Chapter 57
Poverty as a Tourism Attraction:
Travelling on the Web

Donatella Privitera
University of Catania, Italy

ABSTRACT

The visit of the favela or slum into a tourist destination is seen as a part of the so-called reality tours phenomenon and of the global circulation of the favela as a trademark. Tourist behaviour involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit. Examples are the favelas in Brazil, the township of South Africa, the slum in India that have led to different definitions of "slum tourism", "poor-poor tourism", "reality tourism". Web heavily affect today most of the online activities and their effect on tourism is obviously rather important. The aim of the chapter is to discuss about slum tourism definitions. At the same time, taking Reality Tours and Travel - a wholesaler slum websites - as a case, this study attempts to explore issues of the quality of strategic choices on the web. Considering that the content of web site includes a wide variety of technologies, is important that website offer also interactivity with e-tourists. Through the results of the study, it is possible to gain knowledge of the slum e-tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Cities contain extremes of wealth and poverty, each concentrated in one or more sections. The wealthy areas are generally well insulated from the city around them; in contrast, areas inhabited by the poor are marginalised, i.e. generally unconnected to the social and economic life of the city flourishing around them. This leads to a number of questions: are poor people actually poor or are the contexts in which they live poor? Who are the poor? Although 'poor' may be a stable descriptive identity for people in some groups, for most, poverty is a situation, not an identity (Narayan, Pritchett, & Kapoor, 2009). Poverty is not defined in terms of low incomes, but uses broader concepts of deprivation and insecurity (Hossain, 2005).

Poverty is everywhere and anywhere to a different degree but often does not arouse interest. Conversely, poverty actually creates curiosity because of difference in ways of life. It is a common phenomenon and is one of the top forms of tourism in some parts of the world (Delic, 2011). Examples are common throughout South and Central America as well as in Asian countries which have the same characteristics as the favela in Brazil, the townships in South Africa, or the slums in India, which have led to different definitions of favela, township and reality tourism: places where poverty is more concentrated in neighbourhoods.

Slums are particular, unstable areas representing otherness in terms of vandalism and deprivation with an emotive power denoting opposition to order and security (Durr, 2012a). The term slum usually has derogatory connotations. A slum is defined in several ways by different organizations. Slums are usually characterized by urban decay, high rates of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. According to the latest UN-Habitat publication regarding Urban Development and Management (2013), the absolute number of slum dwellers continues to grow, due to the fast time of urbanization. UN-Habitat states that the number of people living in slum conditions is now estimated at 863 million, in contrast to 760 million in 2000 and 650 million in 1990.

In recent times, due to changing social conditions and the development of international tourism, so-called *poverty* or *slum tourism* has increasingly come into focus: organised tours of destinations in degradation and poverty, and in some cases also illegal places fully run by gangs. In the past there have been a lot of violent confrontations between these gangs and states (e.g. favela in Brazil, barrio in Colombia). Tourism today is characterised by diversification and enrichment of the tourist product offered, where the tourist is satisfied not only by the contemplation of a landscape (authentic or romantic), but intends to turn it into an experience to feel a real part of (Schmitt, 1999).

Research of authentic and unexplored regions, places with forms of social tension and ethical issues, contrasts with the particularities that distinguish purely hedonistic and recreational, traditional tourism. The 'regular' tourist travels to sites for the purpose of learning and gaining knowledge and information. A slum tourist, in contrast, is seeking some sort of emotional pleasure and is interested in seeing 'reality', or gaining authenticity, insight into power relations or a window onto other lives when there are ethical sentiments.

At the same time, with consumers playing a participatory role in the production and consumption process (Buhalis & Law, 2008), it has become dominant for businesses to use technology to engage consumers in a more individual way. The internet is rapidly becoming the number one information source for travel. In fact, the choices of the consumer are aided by the information picked up through the Internet, which is an ideal place to communicate, promote, and 'sell' destinations and where potential clients can undertake comparisons and choices more responsibly. The more consumers submit their online interests, the more companies seek to offer solutions that meet their potential costumers. Porter (2001) demonstrated how the internet has changed industry forces. Previous research has shown that innovation, organisation and external factors can influence a firm's decision to adopt e-commerce as a marketing and selling strategy (Wan, 2002). The use of the Internet has become a key competitive tool and essential also for tourist destinations (Murphy et al., 2007) and offers great potential to influence consumers' perceived images. In addition internet promotes the mass customization of tourism products as it supports the tourist operators to target niche markets in different geographical locations (Buhalis et al., 2005; 2011).

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/poverty-as-a-tourism-attraction/215776

Related Content

Cradle-to-Cradle in Project Management: A Case Study
Aydan Ismayilovaand Gilbert Silvius (2021). *International Journal of Circular Economy and Waste Management (pp. 54-80).*
www.irma-international.org/article/cradle-to-cradle-in-project-management/263503

Lack of Environmental Policy and Water Governance: An Alarming Situation in Pakistan
Laeeq Janjua, Atteeq Razzakand Azeem Razzak (2021). *International Journal of Circular Economy and Waste Management (pp. 29-40).*
www.irma-international.org/article/lack-of-environmental-policy-and-water-governance/281611

Chaos and Complexity in Financial Statements
Fernando Juárez (2015). *Economics: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1399-1430).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/chaos-and-complexity-in-financial-statements/128559

Convergence Analysis of Households' Consumption Expenditure: A Cross Country Study
Ramesh Chandra Das, Amaresh Dasand Frank Martin (2016). *Handbook of Research on Global Indicators of Economic and Political Convergence (pp. 1-28).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/convergence-analysis-of-households-consumption-expenditure/161179

Legislation and Policies for the City of Windhoek to Carry on With Water and Sanitation Service Delivery in Havana Informal Settlement
Tekla Amutenya, Maxwell Chufamaand Efigenia Madalena Semente (2024). *International Journal of Circular Economy and Waste Management (pp. 1-11).*
www.irma-international.org/article/legislation-and-policies-for-the-city-of-windhoek-to-carry-on-with-water-and-sanitation-service-delivery-in-havana-informal-settlement/340930