

Poverty tourism: theoretical reflections and empirical findings regarding an extraordinary form of tourism

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Abstract During the mid-1990s, a new form of tourism was established in metropolises of several *developing countries* or *emerging nations*. This type of tourism consists in visits to the most disadvantaged parts of the respective city. Poverty tours or slum tours are offered on a relatively large scale in the South African cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, as well as in Indian metropolises, to name some important examples. The target group of these tours consists primarily of international tourists. It is estimated that 40,000 such tourists visit favelas in Rio de Janeiro each year, around 300,000 the townships in Cape Town. This contribution refers to and comments on these developments and insights regarding poverty tourism or slumming, based on empirical research and experiences in South Africa, Brazil, and India. It will be shed light on the phenomenon from an observational-theoretical perspective. It is aimed to open a discussion on the ways poverty tours or slumming observes and simultaneously programmatically charges poverty. And, it will be considered in which way poverty tourism is observed.

Keywords Poverty tourism · Slumming · Township · Favela · Slum · Observational-theoretical approach

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, a new form of tourism has emerged in the globalizing cities of several so-called *developing countries* or *emerging nations*. Visits to the most disadvantaged parts of the respective city are often essential features of this form of tourism. It is mainly composed of guided tours through these disadvantaged areas, which are not always appropriately referred to as *slums*. Today many of those tours are operated and marketed by professional companies. This kind of tour is offered on a relatively large scale in South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town, Brazil's Rio de Janeiro, as well as in the Indian metropolises Calcutta, Mumbai and Delhi, to name some important examples. Whereas international tourists are the primary target group of such tours, domestic tourists rarely participate. The number of tourists to these disadvantaged districts is increasing constantly. It is estimated that 40,000 such tourists visit Rio de Janeiro each year, while in Cape Town the figure is assumed to be even higher, within a range of about 300,000 visitors.

The terms used to describe this tourism phenomenon so far are very disparate. To conceptualize this

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form of tourism uniformly poses a serious problem: In some academic articles, authors call those tours *social tours* or *reality tours* because a number of them are explicitly presented or advertised by their operators as being *authentic or realistic* and as possessing strong interactive features. Touristic experiences *off the beaten path* are also expressed. This refers to MacCannell's term of staged authenticity (MacCannell 1999, p. 92). *Authenticity* means to get in with the natives (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 581; MacCannell 1999, p. 105). Especially within the context of these *social* or *reality tours* tourists seek authentic or real experiences. According to Goffman, this desired authenticity is characterized by facilitating or staging a glance at the back stage for the tourists (MacCannell 1999, p. 99). By providing this authenticity a distinction is drawn to the common touristic front regions (MacCannell 1999, p. 101). Other authors tag the tours as a form of *cultural* or *ethnic tourism* (Ramchander 2004; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004), generally emphasizing their educational aspects. Here cultural as well as ethnic authenticity is placed at the center. In this context for example, the opportunity for cultural exchange is highlighted.

Then again, terms like *poverty tourism* and *poorism* are used for this kind of tours. These terms express morally dubious socio-voyeuristic aspects. Especially media reports (mainly the daily press and touristic trade journals) work with these expressions. They frequently criticize the valorization and marketing of informal or marginal settlements, slums, favelas or townships—and particularly the sordidness and poverty there—as tourist attractions (Weiner 2008; Gentleman 2006; Danielzik and Khan 2006). Further, the term *slumming* occurs in the field of critical tourism research. In 1993, Welz already examined the phenomenon of *slumming* or *negative sightseeing* using the example of tourism in Harlem (New York City), where she located the culture-historical roots of the term.¹ Koven (2006), however, discovers it as early as the nineteenth century, in Victorian England. He describes the practice of *slumming* as a leisure activity pursued by the upper and upper-middle classes of London society at the end of that century. Pott and Steinbrink (2009) show

that today's slum, favela or township tours can be ranked in this *slumming* tradition. The center of their approach is the consideration that especially a towns' poor, *other* or *dark* side is set at the center of leisure or touristic activities. Their assessment is that this again expresses the desired experience of reality and authenticity.

This conceptual ambiguity may also be due to the difficulty to set a specific goal to this form of tourism. What actually poses as the attraction visited during the tours through slums, favelas or townships? Especially the descriptions poverty tourism and poorism suggest that sordidness and poverty seem to be the touristic attraction. The presumption, that provider of these tours primarily show human wretchedness, illness and infirmity or unworthy living conditions, turns out to be not supportable. The so-called slum, favela or township tours do not focus on visiting sordidness and poverty. This is not an explicit part of the guided tours' agenda. Nevertheless sordidness and destitution do also play an important part in this tourism phenomenon. The tourists, as well as tour guides and scientific sources associate sordidness and poverty, as well as violence and crime with the terms, township, favela or slum. This corresponds to a very large degree with the mass media treatment of these living and housing areas. The motion pictures *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (2002)² or *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) can be named as representatives for films addressing sordidness and poverty in Brazilian favelas and Indian slums. Both motion pictures initiated an increased demand for favela and slum tours. If it can be assumed that participants of these tours want to see what they expect to see there, which means they anticipate their experiences (Urry 2002), then sordidness, poverty and violence are the core topic of this tourism form. In this respect the term poverty tourism or poorism is appropriate, as it corresponds to the tourists' anticipations. But tourists can certainly not state an interest in poverty or curiosity in this aspect as a motive for participating in a favela, slum or townships tours. Exactly this triggers moral indignation and criticism of voyeurism. These introductory considerations emphasize that poverty is a significant topic of these tours; poverty turns out to be one appealing part of this kind of tour.

¹ See the considerations about slumming in New York in Dowling (2007).

² See the reflections in Freire-Medeiros (2009, p. 582).

This aspect can be considered as one significant, linking element of township, favela, and slum tours. However, the tours are not explicitly aimed at showing or visiting poor living and housing conditions. They virtually form the background of this form of tourism. This article aims at answering the question, to what extent and in what way poverty is used as scenery.

So far, only a few empiric studies of this specific phenomenon within the tourism industry have been presented (for Brazil: Freire-Medeiros 2007, 2009; Menezes 2007; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004; for South Africa: Rolfes et al. 2009; Ludvigsen 2002; Ramchander 2004, 2007; Rogerson 2003, 2004; Margraf 2006). These analyses focus primarily on the tourists' motivation for visiting such districts. A basic interest in a country's culture and the residents' living conditions is revealed as the tourists' main motive. At this point it can be argued, that obviously, besides poverty, other motivations are also relevant in the context of favela, slum or township tourism. Thus for example, cultural and political-historical dimensions present also an interesting part of township tourism (Ramchander 2004, 2007). Favela tourism also attracts by marketing of exotic and samba (Freire-Medeiros 2007, 2009; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004). In principle tourists are interested in experiencing the complexity and diversity of the visited destination. Therefore poverty is not the sole motive to participate in such tours. All these remarks are true. However, why and to what extent sordidness, poverty or socio-economic disadvantages seem appropriate to serve these motivations, poses a highly interesting question from an epistemological point of view.

Methodology and theoretical links

In order to approach this form of tourism for the purpose of the outlined research questions just mentioned, during the years 2007 and 2008 extensive empirical research in Cape Town (South Africa) has been conducted. Additionally in the course of shorter expeditions small empirical field studies took place in the years 2008 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and in 2009 in Mumbai (India). These three cities were chosen, as there are a noteworthy amount of commercial favela, township and slum touristic offerings there. Moreover all three cities feature strong socio-spatial

polarization, which is manifest in the form of informal or marginalized settlements as well as, to a sizable extent, socially disadvantaged districts. Within all three metropolises these marginalized settlements are part of the everyday picture. Also, in respect of their tourism-related attributes the cities are comparable. While within Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro a widespread mass-touristic offer already exists, for Mumbai this only applies in parts.

In this article the insights out of these research trips will be presented in the following sections in the framework of short case studies. The findings of the empirical research in the three investigation areas are drawn upon in extracts in order to emphasize this form of tourism's parallels and differences. Within an extensive research project the focus of research will be deepened in the next three years.

There are relatively few empirical studies concerning the phenomenon of township, favela, and slum tourism. Likewise theoretical links helping to analyze and systematize this form of tourism still rarely exist. Looking for helpful theoretical approaches about the tourists' expectations in dark tourism³ discourses, the results are disappointing. Research has mainly focused on *the dark tourism suppliers* (Stone 2006, p. 145), offering typologies of sites and attractions, as well as descriptions of tourism activities.⁴ Nevertheless some authors give ideas on the people's motivation towards visiting dark tourism sites. Simone-Charteris (2009, p. 3) for example mentions in this respect *educational interest in the history of a site, national/patriotic feelings, commemorative reasons, and curiosity* as motivation. Freire-Medeiros (2009) mentions the search for authenticity and adventure, which leads to dark tourism as a part of realty tourism. Still, a lack of research on the tourists' expectations and motivations in this field exists.

³ The term dark tourism was coined by Foley and Lennon in the mid 1990s. However, this kind of tourism already exists much longer. Thus the Christian pilgrimage to the sight where Jesus Christ was crucified can be brought into this context (Robinson and Dale 2009). Many of the dark tourism definitions are limited and apply solely to places of death and grief. These include among others concentration camps, battlegrounds, and cemeteries.

⁴ See the typology of Stone (2006) on dark tourism sites and the dark tourism spectrum.

There also exists a discussion about the possible meanings of *dark* and *darkness*. In this regard, the question whether tourism in townships, favelas or slums can be classified in the tourism category can be discussed. So far there is indeed no concept which gives away enough leeway for a satisfying systematization or classification. Thus dark tourism is once directed towards heritage tourism (cf. Jamal and Lelo 2009), the again, sometimes more in the direction of political tourism (Simone-Charteris 2009). Such systematization will not be possible until the question, what kind of touristic phenomenon poverty tourism or slumming may be, is no adequately clarified. Freire-Medeiros (2009) considers dark tourism regarding favela tourism in Rio de Janeiro. She divides reality tours into social and dark tours, ‘*Social tours*’ sell participation and authenticity through trips that aim to be a counterpoint to the destructive vocation of mass tourism (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 582). Dark tours serve the needs for adventure, uniqueness, and experiences off the beaten path. Next to battlegrounds she mentions Ground Zero in New York or a visit to Sniper’s Alley in Sarajevo. It is not easy to rank township, favela, and slum tours in this context. However, there are some similarities between social and dark tours which are inherent in favela tours. This for example is the voyeuristic aspect visitors are frequently accused with. The term dark tourism requires a further specification. Especially the clarification of the term dark seems urgently needed. Within the scope of this article this kind of classification can not be provided.

The introduction has made clear that tours to townships, favelas, and slums can be viewed at and evaluated out of very different perspectives. Many different actors (tourists, tour operators, residents, a critical public...) are involved and view this form of tourism very differently. How do they differ in their views? In which way do these observations observe each other? In order to investigate this touristic phenomenon closer a theoretical approach, which meets these differing perspectives, shall be employed. To do so, an observation-theoretical approach has been chosen.⁵ This approach shall be utilized for this form of tourism. The starting point for these

concluding theoretical considerations will be Spencer Brown’s realization that the world around us only gains significance by our making of distinctions (Spencer Brown 1969/1997). A thing—e.g. an object (such as a township), a phenomenon (like poverty or insecurity) or a view (moral or ethical assessment)—is only defined through being observed by us, and thus being distinguished from other things (for example poverty in contrast to wealth or prosperity as well as uncertainty in contrast to safety). The world existing around us is created only by our observation, and more precisely by our distinction of something in comparison to something else (Egner 2006, p. 98).⁶ Through an idea or a statement something is distinguished from everything else, from everything undistinguished, and hereby lifting it from the multiplicity of other possibilities (see Fig. 1) (Egner 2006, p. 100).

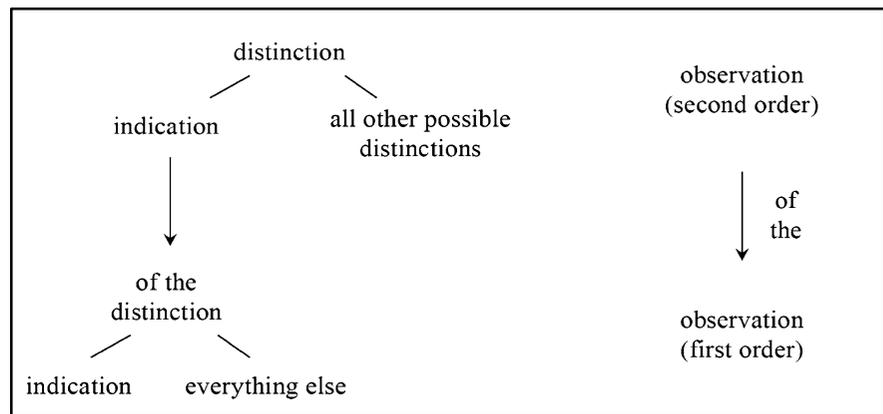
Based on the example of the touristic form, which is object of this article, these statements can be clarified: By the fact that in favela, slum or township tours, the tourists or tour operators distinguish something as poverty, as opposed to wealth, poverty is brought into being for the observers. Poverty is created by being named and distinguished from wealth. Poverty has already been made an issue for example by tour operators of slum tours through Indian slums, who explicitly point out that the inhabitants of the respective slum are not poor. The observers mark out a border or difference between what can be called poverty. This happens in order to distinguish poverty from that which is not poor (e.g. wealth or affluence). Thus, poverty cannot be defined ontologically. What poverty is depends decisively on the observational perspective.

For the following considerations, a further aspect is important: the type of observation. Here, first-order observation is to be distinguished from second-order observation. An observation of the first-order is a simple distinction or indication (naming). Something is being named. The rest, *everything else*, remains unindicated, unnamed (Fig. 1); it cannot be specified. A second-order observation is the observation of a first-order observation. In a second-order observation, the focus is on the distinction in a first-order

⁵ This approach is based on the theory of social systems by the German sociologist Luhmann (1984, 1998). For an overview see Müller and Powell (1994).

⁶ For Luhmann’s systems theory, these differentiations and observations are constitutive in grasping the difference between system and surroundings (Luhmann 1984, p. 243).

Fig. 1 First-order and second-order observations (Egner 2006, p. 101)



observation (Fig. 1). In that process, the second-order observation can also specify everything what remained unindicated in the first-order observation. Nevertheless, the second-order observation merely is a distinction that can in turn be observed.⁷ Thus the second-order observation is not a better observation but rather a different, alternate observation.

Against the background of these observation-theoretical points of reference, this article shall follow the question on how the guided tours to townships, favelas, and slums are and can be observed. In particular, the role played by observation and differentiation of poverty in the context of the remaining observation categories (such as culture, reality, authenticity, cities' complexity) is to be investigated. The case studies presented in the following chapter shall point out, to what extent and in what manner an explicit observation of poverty is tried to be avoided or downplayed. For this purpose the constellation and choice of sights during the tours, the types of argumentation, and the tour guides' and tour providers' motivations, as well as the tourists' specific observation perspectives and motivations shall be systematized. The three case studies shall clarify in which manner alternative observation perspectives are generated, provided, and (re-)produced in Cape Town, as well as in Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai. Reading the case studies will swiftly explain which alternatives or superimposing views are provided and established during the tours.

⁷ Compare with a relevant example regarding video surveillance in Rolfes (2007, pp. 74–75).

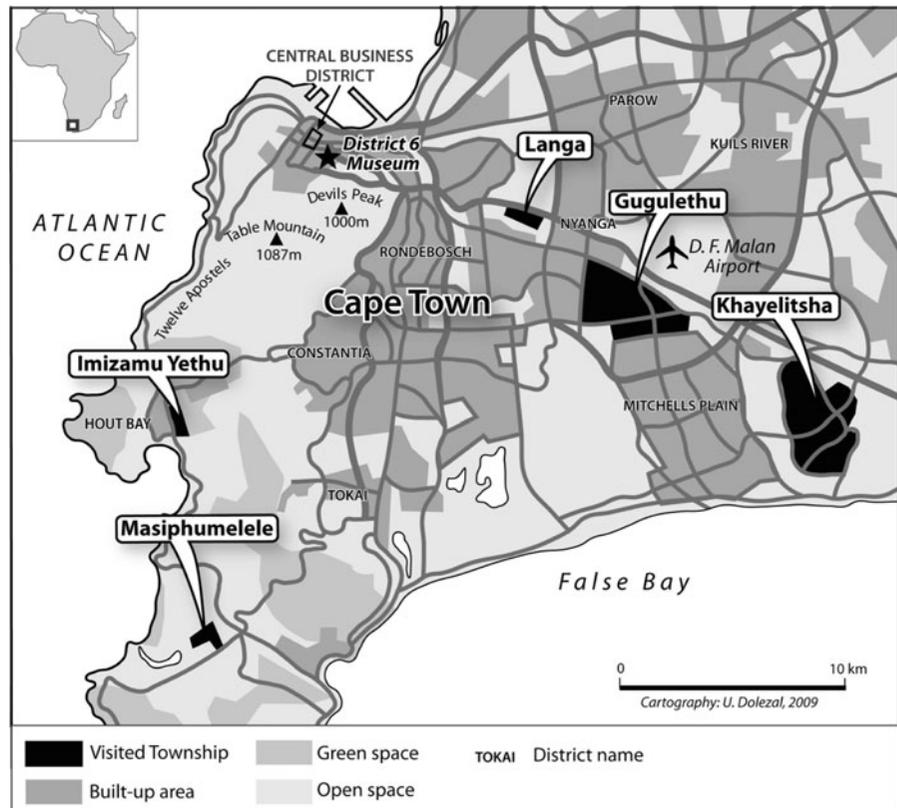
Tourism in townships, favelas and slums—selected findings of empirical analyses

Townships, favelas and slums

Until now the use of the term *slum* for South African townships and Brazilian favelas was purposefully avoided. Hence, one can not talk of *the* slum tourism. Nevertheless, this article broaches the issue of tourism in places which are very similar. This *similarity* follows the fact, that townships, favelas, and generally slum settlements can be viewed as the result of socio-economic segregation- and desegregation processes. In particular, Davis' (2006) demonstrations of districts or areas of social discrimination and socio-economical exclusion are connected to this. In the context of an increasing globalization, the consequence of a growing social polarization, particularly of (mega-) urban societies, especially in emerging nations, is the spreading of slum, skid rows, squatters or informal settlements (Davis 2006). According to UN-HABITAT characteristics of inadequate living conditions in these settlements are: inadequate access to safe water, to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 12). Furthermore, in general discourses in the public media additionally connect crime, illness or poverty with townships, favelas, and slums.

Then again, townships, favelas, and slums show clear *differences* between each other. Especially, for South Africa the Apartheid policies were of vital importance for the urban development, the segregation processes, and the social polarization. Thus residential

Fig. 2 Visited townships in Cape Town



areas of the black population were normally located with a great distance to the respective city center (for Cape Town see Fig. 2) and residential areas of the white population. Even after the Apartheid the segregation process in South African cities ran predominantly along ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, before the end of the governmental segregation, the townships in particular were centers of conflict with the Apartheid. This kind of specific historical dimensions and ethnic disparities can not be found with Brazilian favelas and Indian slums. Oftentimes, these residential areas are located at integrated city outskirts or (frequently illegally occupied) public city outskirts areas (see Figs. 3 and 4). In comparison to Indian slums, Brazilian favelas are said to have an exotic, agile ambiance, but on the other hand excessive drug trafficking and violent crime is imputed to them (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 586; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004, pp. 156–159).

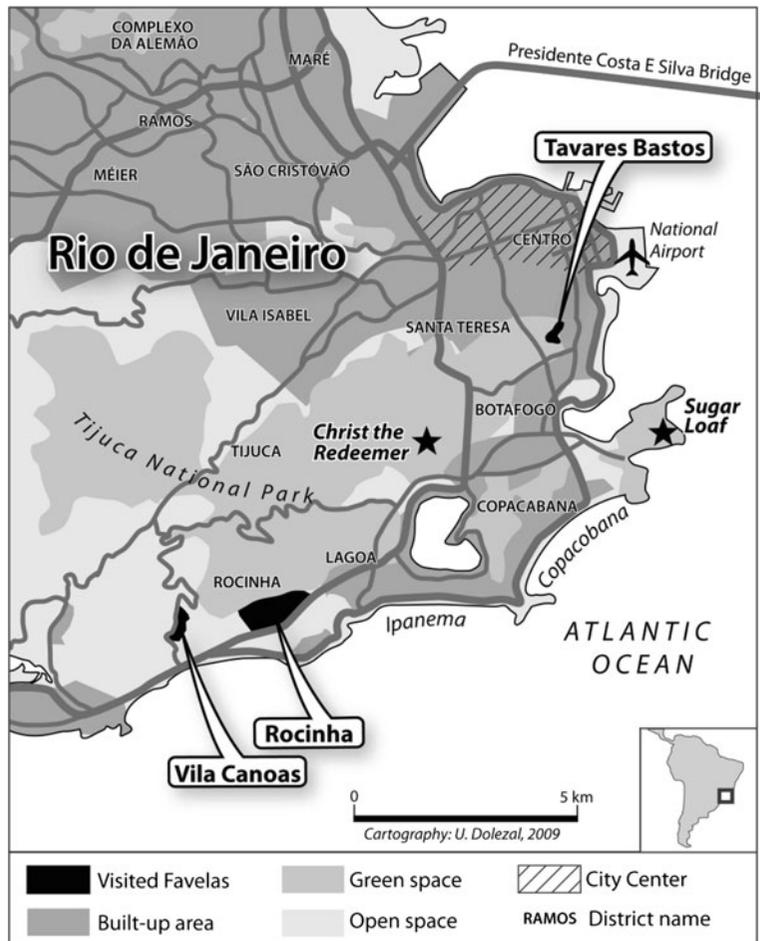
However, noteworthy are not only the differences between these forms of settlement in the different countries. At least equally considerable are the strong socio-economic disparities within the townships,

favelas, and slums. Within these residential areas there is a substantial social differentiation. This social differentiation is even explained during the slum and favela tours. For further explanations it has to be additionally noted, that the residential areas showed during the guided tours are generally districts which are socio-economically very well developed and infrastructurally well equipped. And, this can be mentioned in advance, oftentimes it is virtually avoided to show the poorly developed and strongly disadvantaged parts of the settlement.

Township tourism in Cape Town (South Africa)

In its whitepaper on the development and promotion of tourism in South Africa published in May 1996 the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism promoted the tourism potential of South Africa. Therein, it emphasized the country's diversity as a major selling point. Besides the many natural sights, like Kruger National Park, The Garden Route, Table Mountain, as well as accessible wildlife, varied and impressive scenery, and unspoiled wilderness areas,

Fig. 3 Visited favelas in Rio de Janeiro



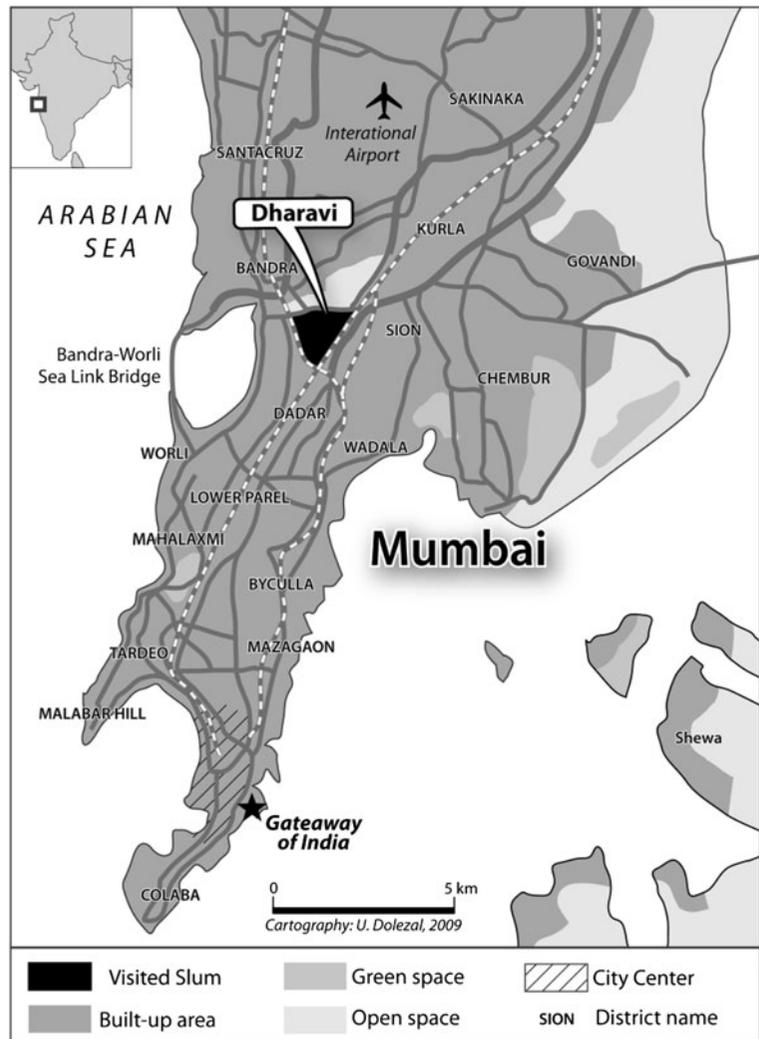
the interesting cultural diversity is mentioned in not more than a few words. Since the mid-1990s the interest of tourists coming to South Africa has changed. While the main focus was set on natural beauty during and in the first years after Apartheid, the interest of tourists shifted increasingly towards cultural attractions. Lubbe (2003 in Ramchander 2007, p. 39) states, that 48% of tourists visit South Africa with a cultural motivation. South Africa is well known for its mix of cultures. With many different groups of indigenous South Africans, its immigrants from Europe and Asia, its history of colonization, as well as the struggle for freedom, tourists can get to know various traditions and the big melting pot South Africa. In this context township tourism became popular, as the townships represent the South African mix of cultures (Ramchander 2007, pp. 40–44).

Regarding the numbers of tourists coming to South Africa, the country can be called a mass-tourism

destination. The Report on Tourism published by Statistics South Africa shows an increase of tourism since 1980. In 2008, more than 9.7 million arrivals in South Africa have been counted. More than 9 million out of these arrived for touristic purposes only. Cape Town is the main destination for overseas tourists in South Africa. The city is visited by over 1 million international tourists per year. Thus, more than half of all overseas tourists visit this city during their stay in South Africa. Traditionally the UK and Germany are the two largest source markets (Cornelissen 2006, pp. 6–7).

Township tours, guided touristic tours through residential areas of the black population, originally started to develop in Soweto (South Western Township of Johannesburg) in the early 1990s. Thus the first township tours were already conducted during the era of Apartheid. They mainly served as politically motivated propaganda tours for the Apartheid regime

Fig. 4 Visited slum in Mumbai



(Ludvigsen 2002, p. 17). With the end of Apartheid and the burgeoning number of international visitors, the focus changed towards more socio-critical and increasingly also toward *cultural* aspects (Margraf 2006, p. 55). What started as a niche market for travellers with special political interests, eager to see the sites of the liberation struggle against Apartheid, has now become a mass phenomenon. According to official information, in 2006 alone more than 300,000 tourists participated in township tours in Cape Town, which amounts to 25% of all visitors to the city (AP 2007). Thus, township tourism has become a booming and highly lucrative sector within the tourist industry. More and more companies push into the market in order to meet the growing demand for this

kind of tour.⁸ In the early days of this development, the tours were organized by the residents of the townships themselves. In later years, the large and inter-regionally operating tour and travel companies also adjusted their offers to this development and included township tours into their (hitherto conventional) product range. Considering the future potential of township tours, further growth in this segment of tourism industry can be assumed. Travel organizations interviewed by Aderhold et al. (2006, p. 144) anticipate, that the wish for *cultural and study elements*, as well as for chances

⁸ A large proportion of the tour companies in Cape Town that were interviewed for the survey were founded between 2001 and 2005.

to encounter local residents, will increase in the future. The township tours promise the fulfilment of these wishes.

For the survey of township tourism a multi-perspective approach and a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was chosen⁹: 20 different township tours offered by 12 different companies were attended.¹⁰ The route, stops, special observations and notable occurrences were recorded. Furthermore, qualitative interviews with nine tour operators, as well as with agents within the townships were conducted. Moreover, 179 tourists were interviewed by using semi-standardized questionnaires.¹¹

The tours and the observed sights

Initially, a basic summary of the organisational and content-related course of township tours should be offered here. The average tours took about four hours time ('Half-Day Trip'). The average cost was around 200 Rand per person (which equals 20 US \$). The number of participants varied significantly; it ranged from two persons in a minibus to 30 tourists travelling in a coach. All tours were led by black or coloured tour guides, most of whom claimed to live in a township themselves. Every tour exclusively had so called *black townships* as destination. But for safety reasons it was advised not to participate in tours to coloured townships.

The 20 analysed tours were carried out by 12 different operators, but they were similar in structure: Almost all of the township tours started out with a visit of the District Six Museum¹² (duration: 30–60 min)

⁹ A major part of the empirical evaluation was conducted within a research project in Cape Town, led by the author in February/March 2007. Furthermore, during another field stay in February/March 2008 own empirical follow-up surveys took place.

¹⁰ It is difficult to clearly quantify the number of companies offering township tours in Cape Town. According to the estimation of the author it ranges between 40 and 50 companies, highly varying in terms of profile and degree of professionalism.

¹¹ All results are available in detail in Rolfes et al. (2009).

¹² The District Six Museum documents the correspondent district's development history. In 1966, the "non-white" population of this hitherto multicultural district had been expelled and forcibly moved to townships. At the beginning of the 1980s all building in this area were demolished. The land has lain waste ever since. (See "About the museum" at <http://www.districtsix.co.za>, accessed 6 December 2008).

and scheduled a stop in the District Six Area afterwards. At those places, the history of Apartheid is explained to the tourists, especially the history of urban planning during Apartheid and of South African townships.

From here, the tours travel from the inner city to the townships. Most of the tours visited the *black* townships of Langa, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha (cf. Fig. 2). Irrespective of which township was visited, the tours usually combined very similar elements:

- Historical or cultural sights
- Visit to pre-school institutions (sometimes including singing or dancing performances by children)
- Visit to various residential areas and different types of housing
- Visit to a *sangoma* (traditional healer), including the possibility of consultation
- Visit to a *shebeen* (informal pub), where usually *umqombothi* (traditional beer) is offered to the tourists
- Visits to private homes

During the township tours, the tourists were offered various possibilities to buy souvenirs or (local) arts and crafts. Moreover, they were offered opportunities to make donations during the visits to social institutions. Though contacts to residents were possible at every stop, such contacts were observed almost exclusively during the visits to the *shebeens*.

Perspectives and views of the tour operators

The nine tour operators were asked about their motives to offer township tours. As expected, commercial motives were ranked at the highest position. The tour companies have to work profitably in order to compete in the market. In this context, the interviewees highlighted the increasing demand for township tours. Particularly the larger companies referred to the fact that township tours are an important extension to their product range. In addition to economic motives, a number of other—rather idealistic—reasons were stressed by the tour operators. Some emphasized, that their tours were supposed to show what life is like in the communities, to convey knowledge about African culture, history, and to give an *authentic* insight into what they themselves called the *real life* in South Africa. These goals were primarily mentioned by the owners of small companies who live in townships

themselves. Furthermore, all of the interviewees stressed the developmental relevance of township tourism and expressed their intention to initiate positive social and economic processes in the townships. Some of the operators also remarked that they wanted to use a share of their profit to support particular projects in the communities.

Tour operators were also asked about their conception of what the tourists expect from the tours. A large part of the interviewees emphasized that the tourists were mainly interested in getting to know township residents and to *interact with the locals*. Apart from this, the operators assumed the tourists to be curious about poverty and developmental processes.

The tourists in general had an interest in South African daily life and culture. In the opinion of the operators, many tourists wanted to see *the far side* of Cape Town and search for a *complete* or *real* picture of the city or of South Africa. This view is also held by the local agents in the townships themselves, who had direct contact with the tourists during the tours (e.g. owners of *shebeens*, restaurants and shops as well as artists and souvenir traders). They believed that the tourists were especially attracted by the *different way of life* in South African townships. They stated that tourists wanted to see how people lived in the townships and get to know phenomena, like locales or institutions that do not exist in their home countries (e.g. *shebeens*, *sangomas*, local arts and crafts, music and dances, *exotic* food and beverages), and that they wanted to learn about the culture and history of townships.

The township tours are arranged according to these assumed motives of and beliefs about the target group. As already seen, the programmes include specific stops, particularly at places that are assumed to exemplify typical properties of *black townships* and *the black community*. Some tours also include sites of historical interest in their programme. The tourists are also taken to public institutions or community projects. Children play an important role in many tours in any case. During school visits they often sing and dance for the tourists. Also on the streets the visitors are often surrounded by children. These situations are used as opportunities to take photographs. Children generally represent the most favourite motif for photographs during the tour. The interviews show that different motives exert a strong influence on the tour programs. Some operators

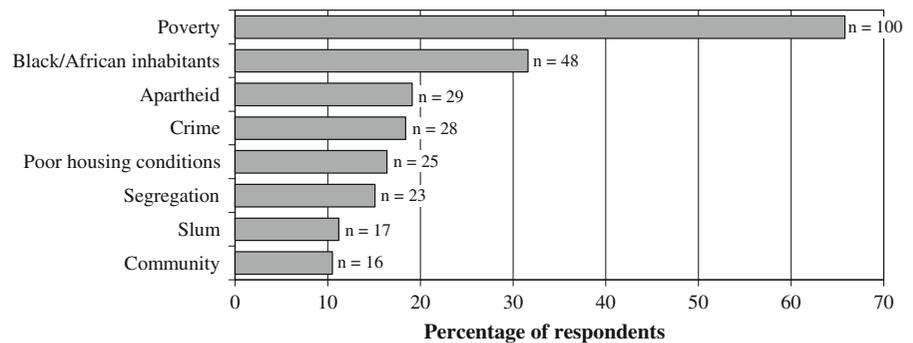
choose their stops in order to explicitly present the residents' poverty to the tourists and to offer possibilities to improve the situation (e.g. by donating to projects). Thus, the tour operators intentionally present the poverty and developmental potentials of the townships at the same time. Their point of view is that the tours have to show the bad living conditions in the townships, but also the positive changes. Others put the focus mainly on the *positive sides* of the townships and consciously omit badly developed areas, so that the tourists' picture of the townships will be as positive as possible. These operators tend to focus on displaying *cultural heritage*. Some of the interviewees emphasized that they go to great lengths to keep the tourists away from irritating or shocking experiences and to avoid any humiliation of the township residents (e.g. HIV-infected persons). Especially the local agents within the communities hope for and strive to achieve a correction and improvement of the negative image of the townships, which is diffused especially by the media.

Motivations and observations of the tourists

The perspective of the tourists is analysed on the basis of responses by 179 tourists, obtained through the use of a standardized questionnaire just before they entered the townships. The questionnaires were filled in at the District Six Museum in Cape Town or on the buses shortly before the beginning of the tour. A total of 100 questionnaires were completed in the museum, and 79 on the minibuses. Only the 79 tourists interviewed on the minibuses also completed a standardised questionnaire immediately after the tour. Consequently, 79 statements about the tourists' expectations previous to the tour and their assessments after the tour are available.

The survey also aimed at finding out what mental pictures and ideas of the townships tourists have before they embark on a tour. For this purpose it was asked what notions the tourists associated with the term *township*. Figure 5 illustrates that 65% of the 152 responding tourists associated *township* with *poverty*. Further associations, with significantly fewer responses, were: *black/African population*, *Apartheid*, *crime*, *poor housing*, etc. It is evident that negative associations clearly dominate the semantic field of the term *township*. If one interprets these results on the basis of the plausible hypothesis, that

Fig. 5 Township associations (The question read: “What associations do you have if you hear the term township”?)



what the tourists *expect* to see and what they *hope* to see is largely identical, then township tourism appears to be a specific form of *negative sightseeing* (Welz 1993, p. 39).

In an additional open-result question, the tourists were asked to state their reasons for taking part in a township tour.¹³ 162 persons out of in total 179 interviewees gave overall 209 answers. The classified statements are presented in Fig. 6. The interest in local culture and people was the most common reason put forward by the tourists (24%). Almost as many believed that during the tour they would learn more about the history of the Republic of South Africa (23%). Furthermore, the tourists wanted to know more about the life of the township residents (21%). At the same time, they wanted to experience the diversity of Cape Town (16%).

As already mentioned, the 79 tourists who took part in township tours on minibuses were also asked to complete a standardized questionnaire *after* the tour. This aimed at examining what the tourists' image and perception of townships was like after the tour. More precisely, the questionnaire should verify if their image of the townships had been broadened, modified or confirmed by the tour. Thus, the following analysis is based on the responses of those 79 tourists.

After the township tour, the tourists were asked what observations they had made throughout the course of the trip and what had impressed them the most. 85 responses were received to this question from 62 of the 79 persons (cf. Fig. 7). Many of the visitors were particularly impressed by the friendliness of the

township residents; this point was mentioned by more than 30% of the respondents. 20% noted the comparatively high standard of public and commercial infrastructure as a surprising characteristic. That these two aspects were striking to so many of the tourists can obviously be ascribed to the fact that they did not expect such high standards. After all, two-thirds of the visitors associated the township with *poverty* before the beginning of the tour. Given such expectations, it is no surprise that happy people and developed infrastructure (and technology) are particularly unexpected to the visitors.

These results are a first strong indication that the tourists' perception of the townships changes during the tour. To allow for a refined description of the tourists' images of townships, the tourists were asked to fill out a semantic profile before the beginning and after the tour. In the questionnaire, opposed word pairs were presented, conceived as scales for assessing the tourists' perception of townships. The tourists were asked to decide which of the respective two words corresponded best with their own ideas of a township. In this way, a specification of the tourists' expectations (images) was rendered possible. Figure 8 illustrates, how the responses before the tour (black line) differ from those after the tour (grey line).

It is evident that the ratings had remarkably changed. Interestingly, there is a tendency to give more positive evaluations after the tour in the case of all word pairs.¹⁴ Once more, it becomes apparent that persons who took part in a tour are much more prone to associate the townships with *happy* and *friendly*.

¹³ 15% of the 179 respondents had seen a township before. Most of them had been to Soweto, Johannesburg, probably the best-known township of South Africa.

¹⁴ This does not apply to the word pairs *modern/traditional* and *African/non-African*, as these do not include an intrinsic positive/negative connotation.

Fig. 6 Reasons for making a township tour (“Why did you decide to make a township tour?”)

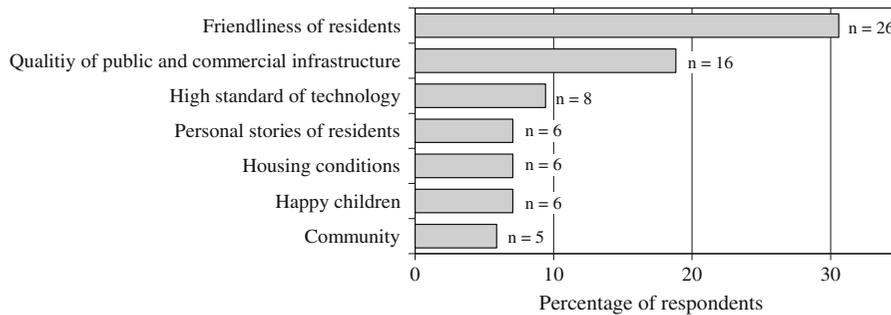
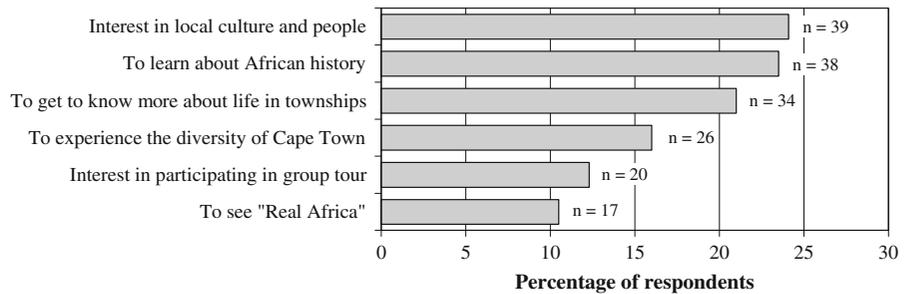


Fig. 7 Tourists’ impressions after the tour (“Please write down words describing your impressions about your township tour”)

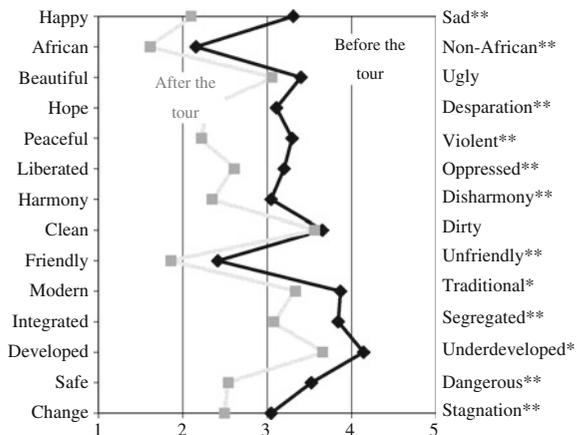


Fig. 8 Evaluation of specific aspects of the townships before and after the tour [“Here is a list of pairs of contradicting words. Tick spontaneously which of the following words do better describe the township.” In order to test the significance of the differences, the *U*-test was applied (* 5% level, ** 1% level)]

The prevailing tendency switches from *sad* to *happy*. The same holds true for the notions *hopeful* and *peaceful*. Here, the expectations of a high number of respondents were more negative before the tour. In addition to this, the percentage of tourists who classify the townships as rather *dangerous* is

significantly lower after the tour. In the case of this word pair, the evaluation inclines more towards *safe*.

From the analyses, it becomes apparent that the visit has brought about significant changes in the tourists’ perception of the townships. The choice of sights and sceneries presented by the tour operators and the agents within the townships has apparently not missed the intended goal (i.e. to improve the image of the townships). An image of dreariness and greyness has become more variegated and at times even veers towards bright and rosy. Further analysis of the inquiries after the tour supported by interviews with individual tourists shows that cultural categories gain in importance for the majority of the tourists.

Favela tourism in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

The number of tourist arrivals in Brazil has risen from 2.9 million in 1997 to 5 million in 2007 (Ministério do Turismo 2008). As a study on touristic demands by the Brazilian Department of Tourism shows, the most important motive for vacation in Brazil are the beaches and the sunny weather (Ministério do Turismo 2009). The second place is taken by the interest in nature, ecotourism and adventure. Here the Iguaçu Waterfalls, the Amazon and Pantanal Regions have to be

mentioned as important and well known natural sights. As official statistics show, the Waterfalls are the second most frequented place in the country—behind Rio de Janeiro. Interestingly, most tourists come to Brazil without having booked an organized tour. It seems that many visitors enjoy a rather independent type of travelling. *Culture*, as motivation for the journey to Brazil was mentioned by 11% of the interviewed tourists in 2007. Culture could mean Samba, Caipirinha, happy people, but it might also be the headline for an interest in the living situations in the favelas. Looking at statistics, many of the tourists coming to Brazil are potential guests of the favelas. Rio de Janeiro with its picturesque backdrop of the Sugarloaf and the Corcovado, as well as Brazilian carnival, Copacabana and Ipanema, are—as mentioned above—the major attractions for foreign visitors to Brazil (Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004). Annually more than 2 million foreign tourists visit the city.

In Rio de Janeiro, professionally conducted favela tourism is a growing market segment, albeit still much less significant in terms of quantity than, for example, in Cape Town. For Rocinha, the most frequently visited favela in Rio; the annual number of visitors is estimated to lie at around 40,000 (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 580; Menezes 2007, p. 12). For the whole city, the number can be assumed to be only slightly larger. Thus, favela tourism in Rio Janeiro remains at significantly lower volume than township tourism in Cape Town (which sees 300,000 visitors per year).

Nonetheless, favela tourism is by no means a new phenomenon in Rio de Janeiro. Guided tours to the favelas have been offered since the early 1990s. Freire-Medeiros (2009) dates the beginning of professional favela tours to 1992. In the context of the Rio Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, international visitors to the city had developed an interest in the living conditions of favelas inhabitants and booked the first of such tours. According to information provided by tour operators, one of the factors that had drawn the tourists' attention to the favelas was the fact that during the Rio conference the access to the favelas was limited by a multitude of police and military forces (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 584).

The foundation of the following descriptions and analyses are several empirical studies.¹⁵ Three

different tours offered by three different tour operators were accompanied and the essential contents and stops of the tours were recorded. Furthermore, qualitative interviews with three tour guides and some tourists were conducted. For the case study, Freire-Medeiros' and Menezes' very well documented scientific analyses were incorporated (Freire-Medeiros 2007, 2009; Menezes 2007).

During the tours, there were occasional opportunities to acquire local products and souvenirs (especially of artistic or cultural nature), some of which were produced within social projects.

However, a further aspect played a major role in all tours: weapons, violence, and the drug trade. On all observed tours, these three subjects were usually raised independently by the tour guides. Their statements in this regard were often contradictory and ambiguous. Sometimes during the tour drug trade and crime were described as everyday phenomena in a favela, and moreover visitors were warned not to photograph certain groups of people. Other times life in a favela was described as absolutely safe, where violence and drug problems are merely media hype characterizations.

The tours and the observed sights

The cost of participating in a favela tour was between 50 and 80 Real (R\$) (20–35 US \$). The tours lasted between three and six hours. Participants were usually international tourists. Minibuses, open-top jeeps, or motorbikes were used as means of transportation, walking tours were offered as well. The number of participants varied between 2 and 15 persons. Their ages were estimated to range between 15 and about 60 years. As already mentioned three such tours were analyzed.¹⁶ They led to Rio's most frequently visited favelas, Rocinha (unofficially estimated to have over 150,000 inhabitants), as well as to the two smaller favelas of Vila Canoas and Tavares Bastos (3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants each). All three favelas are located in the south of the city and are thus easily reachable for tourists. Moreover, touristic sights and the city center are relatively near by. (cf. Fig. 7). For the beginning of the tour, either meeting

¹⁵ The empirical analyses were conducted during the author's favela visit in July/August 2008.

¹⁶ The statements made about the tours here are based on the comprehensive studies by Freire-Medeiros (2007, 2009) and Menezes (2007).

points were arranged (usually at large hotels), or a pick-up service was offered.

Although the tours were arranged by substantially differing operators, their courses were very similar. The core of each attended tour was walks through the alleys and trails of the favelas.¹⁷ In terms of particular locations visited, and specific aspects explained, the tour guides emphasised the following:

- Explanations regarding the mechanisms of socio-geographic differentiation and spatial disparities within a favela (especially rent and property market, unemployment)
- Information regarding modern infrastructural equipment (such as wireless LAN, health services) and up-to-date shopping and services infrastructures (e.g. fashion stores, banks, cafés)
- Meetings with voluntary workers on social or cultural projects and/or visits to such projects
- Visit to or tours of schools, kindergartens or other institutions serving children and adolescents
- Impressions of private residences, communication with their inhabitants
- Visit to a restaurant or café

Perspectives and views of the tour operators and tour guides

Only seven or eight agencies offering favela tours were found in Rio de Janeiro. Their degree of professionalism varied greatly. In some cases, the favela tours were only a small part of a broader product range, including city tours, trips to the Sugarloaf and the Corcovado, or to the coastal rain forest. Some operators stated, that part of the money earned through favela tours was returned to those areas in form of social or cultural projects. Nevertheless, the main goal of the operators was to secure and broaden the financial basis of their enterprises.

According to this research, which is supported and complemented by the results of Freire-Medeiros (2009), the majority of operators intend to present an *authentic* image of the favelas to show *real life*. However, they do not aim at doing so by explicitly

showing the life of the favela inhabitants as precarious or poor. In fact, the very opposite is intended: By stressing the relatively high standard of living, the advanced infrastructural equipment, the modern range of services and the varied shopping opportunities, they strive to demonstrate the living conditions in favelas as absolutely normal and attractive. An illustration of this focus can be seen in the tour guides' repeated references to the traditional Brazilian cheerfulness, which is associated, for example, with the carnival and the numerous samba schools. According to Freire-Medeiros's research, some tour operators have already expressed concern that the image of the favela presented in Rocinha does not sufficiently match the tourists' expectations in terms of poverty: *They [the tourists, M.R.] keep thinking that Rocinha isn't poor enough, that it's not as poor as those miserable cities in Africa* (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 584).

Furthermore, the tour operators, according to their own statements, explicitly aim to correct the public image of the favelas, which is dominated by violence, crime and the drug trade. They consider those images to be primarily caused by national and international media, which they accuse of grossly exaggerating the situation in the favelas, and of consistently returning to such negative aspects as the central focus of their reports. However, especially in this regard, the tour operators' arguments are self-contradictory and inconsistent. By many of them violence, drugs and crime were described as a rather marginal problem in the favelas. Life in a favela was presented as normal, non-violent and safe. Nonetheless, during favela tours the tourists were repeatedly confronted with potential crime and the drug trade. But in these situations, armed patrols were described as normal, certain streets were avoided because of the open drug trade, and the photographing of certain situations was discouraged (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 584). According to this, the tour operators were indeed concerned with the safety and crime but at the same time not wanting this to disturb the tourists they are downplayed.¹⁸

¹⁷ This is also common practice with other favela tours, cf. Machado (2007: 32).

¹⁸ *The truth is that drug dealers make the peace ... Peace means no robbery, and that law is very well respected.* Statement by a tour operator in Rio de Janeiro. Quoted in Yurchyshyn (2008).

Motivations and observations of the tourists

Since no relevant empirical information is available as yet, valid statements about the motives of tourists who participate in favela tours are not possible. Nevertheless, some authors suggest that the tourists want to see those phenomena in the favelas which they expect to encounter there: poverty and violence/crime (Machado 2007, p. 72; Menezes 2007, pp. 18–20). This can be supported in part with statements of the interviewed tour guides. The image of favelas assumed to be present in the minds of all international tourists, is dominated by poverty, violence, as well as crime, which is disseminated by the international mass media. Several authors ascribe a major role in the construction of that image to the film *City of God* (Freire-Medeiros 2009, pp. 582–583; Machado 2007, p. 72). The tour operators also assume that tourists are concerned with poverty and violence/crime, which is why they usually aim to fighting that image.

The few statements by tourists as to their motives about attending favela tours indicate a somewhat different picture. They claim to be interested especially in the living conditions of the inhabitants, in *real life*, or in a different, so far unfamiliar, aspect of tourism in Rio de Janeiro. They expect that the tour will help them gain a more comprehensive impression of Brazil.

Freire-Medeiros further assumes that the favelas, their specific architecture and their inhabitants, are being exoticised in various ways, and thus constructed as tourist destination. This takes place for example through the presentation of favelas in mass media and motion picture (*City of God*, *Favela Rising*, *The Incredible Hulk*). Furthermore, a central role in this process of exoticisation is played by travel guides, travel reports, internet blogs, and the global distribution of favela restaurants and favela events. According to her, the favelas are increasingly marketed as tourist destinations, which lead to an emphasis on culture and lifestyle (Freire-Medeiros 2009, pp. 582–584).

It cannot be conclusively determined in how far tourists are motivated by that type of perspective. However, it is striking that flyers, brochures and posters in tourist accommodation (especially youth hostels and backpacker hostels) advertise visits to

overnight stays at favelas through favela parties, Brazilian funk music, and Favela hype.¹⁹

Slum tourism in Mumbai (India)

According to official information almost 5 million foreign tourists visited India in 2007.²⁰ The average tourists' age is between 20 and 40 years. Tourists travel as individual backpackers as well as in organized groups that mainly visit locations of mass-tourism, for example the Taj Mahal. India is known to its guests as a country of religious and cultural sights and spirituality. Other important touristic attractions are beaches like Goa. In spite of the growing numbers of arrivals touristic infrastructure is lacking in many areas. Therefore mass tourism is only possible in some regions due to an insufficient number of hotels of the upper categories (Röwekamp 2004).

In India, slum tourism²¹ is a very recent phenomenon. As of now, no scientific contributions that analyse this form of tourism are known of. What is available at this point are some experiential tourist reports, who participated in such tours. Furthermore, only a few individual tour operators have internet presentations permitting some statements about the contents of the tours.²²

As professional and regular slum tours in Mumbai are only offered by one tour operator, any empirical studies in this respect can only be conducted in cooperation with this agency. Consequently, the empirical findings presented in this article refer solely to one attended slum tour, one expert discussion with the tour operator, and qualitative interviews with the tour guides and tour participants. Initial results of an empirical research, conducted in the

¹⁹ See <http://www.cariocadesign.com/themaze> or <http://www.bealocal.com>, accessed 6 December 2008.

²⁰ See the statistical data of the Indian Tour Operators Promotion Council at <http://www.itopc.org/travel-requisite/inbound-tourism-statistics.html>, accessed 20 August 2009.

²¹ The term slum tourism is used in numerous sources referring to touristic tours to informal settlements in Indian megacities. The operators of such tours also describe them as slum tours.

²² See <http://realitytoursandtravel.com/slumtours.html>, accessed 6 August 2009.

course of a master thesis, are incorporated within the following explanations.²³

The tours and the observed sights

Being an informal settlement with approximately one million inhabitants, Dharavi is *the* destination of slum tours in Mumbai (biggest slum in Asia). Numbers to indicate the quantitative scale of Dharavi slum tourism can only be estimated. According to media reports (Weiner 2008; Kendle 2008; Viggiano 2008; Schröder 2007) and tour operator statements, slum tours are provided by only one agency to a noteworthy extent, namely, the *Reality Tours & Travel* tour operator, which has offered tours to Dharavi since 2006. Another company does exist, but organizes only very few slum tours. Additionally many informal tour guides offered guided tours through the slums. Thus, the number of tourists visiting Dharavi can only be estimated roughly. Since walking tours for presumably only small groups are being offered, the number may lie between 1,500 and 3,500 tourists. The cost for half a days tour lies between 10 and 20 US \$. According to the tour operator, a major part of the earnings (80%) run into educational projects and language courses for the inhabitants of Dharavi.

Similar to the tours offered in Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro, the Dharavi tours are designed as reality tours. They focus on showing the visitors as realistic and authentic a view of *real life* in the slum as possible. In sum the available information on the course of a slum tour in Dharavi indicates the following stops or points of interest:

- Notes on the socio-spatial and ethnic differentiation in Dharavi, and information about cultural variety and the coexistence of very different population groups
- Visit of recycling activities and a variety of small scale industries (tannery, embroidery, pottery, etc.)
- Detailed information and explanation regarding the economic significance of Dharavi for the national and global economy
- Visit to the market and commercial and cultural centre of Dharavi
- Information on the partly provisional and insufficient infrastructure of Dharavi (especially wastewater disposal and electricity)
- Living and domestic conditions of the inhabitants, visits to the homes of the inhabitants, Enabling of close contact to these
- Visit to social and cultural projects

Perspectives and views of the tour operators and tour guides

The goals of the tour were pointed out frequently during the tour by the guides and during the interview with the *Reality Tours & Travel* tour operator. Thus the agency sees a major goal of its work in breaking down the negative image of Dharavi and its residents. For this purpose and in order to increase their understanding and empathy the tourists of different countries, races, and social classes are presented with the everyday life in the slums. Thus the central issue is to deliver an authentic or realistic image of the slum. The hardworking slum population, its living and working conditions, are presented. This does not just aim at revising the negative image of the slum, but also at enhancing and enabling intercultural learning and understanding. Apparently, the focus is especially on the multiple economic activities.

The tourist view

Regarding slum tourists in Mumbai, no valid indications on their participation motives are available. Undoubtedly, international visitors to India are familiar with the media images of Indian slums, this is one of the results of the qualitative interviews. It cannot be asserted to what extent curiosity about poverty may motivate their taking part in tours. But poverty or misery certainly is one expected factor. According to the qualitative interviews with tour participants, conducted during the field stay, and the findings of Meschkank, it is apparent, that participants claim to be interested especially in *real life* and the living conditions of the inhabitants. Moreover they state that poverty, poor living or hygiene conditions are or were expected to be seen. After the tour they were positively surprised about how

²³ One part of the empirical research was conducted by the author during a field stay in Mumbai in March 2009. Additionally, an extensive survey was conducted in the course of a master thesis between February and April 2009 (Meschkank 2009).

active and committed the slum residents master the hard living conditions. They were astonished about the large spectrum of economic activities.²⁴ Like the tourists in the townships of Cape Town and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, the slum tourists of Mumbai were also motivated by the expectation of seeing another side to the *glistening metropolis* and mainstream tourism.

Summarizing of the three case studies

The empirical investigations in Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai were not as extensive as those in Cape Town. The tour participants' statements in particular were not conducted standardized in Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai. Here merely qualitative interviews were carried out on a random basis. Nevertheless, these obtained results and gained findings allow for a basic comparison of the significance of poverty within context of this touristic form.

Regarding the structure of the tours, the aims and motivations of the operators, as well as the expectations and impressions of the tourists, some parallels are striking. Apparently, it is a goal for the majority of operators to distract the view away from poverty. The negative image of townships, favelas and slums, considered by the tour operators to be primarily dominated by poverty, crime and violence, is to be corrected. Mostly no explicit poverty is shown, only the everyday living and working conditions of the respective quarters' inhabitants. The operators try to point out that the informal or marginal settlements, too, contain impulses for socio-economic development. In order to reach this goal, they emphasize infrastructural equipment, self-aid project, and economic activities, amongst several other aspects. That and how the locals master their lives under difficult circumstances is stressed in all cases.

In all three cities the aim of transforming the tourists' negative image is attempted to be achieved by designing as authentic and realistic a tour as possible. The authenticity is to be obtained by using locals as tour guides, by providing opportunities for conversational contact with the inhabitants and by offering insights into private and economic everyday situations. The tours often take place within the scope

of walking tours with small and inconspicuous tourist groups, who are advised to practise appropriate restraint (e.g. taking photographs). Further, constructed *contact zones* (Freire-Medeiros 2007, p. 69) play an important role between tourists and inhabitants, as they are aimed at enabling and encouraging mutual communication.

The expectations and motives of the tourists are found to be similar in all three case studies. Indubitably, public discourse places the stigma of poverty, violence and insecurity on townships, favelas and slums. It seems unlikely that the tour participants are not aware of this. In spite of that negative image, they have chosen to participate in a guided tour. This decision is normally justified by the wish to experience the visited cities' *real life* or an alternative to mass tourism. Thus, on the one hand, the tourists are curious to see what they are shown or meant to be shown. On the other hand, mixed feelings and a certain sense of guilt also emerge in individual cases. The tourists are disturbed by the implicit accusation that in a voyeuristic manner (like a visit to a zoo) they satisfy their curiosity regarding the precarious living conditions of the urban poor.

But the three case studies also indicate striking differences. Besides the similarities just outlined, the focus of the tours in Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai lie on very different aspects and characteristics of the visited quarters:

- The township tours in Cape Town stress historical/political and cultural categories in a special fashion. This is certainly primarily a result of the ethnically segregated development of South African cities under Apartheid. The historical development of the townships and the political struggle against Apartheid, as well as Black African culture, are the *trademarks* of township tours. Therefore, historically significant sites are visited or special cultural features are presented (*sangoma, shebeen*). The township tours are not just to show *real life*, but *real African life*. To present this authentically, local tour guides are especially important.
- Regarding the favela tours in Rio de Janeiro, two elements are particularly conspicuous. First, the explicit references to the very good provision in terms of infrastructure, services and shopping. This goes to such extremes that in some cases the

²⁴ Qualitative interviews with 19 tour participant were conducted. (Meschkank 2009, pp. 55–57).

favelas are considered not sufficiently poor any more. Second, the considerable focus on themes of violence, crime and the drug trade is a special characteristic of favela tourism. This emphasises a difficult tightrope act, as the tour operators on the one hand have to unquestionably assure the personal safety of the tourists, while on the other hand aim at activating the theme of violence, drugs and crime as an important (and apparently attractive) trademark of Brazilian favelas.

- The slum tour in Mumbai, India, is strongly and formatively influenced by an orientation on the economic activities of the community. The commercial versatility and industriousness of the inhabitants, who pursue their jobs under mostly very precarious working and living conditions, is given especially central emphasis on the tours in Dharavi. This is designed to stress the embeddedness or involvement of the slum's inhabitants in national and international socio-economics.

Concluding theoretical remarks on the role of poverty in the context of township, favela, and slum tours

Guided tours in South African townships, Brazilian favelas, and Indian slums are a very complex tourism phenomenon. They are extraordinary, as tourists are confronted with the subject poverty very differently in these specific touristic destinations. Before, during, and after the tours poverty is made subject of discussion. It is implicitly marketed as supposed attraction, presented as reality or authenticity, and it is even tried to be concealed. Poverty as phenomenon and setting is omnipresent during every tour, even if tour providers aim at specifically not making poverty the focal point of the touristic observation. The three case studies show what alternative observation patterns of poverty during the tours are served as viewing point and how the tour providers try to construct an alternative picture to poverty.

The issue can now be examined from an observational-theoretical point of view. The statements made so far highlight, that poverty is a significant difference or distinction in township, favela or slum tourism. It is evident that a major proportion of international tourists visiting the settlements view

these places as areas of urban poverty. Those districts are excessively charged with characteristics like misery, hopelessness, unemployment, exposure, disease, and sometimes also hunger and poverty. A very similar observation and connotation of urban poverty is also evident in the mass media. Also for Davis, whose much-noted book *Planet of Slums* prophesises an enormous growth potential for this form of informal settlement and dwelling, the term is primarily connected with the expression of urban poverty as misery or distress described above. This type of observation of urban poverty can be seen as a first-order observation. It indicates what poverty is—what poverty is not, is not further specified (see Fig. 1). When observing poverty by primarily focusing on the misery and suffering of humans as its borders and differentiation, thus especially slums and informal settlements are presented.

From an ethical observation perspective, it now seems morally objectionable to observe this kind of poverty within a framework of touristic activities. Not by chance, the practice of this type of tourism is always accompanied by heated debates, mainly with regards to the ethical pertinence of turning other people's misery and adverse conditions into a commodity (Freire-Medeiros 2009, p. 582). Statements of similar content, reporting critically on poverty tourism or poorism, are found in numerous articles in the mass media. Thus, this moralising view observes and judges/evaluates manner in which, the poverty described above is marketed as a tourist attraction. Townships, favela or slum tours are observed as poverty tourism. Therefore, from a moralising perspective, that kind of tourism is usually criticised and condemned as voyeuristic and undignified. Thus the observation of poverty tourism can also be classified as a first-order observation.

It is revealed how these two-first-order observations—the observation of poverty in informal settlements and that of poverty tourism—are being observed by tour operators or agents within the communities, who do after all profit from that kind of tourism. Tour operators' descriptions and their relevant statements (see section “Tourism in townships, favelas and slums—selected findings of empirical analyses”) have made clear that the choice of emphasis on the tours is justified, as they refer to such first-order observations. The following is evident:

- The tour operators, too, regard such *voyeuristic first-order observations of poverty* with scepticism and are critical of such views on urban poverty. The tours aim at relativizing poverty as *the* primary association with townships, favelas or slums. The goal is to correct the observation according to which poverty is the primary factor dominating living conditions in these areas. The first-order observation becomes the starting point for a *different* distinction or drawing of borders. According to this (new) definition of borders, life in informal settlements is not exclusively characterised by poverty, misery and suffering. Rather, the inhabitants' creative engagement with the precarious living and working conditions is presented. The aim is to display, that the so-called poor quarters are not ruled by apathy, fatalistic lack of perspective and socio-economic exclusion. Even though life there is presented as hard, nonetheless, positive impulses of development, success and *normality* of the situations of those living there are focused upon. Thus, one could describe this as a second-order observation commenting on the charged contents of the first-order observation.
- The tour operators further refer to the *moral-ethical observations and evaluations of poverty tourism*. Tours in the marginal settlements that primarily aim towards a voyeuristic viewing of poverty, misery and suffering are also vehemently opposed by the majority of tour operators. They define the tours they offer explicitly and clearly in distinction from such *zoo visits* or *safaris*. However, it should be noted that none of the conducted empirical studies observed any tours that had a voyeuristic character in that sense. Such tours have also not been reported elsewhere. In order to profile their own tours as authentic, real or community based, tour operators intentionally use those constructed negative examples and nourish them deliberately. While their own tours are emphasised and presented as unique, competitors' tours are discredited as voyeuristic. This differentiation is used deliberately to distinguish themselves from the competition.

In a first résumé it can be stated that the discourses around poverty tourism are concerned with the discussion about the touristic viewing of poverty

and whether this view is morally supportable on the one hand. On the other, the discussion is directly connected with the specific notion of poverty of those who criticise the tours. This stems from the inflammation of ethically motivated criticism on tours, especially by the idea that during the tours a type of poverty is presented that is nearly exclusively defined by the suffering, misery and distress of the people. However, the tours aim precisely at not promoting that view of poverty. Thus, the critics of poverty tourism appear to construct their scapegoat image themselves, in order to then criticise it.

The tour operators oppose the negative observation of the tours as *zoo visits* or *safaris* with a positive alternative. Key terms and core concepts in tour construction are authenticity and reality. Here, *authenticity* and *reality* cannot be understood as essentialist or ontological entities. Rather, they must be perceived as social constructions or as observations by the tour operators. During the tours, the operators show what they consider authentic, real or quotidian. In section “Tourism in townships, favelas and slums—selected findings of empirical analyses”, it was demonstrated which strategies and means the tour operators utilise to be able to present or market their tours as authentic and realistic. In this regard, the three case studies featured both parallels and significant differences. In conclusion, those differences are now to be specified once more.

In the specifications of *township tourism* as discussed above, culture has been introduced as a relevant category in poverty tourism in Cape Town. According to Pott, culture is a dominant mode of city tourism (Pott 2007, p. 107). From an observation-theoretical perspective, culture is *a mode of observation for the observance of differences as cultural differences* (Pott 2005, p. 92). Culture is conceived of as a social construct of the observer. Thus, in township tours, the observation of poor quarters also takes place in the context of a culturisation. South African culture and its tradition and history are placed centre stage. Thus, poverty is semantically charged as a cultural tour (Ramchander 2007, p. 40). This cultural charging goes along with an ethnicisation. It is not about South African culture and tradition, but primarily about the culture and tradition of the black population. Ethnicisation and ethnic diversity have already been shown as an important

scheme of touristic observation elsewhere [see contributions in Rath (2007)].

Contradictory elements or features of favela and township tourism are crime, violence and drugs. On the one hand they are highly repellent for tourism, on the other they belong to a repeatedly activated observational scheme—especially in favela tourism. Tourism studies know a variety of examples where tourist destinations are, amongst other reasons, particularly attractive because they play on an ambivalence of security and insecurity or life and death.²⁵ But whereas township tourism aims for the tours to dissolve the association of township with violence/crime, some favela tours more or less openly stress and market those risks of crime, drugs and violence [Freire-Medeiros in Chagas (2006)]. Crime and violence thus become a mode of observation activated in favela tours and characterising the everyday life situation in the poor quarters.

An observational scheme hardly discussed so far takes centre stage in Indian slum tourism: the pronounced economic and innovative power in the poor quarters. The high economic energy and extreme industriousness of the slum inhabitants are stressed as an important distinction during the tours. Even under very precarious living conditions a high potential for economic activity and not apathetic inactivity or helplessness prevail—that is the message of the tour operators.

In a second and final résumé it is to be noted that all observed tours laid special emphasis on the production of an authentic and realistic perspective. The tours were constructed in such a way that the observation of the living conditions in the visited quarters could be presented to the tourists as authentic and realistic. The fact that poverty can or is also observed during the tours is thus pushed into the background. The reduction of the importance of poverty as an observational scheme is also achieved by offering and using alternative observational schemes, such as—depending on the case study—culture, ethnicity, drug crime or economisation. Even if poverty not always presents the tourists' and tour operators' predominant observation perspective, every now and then it still comes to light in places. Poverty is an important category, which structures

and interweaves this form of tourism in numerous ways. However, poverty tourism or poorism are, concerning this matter, not the appropriate terms for this touristic phenomenon. They suggest that the aim of these tours are the deliberate sightseeing and the explicit demonstrations of poverty. Slumming seems to be the most appropriate term. It was already introduced to scientific discussion by Dowling, Koven and Pott/Steinbrink. The term considers even earlier forms of this touristic phenomenon.

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²⁵ Cf. on dark tourism: Stone and Sharpley (2008); See reports in the mass media about war or terror tourism.

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