

# **Barriers towards African youth participation in domestic tourism in post-apartheid South Africa: The case of Alexandra Township, Johannesburg**

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## **Abstract**

Youth tourism is a new and rapidly growing sector in the global tourism economy representing a key element in fueling global tourism demand projections. However, not all youth, especially along class and racial lines, are actively involved in domestic tourism, especially in developing countries. Various social ills experienced by youth such as unemployment and poverty may hinder engagement in domestic tourism activities. However, these may not be adequate in explaining the lack of African youth participation in domestic tourism as there may be other more complex factors involved. The aim of this paper is thus to investigate and identify the reasons African youth within South Africa, specifically in Alexandra Township may not be participating in domestic tourism. Using a qualitative framework, semi-structured interviews with key informants (civil society, tourism private sector and the government sector) were conducted. Unfortunately, Alexandra youth are not participating actively in domestic tourism due to a number of reasons including but not limited to poverty and unemployment, the legacy of apartheid, lack of support from the government and private sector, power relations as well as exploitation. The civil society, government and private sector need to work together to increase youth participation in domestic tourism. This can be done through encouraging training programs the developing organised tours amongst the youth in order to increase their understanding and engagement in domestic tourism to name a few.

**Keywords:** Youth tourism, participation, domestic tourism, Africa, South Africa

## **Introduction**

Youth tourism is significant towards the upgrading of the tourism market as the size of the youth travel market has transformed over the past decade (Moisa, 2010). The World Tourism Organisation notes that youth tourists dominate one-sixth percent of global arrivals with an average of sixty percent (Moisa, 2010). Therefore it is vital to conduct studies that examine the youth's participation and contribution towards tourism development. Globally, youth tourism numbers are estimated to be increasing and between 2002 and 2020 it is predicted that almost 190 million international youth tourist will travel per year, peaking at about 300 million in 2020 (United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) & Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (WYSE) Travel Confederation, 2011). It is important to outline what the terms 'youth' and 'domestic tourism' mean in the context of this paper. Firstly, various definitions of

youth tourism exist and these are contested amongst the different scholars. However, the intention is not to engage in these divergent debates. Youth tourism can be defined as “the tourism of the young and young adults between the ages of 15-25 travelling alone or in groups composed of representatives of the same or a similar age cohort” (Theuns, 1992:166). However, a more contemporary understanding of youth includes those aged between 18-35 years, a portion that is considered to have the finances to travel (Swart, 2010). Youth in this paper draws from the age group between 15-34 years (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Secondly, domestic tourism is defined as “residents visiting destinations within their own country’s boundaries and traveling for tourism purposes”. The concept of domestic tourism is further broken down into two categories; same day visitors those who arrive and depart on the same day and staying visitors those who spend at least one night at a destination (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan & Ranchhod, 2013: 4). These are the understandings of ‘youth’ and ‘domestic tourism’ this paper will engage with.

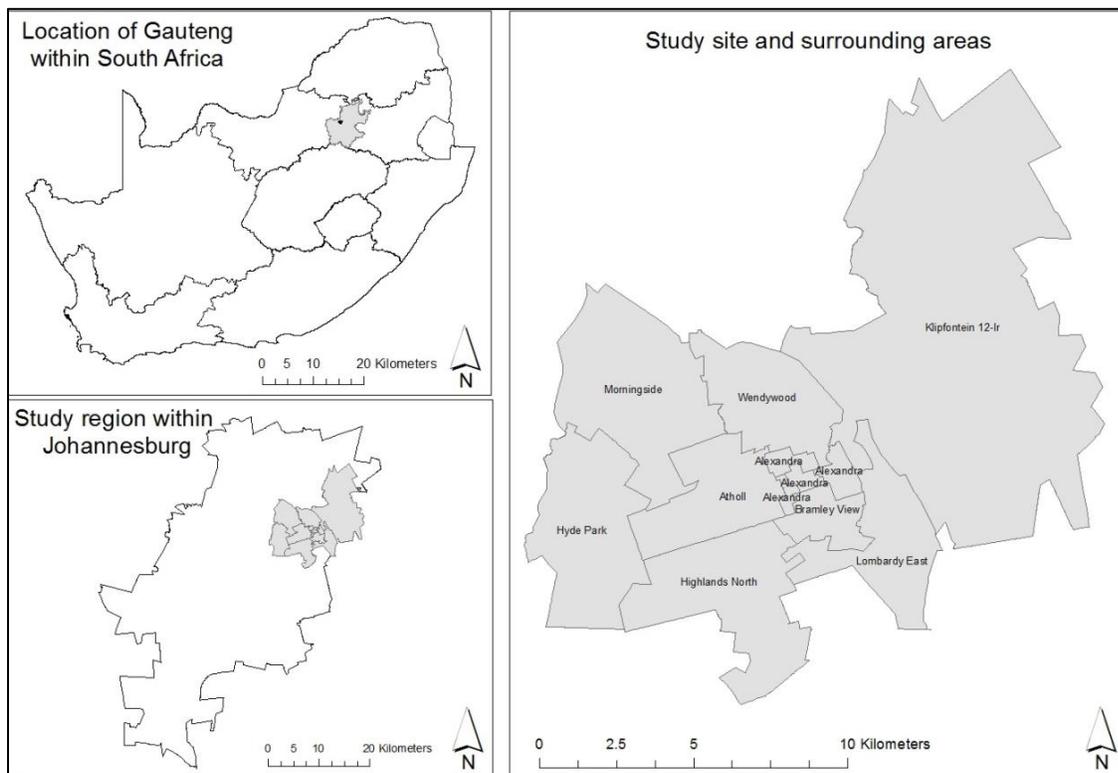
According to the African Economic Outlook (2012) other reasons why African youth specifically may not engage in domestic tourism may also be due to unemployment and an increase in the illiteracy rate amongst African youth. The figure for unemployed youth is estimated to be twenty percent in the Sub Saharan region (Trading Economics, 2014). In 2003 the unemployment rate in South Africa was higher than in other developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Barrar, 2010). According to the Population Reference Bureau (2013) unemployment is an issue amongst the youth with fifty-one percent of women and forty-three percent of men unemployment, which may result in the youth not participating in tourism activities due to unaffordability (Swart, 2010). Based on Statistics South Africa (2015), the youth unemployment rate was about twenty-five percent in the first four months of 2014 which is equivalent to about 4.2 million people as compared to twenty-four percent during the last four months of 2013. In 2015, the youth unemployment rate in the Gauteng Province has increased to thirty-two percent (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This suggests that the youth may not be able to afford to engage in tourism activities. In the Gauteng Province, fifty-five percent of 15-24 year olds are unemployed, especially black people in the townships (Gauteng Province Economic Development, 2012). In Alexandra Township specifically, it is estimated that thirty-two percent of the total population is unemployed (Beall, Crankshaw & Parnell, 2000). This shows that the unemployment rate is affecting the social life of youth due to lack of finance. However, the reasons why African youth do not engage in travel may be more complex and have not been extensively researched, especially in townships like Alexandra.

Within this context and background, this paper explores African youth participation in domestic tourism looking specifically at the case of Alexandra Township. Alexandra Township has received little attention particularly with concerns that lead to the participation of youth in domestic tourism as compared to other townships in South Africa. However, studies have been conducted in townships such as Soweto: Primville, Diepkloof, Meadowlands East, and Dobsonville (Butler & Richards, 2013) but research into African youth engaging in domestic tourism in Alexandra is limited.

Alexandra township was established in 1912 and is located approximately 13km north-east of Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province (see Figure 1). It was referred to as a ‘native township’ because it was the first black community settlement in Johannesburg accommodating about 30 000 people during the time of its establishment. The early decades in the development of Alexandra were filled with political unrest and protest and this has continued to recent years. One of the major political unrests experienced was that of the Bus Boycotts (1940); the bus fare

was going to increase by ZAR1. This resulted in the residents walking a distance of 15km to and from work for about six months, and this was repeated in 1942, 1943 and 1957. Furthermore the Bantu Education Act of 1957 stated that black people were supposed to have an inferior education system which caused not only children in Alexandra but the whole country to boycott school. The Soweto Uprising in June 1976 also spread to Alexandra and this resulted in the death of approximately 19 people (Bonner & Nieftagodien, 2008). The most recent protest was the march from Alexandra to Sandton on 31 March 2001 targeting the World Summit on Sustainable development (WSSD); between 20 000-25 000 people took part. The aim was to bring out the voice of the poor and to highlight that the South African government should take into account the social and economic challenges in Alexandra and addressed the accordingly during the summit (Anti-Privatisation Forum, 2002).

Alexandra has faced various social ills that have contributed to the slow development of the township. For example, unemployment especially amongst the youth; high crime rates; poverty, poor sanitation; lack of water supply; poor living standards and condition; poor infrastructure and lack of security amongst others (Spotlight: Africa, 2013). There have been attempts at developing infrastructure in as seen through the 1980 Master Plan, which aimed at transforming the township to a 'Garden City' through the Urban Renewal Project. This led to considerable demolitions disruptions and displacements within the community. In 1998, the Development Plan came to existence with a plan to divide the township into development zones that is 'Superblocks' and the Alexandra Renewal Project. In February 2001, another attempt was made by former President Thabo Mbeki, which focused on uplifting the township with an amount of R13 billion (Show Me South Africa, 2008/9).



Source: Data set was drawn from Google Earth

Figure 1: Map of Alexandra Township and the surroundings areas within the Gauteng Province

## **Youth tourism: an evolving phenomenon**

According to The World Bank (2014), youth globally are considered an essential active group in tourism since they travel for varied reasons including business and leisure. This might be considered a stereotype in which all youth are alleged to be actively involved, especially in developing countries. The establishment of youth tourism on a global level is prominent and the benefits are viable. For example, youth tourism in the UK contributes to the tourism market and the development of incoming tourists (Jefferson, 1991). It is evident in Britain that domestic youth tourists are more active than other international youth tourists (Carr, 2002). The characteristics include the needs of youth, buyer characteristics and demographic/economic characteristics (Clarke, 1992). Backpackers in Australia are defined by youth's travel patterns such as, using cheap accommodation, meeting other people, organised travel schedules and long holidays (Locker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). The responses gathered from backpacker travel patterns shows that youth tourism contributes to the economic importance to Australia's tourism industry (Locker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Youth tourism in the United States of America has contributed significantly to visited culture developments, personal growth, interpersonal relationships, learning through exposure, which is achieved through decision making processes (Vogt, 1976). The contribution of youth tourism through expenditure towards the tourism industry is determined by quite a number of factors. These factors include length of stay, type of accommodation, trip destination and time of booking (Thrane, 2015).

The origins of youth travel indicate that this notion was not welcome, especially by Less Developed Countries (LDCs), they argued that the youth contributed nothing to the local economy (Hampton, 1998). In Africa, youth travel is linked to the concept of volunteer tourism, though it is an important trend within the current international tourism in the Sub-Saharan region especially South Africa. Volunteer tourism was considered as an alternative form of the tourism experience to that of mass tourism, in which travelers combined travel with work (Govender & Rogerson, 2008). African youth travel is linked to involve in language learning, especially English as this is the supreme mutual language used by people all over the world to understand each other whilst learning other languages. According to Correia (2011) language travel has become a rising sector of the global youth target market contribution to the value of US\$8 million or seven percent of global youth. For this reason, language students tend to stay for longer periods of time and spend more than traditional tourist types (Correia, 2011). Youth participation in tourism contributes to economic development at both local and national levels; increase in foreign exchange, the balance of payment, income generation, employment opportunities and all these impacts are interlinked (Telfer & Shapley, 2007). The major argument that has dominated the African youth travel is that it emphasizes more on international than domestic travel, the same problem is also evidenced in the South African context that more whites than black youth participate in international than domestic tourism (Rogerson, 2007). One of the major factors hindering African youth participation in tourism activities is poverty based on the lack of basic human needs.

There may be various social ills experienced by youth that hinder engagement in domestic tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2003). During apartheid, the Black population was restricted from visiting national parks and beaches because they were regarded as an inferior race (Rogerson & Visser, 2004). Even after 1994, it was difficult for black South Africans to view national parks as a recreational place to visit (Butler & Richardson, 2013). The policies of the apartheid regime restricted movement of particularly black people, and this has influenced African youth perceptions of travel to conservation areas in post-apartheid South Africa as a white dominated

activity (Leonard, 2013). Other reasons that hinder African youth from participating in domestic tourism in post-apartheid South Africa include unawareness of the activities in national parks, insufficient knowledge on tourism activities, misunderstandings of visitor's rights, lack of a sense of belonging and fear of trespassing (Slee, Derren & Curry, 2001).

### **Youth tourism: historical versus contemporary South Africa**

In South Africa, during the apartheid regime, the black majority did not have access to tourism activities as the argument was that they were protecting and conserving the environment; only the white population had access to attractions such as wildlife and beaches (Rogerson & Visser, 2004). Even after 1994, many black still suffer from the social ills that further hinder them from taking part in tourism activities such as lack of access to education, health care, clean water, and waste services (Leonard, 2013). Youth tourism was more concerned with the white population and international tourists received greater attention because of their contribution to the economic development of the country as opposed to the black community (Butler & Richardson, 2013). Research conducted by Rogerson (2010) shows that backpacking in post 1994 South Africa goes beyond that of international tourists. The South African boycotts and international sanctions had a huge impact on international travel in 1960s because of the apartheid regime. Domestic travel was also an issue due to the Group Areas Act of 1950 which restricted mostly blacks' mobility. In order move around, they were required to carry a pass, but after the democratic elections in 1994 everyone had the right to travel internationally or domestically without fear (Booth, 1998). The tourism industry was seen as part of the economic development of the country such that in 1996 the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa which set out tourism as a national priority (Government of South Africa: Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, 1996). Contemporary South Africa reveals that domestic tourism is being implemented, but extra focus is directed at international backpackers from countries like Germany, United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Swart, 2010). Domestic tourism is discouraged, especially amongst the youth in South Africa's townships (Rogerson, 2007).

The establishment of youth tourism in South Africa was initiated by the influence of the backpacker transport called the Baz Bus. The bus travelled between Johannesburg and Cape Town which facilitated historical expansion and geographical dispersal as well as marketing the concept of youth travel (Rogerson, 2011). The growth of the English language also contributed to the rise of youth tourism, especially in Cape Town, Durban and in Johannesburg. South Africa also benefits from volunteer tourism with programs such as Habitat for Humanity, which provides accommodation to previously disadvantaged communities (Rogerson, 2004). Rogerson & Visser (2004) argue that one of the major benefits of youth tourism in South Africa is as a result of the increase in the national tourism economy. This is influenced by community development such as pro-poor tourism which increases opportunities for youth travellers.

### **Poverty, power distribution and exploitation in Townships**

The concept of poverty is quite an issue in the development and establishment of townships especially in developing countries. Poverty is as a result of lack of employment, lack of physical access to land and capital, lack of participation due to inadequate resources and inadequate access to social services (Sekhampu, 2013). Although the concept of pro poor tourism has been implemented in townships, township tourism is characterised by poverty, the tourism concept

should therefore be considered as a way of eradicating poverty (Rogerson, 2006). Pro poor tourism has its focal point on the effects tourism has on the improvement of people's lives, hence promoting local economic development and ultimately generating benefits for the poor. Tourism and poverty reduction contribute to empowerment, cooperate social responsibility, sustainable environment, education and training amongst others (Rogerson, 2012). Poverty in townships is viewed as a way of attracting tourists to come and consume township tourism at the expense of the local residents (Omole, 2010; Sekhampu, 2013). Poverty is a big issue such that a great deal of studies has been conducted in order to alleviate it (Sekhampu, 2013).

The issue of using poverty as a way of attracting tourist brings to the light aspects on the distribution of power relations and resources. It can be argued that the local residents are not being considered in the planning process hence the resulted exploitation (Dyson, 2012). Power in township tourism is mainly directed to the source of resources, in terms of financial resources and materials to develop the project. The main argument that can be drawn is that the profits that are derived from these projects are mainly directed to the main source of funding such that a small minority of the local residents actually benefits from tourism profit hence this is problematic (Ramchander, 2007).

## **Methodology**

The research technique used was a qualitative research methodology. The research techniques included semi-structured one-on-one interviews, participant observation and snowball techniques. These techniques were implemented in order to understand why the African youth do not participate actively in domestic tourism. The semi-structured interviews were conducted between August and September 2014. A total number of nineteen participants were involved in this study. Participants who informed the study were drawn from the civil society, private tourism sector and government. The main author conducted the fieldwork and used convenience sampling in selecting the participants who were already available at the study site and were willing to participate in the study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). A snowballing technique was also used in which the researcher was referred to other informants by interviewees (Babbie, 2011). The researcher managed to contact participants from the private and the government sector by emailing possible participants for interviews. Three categories of participants were targeted and interviewed (i.e. civil society, government and the private tourism sector) to understand the topic at hand. The main researcher also used participant observation to understand the social setting of the youth in Alexandra. Were participant interviewees chose to remain anonymous only the name of the organisation or company is noted. The data was collected and transcribed and grounded theory was used to analyse the data and to identify themes. Four major but overlapping themes emerged and these will be discussed in the following sections.

## **Results**

### **Unemployment and poverty**

From the data collected from the youth in Alexandra, the majority agreed that youth are generally not participating in domestic tourism. The major reason identified for this non participation was unemployment which hindered travel. This was further supported by the

community leaders who strongly agreed that the lack of unemployment due to the social ills that were encountered hindered youth from participating in domestic tourism. The local Alexandra counselor stated that:

*“One of the major problems which hinders youth from participating in domestic tourism is the issue of unemployment. Since they live in marginal areas with poor living conditions it will be difficult for them to engage in tourism activities because they do not have any financial means”.*

Lack of unemployment in South Africa is supported by Statistics South Africa (2015) where 25% of the youth in South Africa are unemployed. Moreover, in The Gauteng Province, 55% of youth between the age of 15-24 years are also unemployed (Gauteng Province Economic Development, 2012). The statistics mentioned by Gauteng Province Economic Development (2012) support the results of this current study which show that unemployment is a major issue not only in Gauteng as evident in Alexandra but the country at large. A Domestic Tourism Manager at Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) stated:

*“Unemployment rate in South African townships remains one of the major problems which hinders youth from participating in domestic tourism. The government devised projects to create jobs and this act as strategies to increase youth participation”.*

However, a Theatre Sales and Marketing Consultant at Market Theatre stated that: *“Most youth consider theatre as for the elites therefore the youth are not interested in attending”.* The above statement clearly shows that youth are not interested in domestic tourism activities. This was furthermore confirmed by a tour guide at Tour Guide at Sci-Bono who stated:

*“Youth are not interested since it is a science museum therefore those who are interested to learn more about scientific appliances are the one who are attracted to come”.*

The problem of unemployment is a major concern for youth in several countries in Africa. In South Africa, especially in the Gauteng Province, 32.4 % of youth are unemployed; this filters down to the youth in Alexandra as seen by an unemployment rate of approximately 32% amongst this group (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Unemployment is a major concern not only in Africa and South Africa but on a global level. The informants identified unemployment as the major reason for not participating in tourism activities and this is intricately linked to a lack of education. Lack of education is one of the many social ills faced within townships in South Africa. The social ills brought by the apartheid system also contributed to the lack of unemployment as the locals are living in deep poverty (Bonner & Niefertgodien, 2008).

Based on the research theme finding, it is evident that unemployment is the major reason youth in Alexandra are not participating in domestic tourism. In order for this problem to be solved the participants identified measures that could be implemented such as organized tours and instigating projects that can create employment. The GTA manager and the majority of the tourism private sector informants agree with the idea of organized tours and employment creation activities

## **Unemployment and the resultant poor living conditions amongst African youth in Alexandra**

Poverty is also connected to the socio-economic challenges faced by this previously disadvantaged community. According to an Alexandra youth: *“I can pin point poverty as the main socioeconomic problem and other social ills such as unemployment, lack of basic need, lack of education can result in poverty”*. Thus poverty hinders youth participation in domestic tourism. A Theatre Sales and Marketing Consultant at Market Theatre stated that: *“Some of the problems include poverty which is the key issue in townships...”* However, one youth interviewed argued in a different manner that the socio-economic factors should not be blamed. An Alexandra youth explained that:

*“A large number of the youth in the area are preoccupied with activities that keep them on the streets as opposed to be doing something worthwhile and meaningful. Participating in tourism enhancing activities has been viewed as a time consuming and 'uncool' thing to do for a large part of the youth thus showing lack of interest of youth towards domestic tourism”*.

An Anonymous church leader stated that

*“Since the community is fond of sports and are very supportive, many of the local games can be moved to places outside of Alexandra so the youth will participate in domestic tourism”*.

The arguments mentioned by both the private sector and government in this study reveal that tourism cannot be viewed as a panacea to solve the issue of poverty. Nevertheless the society should know and understand that the concept of tourism was established to develop township tourism that drives the motivation of the local community to visit other places of interest. The issue of poverty can be traced back to the background of Alexandra, thus considering the reasons why people had to settle in such marginalised communities. The township was established as a result of the discrimination between blacks and whites during the apartheid regime that also extend to tourism activities which were considered to be white population benefits (Rogerson & Visser, 2004). Therefore, the social ills encountered during that period are still visible even now with people living in deep poverty. In the cause of the data collection, the researchers observed that the people in Alexandra are living under harsh conditions; using moveable toilets and living in metal and plastic constructed houses. Therefore, it is assumed that the youth are living in harsh conditions and cannot afford to participate in tourism activities due to poverty.

The arguments raised by the youth in Alexandra poverty contributes to the non-participation in domestic tourism are similar to the research conducted by Butler and Richardson (2013) in Soweto. The various socio-economic challenges can be traced back to the issue of poverty. Sekhampu (2013) also supports that the causes of poverty can be drawn from the socio-economic challenges that are faced by the township communities.

## **The apartheid system and perceptions of participation in tourism**

The lack of participation of youth in townships has been linked to the apartheid era, which deprived the citizens' rights and ownership of the country. During apartheid, tourism activities were set aside for whites with Blacks accorded restricted access and to travel to tourist sites. However, poverty and lack of finances also prevented travel. Blacks were forced to live in impoverished areas with many social ills. A youth in Alexandra supports this idea by explaining that:

*"The fact that tourism activities during apartheid were only consumed by the white community only so even after the 1994 democratic elections, many people lost the interest to participate in domestic tourism even amongst the youth".*

The above suggests that the effects of apartheid are still impacting on the youth decision to participate in domestic tourism. However other respondents suggested that apartheid had no influence on whether the youth participated in domestic tourism in post-apartheid South Africa, rather apartheid was noted to have motivated them to learn extensively about the history of their country through visiting tourism attractions. A Heritage, Education and Tourism Manager at Constitution Hill for example highlighted that:

*"The legacy of apartheid should have contributed to the knowledge of museum since the youth will be involved in it; the youth of today are open-minded so they are not affected because once they know about tourism it will be an individual decision to consume it or not".*

The private sector argued that the new democracy has not addressed the issue of inequality, especially amongst the blacks. This view was supported by a Theatre Sales and Marketing Consultant at Market Theatre who explained that: *"The new democracy has not addressed the issue of inequality and in most cases the people who do not have [opportunities] are blacks".* It was argued that not much attention was given to the youth since they contributed a large percentage to the population of South Africa. Youth contribution in terms of participation in tourism is also a major concern for the South African government. The Domestic Tourism Manager at (GTA) alluded to the fact that: *"A lot has happened after apartheid which includes low level of education, lack of understanding about tourism, lack of tourism infrastructure and poverty".*

The civil society and the tourism private sector support the argument that the apartheid system has contributed to the lack of participation in domestic tourism by the youth. Only a few of the groups dismissed the argument, arguing that the youth should not blame apartheid for their lack of participation in domestic tourism. The main reason identified was that with over twenty years of democracy, tourism has been at the forefront of economic development in South Africa especially on a local level. Tourism has been marketed and promoted on the basis that it has great numbers of domestic tourists' compared to international tourists'. From the evidence presented it can be concluded that the youth in Alexandra are not travelling because of the various socio-economic challenges faced in townships.

After 1994 tourism in South Africa has been used as a tool to achieve economic development even township tourism was established through Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) (Rogerson, 2004). Criticism emanates when the local residents of Alexandra still blame apartheid for not participating in domestic tourism arguing that their community is being used as a destination. The government and private sector argue that they are implementing strategies to encourage participation yet the locals are using the apartheid system as a scapegoat. These arguments lead to the following questions; 'Are the local residents of Alexandra still living under the oppression of the apartheid system? Has this oppression instilled fear in them such that they are not interested in tourism activities? or 'The government and the tourism private sector only has interest in township tourism and the benefits that come with it so much that they overshadow the local residents? There is contradiction between the civil society and the government and private sector in this regard; further research should be conducted to have a deeper understanding of how the local residents in townships should be encouraged to participate in domestic tourism, hence dealing away with the problem of lack of participation.

This theme is fundamental to the purpose of this research because some youth may blame the apartheid system for not participating in domestic tourism. As evident in this study, the government and the tourism sector argue that the apartheid system cannot be blamed for lack of tourism participation because it contributed to the establishments of township tourism.

### **Lack of knowledge in the government and the private sector**

The youth do not understand the governments or private sector's contribution towards stimulating participation in domestic tourism, pointing out that the governments' major concerns dwell in the promotion of township tourism in Alexandra. For example, an Alexandra youth stated:

*"The government is implementing pro poor tourism to increase local participation as a strategy of attracting tourist, hence using the youth as tour guides, they can also develop arts and culture programme facilities, implement projects which employ local youth in which they will have more to spend for example organising expos".*

This shows that youth are being empowered at a local level and to a greater extent understand the importance of participating in domestic tourism. However, the youth agreed that there are no projects that are being initiated within the community that attracts youth participation in domestic tourism. This argument was further emphasised when one youth participant:

*"...The South African government does not acknowledge the youth when travelling and they are not counted or added as valuable tourists. The government lacks proper structures and implementation to get the youth involved in domestic tourism. The government mainly targets the demands of international tourists".*

Both the government and the private sector admit that as organisations, they have not implemented strategies to engage youth. They argue that some of them are driven by a non-

profit mandate therefore they do not have extra funds for outreach. To substantiate this argument, a Theatre Sales and Marketing Consultant at Market Theatre stated:

*“The least that they [government and private sector] can accomplish is providing free tickets to them [youth] only on the basis that their show has a lesser audience and cannot be driven to cancel it”* (personal communication, Interview 09 September 2014).

Furthermore, the study found that there are no programs initiated to involve the youth. Even though the government is not implementing any strategies to increase youth participation, it is trying to involve youth. For example, at the Market Theatre, they have consistent advertising that targets the youth. However the majority of the youth does not respond. A Marketing Manager at Melville Kopjes Nature and Heritage Site explained:

*“We are volunteer organisation with no government funding. All our funds are used to pay for the three full-time workers we employ. Funds are all donations raised by volunteer guides, leading hike, tours and from private donations”.*

The South African Tourism (2012) has employed the Sho't Left Campaign as a way of promoting youth tourism participation but not all youth are actively involved as argued by a Domestic Tourism Manager at GTA. Zola Mtshiza a Curator Exhibitions at Museum Africa noted:

*“...we are allowed to sponsor youth, and we also get funding from National Arts Council, National Lottery Boards as well as several embassies that are interested in sponsoring for example, the France Embassy and the European Union”.*

This further supports that the government and the tourism organisations are doing something to increase youth participation in tourism activities and services.

It remains evident that there is a clear division between the civil society and the tourism private sector. The tourism private sector argues firmly that they are assisting and encouraging youth to participate in domestic tourism. The government and the private sector have devised strategies that can enhance the youth participation in domestic tourism but the key problem is lack of awareness campaigns to inform the youth about the tourism programs. For example, these programs include Township Economic Revival Marshal Uhuru Summit for youth and various other conferences and festivals. These programs were meant to increase youth participation but as evidenced from the interviews with the youth, they are not reliably informed in advance about these programs. This can be considered as truthful since studies done in township focus on evaluating whether the local residents are benefiting from township tourism, with a view to encourage them to participate actively in domestic tourism (Ramchander, 2007).

The attitude of the government and the tourism private sector towards the youth in Alexandra as evident in the findings indicates that the two are assisting youth to participate more through projects, sponsorship using free tickets for entry into events and youth empowerment amongst others. On the other hand the youth protest that they have not seen any initiative from these organisations and the programs have not reached them this would have motivated them to

increase their participation in domestic tourism. Therefore, since the youth are not being motivated to participate, this further supports the purpose of this study that youth in Alexandria are not participating in domestic tourism.

### **Power relations and exploitation by the government and private tourism sectors**

The youth of Alexandria do not understand the reason they are not considered as useful assets that can stimulate the growth of domestic tourism in the Gauteng Province. Several youth in this study argued that they cannot dismiss the fact that the government and private sector are not assisting them to enhance their participation in domestic tourism. The youth further asserts that perhaps the developmental projects are not extended to them. One youth argued that: *“The private sector is in control and has the power to promote further growth and exploitation of locals through tourism”*. The above assertion is echoed strongly in the sentiments of the youth as they show that they are being exploited and their community is used as a destination to attain profit without any direct benefits accruing to them.

However, the tourism private sector argues that they provide funds towards the development of township so that the brand will be promoted; however, the benefits are directed to youth as the indirect inputs. In addition, the youth are indolent and those in townships are associated with crime and violence. On the other hand, it can be said that indeed the private sector does play a role in offering employment and marketing Alexandria as a destination. Therefore, a greater number of the private sector dismiss the claim that they are not assisting in Alexandria arguing that there are projects meant to attract the youth to participate in domestic tourism. A Domestic Tourism Manager at GTA stated:

*“We held several workshops with the youth of Alexandria; recently we had what is called Township Economic Revival that supports the youth with finances, marketing tourism to them and other resources to support them”*.

This displays that the government is devising strategies that should lead to the increased participation in domestic tourism in townships.

The youth in Alexandria feel that the government and private sector exploit them in township tourism is used to attract international tourists through the upgrading of the community and infrastructure to meet the standards of a tourist destination. However, these organisations together with the GTA representative argue that they are providing financial means, blaming the youth for their lack of interest in domestic tourism. Whilst the government and the tourism private sector are implementing programs that assist in the development of youth participation; it seems somewhat contradictory since these groups are putting forward different arguments on the table in relation to the contribution towards increasing youth participation in domestic tourism.

Township tourism in South Africa is crucial especially with regards to the concept of power relations and exploitation of resources (Sekhampu, 2013). This is linked to the government and the tourism private sector introducing projects that only benefit the lesser minority of the resident as shown the current study. This becomes an issue in regards to the youth participation in

domestic tourism. However, it is clear that both the government and the private sectors are not concerned with the youth participation in domestic tourism within and outside Gauteng. The majority of the benefits are not directly aimed at developing the community, but are directed to the development of the country, hence townships remain in deep poverty (Ramchander, 2007). The concept of participation is vital to the development of the community hence power should be transferred to the community so that they are part of the decision making process (Khwaya, 2004). Campbell and Vainio-Mattila (2003) support that power should be shifted to the community especially with initiatives which influence the development of tourism projects. Through empowerment, the youth in Alexandra can actively participate in the development of township tourism that can further drive them to travel thus participating more actively in domestic tourism. The shift of power benefits are not only directed to the community but the country at large, the benefits include education and foster pride amongst people (The Scottish Government Social Research, 2008).

In summation, the theme of power relation and exploitation has contributed largely to the reasons youth are not participating in domestic tourism based on the interviews conducted. These arguments based on the responses from the youth clearly reveal that they are not participating in domestic tourism despite the effort that the government and private sector is instigating.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The paper has identified a number of problems that hinders the youth of Alexandra from participating in domestic tourism. The barriers mentioned above are linked to the socioeconomic impediments such as poverty that is linked to unemployment. The findings also highlight that the apartheid system played a significant role in the decision making process of youth participation within domestic tourism, which has influenced perceptions of African youth travel for tourism. In addition, township tourism has become prominent in the country such that the youth blame the government and the tourism private sector for lack of support towards the local community. The youth argue that the government and tourism private sector resources contribute to the establishment of township tourism but lack in an initiative to encourage the locals to participate in domestic tourism. The concept of power relations and exploitation in the township is surface based on an argument that the minority population benefit from tourism, hence Africa youth are not motivated to participate in domestic tourism (and tourism generally) combined with the various social ills they encounter.

This paper is concluded by a provision of recommendations that can assist the civil society, the tourism private sector and the government to improve youth participation in domestic tourism. These include:

- The government should encourage training programs for youth who are not employed such as entrepreneurial workshops that will assist the youth to be innovative towards engaging in tourism. Support for the creation of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) for tourism will assist in job creation and can be used as a tool to alleviate poverty.
- The youth of Alexandra should have a tourism youth representative that will present their issues to the government and the private sector to support youth tourism

- The community of Alexandra should also seize the initiative to work closely with the government and the private sector so that they can be well informed about programs that targets the youth for additional support.
- The private sector should work closer with the community and youth more specifically to identify opportunities such as placements and internships within their businesses that will assist the youth to better understand the importance of tourism for the economy and poverty alleviation. This can be achieved with the support of the Alexandra Tourism Association recruitment practices.
- The Sho't Left Campaign should be promoted in Alexandra; established by the South African Tourism in order to promote domestic tourism amongst the youth.

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