

Environmental Metabolic Rift and Tourism Development: A Look at the Impact of the Malawi Tourism Industry Development Pattern

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Abstract : The tourism industry in Malawi has grown tremendously during the past twenty-five years. This growth is attributed to the change in the political system which opened doors to international tourist and investment opportunities in the country which previously was under a strict repressive one-party political system. This research paper focuses on the developments that took place in the accommodation sector during the same period and the impact that it has partly caused on an environmental metabolic rift in the country which is now vulnerable to climate change-related catastrophes. Respondents from the government departments and the hotel sector were recruited for in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted between July and November 2015 and follow up interviews were conducted between September and December 2017. Both results indicated there were minimal efforts pursued from the public sector to cartel capitalistic development tendencies in the accommodation sector. The results from the hotel revealed there were considerable efforts pursued driven by operating cost-cutting motive. Applying systems thinking the paper recommends that the policing machinery needs improvement to ensure that the industry also focuses on environmental wellbeing instead of profit maximization. This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on tourism development and climate change.

Keywords : accommodation sector, climate change, metabolic rift, Malawi, tourism industry

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