“We are going to put South West Africa on the map this time.” The homogenisation and differentiation of Namibian tourist spaces
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Abstract
Drawing on elements of spatial theory, this article examines the establishment and development of Namibian tourism. Current literature on Namibian tourism covers the period since the Second World War only. This article seeks to fill the gaps between the experience of the early explorers and the formal beginning of Namibian tourism in the 1950s. Travel planning, guide books, travel brochures, advertising and publicity, as well as the congress of the “South African Publicity Association” offer a variety of perspectives for the period between the 1920s and the 1950s. Namibian tourist spaces were homogenised and - at the same time - differentiated. These spaces do not have to show compelling common characteristics with real spaces on site, but are idealised tourist dream worlds, temporarily realised tourist utopias. In tourism, safe spaces and spaces of adventure, or spaces of modernity and wilderness, are no longer seen as opposites. Thus, tourism has made possible the imagination and construction of more and more tourist spaces and forged the perception of today’s Namibia as a tourist destination.

The phenomenon of tourism
While I was working at the National Archive of Namibia I undertook a weekend excursion to Swakopmund. Therefore I bought a map to plan the whole journey and rented a car in Windhoek. Ready for a change of scene and some rest, I set off, driving the road from Windhoek via Okahandja and Karibib to Swakopmund. During the journey I passed some of the places which the map and some road signs pointed out to be of special interest; amongst them the Spitzkoppe Mountain and the Namib Naukluft Park. I took some photographs along the way to have everyday impressions as keepsakes. The journey took several hours due to the huge distances involved. As a result I was able to take a very brief look at Swakopmund only. I visited some of the sights, such as the beach and the promenade. I ended my day in a restaurant fitted in a style that harked back to colonial times under a flag of the German Empire. I stayed in a backpacker's hostel that night where I gained many new ideas and impressions from other guests. Next morning I returned to the capital, back to the archive and my daily routine.

This short report on my journey to Swakopmund does not make as exciting reading as the travelogues of the 19th century explorers, but it shows that tourism is about
journeys, change of location, staying in remote spaces, experiencing places, beaches, countries and regions or maps: cities, places, spaces, quarters and borders, paths and many more that can subsequently be touristically visited, inspected, entered, crossed, exploited and many more. In retrospect it seems to me that I was moving the whole time in homogenised tourist spaces, although I still felt as if I was on an adventure in ‘unspoiled nature’, as my guidebook told me.

There is a direct connection between tourism and space. The touristic promise of removal from daily routine by changing location leads, inevitably, to questions of spatial relations. It is important to note that space is always constructed and does not simply exist per se, whether it is scenery, unspoiled nature or tourist destinations. In Namibian tourism today spaces exist, which do not accord with the actualities of the situation on-site. In the above example the adventure in a space is standardised by streets, maps or hotels. Understanding space in a relational way enables one to unravel the contrasting nature of tourist spaces. A historic perspective on spaces in tourism describes and explains why and how tourism became possible and still exists today. Thus there is a need for a model of spaces in tourism, which goes beyond a strict territorial description or a linear metaphor of scale and therefore offers a new epistemic perspective, refining the understanding of spaces.

In search of a suitable model of description and explanation

Current literature on Namibian tourism only covers the period after the Second World War. This is perhaps due to a lack of a historical perspective in the literature on tourism that deals with the successful continuation of tourism in the country today, describing the history of tourism rather simplistically. The structures of Namibian tourism were only developed in the 1970s in conjunction with the emergence of an impressive transport infrastructure. It is also conceivable, that some authors were perplexed by the inherent nostalgic content in the advertising of major tourism companies, by their (claimed) long tradition and their (self-re-)presentation as the heroic founding fathers of Namibian tourism.

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Here, by contrast, spatial structures not only support Namibian tourism, but make it possible. Namibia was opened up as a tourist destination in the 1920s. Spaces formed the basis of tourism, which made Namibia *erfahrbar* as a tourist destination and thus facilitated tourism in the country. This became possible through technology and infrastructure: roads and rails, airports, train stations and harbours connected them and provided a necessary spatial mobility for tourist groups. Hotels secured accommodation for travellers on site and visualisation and literary techniques in the guidebooks and travel brochures charged Namibian tourist spaces with special meanings, creating something unique and worth seeing.

When tourists temporarily depart from the structure of their everyday life, they are creating spaces. Tourists and the tourist industry construct their own special meaning of spaces. These do not have to correspond to real places, such as the territory of Namibia itself as a three-dimensional space, absolute size, or independent variable. The tourist spaces created are always charged with qualities, which are a combination of relations and can change from time to time. According to Michel Foucault, phantasms and imaginations populate these extraordinary spaces. They are the “space of our first perception, the space of our dreams, the space of our passions”, they are heterotopias. By following Foucault’s argument, tourist spaces are excellent heterotopias: Beside the utopias that show unreal, alternative concepts or perfections of real spaces, heterotopias express specific relations in a special form. The use of a spatial perspective describes and explains these relations.

Special relations can be understood as realised utopia. Heterotopias are different from all those spaces which they reflect or to which they refer. Besides, heterotopias work, “if people break with their customary time”. Within one’s own everyday time, which does not correlate with one’s social everyday time, this model of thought reminds one of tourism. The phenomenon of tourism shows a reaction to modern everyday life. When people step out of their routine life, they break with their ordinary time and the...

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2 I prefer to use the plural *spaces*; because there is more than one space. Referring to my trip to the Namibian coast, not every tourist is irritated by the German flag in the restaurant at Swakopmund. This highly simplified description shows the possibility of several touristic spaces in the same place at the same time.

3 The German word *erfahrbar* is not translatable into one English word. Its meaning is covered, inter alia, by the following words: experienced, sophisticated, adept, seasoned, versed, conversant. On the one hand, it means someone is able to experience something. On the other hand, there is a close connection to the verb *fahren* (to travel). Someone who has travelled a lot can be described as experienced, because he has moved, he has gained experience. That is why I will use the German term *erfahrbar* at various points throughout the article.


5 Ibid.: 43; my translation, original: “wenn die Menschen mit ihrer herkömmlichen Zeit brechen”.
heterotopia becomes a “dream factory”.6 Heterotopias show those places in a society in which certain structures completely or partially form its internal system. The system of tourism is to be interpreted as such an internal system.

Transferred to tourism in Namibia, an example of heterotopian spaces would be the construction of an adventure in ‘untouched nature’, possibly an off-road safari in the Etosha-Park. But such an excursion proceeds along prescribed routes and therefore in a safe and secure context. A chance meeting with ‘noble savages’, who turn out to be not that savage would be conceivable here.7 In each case, parallel tourist spaces emerge. Other spaces, which do not have compelling common characteristics with real spaces on site, become idealised ‘dream worlds’ for visitors. These heterotopias encapsulate several spaces in one single place and placements which seem incompatible in themselves, such as ideas of ‘security’ and ‘adventure’ or of persons being ‘savage’ and ‘noble’.

Therefore, my argument is that rationalised and professionalised space construction and consumption leads to a homogenisation of tourist spaces. Tourist destinations have to be accessible, they have to be safe, they have to be well organised and they have to be standardised according to the expectations tourists have of their trip. Agents of the process of the homogenisation of tourist spaces are, for example, the technical infrastructure such as systems of traffic, water supply and technologies of spatial mobility, visualisation technologies in the form of photographs, television reports or films and even literature such as guidebooks, travel reports and novels.

Parallel to this homogenisation of spaces a there is a simultaneous differentiation of spaces. By filling tourist spaces with specific meanings the spaces become distinguishable from each other. The important point here is that the construction of spaces is based on the definition of their meaning and at the same time involves a differentiation of meaning. It is this differentiation which makes specific spaces of those spaces to which meaning must be given. Thus tourist spaces are both homogenous and differentiated. Clearly defined as tourist destinations, they refer to the places of interest, the uniqueness and the specific features, but at the same time, they are accessible and standardised.

In this process of homogenisation and differentiation of relational spaces, historical-nostalgic motives play a crucial role, for example by constructing and portraying faraway places as paradisiac and heavenly. Futuristic motives are also conceivable, as in modern seaside resorts, adventure parks or science fiction-like architecture. Thus, nature and testimonies of the past or putatively future epochs become central motifs for travellers. Such spaces, which refer to historical-nostalgic or fictional-futuristic moments, do not exist for all visitors at all times. They have to be charged with suitable meanings to produce perceptions and interpretation patterns. Therefore, this construction of tourist

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7 People living in cities, going to work, using technology, going shopping at the supermarket, and so on.
spaces is based on people ascribing certain qualities to them and on a differentiation of these meanings. Spatial homogenisation and differentiation produce relations, orders and borders and thus form a spatial structure and thus create a relational tourist topology.

The development and establishment of tourism in Namibia supports my argument. I will look at ‘The Denver Expedition of 1926’ to demonstrate of tourist utilisation of the country in the 1920s. I will then analyse the development of tourism by explaining spatial constructions to reveal the topology of early Namibian tourism and to expand an understanding of the system of tourism.

The ‘Denver Expedition of 1926’

In Namibia colonial rule was transferred to the Union of South Africa when the German colonial age ended. As a so-called C-Mandate with limited self-government, the territory was handed over to the Union of South Africa in 1925. That year the first at least partly touristic enterprise took place: The Denver Expedition. In Picturing Bushmen Robert J. Gordon describes how the borders between travellers and tourists, consumers and researchers become blurred.8 Using the example of the 1925 expedition Gordon shows that, partly as a result of this trip, American and European perceptions of the so-called ‘Bushman’ changed from regarding them as the “lowest type of human being” to seeing the noble savage.9 Such expeditions produced a wealth of literature, films and photographs which created a market for depictions of exotic savages and for their cultural artefacts. Such photos and films exposed the ‘Bushmen’ to foreign eyes. With the close link between noble savages and nature being emphasised, the imagination and wishes of the Western world focused increasingly on the ‘Bushmen’. This example also shows the efforts during the 1920s to popularise knowledge of foreign, savage worlds and to extend accessibility to a wider audience. At the same time leisure travel for Americans and Europeans became more affordable. Thus the Denver Expedition happened at a time, at which Western consumer society had reached the appropriate technological level to make the visualisation of foreign countries more accessible on a grander scale and thereby available to a much broader audience. This is when tourism in Namibia was established.

Inspired by the success of the Denver Expedition, the leader of that event, C. E. Cadle, planned another tour to Namibia. In 1926, Cadle announced his plans to the Administration of Windhoek, with a detailed itinerary, and an article in the Denver Post. His motto was “we are going to put South West Africa on the map this time”.10 Cadle described the discovery of Namibia and its exposure to the public through tourism in a

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9 Ibid.: 61.
10 SWAA 1979, A.427/9, 08.11.1926, Cadle (American Express Company International Banking-Shipping-Travel) – Secretary for the Administration, Windhoek.
metaphoric way as a birth or the origin of the country. The inherent meaning of birth is that the area could not have existed as such before or that it was perceived differently. In Cadle’s mind, this would change in the near future under the influence of the touristic system. His short statement also shows, however obvious it may seem, that a tourist destination has to be differentiated. By locating South West Africa, a particular section of the earth’s surface had been named and separated from other areas. Consequently, Namibia as a tourist destination could be located on a standardised map from this time onwards — whether as an object on a physical map or as an object at a level of subjective perception. Furthermore the tourist destination Namibia can be charged with alternate meanings, to erfahren more differentiations. Theoretically there is no limit to the number of constructed differentiated spaces. On the other hand, this spatial differentiation leads to a homogenised and stable structure of similar spaces at the same time. In the context of the planned trip to Namibia, this not only means a homogenisation of locating and differentiation about the encoding of attributes, but also a necessary standardisation of planning, realisation and, ultimately, consumption of the tourist enterprise.

The ways of reaching Namibia was already discussed in technical conditions of the ocean-going journey, which is why Cadle does not describe them in any great detail. However, the author dedicates much more attention to the planning and organisation of the trip, trying to make it practicable and homogeneously structured. According to his plans the journey would take place from 8 June to 6 September 1927. Starting from New York, the tourists would sail to Southampton in England, which would take about a week. Here the tourists would have the opportunity to visit the places of interest in the city, and would be joined by other travellers for the onward journey. From 17 June to 8 July, the group was to travel to Walvis Bay in Namibia by steamboat and from there directly on to the Namibian capital Windhoek by train. The time from 9 July to 5 August was to be spent hunting and sightseeing. After that, Cadle planned to send the travel group to Cape Town by train. On 12 August, the planned return journey was to begin along the same route.\textsuperscript{11} In addition, Cadle envisaged “making the Cruise to South West every year”, as he told the administration.\textsuperscript{12}

Quite apart from this tour concept it was also necessary to make the tourist destination Namibia special and worth seeing. The article in the Denver Post under the headline “Experts and tourists of both America and Britain will make trip into the wilds under leader of famous Post Tour” promoted the planned trip, and constructed the impression of a special, adventurous trip:\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{quote}
Out of the world-famous Denver Post African expedition is to grow another trek into the heart of the dark continent — this time a giant expedition of scientists,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} SWA 1979, A.427/ 9, 11/8/1926, Cadle (American Express Company International Banking-Shipping-Travel) — Secretary for the Administration, Windhoek, \textit{appendix I}.

\textsuperscript{12} SWA 1979, A.427/ 9, No. 3056, 11/8/1926, Cadle (American Express Company) — Secretary for the Administration, Windhoek.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.: Appendix II. Press clipping of the Denver Post without date.
writers and sightseers gathered from all over America and the British Isles. […] on this expedition scientists and tourists are to go in the same party. […] research in the mysterious and virtually un plumbed lore of the jungle […] globetrotters who have exhausted the thrills of the beaten path, will find new ones in a wilderness hitherto accessible only to a few.14

The article constructed dark, wild, mystic and putatively untouched paths. These constructed spaces in South West Africa also appear in the course of following articles. Dangerous and adventurous spaces were created: “the no man’s land of the Bushman, the savage black, and the man-eating lion” are predestined to receive “a whole shipload of men and women”, as curious and adventurous tourists.15 These constructions of differentiated spaces, the unknown, the foreignness and the idea of the other are not an absolute size or independent variables, but a construction of differences.16 The search for the uncivilised or uncultured sketches and adventure goes along with a crossing of borders and contains a clear, temporary diversion from the everyday-life for the tourists. Hence, Cadle’s planned journey is a good example of an adventure. An adventure can be completely dangerous, as the promotional description in the Denver Post suggests. However, it must always end well, otherwise it would constitute a disaster rather than an adventure.17

The article also speaks of adventures and of the fact that only very few people would be in a position to embark on the journey on the one hand. (Thus reference to exclusivity.) On the other hand, Cadle had arranged the trip for a whole ship of travellers which was to follow a minutely planned, guided routes. Tourists were to be lodged in comfortable, well equipped facilities. This would be very important for “Africa novices”.18 Thus there would also be enough baths and good food, alongside the trodden paths, the man-eating lion and “savage black people”. A huge expedition of 400 people and a “representative from the American Express will […] make all necessary arrangements in South West for the excursionists”, so that the adventure remains that and does not develop into a disaster.19 The infrastructural requirements of a long-distance holiday are not mentioned in the newspaper article and they are also not described in the correspondence thoroughly. That tourists would travel to Namibia by ship appears to have been a matter of course in the middle of the 1920s, and required no further elaboration. Great emphasis is placed on the luxurious amenities on the steamboat. Mobility over long distances does not seem to be particularly worth mentioning.

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
18 Cf. SWAA 1979, A.427/9, No. 3056, 11/8/1926, Cadle (American Express Company) – Secretary for the Administration, Windhoek, Appendix II.
19 Ibid.
The example of the second planned and touristically designed Denver Expedition shows that in the 1920s a certain geographic area of the Earth’s surface was named by actors in action executions and appropriation processes and was differentiated and distinguished at the same time from other areas of the world. This did not happen merely by encoding attributes ascribed to South West Africa such as an area of the wilderness, an area of the man-eating animals or an area of the savage blacks. Namibia’s accessibility by ship was a requirement for tourist consumption and the guarantee of a tourist adventure. Furthermore, streets and paths and suitable means of transport guaranteed the necessary mobility on site. There was also a need for functioning hotel accommodation and detailed planning and management of the enterprise. In the 1920s a homogenisation of tourist spaces had therefore already set in with concurrent spatial differentiation, which would be consolidated in the following years. Besides security, accessibility, mobility on site, travel management, and lodgings, a certain area did not only become standardised, but also differentiated and charged with special meanings.

This spatial perspective shows how tourist spaces can combine different meanings and attributes, which seem mutually incompatible, in one entity. In the context of Namibia’s tourist spaces that means it is possible to construct tourist spaces such as the area of the man-eating animals which at the same time is also the area of the organised, guided, safe Erfahrung. Cadle’s planned expedition, its imaginations and perceptions of Namibia conjure up images of adventurous danger and organised security. Technical infrastructure is conceivable as agent of the homogenisation and differentiation of tourist spaces in the 1920s: Traffic systems, technologies of spatial mobility such as the means of transportation to movement of people and goods, visualisation technologies in form of photographs and literature-techniques in correspondences, newspaper articles and guides.

How should South West Africa be put on the map?

Another useful source on the construction of tourist spaces is tourism advertising. In the case of tourism advertising I do not assume inevitable manipulative success. Tourism advertising only works if it encounters mental dispositions which agree in principle with its contents. Advertising is by no means a one-sided communication process. The contrived images always show idealised or fanciful worlds which are based on already available norms and values. These norms can play on dreams or yearnings and in generate a travel need in the target audience. In this way the advertising communication process — and this matters in present context — allows the protagonists involved to establish these imaginations, to reinterpret them, to modify them, or even to develop new ones.

As an example of a tourism advertisement, I present and discuss the work of the Publicity Department. From the beginning of the Namibian mandate in 1925 this authority sought to promote tourism, particularly overseas. At the time the most suitable advertising and promotional instruments were discussed and advertisements and announcements were used in various media. At the conclusion of my examination of advertising and public relations there is a shift in perspective. Here I look at the advertising pamphlet *Rund um Afrika* which was not produced in Namibia, but in Germany by the Woermann Shipping Company.

In 1925 the first congress of the South African Publicity Association discussed further possible activities to attract tourists from overseas. The South African faction, made up of representatives from politics and economy, was the leading actor. It was stated at the outset that “the Territory covered by the activities and membership of the Association shall [include] the South West Protectorate.”21 The still young mandate territory of South West Africa was to be included in the plans for South Africa. The attempt to construct southern Africa as a tourist destination would include Namibia’s capital city Windhoek, although no delegate from the city attended the congress. The declared aims of the event were “to encourage overseas tourists to the territories, and develop tourist traffic within the territory.”22 The country’s possibilities and potential for tourists would have to be promoted more effectively, because 350 tourists from America were expected per month in 1926. Based on statistics the delegates reckoned with an average spend per visitor of 150 pounds in the host country. Thus the South Africa delegates calculated that the expenditures on an advertising campaign would pay for itself almost immediately. Several parties were considered for the production and distribution of the advertising such as the Railway Publicity Department of South Africa, and “any other Government Department or private body.”23 Primarily the discussion on the establishment of tourism focused on economic considerations, particularly the expectation of substantial profits. The actors agreed that there was a “need for improved Hotel Accommodation, Motor licences and roads, Cinema films” to achieve these aims.24

A further congress, two years later, reported that since 1914 there had been ongoing efforts at “advertising in Great Britain with a view principally to attracting tourists and others to South Africa”.25 These did not include Namibia which was still a colony of the German empire at this time. Accordingly Namibia played a marginal role in these considerations. This can be seen from the amount of advertising for the mandate.

23 Ibid.: 1.
territory in the following year. The issues for the advertisement primarily were paid by the Railway Administration which had paid 25,000 pounds per annum since 1920; only 7,000 pounds per year had been contributed by "municipalities, public companies, and other corporate bodies". The actors were convinced that these measures were effective. They heralded the latest success in tourism advertising quoting statistics of the Immigration Department: In 1928 560 tourists visited the country monthly, in 1924 tourists numbered only 420. The actors attributed this success directly to their advertising for southern Africa. Hence, these efforts were to be followed up and intensified in the following years:

The function of the Publicity officers overseas are [sic!] to direct publicity by means of Press advertising, to deliver and to organise lectures, to secure effective distribution of literature, photographs, films, and lantern slides, and to give advice generally to inquirers.

These advertising media were discussed at the congress and all actors involved came to the following result: "The outstanding medium of overseas publicity is, of course, Press advertising." Newspapers and magazines were ideal for communicating the attractions of locations and thus tourist destinations could be constructed and established. Photos should thus play "an integral part in overseas advertising". Furthermore this would not only be relevant for tourists, but also for "scenic and other interests". Slide shows and films in the native countries of prospective visitors could create a stronger incentive for travellers.

How did the representatives of South Africa envisage conducting the advertising campaign? Travel agencies were the most suitable parties to implement these measures. Offices already existed in London, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban among other places. “These bureaux will very soon be in a position to quote inclusive rail, hotel, motor fares, and undertake for our tourists all the functions of any well-established tourist agency". Thus from the 1920s onward, Namibian tourism would ideally be organised worldwide by travel agencies and advertised using various media. In further discussions at the congress the needs of tourists on site were reviewed. In the “Native Curios for Sale to Tourists” discussion it was established that “there is no question that there is a demand for curios.” The actors agreed “to stimulate the production and marketing of bona fide South African native curios.” At another conference in 1932 the national character of the efforts was emphasised and it was stressed that the report should reach all areas of the country including the

26 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.: 21.
mandate area: “In view of the national character and importance of the publicity movement for attracting overseas tourists to South Africa [...] that the annual [...] report should be printed and circulated to all Municipal Councillors”.32 Particular emphasis was placed on the following: “the Overseas Advertising Scheme is of national, not local or section, benefit; and its incidence local ideas and feelings must be submerged beneath a wider and essentially South African outlook.”33

Although South West Africa had dispatched a representative to the conference in 1932 “to serve on the South African Publicity Advisory Committee”, it must be mentioned that Namibia played a marginal role in discussions on advertising measures.34 While the country was regarded as a mere appendix, it was still an integral part of the Union’s tourism planning. According to the leading institution South African Railways & Harbour tourism and tourism advertising were a matter of “importance of nationwide publicity in regard to the [...] tourist industry, which is rapidly becoming a vital factor in the Union”.35 Namibia should also support these measures in the opinion of South Africans, even if only modestly. The fact that Namibia was interpreted more or less as an appendix of South Africa could possibly explain the low interest of the Namibian representatives in the annual meetings. They often rejected invitations to the annual South African Publicity Conference in the 1920s and 1930s. The reasons for not attending were not revealed. In various communications the Administration merely pointed out that it was not possible to send a delegate.36 Besides, Namibia contributed very little to the costs of the advertising measures which could also be a reason for the lack interest in sending delegates to the congress. This could also be down to the general financial restrictions brought about by the worldwide economic crisis.37 However, the worldwide depression and even the Second World War did not cause the abrupt break at a political level which one might suppose when considered from a European point of view.38 Throughout the 1920s, 1930s and even in the 1940s Namibian was being advertised as a tourist destination and there was a steadily “increasing interest” in South West Africa at the time.39 The Second World War merely prevented the yearly

33 Ibid.
36 Cf. MWI, 2/1/70, 27.06.1933, Resolution No. 546.
37 Cf. MWI, J.18/36, 22.09.1932, South African Railways & Harbour Publicity and Travel Department, Johannesburg – Town Clerk, Windhoek.
38 However, with increasing auto-mobilisation and the constant development of the tourist infrastructure after World War II, one can speak at a technical level of a new era.
gathering of the Annual Nationwide Publicity Conference.\footnote{MWI, File No. 27/5/35, No. 3, J.18/2, 06.09.1939, South African Railways & Harbours, Publicity and Travel Department, Johannesburg – Town Clerk, Windhoek.} It was only with the post-war growth in auto-mobilisation and the substantial increase in the general level of mobility that tourism was raised to a new plain.

That Namibia did not reach the same position as South Africa within the scope of the advertising campaigns, is confirmed by an advertisement published in various magazines: On one occasion, the advertising for Windhoek consisted of description of the city of one to two pages. This description was illustrated with up to three professionally taken photographs.\footnote{Most pictures form the Photo Zentrale Windhoek, cf. MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 16.11.1929, Stadtsekretär, Windhoek – Photo Zentrale, Windhoek.} The textual description, as well as the visual representation, depicted a modern Windhoek, comparable to any other town in the world of similar size.\footnote{Cf. i.a.: MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 14.11.1930, Town Clerk, Windhoek – South African Railways & Harbours Magazine; MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 22.08.1928, South African Railways & Harbours Magazine – Town Clerk, Windhoek; MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 17.11.1927, South African Railways & Harbours Magazine – Town Clerk, Windhoek.} Therefore it is striking that the initiative for publications “including a section covering the attractions of the various towns in Africa” did not come from the Namibian authorities, but from South Africa or Europe, from where requests for information and pictures showing the capital of the country regularly came.\footnote{MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 12.11.1931, The African World Annual, London – Town Clerk, Windhoek.}

The pictures provided by the town of Windhoek showed the “New Exhibition Hall, the Municipal Tea Rooms in the Zoological Gardens, Government Buildings and the German-Herero War Memorial”\footnote{Ibid.: Appendix.}, along with the pond in the zoological garden, the swimming-pool “near the hot-water springs”\footnote{MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 14.11.1927, Stadtsekretär, Windhoek – Stadtsekretär, Swakopmund.} including people splashing in the water, a panoramic picture with the title “General view of Windhoek”, or the main street of Windhoek featuring cars and colonial-style buildings.\footnote{MWI, 2/1/70, No. 21/5/35, Vol. 1, 14.11.1927, Stadtsekretär, Windhoek – Stadtsekretär, Swakopmund.}

The government buildings, the zoological garden and the cars demonstrated how modern and advanced Windhoek was. However, the statue of the rider was a legacy of the long gone German colonial epoch. Another picture shows a group of children standing in front of a blackboard. They appear happy and diligent. Some other children pose heroically in what appear to be Boy Scout uniforms on a stone hill in front of a white background. The fact that only children are shown in these pictures implies that the “foreign Germaness” (Auslanddeutschum) in Namibia had a long tradition, which tourism promoters still wanted to continue.\footnote{Ibid.: Appendix.} These ideas are underlined by using the
motifs of diligence, discipline, youth, and Germanness. Naturally the Publicity Department focused on Germanness when promoting Windhoek to potential tourists from South Africa.⁴⁸ Although the advertisement also paints a picture of modernity:

[The] town is laid out on modern principles of town planning [...] street and road have been constructed [...] There is an excellent electric light and power service provided, and the water supply of the town is derived principally from hot water springs. These waters have medical properties [...] There is a Swimming Bath and Zoological Gardens, which with their well laid out grounds and semi tropical vegetation provide a great attraction. [...] It might be of interest to you to know that the climate has proved to have a beneficial effect on persons suffering from diseases of the respiratory organs.⁴⁹

Taking another look at the level of the written advertisements supports the perception that Windhoek was represented as a modern town: The infrastructure is excellent, climate and nature are healthy and several destinations of interest to tourists. Windhoek is thus an important traffic hub, well connected with the Union of South Africa and with Europe. With “well-built public buildings and very many fine residents” and “adequate high class hotel accommodation” the capital of Namibia is depicted as exquisite and luxurious, including state-of-the-art hotels and a wide variety of leisure offerings.⁵⁰

The increased demand for information on South West Africa does not appear to have been interrupted in the 1930s despite the worldwide economic crisis. On the contrary, the interest continued to grow:

During the past 12 months enquiries for information about South West Africa have been received from various parts of the Union and Rhodesia, as well as from overseas countries, such as England, France, Germany, U.S.A. and even Russia.⁵¹

Despite the financial restraints “of the times”, the campaign was to be continued “to the fullest possible extent”.⁵² The actors were hoping to harvest the fruits of their activities when the international situation stabilised:

The Government has increased its grant for overseas publicity in the current year’s estimates, but if the various tourist sources, rising afresh to-day from the ashes of world-wide depression, are to be exploited to the full measure for

⁴⁸ For Germans Germanness was also not always central, but the same text was used as in the African World Annual, cf. MWI, 2/1/70, 27/5/35, 28.03.1927, Stadtsekretär, Windhoek – Redaktion des 8 Uhr Abendblattes, Berlin; also: MWI, 2/1/70, 27/5/35, 11.10.1926, Redaktion des 8 Uhr Abendblattes, Berlin – Stadtsekretär, Windhoek.
⁵¹ MWI, 2/1/70, File No. 27/5/35, Vol. 2, 17.05.1935, South African Railways & Harbours Transportation Department, Tourist Section – Town Clerk, Windhoek.
⁵² MWI, 2/1/70, J.18/36, 17.04.1931, South African Railways & Harbours, Publicity and Travel Department, Johannesburg – Town Clerk, Windhoek.
every public body and private enterprise, to whom this productive industry
means so much, to give the scheme its whole-hearted support.53

In order to remedy the situation, more comprehensive information had to be made
available overseas. Hence another tourist pamphlet was created, to achieve their goals
for future success. Tourism and its promotion were of “such vital importance in the
cause of nationwide progress”.54 “Extensive circulation overseas” was to be achieved by
the use of 25,000 copies of written advertising materials.55 Once again Namibia was still
seen here as mandate territory, but as its role in South African national progress was
not considered insignificant.

The texts and pictures the Administration of Windhoek sent to the South African Railways
and Harbour magazine and other previously mentioned magazines remained unchanged
until 1935, apart from smaller adjustments such as updating the population figures. In
this year infrastructural innovations were also included description. One of the
innovations was that the town had been connected to “the main railway line from de Aar
to Walvis Bay”, and would thus be even more accessible. Substantial success had been
archived through the following: “Airdromes, Zoological Gardens, Swimming Bath,
Electronic power station, Waterworks and Abattoirs [...] public Library and a museum.
The latter what organised by the South west African Scientific Society.”56

Therefore, the motifs were still the same: a modern Windhoek had been constructed,
and now enjoyed far better connections to the rest of the world with the airport and the
new railway line. Progress on the infrastructure for the supply of water and electricity
was also mentioned, as were some new tourist attractions, such as the museum run by
the Scientific Society. The wilderness, with its promise of adventure, is of no relevance
here and is erfahhrbar only on hunting excursions in the surrounding districts.57 On no
account is Windhoek to be advertised or presented as a wild city, as adventurous or
uncivilised, but rather as a modern, hub of transport, communication and development.
The romantic constructions of scenery with adjectives like “beautiful”, “picturesque” or
“entrancing” or the hunting of wild animals in the wilderness were placed in the sur-
roundings and not directly in Windhoek.58 Furthering this construction are the details of
the numbers and origins of inhabitants (Europeans and non-Europeans), which also
implies modernity, because Africans are simply of no relevance and are not mentioned in
the article. The total number of inhabitants of the town and the number of the

53 MWI, 2/1/70, J.18/36, 05.06.1933, South African Railways & Harbours, Publicity and Travel Department,
Johannesburg – Town Clerk, Windhoek.

54 Ibid.

55 Where pictures still held an important role, cf. MWI, 2/1/70, File No. 275/35, Vol. 2, I.P.5/1076,
08.091933, South African Railways & Harbours Transportation Department, Tourist Section – Town Clerk,
Windhoek.

56 MWI, 2/1/70, R.M. 1900/183, 20.08.1935, South African Railways and Harbours Magazine,
Johannesburg – Town Clerk, Windhoek.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.
Europeans are given. Africans in Windhoek were a kind of accessory. Consequently the term European can be seen as another characteristic feature of the construction of Windhoek in the 1920s and 1930s in the advertising in Europe, as well as in South Africa. Central Windhoek was still clearly separated from the surrounding area in international advertisements. The modern, apparently European centre contrasted starkly with the supposedly wild African periphery.

In order to gain another point of view of touristic spaces we will now take a closer look at this ‘wild’ African periphery. Compared with modern Namibian tourist brochures the brochure Rund um Afrika from 1933 is striking by its size and the amount of information it contains.\(^5^9\) It does, however, describe the complete Wörmann-Line route around the African continent and therefore several African states are covered. The brochure is not dominated by pictures to the extent that brochures are nowadays and more emphasis is placed on the written descriptions. The introduction states:

> For anyone who has ever sampled the joys of Africa, the yearning to return grows with every year. There is hardly another country that can enchant us in such a way. Anyone who loves nature free and wild, will find here like nowhere else glorious sunshine, chilly nights on plateaux, challenging mountains, golden-shimmering plains, luxuriant forests, clear rivers and lakes, and, above all, an incomparable animal life.\(^6^0\)

This romanticising description in the brochure could probably be found in modern advertisements referring to formal and content information. The most important topics for tourists are mentioned: Scenery, wilderness, nature romanticism.\(^6^1\) The description of people is still renounced here. The brochure idealises the unknown by transforming it into a perfect holiday world. Unsightly parts are not mentioned and the author limits himself primarily to romanticising nature and its phenomena. The positive attribution of this romanticisation does not explain why Africa is especially worth seeing, but the brochure constructs differences through comparisons with other countries:\(^6^2\) Unique, clean and ‘original’ or ‘unspoiled’ nature should appeal to tourists. The contrived romantic landscape has gained in significance as an attraction. No single element, such as the wealth of game, is particularly important, but the whole landscape merges into one piece of art, and becomes a single great place of interest, which is worth seeing.

It is not only the landscape that is worth seeing, but the journey towards a specific place of interest itself is worth an Erfahrung. The description of the journey by ship points out:

\(^{59}\) SWAA 1979, A. 427/16.

\(^{60}\) SWAA 1979, A. 427/16, p. 3; my translation, original: “Wer die Freuden Afrikas einmal genossen hat, bei dem wächst die Sehnsucht mit jedem Jahr. Wohl kaum ein anderes Land vermag uns so zu bezaubern. Wer die freie wilde Natur liebt, der findet hier wie nirgends strahlenden Sonnenschein, kühl Nächte auf Hochflächen, kühne Berge, goldschimmernde Ebenen, üppige Wälder, klare Flüsse und Seen, vor allem aber ein unvergleichliches Tierleben.”

\(^{61}\) O. Lenggenhager, “Empty landscapes”.

\(^{62}\) In the text Africa is not differentiated further. As a whole continent it is compared and contrasted with other countries.
Naturally one gains the most multi-faceted impression of Africa on a journey around the Dark Continent. There really is no more pleasant way to get to know Africa. One is not burdened with luggage or moving from hotel to hotel. From short or longer excursions into countryside or the interior, one returns restless and perhaps physically drained, again and again to the wonderful peace and comfort of the ship which becomes a true home from home on such long trips.

Therefore, the ship is a homogenised space and provides a peaceful setting characterised by proximity, comfort. It becomes a home from home for the travellers. The possibly irritating foreignness can be observed from a safe distance in a relaxed atmosphere. The better the means of transport and mobility, the less uncomfortable the surroundings feel. By adding elements that inspire confidence (such as the ship in the example above), the foreign environment becomes less demanding and allows better recreation. This could also be said of trains and cars as well as of hotel arrangements.

Furthermore historical sources show that overland excursions on the African continent, “in particular train journeys”, could be “booked in advance” as of the 1930s. The “passage department of the Wörmann-Line” organised the whole journey, and was even “ready to help work out the details of such land trips.” These organizers also took care of the financial management of the trip. Tourists could get a letter of credit from the Wörmann-Line and German East-Africa-Line. The Wörmann-Line also provided a summary of the passage and luggage regulations.

In many African harbours the steamboat remained one or more days on site, to allow travellers a short stay in a variety of African countries. Thus tourists were allowed to interrupt their trip several times and combine longer journeys within the country with the Rund um Afrika tour. Tourist ventures by ship would continue throughout almost the entire year, but particularly from February to October, when many people took holiday trips. The journeys around Africa departed twice a month from Hamburg. Tourists could reduce the planned time of 82 days, by boarding the ship in Genoa. Boarding in Genoa would shorten the journey time by 16 days. It is evident that the large number of ships created evenly structured tourist spaces. Thus tourists could plan their trip to include slight individual modifications and could calculate the costs and schedules themselves.

One part of the brochure on contemporary Namibia also says: “Of great interest is a trip through South West Africa – now under South African mandate – and for us Germans it

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64 Ibid.: 2; my translation, original: “insbesondere Bahnhafarten […], im voraus gebucht werden”; “Passage-Abteilung der Wörmann-Linie […] gerne bereit, bei der Ausarbeitung derartiger Reisen behilflich zu sein.”

65 Cf. ibid.

66 Cf. ibid.: 4.
has a particular emotional appeal. The trip through Southwest can be combined very easily with a trip to South Africa.\textsuperscript{67} This description focuses fully on nostalgia for colonial Namibia. Tourist should travel with the feelings that originally woke their interest. Even though Namibia had become a South African mandate, the German brochure still explains that there are “in all larger towns [...] clean, good hotels, under German management”.\textsuperscript{68} Apart from all the idealised descriptions such as “peculiar beauty”, the portrayal of the landscape is completed by the construction of an “infinite loneliness of the wide bush and grass steppe” about with “eternally sunny skies and clear, transparent air”.\textsuperscript{69} The hunt, which is described as quite excellent in many parts of the country, is clearly offered as another possible tourist activity. Animals are portrayed as objects of interest that enliven the wide bush steppes. However, the inhabitants of the country are not mentioned in the brochure text. The carefully chosen pictures also evoke the German colonial past and depict nature as romantic and worth seeing: one picture shows a Herero woman in traditional costume, which indicates a colonial-nostalgic moment. Another one shows Karakul sheep and refers to the German settlement of large areas of the country. The last of the three pictures shows the “landscape of the north” with a pair of palm trees and a mountain range in the background conjuring up an exotic and deserted country.\textsuperscript{70} The aim of the brochure was to make suggestions by presenting typical pictures accompanied by brief texts which draw on common images associated with holiday destinations and perceptions of how the foreign land, its people and nature should be presented.

The brochure referred those tourists who wished to find out more about Africa to the guidebook \textit{Afrika. Ein Handbuch für Wirtschaft und Reise}.\textsuperscript{71} This handbook was not only a guide in the narrow sense, but also described the country and its people, the geographical and economic relations, the climate, plant and animal worlds, possibilities of potential emigrants, means of transportation, and much more. The book covered some aspects of South West Africa in detail, and included additional information on the whole continent south of the Sahara. All larger towns and rivers as well as the main features of the transport infrastructure are shown on a map. The map also shows places of interest for tourists like the Etosha Pan, Naukluft or the Waterberg. The map organises and homogenises the area of Namibia for tourists. It shows places which are accessible, and it even offers suggestions how these places could be visited. At the same time it separates the places of interest from places which are not worth seeing by

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.: 19; my translation, original: “von großem Interesse ist auch eine Reise durch das jetzt unter südafrikanischem Mandat stehende Südwestafrika, das uns Deutschen ja schon gefühlsmäßig anzieht. Sehr gut lässt sich eine Reise durch Südwest mit einer Südafrikareise verbinden.”

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.: 21; my translation, original: “in allen größeren Orten [...] saubere, gute Hotels, die durchweg unter deutscher Leitung stehen”.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.; my translation, original: “unendliche Einsamkeit der weiten Busch- und Grassteppe”; “ewig sonnige Himmel und die klare, durchsichtige Luft”.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.; my translation, original: “Landschaft im Norden”.

spatial differentiation. The handbook starts with an almost encyclopaedic description of
the geography of the country covering physical features, the plant and the animal world,
as well as the population. In this way the guide, as an aggregation of knowledge,
contributed to the generation of knowledge about foreignness with a regard to tourist
activities. This knowledge should not be confused with reality. The knowledge is even
more able to create a reality. A tourist reality in Namibia emerges through a combination
of tourist practices, expressed by a mixture of knowledge, myths, and personal
experiences of travellers. It is striking that the guidebook does not only address issues
of relevance to tourists but also offers potential colonists a wealth of information about
Namibia. Therefore, the book’s appeal is not limited to tourists who are only temporarily
in the country. Large parts of the manual consist of economic data as well as demographic
information on the white population with listings of marriages, births and deaths, and
classifications of the natives according to family, affiliations and reserves. The book
includes information on imports and exports, a detailed description of agriculture with a
subsection on the areas best and least suited to cultivation as well as statistics on
cattle-breeding, fishing and mining. For readers interested in settling permanently there
is information on land acquisition, obtaining loans and employment conditions for white
people.\footnote{Cf. ibid.: 517.}

In spite of practical nature of the guide for potential settlers it is also
significant for the tourism, as the reference to it in the advertising brochure shows.

Due to the regularity of droughts in Namibia the guidebook outlines the level of rainfall
in tabular form many places. It also provides details of boreholes and drinking-water and
gives tips on the optimal use of the rare and precious water.\footnote{Cf. ibid.: 489.}

Water, whether from rainfall or artificial waterholes, shows an important topological point. This point is not
only limited to the economic view of settlers, but also an important ordinal component in
tourism. Thus the guidebook structures the description of the country by separating
areas without water from those where water is available. In addition, the guidebook
proposes trips which are not unlike modern tour offers. One trip suggested in the book
takes 17 days. The suggested route includes Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Windhoek.
Other routes are presented in detail, but without the exact travel duration. Here, too,
some important issues should be mentioned, such as the process of a spatial
homogenization makes possible an increased familiarization and appropriation of
Namibia’s foreignness, which becomes a crucial prerequisite for the success of tourism.

The guidebook points out that on arrival by ship, hotels and railway station are only a
few minutes away. The book also mentions how accessible Swakopmund is: there is a
twice daily service by car and/or a bi-weekly mail train. Hotels, cafés, banks, postal and
telegraph facilities homogenised the tourist topology. As early as the 1930s there were
a lot of entertainment facilities, such as a library, a cinema, a bookstore and a theatre.

In addition, the guidebook mentions sports facilities where tourists could play tennis or
go swimming or horse-riding. The traces of the first safari — or to sound less
adventurous — the first mention of one in a Namibian context dates back to 1939. The
“possibility of organising Safari trips through this country” would be offered by the Rent a coach Company of Johannesburg. "At present [these actors] drawing up a programme for the next season.” Enclosed in correspondences between the town clerk of Windhoek and the above-mentioned company was an advertising brochure. These “would give [...] an idea of attractions offered in this country to tourists.” Whether a safari had really taken place that year, is not clear from sources – unfortunately its traces no longer exist. Hence, the safari as a brand new possibility of experience consumption and Erfahrung for tourists plays only a minor part at that time.

Hunting trips, on the other hand, are mentioned in the description of some destinations and show a more aggressive form of tourist appropriation of nature: The unsettled parts of the country are the richest in game and, thus, the hunting is excellent in large parts of the country, particularly in the thinly populated areas. Even if the metaphor of the untouched wilderness and the representation of a differentiated adventurousness resonate in the exposition about hunting, the guidebook exposes the homogenisation of tourist spaces, which was happening at the same time, as already shown:

On government land the hunt is only permitted with the approval of the relevant magistrate, on private land only with the approval of the owner. Prospective hunters should find out which regulations apply in each individual case.

Consequently on no account is hunting presented as an archaic space which is unstructured or has no valid rules. On the contrary: The touristic consumption of experience by hunting was strictly regulated in all areas of the country. Before starting out on a hunting trip tourists or their tour organizers had to obtain special permits, Tourist hunting adventures could only develop as touristic spaces, if these touristic spaces were homogenous and differentiated at the same time.

Conclusion: permanents of heterotopias

In contrast to the existing literature on Namibia’s tourism the country did become touristified in 1920s. Spatial structures not only supported the Namibian tourism, but made the system of tourism possible. By differentiating and homogenising its tourist spaces Namibia became a tourist destination. Similar and equally structured spaces formed the basis of tourism. These homogenised spaces made Namibia erfahrbar as a tourist destination and made tourism feasible in the country. Homogenization was made possible through use of technology: The infrastructure system of paths, roads and the harbours linked to them provided a necessary spatial mobility for tourist groups. Hotel arrangements ensured the accommodation of travellers on site, and visualisation and literary techniques in guidebooks and travel brochures charged Namibia’s tourist spaces


75 Martens, Karstedt, Handbuch: 491, 517.

with special meanings. These meanings created something unique and worth seeing. By doing so meanings differentiated spaces worth seeing from those not worth seeing, and the other could become a place of interest by the construction of differences.

Namibian spaces were named and constructed with a special meaning, thus they were differentiated as places of interest. Paradoxically tourism structures were becoming ever more homogenised at the same time. Such spaces can be incorporated into repeatable routes with the result that they can be visited at will. The leitmotiv of the new or the foreign other proved to be constitutive and stimulated the tourists’ longings and dreams. In early Namibian tourism, homogeneous spaces were developed by differentiation and staging of foreignness and otherness. This means a potentially dangerous tourist adventure in the wilderness did not clash with the topos of security or nature as an unpredictable, romantic, messy constant. Wilderness is not the opposite of the civilisation which provides order.

In the early days of Namibian tourism urban and rural areas were represented, or portrayed themselves in different ways. It has been shown that urban areas adopted images as centres of modernity as a motif. Rural areas were charged with another meaning: nature is staged as original, unspoiled and wild by the use of sceneries, landscapes and similar representations. Consequently, in tourism, nature is constructed as African and presented in strong contrast to the postulated civilisation of the towns. The appropriation by tourism of nature can only succeed through a synthesis of homogenisation and differentiation of spaces: The urban traffic centres make possible the construction, expansion and appropriation of tourism. In this case, these are to be thought of as homogeneous places which guarantee the mobility of visitors and therefore make differentiated other spaces, such as the wilderness, erfahrbar. Parallel tourist spaces emerge. These other tourist spaces do not have to show compelling common characteristics with real spaces on site in Namibia, but for tourists they are idealised ‘dream worlds’ a kind of temporary realised utopias. These heterotopias can encompass several spaces in one single place, placements which seem incompatible in themselves. In tourism ‘security’ and ‘adventure’, ‘modern’ and ‘savage’ or ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are no longer seen as opposites.

Thus, the establishment of tourism in Namibia made possible further development following the Second World War. Increasing auto-mobilization as of the 1950s raised tourism to a new level. But the cornerstone was based on spatial developments in the 1920s. The system of tourism made possible the ongoing construction and imagination of more and more tourist spaces until today and formed Namibia as a tourist destination.
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