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Dark Tourism and Higher Education

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Content

Foreword
Dominions of Dark Tourism and 'Ghosts' of the Significant Other Dead

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'Ghosts' of the significant Other dead who haunt our collective conscience have been increasingly commodified through memorials, museums, and visitor attractions – and, consequently, the dead now occupy touristic landscapes. In other words, the term 'dark tourism' (or thanatourism) has been branded into an internationally recognised taxonomy to denote travel within visitor economies to sites *of* or sites *associated with* death and 'difficult heritage'. As contributors to this ATLAS special interest group conference have pointed out, dark tourism is a broad, provocative, and contested concept; dividing opinion both within academic circles as well as in empirical practice. While dark tourism as a scholarly term may have been imposed upon the tourism sector by academia, touristic sites of death and disaster across the world often blur the line between commemoration and commercialisation. Yet, despite its historical foundations, dark tourism as a multi-disciplinary field of study attempts to capture contemporary (re)presentations of the noteworthy dead. Hence, dark tourism allows us to examine issues of dissonance, politics, and historicity, as well as furthering our sociological understanding of death, the dead, and collective memory. Dark tourism permits the dead to become contemporary commodities, and for tragic memories to be retailed in socially-sanctioned tourist environments. Nonetheless, the semi-compulsive nature of consuming dark tourism ensures we do not encounter the actual corpse, but instead a 'difficult heritage' industry present narratives of the known and unknown dead.

In turn, the dominion of dark tourism offers a selective voice and records tragedy across time, space, and context and, subsequently, can provide reflectivity of both place and people. Different cultural, political, and linguistic representations of dark tourism and varying interpretive experiences are complex and multifarious and cannot be taken at face value. Instead, dark tourism in its many guises offers visual signifiers and multiplicity of meanings within touristic landscapes, as global visitor sites function as retrospective witnesses to acts of atrocity or tragedy. Contemporary memorialisation is played out at the interface of dark tourism, where consumer experiences can catalyse sympathy for the victims or revulsion at the context. Despite the cultural complexity and moral dilemmas of dark tourism, we disconnect a (tragic) past from the (fretful) present for our (hopeful) future. We gaze at dark tourism in the knowledge that the victims are already dead, though the precise context and history of the victims can never be truly understood. Ultimately, dark tourism and its difficult heritage is about death and the dead, but through its current production and ephemeral consumption, it perhaps tells us more about life and the living.

Yet, despite a long history of people visiting sites of death, contemporary dark tourism evokes notions of mass 'dark tourist' hordes that may learn little from heritage that hurts. The idea of a so-called 'dark tourist' raises issues of visitors consuming touristic traumascapes. However, semantic insinuations of 'darkness' in dark tourism simply render the tourist to a reductionist, if not macabre, leisure seeker who is somehow deficient in requisite morals, historic comprehension, and cultural codes, and who possesses an innate inability to be elucidated by memorial messages. All-too-common scholarly tropes of tourism responding to manufactured stimulus and, more importantly, tourists as fundamentally gullible passive consumers of packaged experiences is simply an indolent argument. Notwithstanding utility of the term and its contentions, to categorise diverse people who visit sites associated with pain or shame as *dark* – and perhaps in some way deviant – is not only misleading, it is fruitless as a typological exercise. In other words, there can never be a so-called 'dark tourist' as a defined taxonomy because to consume tourism is to consume experiences.

Consequently, there is no such thing as a 'dark tourist' in dark tourism – only people engaged in the historic and social reality of life-worlds. Indeed, if we are living with the forgetting of history – a prevailing postulation of the postmodern – then some critical engagement with dark [tourism] sites might go some way towards our understanding. Furthermore, it matters little if agreement cannot be reached amongst the intelligentsia of what is or what is not *dark* in dark tourism. Arguably, what matters more is scholarly recognition of difficult heritage sites that seek to interpret historic cultural trauma that perturbs our collective consciousness. It is here that the tourist experience becomes paramount, rather than initial commitment of learning tragic history through tourism encounters. It is perhaps, therefore, less important to focus upon motives of why people participate in dark tourism but, rather, focus on emergent corollaries of the tourist experience.

Hence, questions of how, why, and where particular cultural trauma is remembered and experienced within the visitor economy remain at the crux of dark tourism scholarship. This ATLAS conference has sought to illuminate some of these questions, particularly those focussed on dark tourism as both concept and empirical practice, as well as bringing into focus broader processes of memorialisation and memory multiplicities. If difficult heritage is the production and presentation of tragic history, then dark tourism is the consumption and experience of that history. In turn, the dominion of dark tourism becomes an institution of mortality mediation where co-creation of meaning between heritage-producer and tourist-consumer is made. It is within this intersection of heritage and tourism that traumatic (his)stories are exposed and, consequently, 'ghosts' of the significant Other dead offer counsel to the living.

ATLAS SIG Dark Tourism meeting
Dark Tourism and Higher Education
Amsterdam, Netherlands
15-16 February 2018

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Introduction

In the second half of February 2018 the ATLAS Special Interest Group Dark Tourism and the Institute for Dark Tourism Research (iDTR) organized a joint conference on Dark Tourism and higher education. The conference was hosted by Inholland University of Applied Sciences, faculty of Tourism Management which has been a longtime member of ATLAS and an associate of UCLan's (University of Central Lancashire) iDTR. The conference aimed at providing a forum for international educators, scholars, researchers, industry profeesionals, policy makers and graduate students to present and evaluate emerging paradigms and to discuss pioneering practices within the broader cultural tourism field. Defining dark tourism as the act of travel to sites of death, disaster, suffering or the seemingly macabre within the visitor economy, the idea of dark tourism raises fundamental questions on the interrelationships between the touristic representation of death and the cultural condition of society. The participants were asked to shed their light of the various aspects of dark tourism and related subjects such as contested heritage, ethics, the management and marketing of 'dark' venues, education, visitor experiences and management, resource stewardship and positioning these venues in a wider context. The conference thus attempted to foster progressive approaches within dark tourism studies, rather than simply reproducing well-rehearsed empirical models and conceptual applications and had an overall aim of presenting a new agenda for future research and theoretical exposition. The participants of the conference came from the UK, Belgium, Japan, UAE, Turkey, Ireland, USA, Slovenia, Germany, Lithuania, Mexico, Palestine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Azerbeijan and the Netherlands and presented on topics as Dark Tourism business, Battlefield Tourism, the Interpretation and Representation of Dark Tourism sites, Commemoration, new destinations, visitor experiences, slum tourism, funerary tourism, prison and torture tourism, dark urban destinations and technology and ethics.

Apart from the presentations by the participants of the conference there were several keynotes. The first "The 'Spectacular Death' in an age of Dark Tourism", was delivered by Philip Stone, the director of iDTR and an established media consultant on dark tourism whose clients include BBC, History television, the New York Times, the New Scientist, the Guardian, CNN and a host of other press outlets. He has published extensively in the area of dark tourism and heritage an

is co-author/editor of numerous books, including: The Darker Side of Travel: the Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism (2009); Tourist Experience: contemporary perspectives (2011), and the recently published Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies (2018).

The second keynote “From pilgrimage to Dark Tourism, a new kind of tourism in Palestine – New concepts to old problems”, was delivered by Rami Isaac, who holds a spatial sciences PhD from Groningen University and is a senior lecturer at Breda’s NHTV International university. In addition, he is an assistant professor at the faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management at Bethlehem University, Palestine. His research interests are the areas of tourism development and management, critical theory and political aspects of tourism, and he published numerous articles and book chapters on tourism and political (in)stability, occupation, tourism and war, dark tourism and transformational tourism.

The final keynote “Opportunities and Challenges for Dark Tourism and Higher Education” was presented on the second day by Karel Werdler, senior lecturer and researcher at Inholland University and involved with dark tourism studies since 2010. He published various articles, book chapters and the first Dutch book on the phenomenon (Dark Tourism, de dood achterna, 2015). He has been a board member of ATLAS Africa since 2003 and a Fellow of iDTR since 2013.

Karel Werdler

Dark Tourism and Higher Education, the case of Inholland University, challenges and opportunities

After giving a overview of the sites and destinations that have been researched by Inholland students over the last five years in both the Netherlands and abroad, some of the opportunities that research into dark tourism offers to students of higher education were presented. First of all there are many locations in the Netherlands, Europe and the world and students are keen on travelling. Furthermore the research offers a wide variety of perspectives e.g. Dark tourism, Funerary tourism, Battlefield tourism, Prison tourism, Slum tourism to name but a few and the same can be said for the options/departure points for the actual research including motivation, experiences, visitor management, ethics and heritage conservation. In general it is an attractive subject for students with options for publications and the participation at conferences, support from the iDTR as a commisioning client and the Inholland staff and sometimes even attention from the local press. Over the last years some students’ findings were indeed published in peer-reviewed journals and this stimulated the interest and ambition of others. For the near future there might be more emphasis on so-called design based reports, which may include excursions, walks, apps, events, guidelines and even destination development. Also mentioned were the challenges that students might encounter such as the negative connotation with the prefix ‘cursions, walks, apps, events, guidelines and even destination development. Also mentioned

Inhollandro graduation cycle there should be one commissioning client, but permission to visit and research can often only be given by the management of the locations and students end up with responsibility for their findings for multiple commissioning clients. Another challenge is that the iDTR aims to enhance, influence and inform industry practitioners to help ensure the ethical implementation and management of dark tourism/heritage sites, attractions and exhibitions. However, it is not always known if there is a follow-up to the research results by industry practitioners and therefore the question arises: How can this be improved/enlargened? A further challenge is to update and improve knowledge that informs the curriculum and the teaching of dark tourism as well as research methods. Although the experience is positive and apart from regular research methods (desk-, quantitative, qualitative) new methods such as netnography and content analysis are used currently as well, the future is a bit uncertain since it is not yet known what the options are for design-based research and if this might contribute to more acceptance amongst industry practitioners and stakeholders at destinations. An additional challenge is the changing student population with other perspectives on dark tourism research, often influenced by popular media and series who seem to want to push the boundaries and include subjects as suicide tourism, dark leisure, recent and violent crime and fictious elements such as the walking dead. Recently research proposals into the Dignitas suicide-clinic in Switzerland and the Aokigahara ”suicide forest” were not acknowledged by the commissioning client for ethical reasons and the fear of becoming negatively associated with these ‘darkest’ locations. From past experience with working with students is has become obvious that Dark Tourism will offer exciting and sometimes contested subjects for graduation research since not only students but mankind in general will always be interested in death and dying (the last frontier). However, some questions remain: Should/could the boundaries of dark tourism be pushed? Is nothing too dark and nothing too light? Is there such a thing as dark leisure? And, regarding the cooperation with the travel industry: Can destinations use ‘dark features’ to position themselves in an ever-growing tourism industry?

Inholland Student presentations:

Casper Crompvoets

Can slum tourism in the Dharavi slum be regarded as an ethical type of tourism?

This research was undertaken under the supervision of the Dutch representation of the iDTR (Institute for Dark Tourism Research) and aimed at establishing the possible ethical implications of so-called slum tours in Dharavi (Mumbai, India) that are being offered by one of the local tour operators. The aim of this research was to establish if and how these tours are compliant with the directives for sustainable entrepreneurship in India. Taking these directives as a point of departure, recommendations are provided for possible ethical improvements of these tours.

The central question of this research was: Can the offer of so-called slum-tours in Dharavi be regarded as ethically justified? While subquestions focus on the motivations of tourist, the opinion of the local community, the methods and procedures of local tour operators and the supervision by local authorities. For this research both desk- and fieldresearch were undertaken within a period of twenty weeks of which three were spent on location. Apart from research into the concepts of Dark Tourism and Slum Tourism, the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India of the ministry of Tourism in India (2014), Speed's Ethical Tourism model (2008), van Gool en Wijngaarden 's Experience Model (2005), Ryan's Travel Career Ladder (1998) and Yuill's Visitor Motivation for Dark Tourism model (2003) were used for preparing the research framework to be used during the field research. The field work consisted of interviews with representatives of local authorities, tour operators and the community involved and 36 questionnaires were collected from respondents that actually participated in these slum tours.

The main findings of the research were the following:

- Most tourists that book a slum tour are driven by cultural motives and needs
- Tourists expect a memorable experience
- The local community does not receive many direct benefits
- The local community does not perceive slum tours as ethically justified
- Local tour operators do not work according to ethical guidelines, but realize there should be a link between these guidelines and their operations
- Local government does not support slum tourism in Dharavi

Therefore it can be concluded that slum tourism in Dharavi is not yet ethically justified although stakeholders realize its importance, nor is it executed in line with the directives Sustainable Tourism Criteria of the Indian government.

Recommendations:

- More support needed from local government
- Entrepreneurs should adhere to the directives of the Sustainable Tourism Criteria of the Indian government.
- More representatives of the local community should be included
- Dharavi should be developed as an best-practice example of slum tourism
- Local government should be supported
- More research on this type of Dark Tourism is needed

Mihaela Duia

A research on the terminology used by visitors of Torture Museums in relation to the dark tourism phenomenon and their visitor experience

Dark tourism has a long history and dates back to the Middle Ages, the time where torture was the topic of the day. Nowadays medieval torture is only found inside the museums and the dark tourism phenomenon is an increasingly feature within the broader cultural travel market and one of the more recent developed types of tourism. The critical literature review brings into the reader's attention that despite

its popularity, dark tourism remains an area where research is needed in order to understand all its aspects from a supply and demand point of view. Dark tourism was given different names, labels and definitions due to its negative connotations. It was referred as thanatourism, fright tourism, black spot tourism. This terms shined light on the academic terminology, but not on the one preferred by consumers. The research reason is also the concern expressed on the terminology that has been used by scholars and media to describe the dark tourism phenomenon and its implications. The case studies chosen for this research were four Torture Museums, considered the light dark tourism attractions and the way to find their visitors in large numbers was through online communities. The objective of this research is to determine the terminology used in online reviews of selected Torture Museums in West and Central Europe, in order to understand how dark tourism attractions are perceived and evaluated by their visitors and to recommend dark tourism sites how to effectively communicate with the visitors. To achieve this aim, this research used a mixed approach combining desk and field research techniques such as content analysis, netnography, and semi structured interviews. The first two methods took the shape of code books where the personal and physical contexts were analysed accordingly to the theory of Museum Experience literature, and the last one looked at the identity that the managers of the museum desire to have. In terms of terminology, the results have shown that visitors perceived their experience at the museum as being very interesting, arousing their interest and curiosity. Also, they evaluated as being a learning experience, where they learned about the dark history of crime, punishment and torture and the dark side of humanity. In terms of dark tourism terminology, there was no direct reference made to dark tourism, but to the other definitions and labels. As a result, Fright tourism label was highlighted in that most visitors described their experience as being scary and frightening. Other labels which were recognised in the visitors' reviews were: macabre, morbid tourism, negative sightseeing, gruesome, graphic, unusual and different. Furthermore, the interviews with the managers gathered substantial data on their desired identity which was compared with the online identity (official website) according to Mind the Gap theory by Van der Grinten. In general, the managers wanted visitors to see their identity as being serious, historical museums which are there to educate the visitors about the dark medieval history of torture. Although the world's largest travel site, TripAdvisor reviews were not seen as an important part of the museum identity by some of the managers. Same results were shown about dark tourism, a phenomenon which was not positively perceived by the managers. However, they claimed that inevitably the museums are part of this spectrum. While some refused adamantly to be associated with dark tourism, some were neutral to the idea, others accepted it and even asked for more information about this type of tourism. All in all, these dark tourism sites' purpose is to educate visitors about history and macabre periods. Their desired identity was for the most times in line with their online identity found on the website. This research revealed the terminology used by visitors in relation to their experiences and dark tourism. The content analysis results were enough to reach the conclusion that the dark tourism terminology used by 3 the academia but also new terms were brought up by visitors in their comments. This research has clarified for the first time the parameters of the dark tourism by looking at the terminology used by visitors and managers.

Rositsa Shishmanyan

Dark Tourism in Bulgaria, understanding visitor motivation at three selected communist-era sites

The following summary is a substantiation of an advice-based research on dark tourism in Bulgaria. The main aim of the research was to understand the motivations of tourists visiting three communist-era sites in Bulgaria, which are: Buzludzha, the memorial dedicated to the Bulgarian Communist party; the Park-Monument of the Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship and the Monument to commemorate 1300 years of the Bulgarian nation. This study seeks to provide insightful data to the academia interested in the pursuit of dark tourism research and contribute to the dissemination of dark tourism research findings. Moreover, good practices from other post-communist countries were taken in order to see how they integrate communist heritage in their tourism.

The objective of the study, created in the initial phase was to gain insight into the motivations of visitors at three selected communist-era monuments in Bulgaria, in order to provide recommendations to the sites on how to successfully involve themselves in the destination development and also contribute to the Institute for Dark Tourism Research's academic database on dark tourism motivation research in Bulgaria. For the realization of the objective, a central question was formulated to give a clear direction of the study and consecutively four sub-questions were developed to answer the main question. For the research, a qualitative method was chosen in order to gather profound information from respondents. Primary and secondary data were collected throughout the writing of this report.

Firstly, field research was conducted, including interviews with visitors of the monuments, in order to get a tourist profile and also understand the main motivations. Secondly, desk research was done to get additional information on good practices of three other post-communist countries (e.g. Germany, Romania and Hungary) on how communist heritage might be succesfully integrated in the tourism development of the country. The results of the field research showed that visitors are driven by their curiosity and desire for education. Moreover, the sites themselves and its locations are factors which pull travelers to those destinations. The latter were linked to Dann‟s theory of push/pull theory of tourist motivations. Good examples derived from desk research on the three post-communist countries confirmed that adapting communist heritage sites into tourist attractions and maintaining them might benefit tourim to the country and generate additional profits from an increase of the amount of visitors.

To conclude, taking the visitor motivations at the three selected communist-era sites in Bulgaria into consideration and linking them into possible development of the sites might be a step forward for Bulgaria's tourism and will also help the society not to forget their recent past.

Alex Petcu

The presentation of the Valle de los Caidos

The current investigation began as a proposed topic from the commissioning client, the representative of the IDTR at Inholland University, as the monument of the Valley of the Fallen might be considered as a monument associated with dark tourism. For this research, Stone's definition (2006) of "… travel to locations associated with death, dying or the seemingly macabre.. " was used as a reference. Additionally the monument could also be considered contested because of its relevance to both past and recent political ideology. The focus of this research was to determine suitable approaches for tour operators when presenting excursions to the monument and its assumed relation to dark tourism.

First of all trends and developments associated with dark tourism were studied from a global perspective such as Robben Island and the 23rd April Jeju Monument, South Korea. From a more national Spanish perspective, the law of historical memory, other sites related to the Spanish Civil war and the current situation of the Valley of the Fallen were the object of an inventory.Furthermore, the following models have been added to the critical literature review in order to support the analysis: The Dark Tourism Spectrum (Stone,2006), The Destination Competitiveness model (Ritchie & Crouch,2003) the Heritage Tourism Experience model (Timothy and Boyd,2003), The Interactive Museum Experience model (Falk & Dierking, 1992), The 4 Realms of Experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), and the Multi- faceted model(Packer & Ballantyne, 2016). From all the enumerated models, various parts have been merged into one theoretical framework.

In the results, the flow of the sub questions was natural and there was a notable pattern recognizable and sometimes even repetitious. However, for two sub-questions there were notable differences in regards to the opinions of the respondents. These differences relate to sub-question 1 and sub-question 3 (local stakeholders) where the discrepancy of opinion could be related in some instances to the religion and/or political ideology. In some cases the historical accuracy with which the site was supposed to be identified led to differences of opinion and therefore different answers.

The conclusions underlined the main factors that were stressed by the respondents. As the results section was rich in information, it was actually challenging to assess and separate the data in a critical manner for the conclusion section. Overall, it may be concluded that the monument of the Valley of the Fallen portrays various dark tourism aspects, and can been placed, after a thorough analysis, on the Dark Tourism Spectrum Framework, in the shade of "Dark".

Furthermore, the development of the recommendations was built on the premises of the respondents which was provided earlier in the results and subconclusions. It should be mentioned that 24 respondents suggested a change in the presentation of the Valley of the Fallen within a tourism excursion, which consisted of facts and data, so that it provides an in-depth insight and focus over the historical aspects previous to the Spanish Civil War, in the second republic era. References

wrere made to the outbreak of the Civil War and the events happening during the war itself, which lead to the dictatorship and the construction of the monument. Emphasis has been put over who aided in the construction of the monument, how the monument was constructed, who ordered its construction and its relevant technical and symbolic aspects.

On the other hand, two respondents suggested that the current form is adequate to support the fact that the monument of the Fallen is actually a symbol of peace and reconciliation, in its current state. It was advised that only these two factors should be altered, in regards to the number of the workers that died at site, and the fact that the prisoners were actually paid for their work. Thus, the second approach towards the recommendation for the excursion at the Valley of the Fallen site relates to the fact that it was built after general Franco was installed in the position of Caudillo, after the end of the Civil War and that the monument shoudl actually be regarded as a symbol of reconciliation towards all that have fallen, including the 33.000 people that are buried at the site.

Sinai Starink

Exploitation or Empowerment, the ethics of Favela Tourism in Rocinha, Brasil

This research covers the ethics of slum tourism in the favela Rocinha, located in Rio de Janeiro. Slum tourism raises a lot of questions about ethics and morality. In various cases around the world, slum tourism does not benefit the local residents and is sometimes even operated in an unethical and voyeuristic way, making it seem like a safari or a zoo visit. During this research there has been zoomed in on the favela of Rocinha, to find out whether this is the case for that particular slum. The commissioning client of this research is the iDTR, an academic center for dark tourism scholarship, research and teaching. Dark tourism is “the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre” (Stone, 2006). Slum tourism can be seen as a type of dark tourism according to this definition, because slum tourists travel to an impoverished and underdeveloped area and therefore associated with suffering. However, slum tourism is often displayed as educational or cultural tourism and sometimes argued to not be a type of dark tourism. This research therefore also focused on whether slum tourism can be considered dark tourism. The research objective for the research was the following. “To gain insight into the ethical characteristics of slum tourism in Rocinha, in order to give recommendations to the iDTR regarding this possible type of dark tourism and to other stakeholders on what should be taken into account when offering ethical slum tours.” Even though the focus was on the perspective of the local residents, other aspects have been researched in order to understand the whole of slum tourism in Rocinha, namely the extent to which tour operators in Rocinha claim to operate ethically, the motivation, expectations and experience of favela tourists, the role of the Brazilian government and whether slum tourism in Rocinha can be considered dark tourism. After extensive desk research had been done on dark tourism, slum tourism, tourist motivation and experience, ethical tourism and

tourism in Brazil and Rocinha, research was conducted inside Rocinha during several weeks. The respondents of this field research were four tour operators, fifteen local residents, of which five work in tourism and ten do not, six favela tourists and one governmental organization involved in tourism. All respondents were interviewed personally using semi-structured interviews. From the results of all these interviews, several conclusions have been drawn. First of all, all tour operators claimed to operate in an ethical manner and to give back to the community, even though they had little concrete information to prove this. Furthermore, all of them could also see the downside of tourism and expressed critique towards other tour operators. Secondly, local residents feel positive about tourism in general, because it helps change the negative image of the favela and brings opportunities for people from outside to help and can therefore lead to improvements in the favela. However, most of the local residents felt like this was all due to the tourists themselves, not the tour operators. In fact, few respondents that did not work in tourism felt like they personally benefitted from tourism. Furthermore, some local residents expressed themselves negatively towards several companies, especially the ones from outside of the favela that do not give back to the community or even reinforce the negative image that people have of the favela. Only a few respondents were aware of any tour operators that support social projects or other organizations to help the community and all respondents agreed that the tour operators in Rocinha should help the community more. Thirdly, the favela tourists were mostly motivated to come to Rocinha by curiosity. Local residents thought tourists would be motivated by curiosity as well and did not feel like this motivation is unethical. However, since all respondents expected to see poverty and crime, and this did not keep them from visiting the favela, it might be a subconscious or taboo motivation for tourists. 5 Fourthly, the role of the Brazilian government in slum tourism in Rocinha is minimal. The government has a program to help involve favela residents in tourism, but this program has not worked well in Rocinha. Most local residents do not know about this program and feel like the government has no intention of helping, even though some feel like they should. There are no rules or regulations specifically for favela tourism, because this would mean having to treat the favela different from other neighborhoods and could even lead to downsides for the local residents according to the government. In order for the program to work in Rocinha like it does in other favelas, Rocinha needs to choose a new community leader in tourism and the favela has to be tranquil. Lastly, in order for slum tourism to be considered dark tourism, there has to be an aspect of suffering. Even though the aim of slum tourism might not be to see or show suffering, and the local residents do not suffer emotionally, it is still an inescapable part of the tours. Suffering is seen and talked about, even though this is more present in some tours than it is in others. Therefore favela tourism can still be considered dark tourism. The recommendations of this research have been divided into recommendations for the iDTR and for the tourism sector. However, both recommendations can be of value to other stakeholders, like creators of legislation regarding (slum) tourism, local communities, visitors and researchers. The first recommendation for the iDTR was to consider slum tourism a type of dark tourism and to include the subject in their research. Furthermore, the iDTR was recommended to do further research on slum tourist motivation and on the ethics of suppliers of slum tourism, since both subjects were not the main focus of this research and there is still room for interesting results to come up.

A. General recommendations for the tourism sector:

- Tour operators should support one or more social projects or other organizations in the favela.
- When possible, fixed amounts should be donated. If this is not feasible, it is recommended to keep track of the unfixed amounts that are donated.
- It is crucial to be transparent about in which way the company helps the community.
- Tour operators should hire local guides.
- Marketing should be positive about the favela and not portraying it as dangerous or adventurous.
- The touristic sector in the favela should not wait and depend on the government to create rules and regulations. Local and ethical tour operators should instead focus on becoming the most attractive companies for tourists.

B. Specific tour recommendations:

- Tours should always be walking tours and are recommended to take at least two hours.
- Tours should not only be going through the main roads and should cover some less developed areas by walking through the alleyways.
- During the tour it is important to create opportunities for local residents to make money.
- Tourists should be informed on how tourism affects the community and why the tour operator does certain things.
- Communication should be positive and should promote community pride, and the difficulties that the favela faces should be mentioned in an honest and educational manner.
- The tour guide should ensure interactions and foster cross-cultural learning between tourists and residents.
- It is crucial to be respectful towards the local residents during a tour and to teach tourists to be respectful as well. The privacy of the residents should be taken into account at all times.
- Local residents should be involved during the tour.

Tour guides as interpreters of dark tourism – Emerging findings in the process of ethnographic PhD research

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Setting the background

In the current chapter of Berlin's history, more than twenty million tourists visit the city every year engaging both in tourist activities in general and in visitation to sites and museums presenting and commemorating the city's dark history in particular. More specifically, there are more than 30 museums and dozens of monuments representing and interpreting that history under the banner of what has collectively become referred to over the last two decades as Dark Tourism. At the same time, Berlin's atrocities and tragedies of (mainly) the 20th Century are also presented by several hundred tour guides and museum docents who provide their own interpretation to the tourists. In so doing, they often present new angles on a story, potentially impacting on tourists' knowledge, attitudes and experiences.

Aims and Objectives of the research

The aim of this study is to appraise critically the interpretive role of the tour guide in the dark tourism experience. More specifically, (1) it seeks to analyse critically the nuances of tour guides' interpretation, (2) to identify where tour guides' interpretation plays a mediating role in the dark tourism experience, (3) to identify factors involved in tour guide's interpretation and how they might influence tourists' experience, and (4) to identify and explore parameters causing tour guides to interpret events in one way or another.

Thus, the research seeks to address a gap in the academic understanding of the role of the tour guide in the dark tourism experience, thereby contributing to the body of literature of dark tourism and tour guide research.

In this paper I will present a brief overview of the theoretical framework of the research, followed by a selection of emerging findings from the research so far. Finally, I will outline

Theoretical background – dark tourism

From the earlier work that was concerned primarily with identifying and defining what dark tourism is (for example, Dann, 1998; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Sharpley, 2005; Tarlow, 2005), the literature has since expanded to embrace a wide variety of relevant themes and issues, including the history of the phenomenon, supply and demand, ethics, marketing management, interpretation and more.

Nevertheless, it remains a contentious subject (see Ashworth & Isaac, 2015; Stone 2013).

A full consideration of the relevant debates is beyond the scope of this paper. However, three themes are of importance. First, Foley and Lennon (1996: 198) originally defined dark tourism as 'the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites'. They went on to modify their definition twice more in the following years, with variations on the purpose of dark tourism: remembrance, education and entertainment (Foley & Lennon, 1997); and on what is supplied by dark tourism: death, disaster, depravity and tragedy (Foley & Lennon, 1997; Lennon & Foley, 1999). The reference to death as the main element of dark tourism has subsequently remained a constant in other definitions. For example, Stone (2006: 146) considers dark tourism to be 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' whilst similarly, Preece and Price (2005: 200) suggest that dark tourism is 'travel to sites associated with death, disaster, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity'. Preece and Price's definition is slightly modified as the working definition for this research: *travel and visitation to sites associated with death, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity*.

Second, ethical debates in the dark tourism body of research commonly revolve around issues of authenticity, commodification of death, and usage of historical narratives for political purposes. Commodification of a site where atrocities and/or other forms of violent death have occurred may bring with it a loss of the site's authenticity (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Ladd (1997), for example, relates the mid-1990s debates surrounding the development memorial sites for the Berlin Wall, in which 'Disneyland' sites were proposed to be built. And Frank (2015), argues that indeed 'disneyfication' took place, damaging the authenticity of the sites and limiting visitors' capacity to reflect on the events which occurred. In addition, it is suggested that the presence of hordes of tourists at sites of death and tragedy may hinder a much-needed societal debate on human rights, and other functions of remembrance (Tunbridge, 2005).

And third, in terms of motivations to visit dark tourism sites, negative reasons such as voyeurism, morbid curiosity and even *Schadenfreude* have been suggested as some of the principle drivers for many people to visit such sites (Gross, 2006; Sharpley, 2009). Furthermore, Seaton (1996) argues that an age-old human need to encounter death is one of the most popular reasons (see also Sharpley & Stone, 2009, and Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005). Conversely, more positive reasons, from curiosity through to education, remembrance satisfying the need to contemplate one's own mortality (Stone, 2009) are more commonly seen as factors motivating dark tourism, to the extent that many now challenge the pejorative concept the 'dark tourist' (Sharpley and Friedrich, 2016). Equally, simply being the 'thing to do' when in the region has also been ascribed as a reason for visiting such sites (Tarlow, 2005; Hughes, 2008).

Theoretical background – the tour guide

Tour guiding is one of the many services offered as part of the tourism world. Yet, in comparison to many other aspects of tourism, limited attention has been paid to the role of the tour guide in the academic literature (Weiler and Black, 2015; Pond, 1993). Kathleen Pond goes as far as arguing that not being a distinct part of any of the main tourism sectors, the enigmatic nature of the tour guiding profession renders tour guides the 'orphans of the travel industry' (Pond, 1993: 13).

Although Holloway (1981) referred to the role of guides in the tourism industry as simply providers of information and ambassadors of their country or region, it was Eric Cohen's (1985) foundational paper that established the basis for developing our understanding of a role that is easily swallowed within the category of tourism services. Quoting the early 20th Century Oxford Dictionary definitions of a guide, Cohen created the first separation of the guide from tourism services more generally as being first a pathfinder – in the geographical sense, one who leads the physical way – and/or second, as a mentor – directing a person in his ways of conduct (Cohen, 1985).

Over the past three decades there has been confusion regarding terminology and roles of guides (Holloway, 1981; Pond, 1993). Some of the terms used included 'tour leader', 'tour manager', 'tour escort', 'city guide', 'local guide', and docents referring to people who guide in museums. This research employs the working definition of the The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA, 2003), stating a tour guide as: 'A person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area'.

Rather than defining a tour guide, it is suggested that exploring the roles of the contemporary tour guide plays a more significant part in tour guide research. Weiler and Kim (2015) and Meged (2016) stated that these roles include interpreter, information giver, social catalyst, conversation motivator, tour manager, navigator, company representative, and facilitator of access to non-public areas. This research focuses on the guide's role as interpreter. However, it is also acknowledged that in practice interpretation is interwind with being the group's social catalyst and conversation motivator and manager (Bruner, 2005; Holloway, 1981).

Interpretation – as part of the activities performed by tour guides – is another much-debated topic, arguably tangled with ethical and political aspects of the tourism industry. As Pond (1993) suggests, ethics became a more prevalent issue the more tour guiding started being popular as a career choice. It is the power of the tour guides which scholars find intriguing. Holloway claims that tour guides are like 'culture brokers' (1981: 387) as they stand between the tourists and their hosts and can, therefore, play a positive role in initiating the tourists into the local culture (see also Macdonald, 2006; Weiler and Black, 2015). And Hu and Wall (2012) propose that tour guides could play a significant role in promoting economic and socio-cultural sustainability of the site and the local community. Contrary to that optimistic view, however, Pearce (1984) points to the ethically adverse effects of tour guide

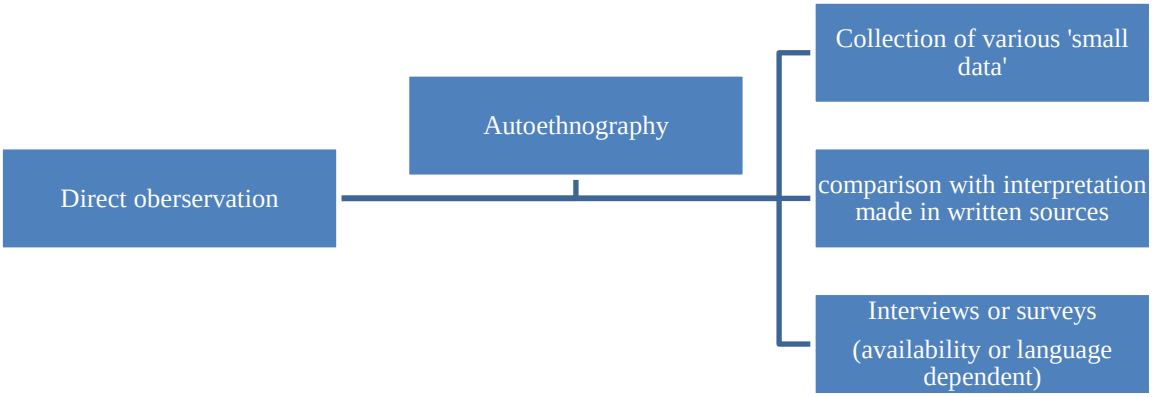
interpretation, powerful enough, according to Pearce, to depict local culture in a completely false way.

Directly related to the focus of this research, Quinn and Ryan (2015) argue that guides mediating difficult memories face the problematic position of treading a path between the knowledge that tourists bring with them and their own interpretation of a site and story. Tour guides, then, inhabit a position of influence, playing a big part in the tourists' dark tourism experience.

Research methods and methodological considerations

The data collection for this research thus far has employed a number of ethnographic research methods. Direct observation is used as the primary method. This is undertaken by joining with guides to observe them as they work during a tour of usually 4-5 hours. Other methods which are used to supplement tour observation are informal conversations, formal interviews, group discussions during social meetings of tour guides, and the collection of so-called 'small data' (i.e. collecting stories, anecdotes and opinions gathered from personal communication with guides during diverse social situations).

Figure 1: A synthesis of data collection methods



Given the role of the researcher as an experienced tour guide in Berlin, the conditions for undertaking this ethnographic research have already been established. It was also the reason for choosing autoethnography as a research strategy. Cole (2005: 64) argues that: 'The use of the first-person singular is an

attempt to avoid disguising the researcher as neutral'. Furthermore, it was clear to me from the beginning that, consciously or not, I employ the same methods and parameters to decide what and how to interpret dark tourism as my colleagues do. I decided to explore my own tours asking the same questions I ask my colleagues. This concept is support by Ellis *et al.* (2011) who suggest that autoethnographers must look at themselves analytically, otherwise they are no different from a guest on a talk show telling a story.

The two primary methods of data collection – observations and interviews – are categorized according to the topic of the tour for the first and talking about specific sites or stories for the second. Thus, tours observed are the Berlin highlights tour, the Third Reich, the Cold War, the Jewish Heritage tour and the tour to the Memorial Site and Museum for the former concentration camp Sachsenhausen. Whereas, in terms of sites, interviews refer to the Holocaust Memorial, Sachsenhausen, the Berlin Wall memorial site at Bernauer Straße, Checkpoint Charlie, Grunewald (the site of deportation of many of the Jews of Berlin to the ghettos and camps in occupied Poland), the Neuewache (the memorial site for victims of war and totalitarian regimes), the monument for the Block of the Women, and others. In order to fully contextualise site interpretation, a short review of the evolution of each of the main sites on discussion is given.

Emerging findings

In the process of the research, I have completed roughly three quarters of the planned data to be collected (observations and interviews). From this data the following findings emerge.

Tour guide interpretation occurs in the 'tourist zone', providing a unique set of conditions for the guides to work in. Under these conditions, guides must be able to interpret the sites they visit following extremely dynamic set of cultural and social rules which originate neither in the tourist's culture nor their own, nor the destination's.

Three levels of interpretation have been identified (with varying levels of guide control): a) word level interpretation – selecting one word or another to illustrate a point; b) anecdote level interpretation – a small story of 2-5 minutes; c) narrative level interpretation – the whole tour follows a planned story line, certain logic, or perspective.

Assembled from answers given by guides in interviews, a list of 14 parameters were given for choosing style and level of interpretation, including for example, group size and prior level of tourist knowledge.

One of the main issues conveyed by the guides was that they are presented with a conflict between expressing their opinion, especially on topics which relate to current affairs, and providing customer service.

A topic that came up in almost every discussion with the guides was the need to create an emotional and professional dissonance. In that context, guides also pointed to the difference between interpreting stories of tragedy, atrocity and genocide in the highlights tour - commonly lighter in nature, or in one of the larger memorial sites - for example, the Berlin Wall in Bernauer Straße or Sachsenhausen, where vast majority of guides claimed there is little or no room for light-hearted interpretation. The following table is an example analysis of interpretation.

Interpretation table

	Content	**Voice**
Word	Statistics to prove a point	Short raise of intonation Slow vowel prolongation
Anecdote	The 'what if game'	Monotonous up to 8 minutes Fast speech / slow speech Sad voice Segway to happy voice
	The 'burn time anecdote'	Can be used to mask lack of knowledge on a certain topic, or to divert attention from a political or otherwise sensitive topic. Done by starting a short story, leading with a key word from the previous topic to a topic the guide knows about, then telling a longer anecdote about this topic.
	Interpretation strategy to argue a point by showing several opposing points – "the analysis"	This strategy achieves the need to express the guide's political opinion without being blunt about it. Rather, the guide is showing that they are aware of other, perhaps opposing opinions.
Narrative	'Feed the tourists', 'coming to terms', 'correcting perspectives', etc.	

The following section are samples of data at an early stage of analysis. Analysis comments are shown in brackets [].

The Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe – three examples

"This is the Holocaust Memorial, or its official title, the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe, it was completed in 2005 and cost 27 Million Euro. It was controversial for a couple of reasons: first, the name, the Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. As I'm sure many of you are aware, there were many people persecuted by the Nazis, the gypsies (sinti, roma, zigani) communists, Jehovah witness, homosexuals, many different types of people, some people felt, maybe this should be a memorial for the victims of the holocaust, not just the Jews, but the Jews were by far [long vowel emphasis] the most severely persecuted group, 6 million were murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust, they really did deserve their own memorial. So those groups are being remembered separately, too… another reason that it was controversial is that in this block nothing related to the holocaust happened, so some people felt that 27 million Euros will be better used to set up a bus shuttle that would take people to the memorial site for Sachsenhausen, which is about an hour drive north of the city, so they could learn about the holocaust somewhere, where it actually happened, but! If you've made the decision to get on a bus and go to a concentration camp you have already made the decision to remember the holocaust!!! [anecdote level interpretation] but they wanted something central, for all these people who didn't feel they need to remember, they will be forced to remember… and that's exactly what we have here"

"So Berliners, Germans, tourists, they all come to this central location [replying the questions of who is it for? And what is it for?] Only one kilometre from here is the Reichstag, the German parliament, where hopefully a hundred years from now German politicians will remember the holocaust and remember it is their responsibility to make sure this doesn't happen again!" [narrative level interpretation].

So some of you can probably guess, we are standing in the central memorial to commemorate the Jews murdered in the holocaust, the person who designed the monument is the Jewish American architect Peter Eisenmann. Peter Eisenmann asks from us the tour guides not to tell you what to think, and this is exactly what we'll do: I want you to walk inside, and I want us to meet again in five minutes in the exact opposite corner… try to think what this place can symbolise for us? What feelings do you experience when you walk inside?"

[after meeting the group again] I call it the central memorial; can you guess why? I call it the central because this is the official memorial. All other memorials were built by the initiative of different groups and was paid by those groups. This one was paid and approved by the German parliament. We have 2,711 stelae, shaped like tombs, the shape, the eight changes. And friends, we have no explanations as to what it means, what you feel is correct. We do know a few things, the number of staele means nothing. We do know that this is an emotive monument rather than an informative monument, the idea is to experience the monument, we're not

walking around to see information or anything else. To me it's important that the monument is always open, we can get out and in, the trees are around, even the edge is part of the pavement, a part of the city… it's a huge thing in the middle of their history, I also find it significant that the monument is in the middle of Berlin, the dozens of millions who walk around all witness and experience the monument. The monument is also right next to the upper house and the lower house and all the representations of the German federal states. Another thing is that we cannot all walk together inside the monument…"

"The Holocaust Memorial was established [built] in 2005. It was designed by a Jewish architect from New Jersey, named Peter Eisenman. Peter Eisenman belongs to a school [of thought] in architecture called deconstructionism, which is something very very modern that says that we should 'deconstruct' – to break what we have in our heads, that in order to really understand architecture we have to experience it ourselves… he says that we should be more active, to accept our feelings, our thoughts, our interpretations, and our [thought] associations in regards of the particular work of art."

"You will see that the memorial looks like a huge cemetery, but with all kinds of heights and sizes, there are many interpretations. Some people say that when we enter the memorial we enter a 'Nazi abyss'; the one Jews went into. And in the time of the Holocaust everything closed in on them. This place which may look like a cemetery, once you go inside it may no longer look like a cemetery at all, rather something more threatening. In the middle you don't quite know how to leave, you lose your orientation. In this weather we won't spend too much time there, but we'll walk next to it, you'll be able to see what I mean."

Various interpretations from the Third Reich Tour

"We are surrounded by almost only new buildings [near Berlin Central Station]. At the beginning of 1945 the red army was fighting its way towards berlin with about two and a half million soldiers… only Hitler did not except the reality of losing the war... if the Germans are not strong enough to win the war, then they should destroy everything! [said with dramatic tone]. For every kilometre lost to the soviets, therefore they should leave scorched land. All German cities that lost should be reduced to ashes… On Hitler's birthday the Red Army surrounds berlin – happy birthday [exclaims the guide sarcastically]. In berlin there are about 70,000 German soldiers left, fighting against 100,000 soviet soldiers flooding the city from all sides. The battle was lost before it even started [intonation rise], but the German soldiers were so stupidly loyal to Hitler that they fought as much as they could to slow down the progress of the soviet soldiers, forcing the red army to fight their way into the city centre block by block, paying a price of enormous casualties."

"Berliners took the destruction of the city with a sense of humour. In the summer of 1945, a joke started circulating: have you heard? The city was once a city of warehouses, here were houses, here were houses…" [anecdote level interpretation, possibly used to show the human side, and to provide a light comic relief before the next stage in the analysis of the story].

"Here we kind of started at the end of the timeline [between Central Station and the Reichstag], but of course we must not forget the beginning [moving towards the Reichstag, making an interpretational segway to talk about the rise of the Third Reich]. Because we have to discuss the main thing that is interesting to all of us: how and why could Hitler get the power that he did in 1933? We're gonna talk about that whilst walking through the new German governmental quarter…"

"All over Germany the Wehrmacht forces were trying to blow up bridges and sometimes it simply didn't work. For example, in Magdeburg recently they renovated a bridge and found a 100 kg of explosives, and they realised it was quite old, from the second world war…. [anecdote level to explain about Malta Bridge]. This is not an unusual problem in Berlin where they estimate 4,000 to 5,000 bombs are buried in different places in the city… Most of the bombs had time fuses that would make them explode two to six hours after impact, to make people afraid to go back to houses… the fuse worked that there was a glass cylinder inside with acid, the glass would break upon impact, and the acid would work its way on the spring, eventually eroding it, causing the bomb to explode. Problem is some of these didn't work and the cylinder can in some cases explode even today. The last fatal accident was in the 1990, bulldozer workers died, and the unions later negotiated higher risk wages."

Tourist question: "would the effects of the war ever be over in Berlin? [the guide giggles sadly] that's a good question… there are ways to get rid of bombs in different places, but it's a question of how much countries want to invest."

"In order to understand how the Nazis came to power, one needs to know what was there before. We need to talk a little about what came before Germany, we need to talk about the *Reich*. The word in German simply means empire, The Nazis said we are forming the third empire, so what are the first two? The first was the holy roman empire of the German nation. There is a joke that says that it was neither holy, nor roman, nor was it even German, at least it was some kind of the empire; one that saw itself as the natural continuation of the Roman Empire."

"The empire was destroyed by Napoleon and the French forces by the beginning of the 19th century. For the most of the 19th century there was no formal Reich. A change happened at the end of the 19th century. Here, there was one of the kingdoms of the previous empire, a kingdom called Prussia. The kingdom was quite small, but [long vowel] through the 18th and 19th century it grew and expanded until the end of the 19th century is included most of north Germany and big parts of Poland, too. Finally, by the 1860s there was a series of three wars, commemorated by the column you can see over there… the first war was against Denmark, the second against Austria, and the third against France, our [the use of the possessive pronoun is noticed by tourists and can be interpreted by them in various ways. The guide is well aware of this] old arch enemy … and for the French war they activated a defence treaty, especially with the southern states, and suddenly for the first time in history, there was a surge of feeling where people felt that now right now, fighting against our arch enemy the French, we're not just Bavarians, Rheinlanders, northerners, Prussians, we are all Germans, fighting against our old enemy, and

our chancellor back then [guide switches to speaking in the first body again] Mr. Bismark, used that surge and united all the kingdoms and towns to what is sometimes called the Second Reich [a problematic statement as First, Second, Third Reich were terms mostly used by the Nazis], second empire, *das Deutsche Keiser Reich* – the German Empire [here, the guide creates an accurate formal naming of the political entity] , with Berlin as its capital."

"The victory column was in the way of the Nazis, so they moved it to be in the middle of the Tiergarten, and put it one level up so it would always be above the trees as it symbolised German victories. The joke was that Nazi propaganda minister Goebels did it so he could always up the lady's skirt. You can imagine what women had to do to get a role in one of the movies Goebles produced. Goebels later left his wife and moved in with an actress he had an affair with. Magda Goebels, who had good connection with Hitler, complained to him directly and he ordered Goebels to stop his affair and make nice with his wife. But should Hitler even care about this? [purposeful anecdote meant to establish ground, illustrate a more important point] The point was that Hitler wanted to present a model family to the German public, for women especially in society, which meant for Hitler, women should be at home make German children, give a child to the Führer [guide uses sarcastic tone to emphasise the cynicism used by the Nazis, and his own distain from this policy], the expand the German people so it becomes the dominant force on the planet. The Nazis actually handed medals to mothers, bronze, silver and gold. And Magda actually got the gold, as she and Joseph Goebels got 6 children together, perfect, blond, blue eyed Aryan Nazis [here, although the guide is using a sarcastic tone, it is milder, as his point is practically common sense to his audience]… [the guide takes a break at the middle part of this story line, to allow the information to sink in, whilst moving to the next interpretational location].

[answering the question why the Jews?] I always tell them that I can answer that, but it's not a short answer… when I really start I talk about the history of antisemitism in medieval Christian Europe, how 'the Jesus killed our saviour Jesus Christ', Jews were often outcast, and people said 'this is your punishment for killing Jesus Christ', actually that explains why Jews were not allowed into parts of society… In the 19th Century with the rise of pogroms and the development of racism, hatred against minorities grew. Hitler then took all of that and combined it to use for his own ends. This is really a very short overview that I sometimes present [when asked by tourists]."

Another guide described how over the years they've perfected an answer to this very complex question. The guide, when asked by groups from relatively low level of historical knowledge, replied that "it is similar to the weather term "the perfect storm". That is to say that the Jews did not do anything for which they deserved the Holocaust. Rather, that it was a historically rare combination of antisemitism in Europe from medieval times, the extreme economic situation poverty most Germans were in, unemployment, and hyperinflation. The fact that the Jews were a known minority if not large in numbers – and therefore easy to target, the fragility of the Weimar Republic, and many other circumstances of the times."

[tourist question] were they [the bullet holes, the 'scars of the war'] kept deliberately? Actually, on the eastern side they simply didn't have the budget to cover them at first, in our days it is done deliberately [leaving the bullet holes or covering them in a visible way]. It is a form of memorial [memorialisation] but also a way to see if the building is old.

"Hitler said to Speer: my dear Speer, when we finally win the war, we will not have to ruin the city ourselves. It shows how Hitler was thinking and also how he still lied to himself that they are going to win - and deserve to - even at that late stage of the war. Speer's contribution to the Nazi war effort as a minister of armaments meant also that Germany lasted longer. Perhaps without him Germany would have lost even six months before [the guide uses the 'what if' game to illustrate how Speer was not insignificant as a Nazi criminal]."
"In 1914 Germany together with Austria started world war one. The youth all volunteered to fight for Germany, absolutely sure that they would come home in 4 months to celebrate Christmas with their families (victorious). Most were eventually killed in the trenches (1 in 3) [here, the guide is using word-level stats, and sad-voice].

Dealing with the past – examples of interpretation

"[explaining about the 1991 monument in Gruenewald] this monument was placed/built here in 1991, just four years after the monument of 1987 we just saw. But what happened in those four years? The Wall is removed and Germany reunites, and if we want to understand how Germany is dealing with its very problematic history we must first understand the two Germanies. As long as there two Germanies, as long as the Cold War is ongoing, the Germanies are not strong enough to deal with the past. Each is stating that the other was a direct continuation of the Nazi Germany. And one can argue that since the German Unification they've not stopped dealing with that. I like to say that – and you can agree with me or not – no people has ever committed such a heinous crime, no people [nation] has even placed such a crime at the centre of their identity; that they are the same Germans of 75 years ago just the opposite. What was then extreme right, would today be extreme left. What was then black is now white, today the Germans are the most liberals, the most pro Europeans, they learn about it endlessly in their schools, there is a lot of commemoration, a person who gets up in the morning to go to work cannot just skip a monument or two…"

"Nazi Germany was de facto deleted. From the leader Hitler to military personnel, people who worked education, street cleaning and bureaucracy. When the US and UK established the BRD they wanted to create a new country, but of course no German speakers in the UK and US wanted to go back to Germany, so they had to use many people with Nazi background for a variety of jobs (including in the political, legal and educational systems). If people committed crimes, you can imagine they didn't want to talk about the crimes of the war at all. People who did not commit any crimes, did not want to talk about that, either. These accounted for about 40 Million Germans who did not commit any crimes but did not resist either. In the 1950s in West Germany (the BRD) most people did not want to say anything,

and young people were often instructed not to ask. All that started to change in the 1960s. Partly, it was the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, widely reported in West German newspapers. However, it was also social movements in the US and elsewhere, changing the way society treats women, gay people, and black people. That started changing things in West Germany, too. Society was shaken and people started to talk. The change was gradual, reaching a level in the 1990s where people study about the Holocaust in Germany in school all the time. In fact, many people of my age group, born in the 1970s already learned about the Holocaust several times and are today well informed on historical facts, and also family stories.

Conclusion

For the completion of the research I plan on conducting up to 50 observations (I have observed 36 tours by the time this article was written) and another 10 interviews. Furthermore, the more advanced stage of writing up the findings aims at analysing and describing the nuance of the three levels of interpretations.

In addition to that there will be focus on professional and emotional dissonance. In other words, I would like to go deeper in exploring the guide's way to 'playing' between their need to interpret stories in a certain way, according to what they know and believe to what they think they need to tell their guests.

The more my research progressed the more guides spoke to me about their ways of dealing with long term psychological impact of interpreting emotionally difficult topics. As the research will continue to evolve, I aim to further analyse the guides' different ways of finding (or failing to find) the balance between creating a dissonance to protect themselves to staying emotionally invested in the topic; a balance that several guides have testified has direct impact on their interpretational style and narrative.

Lastly, guide interpretation of the German Erinnerungskultur (remembrance culture) and of the meaning of memorials and monuments in the city is a topic that came up in many conversations with guides. It is therefore a topic that I will continue to explore and elaborate on at the latter of the research.

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Tourism in post-disaster Japan: Strategies for development in 3 towns after the 2011 Great Eastern Earthquake and Tsunami

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Introduction

This article explores dark tourism affective moments in tours to coastal area of Tohoku, Japan. The region was hit on March 11, 2011 by the Great Eastern Earthquake and Tsunami: a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, a tsunami, and a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The disaster resulted in a dramatic downturn of foreign tourists, who cancelled their trips after the news of possible lingering radiations in the country. However, shortly after the disaster and short-term recovery efforts, some of the towns turned to tourism to help economic recovery, construct memories and memorials that can forge long-term attractions, and educate Japanese and foreigners about the disaster and its consequences on the locals. In this article I offer an initial exploration of affective moments and responses by arguing that the affective facets of dark tourism give insights in how affective bodies can be object-targets for post-disaster place construction through narratives and landmarks, and that, while keeping an overarching theme of 'hope' and 'catharsis', different towns adopt different strategies to develop tourism. Affect has gained prominence as a quality of life that is always other-than-conscious and not easily representable (Pile, 2010, p.8). Affect can bleed into the experience of tourists, locals, tourism stakeholders, but also into narratives of heritage and memory.

To do so, I consider three towns that employ the disaster as catalyst to promote tourism in one of the most rural and overlooked areas of Japan. First is the municipality of Rikuzentakata, which is marketing itself mainly to people interested in the disaster, especially foreigners. The town of Kuji, on the other hand, garnered national attention in 2013 as the set of the popular *asadora* (morning drama) Amachan, which revolves around the traditional local figure of the *ama*[2], or sea-urchin female divers. The tsunami-hit town had been designated as set by the government-owned Japanese National Broadcasting Company (NHK) to boost the dwindling interest of tourists towards *ama*, as well as a means to push forward economic recovery. The third town considered, Matsushima, was a tourism spot long before the disaster, and the most visited spot in the Tohoku region. To attract back tourists fearful of radiations, and cater to tourists interested in post-disaster areas, the municipality merged the historical and cultural narratives of pre-disaster tours with stories and facts about the disaster.

[2] The term ama will be used both in the singular and plural form, as it is in Japanese.

The article borrows from dark tourism studies and geographies of tourism, as well as studies on affects. I briefly outline the theoretical background and the methodology that inform this research, followed by a discussion on the ways in which the disaster has impacted Tohoku, and the plans for tourist development. Finally, I overview the three towns and analyse the ways in which tourism workers at all levels are developing a variety of post-disaster landmarks, heritage sites and narratives, to present an exploration in how affects can inform a new layer of research in such places.

Literature review

During the past 20 years, dark tourism has established itself as a crucial cultural, economic and political phenomenon. The term has unclear borders, and refers broadly to visits to places of death, disaster and atrocities (Foley and Lennon, 1996). It should be considered, as noted by Philip Stone, a brand, a buzzword useful to identify a specific interest in marketing and developing a tourism focus on the death or disaster occurred in the spot (in Baillargeon, 2016). Dark tourism as brand includes a wide and ever-changing variety of sub-definitions based on type of places, motivations, supply and demand factors, as well as providing multiple case studies to compare, contrast, and correlate to current understandings of visits to death and disaster places (see Lennon and Foley, 2000; Stone, 2006; 2013; Tarlow, 2005; Lisle, 2007; Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Cohen, 2011). One category usually included into the broader umbrella of dark tourism is post-disaster tourism, which refers to visits to places that have previously been subject to natural or man-made disasters (Amujo and Otubanjo, 2012).

As media increasingly showcase tragic events in detail, audiences 'familiarize' with disasters, which are perceived as less threatening (Durkin, 2003:47), and in some cases suitable for entertainment purposes. However, media often do not problematize the nuanced motivations and emotions subtending visits to such places, but portray tourists as solely motivated by intrusive and morbid curiosity (Stokes, 2013; Stubbs, 2018). There are indeed moral and ethical dilemmas inherent to dark places consumption, notably when processes of healing and reconciliation are still very much *en cours*. However, these controversial aspects must be balanced 'alongside tourism's more practical function as source of wealth generation that has the potential to help reduce poverty and (directly or indirectly) contribute to social healing' (Carrigan, 2014). Tourism is regularly discussed in debates about livelihoods and resilience in the face of 'natural' and 'human' disaster (Gotham, 2007). It restructures the relational positions of many places in global commercial and social networks (Gibson, 2008), and often produces new economic ventures and opportunities to rebrand places following events of from loss and turmoil (Amujo and Otubanjo, 2012; Medway and Warnaby, 2008). Dark sites' can be pivotal as a means to raise awareness, international sympathy and support for the recovery process (Evans, 2010).

The development and management of post disaster places for tourism is a complex endeavour, in which tourism workers join in an effort to rebrand the destination image of a place (Huan, Beaman, and Shelby, 2004), negotiate narratives on disasters (Hystad and Keller, 2006), and manage the negative perceptions of

potential visitors (Sharifpour, Walters, and Ritchie, 2014). Place perception acquired through media might be more damaging to a destination than actual risk (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty , 2009) and can dissuade tourists from visiting (Pine & McKercher, 2004). In Tohoku, most towns were defined *inaka*, a rural area marked by depopulation, backwardness, and isolation (Ivy, 1995), and excluded by the main tourism routes in Japan. After 2011, some of them put forward plan for long-term recovery based on post-disaster tourism, as a way not only to attract economic revenue and attention for the disaster, but also to create jobs to counter the centrifugal movement of young people leaving for the big metropolis. Post-disaster tourism places are also cradles for the construction of memory and conflicts between the practice of heritage management and tourism (Carrigan, 2014). The issue of remembering tragedy in heritage sites and to whom memory is entrusted, is at the centre of academic debate surrounding truth and appropriate narratives broadcast by dark tourism sites (Stone, 2006). The strategies and plans developed show different purposes and outcomes, while at the same time they share an effort in creating physical landmarks as well as narratives that animate the personal understanding of dark and difficult places.

These intimate, subjective encounters 'inform geographical analysis of material space, its surveillance, governance and affective possibilities' (Bell, 2007), and are crucial to define relationships of power and political implication (Gibson, 2012). During the past two decades, geographies of affect and emotion have received increasing attention (Anderson, 2006; Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bondi and Davidson, 2004; Davidson 2003; Pile, 2010; Thien, 2005), but remain still underdeveloped in studies of dark tourism (Light, 2017). Encounters with death and disaster, however, are shaped by intense felt engagements that exacerbate a number of issues related to affect, especially when this concept, oftentimes thought of as purely abstract (Massumi, 2002), is applied to empirical case studies. In geographical work, affect is broadly defined 'a transpersonal *capacity* which a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of modifications)' (Anderson, 2006, p.735), a moment of unstructured potential that happens outside of consciousness (Shouse, 2005). Emotions can then be seen by some academics as an actualization of this potential (Ngai, 2005), even though many stress the unconstrained borders of affects, emotions, thoughts, and the body (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2016; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). The 'emergent character of affect, however, makes it difficult to pinpoint its appearance empirically It is admittedly difficult to uphold the theoretical distinction between emotions and affect in practice' (Kaufmann, 2016). Against this backdrop, some geographers have introduced the concept of atmosphere (Adey, 2015; Anderson 2009; McCormack, 2008) to target the material, representable conditions of affective place-making. Atmospheres, indeed, can be entered, perceived, attuned to. This notion thus offers a potentially prolific ground for analysis of empirical cases, as atmospheres can come through with a perceivable charge that potentially elicits strong, definable reactions, like hope, empathy, pathos, and pity (Boltanski, 1999).

Context

On March 11, 2011, an earthquake of 9.0 magnitude followed by tsunami waves destroyed seaside hamlets and farmland in several prefectures in North-eastern Japan. The Tohoku region was hit the hardest, with its three coastal prefectures – Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima – shouldering most of the casualties and material damage. The tsunami caused a meltdown and radiation leaks at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, inundated by waves of 11 meters (against the prediction of 5.7 meters[3]). The Japanese population was in shock, and so were audiences around the world, who watched the disaster from the safety of their homes. A few months after the disaster, hotel managers reported the presence of occasional curious tourists and international volunteers (Muskat, Nakanishi, and Blackman, 2015). In 2013 local and national tourism industries, pressured to devise long-term strategies for revitalization, began considering the possibility of tourism to bring people and economic revenue back, advertise recovery efforts, and keep the communities visible. By the end of 2013, the NHK reported 23 tours involving five hundred participants to the nuclear evacuation zones (Good, 2016). However, most rural towns were not tourism destinations before the disaster. Many started small, developing a system of local story-teller tours that merge data about the disaster with personal experiences of the guides or other survivors (McClelland, 2016), as a means to overcome trauma and assist the healing process (Muskat, Nakanishi, and Blackman, 2015).

Presently, disaster tourism has become one of the solutions put forward to contrast accelerated problems faced by several municipalities in the Tohoku region, such as depopulation due to migration in the big cities, backwardness, economic strife (Gasparri and Martini, 2018), and delays in the recovery process. In fact, in 2017 at least 34000 people still lived in temporary homes — mostly prefabricated structures intended to last just two years (Tanji *et al*., 2018). Public and private figures with interests in tourism development in the region today form a complex and often not cohesive network. Institutional actors involved in the recovery took the disaster as an opportunity 'to shape national interests (and possibly even national identity) and try to tilt the balance of history in the direction of their own choosing' (Samuels, 2013), proposing projects and solutions often non-aligned with the needs of the local population, if not in open conflict.

[3] Data acquired from the report "Effects of the Earthquake and Tsunami on the Fukushima Daiichi and Daini Nuclear Power Stations", released on May 24, 2011 by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), owner of the Fukushima Daiichi and Daini nuclear power plants. Available at: www.tepco.co.jp/en/nu/fukushima-np/images/handouts_110525_01-e.pdf

Affective strategies for dark tourism in post-disaster Japan

Rikuzentakata

Walking along the coast of Tohoku, even seven years after the disaster, can be a jarring experience. While many places have returned to a semblance of normalcy, the landscape of Rikuzentakata is still an open wound. As Anthony, a travel writer, recounts:

> "I was initially shocked by how totally empty it was. Visiting the remains of the *michinoeki* (roadside) building and the Miracle Pine reminded me of similar visits to former disaster zones such as Hiroshima. (…) I was still shocked by how flat the town was. It is now just a construction site." (Anthony, 3 August 2016)

Indeed, the waterfront park that once drew local tourists with its white beaches and a forest of 70,000 pines was ravaged by the tsunami that uprooted all but one tree, now memorialized and referred to by international media as Ipponmatsu, or 'Miracle Pine[4]'. The Pine, says one of the tour guides, is:

> "…the most memorable place, the one I am sure the tourists will like most. For me the Ipponmatsu serves as a monument of hope for the Japanese, but also for the foreigners. (…) There are so many beautiful spots that I would like to share with the tourists, but you have seen the place. It's still all washed out. (Marifé, 9 September 2016)

The pine has become one of the most widespread visual representations of the disaster, and a symbol of hope for the town and for Japan. Standing alone where once stood an entire forest, it is the highlight of the tours, a physical landmark of what was lost and what resisted the fury of the tsunami, a stand-in for the Japanese population, who overcame countless disasters. Tourism narratives stress the prominence of Ipponmatsu as affective symbol of hope that tourists can perceive in the encounter with the physical landmark and what it represents. Affect is not yet a coherent, linear, narrated set of emotions (Kaufmann, 2016), and it can be apprehended by tourism workers and tourists as an atmosphere made of landmarks, one's own idea and knowledge and preconceptions about the dark place, as well as tourism narratives that can be politically oriented to shape memory and heritage (Martini and Minca, 2019). Crises, in fact, have the potential to be 'incubators for contending ideas about the past and future' (Samuels, 2013), and mobilize the 'emotional architectures of people' (Baumgartner and Jones, 2009). But the window of opportunity for change, a moment that is profoundly affectively disrupting, must be seized, or it may close prematurely. Rikuzentakata has managed, arguably more than other towns in Tohoku, to do so.

Before the disaster the town had a stream of local tourists interested in the town's seaside, and no foreigners. In 2015, they counted about 420 foreigners, and hope

[4] While international media use Miracle Pine, most Japanese designations refer to the tree as *Ipponmatsu*, or Solitary Pine.

to increase the number ulteriourly[5]. The city recently launched a licensing system for tourism guides to better cope with the translation needs of foreign tourists, while helping local restaurants and hotels prepare menus and signs in foreign languages. These efforts are supported by a cohesive strategy, embraced first of all by Mayor Futoshi Toba who saw the potential to turn the pain of its inhabitant in a highly affective and emotional story of loss and resilience, in which not only the closely-knit community, but everyone in the world can participate in. Tourism narratives highlight what the visitors can do to help the locals. Tourists visit the Miracle Pine and are engulfed by this atmosphere of hope and perseverance, as one commentator notes in a Tripadvisor comment:

> "Once you see it, you'll never forget it. Drive nearby or walk to it. It represents the resiliency of the Japanese people. You will be moved being in Rikuzentakata City regardless of the tree, is life. Stop at the gift shop and spend. Have a soft cream and take it all in. Look up about 15 meters and imagine what happened here."[6] (Tie T., 26 June 2017)

This comment mirrors almost to perfection the tourism narrative promoted by the Mayor, who says in an interview:

> Even if people just come here to look at what happened, they'll learn something, form an impression, and take that back with them – which may develop into something more helpful in the long run. At the very least, if they buy even as little as a can of soda while they are here, they're contributing to the local economy in some way. (Bayliss, 2013).

Amya Miller, the American global public communication director of Rikuzentakata, since 2011 acted as channel between the community and English-speaking media. The stories she offered CNN and The Guardian, amongst others, offer a glimpse into the affective regimen that the town wants to portray. As she narrates:

> Another thing that happened…and you can't make these up stories…a boat belonging to Takata high school washed upon the shores of northern California two years later and that became a story, and that garnered news on both sides. And so you take these moments, where you work your ass off and the story takes traction, and once there is a big story, CBS did an exclusive, and a story on the boat, the rest writes itself (Amya Miller, 4 June 2016)

The story has piqued the interest of the media, and garnered attention to the city once again. The boat Kamome washed away during the tsunami, and was discovered in 2013 in Crescent City, California. Humboldt State University professor Lori Dengler, a tsunami expert, learned that the boat belonged to Takata High School in Rikuzentakata. As Crescent City had too experienced a (decidedly smaller) tsunami on March 11, 2011, 'a group of Del Norte High School students were struck by the many similarities between Crescent City and Rikuzentakata, so

[5] Data collected during an interview with a tourism official of the Municipality of Rikuzentakata on September 9, 2016.

[6] https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g1022871-d4441611-Reviews-Miracle_Lone_Pine_Tree-Rikuzentakata_Iwate_Prefecture_Tohoku.html

they volunteered to clean up the boat and return it to Takata High School'[7]. The underlying, affective response these stories are supposed to evoke is outlined in the articles is to perceive the town as a place that welcomes internationals and that favours create cross-cultural communication. The newspaper The Independent called it 'the start of a beautiful trans-Pacific exchange[8]'. A short documentary on this topic was titled 'The Friendship That A Boat Carried'. Other titles all stress the bond created, such as 'Saga of lost Rikuzentakata tsunami boat forges pan-Pacific friendship'[9], or again 'How two schools used the Japanese tsunami to forge a special bond'[10]. The affective layer of this resonates with larger cultural themes of collaboration and hope amidst the most trying circumstances.

Matsushima

Matsushima is without a doubt the most famous tourism spot in Tohoku, and had a consistent tourism flow before the disaster. The town is known for its bay, which is dotted by dozens of small islands with pine trees. Stefan, an informant and founder of the website Japan Guide, says: 'The only towns featured in japan-guide.com that existed before 2011 and were directly affected by the tsunami were Sendai and Matsushima' (Stefan, 16 August 2016). Before the disaster, Matsushima used to draw around 3.7 million tourists per year[11]. On March 11, 2011, while the whole nation watched in horror entire portion of coasts and all its inhabitants swept away, the town survived almost unscathed. The islands acted as a natural barrier, and blocked the waves, so the maximum height ashore was only one metre. Unfortunately, even though the recovery was completed by mid-April 2011, tourists did not return. Alex, a tourist who visited Matsushima just after the disaster, remembers:

> (…) in 2011 I felt that local people were unhappy with us doing tourism. It is strange to explain but I was with two friends, and they also felt the same. In the train for Matsushima people were watching us very suspiciously. It was kind of dark. Not dark, but like, people didn't want tourists, didn't want us to go have fun in their town. … That was my initial perception and I was like wow. You people really don't want us here right now." (Alex, 23 August 2016)

This general mood that he perceived while in Matsushima denotes an affect, something that has not, or not yet, been made explicit through symbols, experiences and non-intentional communication (Clough, 2008). Affect is found in

[7] https://vimeo.com/90806546

[8] https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/the-extraordinary-voyage-of-komame-how-a-tsunami-boat-washed-up-in-the-us-was-returned-to-japan-by-a6723346.html

[9] https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2016/03/13/how-tos/saga-lost-rikuzentakata-tsunami-boat-forges-pan-pacific-friendship/#.W2ccJH59ijQ

[10] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/a-sister-school-exchange-with-a-difference-five-years-after-japans-tsunami/2016/02/24/3be4b586-c9de-11e5-b9ab-26591104bb19_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.45cada6d8f4f

[11] https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2011/08/17/national/tsunami-spared-matsushima-but-swept-away-bays-tourists/

intensities and the resonances that circulate from body to body, and that sometimes stick to bodies (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). It is apprehended by Alex in most part through 'non-verbal reactions, physical states, enactments and the unsaid through participant observation' (Kaufmann, 2016). To attract both domestic and international tourists back, Matsushima promotes narratives that integrate the usual historical, architectural tours with elements and stories from the disaster. This way, the town hopes to attract tourists interested in post-disaster travels while keeping the focus on the historical and architectural heritage. Here collective memory does not become a discourse that orients tourism, but it is treated as the piece of a puzzle that adds to the atmosphere of the place and that it is continuously performed (Rigney, 2008). Tours provide an outlet for performing memories for those who have survived and for those who are visiting, as there are no monuments for the disaster. Even in the few places affected by the tsunami, the physical value of the event is not present, or has been memorialized in a discrete way. The tour narratives included in the post-2011 tour guidelines have a positive undertone and are aimed at showing how lucky the town was: lucky because the islands protected it; lucky because it already had a tourism circuit to fall back on; and lucky because of all the international help it received. Two of the most popular stories are told at Zuiganji, the main temple of Matsushima, where construction works along the long walkway at the entrance have been going on for six years. The walkway used to be surrounded by two lines of cedar trees, planted by Date Masamune, the samurai lord revered in the whole Tohoku. As Roger, an American tourism worker of the Municipality of Matsushima, recalls:

> Matsushima is not just pretty temples. Why is it the temple so beautiful? Because the samurai ruler had this crazy ambition… he wanted to make this the strongest part of Japan, he brought wood and craftsmen all the way from Kyoto, he helped them build it himself. He had a vision of cedar trees between the temple and the ocean, and then the full moon would rise between them and illuminate the temple. Let's tell his story. And then to me the tsunami is part of that, so that's just one example. (Roger, Matsushima, 12 May, 2016)

The salt water of the waves, in fact, killed all the cedars, and now only a small sign in Japanese remains to tell the story. The temple was also one of the main shelters for tourists during the disaster. When the tsunami hit the coast, tourists and locals evacuated to the temple, as it has been built like a Japanese castle, a fortress that can sustain attacks and has a source of natural sweet water and it is used to store rice. Even in an emergency, Zuiganji could still provide food, water and shelter for locals as well as tourists. The tourism workers in the area are constructing affective atmosphere and attuning visitors to them not by creating physical heritage, but by taking tourists by the hand and painting for them a picture that offers a parable on impermanence and the stoic peaceful resistance and resilience of the Japanese population. For post-disaster tourism, it is not always necessary to create separate tourism circuits, or to have show-stopping narratives that attract international media attention. For some towns, it can be a more subtle affective charge that is brought up by tourism workers to enhance the 'background hum' of atmospheric attunements, of the little worlds entangled in the noise of everyday life (Gandy, 2017).

Kuji

Kuji is located in the northern coast of the Iwate prefecture, and before 2013 was known for its amber deposits and traditional *ama*, female divers that collect sea-urchin, abalone, and other shellfish without using breathing aids. In 2011, the tsunami waves reached almost 27 metres in the area around Kuji, causing massive damage to constructions and ravaging the seabed, effectively making it impossible for years for *ama* to continue their activity. Before the disaster the town received some tourists interested in rural areas and in traditional *ama* diving, but that too came to a halt after March 11, 2011 (Gasparri and Martini, 2018). In an effort to help the process of revitalization, and recover not only from the 2011 damage, but from a slower, more insidious devastation wrought by debilitating demographic and economic forces (Samuels, 2013), NHK (Japan's National Broadcasting Company) designated Kuji as set for the *asadora* Amachan. When the show aired, in 2013, it took Japan by storm, becoming one of the most watched shows in Japanese history. The director Kankurō Kudō, he himself a Tohoku native, declared that he 'hoped that the *dorama* would contribute to promoting a comeback of Japan's more depressed local areas, especially after the Great East Japan Earthquake' (Maynard 2016, p.245).

The 156 episodes narrate the story of Aki Amano, a sullen city girl that finds a purpose when she moves to Kitasanriku (the fictional name of Kuji in the *asadora*) and become an *ama* apprentice. While the disaster only occurs in the last episodes (the timeline progresses from 2009 until 2011), it represents an emotional cornerstone, as it motivates Aki, who has gone back to Tokyo, to return to Kitasanriku and help with the reconstruction. The drama weaves together the personal story of Aki and all the community of Kitasanriku with issues of heritage and memory, as well as rural revitalization. Although humorous in the author's intent, Amachan offers a support to interpret how Japanese media industry re-imagines the landscape to pursue a specific narrative (Gasparri and Martini, 2018). Affect, in the case of Kuji, is constructed through the creation of landmarks that belong to the show, rather than the town of Kuji. By making these tangible and aimed at tourists, the town created a tourism circuit that superimposes the *ama* heritage with the atmosphere of the fictional town audiences all over Japan came to love. In the town there are fliers and posters about Amachan everywhere, a museum dedicated to the show, and a sign in the nearby train station of Horinai reads Sodegahama, the fictional town included in the show. The tours of Kuji include information about the *ama* and the show alike, merging one set of historical narratives with the fictional ones, and culminating with stories about disaster and recovery. Affect becomes a crucial component of the experience as the message received consciously 'may be of less import to the receiver of that message than his or her nonconscious affective resonances with the source of the message' (Shouse 2005). Hence, Amachan's appeal and the affective power held by media rests in a smaller percentage upon their ideological effect, and more upon 'their ability to create affective resonances independent of content or meaning' (Leys, 2011). Places and landmarks of dark tourism are saturated with affects, and become sites of personal and social tension (Bennett, 2012). The way places and objects related to disaster are imbued with affects determines the way they are experienced, mediated and reproduced through media (Bennett, 2012). There is

no obvious, causal relationship, but feelings that travel messily and contingently (Ahmed, 2008). This relationship is also shared by the juxtaposition of the town of Kuji with the fictional Kitasanriku. The show reframes and reimagines issues such as the depopulation movements in the region, as well as the tragic effects of the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Disaster, and superimposes a tone of hope and resilience personified by the protagonist herself. The story arc of Aki, who goes from a sad Tokyoite to a cheerful country girl, calls attention to the atmospheres of rural Japan, and the need to engage with long-standing cultural issue. If a way to recover from the disaster is to stage a permanent show in a rural town (or as permanent as a tourist's attention span), so be it, seem to think the locals.

Conclusions

Narratives of post-disaster tourism rely on affects connected to the disaster, such as hope, pain, catharsis. This paper has presented an insight on how three towns developed forms of tourism somewhat related to the 2011 triple disaster and how the different strategies used mobilize affects, a topic still underdeveloped in dark tourism studies (Light, 2017). In the case studies considered, Rikuzentakata focuses solely on post-disaster tourism to revitalise the town; Matsushima has chosen an approach that integrates narratives about the disaster in the pre-existing tourist narratives; and Kuji relies on the momentum given by the show Amachan. We propose that such post-disaster tourism efforts are based on a set of narrations and practices that are built on and build complex networks of affects. The government, tourism workers, and locals contribute in reframing the disaster for tourism purposes, creating stories that overlap and sometimes contrast the expectations of tourists.

These three places cater to imaginaries, and they do so using affects to engineer specific context and attractions: Rikuzentakata found a powerful symbol of hope and resilience, the Miracle Pine, and capitalizes on it to attract post-disaster tourism; Matsushima integrates stories of the disaster as part of their history and heritage; Kuji revitalized an old tradition to get a tourism flux thanks to the disaster, but not related to the disaster. These towns embrace dark tourism or elements of dark tourism to varying degrees, and with the purpose to preserve memory, create heritage, and keep the towns visible in the eyes of global media so they are not forgotten. This is particularly crucial especially after seven years, where the government is moving fund and workforce to Tokyo to prepare for the Olympics, and the general media and audience found other disastrous events to focus on. In these contexts dark tourism is not morbid and purely motivated by curiosity, but could become a tool for a more long-term recovery, one that preserves historical and cultural legacy.

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What is ATLAS

September 2018

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) was established in 1991 to develop transnational educational initiatives in tourism and leisure.

ATLAS provides a forum to promote staff and student exchange, transnational research and to facilitate curriculum and professional development. It currently has 175 members in 60 countries worldwide.

What are the objectives of ATLAS?

- To promote the teaching of tourism, leisure and related subjects.
- To encourage academic exchange between member institutions.
- To promote links between professional bodies in tourism, leisure and associated subjects and to liaise on educational issues, curriculum development and professional recognition of courses.
- To promote transnational research which helps to underpin the development of appropriate curricula for transnational education.

What does ATLAS do?

ATLAS promotes links between member institutions through regular meetings, publications and information exchange. The main activities of ATLAS currently are:

- Organising conferences on issues in tourism and leisure education and research. International conferences have been held in Canterbury, UK (September 2016) and in Viana do Castelo, Portugal (2017). The annual conference in 2018 will be organised in Copenhagen, Denmark. Regional conferences are also held in Africa, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region.
- Information services and publications, including the ATLAS website and members' portal, the annual ATLAS Reflections, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Running international courses, such as the ATLAS Winter University in Europe and the Summer Course in Asia.
- Organisation of and participation in transnational research projects, for example on cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, and information technology. ATLAS is participating in two major European projects. The Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG) for implementing a new strategic blueprint approach to sectoral cooperation on skills and the INCOME Tourism project to develop soft skills into higher education curricula and to strongly cooperate with businesses.
- Research publications and reports.

What are the benefits of the ATLAS membership?

- Regular mailings of information, updates on ATLAS conferences, meetings, projects, publications and other activities.
- Access to the members' portal on Internet with exclusive access code.
- Participation in the ATLAS information lists for everyone within ATLAS member institutions, as well as for the different Special Interest Groups.
- The annual ATLAS international conference, which provides an opportunity to network with other members.
- Conferences organised by regional sections.
- ATLAS members can participate in a wide range of projects run by ATLAS in the areas of tourism and leisure education and research.
- Members have access to research information gathered through ATLAS
- International projects.
- ATLAS members are listed on the ATLAS website, giving teachers and students easy access to information about member institutions via Internet.
- Distribution of information about member events, programmes, projects and products via the ATLAS mailing list and ATLAS website.
- ATLAS members are entitled to substantial discounts on ATLAS conference fees and selected ATLAS publications.
- Contacts and lobbying through ATLAS links with other international organisations.
- Opportunity for students to take part in an established academic and research network.

ATLAS Special Interest Groups

Members of ATLAS can form and join Special Interest Groups related to specific education and research topics or for specific geographical areas. Special Interest Groups run research programmes and can organise special events and publications related to their area of interest. The current Special Interest Groups are:

- Cultural Tourism Research Group
- Gastronomy and Tourism Research Group
- Business Tourism Research Group
- Cities and National Capital Tourism Research Group
- Volunteer Tourism Research Group
- Events Research Group
- Dark Tourism Research Group
- Heritage Tourism and Education Research Group
- Space, place, mobilities in Tourism Research Group

ATLAS Regional Sections
ATLAS is also represented at regional and local level by sections such as ATLAS Europe, ATLAS Asia-Pacific, ATLAS Africa and ATLAS Latin Americas. The regional sections of ATLAS have developed their own programme of activities and publications to respond more closely to the specific needs of members located in these regions and those with related research interests. Membership of ATLAS regional sections and Special Interest Groups of ATLAS is open to all ATLAS members at no extra costs.

The ATLAS publication series
As a networking organisation, one of the main tasks of ATLAS is to disseminate information on developments in tourism and leisure as widely as possible. The ATLAS publication series contains volumes of selected papers from ATLAS conferences and reports from ATLAS research projects. The ATLAS Tourism and Leisure Review gives ATLAS members and participants of the ATLAS conferences and meetings a platform to publish the papers they have presented. The editing will be carried out by an editorial board / field editors. All publications can be found and ordered in the online ATLAS bookshop at: shop.atlas-euro.org.

Join ATLAS
ATLAS membership is open to bona-fide educational institutions and professional bodies with educational, research or professional interests in tourism, leisure and related areas. If your institution is interested, complete the application form on the ATLAS homepage at www.atlas-euro.org.

How much does the ATLAS membership cost?
Since 2016 the annual institutional membership fee for ATLAS is € 325. For organisations located in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America the fee is € 200 per year.

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Spaces of nature, places of Nature: Exploring tourism encounters with nature
Buxton, United Kingdome
3 June, 2019

ATLAS Africa conference 2019
Tourism and Innovation
Kampala, Uganda
12-14 June, 2019

ATLAS Annual conference 2019
Tourism Transformations
Girona, Spain
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