

# Slums as a place of tourist reception

## Krzysztof Sala

Pedagogical University  
of Krakow, Poland

E-mail: krzysztof.sala@up.krakow.pl  
ORCID: 0000-0002-7614-9309

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**Abstract:** Contemporary tourism is a phenomenon on a global scale. The number of participants in global tourism is constantly increasing. Only in 2018, 1.4 billion trips were made. Like all phenomena in the world, tourism is also constantly changing. Variation may concern travel directions, but also the reasons for it. Visiting areas of social exclusion and poverty are among the most original motives for travelling. The purpose of the publication is to show that slums around the world can be an important place for tourist reception, while being places with a specific quality. Research methods used in the work are literary criticism and analysis of existing data. The publication was written using compact data, scientific articles and netographic data. The results of the scientific analysis clearly show that slums as tourist destinations bring with them a varied tourist valorization, including the opportunity to get to know local entrepreneurship, organization of everyday life, difficult life or survival in specific living conditions.

**Keywords:** poverty, entrepreneurship, development, ecological exclusion, social exclusion

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## 1. Introduction

The motives of world tourist traffic are constantly changing. A contemporary tourist is a person who more and more often behaves differently from the twentieth-century tourist. He breaks with elegance and luxury, and directs his interests towards gloomy subjects. Dark tourism or slum tourism is becoming a phenomenon on the contemporary tourist market. This type of activity is associated with staying in specific places in search of sensations and adrenaline. In this case, tourists are interested in places that once discouraged from visiting and were widely advised against by tour operators.

The main purpose of the publication is to show that slums around the world can be an important tourist destination. The research issues of the publication concern specific areas,

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Correspondence to:  
Krzysztof Sala  
Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji  
Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie  
Instytut Prawa, Administracji  
i Ekonomii  
ul. Podchorążych 2  
30-084 Kraków, Poland  
Tel.: +48 12 662 62 11

which certainly include areas of social exclusion. The specific objectives are to introduce the specific characteristics of slums.

Research methods used in the work are literary criticism and analysis of existing data. The publication was written using compact data, scientific articles and netographic data.

The results of the scientific analysis clearly show that the slums present diverse tourist valorization, including the one related to the possibility of getting to know local entrepreneurship, organization of everyday life, difficult life or survival in specific living conditions.

## 2. Slums as areas of poverty in the world

The term *slum* is very likely derived from the colloquial term *room*, transformed into *back slum* meaning “side alley, street of the poor” (Rana, 2017). The emergence of the first slums in the world in the nineteenth century was inextricably linked to the negative results of the industrial revolution and the development of capitalist economy from the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Chwalba, 2012, p. 68). Shortages in other parts of the city, colonialism and segregation, social exclusion, politics, social conflicts, and natural disasters were considered to be the most frequently cited causes of slum formation in the early twentieth century. M. Davis attaches a special role to the emergence of misery districts as the results of “shock in the global countryside”, i.e. the policy of economic liberalization and actions to deagrarianization of the village and depeasantizing its inhabitants, which forced the rural population to migrate to overcrowded urban areas (Davis, 2009).

The industrialized cities of Great Britain as well as the USA are considered to be places of appearance of the first slums in the world. Soon they began to appear in other countries (including France, Canada). Slum districts at that time consisted of tightly built houses, offering low-quality housing. Their tenants were usually low-paid workers (Eckstein, 1990). In many cases, they were adjacent to rich districts (e.g. in London, New York, Paris or Toronto).

Today, Europe has poverty districts or enclaves of poverty that are inhabited by poorer sections of the population and immigrants. European areas of poverty are often made up of old settlements made of large panels or neglected tenements which have not been renovated for years. Such districts can be found in many European cities (Borowik, 2003). This also applies to cities in Poland (Basista, 2001).

Currently, typical slum areas are mainly located in Third World countries. They occupy a large area of cities or suburban areas. Slums in Third World countries have a different pedigree compared to those in Europe. They most often arose as a result of colonial policy (e.g. India, Kenya, South Africa), the effects of abolishing slavery (e.g. Brazil), or the unproductive migration of people from villages to cities (e.g. Mexico, Venezuela). Sometimes they are also the result of too high living costs in the cities themselves (e.g. Egypt) (Gawlik, 2013).

Houses in poverty enclaves are created mainly from the most accessible and at the same time the cheapest materials such as cardboard, plywood, sheet metal and stones. Rarely, these are stone-built houses. The provisions of the construction law or building permits do not apply here. Houses and streets are without names or numbers. In addition to housing poverty, the characteristic features of slums are environmental problems related to the lack of plumbing or the accumulation of rubbish. Areas of poverty are often deprived of access to the media and digitally excluded (Dijk, 2010).

According to estimates, there are over 200,000 slums in the world. The number of inhabitants in a single slum ranges from several hundred to over a million people. It is estimated that currently the global slum community has about 900 million people. According to the UN, around a quarter of the world's urban population lives in slums, and the number is constantly growing. According to UN-Habitat data, the largest percentage of people lived in areas of poverty in geographical regions such as sub-Saharan Africa (62%), then southern Asia (35%), southeast Asia (31%), eastern Asia (28%), western Asia (25%) as well as Oceania (24%) and Latin American countries (24%). The shameful leaders in terms of slum population include countries such as the Central African Republic (95.9%), Chad (89.3%), Niger (81.7%) and Mozambique (80.5%) (UN-Habitat, 2012). Sometimes the term *slums* is extended. There is also the concept of "megaslums" in literature, when the districts of poverty and communities of wild tenants located on the outskirts of cities merge into the zones of poverty (Bogacz i nędzarsz, 2016). Table 1 presents the most important areas of modern poverty.

Table 1. Areas of poverty in Third World countries in 2019

Name	Location	Estimated number of inhabitants in millions
Maharashtra	India	19,0
Neza-Chalco-Itza	Mexico	4,0
Kibera	Nairobi, Kenya	2,5
Sadr City	Baghdad, Iraq	2,0
Orangi Town	Karachi, Pakistan	1,8
Manshiet	Cairo, Egypt	1,5
Dharavi, Mumbai	Mumbai, India	1,0
Petare	Caracas, Venezuela	1,0
Navas	Manila, Philippines	1,0
Cité Soleil	Port-au-Prince, Haiti	0,4
Khayelitsha	Cape Town, South Africa	0,4
Sultanbeyli	Istanbul, Turkey	0,2
Rocinha	Rio de Janeiro, Brasil	0,2
Kamagasaki	Osaka, Japan	0,03

S o u r c e: Author's own elaboration based on Rankingi24.pl, 2014.

The data in Table 1 indicate the spatial diversity of slum locations around the world. Accurate determination of the number of inhabitants of a poverty enclave is a difficult task due to the widespread lack of statistics in this area and the constant flow of people. Publicly available sources often do not agree on the size of a given slum.

### 3. Roots and the concept of slums as tourist reception areas

Interest in slums as areas of tourist reception is the effect and consequence of increasing social inequality in the world. Visiting places of social exclusion also results from the usual desire of travellers themselves to search for new impressions and experiences (Buczowska, 2014). It is also often the result of boredom with cities, schematic and standard travel programmes, as well as traditional forms of tourism that have been practiced for years. Interest in slums also comes from the feeling of being saturated with luxury and the usual desire to change. Some tourists want to feel the risk of adrenaline. Increasing demand on the tourist market affects the supply side. More and more travel agencies offer organized tours with slum guides, and hotel companies are building new facilities in the vicinity of poverty areas (Frenzel, Koens and Steinbrink, 2012).

Slum trips and stays are sometimes referred to as “slum tours”, “real world tours”, “adventure tourism”, “poverty tourism” or “tourism of social exclusion areas”. In some countries the names “slum tourism”, “favel tourism” are used (Hernández García, 2013). Some authors refer to it as “controversial tourism” (Sikora, 2015).

Visiting the slums, interestingly, has a rich history. The concept of “slumming” became the slogan in the Oxford English Dictionary in the 1860s. In free translation, it means “entering slums or frequent use of them for infamous purposes.” In September 1884, *The New York Times* published an article on the latest leisure trend: “Slumming will become a fashionable form of debauchery among our citizens, because our foreign cousins will always be ready to show us around” (Lee, 2009).

The first tourists visiting the slums were representatives of the British middle and upper class, visiting the poverty districts first in their country and then in the USA (Steinbrink and Pott, 2010).

The popularity of such trips disappeared after World War II due to the increase in prosperity and thanks to social housing programmes. However, this fashion came back in the 1980s and 1990s (Sadowski, 2019). Since the 1980s, slumming has become widespread by South African activists, who opposed the propaganda of the authorities and showed tourists and employees of international aid organizations less representative districts of South African cities. During the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 local tourist offices included in their offer the opportunity to visit the poverty districts. The main recipients of this form of getting to know the city were primarily conference participants—representatives of governments and international organizations, as well as employees of non-governmental organizations (Gandeka, 2016).

The contribution to the promotion of slum issues was due to pop culture. It was in Brazilian slums that Michael Jackson made the music video for the song *They Don't Care About Us*. Film productions such as *Faithful Gardener* (Nairobi, Kenya), *Slumdog Millionaire* (Bombay, India), *City of God* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), *District 9* (Johannesburg, South Africa) were also devoted to the subject of slums. The subject of slums is also devoted to numerous publications and book publishers (including Charles Dickens and Émile Zola).

Currently, slum stays are considered by most authors as forms of cultural tourism and cover the whole world. However, it applies mainly to Third World countries, where the density

of poverty enclaves is highest, and the nature of their operation causes the greatest interest among visitors (Olczyk, 2013).

Areas of social exclusion in the world are not one. They have a diverse character of buildings, housing, ecological or sanitary situations. Their inhabitants represent a diverse approach to life, professional duties or strangers. The level of security in slums can also be heterogeneous. Considering the above conditions, poverty enclaves in the world represent a diverse level of tourist attractiveness.

The most visited areas of poverty in the world are the ones located near attractive cities or areas of interest to countries around the world. A tourist can, therefore, visit slums often while staying in some historic city or doing other types of tourism. Access to the professional offers of local tourist agents is also important. For security reasons, tourism in the slums is collective, organized and with the help of local guides.

Tourists, according to their own opinions, go to the slums for various reasons. Cognitive and cultural motifs prevail, which make it possible to get to know everyday living conditions and ways of solving current problems. This applies in particular to ways to earn money, support a family or spend free time. Such motifs have a strong educational element, most often associated with culture shock. Often tourists want to learn about local, often unusual architecture. Less common motifs are associated with the search for sensations, entertainment, fun or strong emotional experiences. The motives for visiting some of the slums are extreme tourism because of the high level of threat to the safety of visitors. For tourists from countries such as Poland it is also a peculiar trip back to the times of real socialism, where poverty was a common phenomenon.

#### **4. Tourist attractions of slums in the world**

Among the many existing slums in the world, the most attractive are certainly the favelas located in Brazil (including especially Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro). Rocinha represents a rather unusual and interesting example of the area of poverty. Its biggest assets include its location, near the city of Rio de Janeiro, which due to its numerous tourist attractions (Copacabana and Ipanema Beaches, Sugar Hill or Maracana Stadium) belongs to the most visited in all of Brazil. Only in 2017 it was 2.3 million tourists (Geerts et al., 2017).

Unlike many areas of poverty in the world, Rocinha has a fairly high level of internal organization. It has been an official city district since 1993. Its area is 143.72 ha and it consists of 14 administrative units. Its inhabitants constitute about 22% of the city's population (Caldado, 2016).

The favela in question consists of quite solid brick houses with facilities such as playgrounds, sports fields and even kindergartens. Rocinha has fairly comfortable roads (1/3 asphalted), its own cleaning service and a substitute for paid public transport. According to many experts, it is inhabited not only by extremely poor people, but also by representatives of the so-called lower middle class, which, however, cannot afford flats in the city itself or are not accepted there for various reasons. The inhabitants of the area in question make a living mainly from working in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Some people also start their own busi-

ness in the favela, running private dance schools (e.g. samba), restaurants, hostels and even small hotels.

Rocinha attracts tourists with its specific climate, cultural conditions, and because of its location with picturesque views of the Atlantic Ocean coast. Tourists are particularly interested in the local legendary samba schools, local cuisine, art (especially very original murals, bright colours of houses), as well as the housing conditions of the residents. However, for security reasons, individual tours are rare. The biggest threat to visitors is the constant struggle of drug gangs. For this reason, professionally organized, collective forms of sightseeing dominate. Tourists live in slums or directly in their surroundings (Hayes, 2016). The 2014 World Cup held in Rio de Janeiro caused an increase in interest in renting rooms and even entire houses in Rocinha, despite several times higher prices (WP Tourism, 2014a).

Increased interest in slums as areas of tourist reception influenced the development of local infrastructure. In the richer neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro, neighbouring Rocinha, many high-class hotels have been built. Independent facilities dominate, but you can also find global hotel companies (e.g. Marriott, Hilton). They build hotels near the slums, allowing their guests to observe them. They are particularly concentrated in the Vidgal district.

Kibera's slums located near Nairobi can also be included in the most tourist poor areas in the world. The neighbourhood of the capital of Kenya and its monuments undoubtedly positively influence the local tourist traffic. Unlike Rocinha, Kibera is an example of a typical primitive slum, consisting of numerous simple apartments built of the simplest materials. Despite this, its tourist attractiveness is ranked according to specialists just behind the African safari, and right next to the Karen Blixen Museum or Mombasa beaches (Perry, 2010).

Kibera tourist escapades are organized by guides employed by tour operators. Tourists are interested in everyday aspects of life and possibilities of functioning in a place where there is less than 2 m<sup>2</sup> of living space per 1 inhabitant, and the lack of access to running water and electricity is commonplace. Curiosity is also caused by ways to survive in a drainless area, where half of the population are children and 1/5 of the population is infected with HIV. The tour takes place on foot and involves visiting the most important attractions. Tourists visit a typical local house, primary school, orphanage, Catholic church, as well as a train station on the international Kenya–Uganda route. An important educational value for tourists in Kibera is also the opportunity to evaluate the results of implementing the government's programme to build new, cheap apartments with more solid and aesthetic housing. The programme implemented since 2009 is unique on an African scale and it is intended to improve the current situation of residents. The benefits of tourism are also shared by the inhabitants of the slums in question. They have the opportunity to earn on tourists by selling tourist souvenirs or other goods at the local market. Tourists are usually also interested in the possibility of sharing a meal with the local population (WP Tourism, 2014b).

In terms of architecture, sanitation or access to utilities, the Dharavi slums in India represent a similar valorization as Kibera. However, visiting them gives you not only the opportunity to learn about the living conditions of the inhabitants, but also to take part in a specific slum entrepreneurship lesson. In this respect, Dharavi are a real phenomenon. Per 1 million inhabitants here, 250,000 shows professional activity while working on recycling. In addition, there are also about 5,000 companies and 15,000 one-man factories. In addition to recy-

cling, the most common activities include pottery, soap and leather products. There are also over 100 restaurants, bakeries and several thousand shops. Residents also earn by offering accommodation in their homes. For the equivalent of 31 USD per night, visitors have the chance to rent a room and learn about the typical living conditions in poverty, where 1 toilet is for 1,300 people (TTG Polska, 2018). It is estimated that the annual income of the Dharavi community is about 1 billion USD. However, the majority of inhabitants are low paid and exploited, and cases of child labour are also frequent (Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005).

The slums frequently visited by tourists include Khayelitsha in South Africa. Like Kibera, it is located near a large tourist town Cape Town. The interest of tourists is caused by the local, specific community. Unlike many other slums, these are mainly young people (up to 24 years old), of which almost half have secondary education and more than half are professionally active. The popularity of Khayelitsha among tourists, however, is primarily due to the hospitality and friendly attitude of its inhabitants, which is not typical of the global enclaves of poverty. Residents make contact with guests and allow themselves to be photographed. The area in question is a cognitive and educational attraction because of the large community of artists, craftsmen, actors and musicians. Tourists have the opportunity to buy numerous tourist souvenirs, which also benefits the hosts. In Khayelitsha, a tourist can feel and learn the benefits of local spirit and being a member of the local family community. Despite this, the majority of residents are struggling with food and running water problems typical of the areas of poverty (Totaro, 2016).

In addition to the poverty enclaves discussed above, interest in slums as places to stay is noticeable in many other parts of the world. Slums in the Philippines have been popularized by a book by Wojciech Tochman. However, the tourism here has a specific character. Trips are composed mainly of white tourists who treat slum visits as an opportunity to support or even feed its inhabitants. Kamagasaki slums in Osaka can arouse curiosity due to the close proximity to the rich Osaka agglomeration in Japan. High-rise residents are looking down on the poor Kamagasaki community. Despite the terrible poverty and resignation on the faces of the inhabitants, Kamagasaki is characterized by a specific sense of community and openness, which is difficult to meet in Japanese cities (Ostaszewski, 2014).

It is also worth mentioning here the Petare slums in Venezuela, which, despite the great tourist potential, are rarely visited by tourists. The tourist rating of Petare is similar to Brazilian favelas. The local architecture is characterized by varied colours of house facades and strong presence of unique murals. The climate of this area is also created by characteristic narrow streets and majestic views of the centre of Caracas. However, high crime and a sense of threat to life are the causes of low tourist traffic (WP Tourism, 2012).

In addition to the poverty enclaves enjoying high interest from tourists, there are also those whose visiting is an example of extreme tourism. Cité Soleil in Haiti is one of the least touristic slums in the world. The country itself is rarely chosen as a tourist destination in itself and visiting local slums is in the form of trips from neighbouring Dominican Republic. Cité Soleil has a very poor infrastructure, compounded by a strong earthquake in 2010. To this must be added the natural environment degraded as a result of looting. The accommodation, nutrition and transport services here, taking into account the income of the inhabitants, are extremely high. Tourists taking trips around Cité Soleil must take into account very high expenses (Krzyk, 2013).

## 5. Conclusion

Visiting slums is undoubtedly one of the most original tourist travel motifs. Certainly this type of tourism is the domain of people who strive to fully know the places visited, not just superficial sensations. However, it is worth considering the specific qualities that this type of activity presents. Educational elements are particularly noteworthy, thanks to which one can get to know and understand the specificity of these areas and their inhabitants better. An example is the Brazilian samba or Cuban rumba, dances popular today around the world, which arose as a form of entertainment for the poor slum dwellers. In many cases, you can also learn a lot in such areas as dealing with difficult situations, earning a living or spending free time.

The development of this form of tourism will depend on many factors. These include: promoting slum issues in the media and effectively reaching public opinion, developing professional organization of trips to slums, and finally raising awareness of valorization by visiting poverty areas and contacts with their residents. One should also bet on more effective marketing of this type of tourism, especially among tourists from wealthy countries.

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## Slumsy jako miejsce recepcji turystycznej

**Abstrakt:** Współczesna turystyka stanowi zjawisko i fenomen na skalę globalną. Liczba uczestników światowego ruchu turystycznego nieustannie wzrasta. Tylko w 2018 roku odbyto 1,4 miliarda podróży. Tak jak wszystkie zjawiska na świecie, tak również i turystykę cechuje nieustanna zmienność. Zmienność może dotyczyć kierunków odbywania podróży, ale także przyczyn jej uprawiania. Do najbardziej oryginalnych motywów odbywania wyjazdów turystycznych zaliczyć można odwiedzanie obszarów wykluczenia społecznego i biedy. Celem publikacji jest wykazanie, że slumsy na obszarze całego świata mogą stanowić

istotne miejsce recepcji turystycznej, będąc jednocześnie miejscami o wyraźnej specyfice. Metody badawcze zastosowane w pracy to krytyka piśmiennicza oraz analiza danych zastanych. Publikacja została napisana przy wykorzystaniu danych zwartych, artykułów naukowych oraz danych netograficznych. Wyniki analizy naukowej wskazują wyraźnie, że slumsy jako cele wyjazdów turystycznych niosą ze sobą zróżnicowaną waloryzację turystyczną, w tym możliwość poznania miejscowej przedsiębiorczości, organizacji codziennego, niełatwego życia czy też przetrwania w specyficznych warunkach bytowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** bieda, przedsiębiorczość, rozwój, wykluczenie ekologiczne, wykluczenie społeczne