

"Today is party A, tomorrow is party B" : The Elmina 2015 Strategy and the politics of tourism-led local economic development planning in Ghana

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“Today is party A, tomorrow is party B”

The Elmina 2015 Strategy and the politics of tourism-led local economic development planning in Ghana¹

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Introduction

On 15 April 2002, current King Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima (then Prince and Princess respectively) of the Netherlands were present in Elmina, Ghana to officially open the *Elmina Town Consultation* as part of the Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme (ECHMP). This officially opening event was well attended by representatives of Elmina traditional authorities as well as local, regional and national government representatives. Developed by the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem Municipal Assembly (KEEA), the ECHMP aimed at leveraging heritage tourism assets within Elmina for local economic development and poverty reduction. An outcome of the consultations under the ECHMP was the development of a set of ambitions plans christened as the Elmina 2015 Strategy.

An underlying ambition of the Elmina 2015 Strategy was to integrate efforts at stimulating local economic development in the city of Elmina “as a means to alleviate poverty an[d] improve the living standard of the Elmina people” (KEEA, 2002:11). The Elmina 2015 Strategy resulted in the development and implementation of a number of tourism, heritage and local economic development-related projects starting from 2002. The ultimate aim of these projects was the achievement of a developmental vision in which by the end of 2015, Elmina would become “the engine of equitable socio-economic development that impacts on the wealth creation, poverty reduction and improved local governance on a sustainable basis” (Arthur and Mensah, 2006:310). This vision was built on the foundation of heritage tourism becoming the central catalyst for all the other efforts for local economic development and poverty reduction.

When the year 2015 ended, however, the outcomes on the ground showed a remarkable difference from the underlying ambitions of the Elmina 2015 Strategy. The expected integration of tourism to foster local economic development could not be fully realised – although some successes were chalked. Collaboration and coordination between various tourism-related and development-related agencies had broken down. A number of the completed

infrastructural projects began to fall apart due to a lack of use and maintenance. In some cases, such as the Craft Market, facilities become appropriated for other uses due to a lack of patronage. The tourism products on offer in Elmina were not diversified nor were enough linkages made between potential attractions in the locality to the main attraction of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Elmina (St. George's) Castle. The rehabilitated buildings, facilities including tourist signage were left in various stages of disrepair and neglect. Many of the business enterprises that were set up at the start of the ECHMP process to benefit from and attract increased number of tourists into the larger community had closed down because of the failure of institutional collaboration and coordination. The KEEA Municipal Assembly as the highest political and administrative body with responsibility for overall development of the locality appeared to be no longer interested in the Elmina 2015 Strategy. Other institutions that were involved in the planning process seemed to have recoiled back into a narrow focus on their own respective mandates. The governance and management of the Elmina 2015 Strategy appeared to have fallen through the cracks.

Given the wide range of stakeholders involved in the Elmina 2015 Strategy, an examination of the larger context of governance interactions and the institutional structures within which the Elmina 2015 Strategy took place becomes key. This is the focus of this chapter which analyses how institutional setup and political arrangements shaped this tourism-led local economic development planning process. The chapter aims to closely examine the particular ways in which the dynamics of governance interactions shape the use of tourism for local economic development. A strong emphasis in this chapter is placed on the important role of politics in order to address the lacuna in the literature on the tourism-poverty nexus where there is insufficient attention given to the political and governance dimensions of tourism's role in local economic development and poverty reduction (Adu-Ampong, 2019).

After this introduction, the rest of this chapter is organised as follows: first, I briefly sketch out the conceptual ideas around tourism-led local economic development planning and the governance structures in which such process takes place. In particular, I consider how local level political cycles and arrangements shape the use of tourism in local economic development and poverty reduction. Second, I describe the methodology and methods used for data collection and analysis. In the third section, I provide a brief outline of the Elmina 2015 Strategy before moving on to the fourth section that discusses the research findings developed around the political cycles in Ghana. The fifth and final section is the conclusion that draws out implications of this chapter in the wider context of the challenges of leveraging tourism as a tool for local economic development and poverty reduction.

Tourism, local economic development and political cycles

One of the greatest challenges in modern times is the issue of poverty. As such, combating poverty in both “developed” and/or “developing” countries remains one of the main goals of increasing economic development. Within this challenge of global poverty reduction ambitions, tourism is often touted as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the development process (Scheyvens, 2011; Novelli, 2016; Adu-Ampong, 2019). The continuous growth of the tourism sector globally has been the basis on which tourism has come to be regarded as a means to development. This is especially the case in many African countries, where there is an increase in international tourism demand (as also indicated in Chapter 1 of this volume). Many of these African countries possess a wide variety of natural, cultural, and man-made tourism assets like beaches, wildlife parks, cultural festivals and World Heritage Sites. Consequently, tourism has been seen as having the potential to improve livelihoods

through foreign exchange earnings, job creation, income generation and biodiversity conservation (Ashley et al., 2000; Meyer, 2007; Christie et al., 2014; Novelli, 2016; Adu-Ampong, 2017). Tourism is therefore expanding rapidly in many developing countries and in context where states struggle to effectively manage development processes at the local level. Questions have therefore been raised as to the ability of tourism to deliver pro-poor economic benefits in such context (Scheyvens, 2007; Spenceley and Meyer, 2012; Adu-Ampong, 2018).

It has been shown that the most effective way of maximising tourism's potential contribution to local economic development and poverty reduction is by embedding tourism policy and planning within place-based strategic initiatives and seen as part of local and regional economic development (Rogerson, 2014:106). Local economic development (LED) is a development strategy that arose out of the disillusionment with mainstream top-down economic development planning and policy to bring about desired outcomes in the 1970s and 1980s (Nel, 2001; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2010). LED planning is undertaken in well-defined territory or locality, with existing resources available in that locality and the process is controlled by local actors and stakeholders (Rodríguez-Pose, 2002; Pike et al., 2006). Thus, for localities with existing tourism resources, the pursuit of LED tends to be built around using tourism as a catalyst for wider socio-economic development goals. The development of strong linkages between tourism and the local economy is fundamental to maximising tourism benefits.

Tourism-led LED planning is therefore about ensuring an integrated development of tourism in a locality, as a means of enhancing the economic base of that area, creating new employment and business opportunities for local people and complementing existing livelihood options. Following Helmsing (2003:69), tourism-led LED is defined as "a process in which partnerships between local governments, community and civic groups and the private sector are established to manage existing [tourism] resources to create jobs and stimulate the economy of a well-defined area". The emphasis here is on local control and the utilisation of an area's existing potential in terms of human, institutional and physical resources. As these resources tend to be controlled by different groups of governors, actors and stakeholders, LED initiatives rely on the mobilisation of actors, organisations and resources in order to develop local systems through building networks of people, institutions and resources in order to bring about local development.

The state needs to play a key role in integrating tourism into local economic development planning processes, in ways that systematically address development and poverty reduction goals. Tourism and development processes are dependent most crucially on state policy directives that span a multitude of institutions across different governance levels. The importance of governance in enhancing tourism's contribution to poverty reduction has been readily highlighted in the literature (Brohman, 1996; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; Scheyvens, 2007; Holden, 2013; Rogerson, 2014). It has been asserted by Scheyvens (2007:248) that "there is a need for effective governance structures if tourism is to maximise benefits for the poor". More recently, Adu-Ampong (2019:56) has argued that "the issue of governance within the tourism-development nexus has more typically enjoyed only a passing mention, rather than being considered a key explanatory variable in understanding the relationship between tourism and development". Consequently, tourism's role in local economic development needs to be understood from the perspective of the governance structures and interactions at the local level. In particular, it is important to pay attention to the intersection of local governance and local political party cycles.

National and local electoral cycles present both positive and negative incentives that shape the socio-economic and political behaviours of governments. For instance, it has been

established that incumbent governments seeking re-election often engage in increased government spending and/or decreased taxation in the year leading up to national, regional and local elections. Such increased government spending close to elections puts the incumbent government in a position to be re-elected (Drazen, 2001; Franzese, 2002; Khemani, 2004; Brender and Drazen, 2005; Keefer and Khemani, 2005; Drazen and Eslava, 2010). This process of political business cycle (PBC) shows that in the run up to elections, incumbents are shown to reallocate the bulk of government expenditure to high visibility projects that make an immediate impression on voters (Rogoff, 1990). Thus, politicians with an eye on re-election take deliberate steps in the allocation and timing of government resources, which is usually in favour of big development projects at key stages of the electoral cycle. The more visible the projects, such as the extension of electricity, road upgrades and other building projects, the more likely electorates are predisposed to vote for the government. In many cases, these projects need only to be started and not be completed by election time.

There is an issue here of project (dis)continuity and what happens to the high visibility projects and programmes once the electoral cycle is over and the incumbent is re-elected? Do the incumbents see these projects through to full implementation or do they let such projects lie idle until the next electoral cycle is on the horizon? Importantly, what happens to the (dis)continuity of projects if and when an incumbent government is voted out of power and a new government is elected? In a highly contested political landscape as in Ghana, what happens to uncompleted projects when a new political party assumes power? Answers to these questions are important in helping to understand how a long-term project like the Elmina 2015 Strategy unfolded within the context of changing party governments.

To fully comprehend what happens to projects after elections, a set of literature on the political economy of public good provision offers a number of insights. Research from this area has shown how national and local electoral cycles impact on project implementation and development outcomes (Lindberg, 2003; Whitfield, 2009; Batley et al., 2012; Kelsall, 2012; Turner, 2012; Hirvi and Whitfield, 2015; Williams, 2016). Thus, while a given government might initiate tourism development policies and projects, the (dis)continuity and full implementation of such projects are dependent on underlying political-economic conditions in a given destination – of which national and local electoral cycles are a prime example. Clearly then, tourism planning and the tourism-poverty nexus projects are bound to be affected by changes in government. The different set of incentives available to politicians and policy-makers in the lead-up to elections may shape their decision to start high visibility projects and to (dis)continue such projects once electoral victory has been sealed. Differing vested interests represents the potential source of stakeholder conflicts that can impede joined-up communication, collaboration and coordination efforts. An awareness of the political nature of tourism-led LED planning initiatives is therefore critical to understanding the process of and enhance the success of such initiatives.

Furthermore, research has shown how, in many instances, politicians especially at the local level tend to devote resources to starting new projects, rather than completing existing ones in order to accumulate electoral goodwill as well as appease distributive pressures from constituents (Williams, 2016). This is especially the case in countries like Ghana, where there is a highly intensive political competition that tends to constrain policy and project continuity (Whitfield, 2011, 2009; Kelsall, 2012). Local governments play an important role in tourism planning and development. As the third tier (after national and regional governments) of the public sector in tourism, they bear the biggest responsibility for ensuring that the tourism product remains competitive (McKercher and Ritchie, 1997). It has also been shown that local governments are key to achieving sustainable tourism development (Dredge, 2006;

Ruhanen, 2013). However, the assessment of local government cycles and capacity in tourism governance and development has been relatively less studied (Churugsa et al., 2007; Slocum and Backman, 2011).

Given that local governments can either facilitate or inhibit tourism-led local economic development planning initiatives, it is important to fully understand their capacity and the political processes of local government management and administration in a destination (Manning, 2001; Crook, 2003; Smoke, 2003; Awortwi, 2010). Thus to understand tourism-led LED policy and implementation like the Elmina 2015 Strategy, one must consider the political and administrative processes – i.e. the national and electoral cycles, within which it was situated. There are key questions to be addressed within such a context: what was the number of electoral cycles over the span of the Elmina 2015 Strategy? In which ways did these electoral cycles lead to administrative changes in local governments? Did electoral cycles coincide with the transfer of key staff on the project and how this affect organisation memory and capacity? Answers to these questions will provide insight into how electoral cycles lead to administrative changes in local governments shaped the Elmina 2015 Strategy.

Methodology and methods

This chapter is based on research carried out as part of the author's PhD project, which took place between 2013 and 2016. While the data collection period appears dated, the findings and implications have contemporary currency. There are new attempts in Ghana in utilising slavery heritage tourism as an avenue for local and national economic development. This is in the context of the “Year of Return 2019” and “Beyond the Return” tourism marketing campaigns. The overall objective of the PhD project was to understand, explain and analyse how governance interactions shape the planning and use of tourism for local economic development. Meeting this objective involved understanding governance interactions between different structures of governance in the tourism sector of Ghana. The research was framed from the philosophical starting point and assumption about the social construction of the governance interactions that give rise to and shape the use of tourism in local economic development planning strategies. Thus, the interaction between actors (both individually and organisationally) is influential in how institutional arrangements are produced and reproduced, which then in turn delineates the processes of future actor interactions. Actors engaged in interactions and social relations they begin to shape institutional processes but then become simultaneously constrained in their choice of actions and strategies by the very institutional processes they shape (Giddens, 1984; Scott, 1995). Nonetheless, actors are considered as being innovative and capable of learning through their interactions and consequently in becoming capable to then change the very structures that guide their interactions in the first place (Healey, 1999, 2003).

Data for this chapter were collected as part of a three-year PhD research period, with a process-based research design focused on examining how (tourism) governance processes influence the role of tourism in local economic development and poverty reduction (Adu-Ampong, 2016). The methodology was built on semi-structured in-depth interviews, policy document analysis and observations. Fieldwork was carried out on two separate occasions (August–November 2014 and July–September 2015). For the whole project, a total of 59 key informant interviews were conducted in addition to 9 community member interviews, three of which ended up becoming a form of focus group with between two and five persons. These individuals included past and present KEEA officers, Directors at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (currently Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture),

Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, community members and homeowners who benefitted from the building projects under the Elmina 2015 Strategy, as well as private sector organisations members of the Ghana Tourism Federation. In addition, there were a number of informal conversations with community members and extensive field notes taken that provided background information for this research. These were triangulated with the analysis of national, regional and local level tourism-related development plans, especially the Elmina 2015 Strategy documents including progress reports on project implementation. The interviews were used to confirm evidence from other sources while also opening up new lines of inquiry to the (re)analysis of documents and other pieces of evidence. The iterative process of using document analysis and interviews to confirm, corroborate and highlight differences ensured a robust data collection and analysis process.

The framework approach for qualitative analysis as developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) was used to analyse both the primary and secondary data. The five-step process of the approach consisted of familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation. An iterative following of these steps enabled the data to be scrutinised for meaning, salience and connections between what interviewees perceived in their governing interactions and what actually pertains to their day-to-day activities. Significantly, this approach to analysis made it easier to identify salience and connections between governing (in)activities and the challenges of implementing the Elmina 2015 Strategy process. Data analysis focused on building up broad sub-themes of commonalities and differences between actors in their views and actions. These themes included “political interfering”, “party politics”, “forced staff transfer”, “project champions”, “revenue sharing”, “tourism management”, “project monitoring”, “KEEA politics”, “New Patriotic Party role”, “National Democratic Congress Party role” among others.

A stylised (tourism development) history of Elmina

There are a number of challenges facing tourism planning in Ghana, especially in terms of project implementation (Adu-Ampong, 2019; see also Chapter 15). The high level of fragmentation in both public and private institutions involved in the tourism sector often hinder effective collaboration and coordination in tourism planning and development (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2016; Adu-Ampong, 2017). Nonetheless, a number of tourism-related projects have been developed and implemented across the country to varying levels of success. Particularly in the Central Region of Ghana, which is considered as the tourism hub of the country (Adu-Ampong, 2017), a number of projects have been initiated aimed at using a tourism as a catalyst for economic development and poverty reduction (Akyeampong and Asiedu, 2008). This is also the region where Elmina is located.

Given its well-documented extraordinary past, it is impossible to do justice to the complex history of Elmina in a few paragraphs. What follows is therefore a stylised summary of key aspects of this place that are relevant for the current discussion. Imbued with over 700 years of history, the modern city of Elmina traces its roots to the adventures of one Kwaa Amankwaa who gave it the traditional name of Anomansa (Henige, 1974). Elmina was long considered as an independent city-state while the surrounding settlements formed part of the Fante Kingdom. In 1470 Portuguese explorers Juan de Santaran and Pedro d’Escobara landed at the coast of Anomansa which was later christened with the Portuguese name of “La Mina” (“The Mine”) in reference to the abundance of gold in the area. Over time the Portuguese name became localised as “Edina” and later anglicised as Elmina. In 1482, a new Portuguese expedition lead by Don Diego d’Azambuja arrived in Elmina and was later leased land by



Figure 12.1 The Elmina Castle (view from the hill of Fort Java)

Source: Author.

the chief of Elmina at the time, Nana Kobina Ansah I for the construction of St. George's Castle (Essah, 2001). The building of the Castle rejuvenated Elmina's development and made it a centre of commerce, with surrounding regions as well as a key node in an international trading network between Africa, Europe and the Americas.

In 1637, the Dutch took over control of the castle from the Portuguese and continued with the booming transatlantic slave trade. It was during this time that Elmina came to be known as the European African city owing to an increased settlement of Dutch merchants in the city. European-styled merchant houses were built and the city layout was reconfigured to Dutch standards. In 1871, the British took over and after the abolition of the slave trade, used the castle as the central administrative centre during colonial rule. In the aftermaths of Ghana's independence in 1957, the castle was used for various purposes including; as an office for the Ghana Education service, as a District Assembly office and as a policy training academy before its inscription unto the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979 under criteria (iv) – "to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history". It was only after this time that the Elmina Castle (see Figure 12.1), which remains the oldest European building in Africa, became recognised as a tourist attraction site, and efforts were made to preserve and present it as such (Bruner, 1996).

The population of Elmina currently sits at just over 23,000 (GSS, 2014). Elmina is the biggest settlement in, and the capital of the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana, headed by the Municipal Chief Executive. Out of the four major traditional occupations in Elmina – gold prospecting, fishing, salt making and pottery – salt making and fishing with its associated processes remain the most dominant occupation in contemporary times, in addition to the ubiquitous petty trading and commerce. It is estimated that 60% of employment in Elmina is in the informal sector while the remaining 40% of formal sector employment is found in teaching, nursing and government jobs at the KEEA Municipal offices (KEEA, 2002). The informal sector includes activities such as fishing, ship building, fish processing, salt mining, artisanal self-employment, agriculture and petty trading. The poverty incidence in Elmina is widespread as shown



Figure 12.2 A shot of the Elmina Township from the hill of Fort Java

Source: Author.

in a number of indicators such as high rates of unemployment, high school dropout rates, high rates of child delinquency, low school enrolment rates, high rates of teenage pregnancy among others. For instance, the results of the 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census shows that “at least three in every ten persons [in the KEEA municipality] are economically not active (32.4%)” and that “one key finding of important social and health implication is the poor nature of housing condition in the Municipality which confirms the relative poverty of the residents” (GSS, 2014:70) (Figure 12.2).

As the KEEA Municipal Coordinating Director concedes,

...yes we have poverty, the bulk of people are poor so to speak and if you go into the hinterland you see people depend on seasonal cropping and they are peasant farmers, from hand to mouth. This is how they’ve survived all the way.

The Municipal Assembly identifies the key development challenges in Elmina and its environs as found in education, agriculture, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), health and local economic development. Improvements in these areas are considered as essential for improving socio-economic development and poverty reduction. It is in this regard that since the mid-1990s, tourism came to be seen as a potential “third sector” growth pole in Elmina – after fishing and salt mining – which could serve as a catalyst for local economic development (Sonne, 2010; Holden et al., 2011).

Elmina is endowed with a number of cultural heritage tourism resources and assets. These include the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Elmina Castle and Fort St. Jago, 18th and 19th century built traditional Asafo Posts, Old Merchant houses, the Old Dutch Cemetery,

the Bakatue and Edina Bronya traditional festivals and a number of historical landmarks in addition to a long stretch of beach and the Benya Lagoon. These assets have long been noted as having the potential to attract a large number of both domestic and international tourists to Elmina. The first serious attempt at developing tourism in Elmina as part of a strategy to stimulate regional and local economic development and tackle poverty came under the Central Regional Integrated Development Programme (CERIDEP). CERIDEP, which was funded by the UNDP and USAID, was implemented by the Central Regional Development Commission (CEDECOM) between 1993 and 1998. This project was aimed at developing an integrated tourism programme for the Central Region culminating in the restoration of the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles as well as the development of the Canopy Walkway at the Kakum National Park. Thus in 1995, the Elmina Castle and Fort St. Jago were partly renovated and given fresh painting. Unlike in the case of Cape Coast where a number of historic houses were also renovated through home-owner grants, the project in Elmina was isolated rather than integrated into overall economic development strategy. It was within this context that the Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme (ECHMP) was initiated starting from the verge of the new millennium in the year 2000 under the leading auspices of the KEEA Municipal Assembly.

Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme and the Elmina 2015 Strategy

The Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme (ECHMP) was an attempt to provide a coordinated effort towards existing and ongoing initiatives in order to define and develop an integrated approach to the development of Elmina. The ECHMP aimed at stimulating the development potentials in Elmina through the creation of new local employment opportunities in order to alleviate poverty and improve living standards. With initial funding from the Dutch government, a fundamental aim of the ECHMP was urban heritage conservation and the revitalisation of identified mutual heritage between Ghana and the Netherlands. This mutual heritage consisted of the Elmina Castle, Fort St. Jago, Java Museum, Old Dutch Cemetery, Asafo Posts, St. Joseph's Catholic Church building and museum, the Methodist Church Chapel building, numerous merchant houses and the very layout of the city of Elmina. It was these (potential) tourist assets that underpinned the overall objective of the ECHMP which was to develop a "clear-cut strategy and institutional framework for integrated urban cultural heritage conservation in Elmina town and to revitalise the identified mutual heritage" KEEA (2002:1).

A series of public and stakeholder consultations were held to identify priority areas under the programme. The centrepiece of this process was the Elmina Town Consultation held between 15 and 18 April 2002. The official opening of this was attended by current King Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima (then Prince and Princess respectively) of the Netherlands. At the end of the consultation process, five priority areas were arrived at through a series of community stakeholder consultations. These were: (1) drainage and waste management, (2) fishing and fishing harbor, (3) tourism and local economic development, (4) health and (5) education. The various strategic action plans under each priority area were then aggregated by the core Task Force group of the ECHMP into the Elmina 2015 Strategy.

The Elmina 2015 Strategy mapped out a strategy for the future integrated development of Elmina accompanied by specific action and project plans for all the five priority areas with the tagline of "Building on the Past to Create a Better Future". The overall success of the ECHMP and the resulting Elmina 2015 Strategy was predicated on the effective

implementation of priority three – tourism and local economic development. The Elmina 2015 Strategy envisaged heritage tourism as a catalyst for stimulating local economic development. The strategy comprised of three key reports: (1) Sector Strategy and Vision, (2) Project Portfolios and (3) Elmina Profile and Summary Profile. The Elmina Profile was a report on the socio-economic development and political situation of Elmina. This served as basis for developing the Sector Strategy and Vision as well as the Project Portfolios. The Elmina Profile also served as a baseline against which to evaluate its outcomes. Out of the three reports, it is the Sector Strategy and Vision report that offers an insight into how stakeholders arrived at an image of how tourism, local economic development and poverty reduction were related in Elmina. Thus, the Elmina 2015 Strategy set out a tourism-led local economic development planning strategy that went beyond simple heritage conservation. In summary, the argument was this:

The Elmina 2015 strategy goes beyond restoring monuments. It believes that with improved tourist infrastructure, the revitalisation of the existing monuments and the development of other important cultural sites, tourism can become a major economic activity in Elmina and serve to improve the general standard of living in the town. The strategy identifies tourism as an entry point in facilitating sustainable development through an integrated development approach. Thus mutual cultural heritage and monuments serve as a springboard in working towards improvement of living standards. At the same time, the improvements to the other sectors such as health, education and waste management will enhance the touristic potential of Elmina, thereby allowing for a synergistic development framework.

KEEA (2002:10)

In effect, the Elmina 2015 Strategy was positioned as the culmination of a tourism-led local economic development planning process that began in the year 2000 by the KEEA Municipal Assembly in collaboration with the Institute of Housing and Urban Studies of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in the Netherlands. This process was also initiated in close collaboration with the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), Ghana Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) and the Department of International Relations and International Organisations at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. A number of projects outlined in the Project Portfolio document under the Elmina 2015 Strategy were implemented between 2003 and 2007 (see Table 12.1).

These projects were part of a shared vision mapped out for the future socio-economic development of Elmina, through a series of stakeholder and community consultations lead by the KEEA. These projects ranged from the rehabilitation of St. George's Castle, Fort St. Jago, the Dutch Cemetery, old merchant houses and the dredging of the fishing harbour, as well as training of artisans and the construction of the Elmina Craft Market. The funding sources for these projects included the Dutch Culture Fund, the EU's 9th European Development Fund and Government of Ghana funding through the KEEA Municipal Assembly. The implementation of these and other projects aimed to ensure that by the year 2015 Elmina's socio-economic development fortunes would be flourishing through increased tourism. The ultimate expectation was that by the end of 2015, Elmina would become "the engine of equitable socio-economic development that impacts on the wealth creation, poverty reduction and improved local governance on a sustainable basis" (Arthur and Mensah, 2006:310). It was expected that the implementation of these projects would lead to "...the attainment of longer stays by tourist [which] will contribute to local economic growth and generate employment

Table 12.1 Projects to be implemented the tourism and local economic development with indicative total cost

<i>Project</i>	<i>Total cost (in euros)</i>
Project 41: Erection of signposts at strategic locations in town	€20,000
Project 42: Establishment of an internet café in Elmina	€20,000
Project 43: Upgrading of Kiosks	€30,000
Project 44: Rehabilitation of the historic site adjacent to the Castle	€22,000
Project 45: Developing of community performing arts night theatre	€1,000
Project 46: Providing street lighting in Elmina town and illumination of the Elmina and St. Jago Castles	€43,500
Project 47: Diversify choice of eateries and hotels in Elmina Town and provide alternative services for visitors	€830, 000
Project 48: Redevelopment of Trafalgar Square	€30,000
Project 49: Tree planting	€20,000
Project 50: Skill development and capacity building	€1,000
Project 51: Redevelop the former government garden into a children playground	€50,000
Project 52: Improve the salt industry	€2,900,000 (with € 20,000 for feasibility study)
Project 53: Ironman/Action Elmina Competition: running, cycling, boat races and swimming	Sponsored by the private sector
Project 54: Bike rental and bike taxis for tourists	In co-operation with the private
Project 55: Redevelop the beach along Rawlings high street	€20,000–30,000 in co-operation with the private sector

Source: Compiled from Elmina (2015) Strategy Project Reports.

and income in Elmina. It will thereby contribute to the town's longer-term development goals including its social, economic and heritage revitalisation" (KEEA, 2002:61).

In the conclusion section of the document, the centrality of the tourism and local economic development component to the whole Elmina 2015 Strategy is reiterated. The Elmina 2015 Strategy starts with the restoration and management of existing heritage assets for tourism. It is after this that tourism's potential for local economic development and poverty reduction becomes mutually-reinforcing of the other components of health, sanitation and education. The Strategy document succinctly notes that:

But this strategy goes beyond restoring monuments. It recognises the importance of taking away the factors that presently prevent visitors from spending more time and money in Elmina Town. Only if the drains will be cleaned, illegal waste dumps are cleared, waste is collected routinely and visitors are not constantly harassed by children, visitors are tempted to further explore the town. Paving the streets of the New Town and upgrading of some strategic sites such as the former Government Garden and the historic site next to the Castle will further improve the town image of Elmina. An increase in tourist numbers can make this sector an important industry to complement the present sources of local employment.

KEEA (2002:84)

In the last section of the Strategy document with the title “A Vision for the year 2015” the ultimate vision for Elmina is set out and is worth quoting in part. The vision pointed out that:

In 2015 we envisage Elmina to be a thriving town in which fishing is still the main economic activity but has significant other sectors of employment in the salt mining, boat building but most importantly the tourist industry. The unique heritage assets and the picturesque harbour make the town Ghana’s prime tourist destination. The excellent road conditions allow tourists to reach Elmina by car within 2 hours from Accra, while the building of airstrip is underway. The town is to be visited by over 150,000 tourists annually that spend an average of two nights in the town choosing from a wide range of choices for accommodation. The local population is also benefitting from the tourist boom and consequent economic development.

KEEA (2002:85)

This vision for what Elmina will look like in 2015 did not however materialise as originally envisaged. The hope that tourism will serve as a catalyst for local economic development and contribute to poverty reduction turned out to be less real than expected. In the next section, I explore the particular ways in which local governance arrangements and political cycles shaped the outcome of this vision.

Local governance structures and political cycles

The Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) is the legal custodian of the Elmina Castle and has management responsibilities for it. Since the Elmina 2015 Strategy went beyond the renovation of the Elmina Castle and expanded to cover overall local economic development of Elmina, there was the need to involve the KEEA Municipal Assembly. The politico-legal backing of the KEEA to the ECHMP rested on the provisions in Ghana’s Local Government Act 462 of 1993 and section 5 of the National Development Planning System Act 480 of 1994. Under these legislations the KEEA is a planning authority and the only institution legally mandated to prepare local and/or sub-district development plans either directly or through delegation to lower tiers of government like Town and Urban Councils. The proposals for the ECHMP therefore fell into the category of a sub-district local economic development plan of Elmina and hence the KEEA had to be the leading institution for the project in order to provide the requisite politico-legal instruments. The KEEA had the technocratic mechanism and tools for the planning process as the preparation of District Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) is one of its key responsibilities.

The KEEA was therefore able to facilitate the Elmina 2015 Strategy which involved a much more detailed planning process than usually accorded to the making of the MTDP. One of the reasons for this was that the financial resources were provided by external parties. The Planning Officer at that time explains that “the Elmina 2015 Strategy, that was, for that one there was a thorough consultation, participation... [T]he resources were not provided by the assembly otherwise there was no [Elmina] 2015”. It must also be noted that at this point in time, a new political party had just come into office for the first time and was eager to show that they were bringing the promised development projects to the community. This political context was very instrumental in shaping the enthusiasm and support given to the project in the beginning

Notwithstanding its legal mandate for the overall development of the municipality, the remit of the KEEA did not extend to the management of the Elmina Castle or many of

the other tourist assets of the municipality. These areas fell under the responsibility of the GMMB. Thus, while the KEEA came to lead the preparation and implementation of the ECHMP and the Elmina 2015 Strategy plans, it was the GMMB that had the ultimate governing authority over the golden goose upon whose golden eggs all other components of the project hinged. In addition, given the dual governance structure in Elmina (government and traditional authority) it was imperative for the traditional council to give backing to the project. This support consisted largely of the mobilisation of community support for and participation in the projects. During the interviews, an interesting counter perspective as to who should have ultimately been in charge for the project was given by the head of the tourism subcommittee at KEEA, who also serves on the traditional council and is often a spokesperson for the traditional council. He noted that had there been enough capacity within the traditional council, then they should have been the ones to lead the project. In his view, because the land on which the Elmina Castle was built was first given to the Portuguese by the traditional authorities, they have the right to claim the castle as their own. In his own words:

If the traditional council have the capacity to manage this project I would have been the first person to suggest that what, these help or whatever should have channelled through there. The reason is that any project for the people by the people for the people they handle it very well. But the traditional council weren't in a position to handle such a big project and for that matter assembly came in as the facilitator.

The fragmented nature of stakeholder interactions did not paralyse the project in the beginning due to high levels of cross-sectoral coordination and mobilisation of support. This process was further strengthened by the political support offered by the newly elected government. The implementation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy began earnestly in the context of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government taking over power from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party. This context was key in shaping the trajectory and outcomes of the project. In the next sections, I provide an analysis of the evolution of the Elmina 2015 Strategy vis-à-vis the national political (party) cycles in the governance structures of Ghana.

Era of the National Democratic Congress Party: 1992–2000

In the 1980s, Ghana was under the military government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Ato Austin, who hailed from Elmina was appointed as the PNDC Regional Secretary (Regional Minister) for the Central Region in this period and sought to remedy the socio-economic decline in the Region – a decline that started once the national government was moved from Cape Coast to Accra in 1877 by the British colonial. Tourism was regarded as a potential catalyst for local economic development and poverty reduction. The Cape Coast Castle and the Elmina Castle, which were in a deplorable state were identified as the key attractions in this scheme. The plan was therefore to restore these Castles and to then market them to African Americans, Afro Caribbean and other Africans in the Diaspora who want to reconnect with their roots. It was thus from this period that a concerted planning and development effort turned the Central Region into the hub of tourism in Ghana (Adu-Ampong, 2017). As one interviewee noted:

...he [Ato Austin] was looking for a strategy that will stem the economic decline, reverse it and he choose tourism as a catalyst and the proposal, that proposal was to enhance these two Castles, Cape Coast and Elmina, bring them up because they were decaying

very fast. So the proposal's main aim was to restore so that they could be catalyst, important catalyst for African American heritage tourists...

(Interview with Nkunu Akyea, Former Executive Director of Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, 08.09.2014)

Following the transition from military rule to democracy in the 1992 national elections, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party which mutated from the PNDC won the elections and retained control of all Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). A proposal from the Regional Minister – Ato Austin – known as the Tourism Development Scheme for the Central Region received funding support from UNDP and USAID. The USAID funding for this programme was provided through a so-called Natural Resource Conservation and Historic Preservation Project (NRCHP), which made possible the restoration of the Cape Coast Castle, the Elmina Castle as well as works to stablish Fort St. Jago also in Elmina. In a bid to diversity the tourism products away from only heritage, a visitor reception centre and a canopy walkway were built in the nearby Kakum National Park. It was also realised that this bricks and mortar approach to tourism development in the region was not enough to tap into tourism's full potential for local economic development and poverty reduction. A funded subproject developed an integrated tourism-led town planning and development plan for the Cape Coast metropolis, as well as providing homeowner grants for the renovation of old merchant and colonial buildings with historic value. These buildings were then to be used for commercial activities that generate income for those involved. This initial effort at tourism-led local economic development and poverty reduction did not include Elmina.

At the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem District Assembly (KEEA), one Austin Ankumah who was appointed as the District Chief Executive (DCE) was keen on seeing to the restoration of the Elmina Castle for tourism development and to replicate in Elmina the integrated tourism-led local economic development plan that was developed for Cape Coast. Up to the next national electoral cycle in 1996, which was again won by the NDC party, he set about to find external funding. The NDC government at this point had shown strong political will and support to utilise tourism for local economic development and poverty reduction. This resulted in a boom of tourism activities in the region and to Elmina, which the DCE sought to tap into as a catalyst for local economic development and poverty reduction.

The key issue at this point, in the late 1990s, was financing any project. Briggs (2012) notes that, between 1998 and 1999, the NDC government faced a sharp decline in international aid, which limited the government's ability to allocate resources to places like Elmina. Notwithstanding limited government resources, the DCE in Elmina encouraged and was supportive of private initiatives that sought to attract investments for renovating some of the historic buildings for tourism purposes. The point to be made here is that up the year 2000, there was a lot of political support for tourism-led local economic development planning initiatives in Elmina. When the NDC party lost the December 2000 national elections to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) party, much of the ideas that were later to become the Elmina 2015 Strategy were already on the ground.

Era of the New Patriotic Party: 2001–2008

In 2001, the NPP government assumed office and Nana Ato Arthur who hails from Elmina was appointed as the DCE for the KEEA. Keen to get as many high-visibility projects off and running having campaigned on the promise of economic development and poverty

reduction, the government committed resources for the Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme (ECHMP). The ECHMP was in line with the NPP governments economic development strategy which focused on redistributive policies and poverty-related spending. There was a political incentive for the NPP government to lay full claim to and gain political credit to having implemented the project even if the original ideas were already afloat during the era of the NDC government. As one of the interviewees explained,

...this project this project was started by Nana, former MCE, he is now died and gone, Nana Ankumah [from the NDC government]. He initiated this 2015 strategy but they were passing through some challenges. It was Nana Ato Arthur's time that we had the funds coming down...

(Interview with Ebo Dadzie, Head of Tourism Sub-Committee, KEEA, 31.10.2014)

The fact that the benefits of the project were realised during the period of the NPP government had a positive impact on standing of the NPP government in general within the locality. The DCE was very committed to the project and endeared himself to both the national government and the people in KEEA. He explains his commitment and dedication to the project as this;

How we sat day and night to develop this document. I will be here in the afternoon and then J.H. Mensah, the then senior minister will call me to his office in Accra that look, I have been able to get some Ambassadors together and I want you to come and speak with them. It'll be 12midday here, he will tell me I need to be there at 4pm. I need to pick my car and even whether I have said goodbye to my wife or family or not, I will go because I needed to do something for my people. That was the zeal then.

(Interview with Nana Ato Arthur, Former MP for KEEA/Formal KEEA MCE/Formal Regional Minister, 07.11.2014)

The NPP government at this time was committed to cross-sectoral collaboration. For instance, while there was no legislative backing, an informal revenue sharing mechanism was established by the NPP government for the proceeds from the Elmina Castle to be split between the GMMB, the KEEA and the Elmina traditional authority. This arrangement greased the wheels of the interactions of stakeholders towards the effective implementation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy. However, after the NDC party returned to power in 2009, the new management of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) lobbied for this arrangement to be ceased. The argument was that the revenue generated through the Elmina Castle is also used for the preservation and maintenance of the many forts and castles dotted along the Ghanaian coast that do not generate any revenue themselves but are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Status designation. This situation resulted in a dwindling of interest from other stakeholders in working towards the effective implementation of project goals.

The NPP government was returned to power in the December 2004 national elections. A new DCE – Frank Asmah – was appointed for the KEEA to replace Nana Ato Arthur who has been promoted as a Deputy Regional Minister. At this point, a lot of the physical projects were ongoing and near completion with preparations underway to hand over the completed projects to the responsible bodies. Thus the second term of the NPP government coincided with the project implementation and institutionalisation phases of the Elmina 2015 Strategy. However, it is also at this point that the zeal and political commitment shown during the first

term of the NPP government began to wane. For the new DCE, there was a little positive incentive to show the same zeal towards the project because the political credits had already being assigned to the previous DCE. Indeed at the national level, the NPP government's commitment to poverty-related spending began to change and this perhaps trickled down to the local level. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy from the government's first term became the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy signifying a focus on growth as the main mechanism for poverty reduction. In terms of the Elmina 2015 Strategy, it appears that the new DCE began to privatise certain aspects of the Elmina 2015 Strategy projects and spin-offs like the waste management component. Thus interviewees noted that "It was Frank's time the whole project went off to a private entity. It was Ato Arthur's time we started benefiting. It was Frank Asmah's time this project went off" (Interview with Ebo Dadzie, Head of Tourism Sub-Committee, KEEA and founding member of SEA, 16.07.2015).

The point here is that each political cycle of national elections present a different set of incentives to politicians that shape the extent to which they continue existing projects. Thus after the NPP government had been re-elected, the political commitment and zeal that was associated with the Elmina 2015 Strategy began to wane. Certain aspects of the project did not get the needed attention while other aspects came into private hands. The new DCE did not share the same focus for the project as the predecessor (Interview with Justice Amoah, Former Municipal Planning Officer of KEEA/Formal National Project Coordinator of Elmina 2015 Strategy, 17.07.2015). Thus the phase of institutionalising the projects and objectives of the Elmina 2015 Strategy within existing governance structures of the KEEA could not begin in earnest due to the low level of political commitment.

Era of the National Democratic Congress: 2009–2016

Electoral and party politics in Ghana is a highly competitive and intense one. This intensive political competition generates negative incentives for politics in ways that constrain economic progress (Whitfield, 2009, 2011; Kelsall, 2012). This is especially the case when it comes to the project and programme continuity. When a new political party comes into power, there is a negative incentive for them to continue projects already began by the previous government from a different party. At the December 2008 national polls, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party was elected into power to replace the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government that has been in power between since 2001. This was a keenly contested election that went to a run-off before the NDC was able to secure 50% plus 1 vote of total votes cast. Thus, when the NDC came into office, the positive incentive for them was to initiate and start up their own development projects and programmes even though there were uncompleted programmes and projects of the NPP government. This is simply because the political credits of completing existing projects will be claimed by the NPP party in opposition. Thus, by beginning their own projects, the new government can claim all the political credits available which it is hoped will translate into electoral votes at the next elections. This is exactly what happened in terms of the continuation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy once the NDC party came into power.

The NDC government-appointed one Rev. Veronica Essuman Nelson in 2009 to the position of the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) for KEE – the KEEA was declared as a municipality in 2007 by the NPP government. This change had a strong shaping role on the trajectory of the final phase of the Elmina 2015 Strategy. This was the institutionalisation phase where the municipality had to ensure, through effective communication, collaboration and communication between stakeholders, that tourism was generating the momentum

for local economic development and poverty reduction. It appears that there was not much political commitment to see to this phase of the project. The following quotes from some of the interviewees provide a sense of this situation:

KEEA, and KEEA keeps on changing with the personnel. Today is party A, tomorrow is party B. Party A does not see anything right with the work started by party A or party B, that itself creates a problem.

(Interview with Francis Cobbinah, Executive Director, Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, Cape Coast, 29.09.2014)

...paradoxically when this thing started it started with an NDC government, the actual execution was done by an NPP government, an NPP government was succeeded by an NDC government who also wanted to make a niche and did not...now when one party leaves and another party comes, the way it looks at the project differs....

(Interview with Dr. Anthony Annah-Prah, Head of Implementation of Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme, 03.11.2014)

...every government, local etc. want to start something that they will be called an initiator and not a person who built upon what the previous person has done and so the Elmina 2015 strategy was unfortunately seen as an NPP achievement, you see and so the NDC had to start on its own.

(Interview with Dr. Anthony Annah-Prah, Head of Implementation of Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme, 03.11.2014)

The implementation and institutionalisation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy from 2009 onwards began to take a downward turn even as a new political party came into office. As the quotes above makes clear, there was not enough incentive for the new party to continue and make sure that the Strategy is fully institutionalised within the governance structures of the KEEA. While the negative political incentives as discussed above played a role in this downward direction, part of the reason is also closely related to the loss of institutional memory and institutional capacity. For instance, the office room in which the documentations for the Elmina 2015 Strategy were kept at the KEEA were emptied to make room for a German-funded project secured by the NDC government (Interview with Dr. Anthony Annah-Prah, Head of Implementation of Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme, 03.11.2014).

The desire to start from scratch therefore meant that there was no incentive to retain institutional memory about the Elmina 2015 Strategy. Moreover, with change in party governments comes a high rate of municipal staff transfers, based on the perception that they may be too loyal to the previous party government and might therefore be a hindrance to agenda of the new government.

Conclusion

This vision for what Elmina would look like in 2015 did not, however, materialise as originally envisaged. The hope that tourism would serve as a catalyst for local economic development and contribute to poverty reduction turned out to be less real than expected. There were a number of reasons that account for the disjuncture between objectives and eventual outcomes. The planning process leading up to the formulation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy, followed a classic stakeholder identification-stakeholder consultation-stakeholder agreed upon action plans process – which is commonly referred to as collaborative/communicative

planning (Healey, 1997, 1999; see also Brand and Gaffikin, 2007 for a useful critique). While the planning process to arrive at the Elmina 2015 Strategy might have passed as unproblematic, its implementation was anything but that. This chapter has outlined how the local governance arrangements and political cycles impacted on the eventual outcomes.

This chapter has shown how the temporal dimension of implementing the Elmina 2015 Strategy interacted with and was shaped by the time inconsistency problems that arise from the change of political party in government. The political commitment of successive governments towards the institutionalisation phase of the project declined over the years. This lack of commitment was due to the limited incentives faced by politicians who decide to continue project implementation rather than starting one from scratch. Thus, when the NDC government came into power, they were keen on starting their own new projects rather than continue the Elmina 2015 Strategy. This is because the political credit of this had already been claimed by the opposition NPP government. The Elmina 2015 Strategy was based on a technocratic understanding of governance and the institutional arrangements under which implementation was to take place. This technocratic understanding of governance interactions in the locality meant that the strategy proceeded on the assumption that once the consultations had been completed, plans agreed, and the project had begun, things would fall into place to ensure that tourism leads to local economic development. The inadequate attention given to the political dimensions of governance in the design of the strategy appears to be a key weakness. The fact that the governance system is based on a political cycle that ushers in new political and governance agents through elections conducted every four years was clearly not factored into the design of the strategy and plans for its sustainable implementation.

What is clear is that within the Elmina 2015 Strategy there has been a failure in the governance of tourism planning and hence of creating effective linkages between tourism and local economic development. There is a contemporary implication of this chapter's finding in terms of the current tourism marketing and development campaign of the "Year of Return 2019" and "Beyond the Return". These campaigns seek to use slavery heritage tourism (back-to-your-roots tourism) as a catalyst for national and local economic development. The insights from the implementation trajectory of the Elmina 2015 Strategy in terms of the effects of electoral cycles, should inform these new campaign strategies. Changes in government in a highly competitive political environment like Ghana presents both positive and negative incentives for the level of commitment politicians can make towards existing development projects. It becomes clear that what is needed is a new understanding of the governance of tourism-led local economic development that is sensitive to and grounded in the political context in which it takes place. Such a politically informed understanding of governance can provide a basis for developing a more resilient governance framework for tourism-led local economic development (LED) planning.

Much like any development intervention, tourism-led LED planning initiatives are deeply political. The political underpinnings of tourism-led local economic development initiatives exist at the international, national, regional and local levels. A fundamental reason for this political nature is because at its heart, tourism-led LED involves a wide range of stakeholders and actors with differing vested interests. Tourism tends to be considered as a largely private sector business activity, but research has shown that national government policies play a key role in shaping tourism development in a given destination (Jeffries, 2001; Adu-Ampong, 2015). In terms of the tourism-poverty nexus, Harrison (2008) argues that to maximise the benefits of tourism for economic development and poverty reduction, the state's entire apparatus has to be geared towards this goal. States, however, are not static but are made up of

governments that are voted into power in line with a country's national and local electoral cycles. An account of tourism-led local economic development initiatives and their implementation need to be aware of and appreciate the shaping role of underlying electoral cycles and the incentives presented to politicians.

Note

- 1 This chapter is fully based on the author's PhD thesis which was completed at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield, UK in 2017.

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