Tourist Experience
Contemporary perspectives

Edited by Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone
Poorism, poverty tours, cultural tours, slumming...
What are we talking about?

The phenomenon discussed in this chapter cannot be summarised in only one sentence. It is a relatively new form of tourism in the globalising cities of several so-called developing countries or emerging nations; namely, visits to the most disadvantaged parts of the respective city. These are mainly composed of guided tours through disadvantaged areas, often inappropriately called slums. These tours are offered on a relatively large scale in South African cities, Brazil's Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Cairo, as well as in Indian metropolises, to name some examples. International tourists are the primary target group of such tours.

The terms used to describe this tourism phenomenon are very disparate. In some articles, authors refer to these tours as 'social tours' or 'reality tours' because a number of them are explicitly presented or advertised as being 'authentic' or 'realistic' and expressed as touristic experiences 'off the beaten path'. Moreover, it is claimed that tourists participating in these social or reality tours specifically seek authentic or real experiences (Freire-Medeiros 2009a: 581; MacCannell 1999: 105). Other authors tag the tours as a form of cultural or ethnic tourism (Ramchander 2004; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004), generally emphasising their educational aspects. Both cultural and ethnic authenticities are placed at the centre of these experiences and, in this context, the opportunity for cultural exchange is important.

Then again, terms like poorism or poverty tourism are used to describe these tours. These terms express morally dubious socio-voyeuristic aspects. In particular, media reports (daily press and touristic trade journals) utilise these expressions, frequently criticising the economic valorisation 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).

Furthermore, the term 'slumming' occurs in tourism research. In 1993, Welz 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. Koven (2006), however, cites the term being used as early as the nineteenth century, in Victorian England. He describes the practice of slumming as a leisure activity pursued at the time by the upper and upper-middle classes of London society. Pott and Steinbrink (2010) show that today's slum, favela or township tours can be ranked within this slumming tradition. The focus of their approach is the consideration that a town's poor, other or dark side is set at the centre of leisure or touristic activities. Their assessment is that this again expresses the desired experience of reality and authenticity. Therefore, slumming will be used in this chapter as the most appropriate term for this form of tourism. Already introduced to scientific discussion by Welz (1993), Dowling (2007), Koven (2006) and Pott and Steinbrink (2009), slumming considers even earlier forms of this touristic phenomenon.

This conceptual ambiguity may also reflect the difficulty in attributing a specific goal or objective to participation in this form of tourism. What actually poses as the attraction visited during the tours through slums, favelas or townships? Certainly, the descriptions slumming, poverty tourism and poorness would suggest that sordidness and poverty seem to be the touristic attraction. However, the presumption that providers of these tours primarily show human wretchedness, illness and infirmity or unworthy living conditions is not borne out in practice. Generally, such tours do not focus on visiting sordidness and poverty; it is not an explicit part of the guided tours' agenda. Nevertheless, sordidness and destitution do, inevitably perhaps, play an important part in this tourism phenomenon. Tourists, as well as tour guides and scientific sources, associate sordidness and poverty, along with violence and crime, with the terms township, favela or slum. If it can be assumed that participants of these tours want to see what they expect to see in these places, which means they anticipate their experiences (Urry 2002), then sordidness, poverty, crime and violence are the core element of this form of tourism. In this respect, the terms slumming, poverty tourism or poorness are appropriate, as they correspond to the tourists’ anticipations. However, tourists certainly cannot or would not state an interest or curiosity in poverty as a motive for participating in a favela, slum or township tour; this triggers moral indignation and criticism of voyeurism. Nevertheless, these introductory comments emphasise that poverty is a significant element of these tours; poverty turns out to be one appealing part of this kind of tour. Thus, this aspect can be considered as a 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, but poverty does form the background of this tourism phenomenon.

To date, relatively few empirical studies of this specific phenomenon within the tourism industry have been undertaken (for Brazil: Freire-Medeiros 2007, 2009a; Menezes 2007a; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004; for South Africa: Rolles et al. 2009; Ludvigsen 2002; Ramchander 2004, 2007; Rogerson 2003, 2004; Margraf 2006). These studies focus primarily on the tourists’ motivation for visiting such districts and, typically, a basic interest in a country’s culture and the residents’ living conditions is revealed as the tourists’ main motive. For example, cultural and political-historical dimensions also present an interesting part of township tourism (Ramchander 2004; 2007). Favela tourism also attracts customers by marketing exoticism and samba (Freire-Medeiros 2007, 2009a; Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004). 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. However, why and to what extent sordidness, poverty or socio-economic disadvantages seem appropriate to satisfy these motivations poses a highly interesting question from an epistemological point of view.

The following sections of this chapter refer to and comment on these developments and insights regarding slumming based on research and experiences in South Africa, Brazil and India. Specific questions that are addressed include: What do tourists want to see? What is shown? Why is it shown? Subsequently, the phenomenon is explored from an observational-theoretical perspective and, in the context of slumming, existing and produced differentiations, and the specific forms they take, are highlighted.

**Slumming – three case studies**

**Methodology**

In order to approach this form of tourism for the purpose of the abovementioned research questions, extensive empirical research was conducted in Cape Town (South Africa) in 2007 and 2008. Additionally, more limited empirical field studies took place in the course of shorter visits to Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 2008 and to Mumbai (India) in 2009. These three cities were chosen as they offer a notable number of commercial slumming tours. Moreover, all three cities feature strong socio-spatial polarisation which manifests itself in the form of informal or marginalised settlements as well as, to a sizeable extent, in the form of socially disadvantaged districts. Within all three metropolises, these marginalised settlements are part of everyday life. Furthermore, these cities are comparable with respect to their tourism-related attributes although whilst a widespread mass-touristic offer already exists in Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro, this only applies in part to Mumbai.

An insight into these research trips is presented in the following sections within 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 emphasise parallels and differences within this form of tourism.

**Key data about the three case study areas**

Cape Town is the main destination for international tourists to South Africa and attracts over one million international visitors each year. Township
tours, that is, guided touristic tours through residential areas of the black population that used to serve as politically motivated propaganda tours for the Apartheid regime (Ludvigsen 2002: 17), have turned into a mass phenomenon. It is estimated that 300,000 such tourists visit the townships in Cape Town each year (AP 2007; for details, see Table 4.1).

In Rio de Janeiro, professionally conducted favela tourism is a growing market segment, albeit much less significant in terms of quantity than in Cape Town. For Rocinha, the most frequently visited favela in Rio, the annual number of visitors is estimated to be around 40,000 (Freire-Medeiros 2009a: 580; Menezes 2007a: 12). For the city as a whole, the number can be assumed to be only slightly larger. Thus, favela tourism in Rio Janeiro remains at a significantly lower volume than township tourism in Cape Town (see Table 4.1).

In Mumbai (formerly Bombay), slum tourism is a very recent phenomenon. To date, no scientific studies into this form of tourism have, to the author's knowledge, been undertaken, although there are a number of experiential tourist reports of those who participated in these tours. Furthermore, only a few individual tour operators have internet presentations providing statements about the contents of the tours (see Table 4.1).

Township tourism in Cape Town (South Africa)

The tours and the observed sights

The 20 analysed tours were carried out by 12 different operators. The number of participants varied significantly, ranging 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 its destination. However, for safety reasons, it was advised not to participate in tours to coloured townships. The tours proceeded from the inner city to the townships.

Table 4.1 Information about slumming in the three case study areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cape Town</th>
<th>Rio de Janeiro</th>
<th>Mumbai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourists per year</td>
<td>&gt;300,000</td>
<td>&gt;40,000</td>
<td>&gt;5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main destinations</td>
<td>tours to almost all townships</td>
<td>Rocinha and some other favelas</td>
<td>Dharavi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours since...</td>
<td>1990/94</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of tour operators</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>half day, day trips B&amp;B</td>
<td>half day, day trips B&amp;B</td>
<td>half day, day trips B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs half day trip($)</td>
<td>20 US</td>
<td>20-30 US</td>
<td>8 US</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by the author.

Most of the tours visited the townships of Langa, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha (cf. Figure 4.1). Irrespective of the township 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 optional consultation,
- visit to a shebeen (informal pub) with umqombothi (traditional beer) usually served to the tourists,
- visits to private homes.

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

Figure 4.1 Visited townships in Cape Town.
Nine tour operators were asked about their motives for offering township tours. As expected, commercial motives were ranked highest. 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, and the larger companies in particular referred to the fact that township tours were 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 emphasised that their tours were meant to show what life is like in the communities, conveying knowledge about African culture, history, and giving 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 lived 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 wished 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 proportion of the interviewees emphasised that the tourists were mainly interested in getting to know township residents and in interacting with the locals. Apart from this, the operators assumed that tourists were curious about poverty and developmental processes and that, generally, they 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 the country.

This view was also shared by the local agents in the townships themselves, who were in direct contact with the tourists during the tours (for example, the owners of shebeens, restaurants and shops as well as artists and souvenir traders). They believed that 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 own countries (for example, shebeens, sangomas, local arts and crafts, music and dances, exotic food and beverages).

The township tours are arranged according to these assumed motives of and beliefs about the target group. The tour programmes include specific stops, particularly at places that are assumed to exemplify typical properties of black townships and the black community. Some operators choose their stops in order to explicitly present the residents’ poverty to the tourists and to offer possibilities to improve the situation by, for example, donating to projects. Thus, the tour operators intentionally present both the poverty and the developmental potentials of the townships. Their point of view is that the tours have to show the bad living conditions in the townships as well as the positive changes. Others place 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 cultural heritage.

**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 standardised questionnaire handed out before entering the townships. The questionnaires were filled in shortly before the beginning of the tour. Only 79 tourists also completed a standardised questionnaire immediately after the tour. Consequently, 79 statements about the tourists’ expectations prior to the tour and their assessments afterwards are available.

After the township tour, the tourists were asked what observations they had made during the course of the trip and what had impressed them the most. Eighty-five responses were received to this question by 62 of the 79 persons (cf. Figure 4.2). Many of the visitors were particularly impressed by the friendliness of the township residents, this point being mentioned by more than 30 per cent of respondents. In addition, 20 per cent noted the comparatively high standard of public and commercial infrastructure as a surprising feature. The fact 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 changed during the tour. To allow for a refined description of the tourists’ images of townships, the tourists were asked to complete a semantic

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**Figure 4.2 Tourists’ impressions after the tour.**

Note

a ‘Please write down words describing your impressions about your township tour.’
profile before the beginning and after the end of the tour. In the questionnaire, opposing 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 4.3 illustrates how the responses before the tour (black line) differ from those after the tour (grey line). It is evident that the ratings had changed remarkably. Interestingly, there is a tendency to give more positive evaluations after the tour in the case of all word pairs.

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 had apparently not missed the intended goal (that is, 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.

![Figure 4.3 Evaluation of specific aspects of the townships before and after the tour.](image)

**Note:**

b 'Here is a list of pairs of contradicting words. Tick spontaneously which of the following words better describe the township.' In order to test the significance of the differences, the U-Test was applied (* = 5%-level, ** = 1%-level).

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**Favela tourism in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)**

**The tours and the observed sights**

In Rio de Janeiro, minibuses, open-top jeeps, or motorbikes were used as means of transportation, although walking tours were offered as well. The number of participants varied between 2 and 15 persons. Three such tours were analysed. These focused on Rio’s most frequently visited favelas, Rocinha (unofficially estimated to have over 150,000 inhabitants), as well as the two smaller favelas of Vila Canoas and Tavares Bastos with 3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants each. All three favelas are located in the south of the city and are, thus, easily accessible for tourists. Moreover, touristic sights and the city centre are relatively nearby (cf. Figure 4.4).

Although the tours were arranged by substantially different operators, their courses were very similar. The core feature of each attended tour was a walk through the alleys and trails of the favelas. 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, and unemployment),
- information regarding modern infrastructural equipment (wireless LAN, health services) and up-to-date shopping and services infrastructure, such as fashion stores, banks and cafés,
- opportunities to acquire local products and souvenirs, especially of an artistic or cultural nature,
- meetings with voluntary workers on social or cultural projects and/or visits to such projects,
- visits 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.

However, a further aspect played a major role in all tours: weapons, violence and the drug trade. The statements of the tour guides in this regard were often contradictory and ambiguous. Sometimes during the tour, the drug trade and crime were described as everyday phenomena in a favela and, moreover, visitors were warned not to photograph certain groups of people. At other times, life in a favela was described as absolutely safe, where violence and drug problems are merely media-hype characterisations.

**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 and their product range varied greatly. Some
operators stated that part of the money earned through favela tours was returned to those areas in the 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 (2009a), the majority of operators intend to present an authentic image of the favelas to show real life. However, they do not aim to do so by explicitly showing the life of the favela inhabitants as being precarious or poor. In fact, 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 being 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 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 because it’s not poor enough (Freire-Medeiros 2009a: 584).

Furthermore, the tour operators explicitly aim to correct the public image of the favelas, which is dominated by violence, crime and the drug trade. They consider these images to be primarily conveyed 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. Many of them described violence, drugs and crime 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. However, 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 2009a: 584). According to this, the tour operators were indeed concerned with safety and crime, but at the same time, not wanting this to disturb the tourists, they are downplayed.

**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 cannot be made. 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: 72; Menezes 2007a: 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 2009a: 582-83; Machado 2007: 72). The tour operators also assume that tourists are concerned with poverty and violence/crime which is why they usually aim to break down 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, hitherto unfamiliar aspect of tourism in Rio de Janeiro. They expect the tour to help them gain a more comprehensive impression of Brazil. Freire-Medeiros
assumes that the favelas, their specific architecture and their inhabitants are being exoticised in various ways and, thus, constructed as a tourist destination. Favelas are increasingly marketed as tourist destinations which leads to an emphasis on culture and lifestyle (Freire-Medeiros 2009a: 582-84). According to this perspective, it is striking that flyers, brochures and posters in tourist accommodations, especially youth and backpacker hostels, advertise visits to overnight stays at favelas through favela parties, Brazilian funk music and favela hype.

_Slum tourism in Mumbai (India)_

The tours and the observed sights

Dharavi is the destination of slum tours in Mumbai; with approximately one million inhabitants it is the biggest slum in Asia (cf. Figure 4.5). Figures 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 to any extent by only one agency, Reality Tours & Travel, which has been offering tours to Dharavi since 2006. Another company does exist but it organises only very few slum tours.

Similar to the tours offered in Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro, the Dharavi tours are designed as reality tours. In summary, 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 different population groups,
- visit to recycling activities and a variety of small-scale industries, such as tannery, embroidery, pottery, and so on,
- 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 waste-water disposal and electricity),
- living and domestic conditions of the inhabitants, visits to the homes of the inhabitants,
- 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 everyday life in the slums. Therefore, the central issue is to deliver an authentic or realistic image of the slum. The hard-working slum population and their 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 particularly on the multiple economic activities. According to the tour operator, a major part of the earnings (80 per cent) go towards educational projects and language courses for the inhabitants of Dharavi.

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, as indicated by the results of the qualitative interviews. It cannot be asserted to what extent curiosity about poverty may motivate their taking part in tours. However, poverty or misery certainly is one expected factor. According to the qualitative interviews with tour participants conducted during the field stay and also the findings of Meschkank (2009), 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 active and committed the slum residents are in mastering the hard living conditions. They were astonished at the large spectrum of economic activities. 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.

Slumming from an observational-theoretical point of view

Guided tours in South African townships, Brazilian favelas and Indian slums are a very complex tourism phenomenon. They are extraordinarily as tourists are confronted with the phenomenon of ‘poverty’ in very different ways depending on the specific touristic destination. Before, during and after the tours, poverty is the subject of discussion. It is implicitly marketed as a supposed attraction, presented as reality or authenticity, and efforts are even made to conceal it. Poverty as a 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 have shown what alternative observation patterns of poverty are served as viewing points during the tours and how the tour providers attempt to construct an alternative picture to poverty.

However, poverty is a significant difference or distinction within the phenomenon of slumming. It is evident that a major portion of international tourists visiting the settlements view these places as areas of urban poverty. These districts are excessively laden with features like misery, hopelessness, unemployment, exposure, disease and, sometimes, hunger and poverty. A very similar observation and connotation of urban poverty is also evident in the mass media. For Davis (2006), slum is primarily connected with the expression of urban poverty as misery or distress as described above. This perspective of urban poverty should be labelled here as a first-order observation. It indicates what poverty is. When observing poverty by primarily focusing on the misery and suffering of humans as its borders and differentiation, slums and informal settlements are, in particular, presented.

From an ethical point of view, it now seems morally objectionable to observe this kind of poverty within a framework of touristic activities (Freire-Medeiros 2009a: 382). Thus, this moralising view observes, judges and evaluates the manner in which the above described poverty is marketed as a tourist attraction. Townships, favela or slum tours are observed as ‘poorism’ or ‘poverty tourism’. Therefore, from a moralising perspective, this kind of tourism is usually criticised and condemned as voyeuristic and undignified. Thus, the observation of poverty tourism should also be classified as a first-order observation.

It has been revealed how these two first-order observations—the observation of poverty in informal settlements and that of poorism/poverty tourism—are being observed by tour operators or agents within the communities, who do after all benefit from this kind of tourism. Tour operators’ descriptions and their relevant statements have pointed out 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 relativising 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. From their point of view, 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 the so-called ‘poor quarters’ as not being ruled by apathy, fatalistic lack of perspective and socio-economic exclusion. Even though life there is presented as hard, positive impulses of development, success and the 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, distinguishing them from such ‘zoo visits’ or ‘safaris’. 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 by the tour operators to distinguish themselves from the competition.

As an initial summary, it can be stated that, on the one hand, the discourses around slumming are concerned with the discussion about the touristic viewing of poverty and whether this view is morally supportable. On the other, the discussion is directly connected with the specific notion of poverty as proposed by those who criticise the tours. This stems from the inflammation of ethically motivated criticism of tours, especially from the idea that during the tours, a type of poverty is presented that is almost exclusively defined by the suffering, misery and distress of the people. However, the tours aim precisely at not promoting this view of poverty.

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. They must rather be perceived as social constructions or as observations by the tour operators. During the tours, the operators show what they consider to be authentic, real or everyday. It was demonstrated which strategies and means the tour operators utilise to be able to present or market their tours as authentic and realistic. This should be specified once more.

In the specifications of township tourism, historical, political and cultural categories were stressed in a specific way. 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 (handcraft, sangoma, shebeen) are the trademarks of township tours. Culture has hereby been introduced as a relevant category in slumming in Cape Town. According to Pott (2007: 107), culture is a dominant mode of city tourism. Culture is said to be ‘a mode of observation for the observance of differences as cultural differences’ (Pott 2005: 92). Culture is conceived of as a social construct by the observer. Thus, in township tours, the observation of poor quarters also takes place in the context of culturalisation. South African culture, its tradition and history take centre stage. Thus, poverty is semantically equated to a cultural tour (Ramchander 2007: 40). This cultural connotation goes along with 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 (Rath 2007).

With respect to 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 and, second, the considerable focus on themes of violence, crime and the drug trade is a special feature of favela tourism. The latter are, on the one hand, highly repellent for tourism but, on the other, they belong to a repeatedly activated observational scheme – particularly in favela tourism but also to a smaller extent in township tourism.

Tourism research has revealed a variety of examples where tourist destinations are, amongst other reasons, particularly attractive because they play on an ambivalence of security and insecurity or of life and death. However, whereas township tours aim to dissolve the association of townships with violence and crime, some favela tours more or less openly stress and market these risks of crime, drugs and violence (Freire-Medeiros in Chagas 2006). Crime and violence thus become a mode of observation activated in favela tours, characterising the everyday life situation in the poor quarters.

An observational scheme not discussed thus 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 rather than apathetic inactivity or helplessness prevails – that is the message of the tour operators and the dominating scheme of observation.

Finally, 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 be or is 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 culture, ethnicity, drug crime or economisation. Even if poverty does not always present 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 not the appropriate terms for this touristic phenomenon. They suggest that the aims of these tours are the deliberate sightseeing and the explicit demonstration of poverty. It has been shown, however, that this simple observational perspective does not do justice to the complex phenomenon discussed in this chapter.

Notes
1 See the considerations about slumming in New York in Dowling (2007).
2 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.
4 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, further empirical follow-up surveys
took place. Different township tours were attended. The routes, stops, special observations and notable occurrences were recorded. Qualitative interviews with tour operators, as well as with agents within the townships were conducted. Tourists were interviewed by using semi-standardised questionnaires. All results are available in detail in Rolfes et al. (2009).

5 The empirical analyses were conducted during the author's favela visit in July/August 2008. Different tours were accompanied and the essential contents and stops of the tours were recorded. Furthermore, qualitative interviews with tour guides and several tourists were conducted.

6 '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).


8 Professional and regular slum tours in Mumbai are only offered by one tour operator. Consequently, the empirical findings presented in this chapter refer solely to one attended slum tour, one expert discussion with the tour operator and qualitative interviews with the tour guides and tourists. Initial results of an empirical research conducted in the context of a master thesis are incorporated within the following explanations (Meschkank 2009). The empirical research was conducted by the author during a field stay in Mumbai in March 2009 and an extensive survey in the course of a master thesis between February and April 2009.

9 Qualitative interviews with 19 tour participants were conducted (Meschkank 2009: 55–57).

10 For further details about the background of the observational-theoretical approach see Egner (2006) and Rolfes (2009).

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


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