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## Challenging stereotypes in township tourism

Analysis of the role of tour guides as cultural intermediaries in Cape Town township tourism



(French township tourist high fiving child in orphanage in Langa, image taken by author, 2023).

## **Abstract**

South Africa has a remarkably complex history, characterised by the harsh realities of apartheid, which officially ended only three decades ago. Despite the legal end of apartheid, one can argue that its legacy persists, as the social and economic effects remain deeply inherited in South African society. The rapid expansion of townships are an example of the lingering effects. These underdeveloped areas, predominantly inhabited by black or coloured people, have seen little to no development over the years, in stark contrast to other parts of South Africa, and particularly Cape Town, which have flourished.

Township tourism provides an opportunity for tourists to experience what many of them perceive to be the authentic essence of South Africa. For township residents, this form of tourism can bring a sense of visibility and acknowledgement, as they find themselves recognized by visitors from different cultural backgrounds.

However, tourists often arrive with negative stereotypes, particularly regarding safety and danger in townships. Guides play a crucial role in township tours, as they have the ability to either reinforce or dispel these stereotypes. Acting as cultural intermediaries between tourists and local residents, guides provide valuable insights and context that can challenge and reshape visitors' preconceived notions.

As local residents themselves, these guides have firsthand experience of the hardships endured during apartheid and the ongoing struggles faced by their communities. This unique perspective allows them to authentically convey the complexities of township life, but it also places them in a position where they must navigate a delicate power imbalance between the visiting tourists and their own community members. They must balance the need to accurately represent their community's reality while managing the expectations and behaviour of the tourists.

This thesis aims to research the following question: 'How do township tour guides utilise strategies to manage tourist behaviour, highlight key elements of the township, and effectively conclude the experience?' By examining these strategies, the research seeks to understand how guides influence tourists' perceptions and interactions, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced and respectful understanding of township life.

**Keywords:** South Africa, township tourism, slum, authenticity, power imbalance, apartheid, cultural intermediaries, cultural exchange

## **Foreword**

Over the past few months, I have really enjoyed researching and writing this thesis. Unlike my bachelor thesis, which was a stressful experience, this time I found a subject I am passionate about, making the process truly enjoyable. South Africa and its townships hold a special place in my heart, and I am dedicated to changing the negative stereotypes associated with these impoverished areas. It saddens me deeply that many township residents feel inferior to white tourists. I hope that in the future township tours will be more popular and will foster host-guest relationships, helping to bridge this gap.

I would like to express my gratitude to the guides I interviewed, especially Siyabulele, who continued to assist me online even after our time together in South Africa. Siyabulele introduced me to Marie-Provence, who was immensely helpful. As a white female living and working in Khayelitsha, she became a source of inspiration and motivated me to further explore and research townships. Marie-Provence made a powerful statement that white people can live safely in townships, reinforcing the importance of changing perceptions and fostering understanding.

I am also deeply grateful to Meghan Muldoon, whose research on townships has been a significant source of inspiration. When I reached out to her, she kindly invited me to lunch and shared many insightful perspectives, which I am so grateful for.

Additionally, I would like to thank Stijn Reijnders for his brilliant comments and guidance, which helped me see the bigger picture and structure my thoughts more effectively.

Last but certainly not least, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Spa, my former security guard at my first home in South Africa. Despite facing the many hardships of township life, Spa embodies a remarkable spirit of gratitude. His unwavering positivity and resilience have left a profound impact on me. He inspired me to advocate against tourists who speak negatively about townships and their residents, reminding me of the importance of challenging stereotypes and promoting understanding.

The welcoming culture of Ubuntu has played a pivotal role in making South Africa feel like home to me. It's not just a geographical location; it is a place where people like Spa exemplify the essence of humanity and community. Their warmth and generosity have enriched my experience and deepened my connection to this beautiful country.

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## 1. Introduction

For the majority of tourists, a holiday typically involves visits to the beach, dining at restaurants, and exploring cultural highlights. However, in Cape Town the tourist experiences where South African history gets explored are completely different from other common cultural tourist attractions around the city like the safaris and wine farms. Cape Town, often referred to as South Africa's Mother City, is known for its dichotomy between the wealthy, predominantly white tourist areas and the impoverished township areas. These townships emerged during apartheid and are characterised by challenging living conditions and infrastructural deficits (Frenzel et al., 2015), similar to slums in India and favelas in Brazil (Frenzel, 2016; Mekawy, 2012; Nuissl & Heinrichs, 2013; Rolfes, 2010). Moreover, townships are densely populated and continue to experience rapid expansion. In Cape Town alone there are already over 30 townships, with Khayelitsha being the largest, accommodating over two million residents (*About Khayelitsha*, n.d.).

Tourists have been interested to visit these legacies of apartheid, drawn by their desire to immerse themselves in the authentic essence of South Africa, which they perceive to be embodied in the townships (Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Frenzel, 2016; Koens & Thomas, 2016; Rolfes et al., 2009). Due to this growing interest, a new tourism niche called township tourism emerged shortly after the apartheid era. Today, township tourism has become a significant economic driver in South Africa (Koens & Thomas, 2016). Guided tours have made it possible for tourists to safely explore these areas and gain a glimpse into township life. Therefore these township tours are often listed in 'must-do' lists for tourists visiting South Africa (Frenzel, 2016). By participating in township tourism, tourists contribute to job creation and support small businesses in these disadvantaged areas (Koens & Thomas, 2016). Other positive aspects to the tours are that they foster greater understanding and empathy among visitors, and build bridges between different communities (Muldoon & Mair, 2021). The tours are a powerful tool for social and economic transformation, reflecting the resilience and dynamism of South Africa's urban communities in the post-apartheid era. Notably, the tours can serve to 'polish the wounds of the past' for local residents, as tourists can help residents to feel seen and heard (Muldoon & Mair, 2021, p. 457). Therefore the tours are promoted on major tourist websites like GetYourGuide and TripAdvisor, where they have gained numerous positive reviews, reflecting the satisfaction of past participants.

However, township tourism is not embraced by everyone and it is often seen as dark tourism as there have been debates about the tours being unethical. Booyens and Rogerson (2019) even describe the tours as "poverty porn" or "human safaris", as predominantly white

tourists visit the impoverished areas to observe black people. This practice can be seen as objectifying the residents, invading their privacy, and turning their poverty into a tourist attraction, thereby causing harm to the local community.

Guides play a pivotal role in determining whether these township tours are conducted ethically as they shape the environment and tone of township tours. By working with tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds, tour guides not only manage the logistics of tours but also focus on facilitating meaningful cultural exchanges between tourists and local residents (Bruner, 2005). Consequently, tour guides can be seen as cultural intermediaries who mediate cultural encounters between tourists and local communities (Scherle & Nonnenmann, 2008), thereby bridging the gap between these two groups (Feldman & Skinner, 2018). Guides wield significant influence by shaping the narrative and experience of the tour, determining which aspects of township life are emphasised and what information is conveyed to tourists. This influence underscores the importance of researching the role of guides, as their approach is critical to ensuring that interactions between tourists and residents are respectful, educational, and beneficial for both parties. By setting the tone for respectful and meaningful engagement, guides can either foster positive relationships or perpetuate negative stereotypes and behaviours. They have the power to either create an atmosphere where residents are empowered through meaningful interactions or allow tours to devolve into voyeuristic experiences where tourists observe local residents as in a human safari. Therefore, understanding the role of guides is essential to ensure that township tours contribute positively to the communities involved.

Consequently, this research is of social relevance, as township tours have the potential to serve as a powerful social force if guides approach them effectively. Guides can help heal the wounds of the past for residents by facilitating the sharing of stories and fostering mutual understanding. The guides offer a unique opportunity for residents to share their personal stories, experiences, and cultural heritage. By giving a voice to those who have been marginalised, township tours enable residents to reclaim their narratives and foster mutual understanding. Simultaneously, guides can ensure that township tours serve an educational purpose for tourists. They provide a more profound and nuanced understanding of the local culture, history, and socio-economic conditions, challenging tourists' preconceptions and stereotypes. As tourists engage with the community and hear firsthand stories, they are encouraged to develop empathy and respect for the residents' lived experiences. This kind of cultural immersion promotes a deeper connection between tourists and the local community, breaking down barriers and building bridges across different backgrounds and histories. Moreover, by facilitating these interactions, township tours can contribute to a broader social

dialogue about historical injustices and contemporary inequalities. In this way, guides can play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and promoting a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Beyond the social relevance, this research holds significant academic importance by addressing a gap in the literature concerning the influence of township tour guides on both tourists and local communities. While there are numerous studies examining the effects of township tourism and the role of guides separately (Frenzel et al., 2015; Mannheimer, 2022), there is a lack of research that combines these aspects. This study aims to fill that gap, acknowledging that guides have the most direct influence on tourists. Guides shape the narrative, interpret cultural backgrounds and assist tourists in deriving meaning from their experiences during the tours. This thesis can contribute to understanding how township tour guides facilitate cultural exchange between tourists and local residents. It explores how guides can positively influence interactions between hosts and guests, thereby shaping the dynamics of the host-guest relationship. Therefore this thesis can serve as a foundation for developing frameworks for township tour guides on how to conduct their tours, ensuring that their role in bridging cultural gaps is maximised. By highlighting the critical functions of guides, the study offers insights into how their guidance can enhance the overall tourist experience while benefiting the local communities. This framework can be instrumental for training and guiding future township tour guides, helping them to effectively mediate between different cultures and foster positive, impactful interactions.

This thesis seeks an answer to the following research question: ‘‘How do township tour guides utilise strategies to manage tourist behaviour, highlight key elements of the township, and effectively conclude the experience?’’ To address this research question comprehensively, the following sub questions will be answered:

- How do township tour guides present their initial briefings to tourists at the start of the tours?
- Which aspects of township life do guides highlight during tours, and how do they present information to participants?
- How do township tour guides conclude tours and what are their procedures during the end?

The analysis of this thesis mirrors the structure of an actual township tour, with the sub questions presented in the same chronological order as the tours unfold. This approach is



important because it provides an immersive framework that aligns with the real-world experience of a township tour. By following the structure of a township tour, the analysis allows readers to understand the tour's flow as it unfolds. This way, readers gain insights at each stage of the analysis, mirroring what tourists learn during each stage of the tour. This method also helps to highlight the critical points where guides' actions and narratives influence tourists' perceptions and behaviours. Ultimately, it ensures that the research findings are more relatable and practical for improving the design and execution of township tours.

The first sub question resembles the introduction phase of a township tour, where the tour guide introduces themselves and briefs the tour participants about the outline of the tour and what they can expect. This introduction phase is crucial as it shapes the expectations tourists have of the tour and can determine their behaviour throughout the tour. Moreover, it establishes the overall tone of the tour experience, as guides frame the narrative, the townships and its residents, in a certain manner. Following this, the second sub question delves more into the examination of the tour itself. It explores how guides construct their narratives to present the history, culture, and daily life in the townships. The guides control the narrative by selecting what to showcase, whom to engage with, and the information conveyed to the tourist. The final sub question analyses the end of the tour, exploring how guides bring closure to the tour and may influence the interpretation that tourists derive from their tour experiences. This conclusion phase holds significant importance as it plays a pivotal role in shaping the lasting impression that the tour imparts on its participants. By exploring these chronological sub questions, a deeper understanding will be gained regarding the narratives constructed by tour guides during their tours. This process will reveal the multifaceted layers of township tour guides and their influence, leading to an answer to the research question.

The objective of this research is to provide insights into optimising the role of township tour guides to achieve the most positive outcomes, thereby transforming township tourism into a powerful social force within the deeply racially segregated Cape Town. As stated earlier, extreme wealth and poverty coexist closely, with the wealthy Cape Town residents often knowing little about the impoverished townships and their residents.

Having spent longer periods in Cape Town myself, I have observed prevalent negative stereotypes among tourists and white South Africans regarding townships and township tourism. Many perpetuate stereotypes of townships as inherently dangerous, despite lacking firsthand experience. Notably, all the tourists and white South Africans I encountered rely on services provided by individuals from townships, such as Uber drivers and restaurant staff. This underscores a lack of awareness among tourists regarding the substantial portion of

Capetonian population living in townships.

Therefore, my specific aim is to investigate whether township tour guides can help challenge the negative stereotypes held by many tourists, ultimately fostering social harmony between local township residents and tourists. I believe that through these tours, tourists can gain a deeper respect for township residents, while township residents appreciate the opportunity to interact with tourists (Muldoon, 2018). Thus, it is my hope that this research will demonstrate the value of guided township tours in providing tourists with an accurate understanding of townships and their residents. Additionally, this research aims to serve as a foundational framework for optimising township tours to enhance their effectiveness, ethicality, and overall impact on tourists as well as on township communities.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

To comprehensively understand the pivotal role of township tour guides, it is important to examine a broad spectrum of concepts related to tourism, South Africa and townships. Conceptually funnelling all information, the theoretical framework initiates with an expansive examination of the interplay between tourists and tour guides, focussing on the concept of the host-guest relationship (Smith, 1989). Acting as cultural intermediaries, tour guides hold the key to facilitating meaningful cultural exchanges, while navigating the tourist gaze. Notably, an important aspect of tour guides pertains to their presentation of authenticity within townships, considering tourists' wants towards authentic experiences (Sharpley, 2018). However, this pursuit of authenticity raises concerns regarding the potential staging thereof by guides (Sharpley, 2018). This tension between authentic experiences and staged performances forms a critical aspect of the theoretical underpinning, guiding the examination of how tour guides negotiate the tourists' demands. As the theoretical framework progresses, the focus will gradually narrow down to the history of South Africa, a nation whose tumultuous past continues to have huge influences on contemporary South African culture and tourism. Because townships have emerged during the hardships of apartheid, it is important to elaborate on that, as the scars of this era are still visible in townships. The intertwining narratives of history, tourism, and township life converge to form the foundational framework through which township tour guides are scrutinised.

### **2. 1 Intermediating between local residents and tourists**

#### 2.1.1 Host-guest relationship

Understanding the role of tour guides revolves around their function to intermediate between hosts and guests. Tourists travelling to a new destination can be called guests to the hosts, the residents of that destination, creating what is known as the host-guest relationship (Smith, 1989). Typically, inherent disparities exist between hosts and guests, as the dynamic is marked by a notable imbalance with hosts serving the needs of the guests. Furthermore, guests are often only temporarily at the destination, resulting in only brief interactions primarily facilitated during guided tours.

All in all, these differences determine how guides design a tour and intermediate between tourists and local people. Guides will mostly put the wants and needs of the tourists as a priority, as they are the ones that pay the guides. Therefore guides want to align the tourists' expectations and motivations for their travels (Hui et al., 2007, Pizam & Milman, 1993). This shapes the host-guest relationship once again in an unequal one, where the guests are put

superior to the hosts.

Important in examining how guides want their guests to be treated, is the disconfirmation theory. A disconfirmation between the expectations from the tourists and their actual experience leads to tourist dissatisfaction (Pizam & Milman, 1993). On the other hand, when tourists get to experience what they expected and hoped for, they will be satisfied (Hui et al., 2007). Therefore, tour guides will look into the expectations and motivations tourists have to participate in their tour. Consequently making decisions about how to set up the tour to satisfy the tourists. Besides that, tour guides will know how to set representable expectations at the beginning of the tour, because the beginning of the tour sets the expectations for the rest of the tour. By intermediating between the tourists' wants and the reality of the local culture, guides can be seen as cultural intermediaries.

### 2.1.2 Tour guides as cultural intermediaries

Looking back into the evolution of tourism, the first guides can be traced back to the Grand Tour era in the late seventeenth century (Sharpley, 2018). Since then guides have served different roles; they have become companions, personal tutors, pathfinders, language teachers and translators of local cultures (Mead, 1914; Pond, 1993). One foundational theory is that tour guides focus on the construction of cultural exchange between tourists and locals (Bruner, 2005). Building upon Bruner's insights, Scherle and Nonnenmann (2008) assert that tour guides can be viewed as cultural intermediaries who mediate cultural encounters between tourists and local communities. But, in contrast to Bruner (2005), they do not focus on the ethnographies but more highlight the power dynamics inherent in tour guides, emphasising how guides wield influence over tourists' perceptions and experiences. Scherle and Nonnenmann (2008) stress the importance of critically analysing tour guiding practices within broader socio-political contexts, considering factors such as globalisation and tourism development policies that may impact the authenticity of cultural representation. Having elaborated on the foundational theories of guides, it is important to examine how guides operate.

Guides have a lot of impact on tourists' experiences, given the fact that the guides decide what happens during tours (Katz, 1985). Tourists often lack information about the travel destination, but guides, often being locals, have a lot of information about the destination and its history and culture. This informational asymmetry places guides in a position of authority, shaping the narrative and trajectory of the tourist experience.

One of the functions guides have is that they determine what is shown during a tour, and how they frame the local culture as compared to the tourists' their culture. They possess a

lot of freedom and agency in deciding what happens during a tour and what information is shared with the tourists (Mannheimer, 2022). Besides that, because the guides are so powerful, it is important to look at how they shape the host-guest relationship, as guides can have influence over the behaviour of tourists.

Besides guides bringing information to tourists, guides serve as intermediaries, facilitating interactions between hosts and guests. Guides, knowing that tourists are unfamiliar with the destination, will brief tourists about how to behave, effectively mediating tourists behaviour and therefore trying to create social harmony between tourists and local residents. As guides are the ones facilitating tourists to meet the locals, and vice versa, they serve as the intermediaries. Given that guides play a pivotal role in providing tourists with information about the local culture of the residents, they can even be seen as cultural intermediaries (Scherle & Nonnenmann, 2008). Acknowledging guides often work with a lot of tourists, they inevitably acquire insights into various cultures, thereby intermediating between their own cultural background and the backgrounds of the tourists. Consequently, guides learn to adapt to the cultures of the tourists, highlighting aspects of their own local culture that are in contrast against the cultural backgrounds of the tourists.

Township tour guides, therefore, often shape tours through a tourist gaze, tailoring their narratives and routes they show to align with the interests and perspectives of the tourists. In this manner, tourists are likely to positively receive the tour, as it resonates closely with their desire to encounter authenticity, particularly when guides highlight aspects of South African township culture that are in contrast to their own cultural backgrounds.

## **2.2 Tourist gaze**

First introduced by John Urry in 1990, the concept of the "tourist gaze" has become a foundational theoretical framework within the field of tourism studies. Urry's formulation of the tourist gaze draws heavily on Michel Foucault's ideas about the "gaze" in different contexts, such as the "male gaze" and the "medical gaze." Foucault's concept of the gaze pertains to the ways in which power and knowledge are exercised through visual perception. Similarly, Urry suggests that the tourist gaze is a way of seeing where the tourist, often from a more privileged background, views the 'Other' as objects of curiosity and consumption. Urry's theory posits that tourists engage with destinations, cultures, and local populations through a distinctive lens that shapes their experiences and interactions. This perspective is not just an observation but a structured way of seeing, influenced by various social, cultural, and historical factors.

Tourists, bagged with their own cultural backgrounds, gaze at the new destination, seeking for similarities as well as differences between their own culture and the culture they encounter. This process leads tourists to interpret the local people and culture through the lens of their own background, a phenomenon articulated by Edward Said as the notion of the Other (Said, 2014). Thus, tourists tend to view these local people as the Other, distinct from themselves due to their disparate cultural backgrounds and unfamiliarity with their culture. The act of observing through this distinctive lens commodifies experiences, with the local culture becoming a consumable commodity for tourists, further objectifying the indigenous population.

Delving deeper into the dynamics of power within the tourist gaze framework, it is worthwhile to return to where the tourist gaze was built on. Foucault researched dynamics of power within the tourist gaze framework and the discussion of power. His theoretical insights offer valuable perspectives. Foucault offered insights into the micropolitics of power and how that scrutinises the intricacies of power dynamics at the micro-level of everyday life, encompassing individuals' bodies, behaviours and subjectivities (Tomei & Santis, 2022). Foucault states that any form of social relationship around a project endeavour inherently entails the codification of power dynamics (Foucault, 2014). In the context of tourism, guided tours can be seen as projects, thus inherently embedded with power relationships.

### 2.2.1 Host gaze and mutual gaze

Understanding these power dynamics in tourism requires to not only examine how tourists view hosts, but also how hosts perceive tourists. Beyond the well-known tourist gaze, there is also a significant host gaze, where locals observe and interact with tourists, creating a mutual gaze (Sharpley, 2013). This mutual gaze is essential for comprehending the complete picture of host-guest interactions.

The host gaze delves into the perspective of local residents, exploring the lens through which they see their guests. Hosts inherently play a role in catering to tourists' preferences, often feeling compelled to adjust their practices and presentations to meet tourist expectations. This phenomenon is influenced by the tourist gaze, which pressures host communities to view themselves through the eyes of the tourists. Guides, often locals and thus hosts themselves, must navigate the dual roles of being subject to the host gaze while simultaneously catering to tourists from within the tourist gaze.

This dynamic perpetuates a power imbalance, as acknowledged by Foucault in his discussions of power relations. Hosts frequently place tourists on a pedestal, striving to fulfil

their desires and conform to their expectations. This relationship highlights the unequal power distribution between hosts and guests, where the hosts often feel obligated to cater to the tourists' needs and preferences. This can lead hosts to view guests as superior, wanting to please them and present themselves in a way that aligns with tourist expectations. This can result in a performance of culture and identity, where hosts modify their behaviours and traditions to suit the preferences and assumptions of tourists.

By elucidating the interplay between the tourist gaze and power dynamics, this perspective unveils the underlying power imbalances inherent in tourist interactions. It underscores the importance of critically examining the tourist experience not merely as a recreational pursuit but as a complex interplay of cultural exchange, power dynamics, and commodification. This is important as township tour guides can have a different power dynamic with tourists than other guides might have with their tourists, underscoring the fact that township tour guides are local township residents that have endured the hardships of apartheid.

### 2.2.2 Colonial behaviour

Building upon these power imbalances, host-guest relationships are inherently imbalanced as the local people get commodified during tours. This process further deepens into commodifying local people as those people are the "centre of talk," whereas tourists are often positioned as the "speaking subjects" (Aitchison, 2001, p. 136). This dynamic is reinforced by the fact that a predominantly small, wealthy Western group of tourists tends to visit these locals, thereby establishing a power dynamic where Western tourists dominate over the locals, while the locals are in their own environment (Aitchison, 2001).

This power dynamic draws parallels to historical colonial behaviour, with tourists mirroring the colonialists in their perception of the Other through the tourist gaze (Hollinshead, 1992; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Having this power, the motivations of tourists' are central in tourism. Tourists' visits are primarily driven by a desire for experiencing something new and to be entertained, solidifying their position of power due to their greater wealth and ability to pay for desired experiences. Drawing inspiration from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (2014), the parallel lies in the fact that tourists, as the more powerful and affluent group, dictate how the locals are presented to them. In this process, locals adapt to the tourists' perspectives, shaping their own identity based on the expectations of the tourists and their gaze. Consequently, locals gain insights into the tourists' cultures as well, as they navigate the delicate balance of explaining their own culture in relation to the tourists' cultural norms (Urry, 1990).

Township tour guides thus often shape their tours from a tourist gaze, primarily reflecting a Western perspective rather than their own South African township viewpoint. This approach is driven by the need to cater to the expectations and preferences of the predominantly Western tourists who participate in these tours. This strategy is not merely a concession to tourist demands. It is also a nuanced form of cultural mediation, where guides must balance the educational value of the tour with the need to maintain tourists' comfort and interest.

This tourist-centric perspective can potentially lead to a portrayal of township life that is somewhat stylized or selective, highlighting elements that tourists find particularly fascinating or relatable, as guides are aware that tourists want to experience authenticity (Sharpley, 2018).

### **2.3 Authenticity**

To ensure that tourists are satisfied with the tours, guides must know what the tourists' expectations are to align them with the experience during a tour. The consumption of tourism is considered as a source of happiness and an indicator of economic prosperity, contributing to overall human well-being (Sharpley & Stone, 2014). The contemporary tourism landscape, particularly since the beginning of the 21st century, is characterised by the period called "co-creation of experiences and emotions" (Sharpley & Stone, 2014). Modern tourists seek for active participation in local practices and desire complete immersion in the culture of the destination. Additionally, tourists put a growing emphasis on experiencing authenticity (MacCannell, 2001). Tourists often already have a pre-imagined, authentic, traditional way of life interpreted in their mind before they get to a destination (Salazar, 2005).

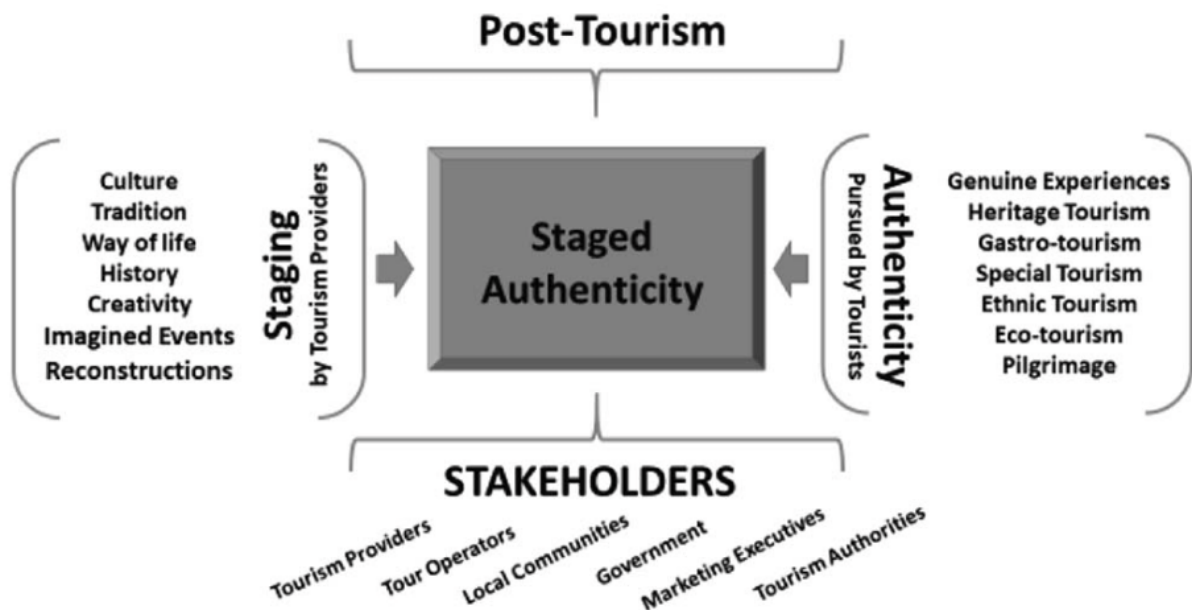
Authenticity is often perceived as something genuine, connotated to traditional culture, the real or the unique (Sharpley, 2018). Cohen (1987) states that authenticity stands in opposition to commodification in tourism. Tourists often associate authenticity with experiences that are not influenced by Western society (Cohen, 1987). Therefore guides try to show aspects of cultures that are different to tourists' cultural backgrounds.

However, distinguishing authenticity in the tourism industry can be challenging, as a lot of experiences in the industry have become commodified (Sharpley, 2018). On top of that, the concept of authenticity is highly subjective, varying based on individual tourists' perceptions, backgrounds, and personal definitions (Wang, 1999). Because this authenticity is very important for tourists, there might be a risk that guides stage authenticity. When this authenticity becomes staged, the experience becomes more of a performance, reducing the notion of being authentic.



### 2.3.1 Staging authenticity

In the pursuit of satisfying tourists, guides aspire to show tourists authenticity. However, it is essential to acknowledge that not all experiences during tours are entirely spontaneous; some experiences can be set up or staged (Sharpley, 2018). Therefore there is a difference between authenticity and staging authenticity, as visualised in the following figure.



(Curtis, M. (2022). Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing. In *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486>.)

On the right side, the figure illustrates how tourists perceive authenticity, while on the left side, it shows the methods tourism providers use to stage this authenticity. For instance, tourism providers might reconstruct certain cultural elements to appear authentic, even though these experiences are not spontaneous and are thus staged.

This staging can have different forms, which Erving Goffmann divided into different kinds of stages (Goffman, 1959). First of all there is the front stage where, in tourism, hosts and guests interact, such as in a hotel reception or during a guided tour. At this front stage, there is a possibility of staging, as the hosts are required to serve the guests and therefore have to act in a certain manner. In contrast, at the back stage are only hosts, for example in employee rooms or restaurant kitchens, these are private stages where there is no performance required as there is no direct interaction with guests.

It is crucial for guides to hide the front stage for guests, maintaining the illusion of authenticity. This strategic approach aligns with tourists' expectations of authenticity, ensuring to have satisfied tourists. Therefore it is important that guides show authenticity or create an illusion of authenticity. Cohen (1979) has come with four different settings for recognizing staging:

- Authentic setting which the tourists acknowledges
- Staged setting which the tourists believes to be authentic
- Authentic setting which the tourists believe to be staged
- Staged setting which the tourists recognize as such

Guides aspire to have their tours in the first or second setting, wherein the authenticity of the experience is either acknowledged or perceived as genuine by the tourists. This strategy choice aims to meet the tourists' expectations, with the guide satisfying the tourists in their experience. This is very important and relevant in examining guides as this determines how guides shape their tour and thus can shape the tourists' feeling towards local people and their behaviour towards them. In this research tourists and guides in South Africa stand central, so it is important to examine South Africa's history, and narrow this theoretical framework down.

## **2.4 South Africa**

To thoroughly examine the tourism industry of a country, it is essential to delve into its historical background (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). Contemporary tourism often mirrors historical patterns and phenomena (Harrison, 2016), underscoring the significance of comprehending a country's historical evolution (Walton, 2009). Consequently, prior investigation into a nation's history proves valuable to the examination of the tourist industry (Mannheimer, 2022). Because, the current tourism industry can never be fully understood without its historical underpinnings.

### 2.4.1 Apartheid

South Africa's history is marked by the profound and painful legacy of apartheid, a system of institutionalised racial segregation and discrimination that was enforced by the National Party government from 1948 until its dismantling in 1994. This era left an enormous impact on the country's social, economic, and political landscapes.

Apartheid was designed to maintain white supremacy and control over the majority black population, as well as other non-white groups. This system dictated where individuals could live, work, and go to school, strictly based on racial classification. Black South Africans

were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to overcrowded areas, forming townships.

#### 2.4.2 Living heritage

Linking back to South Africa's past, the legacy of the apartheid era persists in contemporary South African society and remains intertwined with its heritage. Museums, regarded as sites of national cultural production, play a pivotal role in shaping collective memory and serve as effective platforms for preserving heritage. Unlike many museums worldwide that celebrate their countries' achievements, South African museums face unique challenges in educating visitors about a challenging historical past. These institutions are tasked with representing the multifaceted history of the nation's heritage, which is not always a source of pride but rather demands nuanced and critical engagement. Nonetheless, tourists often express interest in exploring the heritage of the countries they visit. Therefore a niche form of tourism emerged; heritage tourism that encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of both culture and heritage (Southall & Robinson, 2011). Heritage tourism can be defined as: 'relies on living and built elements of culture and folkways of today, for they too are inheritances from the past; other immaterial heritage elements, such as music, dance, language, religion, foodways and cuisine, artistic traditions, and festivals; and material vestiges of the built and cultural environment, including monuments, historic public buildings and homes, farms, castles and cathedrals, museums, and archaeological ruins and relics' (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). In South Africa, the heritage landscape encompasses both physical and intangible elements related to apartheid. While iconic sites like Robben Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site, symbolise the physical remains of this era, there exists an intangible legacy as well – manifested in the emotional scars endured by black and coloured communities.

Given South Africa's ongoing process of healing from the wounds of apartheid, the intangible heritage embedded within its people can be regarded as 'living heritage'. This concept explains how cultural heritage is not static but rather dynamic, continuously evolving and adapting (Nuryanti, 1996). Similarly, apartheid itself has undergone transformations; although formally abolished in 1994, its residual effects linger, and the nation continues to grapple with its aftermath. For example the emergence of townships, a direct consequence of apartheid, bears witness to this cultural heritage, embodying the enduring scars of the past while also undergoing metamorphosis.

### 2.4.3 Townships

Townships epitomise this living heritage, embodying the enduring legacy of apartheid and the ongoing repercussions felt by their residents. These township areas emerged as a consequence of the apartheid system, which forced black and coloured people to live segregated from white people (Muldoon, 2018). Black and coloured people were moved and had to build shacks out of wood and corrugated metal.

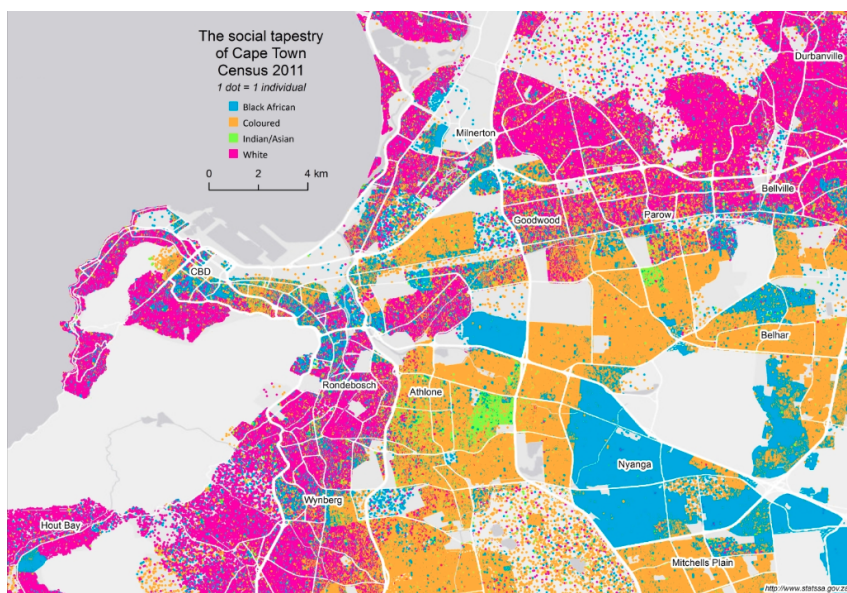


(View on Dunoon township, image taken by author, 2022).

On top of that, the emergence of townships was further growing because of the implementation of apartheid policies around 1950, which forcibly segregated communities along racial lines (Muldoon, 2018). As a result, black and coloured individuals were banned from residing in many urban neighbourhoods that were designated as ‘‘white only,’’ compelling them to settle in segregated townships. This systematic segregation precipitated the rapid expansion of informal settlements, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (Muldoon, 2018). Despite the dismantling of apartheid laws in the early 1990’s, the socio-economic disparities persist, and townships continue to grapple with economic marginalisation, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare. The vibrant communities bear witness to the enduring times of apartheid, where the scars of inequality, poverty, and social injustice run

deep. Therefore townships can also be seen as spaces of resistance and courage, serving as the living museums of apartheid.

Following the end of apartheid and the historic election of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black President, the country underwent a transformative period. South Africa emerged as a prominent global tourist destination. However, the presence of townships, particularly in Cape Town, remains a stark reality. As tourists travel from the airport into the city, they inevitably pass the largest township in Cape Town along the highway. These impoverished areas lie right besides tourists districts, creating a striking juxtaposition of contrasting worlds. The figure below illustrates the ongoing racial segregation in Cape Town, highlighting the persistent divisions within the city's landscape.



*(Mapping Diversity: an exploration of our social tapestry. (2016, May 20). Stats SA.*

Retrieved June 5, 2024, from <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=7678>)

The figure illustrates a noticeable trend: the central and beachside areas are predominantly populated by white residents, at the same time being the more touristy parts. When tourists visit South Africa, they often observe that these tourist-centric areas are predominantly inhabited by white individuals, although being aware that the indigenous South African inhabitants are black. Consequently, township tourism appeals to tourists as an option to see the real essence and the real people of the country, and has grown in popularity. Nowadays, numerous tour companies and private guides offer guided tours through townships, providing visitors with a firsthand experience of these communities.

#### 2.4.4 Capetonian township tours

Township tours in Cape Town are very popular, approximately 25% of international tourists visiting Cape Town participate in a township tour (Koens, 2012), which would add up to 300.000 township tour participants last year. The tours are offered on popular tourist websites like GetYourGuide and TripAdvisor, as well as on their own websites. Most tours are done by foot, some by bike or by car. The tours offer a unique glimpse into the vibrant townships, and typically take visitors through the biggest township Khayelitsha, the oldest township Langa, and sometimes through Gugulethu. During the tours, participants have the opportunity to learn more about these areas, its history and have the opportunity to engage with local residents. The tours are guided by local residents, that way township tours provide an authentic and immersive experience, offering insight into the daily lives, traditions and challenges faced by residents. Visitors can expect to visit community centres, schools, and local businesses, gaining a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and political dynamics that shape life in the townships (Frenzel & Koens, 2012). Ultimately, township tours in Cape Town serve as a bridge between different worlds, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue, breaking down stereotypes, and fostering a deeper appreciation for the resilience, creativity, and spirit of the people who call the townships home. However, every tour distinguishes itself from other tours by the behaviour and the decisions made by the tour guide.

#### 2.4.5 Slum tourism

These township tours are more widely referred to as “slum tourism,” a term more popularised by the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, which made a lot of tourists visit Indian slums. This niche form of tourism has become popular in the “global south” (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019; Frenzel, 2016), encompassing destinations like Brazilian favelas, Indian slums and South African and Namibian townships. These impoverished areas have increasingly become tourist attractions, with guided tours led by local residents. Tourists are drawn to these neighbourhoods in search of authenticity (Meschkank, 2011), perceiving them as representation of the true image of a country. However, the practice of tourists venturing into these areas has sparked considerable debate. Some critics argue that such tours amount to “poverty porn” or “human safaris,” exploiting the hardship of residents for voyeuristic pleasure (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). Tours turn the hardships endured by the residents into a spectacle, which can make the tours to be seen as a human safari (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). Adding onto that, some state that these tours commercialise townships and its residents, and are making individuals into products (Frenzel, 2016). However, Booyens and Rogerson (2019) underline that the dangers

of voyeurism can be minimised through maximising benefits to local communities, involving them in this tourist niche. They contend, together with Frenzel (2016) that these tours commodify both the townships and their inhabitants, reducing them to mere products for tourist consumption.

Despite these concerns, proponents of township tourism argue that the tours can be conducted in a responsible manner that benefits local communities. Booyens and Rogerson (2019) emphasise the importance of maximising the positive impacts of tourism on these communities, advocating for their active involvement in the tourism industry. By empowering local residents and prioritising their well-being, the pitfalls of voyeurism can be mitigated, paving the way for more ethical and sustainable tourism practices.

#### 2.4.6 Township tourism as a development tool

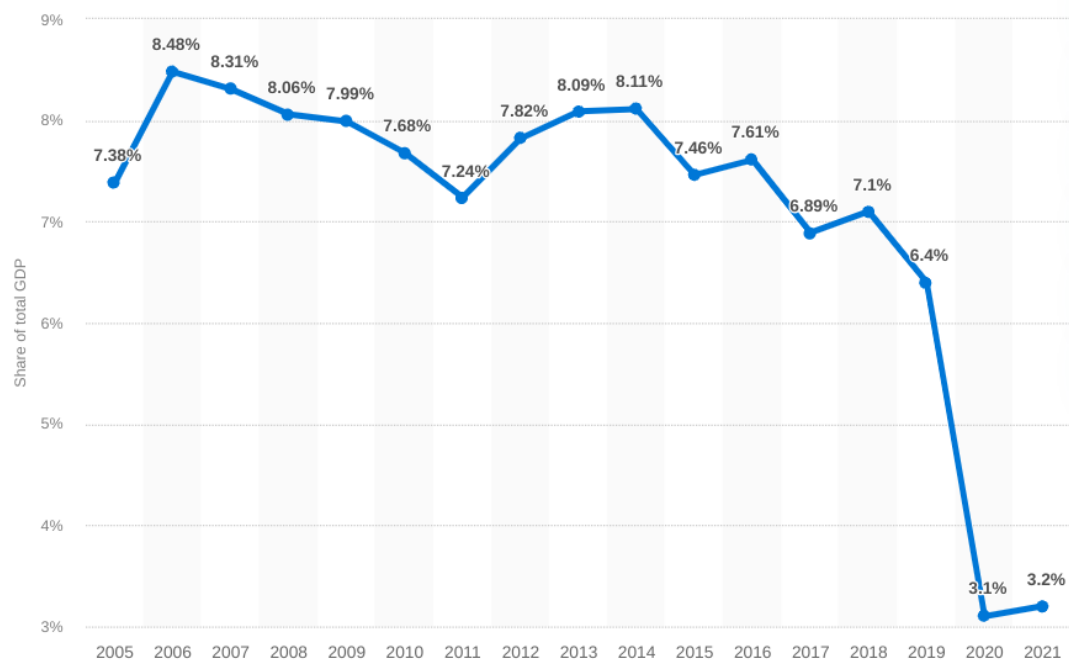
With guides acting as cultural intermediaries between hosts and guests, both groups have the opportunity to learn from each other, making tourism a potential social force. However, maximising its positive impact can be challenging. In the Dutch television show *College Tour*, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a guest (*College Tour NL*, 2018). Tutu became very well known internationally for his advocacy for justice, equality, and human rights during the struggle against apartheid. When asked by an audience member, “What do you think tourism does to South Africa?” He first highlighted the positive impact of tourism on the growing economy. He then elaborated further:

“We have a very beautiful country. We have a very ugly country as well. I mean, Cape Town is one of the most beautiful places, but Cape Town also has some very ugly places [.....] Tourism can bring in unworthy kind of standards and things, but it is up to us, to choose whether we allow it to be a bad thing, or to be a good thing.”

As Tutu stated, tourism can be beneficial, but only if it is managed effectively. Therefore, it is crucial to research how tourism operates in South Africa, particularly in areas where the living heritage of apartheid remains visible, such as townships.

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the multifaceted development of a country, contributing significantly to its economic growth, community development, and poverty alleviation (Binns & Nel, 2002). South Africa's GDP reflects the substantial impact of tourism, underscoring its significance in driving economic prosperity.





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Statista. (2024, January 30). *Contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in South Africa 2005-2021*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1290545/contribution-of-travel-and-tourism-to-gdp-in-south-africa/>

Although the COVID-19 crisis led to a decline in tourism’s contribution to South Africa’s GDP, it is noteworthy that prior to the pandemic, tourism accounted for approximately 8% of the country’s GDP. Because of township tours, there are economic benefits to townships. Tourists not only pay for the tours themselves but also often purchase souvenirs, food, and drinks within these communities. This influx of spending helps stimulate local economies, fostering economic development in townships. By creating jobs and supporting local businesses, township tourism can be a powerful tool for development within the townships.

#### 2.4.7 Township tourism as a social force

Township tours contribute significantly to the economic development of townships while also fostering essential social benefits. Most local residents live and work within the townships or are unemployed, resulting in daily interactions primarily with individuals of the same racial background. This perpetuates the racial segregation that began during the apartheid era. The



presence of white tourists provides residents with opportunities to interact with people of different racial backgrounds, a phenomenon known to have transformative and positive effects (Muldoon, 2018).

Many black township residents often perceive themselves as inferior to white individuals. While one might assume that residents would feel intimidated by white visitors, the reality is quite the opposite. Black residents often feel a sense of worthiness and validation when white individuals show interest in them and their way of life. Thus, township tourism can help heal the wounds of the past by fostering peaceful interactions between races that were previously absent or fraught with tension during the apartheid era (Muldoon, 2018). This positive engagement helps to build understanding and reconciliation, contributing to social cohesion and healing.

The interest shown by tourists in the townships contributes to a heightened sense of appreciation among residents and tour guides for their living environment and cultural practices. Notably, tourists often express admiration for the Ubuntu culture embraced by the residents, further reinforcing a positive perception of their way of life.<sup>1</sup> So through tourism, the townships are reconstructed as places of cultural value, and as interesting places for tourists seeking to experience what they perceive as the real South Africa and engage with local people (Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Frenzel, 2016). In Cape Town, tourist hotspots are predominantly in white areas. Although many white South Africans can be encountered there, many tourists seek to encounter “real” South African” people, who mostly reside in townships.

By providing opportunities for individuals from different racial backgrounds to interact, township tourism can serve as a development strategy against apartheid. It fosters social harmony between the predominantly white tourists and the black residents, helping to bridge racial divides and promote mutual understanding.

This research provides insights into tourism's role in fostering lasting peace and sustainable development in a country still marked by centuries of colonial oppression and racialized violence. Although not without its challenges, township tourism has the potential to be a positive social force if conducted appropriately.

Since guides play a crucial role in shaping the tour experience and facilitating interactions between visitors and residents, it is essential to conduct research on guides. Understanding their perspectives, methods, and the narratives they present can help optimise the tours for greater cultural exchange and social impact. By studying guides, it can be ensured

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<sup>1</sup> A South African philosophical concept where “I am because we are” stands central. This way of living emphasises community, interconnectedness and mutual care.

that the tours are respectful, educational, and beneficial for both tourists and the local community, ultimately enhancing the positive effects of township tourism.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter details the methods that were used to research township tours and their guides, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of their roles and impacts on host-guest relationships. To achieve a thorough and nuanced analysis, a multifaceted research approach was utilised, incorporating participant observation, narrative analysis, and interviews. By closely observing guides' interactions with tourists, insights were also gained in the influence the guides had on the tourists as well as on the local residents, which was crucial to understand the guides' role as cultural intermediaries.

#### **3.1 Methods**

##### 3.1.1 Narrative analysis

A crucial component of the methodology employed in this study is the narrative analysis. Tour guides, along with other individuals, possess certain storytelling abilities that allow them to reveal their inner worlds and thought processes through narration (Lieblich et al., 1998). Narrative analysis is an approach to dissect stories by examining their content, discourse and presentation (Culler, 2004). It is a way to compare story themes and is therefore useful to analyse the themes that tour guides convey information about. Through narrative analysis, a deeper understanding was gained of the structural elements and underlying messages in the narratives presented during tours, making it a powerful way to analyse tours. The analysis focused on the structure and flow of the tours, from their beginning, through their progression, to their conclusions.

To conduct the narrative analysis, I participated in several township tours. At the start of each tour, I obtained consent from the guides to record the tours, ensuring the process was ethically sound. Everything said during the tours was recorded and these recordings were later transcribed. This method provided rich, detailed data on how guides shape the tour experience and the messages they convey, offering valuable insights into the social and cultural dynamics of township tourism.

##### 3.1.2 Participant observation

In addition to examining what guides shared with tourists, it was crucial to observe their behaviours through the tours. Participant observation was conducted by writing down jottings of the behaviours, interactions and body language of the guides. In trying to defamiliarize the familiar, a critical and analytical attitude was maintained (Laurier, 2010). Additionally, as this research focuses on the effects guides have on tourists and local residents, participant

observation also included these groups. This approach helped unravel social dynamics and power relations between them, with the focus on how they accorded their behaviours to the guides' narratives. During the tours, I gathered crucial information by focussing on the chronological structure of tours, emphasising the introductions, highlights, and conclusions. I closely observed how guides acted throughout the tours and how tourists reacted accordingly. This comprehensive approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of the guides' impact on the tour experience.

I did not explicitly ask the guides for permission to document their behaviours because, by the nature of the tours, the guides were aware that they were the focal point and understood that their actions would be observed by participants. Additionally, they had already consented to being recorded and interviewed as part of my research. Given this prior agreement and their awareness of being observed, I assumed there would be no issue with me taking notes on their behaviours.

### 3.1.3 Interviews

After observing the tour guides and listening to their narratives, it was important to delve into the underlying motivations behind their statements, tour itineraries and behaviours. To achieve this, interviews were conducted with the tour guides, as structured conversations with a purpose (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The use of qualitative interview methodologies was intentional, aiming to comprehend the guides' decision-making processes and subsequently interpreting and contextualising their actions. Through engaging in conversations, insight was gained into the guides' inner reflections, which helped interpret the meanings they ascribe to the tours, the residents, and the tourists. It is noteworthy that interviews involve a hierarchical dynamic, with researchers assuming a guiding role in these interactions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Being aware that South African individuals often enjoy conversing and taking the lead in discussions, I approached the interviews with a flexible guide. I wanted to leave enough space for the guides to share what they found important. Consequently, I employed semi-structured in-depth interviews, where the main questions were prepared in advance, but there was significant room for interviewees to add any additional information they wished to share.

## **3.2 Selection method**

All three tours selected for this study took place in Cape Town and could be booked online. The first tour, "La Gugu," was organised by the Red Bus City Sightseeing company. This tour started in the middle of the city centre and proceeded by bus to the townships of Langa,

Gugulethu and Khayelitsha.

In Langa, the tour included several notable stops. First, it visited the Dompas Museum, which provided a look into the apartheid museum. Later, there was a beer tasting, offering participants a unique cultural experience and the opportunity to interact with local residents. Following this, the tour included a visit to the home of Brenda Fassie, a famous South African singer celebrated for her contributions to music and culture. The tour also featured a visit to Mzoli's in the township of Gugulethu, a popular local eatery known for its traditional South African cuisine. In Langa and Gugulethu, the tour guide Thomas led us on walking tours, allowing us to explore these areas on foot. However, in Khayelitsha, he only drove us around in the bus.

The second tour was organised by a company called "18 Gangster Tours". This tour started in a museum about gangsters, followed by a walking tour around Khayelitsha. The tour included a visit to a pharmacy, shopping centre, the stadium and concluded at Rands. This is a popular party spot in Khayelitsha, where participants enjoyed a braai and the lively atmosphere. At the end of the tour, I conducted two separate interviews with guides from 18 Gangster Tours. Upon returning to the Netherlands, I had an additional online interview with Marie-Provence, a French woman who has lived in Khayelitsha for several years and worked for 18 Gangster Tours. Her perspective as a white European provided valuable insights into the role of a tour guide and offered a more Western viewpoint on the tours.

The third tour was conducted by a private guide named Alfred Magwaca. He started his tour in the art centre of Langa and continued to visit some successful businesses in Langa. Alfred was very proud of his township and continually mentioned that. The tour also contained a visit to the Dompas museum and ended at a butchery where the participants had a braai. Alfred came highly recommended by other tourists who had previously taken his tour.

This selection represents a broad selection of different tours, from the highly commercial Red Bus City Sightseeing company to the more personalised experience offered by Alfred the private guide. All three tour guides were South African natives who had spent their entire lives living in townships. These tours were specifically chosen because they all took place in black townships, which have distinct characteristics compared to coloured townships.

### **3.3 Method of analysis**

Following the data collection, the data was analysed by using the thematic analysis as developed by the psychologists Braun et al (2018). This method involved identifying themes and patterns in the data through a structured coding process. According to Braun et al (2018), there are three ways to determine themes: the inductive, deductive and hybrid coding approach.

The inductive approach began with thorough reading and familiarisation with the data. Repeated patterns, meanings, concepts and ideas were identified. These elements were then coded by assigning specific codes to parts of the data that corresponded to the identified patterns or meanings (Braun et al., 2018). These codes could be words, behaviours, phrases or paragraphs relevant to the research question. Following this coding process, similar codes were grouped and organised into broader themes. This process was iterative, with themes being continually refined and revised to ensure they were relevant and consistent throughout the analysis. This systematic and reliable approach allowed for meaningful conclusions to be drawn from the data.

In contrast, the deductive coding approach used pre-established themes derived from existing theories or literature. These themes were specifically chosen for their relevance to the research question. During the coding process, the data was categorised to fit these predetermined codes and themes, emphasising the identification of supporting evidence for each theme.

Braun et al. (2018) also discussed the hybrid coding approach, which combines the inductive and deductive approaches. This flexible approach was adopted for this research, allowing for the establishment of initial themes related to the research question, with the flexibility to edit and add new themes as needed.

There were eight steps to this hybrid approach.

1. Thoroughly explored the data by reading and analysing it repeatedly.
2. Assigned codes to the data based on existing literature.
3. Applied codes to the data, explored if any new patterns or themes emerged and identified them.
4. Iterative process: repeated all the steps to discover any new themes.
5. Organised the themes into themes and subthemes.
6. Defined and refined the themes. In doing so, named the themes and described how they were related to the research question.
7. Assessed whether all themes were appropriate and consistent to answer the research question.

8. Developed an analytical narrative showing the themes, their interrelationships and the findings of the analysis.

While developing this roadmap, several principles needed to be applied. For example, the process allowed new themes to emerge. Additionally, it was crucial for all themes to be coherent and aligned with the overarching theme. The process was iterative, requiring constant checks to ensure that themes and subthemes fit optimally and adjustments were made as needed. Although theme identification was important according to Braun et al (2018), the researcher played a decisive role. Initially, it might have seemed that prevalence was important when creating themes - the more common a code, the more obvious the theme. However, a theme did not need to be prevalent or appear in every part of the data. Nonetheless, it was essential to state and describe the prevalence of themes. Through thematic analysis, the themes of the township tour guides emerged. These themes were vital in shaping how tour guides designed their tours and the impact this had on tourists and local residents. Therefore, they were crucial for answering the sub questions and, subsequently, the main research question.

### **3.4 Researcher reflections**

Having visited South Africa multiple times over the past three years, I have gained a deep awareness of the complex history that underpins contemporary South African culture. Throughout my visits, I have observed numerous instances where it seemed that black and coloured individuals prioritised pleasing me, likely because I am white, reflecting the lingering impact of racial hierarchies.

Given the fact that townships are a direct and complex outcome of apartheid, I believe it is crucial to share my reflections on my experiences in these communities. By doing so, I aim to foster a better understanding among both local residents and tourists, highlighting the nuanced realities of township life and encouraging a more equitable perspective.

During my first visit to South Africa, I did voluntary work in townships. Spending the majority of my first weeks immersed in these communities, I was unaware of the prevalent negative perceptions held by many international tourists and white South Africans regarding townships. My own experiences were strongly positive, I found townships to be some of the most welcoming places, where residents embodied the culture of Ubuntu.

Given my positive experiences, I was shocked to discover the widespread negative stereotypes about townships. It was hard to reconcile these views with the vibrant and hospitable communities I had come to know.

The townships and the whole country intrigued me, which led me to choose to come

back a second time to do an internship for six months. During this stay, I became increasingly frustrated with Western expats who, despite spending months working remotely in Cape Town for several years, harboured negative views about townships. Almost invariably, when I asked if they had visited these areas themselves, their answer was no. This disconnect between their negative perception without having any first hand experience puzzled me, and I struggled to find a way to counter these stereotypes. I was particularly hesitant about township tours, fearing they might resemble a human safari and would do harm to township residents.

A few months later, when I began my masters in Tourism Culture and Society and was planning a month-long trip back to Cape Town, I decided it was time to undertake my first township tour and research these tours for my thesis. I was still quite hesitant about township tours, as I was afraid that it would be like going to a human zoo, but I wanted to explore them for my thesis and wanted to focus on the ethicality of the tours and therefore interviewed township residents about the tours. Remarkably, every interviewee expressed satisfaction with the tours, as they experienced a sense of honour and visibility, as tourists were interested in them by participating in such a tour. While conversing with residents, I could feel, and they even reaffirmed to me, that the residents had a perception of white individuals being superior to them, a realisation that made me very sad. I did feel relieved that the tours, that I initially was hesitant about, were actually a great way to facilitate more interaction between black and white people, and led to black people feeling seen and heard.

Still, my apprehension persisted, fueled by the fear that residents might be positive about these tours due to my status as another white person they perceived as superior. That led me to interviewing friends and acquaintances who lived or had lived in townships, who I trusted would never lie to me. They were all very positive about the township tours, which led me to conclude that I should believe them. Maybe the township tours were genuinely positive experiences, even for township residents.

However, I still had my reservations, mainly about tourists taking pictures of township residents without their consent. But even when I interviewed residents about this, they did not see this as disrespectful. Instead, they perceived it as a sign of genuine interest, feeling valued by being photographed and remembered. This shift in perspective led me to change my mindset and actually advocate for an increase in tourists participating in township tours. Recognizing the educational value for tourists and the positive impact on residents who feel acknowledged, I concluded that, when approached with respect, township tours are not only unproblematic but also mutually beneficial for both tourists and residents. As I learned more, I delved into the theory behind the positive aspects of township tourism. I found a study showing that tourists



had significantly more positive attitudes toward the townships and their residents after participating in a tour compared to their initial perceptions, as illustrated in the following figure.

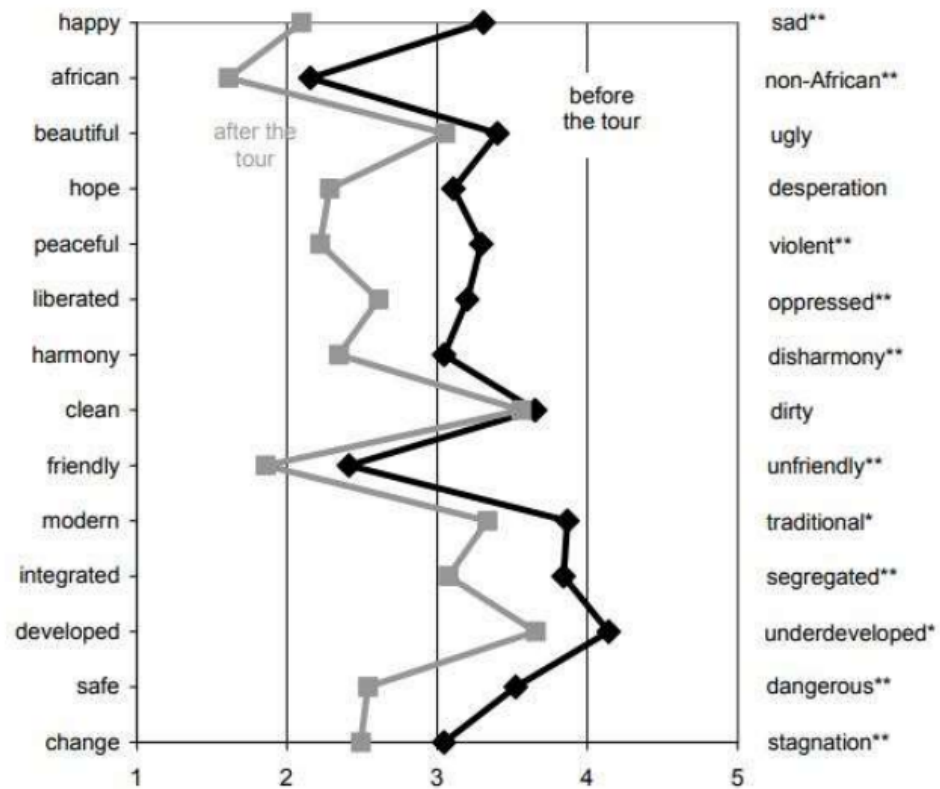


Figure 1. Evaluation of specific aspects of the townships before and after the tour (Source: Rolfe, Steinbrink, & Uhl, 2009).

This figure suggests that township tours significantly impact changing people’s perceptions of townships. It highlights how these tours help tour participants to feel more positive about townships and their residents afterwards.

This shift in tourists’ perceptions after a tour can help alter the negative stereotypes about townships, particularly the belief that these areas are dangerous. Intrigued by the potential of township tours to change these negative stereotypes, I decided to research the experiences of township tour participants myself. I interviewed them before, during, and after tours. However, most participants focused on what I considered irrelevant details, giving responses like, “I thought we would get a bigger lunch,” or “GetYourGuide stated this tour would have been four hours instead of three”. I soon realised that I was not as interested in the tourists themselves, as most of them did not share my passion for townships. I wanted to delve deeper into the broader context of township tourism. Having participated in several tours at this

point, I recognized the crucial role that guides play in changing negative stereotypes among tourists. This realisation led me to shift my research focus to the guides in township tours.

Motivated to explore how negative stereotypes surrounding townships can be changed, my goal for this thesis was to research how guides can design tours that truly capture the essence of townships and educate tourists. I am particularly driven by my frustration with internationals and white South Africans who label townships as dangerous without having visited them themselves. It is noteworthy that these same individuals, despite their negative views on townships, rely on services primarily provided by township residents, such as Uber drivers and restaurant workers. In my view, many internationals and white South Africans in Cape Town seem unaware that a significant portion of the population resides in townships and that they regularly interact with township residents without feeling endangered. Through this research, I hope to offer a framework which can advise guides on how to effectively change the negative stereotypes that tourists hold during tours, fostering a better host-guest relationship.

I do acknowledge that being a young white female, my presence might have been perceived differently by township residents, who might have been inclined to please me during interviews, given the historical context of racial dynamics in South Africa. This was why I initially checked with my long-time friends and acquaintances to confirm that township residents genuinely viewed township tourism positively. Additionally, conducting numerous interviews provided me with a well-rounded perspective. To ensure honest responses, I reassured each interviewee that the interviews were confidential, meant only for the Erasmus University Rotterdam and me. I emphasised that my interest was in their truthful opinion, not in hearing what they might have thought I wanted to hear. At the beginning of each interview, I explained that my goal was to research how township tourism could be improved to reduce negative stereotypes about townships. I hoped this clarity would encourage them to answer truthfully, knowing that their perspectives were my priority.

#### **4. Results**

The findings of this study stem from a comprehensive approach, encompassing insights gleaned from various sources of data collection. This multifaceted methodology therefore provides a holistic understanding of township tour guides.

The results chapter mirrors the structure of the sub questions, thereby following the chronological order of a typical township tour. This approach allows the chapter to unfold in a manner similar to an actual tour, providing the reader with information in the same logical progression that guides use. By adopting this structure, the chapter not only mirrors the tour experience but also ensures that readers of this thesis receive the same insights and contextual understanding as the tourists do during the tour. In essence, by paralleling the tour's itinerary, the results chapter effectively immerses the reader in the township tour experience.

The first part of the results chapter researches the start of the tour, examining the briefing provided by guides and how they frame the townships as well as the itinerary for the rest of the tour. Additionally, this part delves into the conduct of the guides at the outset of the tour, recognizing the pivotal role the guides have in their briefing to set the tone for the entire experience. The middle part of the results answers the second subquestion, detailing the sites visited by guides and the corresponding narratives shared. This part also explores how guides navigate stereotypes, interacting with the preconceptions tourists might have about townships and its residents. Besides that, it also examines how guides use the tourist gaze to show aspects of the township that tourists find interesting. On top of that, it showcases a power imbalance between the hosts and the guests, particularly within the context of the racially segregated South Africa. The final segment of the results chapter centres on the conclusions and procedures during the end of the tour. This part emphasises the strategies employed by guides to ensure that tourists depart with a genuine understanding of township life and trying to dismantle any negative stereotypes tourists may have harboured before the tour.

Starting with researching the start of tours, it becomes evident how guides share information about townships and the behaviour tourists should have in townships. Therefore in this paragraph the first sub question will be answered: ‘How do township tour guides frame their initial briefing to tourists at the beginning of a tour, ensuring effective communication of essential information about the itinerary and advising appropriate behaviour towards local residents?’

## **4.1 Beginning of the tour**

It is Boxing Day 2023, a little before 10 o' clock in the morning, and a township tour starts by all the tour participants meeting at the tourist office of the company. The participants, mostly quiet and nervous, wait in anticipation. Suddenly, a guide enthusiastically announces that it is time for everyone coming for the township tour to board the bus. All the tour participants are in couples, and each pair chooses to occupy a separate row, although there is enough space to sit next to each other. The guide, a typical looking South African guy, talks in a loud and cheerful voice, introduces himself and welcomes everybody. He tries to put the tourists at ease with a few jokes, lightening the mood. Then he outlines the itinerary for the tour and asks the tourists to introduce themselves.

It is common for participants on township tours to exhibit signs of nervousness and remain quiet on the outset. Consequently, guides aim to cultivate a sense of safety and comfort among the tourists, often employing humour to foster comfort. Wara (18 Gangster Tours) shares: "At the beginning I give a long African introduction, to let the tourists feel at ease." Similarly, Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) elaborates: "With me, you see the energy. With me, I scream and jump, even sing a song, icebreaking, that is what I do, the energy. Because some tourists that come here, they come not sure, because other people tell them it is dangerous, you will get robbed. So some of them are scared. So when your energy is high, they get to adapt to that." So, the guides intentionally strive to alleviate tourists' nervousness. Marie (French guide) added, "Now the guides, they are very energetic, very welcoming, very friendly. So it was like, they are an experience in itself." The vibrant personalities and dynamic approaches of the guides become integral to the tour experience, serving as a way to break the ice and make the tourists feel more comfortable.

### 4.1.1 Acknowledging stereotypes

Typically, following the guide's introduction, tourists are invited to introduce themselves, sharing details such as their name, age, cultural background, and sometimes their expectations of the tour. This exchange serves multiple purposes. It enables guides to identify and highlight commonalities among participants, particularly within specific cultural backgrounds. By acknowledging these backgrounds, guides can tailor their approach to engage more effectively with the specific tourist gaze each group brings. For instance, Thomas (La Gugu tours) uses this strategy adeptly. Upon learning that some tourists are German, he informs them that the township also celebrates Oktoberfest. This not only establishes a cultural connection but also fosters a sense of appreciation among the tourists. By referencing traditions like Oktoberfest in

the townships, guides enrich the experience and make it more relatable for the tourists. Furthermore, when I introduce myself as being from the Netherlands, guides will always make a point to say something in Afrikaans. This thoughtful gesture instantly creates a bridge of familiarity, as Afrikaans is a language that Dutch people can easily understand.

The tours typically continue with an overview of the itinerary, establishing clear expectations for the tourists. Additionally, guides address and discuss common stereotypes that tourists often have about townships and the tours themselves. For example, all tours include a discussion about the negative stereotypes related to the perceived danger in townships. As Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) explains:

Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours): ‘‘And that’s one of the challenging parts, if you tell a white South African that you go to Khayelitsha. ‘‘Khayelithsa? Don’t go there.’’ And we ask them why. First thing they will tell you: ‘‘it’s dangerous, crime, everything.’’ That’s one of the negative stuff. And then you ask this question.’’

Saf: ‘‘Have you ever been?’’

Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours): ‘‘Have you ever been to township? ‘‘Yes I always pass the township.’’ Because they always drive on the highway, passing Somerset side, passing close to the airport. But they haven’t been in the township. And that is one of the narratives that we need to change about the township.’’

Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) underlines the challenge of confronting negative stereotypes that tourists often bring with them. To address this, guides structure their tours from a tourist gaze. They recognize that tourists have typically heard negative stereotypes about townships, mainly concerning danger. As a result, they begin the tour with high energy, aiming to put the tourists at ease.

However, different guides address these stereotypes differently. Notably is Thomas (La Gugu tours), who says: ‘‘So I am willing, I don’t know about other people, I am willing to die for my clients. So if anyone would touch you, you must know what will happen in the end. It will not end well. So that is why your safety is not even doubtable. You can’t even doubt me.’’ Thomas’ (La Gugu tours) approach in his briefing arouses shocked reactions of the tour participants. He tries to reassure tourists of their safety, though he acknowledges that incidents could occur. This approach leaves the tour participants feeling slightly apprehensive as the danger is not entirely dismissed.

However, Alfred (private guide), observes that many tourists are intrigued by the

perceived danger and seem eager to experience it firsthand. He reassures them, explaining that there is no real danger and that townships are not as dangerous as they might have expected. By doing this, Alfred (private guide) aims to reshape their understanding, showing them the reality of township life, which is often far removed from the stereotypes and misconceptions they might have heard. This approach helps to create a more balanced and accurate picture of the townships, making the tour both informative and reassuring.

Thus, there is a variability in how guides address the topic of safety. While some guides outright refute the stereotype of townships being unsafe, others acknowledge potential risks and advise against conspicuous displays of wealth, such as flashing mobile phones.

The guides offer more than just behavioural guidelines; they also provide advice on how to interact with township residents. However, there is a notable discrepancy in how the guides do so. For instance, Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) explicitly mentions that taking pictures of people is forbidden, stating “then they will feel as they are in a zoo”. Therefore Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) emphasises the humanity and dignity of township residents, reminding tourists that they are people just like themselves. In contrast, Alfred (private guide) encourages taking as many pictures as desired, explaining that it is an educational tour and that the residents understand this. This contrasting advice provokes a variety of reactions from the tourists. The tourists that are part of Alfred’s (private guide) tour, are initially shocked, questioning if the residents really are okay with the taking of pictures. Siyabulele’s (18 Gangster Tours) approach seems more considerate and respectful. He stresses the importance of always being respectful towards residents and explains that residents are happy to connect with tourists, seeing it as an educational opportunity for both sides. This more human-focused briefing made the tourists feel more comfortable and open to interacting with local residents, fostering a more genuine and respectful connection.

To come back to the first sub question: “How do township tour guides frame their initial briefing to tourists at the beginning of a tour, ensuring effective communication of essential information about the itinerary and advising appropriate behaviour towards local residents?” The answer lies in the fact that tour guides acknowledge and address stereotypes that tourists may hold about townships from the lens of the tourist gaze, so that they can manage and shape tourists’ expectations. By informing tourists about how the tour will be, and advising them on their behaviour, a more informed and respectful interaction with the local community is ensured.

## **4.2 Middle of the tour**

During the middle part of the tour, we take a leisurely stroll through the heart of the township. Our guide greets nearly everyone we encounter. It quickly becomes apparent that the guide is well-acquainted with the local residents, who respond with friendly waves and cheerful hellos. As we walk, the guide proudly shares stories about the township's thriving businesses and the remarkable achievements of its residents. The sense of community is palpable, with a strong emphasis on mutual support and collective pride.

Despite our group being composed mainly of white tourists, the black residents display no signs of surprise or discomfort. Instead, they extend genuine, heartfelt greetings, making us feel welcome and at ease. This open and friendly interaction underscores the township's inclusive and hospitable spirit, further enriching our understanding and appreciation of the welcoming culture of Ubuntu.

By highlighting these positive aspects, guides counteract common negative stereotypes and present a more nuanced and uplifting narrative about township life. During the middle part of the tour the guides lead tourists through the townships, offering insights into its history and culture. In this part, interactions with residents often occur, adding depth to the experience and the host-guest relationships. Ingrained in all the information shared with tourists, and guides' behaviour towards tourists, is the complex history of South Africa, particularly the enduring era of apartheid which led to rapid expansion of townships.

This section addresses the subquestion: "During the tour, how do guides navigate stereotypes and which elements of townships do they choose to highlight while sharing information with the participants?" To answer this, the prevalent themes observed during this part of the tour were analysed, encompassing both physical and oral codes and themes. Multiple themes arose when analysing the interviews, the tours narratives and the participant observation of this middle part. The themes discussed in this chapter are outlined in detail in Appendix A. Among the prevalent themes explored are community dynamics, power imbalances, the prioritisation of tourists' perspectives, the phenomenon of the tourist gaze, prevalent stereotypes, and the role of township tourism as a social force.

This chapter serves to illuminate and emphasise these recurring themes, shedding light on their significance within the context of township tourism. Each theme represents a crucial aspect of the complex interactions and dynamics at play within township communities and the tourism industry.

#### 4.2.1 Navigating information about the complex history of townships

Tourists sign up for township tours expecting to learn about the history, seeking an educational experience, often looking for the authentic essence of South Africa. However, townships are not just historical sites; they epitomise living heritage (Nuryanti, 1996). The heritage of South Africa is embedded within its people, which makes it dynamic and changing. In these areas, residents still predominantly consist of black or coloured communities, a lingering result of apartheid. Thus, tourists on these tours find themselves immersed in the tangible remnant of apartheid's legacy.

Given that the wounds of apartheid are still visible and deeply felt, every tour guide addresses complex topics such as apartheid, racism, and South Africa's complex history. It is impossible to explain the rapid expansion of townships without delving into the history of apartheid, which forcibly relocated black and coloured people into these areas. This historical context is woven into nearly every aspect of the tours, emphasising the lingering disparities between white and black people. The deep scars left by apartheid are palpable, visible, and audible as guides recount stories and share experiences of township residents. Most of the guides take the group to the Dompas museum or the District Six museum, to illustrate the hardships the township residents have endured during the apartheid era.

Secondary interviews with township residents further illuminate these issues. Many residents express that they believe white people are still regarded as more important than black people. However, there is also a positive sentiment towards township tourism. For example, Spa (Khayelitsha resident) remarks, "I think it is good, for me at least, for people to see there is still generosity inside here, there are still people who are not taking us as animals, who are taking us as human beings." Spa's (Khayelitsha resident) comment highlights a common belief among township residents that without these tours, Western tourists might continue to see them as less than human. Tour guide Wara (18 Gangster Tours) echoes this statement, noting that residents often view white people as superior, supporting Muldoon's (2018) theory. These tours not only enhance tourists' understanding of townships but also affirm the dignity and humanity of the township residents. They provide a platform for residents to share their stories and for tourists to see beyond stereotypes, fostering a more nuanced and empathetic perspective.

#### 4.2.2 Power imbalance

However, the complex history of apartheid underscores the inherent power imbalance that has left its marks on township residents. Therefore, there is an inherent power imbalance between township residents and tourists, as township residents feel more human as they get visited by



white tourists. It therefore becomes evident that township tours serve as a double-edged sword. On one hand, the tours provide an opportunity for tourists to gain insights into the realities of townships, thereby potentially fostering greater understanding and empathy. Yet, on the other hand, the tours also perpetuate a power imbalance that echoes historical colonial dynamics (Aitchison, 2001).

While residents may feel honoured by tourists' visits, they also perceive tourists as superior. This power dynamic echoes Aitchison's (2001) theory mentioned in the theoretical framework, which highlights how Western tourists often dominate local communities, making them the centre of talk. It is rooted in colonial behaviour, which has deeply influenced South Africa since the coming of the Dutch in the 17th century. Tourists, akin to colonialists, often view township residents as the Other (Hollinshead, 1992; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Because township tour guides are township residents themselves, one can conclude that they themselves feel inferior to white tourists as well.

The notion that without township tours, Western tourists might perceive township residents as less than human speaks to the dehumanising effects of ignorance and lack of exposure. By engaging in these tours, tourists are forced to confront the humanity of township residents, thereby challenging any preconceived notions they may have held. Additionally, the acknowledgment of the existence of township residents through these tours is crucial in letting the residents feel seen and heard.

However, the fact that township tour guides are residents of the townships themselves further complicates the power dynamic. While they may serve as ambassadors for their communities and take pride in showcasing their homes, there is also a sense of internalised inferiority, as they cater to the expectations and judgments of predominantly white tourists. This underscores the complex interplay of race, power, and identity within the context of township tourism. Drawing back to the theory of guides, these hosts are normally the pathfinder and personal tutors for the guests (Mead, 1914; Pond, 1993). However, because of this complex racial imbalance in South Africa, the guests actually take the authority over the guides instead of the other way around. With guides constantly adapting their tours to the tourists' preferences. All the guides constantly ask if everyone is doing good, if there are any questions, et cetera.

Furthermore, the host-guest relationship strengthens the power imbalance, as tourists fund the guides by paying for the tours and therefore effectively dictate the course of the tours. As guides perform more tours with different tourists, guides adapt their narratives to align with tourists' perspectives, shaping their tours according to tourists' expectations and gaze. Guides contextualise their own culture in relation to tourists' cultural norms (Urry, 1990), striving to

provide an entertaining experience that meets tourists' expectations. This can be seen in the many times that guides reassured tourists that they could always ask questions, take pictures, and tell him what they wanted to see. This also explains the briefing of the tour, where guides underscored the freedom tourists had in determining what would happen during the tour. Therefore it can be stated that township tour guides operate from a tourist gaze, although having the lens of the host gaze themselves.

The power imbalance manifests in both the racial segregation, but also in the language phrases employed by guides. The guides constantly thank the tourists for coming. Thomas (La Gugu tours): "So that is why we say thank you. Not only thank you for coming to this experience, but thank you for existing." This shows that Thomas (La Gugu tours) feels very honoured by tourists coming to visit them. Thomas (La Gugu tours) later says that he is fat because of the tourists, he can eat because of the tourists, trying to make the tourists feel good about themselves for contributing financially by coming on a tour. Moreover, the constant encouragement for participants to ask questions, underscores the guides' prioritisation of tourists, allowing them to tailor the tours according to their preferences. Therefore guides need to navigate through the complex history of townships and apartheid, as that is the root of townships, but also because of the power imbalance from apartheid, have difficulty navigating these complexities. However, the guides want to serve the tourists as that is their job, and therefore keep the power imbalance in place. On top of that, given the fact that township tour guides are township residents themselves, there exists a dynamic where tour guides perceive themselves as inferior to the tourists they are guiding. This underlying sense of inferiority can subtly influence the way guides conduct tours. Consequently, this perpetuates the lingering effects of apartheid, as it reinforces social hierarchies and power imbalances.

#### 4.2.3 Prioritising tourists

As township tour guides may feel inferior to the tourists, they want to make sure that they prioritise the tourists. This can be argued because guides constantly tell tourists that they can ask whatever they want whenever they want, they are free to take pictures and tell the guide what they would like to see. Tour guide Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) tells me that when someone asks something about the minibus for example, he will take that group to go inside and make a trip in the minibus. So, tour guides adjust the tours according to the tourists' preferences. This makes a weird line of authority, as normally guides have the authority presenting their own culture, now the guests take the authority about what they think is the township and what they want to see. Tour guide Wara (18 Gangster Tours) notices that tourists

become particularly excited and ask a lot of questions when the tour enters the poorer informal settlements. In contrast, tourists often display less interest and become bored more quickly in the wealthier parts of townships. This creates a challenging balance for the guides, who strive to keep the tourists engaged while also providing an authentic representation of their culture. Wara explains, ‘‘I want to show a proper reflection of our culture, but it is a hard balance because tourists want to be entertained, and I want to show tourists what they want to see.’’ Consequently, tour guides have learned to adapt to the tourists’ preferences, trying to understand and cater to what they find entertaining. This way, guides learn to adapt to the cultures of the tourists, highlighting aspects of their own local culture that are in contrast against the cultural backgrounds of the tourists. That is why it can be argued that guides often shape the tours through a tourist gaze, tailoring their narratives and routes they show to align with the interests and perspectives of the tourists. In this manner, tourists are likely to positively receive the tour, as it resonates closely with their desire to encounter authenticity, particularly when guides highlight aspects that are in contrast to their own cultural backgrounds. Tour guides, applying the tourist gaze at their own community, actually are making themselves and their own community as the Other.

Another aspect where tourists are prioritised is in the taking of pictures. A tour participant asks Alfred (private guide) if he is allowed to take pictures of people. Alfred (private guide) answers that everyone is allowed to take pictures of everyone and everything. However, the tour participants react hesitantly, showing signs of discomfort. At one point, children come running to hug the tour participants. One girl, who seems concerned, steps away and does not allow the kids to hug her. Observing this, Alfred (private guide) refrains from initiating any further contact with the residents for the remainder of the tour.

This scenario highlights how tour guides often strive to entertain tourists from a tourist-centric perspective. When tourists react differently than expected, guides quickly adapt and modify the tour to align with the tourists’ preferences. For instance, Alfred had planned to visit a house later in the tour but adjusted his approach based on the initial reactions of the tourists. This flexibility underscores the delicate balance guides must maintain to ensure a positive and comfortable experience for their guests.

Alfred (private guide): ‘‘The residents of this house have given us the permission to enter this house, to see how they live. But there are visitors that don’t feel good about going to people’s homes and other stuff. So people get to choose when they come here, do they want to

go inside this house, to see how people live, or they just prefer to walk around. So, we have choices made and our choice gets to be different.”

Noticing that this particular group of tourists appears hesitant, Alfred (private guide) takes extra care to address their concerns. He provides additional information, emphasising that their participation in various activities is entirely voluntary and ethically sound. Alfred (private guide) reassures the group that no one will be forced to do anything they are uncomfortable with.

In every situation, the guides prioritise the comfort and preferences of the tourists, tailoring the experience to meet their desires for entertainment and engagement. This flexible approach ensures that tourists feel respected and at ease, whether they are enthusiastic about exploring or more reserved. Alfred (private guide)'s sensitivity to the group's mood exemplifies the broader ethos among the guides: a commitment to creating an enjoyable and memorable experience that aligns with each tourist's comfort level and interests. By doing so, the guides not only foster a positive atmosphere but also build trust and rapport with the tourists, prioritising the tourists and enhancing the overall quality of the tour. So, this questions Mannheimers (2022) theory that guides have a lot of freedom and agency in their tours. Township tour guides actually let the tourists have the freedom and agency in deciding about the tours itineraries.

Navigating through the complexity of some aspects of townships, tour guides use the tourist gaze to make tourists feel comfortable talking about the awful stories of the apartheid era. For example, in the Dompas museum, when guides talk about the segregation between white and black people, tourists act nervously and ashamed. However, guides try to take any guilt away that white tourists might feel. Alfred (private guide) remarks: “Remember guys, only a minority of white people were racist during apartheid.” Besides that, Alfred (private guide) wants to show how the township residents handle racism nowadays.

Alfred (private guide): “So, we are teaching our kids now to embrace people of color. We are taking our kids back to how life was, back in the oldern days, where black, coloured, Indian, muslims were living together in a place called the District Six, in town.”

With this statement, Alfred (private guide) teaches the tour participants that they do not feel any hatred anymore and that there is no problem among races anymore.

Another important aspect is that there are several monuments in the townships to commemorate individuals who have lost their lives to crime. One notable example is the Gugulethu Seven monument, honouring seven black anti-apartheid protesters killed by white policemen. However, during the tour led by Thomas (La Gugu tours), the group is not taken to the Gugulethu Seven monument, but rather to the Amy Biehl monument, which is actually situated in the same street. This monument memorialised Amy Biehl, a white American student who was tragically killed in Gugulethu by four black township residents. They believed the township was a no-go zone for white people. Remarkably, Amy's parents flew to South Africa, forgave her killers and advocated for a reduction in their sentences in court. With two of her killers they established the Amy Biehl foundation, which strives to reduce racism. By choosing to share this story exclusively about the forgiveness and reconciliation initiated by white individuals, rather than showcasing the Gugulethu Seven monument, Thomas (La Gugu tours) may aim to provide the white tourists with a narrative that can potentially assuage any discomfort they might feel about the troubled history of race relations in South Africa. In doing so, however, he neglects to highlight the hardships endured by black residents at the hands of white oppression, thus presenting only a selective aspect of township life. This further strengthens how guides want to prioritise tourists and their entertainment. The participants are mesmerised and saying 'wow,' admiring the story. Thomas (La Gugu tours) ends the story with: 'So, out of a bad thing came a... Good thing!' Underlining that the white people did good. Therefore once again, guides try to give white tourists a good feeling.

Guides know that some tourists feel insecure about doing a tour regarding the ethical concerns. Guides keep stating that residents are totally fine with tourists coming in, also because of the economy, with Alfred (private guide) stating: 'The economy is growing, because sometimes you guys get to eat in our restaurants. You get to buy our stuff, as we are going to have lunch now in the butchery. So the money we gonna be spending is going to go a long way, to the business you are going to be supporting.'

This demonstrates how guides often feel compelled to entertain and reassure their tourists. Marie (French guide) notes that most tourists visit townships seeking entertainment. Initially, township residents were wary of Marie, a white woman, moving into their community. However, she got fully accepted. She explains: 'I think it helped that I had this posture of I'm not better than any of you guys. I'm really impressed by everything you're doing.' This suggests that long-term interactions can help disprove the power imbalance guides might feel towards white people.

By continually reassuring tourists and prioritising their comfort, guides end up

organising tours through the lens of the tourist gaze, catering to tourists' desires and reinforcing a sense of comfort and entertainment.

#### 4.2.4 Tourist gaze

Similarly, Siyabulele (18 Gangster Tours) adapts his approach based on tourists' reactions. Around a decade ago, he conducted tours by bus, but he realised that this method made tourists feel like they were on a "human safari." In response, he now offers "detail tours, human to human," which foster direct, personal interactions between tourists and township residents, aligning with tourists' desire for a more authentic experience, once again, catering to what the tourists want.

As these examples show, tour guides have become used to reading their audience, learning from past interactions what surprises or interests tourists. This expertise allows them to create tours that are both entertaining and educational. They understand that tourists often seek a blend of excitement and learning, and they strive to meet these expectations.

Marie (French guide) mentions how she encountered unique challenges due to tourists' expectations. Despite living in the township and speaking Xhosa, she faced criticism for not being considered a "real" South African guide. Tourists, particularly Americans, often arrived with preconceived notions and a desire for entertainment, prioritising excitement over authenticity. This aligns with the disconfirmation theory, which suggests that people experience discomfort when reality does not match their expectations. Marie observed that tourists often demand an entertaining experience, saying, "Guys, show me a good time. I paid for this." This expectation for amusement, rather than an authentic cultural exchange, underscores the pressure guides face to conform to tourists' desires. This perspective challenges the notion, proposed by Sharpley (2018), that tourists primarily seek authenticity. Marie (French guide) also highlighted the power imbalance between tourists and residents, noting that tourists sometimes distance themselves from locals, treating the tours as a spectacle rather than a glimpse into real lives:

"Maybe they put such a distance between them and the locals. But it is like, you know, just people living their lives. They are not puppets; this is how they actually live. This is their current lives. I'm sorry if it's not entertaining for you. But this is the reality of things; we are not going to make theatrics just for you."

Marie's perspective was unique among the guides, possibly influenced by her being the only white, non-South African, guide. Her reflections suggest a critical awareness of the dynamics at play. Marie's vision might be different than other guides, because other guides might feel compelled to cater to tourists' expectations, possibly due to underlying power dynamics regarding race. Marie wants to show the authenticity of the township and can thus be seen as a progressive guide, whereas South African guides feel inferior to the tourists and cater to their entertainment.

This is illustrated by Wara (18 Gangster Tours), who notices that tourists are more interested in the poor informal settlements than in the wealthier parts of the township. As a result, he primarily showcases impoverished shack areas. Wara can thus be seen as a conformistic guide; he tends to cater to tourists' preferences. Tourists' expectations are that Africa and its townships are predominantly poor, which they perceive as the authentic essence of the continent. However, this narrow focus overlooks the fact that wealthier areas are also part of authentic township life. The tourists' lack of interest in these wealthier parts highlights their desire for entertainment rather than genuine understanding. Coming from different cultural backgrounds, tourists are accustomed to affluence and thus seek to experience poverty, reinforcing their preconceived notions through the lens of the tourist gaze.

In summary, township tour guides balance the need to entertain tourists with the responsibility to educate and dispel myths. They tailor their tours to meet tourists' desires, often highlighting cultural aspects that differ from the tourists' own experiences and thus guiding from the tourist gaze, while challenging stereotypes and fostering meaningful interactions.

#### 4.2.5 Showing pride and changing the narrative

However, guides not only want to cater to tourists' preferences, they also want to change the mainly negative narrative about townships. Therefore, guides make the itinerary of the tours to highlight the townships pride. For instance, Alfred (private guide) starts his tour at the art centre, where he meets the participants and provides an extensive introduction, showcasing the township's talented artists. He then leads the group past successful businesses, emphasising the close-knit community of the township.

Walking past all these accomplishments, Alfred (private guide) says: 'Langa has produced artists, I am talking about jazz legends, Maramba legends, gospel singers, you name it. We also have our pride in sports, we have produced some things in rugby, cricket, soccer, hockey and in boxing. Even today, Langa is presented in the highest fields of the world. The

captain of our South African squad in cricket is from Langa. The first black man to be our highest owner in cricket and in rugby was from Langa. The first woman to be recognized in boxing was from Langa. The champions in boxing that have fought heavyweight tigers of the world, were from Langa. The first black person to be honoured for doing a successful heart transplant surgery without ever going to any university, was from Langa.’’

By listing all these achievements, Alfred (private guide) shows how proud he is of the township community and tries to impress the tourists. Alfred (private guide), in contrast to other guides, guides the tourists along the more wealthier sections of the townships, showing the neighbourhood ‘Beverly Hills’ but avoiding the more poor areas filled with shacks. This evoked questions from the tourists about where the shacks were, with Alfred avoiding those questions. This shows that this guide wants to present the township in the best way possible. Alfred (private guide) stresses the sense of community, greeting everyone he encounters on the street. Similarly, Thomas (La Gugu tours) demonstrates this sense of community by enthusiastically greeting people and shouting "Mojo!" across the street. At one point, he jumps out of the bus he is driving to run over and shake hands with an older man in a car, later explaining that this is a customary greeting for those part of the same clan.

All the guides make a point to mention the notable individual from a township who performed the first open-heart transplant, showcasing a shared sense of pride in local accomplishments. Additionally, the tours often include buying traditional foods such as chicken feet, sheep heads, and visiting popular local spots like Mzoli's and Rands. These elements collectively illustrate the guides' efforts to present a rich, positive narrative about the townships, countering stereotypes and highlighting the community's strengths and achievements.

By showcasing the positive developments and achievements within these communities, they actively challenge and reshape the stereotypes held by tourists. This approach disrupts the tourist gaze, which often has tourists viewing townships as poor and dangerous. By walking past all the positive aspects of townships, hearing about the accomplishments and experiencing the welcoming culture where everyone knows each other, the tourist gaze and the stereotypes get challenged. Thomas (La Gugu tours) rhetorically asks during the tour: ‘Where is this danger they talk about in the township?’’. This question underscores how Thomas (La Gugu tours) wants to show positivity and thereby wants to make tourists remember their stereotypes when they came in earlier.



#### 4.2.6 Navigating stereotypes and chosen highlighted elements

Coming back to the second sub question: ‘‘During the tour, how do guides navigate stereotypes and which elements of townships do they choose to highlight while sharing information with the participants?’’ Answering this question, guides feel obliged to start tours addressing the stereotypes tourists have about townships concerning safety. Some choose to continue the tour by challenging the stereotypes, making a progressive tour by providing a nuanced and balanced portrayal of township life, aiming to dispel misconceptions and foster understanding. Guides may emphasise the resilience, creativity, and community spirit present in the townships, showcasing positive aspects of daily life and highlighting initiatives aimed at addressing social and economic challenges. At the same time, most guides acknowledge the realities of poverty, inequality, and the historical injustices that township residents have faced, ensuring that participants gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues of the townships as well, catering to a conformist tour. By navigating stereotypes in this way, guides aim to provide tourists with a meaningful and respectful experience that promotes empathy, awareness, and cross-cultural understanding.

#### **4.3 Conclusions of the tours**

Leading to the end of the tour, the guide brings us to Rands, a lively party spot where the tour participants have a braai and a party. As we arrive, the waiters eagerly rush to serve us, ensuring we receive first class attention. Buckets filled with various kinds of beer are delivered to our table, accompanied by enormous plates filled with different kinds of meat. Everyone is in a party mood, feeling completely at ease which is in stark contrast to the beginning of the tour.

In this festive setting, the guide gathers us and asks if we have enjoyed the experience, encouraging us to reflect on our new perceptions of the townships and how they differ from our initial expectations. The tour concludes with a heartfelt thank you to the tourists for visiting and a request to spread positive stories about the townships and tours.

The conclusion of tours hold profound significance, as it encapsulates the essence of the entire experience. It marks the moment when visitors leave the township, yet simultaneously gain a comprehensive understanding through final views and information. These concluding moments are pivotal, as they finalise tourists' impressions and shape the narratives they possibly share with others. Such narratives wield considerable influence, serving as catalysts for altering entrenched stereotypes about townships. Thus, the power of the tour conclusions lies not just in their closure, but in their potential to drive social change by reshaping perceptions. Therefore it is important to research the endings of tours and to answer

the following subquestion: “How do township tour guides conclude tours and what are their procedures during the end?”.

#### 4.3.1 Changing stereotypes

One of the prominent themes that emerged during the end of tours is the discussion led by guides regarding the disparities between tourists' preconceptions and the reality of townships. This observation underscores a crucial aspect highlighted earlier in this section: guides are aware of the prevalent stereotypes surrounding townships, which visitors often bring with them. Consequently, guides proactively address these stereotypes at the onset of tours. However, it is at the conclusion of these tours that guides revisit this initial briefing, prompting tourists to reflect on whether their perceptions have evolved in light of their immersive experience within the townships. By circling back to the introductory discussion, guides aim to facilitate a transformative shift in tourists' perspectives. They encourage tourists to reconsider their initial impressions in light of the firsthand encounters and insights gained throughout the tour. This reflective exercise serves as a powerful tool for challenging and ultimately reshaping entrenched stereotypes about townships. Thus, the conclusion of tours not only marks the end of a journey but also symbolises a pivotal moment for fostering empathy, understanding, and meaningful change in perceptions.

During the conclusions of the tours, all the guides addressed the prevalent stereotype concerning danger and the oversimplification of Africa frequently held by tourists.

Alfred (private guide) hooks into stereotypes he assumes tourists had beforehand and starts the conclusion of his tour with: “So, did you see any half naked guys, with spears hunting the big five animals? Or any gun shot you heard? Someone shooting guns?”

After this question, the tour group falls a bit silent, but everyone eventually laughs and says no. At that moment, Alfred (private guide) decides it is time to challenge those stereotypes.

Alfred (private guide): “Now you are going to be our ambassadors. You will tell the rest of those that will tell you: “Don’t go to Langa! If you go to Langa, if with your wife you are going to come back alone because they will keep your wife, or your boyfriend will be kept in Langa. None of that happened. So you will be telling the rest of your friends, your colleagues, that Langa, is safe.”

Alfred (private guide) uses the new vision tourists have gained about townships to be a social force, to use the tourists to change the negative stereotypes.

Also Thomas (La Gugu tours) looks back at the briefing where he talked about the stereotypes about danger.

Thomas (La Gugu tours): “Where is this danger they talk about in the townships? Where is this? Because they always portray townships as no-go area. Don’t go to the townships. Don’t go to the townships. They will kill you. They will kill you, they will rob you. They will grab your belongings, they will do this. So, where is all this danger? Where is all that danger? Because we wanna see it, we wanna feel it. Have you ever felt the danger within these townships?”

Thomas (La Gugu tours) helps tourists give meaning to what they have experienced. They have not experienced danger, so they can dispel these stereotypes. With these conclusions, guides try to have tourists change the stereotypes about townships.

#### 4.3.2 Conveying the authentic essence to tourists

By changing the negative stereotypes, guides want to teach tourists what the actual authentic essence of townships is, by using different statements. Thomas (La Gugu tours) and I are having a conversation when he brings us back to the city centre while all the other tourists are eagerly listening. I ask Thomas (La Gugu tours) about the danger perceptions. He asks me where I live and I answer with Observatory, a mixed race suburb on the east side of Cape Town. Thomas (La Gugu tours) states that that area is more unsafe than townships and that people have to become aware that there is way more crime in the city centre than in the townships.

Thomas (La Gugu tours): “But honestly, not a single one was ever robbed in a township. But they will tell you what they wanna tell you about the townships. Because they do not want you to visit these areas.”

Here Thomas (La Gugu tours) explains how he thinks that because of the bad stereotypes tourists will not visit townships. By talking about this at the end of the tour, guides help tourists to change their perceptions of townships.

### 4.3.3 Activating tourists to be a social force

Conclusions at the end of tours suggest that guides are motivated by a desire to create change, using tourists as catalysts to dispel negative stereotypes. Township tourism serves as a powerful social force in this regard. As negative stereotypes decline, more tourists may be drawn to these tours, fostering host-guest relationships and social harmony between tourists and township residents. Ending with statements like Alfred's (private guide) highlights this potential, as tourists can be transformed into ambassadors who spread positive perceptions, encourage others to visit, and contribute to the township's economic growth, further enhancing social harmony.

However, Marie, the French guide, expressed reservations, noting that only the more adventurous tourists were inclined to visit townships in the first place. This limits the impact to reassuring those who are already willing to engage. Attracting those who are staunchly opposed to the idea presents a significant challenge, raising questions about the true extent of township tourism's influence as a social force. Despite its potential, its efficacy may be constrained by the reluctance of certain individuals to participate, thus highlighting the complexity of effecting meaningful change in perceptions and behaviours.

Answering the third and last sub question: 'How do township tour guides conclude tours and what are their procedures during the end?' Township tour guides typically conclude their tours with a series of well-defined procedures to ensure a smooth and meaningful end to the experience. These procedures often include a final discussion, allowing tourists to ask any remaining questions and reflect on what they have encountered. This is also an opportunity to reflect on the stereotypes and try to change them. Besides that, tour guides usually thank the tourists for their participation and interest in learning about the township. This helps foster a sense of mutual respect and appreciation.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the search of answering the research question ‘‘How do township tour guides utilise strategies to manage tourist behaviour, highlight key elements of the township, and effectively conclude the experience?’’ a broad theoretical framework was used.

To understand the role of township tour guides, it was crucial to examine a broad spectrum of concepts related to tourism, South Africa, and townships. That is why this research started with an expansive look at tourism and tour guides, incorporating Urry’s (1990) concept of the tourist gaze, which often leads to the notion of Otherness (Said, 2014). Besides that, the concept of cultural intermediaries was used to research the function guides have, because as cultural intermediaries guides influence the host-guest relationship and make encounters between the two groups possible. Such dynamics between hosts and guests mirror colonial behaviour, with wealthy Western tourists dominating local narratives, echoing historical patterns of cultural domination, where power imbalance has been an important concept. (Aitchison, 2001).

Guides, serving as cultural intermediaries between hosts and guests, influence the relationship between these groups, and can help foster social harmony. As cultural intermediaries, they mediate cultural encounters between tourists and local communities, wielding significant influence over tourists’ perceptions and experiences (Bruner, 2005; Scherle & Nonnenmann, 2008). Guides shape the narrative and trajectory of the tourist experience, determining what is shown during tours and framing local culture against tourists’ backgrounds. They also mediate interactions between hosts and guests, ensuring social harmony and influencing tourist behaviour through their authoritative position. Guides normally have the authority over tourists as they shape the tours. However, with the complex history of South Africa, township tour guides often let tourists have the authority over the tours. Guides experience a power imbalance because of colonial behaviours and history, and therefore prioritise tourists’ expectations and motivations to ensure satisfaction. To do so, guides make use of the tourist gaze, they design tours from the lens of the tourist to make them the most entertaining for them.

### 5.1 The role of township guides in shaping tourist experiences and challenging stereotypes

Building upon these concepts, the empirical research started with having narrative analysis of the tours, interviews with the guides and participant observation. By thematically analysing all this data, prevalent themes arose, and the sub questions, similar to the chronological of an actual tour, could get answered.

The initial phase is crucial as it sets the tone for the entire tour. Guides use humour, personal introductions, and direct addresses of common stereotypes to foster a sense of safety and comfort. This approach is crucial in countering preconceived notions about the danger associated with townships, thus enabling tourists to engage more openly and positively with their surroundings.

During the middle segment of the tours, guides navigate the delicate balance of presenting township life authentically while addressing and deconstructing stereotypes. This balance is influenced by the guides' approaches, which can be categorised as either progressive or conformist. Progressive guides aim to change negative stereotypes, providing a view of townships where positive highlights get shown and guides show pride in their community. In contrast, conformist guides tend to cater to the tourist gaze, reinforcing existing perceptions and focusing on what tourists expect to see.

The power imbalance between guides and tourists significantly influences the choice between a conformist or progressive tour. Notably, Marie (French guide), as a white Western guide found it more honest to conduct progressive tours that dispel stereotypes and present an unvarnished reality of township life. Her position allowed her to challenge tourists' preconceptions without feeling inferior.

Conversely, many black South African guides often felt compelled to cater to tourists' expectations, resulting in more conformist tours. This approach stemmed from an inherent power imbalance, where these guides might feel a need to please tourists, reinforcing the stereotypes tourists bring with them. This dynamic highlights the challenges and complexities faced by township guides in their efforts to educate and inform while also managing tourists' preconceived notions and desires.

The concluding part of the tours focuses on helping tourists synthesise their experiences and reflect on the insights gained. Guides play an essential role in this phase, ensuring that tourists leave with a deeper, more nuanced understanding of township life. This reflective process is vital in transforming fleeting impressions into lasting, meaningful knowledge.

During this final segment, guides often engage tourists in discussions that encourage them to think critically about what they have seen and heard. They highlight key takeaways, share personal stories, and address any remaining questions or misconceptions. By doing so, guides help tourists piece together the various elements of their experience, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and cultural dynamics within the township.

The conclusion of the tours also plays a crucial role in challenging and changing

stereotypes. As tourists reflect on their experiences, they often reassess their preconceptions and acknowledge the complexity and diversity of township life. Guides emphasise that townships are not as dangerous as people often think and that residents are not as mere subjects of poverty and struggle but as individuals with rich, multifaceted lives.

The study underscores the critical role that township tour guides play in not only educating tourists but also in bridging cultural divides and fostering mutual respect. The effectiveness of guides in communicating, addressing stereotypes, and engaging tourists significantly influences the tourists' perceptions and the overall success of the tours. This research enhances the understanding of township tours as a complex interplay of education, entertainment, and social interaction, highlighting the transformative potential of tourism in promoting cultural understanding and altering negative stereotypes, thereby fostering social harmony between hosts and guests.

Through a multifaceted methodology, a holistic understanding of township tour guides and their practices was offered. The methodology offered to answer the research question: ‘How do township tour guides utilise strategies to manage tourist behaviour, highlight key elements of the township, and effectively conclude the experience? Three important findings emerged from this study:

1. Tour guides tailor their tours according to the tourist gaze
2. Tour guides are more cultural servers than intermediaries
3. Guides actively challenge tourists' negative stereotypes

### **1. Tour guides tailor their tours according to the tourist gaze**

Tour guides utilise the concept of the tourist gaze to meet tourists' expectations, selectively showcase aspects of township life that meet tourists' expectations and interests. This tailored approach highlights the complexity of the guides' role as they navigate the delicate balance between satisfying tourists' curiosity and providing an authentic representation of townships. Already at the start of the tours, guides make sure they invite tourists to introduce themselves, mentioning things about the tourists' cultural backgrounds that are similar or different to townships. By guides having knowledge of tourists' backgrounds, the tourists feel more at ease.

Besides that, guides focus on what tourists find intriguing, ensuring the tours are engaging and memorable. However, this selective portrayal can also perpetuate stereotypes and overlook the more nuanced and diverse realities of township life. For example, some guides may emphasise the poorest parts of townships because they attract the most interest from

tourists, catering to a more conformist tour and potentially reinforcing preconceived notions. Nevertheless, it is equally important to present a comprehensive view that includes the more affluent aspects of township life, which are also authentic.

Because tourists often show less interest in the more affluent and nuanced aspects of township life, and guides rely on the concept of the tourist gaze to tailor their presentations, this creates a significant challenge. Guides must navigate the tension between meeting tourists' expectations and providing a comprehensive and authentic depiction of township life. This selective approach, driven by the tourist gaze, often leads guides to highlight the most visually and emotionally striking aspects—typically the impoverished areas that align with tourists' preconceived notions and desires for an "authentic" experience.

## **2. Tour guides are more cultural servers than intermediaries**

Within the framework of cultural intermediaries, guides typically hold authoritative roles as they navigate the experiences during their tours. However, in the context of township tours, guides inhabit a nuanced role. This complexity arises from the lingering effects of apartheid, which have created a dynamic where the power dynamics are skewed, placing tourists in positions of authority rather than the guides themselves.

In elucidating this phenomenon, it becomes evident that township tour guides are tasked not only with the traditional responsibilities of guiding and interpreting culture but also with negotiating the power differentials inherent in their interactions with tourists. Their role extends beyond merely conveying information; they must navigate the sensitivities and complexities of apartheid's legacy, all while catering to the expectations and desires of their clients.

Because of this dynamic, guides are positioned more as cultural servers to tourists than as cultural intermediaries. By township tour guides being more servers, rather than equals, this contradicts the notion that guides possess significant freedom and agency as suggested by Mannheimer (2022).

## **3. Guides actively challenge tourists' negative stereotypes**

Numerous guides proactively confront the negative stereotypes perpetuated by tourists. They take a proactive approach by addressing these stereotypes right from the onset of the tour. Throughout the tours, they consistently emphasise the inaccuracy of these preconceived notions, shedding light on the nuanced realities often overlooked by such stereotypes. This emphasis continues until the tour's conclusion, where guides reinforce the message once more.



Moreover, guides go beyond mere discourse; they actively engage tourists in challenging these stereotypes. They encourage visitors to serve as ambassadors of social change, urging them to play a role in dispelling these harmful misconceptions. By empowering tourists to become advocates for accurate representation and understanding, guides foster a more informed and empathetic cultural exchange. This approach not only enriches the tourist experience but also contributes to broader efforts of social awareness and transformation.

These findings underscore the strategic approach township tour guides employ in managing the stereotypes held by tourists. They leverage these stereotypes at various points throughout the tour, strategically using them to either reinforce or challenge prevailing perceptions. This process begins from the moment tourists embark on the tour and continues seamlessly throughout the excursion, culminating in a reflective examination of these stereotypes by its conclusion.

From the perspective of the tourist gaze, these tours are not only informative but also entertaining. However, this expectation for amusement, rather than authentic cultural exchange, underscores the pressure guides face to conform to tourists' desires. This perspective challenges the notion proposed by Sharpley (2018) that tourists primarily seek authenticity. Guides skillfully navigate the delicate balance of making the complexities of townships accessible and engaging to visitors. They strive to portray townships in a positive light, presenting a multifaceted narrative that challenges simplistic and often negative portrayals. In doing so, guides not only provide tourists with a deeper understanding of township life but also contribute to reshaping perceptions and fostering empathy and appreciation for these communities.

These conclusions are of academic relevance because they contribute to the field of tourism studies by shedding light on the intricate dynamics between tour guides, tourists, and the destinations they visit. Understanding how tour guides manage stereotypes and navigate power imbalances enriches one's understanding of the tourist experience and the role of guides in shaping it. The discussions around authenticity, entertainment, and power dynamics contribute to critical tourism scholarship, which seeks to question and challenge dominant narratives within the tourism industry. By critically examining these issues, academics can advocate for more ethical and responsible tourism practices.

The insights gained from these conclusions can inform tourism policies and practices, particularly in terms of training and support for tour guides. Understanding the pressures and challenges faced by guides can help stakeholders develop strategies to enhance the quality and

authenticity of tourist experiences while also promoting sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

## 5.2 Limitations

Nevertheless, this thesis has limitations. One significant limitation might be my position as a young white female researcher. The dynamics in townships, where residents often prioritise interactions with white individuals, may have influenced the data collection process. This context could mean that I was not the ideal person to go on the tours, observe the guides and interview them. However, I did do secondary interviews which all led to the same conclusions, trying to minimise this limitation.

Another limitation is the thesis' insufficient linkage between the behaviour and narratives of the guides and the changes in tourists' perceptions. While the research explored the role of guides, it did not thoroughly analyse how their specific actions and narratives influenced the tourists' views. For future research, it will be interesting to assess tourists' perceptions before and after the tour. This could provide a more clear view on how tour guides influence tourists, and can thus help change negative stereotypes.

Additionally, future research can be about situations where guides are even more unequal to tourists, for example in prison tours. During prison tours, the guides are still locked up in prison, which makes a clear power imbalance between guides and tourists. It will be interesting to research if this makes guides cater even more to tourists' expectations by using the tourist gaze.

A point of discussion raised about the thesis conclusion is the idea that only tourists who are brave enough to take a township tour may experience a change in perception. Marie (French guide) suggested that those who are extremely fearful may never participate in such tours and, as a result, may continue to hold negative stereotypes. This raises important questions about the reach and inclusivity of township tours in combating stereotypes and suggests a need for strategies to engage a broader audience.

## 5.3 Empowering guides and changing perceptions: future directions for township tourism

So, what can we do with this information? This research has personally motivated me to address the negative stereotypes tourists hold about townships and tours through these areas. It provides valuable insights for guides on how to challenge the tourist gaze during tours and encourage tourists to spread positive information about township experiences. This research can help

establish a framework for guides, enabling them to structure their tours to showcase authenticity while still entertaining tourists.

By doing so, the power imbalance can be challenged, fostering a more equal relationship between tourists and township residents. The ultimate goal is for individuals to no longer feel inferior to others.

In conclusion, the power of informed guides in reshaping negative stereotypes about townships cannot be overstated. By providing accurate and authentic insights, these guides can play a pivotal role in attracting more tourists to these vibrant communities. This not only offers economic opportunities but also fosters social harmony between hosts and guests.

Furthermore, such tourism has the potential to contribute to the healing process of apartheid's wounds, as it promotes greater understanding and empathy among visitors. By experiencing the rich culture and resilience of township residents firsthand, tourists are confronted with the reality behind the stereotypes, leading to meaningful connections and mutual respect.

Township tour guides, embodying the spirit of Ubuntu, warmly welcome tourists, inviting them to immerse themselves in the genuine hospitality and warmth of these communities. They envision a future where tourists become ambassadors for townships, sharing their positive experiences and helping to dispel misconceptions.

As we look ahead, let us remain hopeful that through education, empathy, and inclusive tourism practices, barriers can be broken down, cultural exchange can be promoted, and a more interconnected and harmonious world can be built.

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## 8. Appendix A: Themes

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Theme 1      | Community   |
| Theme 2      | Power disbalance between tourists and local residents |
| Theme 2.1    | Prioritising tourists                                 |
| Theme 3      | Tourist gaze  |
| Subtheme 3.1 | Stereotypes   |
| Subtheme 3.2 | Changing stereotypes                                  |
| Theme 4      | Tours as social and economic force                    |

### Theme 1: Community

- Knowing everyone
- Pride
- Making sure money circulates within the township
- Greeting another
- Church
- Growing up together
- Talking loud
- Taking care of each other
- Entrepreneurship
- Talent
- Proud of first open heart transplant done by Langa resident
- Thankfulness
- Neighbour watchers
- Supporting each other
- Kindness
- Music

### Theme 2: Power disbalance between tourists and local residents

- Helping tourists to get into the transport safely
- Tourists discovering talented residents
- Residents hoping to get famous because of pictures of them taken by tourists

- Tourists receiving high class service
- Guides always running tours for the tourists
- Guides adjusting tours according to tourists' preferences
- Residents expecting money from tourists
- Tourists sympathising with residents
- Guides wanting to take guilt away tourists might feel
- Generosity among residents towards tourists
- Tourists getting educated about residents through tours
- Residents expecting white people to be racist
- Apartheid
- Disbalance in economic situations between tourists and township residents
- Human zoo
- Human safari
- Poverty porn
- Poverty among township residents
- Residents feeling honoured that tourists visit them
- Only passing the townships on the highway

### **Subtheme 2.1: Prioritising tourists**

- Helping tourists to get into the transport safely
- Highlighting the positive aspects of the tragic death of Amy Biehl
- Tourists receiving high class service in township bars, restaurants
- Always running tours for tourists
- Offering specialised tours according to what tourists want
- Taking tourists upon the minibus because they want to
- Arranging chats between tourists and residents
- Emphasising that tourists are not enforced to buy anything
- Giving tours in second or third language
- Reminding tourists that they can ask questions
- Reminding tourists that they may take pictures
- Organising residents who want to go on the picture with tourists

### **Theme 3 Tourist gaze**

- Survival

- Violence
- Life is up and down
- Negative reactions when a white person is a township tour guide
- Tourists liking Mandela
- Residents disliking Mandela
- Township is a place full of joy
- Taking the law upon themselves
- Township is a place full of sadness
- African Oktoberfest → adjusting to what tourists know
- Tourists focussing on the disadvantaged areas of townships
- Showing tourists successful businesses
- Showing tourists bars
- Stealing phones
- Wanting to go to jail for free food
- Gunshots
- Showing tourists clubs
- Showing tourists restaurants
- Killing people
- Township residents are struggling
- Eating chicken feet
- Eating sheep heads
- Tourists financially supporting kindergartens and orphanages
- The residents are not animals
- The residents are humans
- Without tourists visits, tourists will think that the residents are different to them

### **Subtheme 3.1: Stereotypes**

- Residents expecting white people in townships to belong to a tour guide
- White saviour behaviour
- Media depicting Africa as poor
- Guides wanting tourists to feel safe
- Crime
- Police
- Gangster

- Tourists having a negative perception of townships
- Crime in townships gets exaggerated
- News never shows crime outside of township
- People wearing animal skins
- Expecting to see the big five in townships
- Half naked guys with spears hunting
- Scared to go to townships

### **Subtheme 3.2: Changing stereotypes**

- Tourists becoming ambassadors
- Guides connecting with tourists
- Feel safer in the township than in town
- Felt more comfortable in the township than in town
- Welcoming guides
- Friendly guides
- Guides being an experiences in itself
- Tourists feeling reassured about safety at the end of the tour
- Guides thanking tourists for visiting
- Positive host-guest interactions
- Guides wanting to flip the narrative

### **Theme 4: Tours as social and economic force**

- People running businesses are profiting of the tours
- Tourists buying crafts
- Tourists spending money in township restaurants or bars
- Residents encouraged to make crafts for tourists
- Residents believing that tourists coming to townships are good people
- Believing residents can become famous because of the pictures taken by tourists
- Getting to know white people and therefore learning that they are just human
- Number of guest houses in townships are increasing
- Sharing stories between residents and tourists
- Residents are happy to talk to tourists
- Tourists financially contributing
- Township economy profiting of the tours

- Tourists becoming ambassadors
- Growing economy
- Adopt a visitor