Slum Tourism and Urban Regeneration:

Touring Inner Johannesburg[1]

Dr Fabian Frenzel

School of Management

University of Leicester, UK

&

School of Tourism and Hospitality

University of Johannesburg

Email: ff48@le.ac.uk

Abstract

Much attention has been paid to township tourism in South Africa, a practice of tourism that emerged in Apartheid South Africa with different organised tours catering for governmental officials, faith-based groups and anti-apartheid activists. In democratic South Africa township tourism has developed into a mainstream tourism activity and operators now offer township tours, township stays and other tourist activities in townships across rural and urban South Africa. Township tourism has also been one central empirical pillar of the relatively new research area of slum tourism addressing tourism in slums and areas of relative urban poverty across the globe. Based on recent preliminary empirical research in Johannesburg this paper shows that slum tourism can now also be observed in areas other than townships in South Africa, including perceived 'no-go areas' in inner-city Johannesburg.

The expansion of slum tourism beyond townships in Johannesburg points to an increasingly complex picture of urban poverty in South Africa. It also allows reflections on the role of slum tourism in poverty alleviation and urban regeneration, responding to and addressing 'territorial stigma' and other related symbolic aspects of poverty. Analysing the motivations and perspectives of tour operators of some of these new tours, the paper finds that the new slum tourism in South Africa is pursued in order to serve as an urban development and regeneration tool from below. It responds to an

[1] Acknowledgment: I would like to thank Peta Thomas for invaluable insights into tourism development in Inner- City Johannesburg. The research was funded by the European Commission (Marie Sklodowska Curie Intra-European Fellowship)

absence of action or perceived failure to respond to poverty by urban policy, and its potential lies in particular in addressing invisibility, overcoming territorial stigma and empowerment of the urban poor.

Introduction

Township tourism has a long history in South Africa. Its origins lie in the tours of government officials, faith-based groups and anti-apartheid activists into the townships that had become, since the 1970s, a focal point of anti-apartheid struggle and activism. Research has pointed to the political character of most of these visits and tours, either to affirm and justify government policies towards the townships in government tours, or to question it and support resistance to it in tours organised by civil society groups. The early township tours formed the nucleus of the emerging township tourism operations and industry of democratic South Africa since the early 1990s (Dondolo 2002; Rogerson 2004; Pirie 2007; Frenzel 2012). There are a range of publications discussing township tourism in South Africa, and a central focus has been the question whether this form of tourism can support economic development in townships (Ramchander 2007; Rogerson 2008; Koens 2012). While there is overall little evidence towards significant economic benefits of township tourism to the townships, researchers continue to see its potential as a tool of poverty alleviation (Booyens 2010). One key conclusion, formulated in a recent review by George and Booyens (2014), is that there is still a dearth of research. Considering the relative size of township tourism in South Africa with about 25% of all foreign tourists taking part in a township tour (Rolfes 2009) and further – thus far almost unaccounted for – numbers of South African day visitors and visits of family and relative (VFR) tourism, domestic and foreign business travellers, township tourism's socio-economic role may be sizeable and indeed significant for questions of poverty alleviation and urban development.

Township tourism has been one central empirical pillar of an emerging field of research of tourism in slums (Frenzel & Koens 2012; Frenzel et al. 2012; Freire-Medeiros 2013). In this field instances of tourism in areas of relative poverty and slums across the globe are addressed in a comparative perspective. As previous reflections on the state of the art of slum tourism research have observed, however, the field is still dominated by case studies with limited overall attempts at generalisation (Dürr & Jaffe 2012; Steinbrink et al. 2012). Part of the reason for the limited theoretical basis of research to date is the real difficulties in comparing empirical phenomena like township tourism in Soweto and visits to Dharavi, a huge slum in Mumbai. What do these phenomena actually have in common? One commonality between empirical cases of slum tourism seems to consist in the fact that poverty is not just a condition in which this tourism takes place, but is the main attraction (Frenzel 2013). Most tourists expect to see poverty in slums and when they decide to visit a slum, it is probably to see what they expect (Rolfes et al. 2009). In sociological terms however levels of poverty differ dramatically in destinations, not just across different locations and countries but also within one destination (Freire-

Medeiros 2009). Recent research on urban marginality might provide clues to the question what tourists refer to, when they say they seek to see and visit poverty in slum tourism.

With the concept of 'advanced marginality' Wacquant (2008) describes 'post-fordist poverty' as 'fuelled by the growing instability and heterogeneity of the wage labour relation in the context of rising inequality', that 'tends to concentrate in defamed and desolate districts' (Wanquant 2008: 7). The concept of advanced urban marginality stresses the specifics of urban poverty in different social economic contexts and temporal periods, while suggesting a set of commonalities. Among the most pertinent for slum tourism research is 'territorial stigma'. 'Advanced marginality tends to be concentrated in isolated and bounded territories increasingly perceived as social purgatories, leprous badlands at the heart of the post-industrial city' (Wacquant 2008: 237). Territorial stigma is a symbolic devaluation of whole neighbourhoods that both results from and effects more material deprivation. Importantly it is sometimes applied regardless of the actual economic situation in a neighbourhood.

Against Wacquant's own observations (Wacquant et al. 2014) slum tourism occurs precisely in (some) of those badlands that come to be refashioned as attractions. It seems possible to posit that slum tourism symbolically responds to the formation of areas of 'territorial stigma'. The question is, however, what this response entails. Can slum tourism change the 'territorial stigma' attached to a place and hence contribute to its betterment? Or is slum tourism an expression of advanced marginality, with better-off city dwellers venturing into the stigmatised territories to take over and gentrify, displacing the marginalised populations from there? In this contribution an attempt is made to approach these questions by studying the development of new forms of slum tourism emerging in South Africa.

After slum tourism in South Africa was initially associated only with township tourism, in recent years forms of slum tourism occur that do not take place in townships. This includes tours to neighbourhoods of inner-city Johannesburg like Hillbrow, Yeoville, and other inner-city areas, considered until recently (and by many to date) as no-go-areas , carrying high 'territorial stigma'. Based on ethnographic and interview based research of slum tourism of inner-city Johannesburg, this paper displays and discusses the political and interventionist motivations of its operators. Tours and tourism are conceived as answers to perceived policy failure or inaction in regards of urban marginality. The findings suggest that slum tourism's potential to address advanced marginality lies foremost in the lifting of territorial stigma, aiming at urban regeneration. This may prompt an empowerment of residents, the encouragement of more tourism and other business activity and finally a more considerate approaches to these areas by urban policy. In contrast to other public and private regeneration activities in inner-city Johannesburg the discussed tourism initiatives valorise the social fabric of the existing communities in the areas. This constitutes a safeguard against the thread of displacement resulting from gentrification.

Township Tourism and Poverty Alleviation

Much literature on township tourism in South Africa has dealt with its pro-poor and developmental aspects, i.e. the ways it may alleviate poverty or support business development in townships. In the wider slum tourism field discussions about the benefits it may bring to slum residents are equally central. The overall focus on the poverty alleviating effects of township tourism may be explained by the most pertinent question for slum tourism research: why does this practice - better-off people visiting areas of poverty – matter? Policy in South Africa has long attempted to promote township tourism as a tool of economic development and the transformation of the mostly white owned tourism industry in South Africa (Rogerson 2004, 2013). Some research has attempted to evaluate township tourism's role in alleviating relative poverty in townships and providing business opportunities for township residents (Booyens 2010; Koens 2012; Ramchander 2007; Rogerson 2004, 2008, 2013). Overall little evidence could be established towards significant positive economic effects in these studies. Instead several problems were highlighted. To date most township tourism takes place in package tours (Booyens 2010, Koens 2012) and while these tours were initially organised to some extent by township residents, the role of mainstream tourism operators in bringing in tourist as well as controlling revenue has increased with the expansion of township tourism (Rogerson 2004). Most mainstream tour operators are from outside the townships and come traditionally privileged white middle-class background (Rogerson 2004, Rogerson 2013, Koens 2012). While local businesses have remained, there is often a lack of cooperation and collaboration among them, as Koens (2012) observed in a study of black owned township tourism businesses around Cape Town. Beyond the offering of tours, the provision of hospitality emerged as a new potential source of revenue, particularly in the context of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. In the run up to the world cup, policy encouraged and supported the creation of black owned Bed and Breakfast (B&B) businesses. The large visitor numbers during the mega event were expected to bring additional tourists into townships.

This is evident in particular in Soweto, where to date several B&Bs exist, but World Cup hopes for revenue were often not fulfilled (Freire Medeiros 2013). Rogerson (2013) found, that those businesses that remained open continue to suffer from low occupancy rates. One notable exception is Lebo's backpacker in Soweto. Lebo's story has been highlighted and celebrated among policy makers and tourism officials in South Africa for it epitomised the much cherished black entrepreneurship. Lebo started as a souvenir seller outside the Hector Pietersen museum in Soweto, and through befriending tourists, emerged as a provider for home stays, initially in his grandparents house. The business developed from this and now features a landmark backpacker and B&B location on the South African tour circuit. Lebo's bike tour of Soweto has proved a very successful alternative to the package tours provided by large operators (Rogerson 2010). The success story of Lebo's points to the potential of township tourism to stimulate economic development among township residents, perhaps in line with

observations by Koens (2012) that there is a need for small local businesses in township tourism to look beyond the crowded mainstream market. The development of new tourism offerings from small operators is also likely to be enhanced by social media platforms. These could make it easier for local and small businesses to gain access to tourists, although thus far there is no conclusive research that has confirmed this hypothesis in the field of slum tourism.

More recently it has been pointed out that current studies of slum and township tourism in South Africa have focused on the long haul market of tourists (predominantly from Europe, North America and Australia) and overlooked business travel, domestic and VFR tourism in the evaluation of township tourism's economic impact. There is ample evidence that parts of Soweto now feature increasingly as leisure destinations among middle class black South Africans, sometimes returning to the places they grew up for day trips and VFR. Business tourism, is also likely to be a significant factor of tourism revenue for townships. Research has thus far not systematically evaluated this form of township tourism and mobility and its economic impact.

Symbolic factors

The analysis of the role of slum and township tourism on poverty alleviation is rarely limited to relatively pure economic factors (Frenzel 2013). In the so called 'tourism and poverty nexus' (Scheyvens 2010) tourism is increasingly understood as not merely an industry but a social force (Higgins-Desbiolles 2009), akin to migration, the economic aspects of which are rarely discussed in isolation from its broader role and meaning for contemporary societies. In evaluating the symbolic role of township tourism, a key concern has been how potential positive aspects, like the empowering of residents or attitude changes among tourists towards slums square with negative aspects, like the spectacular display of poverty for voyeuristic tourists or the perpetuation of myths about slums. Empowerment was found in some cases, for example when tourists were mobilisied to support slum dwellers in battles against city authorities in Bangkok (Wattanawanyoo 2012). In township tourism research it could be shown how tourists changed their attitudes about what they associated with townships before and after the tour (Rolfes et al. 2009), following the often positive narratives created by tour operators. Butler (2010; 2012) has considered the role of tour operators and guides in linking tourists and slum dwellers in what she calls 'curatorial' process of presenting and displaying the township for tourists. This may or may not correspond to the desire of many tourists, who express that they visit townships to experience 'the real' South Africa, a claim often also stipulated by the tour operators. While there is little evidence of practices that could be akin to cynically responding to voyeuristic desires, the production of staged authenticity and myths in township tourism is sometimes affirmed. Tours that allow visitors to enter township shacks and houses may contribute little to the advancement of visitor's understanding of poverty and inequality in South Africa beyond a mobilisation of pity which tends to do little to empower the visited (Butler 2010). The desire of tourists to see 'the real' is clearly not fulfilled either, as the huts selected for visits are staged as such (Butler 2012). Previous research thus gives an

indication that slum tourism matters in the symbolic sphere of representation and as a communicative and political practice, but the question is how this corresponds to symbolic aspects of poverty itself.

Symbolic Aspects of Poverty

For some time now researchers of poverty have pointed to the importance to consider non-economic factors to better understand the multi-dimensionality of poverty (Tomlinson et al. 2008; Walker 2014). Poverty is more than lack of income and resources, it also consists of exclusion from social and political participation, a lack of well-being, both physical and psychologically, lack of security and so forth. These non-economic factors of poverty are related to the more substantial political questions about the reason for poverty to exist. When poverty was identified as a social problem of policy in the 18th and 19th century Western states as the 'social question', its political and symbolic character came to the fore (Arendt 1990; Walker 2014). Importantly all technical discussions that have developed since, name how to properly measure and define poverty and to best conceive of policy to address and overcome it, remain essentially connected to political-symbolic questions of why there is poverty and who is to blame.

In this context Koven (2004) saw the 19th century slumming phenomenon instrumental in triggering the development of social welfare policies in Britain. Slum tourism did not only bring the leisured upper classes to the London slums. Slumming also included the establishment of study centres of Oxford and Cambridge universities in East London, where the likes of Beatrix Webb, for example, worked and abandoned free market ideas and became a socialist. Contemporary slum tourism could be playing a role in the formation of social policy. This symbolic aspect of slum tourism corresponds to symbolic aspects of poverty, because slum tourism can provide a space for debates and experience of poverty for better-off tourists (Frenzel 2013).

Symbolic aspects of poverty also consist of shame and stigma that affects the poor and add to their economic misery (Walker 2014, Wacquant 2008). Often certain welfare policies are complicit in building shame and stigma, for example when policy is designed to shame people in to not claiming welfare and benefits (Walker 2014). While the efficiency and salience of such policies are already questionable for an individual in poverty, there are additional problems when such shaming processes enhance more general stereotypes about larger groups of people and areas. Wacquant (2008) observes the centrality of stigma in what he calls 'advanced urban marginality' that extends beyond the slums of the developing world to the ghettos of the developed world. Advanced urban marginality has its material cause in changes of the labour regime, however many of its outcomes and consequences are negotiated in the symbolic sphere. Here whole areas begin to carry 'territorial stigma', a negative valorisation in the eyes of outsiders as well as the inhabitants. Economic and material poverty gets entrenched because of the symbolic exclusion.

The key points raised by Wacquant as consequences of territorial stigma are

1) personal indignity for the inhabitants of these areas

2) the compound effects of neglect and avoidance by visitors, red-lining by banks, avoidance by companies and businesses leading to general lack of attention by politicians

3) the eroding effects of territorial stigma on relationships in these areas as everybody is in fear and suspicions towards each other.

This leads to further neglect and ignorance of these areas, while the only remaining outside visitors are the police and security services.

In a recent paper Wacquant et al. (2014:1275) have contended that territorial stigma in today's advanced marginality does no longer attract the curiosity of the 'other half'.

'Long gone are the ambivalent fascination and lurid attraction that political and cultural elites felt for the sordid bas-fonds of the emerging industrial city, […], as demonstrated by the conjoint invention of 'slumming' and 'undercovery' journalism centered on the derelict districts of the metropolis […] In the 1980s, no rich Chicagoan would envisage, let alone dare, to drive down and ogle around the Robert Taylor Homes on the city's South Side, least of all at night.'

Contrary to this claim the expanding slum tourism - also in cities of the global north - shows that territorial stigma continues to attract tourists, at least in some areas of the world. While South Side Chicago might not get visited, inner-city Johannesburg, parts of which are still conceived of as no-go areas and fulfill all criteria of advanced marginality, of extreme territorial stigma, now see tours operating in them and tourism being considered as development options for them. This prompts the question why slum tourism occurs in particular places and how tourism relates to different aspects of their territorial stigma?

In the following analysis of tourism operations in inner-city Johannesburg, three lines of inquiry chart this relation. Firstly in what ways may slum tourism help to overcome invisibility and to put slums back on the map as a first important step to overcome neglect. Territorial stigma, i.e. the negative valorization of a place, as Wacquant (2008) has argued, is not opposed to invisibility but they are mutually connected. A second question is whether slum tourism can help change attitudes of an area and how attempts to do so look like. In previous literature (Rolfes et al. 2009; Meschkank 2010; Dyson 2012) this has mostly concerned questions over whether tourists' ideas of a place have changed. However to tackle shame and stigma attached to poverty in these areas, changes also need to affect local elites and the slum dwellers themselves. Finally, what is the role of slum tourism in creating communicative and political spaces in which the social question can be addressed in a public domain. Such public debate over causes of poverty and ways to address it are central to the creation and potential justification of policy addressing poverty. While all three points relate and overlap they offer a discussion of very different aspects of tourism operations in these areas.

Slum Tours in Inner-City Johannesburg

The history of Johannesburg's inner-city development is a reflection of South Africa's transformation process since the faltering years of Apartheid. Johannesburg, in the words of Murray (2011: 5) 'bears the scars of white minority rule obviously'. During the 1980s inner-city districts like Hillbrow and Yeoville witnessed an increasingly rapid decline in housing quality, while associated indicators like property prices and perceived security dropped significantly as well. The reasons are to be found in a complex combinations of factors resulting from the crumbling Apartheid regime. From the mid 1970s onwards increasing numbers of non-white residents were able to secure tenancies in central Johannesburg. These tenancies were illegal according to the Apartheid Group Areas Act, resulting in higher rents for new arrivals and conflicts in the tenant landlord relations leading to rent strikes and a divestment of landlords from the area. Hillbrow and Yeoville were re-classified as a 'grey areas' in the group areas act of 1985 - after a landmark ruling had questioned forced removals from the area - banks and financial institutions redlined Hillbrow, and other parts of Johannesburg, effectively halting the ability to secure mortgages here (Morris 1994, 1999; Murray 2011; Winkler 2013; Smithers 2013). In the years following the end of Apartheid, these inner-cities districts faced a continuous downward spiral with the emergence of vertical slums in the form of hijacked and squatted high rises. Former apartment houses, neglected by their owners, sometimes compounded by the city for lack of property tax payments, were squatted and often re-rented in an informal rental market, catering for an increasingly substantial number of immigrants. Mostly white and middle class residents had left these inner-city districts almost completely by the mid to late 1990s to settle in new suburban areas in the North of Johannesburg. In the perception of most South Africans to date Hillbrow and Yeoville, still stand as-no go-areas and as slums (Winkler 2013, Smithers 2013).

Symbolic Issues with perceptions of Inner City Johannesburg

The last 20 years have seen attempts to reverse the deprivation of inner-city Johannesburg and its regeneration. Policy followed models of other post-industrial cities, in particular in the UK, with its particular focus on culture and creativity (Rogerson 2006; Winkler 2013). The Johannesburg master plan of the city authorities is to develop Johannesburg into a world class African city. Initially there was mainly public sector activity, in particular in creating a cultural quarter in Newtown, including the building of venues and conference centres. More recently initiatives from the private sector of property developers, operating with an increasing focus on cultural industries and creativity, have targeted the regeneration of Maboneng District and Braamfontein. The specific interest of the developers in these areas are not necessarily aligned with social aims of regeneration however evidently both initiatives have created more attention

and visibility for the surrounding areas. They have also responded to an increasing desire of the predominantly white middle classes confined to suburban life styles to reclaim inner-city Johannesburg. Bahman and Frenkel (2012:8) see 'a whole generation unfamiliar with the city centre or an urban culture' now pushing back into the city while property developers are capitalising on this. Bahmann and Frenkel (2012) empirically question fears, that the development in Maboneng displaces former poorer residents however see this potential danger in the long run. They also question the extent to which the developments, featuring markets, lofts and café's, are able to overcome the exclusionary character of the suburban shopping mall culture. They might constitute similar 'fortified enclaves' however marketed on a semblance of diversity and edginess (Bahmann and Frenkel 2012). A key positive aspects Bahmann and Frenkel (2012) find concerns the opening of walking spaces between different developments, in particular in the Maboneng District. As middle class visitors leave the enclave of the Sunday market on Arts on Main to explore galleries and restaurants in the vicinity, encounters across class and race line may take place. Bahmann and Frenkel (2012, p.41) see 'the beginnings of the development of a diverse and inclusive urban culture as can be seen on the streets of Maboneng.'

In Hillbrow the city of Johannesburg aims for a revival as a multicultural district, however as Winkler (2013) claims, there have been thus far few ideas and initiatives to actually implement this. In his analysis of government action in Yeoville, Smithers (2013) comes to a similar conclusion. Limited or insufficient public service provision in Hillbrow, Yeoville and other inner-city districts of Johannesburg continue to dampen the prospect for urban redevelopment. High profile real estate driven interventions like in the case of Maboneng have been attempted in the case of Ponte City, a landmark high-rise housing tower in Hillbrow, but abandoned during the credit crunch. Negative stigma of these areas is compounded because their residents are often non-South African with little representation in the government institutions. Policing remains the key policy intervention, for example in respect of informal street trading, subject to continuing sweeps in the whole city centre with little lasting effect (Smithers 2013).

Despite overall negative public perceptions, Winkler (2013) claims that Hillbrow remains a highly attractive urban area to many. The same can be said of Yeoville, where the building of backyard shacks points to housing shortages (Smithers 2013). In sociological terms it makes sense to see Hillbrow as an 'arrival city' (Saunders 2012) in the sense that many new migrants to Johannesburg, today mostly from other African countries locate here first (Winkler 2008; Winkler 2013). The informal housing and to date the relatively low rents in a convenient inner-city location enhance this function. The current situation of these areas is characterised perhaps best as a complex picture. Squatted, and hijacked buildings remain, while some areas of Hillbrow and Yeoville now see a normalisation of rent regimes and property regimes.

A case in point is Ponte City, a landmark 1970s housing tower. Initially a very exclusive address in the Hillbrow area, Ponte City became a hijacked building in the 1990s. With its curious architecture of a the round tower around an empty core and its extreme

height, it dominates Hillbrow. For some time during the last two decades Ponte City became a symbol for the decline of inner-city Johannesburg with film and journalist reports casting Ponte City as a pandemonium of crime and desperation. An attempt to regenerate Ponte and the surrounding area failed in the subprime crisis in 2009. Ponte City's current owners manage the building based in short term contracts. Ponte City shows the potential as well as the challenges of this arrival area. It is also the starting point of a tour called 'This is Hillbrow' in operation since 2013.

In the next section I examine tourism initiatives in relation to the symbolic aspects of poverty and particular territorial stigma. I do so by presenting three tour operations and tourism initiatives, operating in Yeoville and Hillbrow as well as other parts on inner-city Johannesburg. The first one is the tour company 'Past Experience', founded in 2012 by Jo Buitendach. It started off with archaeological tours but today operates a whole range of inner-city tours. Past Experience also runs a Soweto Tour. In their tour of Yeoville, Past Experience cooperates with Maurice Smithers who is a community activist in Yeoville and has offered tours of the neighbourhood for while. Smithers has been a key player in creating tourism initiatives, tours and a community festival for the area. Ponte City is the base of Dlala Nje, founded by Nicolas Bauer and Michael Lupak. Their tours of Hillbrow and Yeoville have been running since 2013. The material presented is based on interviews conducted with Buitendach and Bauer, ethnographic research in inner-city Johannesburg and online document research. The data is presented relating to three aspects of territorial stigma, first to attempts at tackling invisibility of these areas and putting them on the map, second for the overcoming of myth, here in particular with respect of the negative perceptions of these areas as no-go zones and third to fighting disempowerment in the areas through political interventions, mainly to influence policy, or replace policy where it is absent.

Putting Inner-City Johannesburg (back) on the Map

In the previous section I described the increasingly suburban experience of most middle and upper-class South Africans in the post-apartheid period. This resulted in an increasing invisibility of inner-city areas, a lack of experience of the urban reality among those middle classes.

'People in the suburbs say: 'no one lives in the inner city'. I find this rather disturbing, because loads of people actually live here.'

Buitendach, founder of Past Experience, quotes such attitudes as her main motivation to offer tours in the inner-city. Her own experience of London and other European cities taught her that quality of city life depends on the ability to walk and use public transport in a city, the experience of street life. However in the isolation of Johannesburg's suburbs, in which she grew up, such experiences were completely absent. One focus of her tours is showing middle-class South Africans how to use the public transport in the city. She takes her visitors on bus rides with the busses of the city authority and teaches them to make use of the collective taxi system. The walking tours aim at opening up to

South Africans the beauty of inner-city life. Middle class and often white South Africans make up the majority of her customers, which amount to several thousands a year while the company also attracts many international visitors. Past Experience has developed a diverse portfolio of formerly invisible 'inner-city' locations. A trained archaeologist, Buitendach sees her work as uncovering the hidden treasures of the city. The invisibility of inner-city Johannesburg is to her more than a political problem of advanced marginality, but also a loss to all South Africans, a lost treasure which she hopes to help uncovering.

Increasing the visibility of Hillbrow and Yeoville is also a key motivation to efforts by Dlala Nje. Nicolas Bauer argues that 'For the first 20 years of democracy…this place was forgotten.' One of the founders of Dlala Nje, Bauer takes tourists around Hillbrow, and starts tours with a visit to his apartment in Ponte City. His decision to move into 'a place where no local dares to go' (Traveller 2014) as well as to get involved in the neighbourhood is based on a sense of obligation. Bauer calls this his contribution to 'RDP of the Soul', evoked by Nelson Mandela aiming at building the democratic South Africa healing the wounds of Apartheid. The tours are a funding model for the NGO Dlala Nje, focusing on work with children. People come to the tours, specifically, because Hillbrow has such a bad reputation, according to Bauer. Highly rated on social media pages for travel advice, the tours are informally conducted by Bauer and his partner. Bauer is a former Mail & Guardian journalist and criticism of political neglect features centrally in this tours. One surprising aspect of the tours is the attention they solicited among residents in the area. With tours predominantly made up of white participants, residents stare at the group, some taking out their phones to take pictures. This points to the fact that invisibility is, to some extent mutual.

Image Changes: transforming stigma into strength

Tourism is not new to these districts. In Yeoville it was a force in urban development in the 1980s. At the time Yeoville (as well as Hillbrow to a lesser extent) developed into attractive tourism destinations, mentioned in guidebooks, partly because of their alternative flair (Smithers 2013). Trying to revive this role of tourism local activists in different Yeoville resident and stakeholder groups composed development plans as early as 1999, suggesting to the city council to develop Yeoville as a 'African destination', highlighting the pan-African diversity of the place for national and international tourists. Tourism is supposed to play a central role in uplifting the place (Smithers 2013:77).

The plan, and some follow-up plans published since, have garnered little attention and later only lip service of support from the city authorities. Proposals for a festival 'Africa Day' in 2000 lay dormant for almost 10 years, only to be revived in the run up to the World Cup and after a series of xenophobic violence in South African targeting African immigrants in 2008. The support for the festival was short-lived, as already in 2011 no further funding was made available from the city, and only smaller festivals were realised, funded in different ways. Since 2009 and with the involvement of researchers

and students from Witwatersrand University in the Yeoville Studio, the neighbourhood developed tours and maps explaining those tours. They include a political heritage tour, a cultural tour, an architectural tour as well as a flyer for restaurant recommendations.

These initiatives by the community activists and some outsiders aim to change the symbolic negative valorisation of the area. In the festival and tours attempts are made to capitalize on the diversity of the area for tourism purposes which is no longer presented as a problem, but as a strength. The initiative of residents to take matters into their own hands comes as policy continues to be absent or failing. Tourism is envisioned predominantly as a long term economic strategy, but also functions in the present through festivals and tours, attempting to change perceptions about Yeoville. Significant is the perception of hostel and hotels in Yeoville. These have developed to cater for recent and new arrivals, mainly from outside South Africa in Johannesburg. According to Smithers (2013) these guest houses are often associated with illegal activities, like drug smuggling and prostitution and there are also issue over their alcohol licences. However

> Guest houses can play a critical role in our efforts to promote Yeoville Bellevue as a pan-African destination for domestic and international tourists. They also create jobs for local residents. However, because there is currently no effort to regularise the way in which guest houses operate and no attempt to counter the negative perceptions many Yeoville Bellevueites have of them, they all get tarred with the same brush. (Smithers 2013: 56)

It is obvious that attitude changes towards an area concern not only outsiders but also locals living in those areas. They correlate to a sense of empowerment, the ability to feel that one can influence the area. Tourism development can be a catalyst to address those issues. But as Smithers (2013) points out, tourism development in larger scale cannot happen before issues of security, among others, are addressed. The diversity and informality of the neighbourhood can become a strength and work towards the living quality of an area only insofar as it is embedded into some structure the creation of which depends upon policy.

Symbolic Interventions and spaces of power

The attempt to use tourism to force the city authorities into action features as a major element of all tourism activities discussed here. This concerns in particular the space that tourism creates for intervention. While tourists might not be best placed to influence policy, there is the potential to use tourism to create communicative spaces in which neglect and policy failure can be discussed and sometimes addressed. Dlala Nje's co-founder Bauer explains that he sees the lack of state involvement as the key problem hindering people to help themselves.

'Allow people to do their thing, provide some service, but when it comes to hijacked buildings, we can't change this.'

Past Experience, according to Buitendach, attempts to draw realistic pictures of the neighbourhoods they visit. While she sees a focus in showing the things that work and dispel myths about total deprivation, problems, and particular problems connected to policy, feature as well. In the tours such perspectives are transported to domestic and international participants. All tours attract journalists and researchers as well as tourists with a passion for writing, photography and documentation. Past Experience and the tours of Maurice Smithers work in close cooperation with Witwatersrand University, from where they get visiting researchers and students to come on the tours. The Yeoville studio project did its own work in bringing researchers in. In the case of Dlala Nje, feedback on tours on social media sites shows how ideas about Hillbrow and the political neglect it befalls are circulated from the tour to national and international media spheres.

More than conveying a message the spaces which tours and tourism creates also effects the standing and political role of the guides and tour operators. In the three cases discussed here, the tour companies and their founders have to some extent acquired public roles in Johannesburg, enhanced their power through the tourist attention they have generated for inner-city Johannesburg. Buitendach has used this influence in 2013 to protest against the botched introduction of smart cards by the city bus service Rea Veya (ENCA 2013). Smithers role as a community activist derives from a long term involvement, but tours and the exposure they bring enhance the role and strengthen his position in negotiations with the city. Tourism thus creates a political space that empowers the tour guides.

Forming a political-symbolic space in which power is thus generated the tours also facilitate the personal intervention of participants which is the explicit aim of Dlala Nje. Tour participants, of middle and upper-class backgrounds, often come with a range of skills, resources and abilities, according to Bauer. Dlala Nje attempts to encourage those skills to be utilised for volunteering activities.

Influencing government into action is an aim discernable in all tours, but there is also a tendency to make tourism work as a replacement of government inaction, particular in the case of Dlala Nje. Here tourism is a funding model for charitable work in and around a play centre in Ponte City run by Dlala Nje. This pattern of work is well established across slum tourism destinations in South Africa and beyond. They point to a new dimension of charitable work, in particular in enabling independent, experience based funding to be generated in tourism activities. The case of Dlala Nje also shows the connection between the symbolic power generated in the tours and the ability to attract large scale funding from corporations. Recently a bank donated a significant amount of money to Dlala Nje.

Discussion

The relatively new inner-city tours of Johannesburg give a picture of attempts to address some of the symbolic issues of poverty, namely the territorial stigma these areas befall. While these are intrinsically connected to economic issue of poverty, the symbolic factors are central for they point to the political nature of questions of inequality. Invisibility and isolation are closely connected. In creating visibility, attempts by all three operators point to the importance of people from outside the areas affected by territorial stigma to come and see them. This concerns middle and upper class South Africans. It is important to note that middle and upper classes are no longer only white in South Africa. To the extent that the middle and upper classes yield over-proportional political influence, their ignorance towards the living conditions of people in inner-city Johannesburg also results in political neglect as problems of inner city Johannesburg are not, or not proportionally on the political agenda.

One curious effect of invisibility works to the benefit of tourism: the invisibility of these areas actually attracts (some) tourists. It makes sense here to see the operators of the tours as tourists themselves. It is precisely their own desire to enter these spaces that corresponds to the desires of the first tourists they manage to attract. This points to the pioneering character of the tours, whereby they sense and act upon a more generally shared desires. This pioneering role of the guides then consists in opening up spaces of territorial stigma to outsiders and start placing them on the map, responding to more widely held desires about urban development in the city. Tourism operators here are engaging in the kind of artistic work, that aligns with Butler's (2012) notion of tour guides as curators. Artist interventions also characterize early stages of gentrification, albeit that territorial stigma here adds to the lure of the place, rather than simply cheap property prices. In the symbolic sphere, the pioneers now facilitate the appearance of media reports that address these areas beyond reports of crime and sensationalist consumption which is, in many cases, directly linked to journalists going on tours.

There is also no doubt a level of similarity between these pioneers and the real estate companies operating in Maboneng and Braamfontein areas, mainly in the sense of putting these places on the map through their work. But it is also central to state the differences, particular with regards to the crucial question of inclusiveness of urban development, raised earlier in reference to advanced urban marginality. While real estate driven development might lead to displacement of the people living in the area, the tourism pioneers base their valorisation on the very social fabric they find in these neighbourhoods. There is a strong appreciation of what is in place in Yeoville and Hillbrow, working with the people who are already here. This is particularly the case when like in Yeoville tourism development is pursued by associations of local residents and attempts to transfer the perceived problems of the area into strengths of cultural diversity that can be projected and marketed in attempts to uplift the city. A key component has been the African culture festival. After years of proposing such a strategy to the city authorities, there has been an increasing level of self-organising in the light of the absence of state action. Such initiative, for example in realising the festival without state support, points to energy of the neighbourhood initiative. At the

same time, other non-state actors, like the Yeoville Studio of Witwatersrand University have supported the initiatives. Such activity, importantly points beyond image changes among and for outsiders, but also targets the change of perception of people living in these areas. This works to counter the effects of territorial stigma on people living in those areas as a key factor in their disempowerment (Wacquant 2008).

Overall the limits of such private and voluntary initiatives towards tourism development are clearly stated in many of the actual tours. Without reliable service delivery, in particular in regards of security and regulation, voluntary activities by residents, pioneers and other private actors will not be sufficient in delivering the symbolic valorisation of the areas through tourism. Pointing to failed urban planning is a key narrative in all tours offered and points to the political character of the tours. They add a symbolic function to tourism beyond increasing visibility, and changing perceptions about the areas. Tourism initiatives here may be understood as a generator of power. The empowering effect of tourism is most strongly observable in the role of guides and tour operators, who assume public roles in their work. It is through the active engagement in the neighbourhoods and the offering of tours, the sharing of their insights to outsiders, that tour guides may obtain powerful broker roles. Symbolically brokers can use this power to demand and campaign on behalf of stronger state involvement for the communities. On a symbolic level, this indicates a coalition between pioneering brokers, who bring curiosity and passion to stigmatised communities, and the people living in these communities. The empowering effect of slum tourism on pioneering brokers clearly depends on the stories and practices they profess. A pure profit focus in such tourism initiatives is likely to undermine a credible political broker role while they thrive in providing credible symbolic assistance to the cause of inclusive redevelopment.

Tourism can therefore be seen as a domain of political deliberation. Naturally many participants in the tours are international visitors. While they may share concern for poverty in South Africa, their influence on policy making in South Africa is limited. Perhaps as a result of this, the focus of many slum tourism operators, not only in inner-city Johannesburg but across destinations, is on garnering material resources, rather than political capital. Such attempts do not aim primarily at lobbying the state, but rather to replace state action with service delivery financed by money made in tourism. The salience of such activity needs further research. There are clear limits to non-state actors ability to replace state action and the retrenchment of the state can to some extent be seen as the key problem of advanced urban marginality. Even before the neo-liberal retrenchment of the state, however, concerted state action has not always been beneficial in addressing urban marginality. In the increasingly global public sphere, new forms of service delivery to address the social question beyond the state may indeed continue to play a central role. In this context experiments in slum tourism need more

evaluation.

Conclusion

This paper addressed the development of slum tourism in Johannesburg, South Africa outside the classical cases of such tourism in townships. It asked about the relationship of slum tourism to poverty, and in particular to symbolic aspects of poverty. Tourism seems to respond in particular to territorial stigma, a condition of advanced urban marginality. This response entails different aspects. To some extent slum tourism helps putting neglected and invisible areas back on the map. This is done by pioneers who through their own curiosity and appreciation of an area encourage and enable others to explore. Furthermore slum tourism may support the change of images of these areas, by turning key features of the neighbourhoods from perceived weaknesses into strengths. Finally slum tourism creates power. To an extent all tourist activities discussed here speak to politics. When invisibility is broken and formerly no-go areas are transformed into destinations, they inevitably also appear in a different light in politics, people start caring about them. Slum tourism operations seem to have strength in their potential to create political pressure through symbolic valorisation.

This research also found that tour guides and operators, who function as brokers between tourists and the slum, may attain public roles as mediators between the city and the slum. This empowerment can serve to politicise neglect and limited service delivery and lead to an empowerment of the people living in these areas. While some of the slum tour operators also operate businesses and while their activity can be described – in some cases – as clearly entrepreneurial, their operations differ from the real estate initiatives discussed. Slum tourism operators in the cases discussed valorise the existing urban fabric in the neglected areas, rather than only capitalising on their location and architectural features with certain disregard for the stigmatised populations, leading to a potential dislocation of the residents in gentrification.

Slum tourism operations respond to an absence and failure of government policy and private sector initiatives to secure inclusive urban development. Often, slum tourism goes further and attempts to replace the state in service delivery. This is observable across slum tourism destinations globally, but to date there is limited data on how to best understand these mechanism. Further research on slum tourism needs to address the role of operators in developing new forms of charitable engagement and globally connected responses to the ‘social question’. In inner-city Johannesburg, the tourism initiatives and tours now mainly work towards overcoming the territorial stigma attached to these areas. By highlighting the strengths of the neglected areas, and by creating a ‘buzz’ around them, their most salient effects may not be tourist dollars that support this or that social project, but the garnering of political support for appropriate service delivery and better governance.

References

Arendt, H., 1990. *On revolution*, New York: Penguin Books.

Bahmann, D. & Frenkel, J., 2012. *Renegotiating Space - Arts on Main, 44 Stanley and Johannesburg*, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Booyens, I., 2010. Rethinking township tourism: Towards responsible tourism development in South African townships. *Development Southern Africa*, *27*(2), 273–287.

Butler, S.R., 2012. Curatorial interventions in township tours: two trajectories. In F. Frenzel, K. Koens, & M. Steinbrink, eds. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.* London: Routledge, 215–231.

Butler, S.R., 2010. Should I stay or should I go? Negotiating township tours in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *8*(1-2), 15–29.

Dondolo, L., 2002. *The construction of public history and tourism destinations in Cape Town's townships: A study of routes, sites and heritage*, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape.

Dürr, E. & Jaffe, R., 2012. Theorizing Slum Tourism: Performing, Negotiating and Transforming Inequality. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 10(93), pp.113–123.

Dyson, P., 2012. Slum Tourism: Representing and Interpreting "Reality" in Dharavi, Mumbai. *Tourism Geographies*, *14*(2), INSERT PAGES

ENCA, 2013. Rea Vaya under fire | eNCA. Available at: http://www.enca.com/south-africa/rea-vaya-under-fire [Accessed August 12, 2014].

Freire-Medeiros, B., 2009. The favela and its touristic transits. *Geoforum*, *40*(4), 580–588.

Freire-Medeiros, B., 2013. *Touring Poverty*, New York N.Y.: Routledge.

Frenzel, F., 2012. Beyond "Othering": the political roots of slum tourism. In F. Frenzel, K. Koens, & M. Steinbrink, eds. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.* London: Routledge, 49–65.

Frenzel, F., 2013. Slum tourism in the context of the tourism and poverty (relief) debate. *DIE ERDE – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin*, *144(*2), 117–128. Available at: http://www.die-erde.org/index.php/die-erde/article/view/58 [Accessed February 20, 2014].

Frenzel, F. & Koens, K., 2012. Slum Tourism: developments in a young field of interdisciplinary tourism research. *Tourism Geographies*, *14*(2), 1–16.

Frenzel, F., Koens, K. & Steinbrink, M. eds., 2012. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.*, London: Routledge.

George, R. & Booyens, I., 2014. Township Tourism Demand: Tourists' Perceptions of Safety and Security. *Urban Forum*, *25*, in press.

Higgins-Desbiolles, F., 2009. *Capitalist globalisation, corporated tourism and their alternatives*, New York: Nova Science.

Koens, K., 2012. Competition, Co-operation and Collaboration in Township Tourism: Experiences Studies from South Africa. In F. Frenzel, K. Koens, & M. Steinbrink, eds. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.* London: Routledge, 83–100.

Koven, S., 2004. *Slumming : sexual and social politics in Victorian London*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Meschkank, J., 2010. Investigations into slum tourism in Mumbai: poverty tourism and the tensions between different constructions of reality. *GeoJournal*, *76*(1), 47–62.

Morris, A., 1994. The Desegregation of Hillbrow, Johannesburg, 1978-82. *Urban Studies*, *31*(6), 821–834.

Morris, A., 1999. Tenant-Landlord Relations, the Anti-apartheid Struggle and Physical Decline in Hillbrow, an Inner-city Neighbourhood in Johannesburg. *Urban Studies*, *36(*3), 509–526.

Murray, M.J., 2011. *City of Extremes: The Spatial Politics of Johannesburg* First Edition edition., Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Pirie, G., 2007. Urban Tourism in Cape Town. In C. M. Rogerson & G. Visser, eds. *Urban tourism in the developing world: the South African experience*. London: Transaction Publishers, 223–244.

Ramchander, P., 2007. Township Tourism - Blessing or Blight? The Case of Soweto in South Africa. In G. Richards, ed. *Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives*. New York: Haworth Press, 39–67.

Rogerson, C.M., 2004. Urban tourism and small tourism enterprise development in Johannesburg: The case of township tourism. *GeoJournal*, *60*(1), .249–257.

Rogerson, C.M., 2006. Creative industries and urban tourism: South African perspectives. *Urban Forum*, *17*(2), 149–166. Rogerson, C.M., 2008. Shared

Growth in Urban Tourism: Evidence from Soweto, South Africa. *Urban Forum*, *19*(4), 395–411. Rogerson, C.M., 2010. Towards Strategic Planning for an Emerging Backpacker Tourism Destination: The South African Experience. In K. Hannam & A. Diekmann, eds. *Beyond Backpacker Tourism: Mobilities and Experiences*. Bristol: Channel View Publications, 203–220.

Rogerson, C.M., 2013. Urban tourism, economic regeneration and inclusion: Evidence from South Africa. *Local Economy*, *28*(2), 188–202.

Rolfes, M., 2009. Poverty tourism: theoretical reflections and empirical findings regarding an extraordinary form of tourism. *GeoJournal*, *75*(5), 421–442.

Rolfes, M., Steinbrink, M. & Uhl, C., 2009. *Townships as attraction : an empirical study of township tourism in Cape Town*, Potsdam: Universitätsverl. Potsdam.

Saunders, C., 2012. Reformism and radicalism in the Climate Camp in Britain: benign coexistence, tensions and prospects for bridging. *Environmental Politics*, *21*(5), 829–846. Scheyvens, R., 2010. *Tourism and Poverty*, London: Routledge.

Smithers, M., 2013. *Re-Imaging Post Apartheid Yeoville Bellevue - The journey and refletion of a resident activist/activist resident*, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Steinbrink, M., Frenzel, F. & Koens, K., 2012. Development and globalization of a new trend in tourism. In F. Frenzel, K. Koens, & M. Steinbrink, eds. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.* London: Routledge, 1–18.

Tomlinson, M., Walker, R. & Williams, G., 2008. Measuring Poverty in Britain as a Multi-dimensional Concept, 1991 to 2003. *Journal of Social Policy*, *37,* 597–620.

Traveller, 2014. Where no locals dare go.... - Dlala Nje - Private Tours, Johannesburg Traveller Reviews - TripAdvisor. Available at: http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g312578-d6163716-r193640152-Dlala_Nje_Private_Tours-Johannesburg_Greater_Johannesburg_Gauteng.html#REVIEWS [Accessed August 12, 2014].

Wacquant, L., 2008. *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*, Polity.

Wacquant, L., Slater, T. & Pereira, V.B., 2014. Territorial stigmatization in action. *Environment and Planning A*, *46*(6), 1270 – 1280.

Walker, R., 2014. *The Shame of Poverty*, Oxford, : Oxford University Press.

Wattanawanyoo, K., 2012. Poverty tourism as advocacy: a case in Bangkok. In F. Frenzel, K. Koens, & M. Steinbrink, eds. *Slum Tourism Poverty, Power and Ethics.* London: Routledge, 207–214.

Winkler, T., 2008. When God and Poverty Collide: Exploring the Myths of Faith-sponsored Community Development. *Urban Studies*, *45(*10), 2099–2116.

Winkler, T., 2013. Why Won't Downtown Johannesburg "Regenerate"? Reassessing Hillbrow as a Case Example. *Urban Forum*, *24*(3), 309–324..