

Developing beer tourism in South Africa: international perspectives

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Abstract

Beer tourism is a growing dimension of culinary or food tourism. Although South Africa is traditionally associated with wine tourism the country is enjoying the development of beer tourism, in particular associated with the expansion of craft beer micro-breweries. Against this background the paper situates the emergence of South African beer tourism as part of the wider international growth of beer tourism. An analysis is presented of key trends in research on beer tourism, including of policy-related issues. It is argued that whilst lessons may be learned from the experience of wine tourism that there is a need for expanding the amount of beer tourism specific scholarship. In particular, there is a significant agenda for tourism scholars around the relationships between the burgeoning of craft beer and of incipient forms of craft beer tourism. This agenda includes the need to profile beer tourists, understand the participation of breweries in beer tourism, the importance of neo-localism for the craft beer industry in South Africa, and evaluate the impacts of beer tourism initiatives for local economic development.

Keywords: culinary tourism; beer tourism; South Africa; craft beer; international debates



Source: <http://www.bloomrealty.com/content/blogs/290/Beer.jpg>

INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world the activity of culinary travel is expanding in popularity and progressively has emerged as an independent product on its own within tourism (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012a). Culinary tourism can be recognised as applying a variety of alternate terms including food, gastronomic, cuisine or gourmet tourism (Hall et al., 2003). Both Robinson & Novelli (2005) and Kraftchick et al. (2014) designate culinary tourism as a form of niche tourism with people travelling to particular localities in order to experience the unique foods and beverages of a destination. Minihan (2014: 3) adopts the definition that it is a “tourist’s experience taking a trip outside their normal setting for either a primary or secondary intention to embrace the food spectrum and sample local cuisine”. Indeed, culinary tourism is delineated as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences and gastronomic tourism viewed as “trips made to destinations where the local food and beverages are the main motivating factors to travel” (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012b: 104). Notwithstanding a rising interest to explore a region’s cuisine until recently only a small volume of research has been generated around culinary tourism. Overall the scope of culinary tourism encompasses visits to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and special locations for food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production as the essential driver or motivation for travel (Hall et al., 2003; Hall & Sharples, 2008).

Arguably, food and drink have emerged as integral elements of the tourist experience and often they are viewed as a lens to interpret a destination’s local culture and often unique heritage (Hall & Sharples, 2008; Hall & Gossling, 2014; Minihan, 2014). Among others Hall et al. (2000) stress that the relationships between

cuisine, place and experience are critical matters for tourism development. In a significant observation Bell & Valentine (1997: 149) aver that as localities and regions “seek to market themselves while simultaneously protecting themselves from the homogenising forces of globalization, regional identity becomes enshrined in bottles of wine and hunks of cheese”. Arguably, therefore, local food and beverages of a region can assume a vital role in the culture of regions and can be one of the essential motivations for tourists to travel to certain areas (Plummer et al., 2005). In South Africa the benchmark study by du Rand et al. (2003) underlines the potential for gastronomy to be applied as a branding tool for tourism destinations and that localities should not overlook the potential of what are sometimes considered as secondary attractions, such as local food and drinks. Food tourism can be a vehicle for local and regional development with opportunities to diversify local economies as well as strengthen local identities and traditions (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). As argued recently by Everett & Slocum (2013, 2014) many local governments acknowledge the capacity of food tourism to enhance the sustainability of tourism development and have initiated a critical policy oriented agenda that supports the nexus of tourism and food as well as furnishing an avenue to enhance tourism product offerings. The search for authentic local products has become therefore a vital trend within food tourism (Hall & Gossling, 2014). Neolocalism can be interpreted as a desire among communities to embrace or reassert the uniqueness and authenticity of places or localities (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014). The stress on neolocalism has become a significant asset for culinary tourism development “because of its symbolic ties to place and culture” (Spracklen et al., 2013: 307) as well as according a so-termed moral ‘feel good factor’ which is associated with consumption by allowing visitors a sense

of connection to their destination (Sims, 2009).

Within the segment of beverage tourism, the most important scholarly focus so far has been upon wine or viticultural tourism (Hall et al., 2000; Plummer et al., 2005). However, in addition to wine tourism other forms of beverage tourism that have come under critical academic scrutiny include whisky and bourbon tourism, coffee tourism, tea tourism, sake tourism and most recently beer tourism. The phenomenon of beer tourism is considered as “a young form of special interest tourism” (Howlett, 2013: 32) and “a new way of gastronomic tourism” (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012a). It has been defined as a form of tourism “of which participants are motivated by gastronomic experience of drinking different types of beer and typical atmosphere of brewing restaurants or knowing history and current technology of beer manufacture” (Jablonska et al., 2013: 67). For the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) “beyond just being a beverage, beer tourism offers curious travellers an insight into national identity, and most importantly, is a way to develop local tourism” (WTTC, 2014). As observed by Bujdoso & Szucs (2012b: 105) the international experience is that “beer tourism has become a new and popular form of alternative tourism” and “a growing industry as more and more companies offer tours to beer brewing regions”. Recently, the WTTC (2014) accorded official acknowledgement of the ascent of beer tourism as an emerging niche in the global tourism economy. In particular, it draws attention to an increasing number of countries looking to “jump onto the craft beer bandwagon”. The potential for beer tourism development has included even traditional wine tourism destinations such as France where the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region is planning to use its craft beer to attract tourists (WTTC, 2014).

One emerging destination in global beer tourism is South Africa, a country

conventionally associated for beverage tourism with the activity of wine tourism which is mainly prevalent in the Western Cape province. During the past two decades, however, several initiatives have been launched specifically to strengthen beer tourism. Mager (2005, 2006, 2010) documents the establishment in the 1990s by South African Breweries Ltd of heritage beer museums in Johannesburg and Cape Town designed to celebrate and promote (mainly) the clear beer product offerings of the country's monopoly beer brewer. Since the early 2000s the momentum of beer tourism in South Africa has shifted, however, with the emergence and establishment of over one hundred micro-breweries which produce a wide array of craft beers (Collins, 2014; Strydom, 2014). In common with the international experience the niche of craft beer in South Africa was opened and driven by the blandness and lack of variety of products in the local beer market. Increasingly, local consumers dissatisfied with mass-produced generic lagers reacted positively to the array of new offerings made by craft micro-brewers.

The expansion of craft beer production has been associated with the launch of a rapidly growing number of local beer festivals and of suggested beer trails which are expanding the footprint of beer tourism in South Africa (See Corne, 2010; Anon, 2012; Corne & Reyneke, 2013; Collins, 2014). It is against a backdrop of the emergence of South Africa as a beer tourism destination that this paper has two modest aims.

First, is to situate the growth of beer tourism in South Africa as part of a wider international expansion in beer tourism. Second, is to offer an overview of key trends in research on the phenomenon of beer tourism, including of policy-related issues.

BEER TOURISM: INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

Notwithstanding the growth of beer tourism, academic studies of the topic are undeveloped as the corpus of beer-specific tourism scholarship lags far behind that which is devoted to wine tourism. In pioneer Canadian research on beer tourism Plummer et al. (2005: 449) used the definition that it is “visitation to breweries, beer festivals and beer shows for which beer tasting and experiencing the attributes of beer region are the prime motivating factors for visitors”. An important attraction for beer tourists is brewery tours and tasting rooms which allow the visitor to experience new types of beer and interact with brewmasters (Plummer et al., 2005). Overall, Howlett (2013: 6) considers brewery based tourism to be “a relatively new type of tourism” and deems it a form of special interest tourism which is “a small and relatively unknown form of tourism” (Howlett, 2013: 23).

Since the first academic forays in beer tourism which began with an investigation of the Waterloo-Wellington Ale Trail in Canada (Plummer et al., 2005, 2006), a small number of additional investigations relating to beer tourism have surfaced. Bujdoso & Szucs (2012b: 105) draw a distinction between different kinds of beer tourism based upon the primary motivation of tourists. First, beer as the primary motivator for travel with the core aim of tourists to consume the selected type(s) of beer in a chosen environment. Second, is a situation when places that may be connected with beer or beer consumption are the primary motivation for travel; the actual consumption of beer is of a secondary consideration. For the first form of tourism, the attractions can be beer tastings, specialised beer shops, beer themed meals, beer weekends and most importantly the beer trail or route. It is argued that an organised beer trail might be a tourism attraction as it can be a major motivator for beer tourists “to plan a

weekend break or short holiday in the area to sample local beers, stay at pubs and visit one or two breweries” (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012b: 106). Beer museums and pubs as industrial heritage attractions are considered the most significant basis for the second form of beer tourism, in which beer consumption may be a secondary motivator. Examples include many European local breweries which operate visitor centres and beer museums, including the Plzen Brewery museum in the Czech Republic and the Guinness Brewery Museum in Dublin. Among others Van Westering (1999) and Spracklen et al. (2013) point out beer tourism is an integral part of tourists consuming local heritage and experiencing local history and cultures as reflected in food and drink. Indeed, in the USA, Dillivan (2012: 8) articulates the linkages of craft beer to local heritage and identity as follows: “When ordering a drink at a bar, pub or microbrewery, there is much more than simply the drink that is ordered: it is part of a tradition that has shaped our culture and our history”. By branding beers with local themes a unique and distinctive beverage culture can be fostered thereby enhancing the distinctive character of localities for tourism development (Schnell & Reese, 2003).

The growth of the slow-food movement and of foodie movements are considered in the context of the USA as affording a stimulus of market demand for beer tourism. Among its goals, the slow food movement seeks to preserve traditional and regional cuisines, objectives which are incorporated within beer tourism. Howlett (2013: 24) emphasizes that slow food members who visit craft breweries “can now understand who is producing their favourite brews”. The term foodie in the USA refers to collectors of food experiences and is generally viewed as originating in the 1980s. Foodies represent a distinctive hobbyist group whose interests and activities include the food and beverage industry and can encompass breweries and the sampling of different forms of beer. Craft breweries with their select and unique offerings are

in a strong position to capitalize on the desires of the foodie movement to strive to try new restaurants and food products (Howlett, 2013). Another shift which is favouring the expansion of craft beer tourism is the rise of experiential tourism and of the experience economy wherein consumers pay a premium for experience rather simply a product or service. Breweries engage in experiential tourism by allowing visitors to become part of the 'creative' process of beer production through for example applying labels or even selecting hops. Another stimulus and outcome of the enhanced interest in beer tourism is the collector activity of 'breweriana' which involves any articles or item that contains a brewery or brand name associated with beer and breweries. In the USA there are a growing number of beer tourists who "collect beer glasses, bottles and other paraphernalia from the many different breweries they visit" (Howlett, 2013: 28).

Baginski & Bell (2011) argue the international trend towards the growth and expansion of craft breweries exemplifies resource partitioning theory in which firms that serve small niche markets challenge the monopolistic competition of the large enterprises that command the brewing industry. The global movement in craft beer production towards small production breweries is inseparable, however, from the changing economics of the industry but also is an indicator of the growth in tourist interest for consuming local products and real food and drink. This is illustrated by the rise of craft micro-breweries across North America as well as in parts of Europe (Spracklen et al., 2013; Batzli, 2014; Eberts, 2014; McLaughlin et al., 2014).

Nowadays beer tourism is a way for localities to attract niche tourists either as a supplement to other tourism assets or as the main attraction. In many parts of the global North "beer could thus be seen to

occupy an important position in the hospitality and entertainment industries" (Niester, 2008: 18). In the USA case for some tourists the macrobreweries of the country's six leading brewers exhibit "a negative connotation, being known as beer with little character or culture" (Howlett, 2013: 8). By contrast the country's growing cohort of micro-breweries and brew pubs have the ability to offer a culinary experience, not least through pairing of different foods with multiple beers. In addition, farmhouse breweries or farm breweries, which are micro-breweries based on or near to a farm, often are motivated to supply locally produced items that are manufactured ethically and without chemical preservatives (Howlett, 2013: 13). As a whole, the expansion of the craft beer industry and of micro-breweries has escalated the popularity of beer tourism in several countries, in particular in regions of the USA including Wisconsin, North Carolina, Colorado and Oregon (Francioni, 2012; Kline et al., 2014; Kraftchick et al., 2014; Shears, 2014). The Southern states of USA are the most recent entrants to the business of beer tourism (Baginski & Bell, 2011). Alonso (2011) highlights the challenges facing the establishment of beer tourism in the new frontier of Alabama.

Among others Niester (2008: 19) points out the concept of route development "has been adapted by the beer brewing industry in several areas and is commonly referred to as a 'beer trail' or 'ale trail'". These are self-guided tours that link beer lovers with a range of destinations connected to the beer. It is observed that beer or ale trails "increasingly are taking their place alongside more-established wine trails to draw the connoisseur to areas with a clustering of microbreweries" (Schnell & Reese, 2014: 175). Beer trails represent a subset of what Timothy & Boyd (2014) refer to as "purposive cultural routes". Of all the different forms of tourism trails, wine routes are the best documented in tourism scholarship with the benefits of wine trails seen as accruing

both to participating producers as well as having wider economic and community impacts particularly for local development. The concept of beer routes or beer trails is of more recent origin. Timothy & Boyd (2014) document the existence and popularity of several beer trails in European destinations. In tourism scholarship greatest attention has been devoted to the Canadian experience and the record of the Waterloo-Wellington Ale Trail (Plummer et al., 2005, 2006). The potential local economic development benefits of successful beer trails can be to strengthen pride in local breweries, attract tourists into localities, develop cooperative and collaborative networks and partnerships for both tourism expansion and expand sales of beer (Plummer et al., 2005, 2006). In the USA the state of Pennsylvania offers a self-guided beer tour that incorporates also visits to state parks and New York markets the Finger Lakes Beer Trail which encompasses breweries, brewpubs and restaurants. Howlett (2013) maintains that the state of Oregon is at the forefront of beer tourism in the USA with the cities of Portland and Bend of special significance. Abernethy (2014) chronicles the transition of a former mill town to "Beer Town, USA". The locality of Bend with a population of 82 000 witnessed the rise of beer tourism with at least 14 breweries and encourages tourists to participate in a beer trail involving walks to local breweries (Abernethy, 2014). This town has been described as "maybe the most successful example of an ale trail" (Howlett, 2013: 46). The locality's beer trail can be undertaken "on foot, bicycle or by car if they have a responsible and non-drinking driver" (Howlett, 2013: 46). The trail is organised with tourists having a beer passport and collecting stamps on visiting various breweries; on receiving 11 different stamps tourists can take their passport back to the local visitor centre and receive a special prize. A parallel state-wide beer passport programme exists in the State of Vermont.

In common with the Bend Ale Trail several similar initiatives have been innovated across other towns of Oregon with one linked to a bicycle trail such that adventure tourism merges and cross-cuts the activity of beer tourism. In California restaurants offer beer and food pairings to celebrate the bold flavours that the products of the state's flourishing craft beer industry add to local meals. In addition, California is among many states that organise festivals which offer not only beer but also entertainment and barbecue competitions. In particular, San Diego is promoted as a hub for beer tourism with the city's expanding beer culture. In Colorado beer tourism is stimulated by hosting a number of festivals the most notable that of the Great American Beer Fest featuring over 600 breweries from across the USA which compete for medals for their beers. In Michigan the month of July is declared as Craft Beer Month to promote consumption. Across the USA Schnell & Reese (2014: 175) reflect that brewery tours "have now taken their place alongside winery tours as a *de rigueur* part of tourist advertisement for most regions of the country, and are touted as a means of experiencing the 'authentic' nature of a place".

As noted earlier Canada was the focus for pioneer beer tourism research which was conducted on the Waterloo-Wellington Ale Trail. This collaboration between six craft breweries was closed in 2003 (Plummer et al., 2006). Elsewhere in Canada, however, the linkage between beer and tourism has grown and strengthened. For example, Eberts (2014: 196) argues that tourism has emerged as "an important component of the craft breweries business model and increases their connection to local communities". It is noted "most microbreweries offer tours, both for marketing, but also to create tangible links with their consumers, or enable consumers to feel a greater connection to them" (Eberts, 2014: 196). In particular, this business model is common in Ontario where the Ontario Craft Brewers has created the Ontario Beer Route which is

subdivided into a series of five routes corresponding to craft beer regions across the province. The role of such routes is to offer both increased sales to breweries and importantly, wider benefits to local communities as the brewery tour is a vehicle for local economic development (Eberts, 2014).

Outside of North America beer tourism is taking root and recognised by several other countries which we discuss below. In parts of Europe beer tourism is linked strongly to heritage tourism. It is argued that brewery tourism in Germany is an integral facet of understanding the culture and cuisines of locales as well as the long-established histories of brewing and of breweries. The most well-known European festival is the Munich Oktoberfest which attracts millions of tourists annually to experience Bavarian culture and cuisine. Pechlaner et al. (2009: 33) observe that beer "is a cultural asset in Bavaria" and that "Bavarian beer becomes a part of the adventure that is travelling to Bavaria". Cooperation is therefore essential between tourism organizations and the local brewery industry. Within Europe Amsterdam linked to Heineken, Dublin linked to Guinness, and Copenhagen, the headquarters of Carlsberg, are also important destinations which are linked to beer tourism. Belgium is another established locus for beer tourism with its vintage beers a popular attraction for tourists (Plummer et al., 2005). In Amsterdam the rise of the city's beer tourism economy has been spurred by the expansion observed in craft breweries in the Netherlands particularly over the past decade (Strydom, 2014). In the case of Ireland the Guinness Storehouse is the country's most popular fee charging tourism attraction (Foley, 2009: 15).

The Czech Beer Festival in Prague attracts more than a million visitors and similar festivals are of growing significance for beer tourists to visit the Baltic states especially Estonia (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012b). International research on beer

festivals points to three positive impacts upon destinations: (1) contributions to local economic development; (2) image enhancement; and (3) potentially strengthen the competitiveness of the destination for business investment (Zong & Zhao, 2013). The opportunities for developing beer tourism in Slovakia are highlighted by Jablonska et al. (2013). In Slovakia the country's cohort of microbreweries assume a vital role in developing local tourism and creating employment opportunities in small towns and villages. This potential is further maximised through the establishment of beer routes or trails which are dedicated to cultivating tourism and help preserve the country's brewing traditions. Promotion of beer tourism occurs also through a range of local festivals and beer celebrations which have markedly increased in recent years. At such events "visitors can taste a wide offer of different beer brands" as well as "try here various specialities of Slovak cuisine" (Jablonska et al., 2013: 71).

The United Kingdom is another popular destination for beer tourism. Real ale tourism, part of British working class male culture, is expanding particularly in the traditional heartland of northern England. Spracklen et al. (2013) link its resurgence as part of a search for authentic food and drink and that the real ale industry is an element in the revitalization of beer traditions and of particular identities in the wake of what they describe as a 'lagerized' commercial world. In the United Kingdom 'real ale destinations' are being packaged and promoted by the tourism sector. Support for beer tourism can be secured through a beer achieving the status of Protected Designation of Origin Product which legally confines the production of a particular product to within the boundaries of a local area such as 'Yorkshire beer' (Niester, 2008). Real ale is marketed as a premium product which reflects authenticity and real food which is something 'uniquely northern English' (Spracklen et al., 2013). The real ale tourists are those who choose to reject the

lagerization of the mainstream beer industry and view real-ale as an expression of authenticity, real food, small-scale capitalism, locality and regional identity (Spracklen et al., 2013). In the UK real ale tourism is supported by organised pub walks in which small groups of real ale supporters take walks across the English countryside to support old-fashioned pubs that serve real ale (Spracklen et al., 2013). Other channels for promoting real ale destinations are through organised brewery visits, tastings in local pubs which are paired with food, and having themed shops and visitor centres. Caffyn (2010) asserts that the relationships between beer and tourism are “worth fostering”. Using the example of the United Kingdom it is argued that beer, a traditional and often taken for granted product, can be used as a basis for sustainable tourism development. In particular the British pub and breweries are a significant component of national architectural, social and industrial heritage (Niester, 2008). The enhancement of the linkages between beer and tourism through different aspects of beer tourism, in the long term, can offer opportunities for the growth of the beer industry and of tourism (Caffyn, 2010).

As tourists search for new experiences, beer tourism in Europe is becoming increasingly diversified as beer is connected with local attractions to create a “beer package” which is viewed as “a specialist beer themed trip including trips to breweries, interesting pubs, festivals and beer tastings, perhaps linked to walking and other food related activities” (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012b: 110). In addition, opportunities exist to link beer with other local food specialities particularly those which complement beer such as cheese, chocolate or sausages (Caffyn, 2010). Finally, within the domain of beer tourism in Europe might be included, according to Munar (2013), the phenomenon of ‘drunken tourism’, which is a characteristic of destinations such as Majorca, in the Balearic Islands. Munar

(2013) tracks the case of Palma where the promotion of heavy alcohol consumption, mainly beer, is used as a means to revitalize stagnant tourist areas. Easy access to abundant and cheap alcohol is related often to excessive consumption which causes outrageous, immoderate and unethical tourist behaviour at such drinking destinations (Munar, 2013).

Beyond Europe and the USA there is also increasing evidence of beer tourism taking root. In Asia, Zong & Zhao (2013) highlight the importance of beer tourism to Qingdao, the home of Tsingtao Brewery. At Tsingtao there is an International Beer Festival as well as organised visits to the original brewery buildings which are converted to a taproom where tourists can enjoy tastings as well as learn about the history of the brewery (Howlett, 2013).. It is argued that the Qingdao brewery is “a popular tourist attraction and is considered a part of the town’s cultural identity” (Howlett, 2013: 37). In New Zealand, the city of Dunedin with its attraction of Speights’ brewery is another developing beer tourism destination. In Brazil beer tourism also has become an emerging tourism segment in certain parts of the country. In particular, Bizinelli et al. (2013) document the expansion of beer tourism in the surrounds of Curitiba. Here the authors’ analysis suggests a need to promote a quality experience for visitors around good service, ambience and especially the quality of the craft beer that is produced and marketed.

CURRENT POLICY AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

According to Howlett (2013: 29) the future growth of beer tourism “can learn a great deal from a similar industry, wine tourism”. One parallel is that of establishing tasting rooms. It is argued that the motivations for breweries to establish tasting rooms are a direct parallel to those found by Hall et al. (2000) with respect to wine tourism

namely for purposes of growing retail sales, promotion and education (Dunn & Kregor, 2014). Arguably, the opportunity to expand retail sales is most welcome by brewers as the distribution of craft beer can be difficult and expensive and brewers make more profits on direct sales than through the channels of wholesalers. The function of education was viewed as aligned to promoting and developing product awareness as well as challenging the market dominance of large brewers. Importantly, also, Dunn & Kregor (2014: 192) aver that scholarship on wine tourism “clearly demonstrates that wine producers initially did not regard their businesses as tourist attractions” and further that they needed “encouragement to recognise the potential benefits of cooperating with tourism industries to form wine tourism regions”.

The experience of the Canadian Wellington-Waterloo Trail is instructive here as suspicions existed between brewers and tourism organizations to the extent that the successful ale trail was closed and the trail eventually abandoned (Eberts, 2014). In this case the brewers' early enthusiasm for the beer trail dwindled. It was contended that the breweries viewed tourism in the guise of the Ale trail as a vehicle for enhancing brand awareness and that once this was achieved the need for tourism was reduced (Plummer et al., 2006). Overall, an important policy lesson is to reflect on the fact that the principal focus of many craft breweries is craft beer and that their business strategy often is to build direct links to consumers locally and beyond through fostering a craft beer culture which is supported further by beer tastings, festivals and social media. Arguably, following Dunn & Kregor (2014: 197), in policy terms there is a need for extended collaboration and cooperation which requires that brewers acknowledge their potential role as tourism attractions and embrace support and partnerships from tourism organisations.

It is argued that one of the most appropriate vehicles for wineries to expand marketing and enhance revenues is through promoting tastings and tours of their wineries. Accordingly, in several parts of the world wineries have energetically sought to initiate tours, hire knowledgeable staff and establishing tasting rooms to support tourism. The core benefit is to enhance brand awareness and sales which are important benefits to the winery. Wider benefits can accrue to the local community and economy particularly in circumstances where visitors may be attracted to clusters of wineries in order to engage in multiple tastings. The establishment of restaurants and of dedicated food and wine pairings is a further component of wine tourism in many parts of the world (Ferreira & Muller, 2013). The burst of wine tourism can be explained in part also by the rise of slow food and foodie movements as well as the expansion in interest in experiential tourism (Howlett, 2013). It is contended that whilst wine tourism is now an established niche in gastronomic/food tourism “beer tourism can learn from wine tourism and be able to attract consumers with methods similar to wine tourism or develop its own to differentiate itself” (Howlett, 2013: 31). In particular the promotion of beer tourism can learn from the networking effects, successful (informal as well as formal) collaboration and clustering that has galvanised wine tourism in many parts of the world (Plummer et al. 2005).

Nevertheless, it is stressed by Dunn & Kregor (2014: 192) that minimal “empirical research has been conducted into the relationship between craft breweries and visitors”. Early work in Canada generated a profile of mainly male visitors, largely under 30 years, travelling with partners or in a group and with an increasing proportion of visitors from outside the local region. Plummer et al (2005: 456) unpacked the purchasing behaviour of

beer tourists and disclosed that the majority of visitors had sampled new beers and “planned to purchase that product in the near future”. The extent of consumer-based research on beer tourist motivations remains limited. However, in recent studies based in North Carolina, USA Francioni (2012) and Kraftchick et al. (2014) isolate four sets of main motivational factors for beer tourists. These relate to the craft brewery experience, enjoyment, socializing and beer consumption. It is argued that the first and last factors, the craft brewery experience and beer consumption “illustrate the elements of a craft brewery that people enjoy and to which they are most attracted” (Kraftchick et al., 2014: 45). The existing limited research findings on beer tourists suggest that typically they wish to visit regions where they can tour multiple breweries and taste multiple products (Howlett, 2013: 38). The majority of beer tourists learn about breweries either through word of mouth or from friends and family. This said, the role of social media is also of rapidly growing importance for the marketing of new craft beers and breweries (Dunn & Kregor, 2014).

Drawing from the experience of Yorkshire in Northern England, Niester (2008: 99)

cautions of considerations that can limit the development of beer tourism. At the outset it is made clear that beer tourism represents a small niche form of tourism and that beer tourism development “is constrained by the relatively small but passionate number of beer drinkers, who enjoy Real Ales” as well as the relatively small size of the region’s producers. Accordingly, in considering an entry into beer tourism breweries must be realistic about potential revenues, the size and scope of their business operations and of the specific goals that they wish to achieve. Indeed, it is demonstrated from Yorkshire that while adopting tourism promotion as a component of a brewery’s overall business plan can yield potential benefits it also may have certain costs. In particular, attention is drawn to the requirement for additional staff to run tasting rooms or tours and the capital costs of making a brewery ‘visitor friendly’ including in terms of local planning health and safety regulations. Niester (2008: 99) points out that in certain cases these added costs and time commitments for tourism may outweigh the limited benefits and thus “discourage a brewer from getting involved with tourism in the first place”.

Table 1: A Categorization of Breweries Based upon their Involvement in Beer Tourism Activities

Category	Adoption of Beer Tourism Practices	Nature of Brewery Tours	Tourism Infrastructure	Brewers Opinions on Using Tourism
Attraction Breweries	Beer tours, festivals, facilities for special events	Daily, year round brewery tours offered to the public. Pre-booked visits accepted	Visitor centre, brewery bar or tap room, restaurants, conference facilities	Very positive
Participant Breweries	Tours, festivals and sometimes special event facilities	Tours must be advance pre-booked and usually groups	Wide-ranging. Sometimes visitor centre and usually a tap room	Mixed attitudes and opinions which can vary from very positive to

				negative
Promotional Breweries	Tours and festivals	Tours available to customers, those in the trade or specialist groups	No general patterns but usually a brewery tap is available	Mixed opinions dependent on the brewer who often views tours and festivals as strictly a business tool
Enterprising Breweries	Offers tours or participates in festivals but not both	Infrequent tours only for pre-arranged special groups.	Variable from brewery tap to no facilities	Mixed opinions from highly positive to strongly negative
Reclusive Breweries	No tours, no participation in festivals	None	None	Usually negative or indifferent

Source: Adapted after Niester 2008: 110.

In an important contribution to international scholarship on beer tourism, using UK experience, Niester (2008) furnishes a typology of breweries which is anchored upon their involvement in the practices of beer tourism. As summarised on Table 1 five categories of enterprises can be differentiated. These are based upon a brewer's overall involvement in brewery tours, beer festivals and special events, the structure of these activities, a brewer's rationales for using tourism, and their attitudes and opinions on the importance and usefulness of brewery involvement in tourism and hospitality. These five generic categories of brewery can be applied to interpret aspects of beer tourism development in emerging destinations, not least in South Africa.

Based on Niester (2008) the first category of 'attraction breweries' apply beer tourism practices for their benefit with the brewery marketed as a tourism attraction and open daily, all year around for tours at regular, predictable times. Such attraction breweries are distinguished by a well-established tourism infrastructure and offering their guests the use of brewery

facilities for special events, corporate functions or weddings. The second category is 'participant breweries'. These are denoted by their strong use of beer tourism as a whole, offering of beer tours as well as their participation in beer festivals and occasional use of premises for special events. For such participant breweries tours are not undertaken on an everyday basis but can be done if pre-booked and usually for groups rather than individuals. The third category of 'promotional breweries' are defined as using "beer tourism practices such as tours, festivals and special events only if these practices may directly affect immediate or future beer sales". Tours are restricted usually to special groups of tourists who are legally able to attend, (age wise)and only by appointment: the group of promotional breweries "do not allow onlookers, casual observers, passers-by, or those with an interest in how beer is made to visit" (Niester, 2008: 105). The fourth group of "enterprising breweries" usually are small in size with many falling into the categorization of brewpubs. Most of these participate in forms of brewery tourism, albeit they have not made a firm commitment to tourism as

part of their business model. Typically, such enterprises might engage in beer festivals but would not offer tours of their property. According to Niester (2008: 107) this group of breweries are “trying their best in a very limited and competitive market”. The last group of what are termed “reclusive breweries” have no engagement at all in beer tourism and do not participate in festivals, offer tours or provide any infrastructure for beer tourism. Such breweries eschew involvement in the activity of beer tourism often for reasons of lack of funds, lack of time, sometimes unsafe properties for visitors or simply absence of any interest in tourism as part of a business model.

In final analysis it is hypothesized that smaller micro-breweries use tourism for different reasons to those of more successful and large brewing enterprises. For Niester (2008: 108) there is a continuum across from the group of small and less profitable enterprises that participate in tourism for purposes of increasing revenue to the opposite extreme of a cohort of larger and more profitable enterprises that apply the practices of beer tourism (in the form of beer tours and participation in festivals) more for purposes of marketing, brand relationships and as a tool to further popularize their brands than for direct revenue generation. Yet other brewers will shun completely the activity of beer tourism and instead concentrate their efforts exclusively upon the production of craft beers (Niester, 2008). Interpreting this uneven landscape requires an appreciation that many ‘informal’ micro-brewers lack the capital, resources, skills and knowledge which are essential prerequisites for participation in beer tourism.

CONCLUSION

Beer tourism is a new and expanding field of scholarship in beverage tourism and in

culinary tourism more broadly (Bujdoso & Szucs, 2012b; Howlett, 2013; Dunn & Kregor, 2014). For the development of beer tourism much can be gleaned in terms of lessons informed from the experience of parallel forms of beverage tourism, such as wine tourism. This said, the differences between the often well-organised and better-developed wine tourism sector as opposed to the often loosely and informal mode of organisation of craft beer micro-breweries point to the value of generating an expanding beer-specific scholarship (Niester, 2008). With the recent birth of South Africa as a beer tourism destination there is an urgent need for (re)examining the changing nexus between tourism and the beer industry in general. In particular, an important agenda exists for tourism scholars around the relationships between the burgeoning of craft beer and of incipient forms of craft beer tourism. This agenda includes the need to profile beer tourists, understand the participation of breweries in beer tourism, the importance of neo-localism for the craft beer industry in South Africa, and to evaluate the impacts of beer tourism promotional initiatives for local economic development.

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