

Dark Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the research about dark tourism and its concepts and its psychological effects on tourists. Dark tourism is defined as a type of tourism that is associated with death, suffering, misfortune, and tragedy and includes places such as murder sites, battlefields, cemeteries, disasters which are always considered to be fascinating to visit. The aim of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding of dark tourism destinations by analyzing the feelings and emotions of tourists after visiting a dark site. This paper provides a literature review about this product of tourism which thrill plays an important role, and to present dark tourism definitions (concept), evolution, destinations, as well as to introduce typologies and to overlook them.

KEYWORDS: *Dark Tourism, Chernobyl, Dark Tourism Uzbekistan.*

One area of tourism research that that has only recently been investigated by tourism academics is dark tourism. Dark tourism is described as a category of special interest tourism which is often associated with feelings associated with death, disaster, and the macabre. Among the first to connect dark tourism to places of death was Rojek(1993),who explored the popularity of visiting gravesites and places associated with the death of celebrities, that were commercially exploited by tourism operators who were motivated by greed to 'milk the macabre'. He labelled these places as 'black spot' tourism, that he associated with as a means of confronting death in post-modern societies.

The term 'dark (or tragic) tourism' was first used by Lennon and Foley (1996)as, "...the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites" (p.198). However, Seaton (1996) defined than tourism differently as, "...travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death" (p.240). This exclusive focus on death means that than tourism is narrower in scope than dark tourism and he conceptualized it as a form of heritage tourism. That is, for many dark tourists, the main attraction is the historical aspects rather than the associations with death and suffering. For example, holocaust tourism contains aspects of both dark tourism and heritage tourism.

According to Stone (2006), dark tourism falls into seven main types which are described below: Dark fun factories; Dark dungeons; Dark resting places; Dark shrines; Dark conflict sites; and Dark Camps of genocide.

However, Stone he has not considered religious sites such as mausoleums in his typology of dark tourism sites.

This research provides a deeper understanding of dark tourism and investigates how people feel through their emotions after experiencing a dark tourism destination. This research will help tourists to more deeply understand the concept of dark tourism, through an analysis of people's feelings and emotions. The problematic side of this topic is the effect of dark tourism on visitors' psychology has not been investigated much, especially in Uzbekistan among tourists. The gap is

that researchers have investigated dark tourism destinations as war places, murder places, cemeteries, prisons but not mausoleums. For this, the current paper learns the mausoleum (Amir Temur in Samarkand) as a dark touristic destination and peoples' attitude and emotions linked with the site and dark tourism

Dark tourism has become one of the most popular types of tourist visitation in recent years. For example, according to the China Daily (2019) 72,000 visitors visited Chernobyl each year, the site of the worst nuclear disaster in history, which occurred in 1986 in Ukraine. Many tourists are fascinated to visit these dark places of death, disaster and atrocity (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Such sites represent a range of different types of events that include natural and accidental disasters, broad group atrocities, wars, large scale killings or massacres and genocide (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996).

Although more researchers are becoming interested in dark tourism there are still a number of dark destinations around the world that still need to be researched. What is unique about dark tourism is its engagement with catastrophic places; that includes battlefields, prisons, cemeteries that exhibit strong emotions because they involve death, suffering, pain, and murder. Although dark tourism is not a new phenomenon, recently there has been scholarly interest in researching and analyzing dark tourism (see for example, Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Dark tourism has been recognized as a growing phenomenon in the 21st century, from both a demand and supply perspective that relates to the motives of visitors to visit these sites and the provision of on-site interpretation and visitor facilities.

However, very little research has been conducted on the felt experience of dark tourism sites. While emotions have received some attention in dark tourism studies (Biran & Buda, 2018; Buda, 2015a; Nawijn & Biran, 2018; Nawijn, Isaac, van Liempt, & Gridnevskiy, 2016; Picard & Robinson, 2012; Tucker, 2009, 2016; Waterton & Watson, 2014), 'to date only one researcher has explicitly focused on the affective dimensions of dark tourism in the context of travel to dangerous places (Buda, 2015a, 2015b; Buda, d'Hauteserre, & Johnston, 2014)' (Light, 2017, p. 288).

This article builds upon previous contributions to dark tourism (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Biran & Hyde, 2013; Buda, 2015a; Buda et al., 2014; Carrigan, 2014; Light, 2017; Stone, 2012, 2013; Stone et al., 2018). These researchers have encouraged scholars to provide a deeper analysis of dark tourism. Not only researchers but visitors also have a great interest in visiting these places. Some individuals have curiosity and fascination about thanatological concerns (i.e., the study of death and its related phenomena) in a socially acceptable environment that provides them with an opportunity to construct their own contemplation of mortality (Stone and Sharpley 2008). However, some visitors are motivated to visit for scary places and enjoy it. (Wilson 2004). The modern day interest in celebrity, famous places and the development of communication that produces images of violence, war and tragedy, may support an individual's desire to visit such death sites (Lennon and Mitchell 2007).

The recent research showed the sensitive issues at museums (Beech 2000; Miles 2002; Wight and Lennon 2007), the memory of war crime victims (Rivera 2008). According to Urry (2004), this change transformation from murderous site to tourist site is usual, as places of death transferred into places for visitors, and appear new tourist itineraries as a part of dark tourism.

Dark tourism as already discussed are places that are related with tragedy. It is also known as Thanatourism.

Dark and disaster tourism is a new phenomenon in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is a country with a number of dark tourism destinations that have not yet been fully explored.

According to results, most people who were interviewed they have limited understanding of dark tourism maybe because of less development of dark tourism in Uzbekistan. However, there a number

of mausoleums in Uzbekistan, which are considered dark touristic destination, local people are unaware of dark tourism. After some explanations and examples of dark tourism, local interviewees answered the questions. All respondents participated, no respondent objected to give an interview. The main theme of the result is *frightening* and *enjoyment*, which the most respondents answered. Some respondents while answering the questions showed their emotions while sharing the experiences. According to the results of the interview it is founded that dark tourism given adrenalin to people even though it is a bit frightening type of tourism. Some questions were asked and discussed about psychological effect of dark tourism related to mausoleums but just it was stated that mausoleums are linked with *remembrance* not any kind of fear or adrenalin. Even nearly all kinds of dark touristic destinations are linked with *remembrance* of wars, victims of tragedy, cemeteries and family members.

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