber products: "Biżuteria Artystyczna Beata Narkiewicz-Sas," "Amber Marcin Buzalski," and "Bursztyn Prasowany. Drucker W." In the Oliwa region, there is also a shop that sells lamps adorned with amber gemstones.

Our research is based on 6 shops in the region Old Town of Gdansk:

- four Amber shops on Amber (pl. Mariacka) Street:
  - BG Amber
  - Dawid
  - A2 Amber House

- Image Silver.

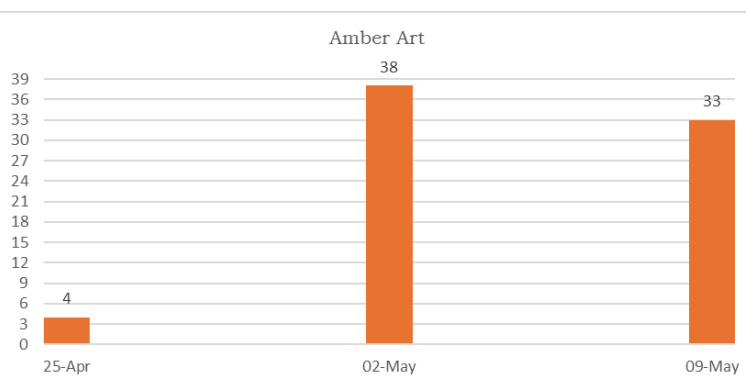
- one shop named Amber Art (Długa 74, 80-831 Gdańsk, Poland);
- one more Amber shop called Millenium Gallery (Długie Pobrzeże 2, 80-888 Gdańsk, Poland).

### THE RESULT OF THE FIELDWORK RESEARCH

The first shop, Amber Art (Figure 2), has the same results of the following shop, Millenium Gallery. As expected, the chart (Figure 3) shows us the second date has almost 9 times more clients than the first date, yet the last date has almost as many clients as the second one.



**Figure 2.** Amber Art shop

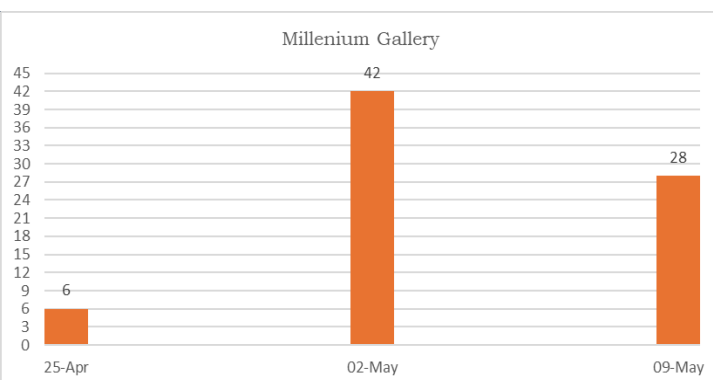


**Figure 3.** Amber Art shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May

Like the first shop, Millenium Gallery (Figure 4) is in the same situation (Figure 5), the first day has a low client count, but the second has 6 times more clients and the last day has still a high client count despite the expectations owing to the start of normal days with work hours.



**Figure 4.** Millenium Gallery shop



**Figure 5.** Millenium Gallery shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May

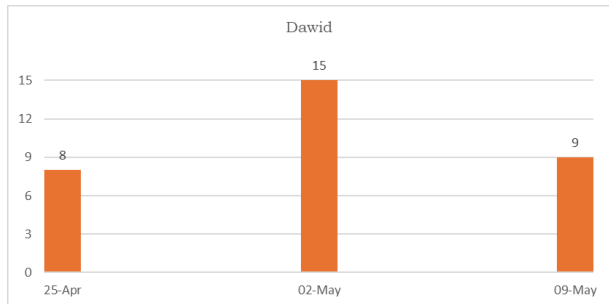
The next four shops, located on the famous Amber Street in The Old Town, have various results regardless of their narrow location. As expected, the first shop named Dawid (Figure 6) has the client count (Figure 7) according to the



calendaristic dates: the first and last date have a similar, lower count, and the second one, where people had free workdays, has almost double the numbers.



**Figure 6.** Dawid shop

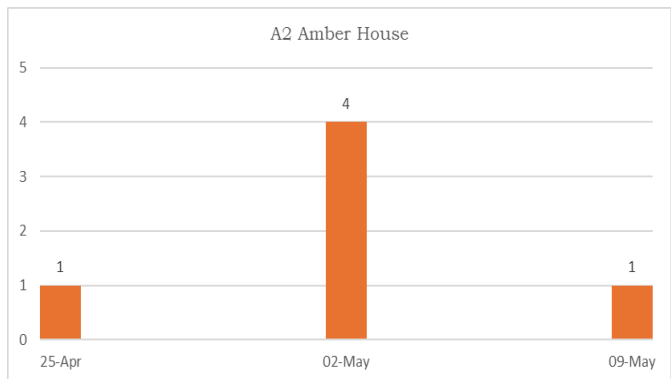


**Figure 7.** Dawid shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May

The second shop in Amber Street, A2 Amber House (Figure 8), is low value (Figure 9) yet, as expected, more clients visited the shop during the second date.



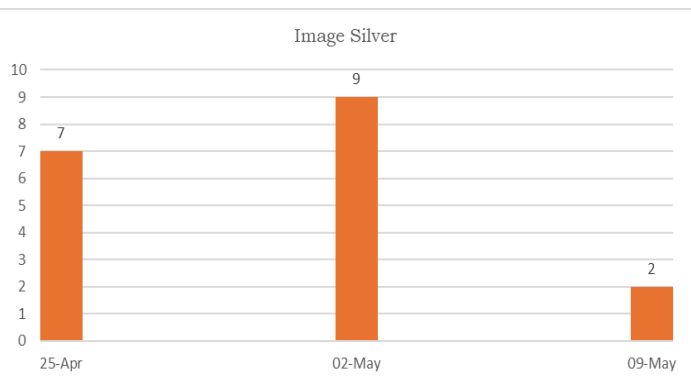
**Figure 10.** A2 Amber House shop



**Figure 11.** A2 Amber House shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May



**Figure 12.** Image Silver shop



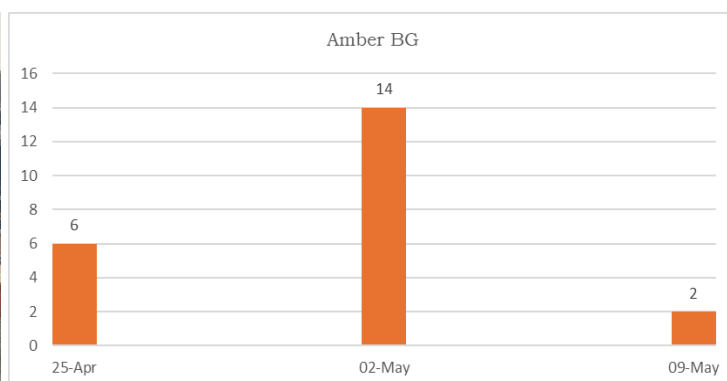
**Figure 13.** Image Silver shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May

Contrary to the first few shops, Image Silver (Figure 12) has quite a different client count value (Figure 13) meaning the first date has a higher count than the last one, however the date which suits the calendaristic day with the free time.

Like the last shop, Amber BG (Figure 14) has the same appearance in terms of the graphics (Figure 15), the first day having more visitors than the third one, and the second one having more than double.



**Figure 14.** Amber BG shop



**Figure 15.** Amber BG shop visitors count during 25<sup>th</sup> April - 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 9<sup>th</sup> May

In conclusion, the first two shops, Amber Art and Millennium Gallery, exhibited similar fluctuations in visitor numbers. In both stores, visitor numbers were low on the first days, while a significant increase of nearly six to nine times was observed on the second days. As expected, this increase in traffic occurred on dates that coincided with holidays. Although the visitor numbers dropped again on the last date with the start of workdays, they remained higher compared to the first date. This situation indicates that despite the shift to working hours, the stores still maintained a high potential for visitors. The four stores on Amber Street, despite being in similar locations, displayed different visitor trends. The first store on Amber Street, Dawid, showed a predictable trend in visitor numbers. Visitor numbers were low on the first and last dates, with nearly a twofold increase on the second date, which coincided with holidays. Similarly, low values were observed in the second store on Amber Street, but an increase in visitor numbers was recorded during the holiday dates. In contrast, a different trend was observed in the Image Silver store. In this store, the visitor count on the first date was higher than on the last date, while the visitor count peaked on the second date due to the holiday effect. Lastly, a similar trend was observed in the Amber BG store; the number of visitors on the first day was higher than on the third day, and there was a significant increase in visitor numbers on the second date, coinciding with the holiday.

These results indicate that holidays and working days have a notable impact on the number of visitors to the stores, and this impact can vary depending on store location and visitor profiles.

The overlap of peak periods in amber shopping tourism in Gdansk with Poland's national holidays and other holiday periods of increased tourist density

will contribute to a rise in tourism activities and revenue. The study by Felsenstein and Fleischer (2003) on shopping tourism demonstrates that proper timing plays a critical role in increasing the number of tourists and sales. In this context, amber shops in Gdansk can enhance visitor attraction by organizing special campaigns and events during national holidays and major festivals. Timothy and Butler (1995) indicate that the promotion of local specialty products and their marketing in an international context have a significant impact on enhancing shopping tourism (Bar-Koëelis and Wendt, 2018; Wendt et al., 2021). The amber sector in Gdansk can highlight cultural values through marketing campaigns focused on national identity, making Gdansk an attractive destination for tourists coming to shop (Wendt and Bógdał-Brzezińska, 2018b). For example, by providing information on the historical significance of amber and emphasizing local handicrafts, a deeper cultural shopping experience can be offered to visitors. Moreover, Reisinger and Turner's (2012) studies on shopping tourism reveal that shoppers typically seek culturally meaningful and unique products. Amber stores in Gdansk can cater to this interest by offering unique amber items crafted with local artisanship. Additionally, interactive experiences such as workshops on amber craftsmanship or guided tours highlighting the historical significance of amber can be organized. Such experiences not only enhance interest in the city but also position Gdansk as a unique cultural shopping destination. Additionally, as expressed in studies by UNWTO (2014) and Wong and Law (2003), shopping tourism has broader economic and social impacts. The amber shopping sector in Gdansk not only contributes to the local economy but also positively influences other sectors, such as accommodation and transportation. By collaborating with local businesses on various projects, amber retailers can foster sustainable economic growth and strengthen the social fabric of the community.

## CONCLUSIONS

Shopping tourism in Gdansk has an active flow, especially during the days when people are free from work. Largely because of the popularity of the famous name, World Capital of Amber, Gdansk attracts tourists from all around the world, which are sent into a fascinating world of the Amber resources found in the city.

Regardless of the small number of clients visiting the shops, Gdansk has a lot of visitors focused on gemstones. During the research we have found that clients tend to be more attracted to the shops where they have a unique location. And regardless of the admiration of the Amber Street, it does not have that many clients as other shops such as Amber Art or Millenium Gallery. People do tend to use the admired Amber Street mostly for leisure rather than a shopping location, whereas other Amber shops have more clients being surrounded by shops unrelated to their offer.

Amber is a great tourist attraction for the city of Gdansk, that brings value to Shopping Tourism in the city.

In practical terms, these results underscore the importance of aligning marketing and operational strategies in amber shops with national holiday schedules. By understanding the impact of free days on shopping behavior, businesses can better plan for increased tourist traffic and tailor their offerings to maximize customer engagement during these peak times. This insight

highlights the role of strategic timing in enhancing shopping tourism and capitalizing on the unique appeal of amber products.

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## THE CV OF THE WORLD'S SUPERPOWERS

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**Abstract:** We already know that not all states can become world superpowers. Compared to Romania, the United States of America is 90 times more economically powerful, the European Union 60 times, while India or China are each 70 times more populated and Russia is 70 times larger in area. These 5 heavyweights of the world compete, they are at war but also form alliances of mutual aid. Forming a matrix with 14 analysis criteria, advantages with plus points and weaknesses with minus points, numbered between 0 and +5 or -5 points, including forecasts for the years 2050 and 2100, the top for the year 2025 came out : 1 USA, 2 India, 3 China, 4 EU and 5 Russia, but with major changes to come by the end of the 21st century.

**Key words:** great powers, ranking, advantages, weaknesses, year 2050, year 2100

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### INTRODUCTION

Mountains have always represented a stop, a natural barrier, but at the same time a place of refuge, a source of water, wood and hunting ground. The plane, however, represents the vital space for food production, the place of great civilizations, of the great cities of today, but it is also in the open fields that the greatest invasions, wars and conquests took place. Geography represents fate, the destiny of a nation.

Some of the newest and most developed works on geopolitics have appeared around it. Among them are: The Future of Geography (Marshall, 2024), The Revenge of Geography: What Maps Tell Us About Future Conflicts and the

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Fight Against Destiny (Kaplan, 2023), The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal the Future of the World (Marshall, 2024), The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions (Sachs, 2025), Prisoners of Geography (Marshall, 2025), Rivers of Power: How a Force of Nature Built Kingdoms, Destroyed Civilizations, and Shapes the World We Live in (Smith, 2023), The Conquest of the Rocky Mountains: How Geography Determines America's Role in the World (Kaplan, 2018), Naval Power or the Geopolitics of the Black Sea and the Pontic Space (Filip, 2013). In all of them it is demonstrated that relief, waters and climate have defined civilizations.

This field fascinates the world of geopolitics precisely because of the influence it has over the world. Geography does not change, climate does not change, but there are other aspects that can make all the difference. These are: religion, infrastructure, overpopulation and geopolitical friendship, resource trade or food security (Iacuone, Ferrari and Fuschi 2024; Kearns, 2010). Between the European Union and Russia there is a smooth space, a huge, fertile plain, perfectly functional in a geographical context that has supported a demographic flow in both sides for centuries, but currently blocked geopolitically by the war in Ukraine, on the other hand, the natural border between China and Pakistan is downright criminal, with mountains exceeding 8,000 meters, with steep valleys, landslides and streams without a meadow (Stupariu, 2023). A devastating natural border that leaves no room for good decisions. Including the war with India, the province of Kashmir being on the verge of nuclear conflagration. On the Pakistani side there is an overpopulated area, with multimillion cities: Rawalpindi-Islamabad 7 million inhabitants, Peshawar 5 million, Lahore-Faisalabad with 25 million or Multan with 5 million, all crammed into the immediate exit of the Indus from the mountains. This population is dense, Islamist, fierce and warlike. On the Chinese side, the mountains continue for another 200 km, followed by the Tarim desert depression for 900 km until you reach the first millionaire city, Urumqi 5 million, but from here to Shanghai there are another 4,000 km, yellow, Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist population, totally different from Pakistani Islam. The chance of making friends is almost zero, but that 1% is more than 0%. This small chance has led to the creation of a large highway and pipeline corridor, an economic axis that defies the impossible. Furthermore, Japan's rapprochement with China, or especially South Korea, should have led to customs unions, but no, just like in the case of the EU with the Russian Federation, where although there are smooth spaces or calm seas, geopolitical boundaries have been drawn with a harder role than the limit imposed by geography.

The proximity of the states is less important than the location of the population. The USA and Russia are separated by only 20 km on the mainland, or only 3 km on the nearest islands, but both the Russian part where Siberia is located and the US part where the state of Alaska extends, are the areas of exploitation, almost deserted, far from the big cities. The same is the proximity of China to India dominated by the frozen and steep deserts of the Himalayas.

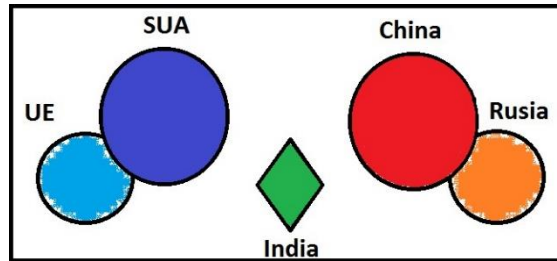
Geography, religion, ideology, alliances, resources, proximity, industrialization, or diplomacy can be advantages or obstacles in the assertion of global power by great powers. But which countries are advantaged, which are favored for world domination according to these criteria, and how will events evolve by 2050, but also by 2100?

To get an idea, we developed a strategy of advantage: geographical, geopolitical, cultural, religious, demographic, but also future evolution, a kind of CV of the great powers.

Between 1 and 5 points are awarded for advantages, and between -1 and -5 points for disadvantages depending on their severity. The matrix includes 11 current criteria, a criterion of the greatest advantages but also vulnerabilities, as well as two criteria of future evolution, for the year 2050 and for the year 2100.

### The CV of every major world power

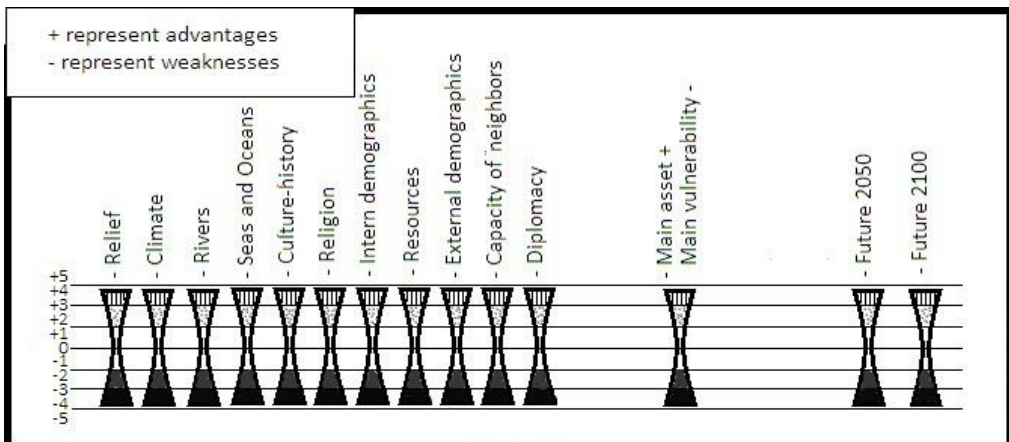
USA, China, India, European Union and Russia (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The world's superpowers

Source: processed by the authors

The economic growth of 5% per year in Asia and 3% in Africa, but also the demographic growth of over 80 million people per year globally, promises the emergence of several economic powers, with a number of states with significant influence such as: Japan, Brazil, Canada, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Mexico, Iran, Argentina, Australia or South Africa, but also states that promise a lot for the future such as: Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Philippines or Colombia. But in this article, the CV of the great economic powers such as the USA and the EU, commercial and demographic powers such as China, demographic colossus such as India and old power with abundant surface and resources such as Russia was made.



**Figure 2.** The matrix developed to calculate the advantages and weaknesses of great powers

Source: processed by the authors



14 indicators were added to the analysis, marked with + if they bring value and with – if they are an impediment, on a value scale from 0 to plus or minus 5, explaining each score with arguments that can be discussed at length, but which provide a first benchmark in the analysis of competitiveness between the great world powers.

### 1 USA

The world's leading economic power by nominal GDP, 50% more than the EU or China and 6 times more than Japan, the USA has continental dimensions (as large as the entire continent of Europe), being the greatest military power, with bases in over 80 countries, great decision-making power and financial power (over 80% of global trade is transacted in US dollars).

**Table 1.** United States of America

| No. | Criteria:        | Advantages:   | Weaknesses:   |
|-----|------------------|---|---|
| 1   | Relief:          | (+5) - Agricultural potential, Mississippi plain<br>Agricultural land 1,700,000 km <sup>2</sup>   | (-1) - Mountainous areas in Alaska, Rocky Mountains and San Andreas Fault   |
| 2   | Climate:         | (+5) Temperate rainy and subtropical rainy in the southeast, Mediterranean on the Pacific coast   | (-2) Subpolar cold in Alaska, dry-arid in the Wild West, hurricanes in the southeast: Florida   |
| 3   | Rivers:          | (+4) – Mississippi with its tributaries, smooth flow with low flooding, canalized for navigation,<br>- Great Lakes navigable and connected to the sea through Canada: Saint Lawrence River<br>- Mississippi-Great Lakes Canal, Great Lakes Canal – Hudson River – Atlantic Ocean<br>- irrigation and diversions from Colorado River to California | (-2) - no navigable arteries in the western half of the US<br>- St. Lawrence flows through Canada and the Mississippi have many meanders, flowing south |
| 4   | Seas and Oceans: | (+5) – access to the Ocean: Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic<br>- extensive coastline to warm seas<br>- dominates the North Atlantic, North Pacific through its islands, half of the Bering Strait, the Caribbean Sea and influence over the Panama Canal  | (0) – possibility of a blockade in Panama, frozen seas in Bering, too great distances from dominant international routes                                |
| 5   | Culture-History: | (+4) – dominates the Western and English world (Canada, Europe-NATO, Australia and New Zealand,<br>- influence on Latin Americans   | (-1) – aggressive Westernism, intervened in the political decisions of many states, attracting numerous enemies   |
| 6   | Religion:        | (+5) Protestant Christian and Catholic Christian, like all of America, Europe across the  | (-0) a slight conflict between Protestant and Catholic Christians   |

|    |                                       |   |  |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|--|
|    |                                       | North Atlantic, and the Philippines and South Korea across the North Pacific  |  |
| 7  | Internal Demographics:                | (+3) – large population of 340 million (fourth after India, China and the EU), specialized and concentrated in large cities   | (-4) – population 25% of the population of rivals China or India, with low density and labor force below requirements  |
| 8  | Resources:                            | (+4) – abundant resources of 45 trillion dollars, ranking second in the world: coal, oil and gas, uranium, iron and bauxite, gold, forests, etc.<br>- neighboring the state of Canada, where US companies dominate the 33 trillion-dollar mining market, ranking 4th in the world         | (0) – slightly deficient in some resources or forest, in the context of continuous exploitation for over a century   |
| 9  | External Demographics:                | (+5) – 10 times more populous than Canada and twice as large as Mexico, making it the most populous state in America and the Western Hemisphere   | (-3) – the Spanish population in the south, Mexico, the Caribbean or the northern part of South America is growing rapidly<br>- large population overseas: Europe, East and Southeast Asia |
| 10 | Neighboring Capacity:                 | (+5) – Demographic, industrial, technological and military power far surpasses its neighbors  | (-2) – Chinese alliances are infiltrating the Caribbean basin: Venezuela (continuation from Brazil), Cuba, Nicaragua with expansion into Panama or Mexico                                  |
| 11 | Diplomacy:                            | (+5) Dominates America, the Atlantic coast (NATO) and the Pacific coast (QUAD)<br>- the world's leading decision-making, monetary and military power (military bases in over half of the world's countries)   | (-2) – has caused discontent in a series of regional powers that are aligning themselves behind China, the BRICS 10 and OPEC   |
| 12 | Main asset +: / Main vulnerability -: | (+4) – large, stable area, with immense resources and workforce, loyal neighbors, global decision-making alliances dominating the oceans<br>- great technological, military, decision-making and financial power (the US dollar represents over 80% of the currency used in global trade) | (-3) – sparsely populated compared to geopolitical adversaries,<br>- tough alliances against it<br>- far from overpopulated and increasingly powerful Eurasia                              |
| 13 | Future 2050                           | (+5) – population increases and economic and financial stability continues in the country<br>- industrialized allies using US   | (-2) – population and economy grow in the main US challengers and decline in allies like Japan and the EU  |

|    |              |  |  |
|----|--------------|--|--|
|    |              | weapons and currency   |  |
| 14 | Future 2100  | (+2) – rich resources, quiet space and far from major global problems: overpopulation, water shortage, Islamic-Christian war and the space crisis that will spread to Africa and the southern half of Asia<br>- among the only Western state that will ensure its demographic growth thanks to immigration | (-5) – is demographically surpassed by more and more states, US cities no longer occupy the top places in demographic top, ports, airports and financial centers.<br>- 50% of the world's population is concentrated around the Indian Ocean, to which the US has no direct access<br>- the development and removal of Mexico, a state whose 50% of its territory is currently in the US: California, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, but also Spanish Florida, territories populated mostly by Spanish speakers even today |
| 15 | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>+61</b>   | <b>-27</b>   |

## 2 China

The second largest economic power in the world, equal to the EU in nominal GDP, but the first economic power in PPP GDP (purchasing power parity), surpassing the USA in 2014 and now reaching 25% above the North American economy, the first commercial power and workshop of the world, with an area as large as the continent of Europe or the state of the USA, but with a population as large as the entire continent of Africa or 4 times larger than the USA.

**Table 2.** China

| No. | Criteria: | Advantages:   | Weaknesses:  |
|-----|-----------|---|--|
| 1   | Relief:   | (+3) – Extensive agricultural lands, with high productivity<br>Agricultural land 1,400,000 km <sup>2</sup>  | (-3) – Gobi-Tarim Desert, Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya Mountains (almost 9,000 m altitude), Tian-Shan, Kun-lun and Altai, make half of the country unproductive                    |
| 2   | Climate:  | (+3) – rich in precipitation in the east, temperate oceanic and humid subtropical climate   | (-3) – Severe temperate continental climate-desert and mountainous in the west, frost in the north, typhoons in the east   |
| 3   | Rivers:   | (+4) – the longest river in Asia, the second in terms of flow, with navigation, fishing, the largest hydroelectric power plant in the world and a powerful irrigation system<br>- The Grand Chinese Canal | (-3) – Rivers that cause catastrophic floods, extend only in the eastern half of the country<br>- The Yellow River tends to dry up in the dry season and carries too much alluvium |
| 4   | Seas and  | (+4) – has an extensive outlet to   | (-4) – It has an outlet only to  |

|    |                               |  |   |
|----|-------------------------------|--|---|
|    | <b>Oceans:</b>                | <p>warm seas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- numerous natural deep-sea ports</li> <li>- near the seas are shipping routes</li> <li>- dominates the South China Sea with the Paracel and Spratly Islands</li> </ul>  | <p>the Pacific Ocean where a chain of islands owned by Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines are massively armed by the USA, against China</p>                 |
| 5  | <b>Culture-History:</b>       | <p>(+5) - state dominated by Han culture, with Buddhist influences in Indochina and similar populations in Siberia to the north</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China does not have a history of invading the three main neighboring states (Russia, Japan, India) and has not territorially fallen to the USA</li> </ul> | <p>(-3) – Culturally different from its western and southern neighbors</p>  |
| 6  | <b>Religion:</b>              | <p>(+5) – religion that promotes peace, similar to the religion of the peoples of the east and southeast</p>   | <p>(-2) – Islamist influence from the west and southwest, Hinduism from the southwest</p>   |
| 7  | <b>Internal Demographics:</b> | <p>(+5) – very large population, like India, twice the size of Europe and equal to the population of all Western states and their allies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diligence, loyalty and discipline</li> </ul>   | <p>(-0) – the fact that the population has stagnated demographically in recent times is still an advantage</p>  |
| 8  | <b>Resources:</b>             | <p>(+2) - Rich coal resources, but also oil with a total value of 23 trillion dollars, and close to exporting states such as Russia or those in Central Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- half of the world's coal production</li> </ul>   | <p>(-5) – resources with reserves and very low productivity compared to the country's population and industrialization</p>  |
| 9  | <b>External Demographics:</b> | <p>(+5) - Thinly populated neighbors (Russia or Japan each representing 10% of China's population), and India, which has the same demographic capacity, is located behind the natural barrier of the Himalaya Mountains</p>  | <p>(-1) – existence of India as a neighbor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demographic stagnation</li> </ul>   |
| 10 | <b>Neighbors' Capability:</b> | <p>(+4) - after the last few decades, China has become a force in all of Asia</p>  | <p>(-3) – Anti-Chinese alliances in the east (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) and the risk of escalation in the south (India, South China Sea) keep China vulnerable</p> |
| 11 | <b>Diplomacy:</b>             | <p>(+5) - New Silk Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BRICS +</li> <li>- Shanghai Cooperation</li> <li>- most votes at the UN</li> </ul>  | <p>(-2) – failed to attract Taiwan and Japan to its side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- often provokes its most important neighbor: India</li> </ul>      |

|    |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|
|    |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- economic corridor with Pakistan</li> <li>- military attachment with Russia, Iran</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- failed to achieve equal status with the US within the European Union</li> </ul>   |
| 12 | Main asset +: /<br>Main vulnerability -: | (+5) – large and productive population.<br>- government involvement in accelerating industrialization.<br>- diplomacy to create openness in the world<br>- attractive states that have entered conflict with the USA       | (-3) half of the territory is poorly productive.<br>- isolation from the west and southwest.<br>- open conflict with the US and its allies in the vicinity of the Chinese coast<br>- scarce resources<br>- demographic stagnation  |
| 13 | Future 2050                              | (+5) – explosive economic growth dominating Asia and the entire world at the expense of the USA<br>- loyal allies in Asia, Africa and Latin America<br>- dominance of Western markets<br>- large and specialized workforce | (-1) – the difficult breakthrough of the US naval barricade in the China Sea<br>- the dominance of the US dollar to the detriment of the Chinese economy<br>- the Western coalition to contain China<br>- the slight demographic decline   |
| 14 | Future 2100                              | (+3) – huge agricultural capacity in an overpopulated and food-scarce world<br>- Developed infrastructure in a world with few resources to create it<br>- high technological capacity and robotization                     | (-4) - sharp demographic decline: comparison 2023-2100:<br>- China exceeds the population of the USA by four times - it will exceed by two times<br>- China has 9 times more than Nigeria and equal to India - China will have 1.3 times more than Nigeria and 60% of India's population<br>- China has 2.2 times more than Southeast Asia - it will have the same population<br>- very aging population<br>- emergence of other economic powers |
| 15 | <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>+ 58</b>  | <b>- 37</b>  |

### 3 India

The most populous country in the world since 2023 when it surpassed China, probably the first demographic power until after 2150, with a small area as small as 35% of the USA or China, but productive land and access to the open seas, economically surpassing France or the United Kingdom and with a sharp annual growth, which announces the surpassing of Japan and Germany in the next 4 years, but the 4th economic power in the world by GDP PPP since 2009.

**Table 3. India**

| No. | Criteria:              | Advantages:  | Weaknesses:  |
|-----|------------------------|--|--|
| 1   | Relief:                | (+5) - Productive arable land with 1,500,000 km <sup>2</sup> of agricultural land<br>- Flat plains and plateaus  | (-1) - Small area, with the Himalaya Mountains/Wall to the north   |
| 2   | Climate:               | (+5) - Tropical climate with sufficient rainfall   | (0) Heavy rainfall in the east (most in the world) and decreases towards the west where it causes the appearance of desert, but the entire territory is humanizable  |
| 3   | Rivers:                | (+5) - Rich in flow and navigable rivers, with the Ganges draining the entire north, being a navigable route   | (0) - Although there are huge navigable projects underway, the country's rhombus shape, surrounded by seas, gives it full access to navigation   |
| 4   | Seas and Oceans:       | (+5) - Surrounded on two sides by warm waters and located on the world's dominant sea route between Africa, the Middle East and Europe on one side and East, Southeast Asia and Australia on the other | (-1) - Although it has extensive islands in the east (Andaman and Nicobar) and west (Laccadive), the island state of Sri Lanka and its alliance with other rival powers represent an impediment  |
| 5   | Culture-History:       | (+3) - Has always been peaceful, being a gentle power  | (-4) - It is at war with nuclear power Pakistan for Kashmir and with the Chinese people in the north for Aksai Chi and Arunachal Pradesh   |
| 6   | Religion:              | (+4) - Hindu religion that manifests itself peacefully and attractively  | (-2) - Slight Islamist disturbances on the border with Pakistan, Bangladesh and in the state of Hyderabad, India being the second state with the largest Islamist population in the world after Indonesia  |
| 7   | Internal Demographics: | (+5) - The most populous country in the world with 1.45 billion people, surpassing China<br>- Young population   | (0) - Very dense population with 450 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> (Russia 8 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> , USA 35 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> , European Union 100 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> ) and still not very specialized, but which is stabilized |
| 8   | Resources:             | (0) - Ocean fishing potential and low energy resources   | (-5) - Very low resource reserves compared to the huge population  |
| 9   | External Demographics: | (+5) - Exceeds the population of any neighbor<br>- Only China matches it globally  | (-1) - Neighbor with the second megademographic state in the world: China<br>- The population of the main rival Pakistan is growing rapidly  |
| 10  | Capacity of            | (+4) - Bordered by ocean waters  | (-3) Chinese influence in  |

|           |  |  |   |
|-----------|--|--|---|
|           | <b>Neighbors</b>                             | on two sides<br>- The only powerful neighbor (China) is located behind the Himalaya mountains, which have peaks of almost 9,000 m  | Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the tough anti-Indian Pakistan-China alliance are putting India in difficulty   |
| 11        | <b>Diplomacy:</b>                            | (+5) - India is in the Eastern Partnership, BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation, allied with Russia<br>- Close to the West through the Commonwealth and QUAD with: USA, Japan, Australia and the United Kingdom<br>- Represents the forefront of the Third World, the neutral world between East and West | (-2) - Fails to defuse conflict with Pakistan, keeping nuclear war a possibility<br>- Often engages in military war against China   |
| 12        | <b>Main asset +: / Main vulnerability -:</b> | (+4) - Population of 1.45 billion, young and growing<br>- Located on the world's main sea routes<br>- With productive territory, agricultural and climatic potential   | (-2) - Lack of subsoil resources<br>- High and growing population density<br>- Isolation caused by rivalry with Pakistan, China and the natural barrier of the Himalaya Mountains |
| 13        | <b>Future 2050</b>                           | (+4) - Large and young workforce will attract foreign investment now dedicated to China<br>- Dual East-West collaboration  | (-2) - China's economic growth and infiltration into India's neighbors will be overwhelming   |
| 14        | <b>Future 2100</b>                           | (+5) - 50% of the world's population will be concentrated around the Indian Ocean, where India dominates the waters<br>- India's population will grow to 1.6-1.8 billion people while China's population will decline  | (-1) - Demographic rivals emerge such as: Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, E. D. Congo, Tanzania or Mozambique   |
| <b>15</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>+ 59</b>  | <b>- 24</b>   |

#### 4 European Union

The third demographic power in the world and with 40% of the area of the USA or China, the second economic power by nominal GDP equal to the state of China, 5 times larger than India or the entire continent of Africa, equal to the USA by PPP GDP, this is the great soft economic power of the world, developing a union with its own sovereign laws and leadership, but with a single currency and abolished borders.

**Tabel 4.** Uniunea Europeană

| No. | Criterie:       | Advantages:   | Weaknesses:                    |
|-----|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>Relief:</b>  | (+5) - Flat surface, with high agricultural potential throughout<br>- Agricultural land 1,700,000 km <sup>2</sup> | (-2) - Small area of the Union |
| 2   | <b>Climate:</b> | (+5) - Mild, temperate climate,   | (0) - Climatic extremes rarely |

|   |                        |   |   |
|---|------------------------|---|---|
|   |                        | warm in the south, slightly cold in the north, rainy in the west and moderate in the east   | occur without significant damage  |
| 3 | Rivers:                | (+5) - High-flowing rivers, navigable and linked by a huge network of canals: Rhine-Danube, Rhine-Vistula, Rhine-Rhone, Garonne-Mediterranean, etc.   | (0) - The canal network is reduced in the south, but compensated for by the continental seas  |
| 4 | Seas and Oceans:       | (+5) - The most landlocked power in the world, with continental maritime systems: Mediterranean-Black Sea and Baltic Sea, numerous islands and peninsulas: Scandinavian, Jutland, Iberian, Italic, Balkan | (-3) - Bordered by oceans, seas, straits and canals that it does not dominate: Arctic Ocean dominated by Russia and Norway, English Channel shared with the United Kingdom, Gibraltar shared with the UK and Morocco, Bosphorus dominated by Turkey, Suez Canal (to the Indian Ocean) owned by Egypt  |
| 5 | Culture-History:       | (+2) - The states of the union are united culturally and religiously, with a common history   | (-4) - Many former rival states: France-Germany, Germans-Poland, Austria-Italy, Romania-Hungary, etc.<br>- Dissensions between North-West and South-East<br>Coalition of Anglo-Saxon states in the Atlantic (USA-Great Britain) and Islamist states in the Mediterranean (Turkey-Bosnia-Albania-Morocco- Islamist community in the big cities |
| 6 | Religion:              | (+4) - Religiously united Christian states, dominated by peaceful teachings   | (-3) - Promotion of atheism that endangers the existence of the Union<br>- Expansion of Islam, more united and tough  |
| 7 | Internal Demographics: | (+5) - Population of 450 million, numerous and specialized  | (-3) - Population too linguistically differentiated, in demographic decline and aging   |
| 8 | Resources:             | (+2) - Fish resources in territorial waters, forests in mountainous areas and numerous subsoil resources  | (-5) - Very few resources compared to the large population<br>- Lack of energy resources, these being in non-EU states such as Norway or the United Kingdom, in northern Africa, Iran or Russia, where the Union has diplomatic dissensions   |
| 9 | External Demographics: | (+5) - Population three times larger than Russia or more than the population of all   | (-3) - The Islamist population is growing rapidly in the southern and eastern   |



|    |                                       |  |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|---|
|    |                                       | neighbors combined   | Mediterranean, Turkey or Egypt surpassing the most populous state of the Union: Germany   |
| 10 | Capacity of Neighbors:                | - The Union has 20 trillion US dollars Nominal GDP and 29 trillion US dollars PPP GDP, while non-EU states around the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Algeria, Morocco etc.) together have 4.5 trillion Nominal and 12 trillion US dollars PPP GDP | (-4) - Fierce neighbors, with rich resources and Arctic and land sea routes (Russia) or Islamists with dominant sea or land routes (Turkey with the Bosphorus Strait and Egypt with the Suez Canal artery)  |
| 11 | Diplomacy:                            | (+4) - Allied with the US and Canada in NATO<br>- Allied states in the G7<br>- Monetary, commercial and decision-making power  | (-4) - Does not have its own army<br>- In conflict with hydrocarbon-rich neighbors (Russia, Algeria, Iran, Libya)<br>- Isolated itself in the northeast and south, and in the west allowed total US influence in the United Kingdom                                       |
| 12 | Main asset +: / Main vulnerability -: | (+3) - Rich and strong<br>- A huge economic market<br>- EURO currency<br>- An island of stability and prosperity in an ocean of wars, poverty and political instability  | (-5) - Fierce dissensions between states<br>- Aging and stagnating population<br>- Lacking vital energy resources<br>- Isolated in the north, south and east and a vassal of the US in the west, through miscalculated diplomacy  |
| 13 | Future 2050:                          | (+3) - Continues economic stability and development, being a haven of well-being in the Western Rimland region<br>- Immigration helps maintain economic growth   | (-3) - Isolation and wars in the east (Ukraine-Russia), southeast (Azerbaijan-Armenia, Turkey-Armenia, USA-Iran, Syria, Israel-Islam, Turkey-Greece-Cyprus) and south (Libya, Algeria, Morocco) affect trade, supplies, finances and bring in large numbers of migrants   |
| 14 | Future 2100:                          | (+2) - Economic development and agricultural and climatic potential maintain prosperity  | (-5) - Population declines and ages<br>- Ethnic structure of population changes<br>- Demographic growth is maintained in the states supplying emigrants from the Islamic World, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia<br>- Possible disintegration or diminution of the Union |
| 15 | <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>+ 55</b>  | <b>- 44</b>   |

## 5 Russia

The world's territorial colossus, Russia is as large as the US and China combined, or 4.5 times larger than the EU, with a very small population, 10% of the population of China or India, but homogeneous and with huge agricultural areas, forests and subsoil resources over 3 times larger than China's, 1.8 times larger than the US or 70 times larger than India.

**Tabel 5.** Russia

| No. | Criteria:        | Advantages:  | Weaknesses:   |
|-----|------------------|--|---|
| 1   | Relief:          | (+5) - Area 17,000,000 km <sup>2</sup><br>- Largest plain in Europe – East European Plain<br>- and in Asia – West Siberian Plain<br>- Smooth plateaus and low mountains: Urals, Altai<br>Agricultural land 1,200,000 km <sup>2</sup>   | (-2) - Too large and difficult to manage area, almost as big as the USA and China combined or three times the size of the rest of Europe, excluding Russia  |
| 2   | Climate:         | (+5) - In 10,000,000 km <sup>2</sup> the climate is temperate, favorable for humanization  | (-2) - Large cold areas in the north, but little humanized  |
| 3   | Rivers:          | (+5) - Four of the largest Asian rivers (Obi, Yenisei, Lena, Amur) and the largest river in Europe (Volga)<br>- Complete canal system: White Sea – Gulf of Finland – Volga – Caspian Sea – Don – Sea of Azov   | (-2) - Asian rivers are not interconnected by canals and flow north, being frozen for a long time of the year   |
| 4   | Seas and Oceans: | (+4) - Extensive direct outlet to the Arctic Ocean and Pacific Ocean and indirect outlet to the Atlantic Ocean through the Baltic Sea and Black Sea<br>- Access to the Indian Ocean through Iran or through the Black Sea – Mediterranean Sea – Suez – Red Sea   | (-2) - Frozen seas (Arctic Ocean, Baltic Sea, Sea of Okhotsk)<br>- Seas blocked by straits in rival states: Bosphorus, Kattegat, Norwegian coast, Bering, Korea<br>- 8,000 km distance between populated European Russia and the ports of the Pacific Ocean |
| 5   | Culture-History: | (+2) - Historical domination over neighbors, conquering territories in the past in: China, Korea, Japan, Central Asia – Iran, Ukraine, Poland, Finland, etc.<br>- Cultural domination with Slavic-Orthodox states, Slavic or Russian communities: Ukraine, Poland, Belarus, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kazakhstan, etc. | (-4) Current enemies: Japan, Ukraine, Georgia, Poland, USA; potential enemies: Germany, Finland, Turkey and Islamist states, China  |
| 6   | Religion:        | (+5) - Peaceful and united Orthodox Christian  | (-2) - Expansion of Islam in the south and tribal religions   |

|    |                        |  |  |
|----|------------------------|--|--|
|    |                        |  | in Siberia   |
| 7  | Internal Demographics: | (+2) - Stable and specialized Russian population   | (-5) - Total population too small numerically, surpassed by Bangladesh or Nigeria and close to Japan, Ethiopia or the Philippines<br>- The population is decreasing and is also very old<br>- Increasingly Islamist population in southern Europe and Chinese in southern Asian Russia   |
| 8  | Resources:             | (+5) - Huge amounts of resources of 75 trillion US dollars, the largest resources in the world owned by a small population: oceanic fishing areas, the most extensive forests, subsoil resources   | (0) Easy exploitation and proximity to major consumers such as East Asia and Europe  |
| 9  | External Demographics: | (+3) - 145 million, populous compared to most of its neighbors: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and North Korea which together have 80 million, and Ukraine and Poland together now have under 80 million<br>- Surrounded by the Pacific to the east and the Arctic to the north where there is no stable population | (-4) - Japan and Korea very populous (200 million together), China 10 times more populous (1.4 billion), population increases in Turkey and Iran (90 million each) and the European Union (450 million)  |
| 10 | Neighbors' Capability: | (+4) - It borders weak states that do not have heavy weapons<br>- In the north there are frozen wastelands and in the south desert wastelands<br>- Dissension within the European Union and the non-integration of some states gives Russia the capacity to intervene  | (-3) - European states are allied in NATO with the US and the European Union, having a great economic capacity<br>- Turkey is making military and economic friends with Islamist states neighboring Russia<br>- China is 6-10 times stronger economically (GDP PPP and Nominal GDP)<br>- South Korea and Japan are economically strong |
| 11 | Diplomacy:             | (+4) - Ally in BRICS<br>- Integrated in the Shanghai Pact<br>- Military coalition with Iran, Turkey, North Korea, China and former USSR states   | (-5) - It has allied the most developed states against it (US, EU, Japan, etc.)<br>- Attachment of states with risk factor: China, Turkey<br>- War with states that are similar to it linguistically, religiously and culturally:  |

|    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
|    |   |   | Ukraine  |
| 12 | Main Strength<br>+: /<br>Main<br>Vulnerability -: | (+3) - Very large area with huge resources needed by Eurasia<br>- Great military power and exporter of competitive and cheap weapons<br>- Military and decision-making influence on neighbors and in many states of the world | (-3) - Reduced population compared to the contested states<br>- Far from populated areas, having vulnerable routes: mountains, deserts, sea routes with straits<br>- Many allies allied against it   |
| 13 | Future 2050                                       | (+4) - Rimland development and Russia's allies: China and India will bring it profit and investment for resources<br>- BRICS expansion and development  | (-2) - NATO and EU expansion into the European coast of Russia, the US-Japan alliance on the eastern seaboard and the return of Turkey to Central Asia   |
| 14 | Future 2100                                       | (+2) - Overpopulation and development of the world will thirst for the resources so abundant in Russia<br>- Possible dissolution of the European Union in the west and demographic decline in the east: China, Japan          | (-5) - Drastic population decline in Russia and the growth of world population<br>- the growth of the Islamist population in the south and the influence of China on the Siberian peoples increase the risk of a split of the Russian Empire |
| 15 | <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>+ 53</b>   | <b>- 41</b>  |

### CONCLUSIONS

This topic can become the theme of a book and can be expanded to hundreds of pages. Although it represents only an opinion, scientifically analyzed, but which is based overwhelmingly on the decision and perception of the author. At the beginning of the study, it seemed that China would be at the top of the ranking of the most advantaged states, but the lack of resources, the risks of isolation and the demographic decline that is announced for the end of the 21st century, this state falls to third place after the USA, which is in a remarkable geographical situation, but also after India, which tends to even surpass the USA by 2100, based on its demographic power, maritime freedom and access to an ocean that will host half of the world's population, around its waters, by the end of the 21st century.

At the bottom of the ranking is the European Union in penultimate place, which is a gentle economic colossus and geographically advantageous, but the aging population and such diversified migration put great pressure on the change of this union, which in the constant stress of dismemberment, tends to fall to 5th place to the detriment of Russia, homogeneously populated and with agricultural, forestry and especially subsoil resources estimated at 75 trillion US dollars, similar at a global level to all the resources of Canada, Brazil and Australia combined. In the current global poverty, the world needs high technology and EU investments, but with the demographic explosion and the economic miracle in Asia and Africa, they will accentuate the need for natural resources, benefiting states with large areas but little population, such as Russia.

**Table 6.** Final ranking of superpowers between 2025 and 2100

| No. | Mega-powers    | Points Very 2025 | Points Weaknesses | Points Very 2100 | Points Weaknesses | Difference + and - 2025 | Difference + and - 2100 | Place occupied 2025 | 2100     |
|-----|----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 1   | India          | + 50             | - 21              | + 59             | - 24              | + 29                    | + 35                    | <b>2</b>            | <b>1</b> |
| 2   | USA            | + 54             | - 20              | + 61             | - 27              | + 34                    | + 34                    | <b>1</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| 3   | China          | + 50             | - 32              | + 58             | - 37              | + 18                    | + 21                    | <b>3</b>            | <b>3</b> |
| 4   | European Union | + 50             | - 36              | + 55             | - 44              | + 14                    | + 11                    | <b>4</b>            | <b>5</b> |
| 5   | Russia         | + 47             | - 34              | + 53             | - 41              | + 13                    | + 12                    | <b>5</b>            | <b>4</b> |

The interpretative nature of the study may attract many different opinions, with each inhabitant of the 5 powers probably emphasizing the advantages of the mother countries, geologists would be tempted to highlight the decisive role of relief in the development of a nation, climatologists could argue that desert or frozen land should not be considered an advantage, geopoliticians deservedly emphasizing diplomacy, and demographers showing how important a country with many millions of inhabitants can be, but this is precisely the role of the present work. The geography of nations is important, but so is the human factor, its cultural-religious manifestation, access to information and general mentality, position on the world stage, shared history with the neighborhood, or dominant trends until the 2050s or even 2100s. Analyzed together, they form the CV of a nation, and several CVs placed in the same ranking can anticipate the future of humanity.

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