Dark Tourism: Understanding the factors that create memorable tourism experience in the case of Millennials

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ASCE: Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe
DMO: Destination Management Organization
MTE: Memorable Tourism Experience
UCLAN: University of Central Lancashire
1. Introduction

My personal motivation for writing my thesis on this topic is that I have been always interested in the tourism industry, in fact, one of the main purpose to study abroad was to be able to discover new places and live different experiences, since a few years ago my interest in the seeking of new experiences increased and then it was when I discovered dark tourism.

What I like the most about this type of tourism is that actually I can educate myself about history and remember the past atrocities, dark tourism is related to heritage and culture, two aspects that I enjoy and are really important when I choose a destination. Recently, I have been in a couple of dark sites as cemeteries, museums and concentration camps in some European countries as Hungary, Germany, Poland, and France.

After visiting all those sites I was sure that I wanted to conduct my research on dark tourism because I find it incredible and extremely interesting, I still do not find the words to describe my experience in being in different dark sites, all I know is those trips have been the most memorable ones.

1.1. Research background and objective

At the moment of choosing a tourist destination, there are infinite options for all types of tourists’ demands, some tourists will choose to spend their holidays at a relaxing beach, visit any famous historical place or go to a winter resort where there are different extreme sports’ offers for the more adventurous ones, but there is also one recent offer in the market that may be polemic for some but definitively is growing in popularity: dark tourism.

This phenomenon is described by Tarlow (2005, p. 48) as “visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives”. The word “dark” for defining this kind of tourism is used to give an emphasis on the association of the place with a gloomy chapter of the history.
Nowadays, there are a lot of attractions for tourists that provide experiences and many of them are somehow associated directly or indirectly with past tragedy as war memorials, museums, concentration camps, abandoned cities, scenes of crimes, prisons, cemeteries, disaster zones, and the list continues.

According to Hohenhaus (2010), there are approximately 800 individual dark tourism sites among 108 different countries.

The tourism industry is recognized as one of the main providers of experiences and one of the principal revenue generators worldwide, and dark tourism is not the exception, in fact, many entrepreneurs take advantage of the recent boom of this alternative tourism and the continuously increasing interest among people. As Lennon and Foley (2000, p. 46) said: “…there has been significant growth in tourism associated with sites of death, disaster, and depravity”.

My thesis will give a better insight of a tourism form that has been present since always but now finally has a term to define it, researches have been done in the past decades about dark tourism, and the world is getting more aware of this new tourism alternative.

Even though we know dark tourism is getting popular and more popular in the present the literature is disjointed and despite the several researches conducted by practitioners and scholars for tourism experience and tourism motivation, we cannot say the same about the niche market: dark tourism, scholars are claiming a lack of information and they are calling for future researches on the two previous aspects of dark tourism.

The present thesis is aiming to recognize the key factors that enable Millennials to have a memorable dark tourism experience. To accomplish this I used in-depth interviews and visual content analysis as methodological tools that suit perfectly the deep thoughts that I wanted to rescue from the interviewees and their memories.

The research questions that my thesis aims to answer with the data results and findings of the empirical part are the following:
Main research question:

What are the factors that create memorable experiences in Millennials in the case of dark tourism?

Sub-questions:
- How can push and pull factors affect the memorability of dark tourism experience?
- What do tangible memories as photographs say about the memorable tourism experience?

1.2. Structure of the thesis

This thesis starts with the literature review where the most relevant definitions by experts will be given, I will explain dark tourism in two context: demand and supply, I will provide a summary of the tourists’ motivations in dark tourism according to conceptual and empirical previous researches, some of the most famous dark attractions and the different classifications will be explained, and at the end the tourism experience economy will be introduced as well.

After the literature review, the theoretical framework will be introduced with some models, concepts, and methods that have been used in similar previous researches and that are important to the development of the central topic of my research.

Next, I will move on to the methodology where the research aim toward the topic will be introduced, besides the reasons why I decided to use qualitative research methods as in-depth interviews and visual content analysis of photographs will be explained as well, in total eight interviews were conducted through Millennials and nineteen photographs were analyzed.

What follows to the methodology is the elaboration of the central topic, the results obtained, and the analysis of them, the research results will be analyzed with the help of the concepts and models explained in the literature review and theoretical framework.
Conclusions will come at the end aiming to summarize the research results and findings of the empirical part. In addition, I will give my point of view and recommendations for future studies in the field.

2. Literature review

2.1. Dark Tourism definitions and concepts

Dark Tourism has less than thirty years since has been intensively studied by professionals but it is not a new phenomenon. The literature reveals that Foley and Lennon (1996) two researchers belonging to the University of Glasgow were the pioneers to mention dark tourism and four years after one of the very first books about dark tourism was available to the public, it was written by Lennon and Foley (2000) being its title: “Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster”.

It is hard to believe that a couple of decades ago no one showed interest on the topic, nevertheless, today we can see dark tourism has created an incredible amount of media and research attention. Articles, websites, social networks, and documentaries dedicated to the term are available online and offline, however, there is still a fragile literature and several aspects remain unknown or not totally investigated (Stone, 2006).

Despite being a fresh term, there are different definitions for dark tourism proposed since 1996 by many authors as (Dann, 1998; Seaton, 1996; Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Walter, 2009). Foley and Lennon (1996, p. 198) have defined it as “the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites”.

Stone and Sharpley (2008) define it briefly as the action of traveling to destinations that somehow are related to atrocity, death, and emotional pain as well with the people fascination with death being this real or fictitious. While Walter (2009) summarizes all the definitions of dark tourism into attractions that intermediate among the living and the death.

Stone (2012) states that dark tourism and death are connected, and the consumption of dark tourism may be a chance to closely see the death of the self. Something similar about
the connection of death, dark tourism, and society is said by The Institute for Dark Tourism Research (2018) where they consider tourists visiting dark sites as a referential point to understand the feeling of society about death.

In the past years, different names and labels have been proposed to refer to “Dark Tourism” (as cited in Stone, 2006), some of them are:

- Black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993),
- Milking the macabre (Dann, 1994),
- Thanatourism (Seaton, 1996),
- War tourism (Smith, 1998),
- Dicing with the death (Dann, 1998),
- Morbid tourism (Blom, 2000),
- Atrocity tourism (Ashworth, 2002),
- Fright tourism (Bristow and Newman, 2005),
- Grief tourism (Slayton, 2006).

2.2. Dark tourism demand

Tourists are seeking for new experiences and dark tourism provides them, there is no doubt that the attention in this niche tourism market has been facing an increase lately that was accompanied by a further increase in interest in dark attractions.

Numbers prove the previous point, in 2016 more than 2 million tourists visited the memorial in Auschwitz¹ (“Auschwitz-Birkenau,” 2018), while the Anne Frank House ² was visited by more than 1 million in 2017 (“Anne Frank Museum Amsterdam - the official Anne Frank House website,” 2018).

Although demand seems to be a very important point for dark tourism there is a lack of literature, Stone and Sharpley (2008) state that despite the contribution of many researchers and academics to the literature to dark tourism, the demand side tends to be forgotten and not equal attention is given as they do on the supply side.

¹ http://auschwitz.org/en/
² http://www.annefrank.org/en/
Farmaki (2013) distinguishes two factors impacting the demand for dark tourism: Needs and motivations.

2.2.1. Motivation in dark tourism

Hudson (1999) mentions that fulfilling the human needs is a very important part of the tourist motivations. The hierarchy of needs by Maslow (1970) has been one of the most used models to understand people motivation and behavior toward many subjects.

Maslow (1970) proposes five categories of human needs: self-actualization, esteem needs, social needs, love and belongingness, safety and security, and psychological needs. He also mentions that once a need for a lower level is fulfilled is when a person can move on to a need in a higher level.

![Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs](Source: Adapted from Maslow (1970))

Even though the model was not created specifically for one single business segment it is useful for tourism, indeed, experiences are positioned at the top of the pyramid (Maslow, 1970).

There has been one attempt to focus the hierarchy on the tourism field, Pearce (2005) suggests a “Travel career ladder” for the tourism needs based on the Maslow (1970)
“Hierarchy of needs”, from the bottom to the top we find relaxation, safety, relationship, self-esteem, and fulfillment.

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) define tourism motivations as aspects that impulse a traveler to the consumption of a certain service or product. Another definition is provided by Nikjoo and Ketabi (2015) who say that motivations are the starting point for traveling and the reason why travelers decide to escape from their routine to visit other sites, they also stated that motivations could help to understand tourists decisions, furthermore, visitor motivations is also a key point to recognize new market segments (Park and Yoon, 2009).

There have been a couple of scholars’ empirical and academic conceptual researches over the dark tourism motivations in the past years, nevertheless, due to the broad of the term and the diversity of the supply side it is hard to find specific motivations, however, Table 1 summarizes the different findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 1: Compilation of dark tourism motivations (own chart)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Escape from a perceived mundane environment; exploration and evaluation of self; relaxation; prestige; regression; enhancement of kinship relationships; and facilitation of social interaction” (Crompton, 1979, p. 416).</td>
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<td>“Safety, convenience and amenities, nature and scenery, and history/culture and experience” (Ryan and Kohli, 2006, p. 223).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pilgrimage, special interest, validation and (morbid) curiosity” (Dunkley, 2007, p. 386).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“See it to believe it, learning and understanding, famous death tourist attractions and emotional heritage experience” (Biran, Poria, and Oren, 2011, p. 830).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Curiosity, novelty seeking”, “cultural heritage and identity, death and dying, remembrance, education, location, and artifacts and exhibits” (Gaya, 2013, p. 54).</td>
</tr>
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There is one study that was done by The Ostelea School of Tourism and Hospitality (2017) aiming to propose the types of a dark tourist according to their motivations and experiences, five types were found:

- The discoverer: It is a very knowledge traveler in their middle age.
- The vital: mostly young well-educated students.
- The vacation-cultural: with a mid-level of education.
- The rural and nature tourist.
- The cultural tourist.

Another attempt to classify a dark tourist has been done in the research paper of Raine (2013) by developing a typology of a dark tourist according to their motivations and using two frameworks (see figure 2 and 3): “The seven dark suppliers” and the “Dark tourism spectrum” by Stone (2006), as a result, nine dark tourists’ types under four theme were identified under the name of “A dark tourist spectrum: perceived typology of visitors” within a “darkest-lightest” framework (Raine, 2013):

- Devotion-darkest: mourners and pilgrims.
- Experience-dark: morbid/curious and thrill seekers.
- Discover-light: information seekers and hobbyists.
- Incidental-lightest: sightseers, retreaters, and passive recreationists.

### 2.2.2. Push and pull factors

This framework was suggested by the researcher Dann (1977) with the purpose of recognizing and classifying the individuals’ motivations into two categories, push and pull, and study the relation among both.
“Push and pull” factors are extremely relevant in how tourists choose a destination, while the push and pull framework have been used as a reference in many researches to understand the tourist decisions, this framework can be also helpful for having a better insight of the travelers’ motivations to go to a dark destination (Norman, 2011).

Push factors in tourism refer to the motives that influence a person to leave their local places and incentive them to travel (Mehmetoglu, 2012), push factors are inherent and internal (Crompton, 1979), such as novelty, desire to escape, and self-esteem (Dann, 1981). As mention by several academics, there is scarcity in the literature for push factors.

Pull factors in tourism according to Crompton (1979) are the motives why a tourist is attracted to the destination and what the destination offers to them, specifically the destination features (Robinson, 2015). Some pull factors are activities, landscapes, sea, shopping (Dann, 1977).

According to Dann (1981) there is a gap between push and pull due that most of the motivations academic studies have been focused on the pull factors, hence one more time we can see that tourist motivations as part of the demand side are not completely researched.

### 2.2.3. The dark tourist’s profile

A tourist is a person traveling to any place different from their typical atmosphere not longer than 365 days for different purposes as leisure, business, and personal motives (World Tourism Organization, 2018).

There are several researches regarding dark tourism but there are not enough academic researches that help to define the dark tourist profile or its typology. The expert in the field Stone (2016, p. 16) assures: "There are no dark tourists to dark tourism sites only individuals who are interested in the social reality of their own life-world."

There is not a specific dark tourist’s profile or classification, however, some scholars have attempted to fill this scarcity of information.
In the study done by Yuill (2003) in *Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum*, the results for the dark tourist profile show the following findings: the age of the dark tourist seems to be divided by two generations, Millennials 18-24 and Generation X 50-54.

The tourists belonged to a very educated category, the majority of them attended to college or the university, more than the 50% visitors were female, and the majority of the respondents’ faith was Christian, and only 5% were Jewish, moving on to the income they can be considered as a group with a purchasing power.

Ten years after, a study in a Memorial Park done by Gaya (2013) highlights the following characteristics of the dark tourist: female tourists were found to be the majority with more than 50%, highly educated tourist 80%, and the faith of the tourist was Christian with 84%. We can see the profile of the tourists seems to be very similar than ten years ago.

Additionally, in the research paper done by Mencfel (2016) it is mentioned that most of the tourists deny to call themselves dark tourists, in fact only three out of sixteen respondents recognized themselves as dark tourists, the reason for that is the majority did not feel comfortable with the term.

Other highlights from Mencfel (2016) investigation are the characteristics of a dark tourist found, they are morbid, curious, show interest in history, the darker site the better, look for authenticity and historical perspective.

### 2.3. Dark tourism supply

The supply approach is one of two approaches the literature reveals for dark tourism. Stone (2009) declares that most of the conceptual and empirical researches have been concentrated on studying the supply.

While Farmaki (2013) reaffirm it by stating that dark tourism researches seem to pay more attention to the dark sites and the supply overall, however, the analysis of the supply side will not be complete if the demand side is not examined (Stone, 2006).
2.3.1. Dark attractions

Dark attractions can be defined as zones that have a thematic related to the macabre and death (Lennon and Foley, 2000). Within the main attractions associated with dark tourism we have: cemeteries, memorials, public execution, natural disaster zones, war museums, concentration camps, and prisons.

The dark attractions have been popular since ancient times, as an example, we can easily take the gladiator games and the way how people in the whole Roman Empire was attracted and entertainment to it, some early time dark tourism attractions were: Gladiator games in ancient Rome, cemeteries, slavery prisons, and middle ages public executions (Seaton and Lennon, 2004).

Nowadays these can be label as the top attractions considered dark in Europe: Chernobyl, Ana Frank house, Belchite, Pompeii, Wall of Berlin, Catacombs of Paris, Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, and London Dungeon (Hohenhaus, 2010).

Dark tourism demand has led to new tourism products development one example of the implementation of a new product is “The European cemetery route” managed by the “Association of significant cemeteries in Europe” (ASCE) that serves as an educational itinerary (European Cemeteries Route, 2018).

The route is a plan to promote the tourism, culture, and heritage in Europe, it is composed of 179 cemeteries distributed in 22 countries with the aim of educating people with guided tours to funerary patrimony and historical places (European Cemeteries Route, 2018).

We can see that dark tourism attractions are really important for the tourism industry and one study done by Powell et al. (2018) for the University of Greenwich shows the relation of the top most visited European cities according to Euromonitor with their dark tourism offer.

The research method used was through the association of dark tourism keywords with the DMO official websites of the city. The ranking result was: London, Amsterdam, Rome, Paris, Prague, Istanbul, Vienna, Barcelona, Milan, and Venice. London leads the ranking with both: greater visitors’ numbers and dark tourism offers, while Paris is the second

11
most visited city but its dark tourism offer made it go on the number four on the list (Powell et al., 2018).

### 2.3.2. Dark attractions’ classification

Over the years several authors have made some good proposal to classify dark tourism into separated categories in favor of getting an easier overview of the term. Hence I have chosen three of the most relevant classifications which are a bit different from each other; one by Seaton (1996), the second by Dann (1998), and the last one by Stone (2006).

Seaton (1996) proposes a division of dark tourism into five categories based on a behavioral perspective of tourists:

- Visit places to observe someone being killed openly for instance executions.
- Visit places where one person or a group of people have died, some examples can be ethnic extermination, mass murder, massacres, battlegrounds, accident scenes, and natural disaster zones.
- Visit places that commemorate victims or pay respect to them as war memorials, commemoration monuments, cemeteries, graveyards, crypts, and catacombs.
- Visit places where a representative meaning of death is found as museums that contain history and morbid information about the events.
- Visit places where tourists can live through fiction the replication of death as plays that represent some specific tragedy while acting or festivals dedicated to past battlefields.

The next classification is provided by Dann (1998) who suggests to divide dark tourism also into five categories:

- Perilous places: They are hazardous destinations from the past or the present-day one example could be a current war zone.
- House of horror: Constructions related to lose and horror for instance dungeons.
- Fields of fatality: Refers to those sites that commemorate disgrace, death, fear, and fame as battlefields, concentration camps, and famous cemeteries, for instance, Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.
• Tours of torment: Visitation of attractions linked to murder, chaos, and violence such as Ghost tours, mutilation tour, and murder tours.
• Themed Thanatos: Museums and memorials with a morbid theme about death and misery where morality is included. Some examples are House of Terror in Budapest and Bloody Sunday monument.

The last classification was named by its author Stone (2006) as “The Seven Dark Suppliers”, he divided the different attractions into seven products according to their percentage of darkness (see figure 3) from the “lightest to the darkest”.

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**Dark fun factories - lightest**

- They are composed of entertainment and morbidity. Most of the attractions charge an entry fee, the most popular are Dracula Castle and London Dungeon.

**Dark Exhibitions - lighter**

- Link to educational purpose with a combination of entertainment and a memorable message delivery. Some examples are: Catacombe dei Cappucini in Italy and The International Slavery Museum, U.K.

**Dark Dungeons - light**

- They are associated with bygone penal and justice codes. Education and entertainment are sold as the main product. Most of them are penitentiaries and courthouses. Some examples are The Galleries of Justice U.K. and The Robber Island in South Africa.

**Dark Resting Places - Mid-range**

- Refers to sites as cemeteries and graves which are linked to commemoration and history. Due to the increasing interest in the death of celebrities it might happen that resting places are transforming into a commercial approach. One of the most popular is Père-Lachaise’s cemetery in Paris.

**Dark Shrines - dark**

- Associated with tribute, commemoration, and respect. Veneration to those who freshly passed away, dark shrines are usually situated near the site of death and they have a low infrastructure. One example is the Gate at the Kensington Palace for Princess Diana of Wales.

**Dark Conflict Sites - darker**

- Represent sites of conflict, warfare, and battlefield, they have an educational, historical and commemorative approach usually present solid political beliefs. One example could be the Battle of Bosworth enactment Weekend in the U.K.

**Dark Camps of Genocides - darkest**

- These are sites where the main subject is mass genocide, violent deaths, and barbarity. Dark camps of genocides are located at the exact site where the tragedy occurred. Auschwitz-Birkenau is the best illustration considering that it is the worldwide evil representation.

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Figure 2: The seven dark suppliers
Source: Adapted from Stone (2006, pp. 152-157)
Stone (2006) suggests a model in a descending order of gradation scale organized from “darkest to the lightest” in order to differentiate the intensities of the dark tourism attractions, this shade scale was called the “Dark tourism spectrum”, the categorization starts with the darkest level where the attraction is located where the death and martyrdom took place and finish with the lightest level where the attraction is associated with death and misery.

Figure 3: A dark tourism spectrum
Source: Adapted from (Stone, 2006, p. 151)
2.3.3. Dark attractions’ management

Stone (2010) explains that due the nature of several dark places and their association with misfortune and disaster there are some internal issues that require a proper examination and comprehension:

- **Ethical/moral issues**: Is it ethical to develop, publicize or offer the dark destination for the market consumption due to the macabre association.

- **Media/promotional issues**: Some dark sites became tourist destinations by accident so they were not developed at a first place for the tourist consumption, it is required a deep understanding of the connection among the site and the role of the media.

- **Interpretation/political issues**: How the attraction is offered and the information provided to the tourists, the interpretation by tourists is extremely important as well the political implication of commemoration.

- **Management/government issues**: The majority of dark attractions are sites where a big amount of people died, hence the management of the destination should be built upon the wholeness of the place, respect, understanding, and commemoration to the victims as well the respect for the locals and their rights.

- **Socio-cultural/thanatological issues**: Modern issues of secularization, individualism and the religious organization's denial in how mortality should be perceived and delivered to the society.
2.4. Impacts of dark tourism

Everything associated with death is already polemic and the term dark tourism might give a negative meaning or connotation. Dark tourism has left two impact groups in the tourism industry and the community: one positive and one negative.

Numerous positive impacts are mentioned, as helping the tourism industry to revive the communities that have been involved in a tragic event (Hermann and Edwards, 2011), educate travelers, give a warning for future mistakes (Bowe, 2014), act as an income generator (Novelli, 2007), emotive benefits for the visitors and the community (Lamott, 2015), and create new jobs as tour operator companies (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004).

On the other hand we have the negative impacts such as inappropriate behavior by tourists while they are in the dark sites, abuse, disrespect, and smiling selfies (Paris, 2016), moral and ethical issues (Stone and Sharpley, 2008), exploitation of a tragedy (Verma and Jain, 2013), and not allow the community to move on (Kim and Butler, 2015).

So far I have introduced the relevant definitions of dark tourism and the different names given to the same phenomenon, the two approaches of dark tourism: demand and supply have been explained in detail.

I have highlighted that there is an inequality of literature available for the approaches according to several authors, and the two impact groups of dark tourism: positives and negatives have been mentioned. In the next part of the literature review, the tourism experiences economy will be presented as well as different theories related to it.

2.5. Tourism experience economy

In experience economy basically suppliers are looking to differentiate themselves from the others with the aim of fighting for the attention of the customers (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009).

The term experience economy also refers when customers are engaged in the events that are staged by the companies and the heart of the consumer are captivated by the
experience, the profits of the industry grows according to if the consumer liked or enjoyed the experience, experiences should be unrelated from services due that the first one focuses on the delivery of an individual and remarkable experience and the second focus on the delivery of an intangible service (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Table 2 points out the differences between services and experiences.

Table 2: Economic distinction
Source: Adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 98)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic offering</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Function</td>
<td>Deliver</td>
<td>Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Offering</td>
<td>Intangible</td>
<td>Memorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key attribute</td>
<td>Customized</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of supply</td>
<td>Delivered on demand</td>
<td>Revealed over a duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Stager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Guest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors of demand</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Sensations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.1. Tourism experience

World Tourism Organization (2018) mentions that there has been a change in the tourism industry and travelers are looking for experiences that are authentic and provide knowledge.

Practitioners, researchers, and scholars have been studied experience delivery, experience creation, experience co-creation, and similar terms for several years, it is a broad term that has captured the attention of many professionals, however, regarding dark tourism experience, the literature exposes a gap.

Volo (2009) reveals that in the tourism field, providing experiences have gained strength and it is an important theme to consider due it is an industry that sells experiences, while Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) consider tourism as one of the main generators of experiences but despite the literature found some authors as Zatori et al. (2018) mention that gaps are found in the analysis of experiences in tourism.
The academics Pine and Gilmore (1999) declare that “experiences” tend to be perceived by each individual differently existing merely in the thoughts of the person that was involved in a spiritual, emotive, knowledgeable, and physical level.

Quan and Wang (2004) propose two dimensions where tourism experiences can be studied:

- Social science approach: focus on the experience perceived by the tourist, the motivation and the offer by the attractions.
- Marketing/management approach: focus on all the facilities related to the attraction that play an indirect role in forming the experience, to mention some there are promotion, infrastructure, transportation, and gastronomy.

Experiences can be delivered at different levels, according to Ritchie and Hudson (2009, p. 112) there are “various levels/types of experiences that conceptually seemed to form an evolutionary trail of experience thinking. This trail involves the basic experience, the satisfactory experience, the quality experience, the extraordinary experience and the memorable experience”.

Furthermore, attempts to classify the experiences have been done, in the case of Aho (2001) he reveals four important types of tourism experiences: Emotional experience, practice experience, informative experience, and transformation experience.

The implantation of phases to create experience have been also suggested by academics, Aho (2001) points out seven phases of the experience development: interest for the experience, connection with the site and experience, be part of the experience, assess the experience, storage the experience, reproduction of the experience, and fortification of the experience through tangible memories.

While the psychology’s academic Larsen (2007) distinguishes a threefold phases process for the developing of a tourist experience: the planning of the trip, do the trip, and tourists recalling the event.

As I mentioned before the tourism industry has suffered a shift on the demand for tourism experiences and according to the research report by the Canadian Tourism Commission (2004) these are the five current experience demand:
• Reach the community.
• Participatory activities.
• Special Access and exclusivity.
• Discover and learn.
• Shared experiences.

2.5.2. Memorable tourism experience

As stated by Tung and Ritchie (2011) memorable tourism experiences (MTE) are considered as the superior experience that any traveler can have. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999) experiences have to be memorable but not all the individuals will live the experience in the same way. Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) point out that people tend to give a higher value to the memorable experiences.

There are four aspects that make an experience to be memorable according to Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1377) “affect, expectations, consequentiality, and recollection”. In MTE individuals are provided by the chance to shape their identity, rising personal abilities and achieve beloved dreams and desires (Mehmetoglu and Engen, 2011).

The importance of providing a memorable experience has been emphasized by several researchers, Kozak (2001) indicates that memory is a primordial internal information source to the individual that help to choose whether revisit the place or not.

Furthermore, Clawson and Knetsch (1966) allege that experiences are only valuable if they are storage and remember in the future, whilst Woodside et al. (2004) say that positive memorable experience will lead to positive word of mouth, which may be positive for the attractions.

Kim et al. (2012, p. 14) came out with the most relevant components to make an experience memorable after reviewing different literature and those are: “involvement, hedonism, happiness, pleasure, relaxation, stimulation, refreshment, social interaction, spontaneity, meaningfulness, knowledge, challenge, sense of separation, timelessless, adventure, personal relevance, novelty, escaping pressure, and intellect cultivation”.

19
Pine and Gilmore (1999) indicate memorable experiences are design based on five principles: a) give the experience a theme, b) try to give good impressions, c) avoid to give bad perceptions or sign, d) provide memorable moments, and e) capture the attention of tourists through their whole senses.

2.5.3. Co-creation tourism experience

Conceptual and empirical studies have focused on co-creation in a tourism context in the previous years, there are some definitions proposed for co-creation in tourism.

Volo (2009) defines it as tourists that co-create the content and the essence in which they elaborate the experience, while Minkiewicz et al. (2014, p. 46) posit that: “Consumers actively co-create their consumption experiences through co-production, personalisation, and engagement”.

Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) affirm that a good co-creation experience should not be focused on the company or product but on the impression left in the consumer, whereas Morgan (2006) says that consumers leave the passive role to become active members and tend to play a role of designers that perform creativity, innovation, and involvement (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009).

Co-creation experiences can be thought in two scopes, the first one corresponds to consumer participation and the second scope of co-creation experience defines the relationship or connection among customers and the event (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

The participation of tourist in the experience contribute to some aspects as long-lasting memories (Larsen, 2007), and increase the value of the experience (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009).

The researchers Minkiewicz et al. (2014) suggest a conceptualization of co-creation according to the perspective of the consumers with three dimensions:

- Co-production: active customer participation and physical interaction.
- Engagement: emotional and cognitive involvement.
• Personalisation: technology, adaptation to the experience, interaction with members of the staff.

Heretofore in this section, I have presented the tourism experience economy, the difference between services and experiences, the different types of experiences, and the experiences process.

I have listed the current experiences demand, furthermore, some factors, aspects, and components that are part of the memorable tourism experience were mentioned as well. In the following section of the present thesis, the theoretical framework will be explained.

3. Theoretical Framework

There have been some empirical and conceptual researches conducted in a similar field of the present thesis topic and research questions, therefore, I have selected the most relevant ones and explained the methodology tools that they used. The following concepts and models are going to be useful for the elaboration of the central topic of my thesis. Table 3 summarizes those studies.
### Table 3: Summary of concepts and models in tourism experience (own chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article’s Title</th>
<th>Author/year</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Welcome to the Experience Economy”</td>
<td>Pine and Gilmore (1999)</td>
<td>Propose a model to analyze experiences</td>
<td>Analysis of literature</td>
<td>Realms of an experience into four E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Aspects of a Psychology of the Tourist Experience”</td>
<td>Larsen (2007)</td>
<td>Propose a threefold idea of the tourist experience</td>
<td>Analysis of literature</td>
<td>Three aspects were proposed to analyze the tourist experience: expectancies, events and memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Understanding and Meeting the Challenges of Consumer/Tourist Experience Research”</td>
<td>Ritchie and Hudson (2009)</td>
<td>Propose a framework to understand the tourist experience</td>
<td>Analysis of literature</td>
<td>Six main streams were found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences”</td>
<td>Tung and Ritchie (2011)</td>
<td>Explore the essence of ME, based on psychological aspects and memory retention</td>
<td>In depth-interviews</td>
<td>Four key dimensions of MEs were found: affect, expectations, consequentiality and recollection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development of a Scale to Measure Memorable Tourism Experiences”</td>
<td>Kim et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Establish necessary dimensions to measure the MTE that can be reliable and valid.</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Seven dimensions with twenty-four indicator were found for measure MTE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Experience-involvement, memorability, and authenticity: The service provider’s effect on tourist experience”</td>
<td>Zatori et al. (2018)</td>
<td>How memorable tourism experience can be enhanced in the on-site context</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Four dimensions of on-site tourist experience were identified: emotional, mental, flow-like and social experience-involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A customer can be involved in an experience in two scopes, customer participation, passive or active and relation to the experience, immersion or absorption, the “Four realms” is a model that was proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) categorizing the realms of an experience into four E:

- Entertainment: the participation of the customers is in a passive way and their connection with the experience is in an absorption’s state.
- Educational: tends to require an active participation by the customers and an absorption’s state of mind.
- Escapist: these experiences contain a higher customer’s immersion and active participation. It is a mix of entertainment and educational.
- Esthetic: when the customers are in an immersion state of mind and passive participation.

Understanding the tourist experience has called the attention of academics and scholars, Larsen (2007) conducted one study with the aim of proposing a framework that can help to understand the tourist experience in a psychological approach, the methodology used was through the analysis of several authors’ previous conceptual researches, as a result, three main aspects were developed:

- Expectancies: motivations, attitudes, emotions, all related to the phase before the trip.
- Events: involves the perception, everything that the tourist feels in the place.
- Memories: to what extent the experience will stay and last in the tourist’s mind.

While the scholars Ritchie and Hudson (2009) also proposed a scheme to comprehend the tourist experience through the analysis of literature, as a result, six main streams are suggested:

- Stream 1: try to describe and understand the tourism experience essence.
- Stream 2: focus on understanding the tourist’s behavior while seeking the experience.
- Stream 3: look for material associated with the methods used in the study of tourism experience.
- Stream 4: this stream aims to discover the specific types of tourism experiences.
• Stream 5: refers to the different levels the experience can be delivered.
• Stream 6: focus on distinguishing between the different kinds of experiences.

Moving on to the memorability of an experience Tung and Ritchie (2011) searched for the memorable experience’s essence regarding psychological characteristics and memory retention. Four key dimensions of MTEs were found:

• Affect: positive and negatives feelings or emotion related to the experience as fear, anger, frustration, happiness, and excitement.
• Expectations: if they fulfill or not their expectations, most of the individuals’ expectations were likely to be influenced by friends, media, and websites.
• Consequentiality: improving relationships, development of the intellect, overcoming challenges, self-examination, and discovery.
• Recollection: after the event if they remember the experience through different ways as story-telling, pictures, and souvenirs.

Furthermore, in the study conducted by Kim et al. (2012) they developed a scale for tourism memorable experience based on literature found and tested it with the information gathering from surveys with open questions with Millennials, the results show seven factors and twenty-four items that are likely to improve the memorability of an experience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>• Thrilled about having a new experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Indulged in the activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Really enjoyed this tourism experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td>• Once in a lifetime experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Different from previous experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experienced something new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local culture</td>
<td>• Good impressions about the local people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Closely experienced the local culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local people in a destination were friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshment</td>
<td>• Liberating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enjoyed sense of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refreshing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Revitalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningfulness</td>
<td>• I did something meaningful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I did something important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learned about myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>• I visited a place where I really wanted to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I enjoyed activities which I really wanted to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>• Exploratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Scale to measure MTE
Source: Adapted from Kim et al. (2012, p. 18)
One of the most recent research about MTE have been published this year by Zatori et al. (2018) in their research paper they aimed to answer how MTE can be improved in on-site perspective, the methodology used was quantitative methods as surveys and one measurement scale, as a result, they discovered four dimensions to enhance MTE:

- Emotional experience: refers to emotions involved, it is evaluated through fascination, enjoyment, inspiration, excitement, and surprise.
- Mental experience: involves mental senses, some indicators are learning emerging interest, and stimulating the need to learn.
- Flow-like experience: the cognitive and emotive value experience that engaged the tourist, it is unique and meaningful, it is measured through meaningfulness escapism, and sense of uniqueness.
- Social experience: this experience focuses on the interaction among the members, the crowd’s atmosphere, the relations within the group, and the participation with employees.

After having presented the theoretical framework with the concepts and models relevant for the discussion of the present research topic, the methodology of the empirical part is going to be the next theme to discuss. The seven factors for MTE found in the research paper by Kim et al. (2012) will be taken as reference for my primary research.
4. Methodology

4.1. Research aim

Dark tourism is a new phenomenon for some and not so news for others, visit places related to death is something not everyone is willing to do, nowadays, there is a scarcity of information on the demand side as Stone and Sharpley (2008) have mentioned before.

The aim of this research is to contribute to what scholars, practitioners, researchers, have been claiming for years, experiences and motivations have remained partially in the dark and not complete investigated.

Components and factors that enhance memorability for tourism experience have been studied in tourism industry overall, however, the factors that create dark tourism memorable experiences have not been totally revealed, this research aims to fill the gap in dark tourism experiences and find the factors that create memorable tourism experiences in a special segment.

This thesis should help futures’ researches to understand tourist behavior and memorability in dark places as well help the attractions to improve the way they create experiences.

4.2. Research questions and assumptions

The present thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

Main research question:

What are the factors that create memorable experiences in Millennials in the case of dark tourism?

Sub-questions:

- How can push and pull factors affect the memorability of dark tourism experience?
What do tangible memories as photographs say about the memorable tourism experience?

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review I made five assumptions:

As mentioned in chapter 2.2.2, “push and pull factors” are considered as a driven force for tourists when they travel, hence, my first assumption was that if the push factors of the tourist to visit these kinds of places are strong enough and they have special interest in this type of tourism then the memorable tourism experience will be stronger.

According to Kim et al. (2012) “Refreshment” is a factor that is likely to enhance the memorability of a tourism experience, thus, my second assumption was that this factor may not affect the memorability of the experiences in dark tourism due the negative and gloomy association.

Kim et al. (2012) revealed seven factors for MTE that suits almost all tourism types hence my third assumption was that in the case of dark tourism I will find new factors that help to create memorable tourism experience.

Stone (2006) have stated that places considered as the darkest in the “Dark tourism spectrum” tends to be more “authentic”, therefore, my fourth assumption was that tourists that visit attractions ranked as “darker” are more likely to have memorable experiences than the ones who visit “lighter” attractions.

Based on the research of Tung and Ritchie (2011) where they claimed “recollection” as an influencer for MTE, my last assumption was that the year of the visit will affect the memorability of the tourism experience, the oldest the visit the less memorable the experience will be.
4.3. Data gathering

The research methods that I chose to gather the information for my thesis were qualitative methods, I applied two qualitative tools as empirical research: one was consumer in-depth interviews and the other analysis of visual content as a secondary tool.

This first method: the in-depth interviews are perfectly adapted to my research question because I wanted to get a deep insight and reliable data from the interviewees. To be more precise, the interviews were semi-structured and face to face, the sampling consisted of eight Millennials, also known as Generation Y, people born between 1980 and 2000 who have been in any dark destination/site.

The reason for choosing Millennials was because they are a big market with special values, attitudes, big purchase power and they will be the travelers of the future, in addition to some previous research such as that carried out by Yuill (2003) revealed Generation Y composes the biggest target of tourists for dark tourism.

The eight interviews were conducted from the middle of March to the beginning of April. I found the sampling through my personal relationships, thus, I personally know all the interviewees, which made the flow of the interviews easier for both, respondents and the researcher, as well as a comfortable atmosphere, the average time for each interview was approximately forty-five minutes.

The interviewees were told that their identity would be anonymous, as well as a brief explanation of the term dark tourism and the purpose of the investigation.

The analysis of the visual content was used for the second part of the research. According to Rose (2014, p. 25) "Visual research methods are methods that use visual materials of some kind as part of the process of generating evidence to explore research questions".

There is a famous universal phrase that says "An image can say more than simple words", and images are everywhere in tourism. For the analysis of the visual content, photographs were examined, the images were collected through the same interviewees, they were
asked to send their three favorite personal images of their previous trip of the dark site in which they have been into in advanced through e-mail or Whatsapp.

It is also important to mention that the three images belong to the same site, in the case that the interviewees visited several dark sites, they were told to choose one of them and select the three images.

4.4. Data analysis

After having conducted the semi-structured interviews with the eight Millennials, I proceeded to analysis them with the help of the following procedure: first a transcript was made of the eight interviews in order to filter the most relevant information for each question and analyze each response, then I created a table with the most significant information of each tourist and the destination/site they visited for further consideration.

To analyze the interviews I used a matrix to set up the similarities and the differences found in the results for the interviewees, moreover, the research findings were highlighted.

Additionally, for the visual content analysis the photographs were examined using several aspects as people on the photo, color, objects, weather, description, relation of the site with the interviewee and some more aspects.

4.5. Limitations

In the course of this research I faced some limitations some of them were:

- The aim of the interviews was to get deep thoughts by the respondents, the information was limited to the number of people selected where I get the information from, in comparison with the bigger data that a survey could give.
- Conducting qualitative research limit the broad of nationalities of the sample, in the case of eight interviews the variety was limited.
• The research was conducted with a small sample and just one age generation, having access to older generations as Baby Boomers and Generation X was limited.
• For the visual content analysis some of the interviewees were not able to find the pictures they took in the destination/site, so altogether only nineteen pictures were analyzed.
• To get a variety of attractions with different degrees of darkness was a limitation.

After having introduced the main research question and supportive research questions to be answered in this work, the next part of the present thesis is the elaboration of the central topic, the analysis of the primary research and the outcomes obtained.

5. Research analysis and results

5.1. Interviewees’ profile

Section A of the interview guide focuses on the general and demographic information of the interviewees, table 4 shows the most relevant data from each interviewee.

Table 4: Relevant information of the interviewees (own chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Hobbies/Fields of interest</th>
<th>Current location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Studying a Master</td>
<td>Travel/history/culture</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Studying a Master</td>
<td>Travel/History</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Studying a Master</td>
<td>Paint/art/history</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>History/music/art</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>Student/Community manager</td>
<td>Studying a Master</td>
<td>Travel/dance/history</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>Travel/music/culture</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>Student/Sales assistant</td>
<td>Studying a Master</td>
<td>Travel/music/culture</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Tourist guide</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Travel/Music</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My thesis research concentrates on one age segment: Millennials, the majority of them were into 25-28 years old conforming the oldest group from Millennials. As the sampling was selected by myself I tried to have an even amount in the two genders so half of the interviewees were female and the other half were males.

All the respondents are well-educated having Master’s degree or currently studying one, except from interviewee No. 8 who has a Bachelor’s degree, this data is similar to previous researches as Gaya (2013) pointed out in her research paper that tourists going to dark sites are highly educated. Many of them were students with a part-time job while interviewees No.4, No.6, and No.8 were the only ones working full-time as professors and tourist guide.

The sampling was rich of South Americans nationalities, the majority of interviewee were Ecuadorians, few of them belonged to Europe but all the interviewees are presently living in Budapest.

We know that income is a very important factor to travel, the majority of the interviewees show to have a monthly income between 300-600 euros while just a couple of them have a monthly income higher than 600 euros, some explained the sources of that income were scholarships and part-time jobs.

In order to have a deeper insight of each interviewee, it is important to understand what fields are important to them and what their hobbies are, many of them said they are interested in music, art, history, and culture, furthermore, the majority of them mentioned traveling as a hobby.

In a study conducted by Mencfel (2016) he points out that the majority of tourists deny to call or consider themselves as dark tourists, and the same happened in the present research, many of the interviewees presented a negative response when they were asked if they think they are dark tourists, in fact, they claimed they do not like to be associated with death.

Some of the answers were:

- “I think it gives a meaning like you like morbidity.” (Interviewee No.3).
• “I would rather be called different than a dark tourist.” (Interviewee No.5).
• “I do not like the negative meaning.” (Interviewee No.7).

5.2. Interviewees’ tourist behavior

The interview outcomes show that the respondents are very active travelers, they used to travel at least once every two months except for interviewees No.6 and No.7 which said they travel twice per year.

The transportation chosen depends on where they go, most of them said “bus and airplane” while “historical places”, and “iconic places” were the most named requirement when they choose a destination besides all the respondents agreed that one important factor to choose their future destination is that it has to be a “new” destination.

Furthermore, when it comes to the company the majority agreed that they travel with friends or family, interviewee No.5 stated: “I always rather travel with friends than alone.”, while interviewee No.7 said: “I enjoy more if I travel with someone else and share the experience with them”.

The duration of their trips depends also on where they go but some defined two ranges “3-5 days” for closer destinations or short holidays while “1-2 weeks” for farther destinations or long holidays.

They were asked to list the previous experiences in dark sites, the results show that the greater part of the interviewees have been in more than two dark sites before, while interviewees No.6 and No.8 revealed they have just been in one site like this before.

“I have just been in one dark site before and it was not in my plan to go there.” (Interviewee No.8).

Table 5 shows the previous experiences of the interviewees in different dark sites and the website ³ of each dark attraction.

³ The website of each dark site was added by the author of the present thesis in the case the readers want to know more information of them.
Table 5: Dark sites visited by interviewees (own chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Previous dark sites visited</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| No.1        | • Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, Poland
              • House of Terror Museum, Hungary
              • The Monumental Cemetery of Milan, Italy | • http://auschwitz.org/
                                                          • http://www.terrorhaza.hu/
                                                          • http://www.turismo.milano.it |
| No.2        | • Kutná Hora, Czech Republic
              • Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Germany
              • Warsaw ghetto, Poland | • http://www.kutnahora.cz/
                                                          • https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/
                                                          • http://warszawa.getto.pl/ |
| No.3        | • House of Terror Museum, Hungary
              • Ushuaia Jail and Military Prison, Argentina | • http://www.terrorhaza.hu/
                                                          • http://www.museomaritimo.com/ |
| No.4        | • House of Terror Museum, Hungary
              • Old Jewish Cemetery, Czech Republic
              • The Monumental Cemetery of Milan, Italy | • http://www.terrorhaza.hu/
                                                          • https://www.jewishmuseum.cz/
                                                          • http://www.turismo.milano.it |
| No.5        | • Hospital in the rock, Hungary
              • State Museum at Majdanek, Poland | • http://www.sziklakorhaz.eu/
                                                          • http://www.majdanek.eu/ |
| No.6        | • Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Germany | • https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/ |
| No.7        | • House of Terror Museum, Hungary
              • St. Marx Cemetery, Austria | • http://www.terrorhaza.hu/
                                                          • https://www.wien.gv.at/ |
| No.8        | • Interpretation Centre of the Battle of Aljubarrota, Portugal | • http://www.fundacao-aljubarrota.pt/ |

5.3. Travel decision-making process to visit the dark site

The interviewees were asked to choose one of their previous experiences in dark tourism in order to understand their travel decision-making process for the specific dark site. The same dark sites were used for the rest of the research analysis.

The eight dark sites selected were categorized according to their degrees of darkness (see table 6) by the author of the present thesis using the models of Stone (2006) as “The Seven Dark Suppliers” and “Dark tourism spectrum”.

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Table 6: Dark sites chosen by interviewees (own chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Dark site</th>
<th>Degrees of darkness</th>
<th>Year of visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum</td>
<td>Darkest</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum</td>
<td>Darkest</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>House of Terror</td>
<td>Darkest</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>Old Jewish Cemetery</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.5</td>
<td>State Museum at Majdanek</td>
<td>Darkest</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.7</td>
<td>St. Marx Cemetery</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.8</td>
<td>Centre of the Battle of Aljubarrota</td>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decision-making process for some interviewees was taken very seriously while for others the visit was spontaneous thus very simple. The ones who organized their whole trip in advanced were those whose intention of the trip was purely to see that specific attraction as the case of interviewees No.1, No.2, and No.6.

One important information of the previous three respondents is that they went alone and spend one complete day at the dark site and dedicated little time to see other attractions not related to dark. “I spent the whole day at the concentration camp, I felt like still was not enough.” (Interviewee No.2), while interviewee No.1 said: “After I spent one day at the dark site, I went to see the rest of the city, but the site was my priority”.

Analyzing interviewee No.8, he recognized he did not organize the trip while his friends did and choosing to visit the Battlefield was randomly and spontaneous stating: “the place was on our way so we decided to check it, the Battlefield was not the only attraction we visited on our trip and it was not our main intention to go there either.”.

The ones who visited the sites because they had free time to fill in their trips hence to see another attraction or was convenient to stop by did not spend more than one hour at the site, some examples are interviewees No.8 and No.7.

“We spent forty minutes in the cemetery and then we went to see more things because we still had time.” (Interviewee No.7).
Comparing interviewees No.5 and No.8 whose made their visit the same year (four years ago), the first one decided to go because she was curious about the place hence she organized the trip with a group of friends while the second did it because it was convenient, interviewee No.5 seems to remember more about her trip than interviewee No.8.

This shows that the year of the visit does not influence directly the memorability of the experience nevertheless the motivation, the travel decision-making process, and the involvement with the experience does.

5.3.1. Push and pull factors

As mentioned in chapter 2.2.2., the forces or motivations of every tourist can be divided into two parts, the “push” and “pull” (Dann, 1977). Infrastructure, famous people buried, specific areas as chambers, beds, know the city, and authentic content were some of the pull factors that interviewees mentioned when they decided to visit the attraction.

“My friends told me there is a dungeon in the dark site and I really wanted to see where people spend their last moments before they die. I was also told they had real voices recorded of the victims” (Interviewee No.3).

While learning, know the history, satisfy their curiosity were some of the most common push forces found in the interview’s outcomes. “I was just curious about the place, many of my friends were there before and they told me about it thus I wanted to see it by myself.” (Interviewee No.5).

The results show that interviewee which strong push factors as getting to know the history deeply and learning about the site, were likely to have a memorable experience than the ones which weaker push factors as curiosity.

In the case of interviewee No.8 he mentioned that he visited the dark site (battlefield) because it was on the way of his trip, so not strong push factor was given hence his experience was not as memorable as interviewee No.1 who claimed: “my main motive to
go to the concentration camp was educational purpose.” therefore she was able to remember and recall great part of her dark experience.

Furthermore the conservation of the originality of the sites’ infrastructure and authenticity of the content act as “pull” factors and enhance the memorability of the experience.

5.3.2. Recollection phase

Buying souvenirs as postcards or magnets, take photographs, get informative brochures, record videos, and share the story to people are some of the aspects of the tourist’s intention of remembering the experience and make it memorable (Tung and Ritchie, 2011).

Interviewee No.8 was the only one who did not get any tangible memory, while the majority took at least one picture and got a souvenir of the site.

Besides interviewee No.8, all the interviewees shared their experience with others after the visit, they share it with friends and family, while some divided thoughts were found when it comes to sharing visual content on social media. Some explanations were:

- “It was not appropriate to sharing on social media I think it is somehow disrespectful.” (Interviewee No.5).
- “I don’t think is something you can share.” (Interviewee No.3).
- “I think you can share this kind of experience but I’m not into social media.” (Interviewee No.4).
- “I wanted to transmit my experience to everyone, not with cruelty but with the message of how important is not to forget what happened.” (Interviewee No.2).

5.3.3. Future intentions

Having future intentions for “re-visit” sites considered dark it is the outcome of a good MTE in dark tourism. The majority of interviewees claimed they do want to visit more dark sites but with some objections. 1) A dark site with a lightest content one example given was Bran Castle, and 2) they will visit a dark attraction not alone but with a group.
Interviewee No.3 rejected the possibility of visit another place associated with tragedy due the experience was too strong for her. Furthermore, interviewee No.2 claimed: “I would not visit one more site of this type because I already know all the dark attractions I wanted to see.”.

5.4. Factors enhancing memorable tourism experiences

According to Kim et al. (2012) there are seven factors that are important when it comes to overall memorable tourism experiences, these seven factors were recollected from a survey conducted from Millennials in different tourism types and were likely to enhance their tourism experiences and made them memorable. The seven factors were used in the present thesis as the base of my primary research.

5.4.1. Hedonism

Hedonism is the first factor mentioned by Kim et al. (2012). This factor is related to the positive feelings as pleasure and enjoyment.

Just one of the interviewee (No.3) do not consider this factor as an important factor in the memorability of her dark tourism experience, her argument was that it is not possible to enjoy this kind of experience and the feelings in the experience were not considered as pleasant for her. Moving on to the answer of interviewee No.8 he said he is not into history thus he did not enjoy it.

The interview outcomes show that the majority of the interviewees agreed that hedonism is a relevant factor to the memorability of the experience. According to interviewee No.2 for him was more than enjoyable, “I found peace while walking there.”, while interviewee No.2 said “I enjoyed the experience that was why it was memorable.” he also stated he felt excitement before the visit.
Furthermore, interviewee No.5 claims that she enjoyed the experience because she was with friends. While the rest of the interviewees claimed they enjoy the experience because it was something different and they were curious.

Evaluation

Kim et al. (2012) combined positive and pleasant feelings like exciting, enjoyment, and interesting below hedonism factor, this factor is easy to find it in tourism related to leisure and relaxation.

The results show that this factor in dark tourism experience is also relevant in order to create MTE, the motivations of each interviewee to visit the site influenced them to what extent they enjoy and feel the excitement with the experience.

Most of the interviewees posit that this factor made their experience memorable due they did something interesting and different. Analyzing interviewee No.8 he claimed he is not interested much in history, it can be deducted that being indifferent to the site and to the event lead to not enjoy the experience at all.

Hedonism can be related to one of the dimensions found in the research paper to MTE by Zatori et al. (2018), as an experience that involves emotions, furthermore, it can also be associated to what Tung and Ritchie (2011) revealed in their study under the “affect” dimension.

5.4.2. Novelty

Another factor that was enquired to interviewees to know if influenced the memorability of their experiences was novelty, all the interviewees agreed that the uniqueness of the site was relevant to their experience.

Interviewee No.6 claimed, “It was different for what he likes to see.”, while interviewee No.4 claimed, “I do not usually visit this kind of places because it was different it is interesting for me.”.
Moreover, interviewee No.1 stated: “It was something that cannot be compared to any previous tourism experience.” while interviewee No.4 mentioned “The site was not created to be a tourist attraction, it is original and hence authentic”.

Interviewees were asked if they would repeat the dark tourism experience, and divided opinions were given. The ones who said yes claimed they would repeat “with friends or with relatives”, while the rest who said no argued that one time was enough to satisfy their knowledge and curiosity. Interviewee No.2 claimed: “I would not repeat because it was very strong to see that.”.

Evaluation

Stone (2006) says that places considered as dark, darker, and darkest in the “Dark tourism spectrum” are authentic, the eight interviewees have been in sites with those degrees of darkness hence that is why all of them agreed that the experience was distinctive and different from any previous tourism experiences.

The majority of the interviewees claimed to enjoy other types of tourism experience related to holidays and relaxing trips thus their visit to dark sites which are sites that have a powerful and shocking content helped the visit to not to be easy to forget. The interview results reveal that this factor does influence the interviewees to have a MTE.

Additionally, uniqueness is part of the novelty factor thus it can be associated with the research paper of Zatori et al. (2018) as one dimension to MTE with “Flow-like experience”.

5.4.3. Local culture

The following factor is related to the interaction of tourists with locals and their culture as well as the impression of the tourists about locals, many of the interviewees revealed that being able to share the experience with locals somehow make it more appealing to them.

In the case of interviewee No.6 he visited the “Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe” he claimed in his trip to Berlin, he got a good impression of Germans. “The
Germans were so open to sharing information about everything, they were not ashamed of their dark past. They were very kind, polite and willing to help you.”, “It makes the experience amazing because I went to Germany having an idea about Germans being cold and unfriendly, but they were totally the opposite”.

Interviewee No. 1 mentioned that her experience was complete due she was able to meet some locals, she visited a Concentration camp in Krakow-Poland, she claimed: “The tour driver was polish, the museum guide was polish, there were also people in the van from different parts of Poland, I got to talked to them in the way to the site they were very smart and kind people”.

In the case of interviewee No.8 his experience was good due to the nice friendly and kind people he found at the place, on the other hand, interviewees No.2 and No.4 said due to the popularity of the place, it was crowded by tourists, they did not get to interact with locals so they were not able to create an impression about them.

Furthermore, interviewee No.3 claimed that get to understand locals was relevant for the experience, she also mentioned some locals still reflected the harm caused by the event in their attitudes while others seem to have left the event behind and move on. Only the interviewee No.7 believes that share with local people is not so important to the tourism experience.

**Evaluation**

As shown above, in the interview results, the majority of the interviewees think the interaction with locals and experience the local culture have a big influence to have a memorable experience. Canadian Tourism Commission (2004) claims that one current tourism experience demand is to get in contact with the local people and join and participate in their daily routines and experiences.

I could identify that interviewees No.2, No.4, and No.7 were not able to have a direct interaction with locals, nevertheless, they did consider this factor very important to affect their experience to be memorable. Tourists are not just looking for acquire new information and see a specific site but they also are looking for getting to know and have
a closer interaction with locals due at some extent they have been part of the event and thus part of the experience.

Furthermore, “Local culture” can be associated with the research paper of Zatori et al. (2018) as one dimension to MTE with “social experience”.

### 5.4.4. Refreshment

The next factor that is considered to enhance the memorability of a tourism experience is refreshment. The outcomes of the interviews reveal that refreshment is not a factor that interviewees can relate when they visit the dark site.

When they were asked if they felt any sense of freedom, rejuvenated or revitalized with the experience these were some statements provided by interviewees:

- “Why would I feel like that? I do not see the connection with this kind of experiences.” (Interviewee No.1).

- “Not really, after leaving I feel sad and down, the visual impact and psychological impact was high, and I got shocking feelings.” (Interviewee No.2).

- “I felt the opposite, I felt sad and psychological tired.” (Interviewee No.3).

- “I felt more negatives feeling, I think that is associated with more relaxing places, like the beach. I felt a little depressed about the things I saw there and shocked.” (Interviewee No.4).

**Evaluation**

Kim et al. (2012) has mentioned that refreshment is a factor that helps to create memorable tourism experience in almost all types of tourism, the interview results show that when it comes to dark tourism, the majority of tourist do not feel refresh with the experience, in fact, they are more likely to have negative feelings as psychological and emotional exhaustion after their visits.
Refreshment as a factor can be considered for different niche tourism as spa, gastronomy, or adventure tourism, but it has been proved in dark tourism it is not a factor that could help the experience to be memorable just because it is not easy to associate tragedy with refreshment.

5.4.5. Meaningfulness

The following factor is likely to enhance the MTE is meaningfulness, which is related to what extent the experience was relevant for the tourists.

All the interviewees agreed that visit the dark site was very important and relevant, “I have never expected that visiting a site of this kind will give so much meaning to my trip.” (Interviewee No.1), while interviewee No.2 stated “It was extremely important all that I learned and did”.

The interview results reveal that the majority of the interviewees considered they discovered something about themselves, mostly associated in the way they see life. “I learned to see that there are worse things than my problems. I found a new mission for my life which is to share my knowledge about the site with people who ignore about its history.” (Interviewee No.2).

Furthermore, interviewee No.3 claimed that she realized to “Be thankful and stop complaining.” while interviewee No.4 said something similar: “I learned to be grateful.” and last “It changed me and I understood to value my life.” (Interviewee No.5). The rest of the interviewees, (No.7 and No. 8) were not able to remember if they learned something about themselves.

Evaluation

According to Kim et al. (2012) tourism experiences tend to be more remarkable and memorable if tourists perceive in their visits that they did something important and significant, the interview outcomes highlight that all the interviewee considered their visit was relevant for them.
Learning about the history and discovering about themselves was considered for them relevant at the moment of creating a memorable dark tourism experience. Tung and Ritchie (2011) also stated that “self-discovering” and “self-examination” belong to one of the four dimension to create MTE.

Furthermore, this factor can be also be considered as a “Flow-like experience” according to Zatori et al. (2018). In the case of this factor, the outcomes show it does help the dark experience to be memorable.

5.4.6. Involvement

The next factor for MTE according to Kim et al. (2012) is involvement, when interviewees were asked if they think they were active or passive participants in their experience, the majority stated they were actives.

Interviewee No. 3 said in her visit to “House of Terror” there was a phone where visitors could hear real call recording from the past event and she felt as an active participant with the experience by “picking up the phone” and “listening to the voices recorded”.

Interviewee No.7 was able to mention that in her visit to the cemetery she had an active role while looking for the graves of famous composers. The rest who claimed to be passives could explain that they were just listening to the guides without asking questions, somehow immerse with the reception of information.

Moving on how they site got them involved many of interviewee highlighted that “having someone to explain you” was the easier way to involved them in the experience, as a tour guide or museum guide.

Interviewee No.2 stated: “They got me involved at the very beginning when they told me the meaning of the words at the doors.” while interviewee No. 3 claimed: “having real material as videos, photographs, and victims belongings is also a good way to get you involved”.
Furthermore, interviewee No.6 stated the significance of being involved with the experience he said: “If you don't get involved you cannot live the experience to its fullest”.

**Evaluation**

As shown above, the tourist involvement is considered as a factor that creates MTE, the interview results reveal interviewees agreed that their experience was involving and hence memorable.

It is said by Pine and Gilmore (1999) that a tourist can be involved with their participation in the experience in different ways as “actives or passives”, many of them according to their active participation can be considered “educational” while the passive ones could be considered as “entertainment”.

This factor can be associated with “emotional experiences” that is one of the dimension that Zatorì et al. (2018) revealed in their research paper (See chapter 3).

**5.4.7. Knowledge**

Coming to the interview results, almost all the interviewees agreed that the knowledge acquired during their visit was an extremely important factor when it comes to the memorability of their experiences in the dark site.

Interviewee No.2 claimed that the knowledge he acquired in the site comes from a “first-hand information” and very different from what they can learn by other channels.

Interviewee No.6 agreed with No.2 saying: “Even though I read about the history of the site on books or internet it is totally different stand in the actual ground where everything happened and have the information”.

“Try to understand” was mentioned by interviewee No.3 who explained that for her is a key point to understand about the history of the place, the culture, and the event that happened there and this just can be accomplished through a deep knowledge.
According to interviewee No.6 the way the knowledge was given was relevant for her experience: “A lot of information and many different ways to get it as tapes, videos, photos, victim’s belongings, and letters”.

Interviewees No.1 claimed that “clarify the doubts” by asking the workers and locals that lived or know better their own history was a plus in her experience, furthermore, interviewee No.3 claimed the knowledge acquired is a way to gain “empathy” with the past events and with the victims.

Just one interviewee (No.5) said that knowledge was not that important in her experience: “I gain more empathy than knowledge, you can get knowledge with movies and books, but at the place, the empathy remains”.

Evaluation

As mentioned above in chapter 2.2.1., knowledge and learning is located in the Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow (1970) on the top of the hierarchy as “self-actualization”.

Considering the results of the interviews it has been revealed that interviewees had the need to learn and understand the history and past event of the site. The source where the information came from was relevant to them, besides the way the information was provided as videos, real images, real scenarios, affected each individual memorability in a great way.

Zatori et al. (2018) have categorized experiences where the individual learns as a “mental experience”, the acquisition process through the information received by the environment, learning, and tools with the use of the different senses.

5.4.8. Other factors to be considered

It is known that every person has its own perception for his own experience, and the memorability of the experience is affected differently than others, the general factors that influence almost all the tourism experiences have been explained, nevertheless, for some interviewees there can be further factors that affected their dark experience to become memorable.
The interviewees were asked to describe further factors that made their experience memorable and that they consider important, some of them mentioned several new considerations. The “outside factors” as weather and general atmosphere was mentioned by interviewee No.7 who could explain that for her it was really important these conditions in her visit.

“The travel companions” was mentioned by interviewees No.5 and No.7 who said the experience would not have been that relevant if they have gone alone or with the wrong people, “infrastructure” was revealed by interviewee No.4, he claimed that is an important factor if the infrastructure of the place is adequate for the purpose of the experience.

Furthermore, “supported educational tools” was said by interviewee No.4, he affirmed that “*It is not enough to have the information but also how the information is given.*”, also “original content” as “*recorded voices from real victims and their belongings*” was claimed by interviewees No.2 and No.3.

The last and not less important “the victims” was suggested by interviewees No.2, he pointed out that get to know the real victim somehow through images and names made his experience memorable.

To summarize we can say the previous factors may not affect in the same way to each person, as I mentioned each individual has its own different experience, but for sure these factors needs to be considered in order to create memorable tourism experiences. Table 7 presents a summary of the results of the interviews regarding the factors that create memorable tourism experience in dark tourism.
Table 7: Summary of MTE factors (own chart)

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<th>Facts</th>
<th>No.1</th>
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<td><strong>Factors that create MTE</strong></td>
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5.5. Visual content analysis

Millennials are a group that has grown up surrounded by technology and social networks, taking pictures for this generation is more than common, it is a way to express and share what they like and their lifestyle.

Photographs are a way tourists can remember their experiences and they can act as a stimulus to repeat the experiences in the future, therefore, it is important for this research
to understand what the photographs of the sites are expressing and saying of the experience.

The interviewees were asked to select their three favorite or most relevant pictures of the dark site they visited and give a brief description of each of them. Interviewee No.8 who visited “Interpretation Centre of the Battle of Aljubarrota” in Portugal did not take any photograph, hence, he was excluded from the visual content analysis.

Altogether nineteen pictures \(^4\) were used for the analysis, the photographs were analyzed with help of several aspects that are shown in Table 8.

### Table 8: Photographs analysis (own chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>People on the photo</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Clothes and shoes belonging to the victims</td>
<td>Clothes, Shoes, Victims</td>
<td>Blue and grey</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Gates to the working field</td>
<td>Gates, Work, Camp</td>
<td>Green, brown, and black</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partly cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Entrance to the camp with the message “Work will set you free”</td>
<td>Door, Entrance, Tourists</td>
<td>Black, white, green and brown</td>
<td>Yes, other tourists</td>
<td>Partly cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Some of the shoes retrieved from the camp as evidence</td>
<td>Shoes, Victims</td>
<td>Black, red, brown</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Entrance to the camp with the message “Work will set you free”</td>
<td>Door, Entrance, Tourists</td>
<td>Black, white, and blue</td>
<td>Yes, other tourists</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Memorial plaque in honor of the victims</td>
<td>Plaque, Message, Jewish, Nazis</td>
<td>Black and silver</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sunny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) All the pictures can be found in an appropriate size in the appendices 8.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.3</th>
<th>House of Terror</th>
<th>Photographs of the victims</th>
<th>Faces Wall Photos</th>
<th>Blue, red, and black</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partly sunny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>House of Terror</td>
<td>The dungeon where prisoners spent their last minutes of life</td>
<td>Dungeons Cell Table</td>
<td>Beige, brown, white, and black</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>House of Terror</td>
<td>War tank used in the war</td>
<td>Tank Weapon</td>
<td>Grey, blue, black, and brown</td>
<td>Yes, other tourists</td>
<td>Partly sunny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>Old Jewish Cemetery</td>
<td>Graves of different Jewish people</td>
<td>Graves Jewish Dead</td>
<td>Green, grey, white, brown, blue, and red</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sunny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.5</td>
<td>State Museum at Majdanek</td>
<td>Watchtower where Nazis controlled prisoners</td>
<td>Vigilance Security Nazis Birds</td>
<td>Green, black, brown, and blue</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partly cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.5</td>
<td>State Museum at Majdanek</td>
<td>Name of the museum in the entrance</td>
<td>Letters Wall Entrance</td>
<td>Black and silver</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.5</td>
<td>State Museum at Majdanek</td>
<td>Rocky entrance to the camp</td>
<td>Rocks Stairs Entrance</td>
<td>Grey, brown, and black</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partly cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe</td>
<td>Six people representing the six millions of people killed</td>
<td>People Photos Jewish</td>
<td>Black, red, white, and yellow</td>
<td>Yes, other tourists</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe</td>
<td>Diary entry</td>
<td>Letters Diary</td>
<td>White and black</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe</td>
<td>Memorial to pay respect to all the Jewish who died by the Nazis</td>
<td>Memorial Jewish wall</td>
<td>Black and white</td>
<td>Yes, another tourist</td>
<td>Partly sunny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After reviewing the nineteen photographs, six categories of pictures that interviewees took the most in these kinds of sites were found. The six categories are:

- Victims’ belongings (shoes, clothes, and personal items).
- Victims’ images (pictures of the ones who were murdered and killed in the event).
- Dungeons (real dungeons where prisoners spent their last minutes before they died).
- Sculptures and statues (to commemorate certain individuals or acts).
- Place entry (as names of the dark site and doors).
- Commemorative plaque (small messages to commemorate the ones who died as a result of the event).

The most common keyword found for all the pictures were: “victims, photos, graves, and Jewish”, most of the keywords are associated with death. The dark colors’ tones predominated in the photos as black, brown, blue, and grey, while bright colors as yellow and green were seen in few of them.

As the pictures show just one interviewee can be seen in the photos, the rest of the interviewees did not find appropriate to take pictures of themselves on the site. There was no object on the photos that belonged to the interviewee, or any travel companions as friends or relatives of the interviewees in the pictures.

Less than the half of the photographs shows other tourists on them, it seems they appeared accidentally on the pictures without being the intention of the owner to take pictures of other tourists.
A couple of photographs shows real faces of the victims, as mentioned in chapter 5.4.8., “getting to know the victims” was a factor that made some interviewees’ experiences memorable, the interviewees that took those pictures could explain they wanted to remember the people who died, people who were like them, normal, and put a face to the label of “victims”.

Original content as diary entries, dungeons, war tanks, clothes, and shoes are seen in several pictures. Some interviewees claimed before that the authenticity of the content was relevant for their experiences.

More than the half of the pictures were taken outdoors, interviewee No.7 mentioned before that “outside factors” as the weather was an important factor in her experience, reviewing her photographs, they were ones of the few that present a sunny and shiny day. While the majority of photographs had a cloudy weather.

Infrastructure as the sculptures, memorial’s design, doors, entry stairs, and different floors of the sites caught the attention of the interviewees and they captured them in a photo. Some of them were iconic symbols of the places as the famous gate in “Auschwitz’” that it is shown in movies and documentaries.

Additionally, some association between the photographs and their owner were found, for instance, interviewee No.2 took a photograph of a commemorative plaque in a language similar to his native language, Spanish, and he said he wanted to show that message to his friends and family.

While interviewee No.7 is a big fan of music, she took a photographs standing on the grave of one his favorite composers, furthermore, interviewee No.1 took a photograph of the concentration camp entry, she stated that it was something that she has seen for years on TV and books.

Even though interviewee No.8 did not have any photograph of his trip to the Battlefield, he was the only one with a direct connection of his nationality and the site, due it was a battle between Portugal and Spain. Neither of the pictures above was associated with the nation of the interviewees.
A couple of the photographs can be associated with “Knowledge” and “Novelty”. Some objects shown in the photographs as an entry of a diary and photos of the victims are a way to providing meaningful knowledge to the tourists, while the war tank and the dungeon leave an impression of a unique and different experience.

To conclude, the analysis of the photographs taken in the seven dark sites has revealed that interviewees wanted to have tangible memories that were associated with a way to remember the victims and commemorate them. Besides the pictures shown that not happy feeling can be projected through them, therefore, there is no one smiling in the photographs.

5.6. Research findings summary

The research findings of the interviews and visual content analysis are the following:

RF1: Tourists do not like to be called dark tourists
The interviews outcome revealed that most of the interviewees do not like the negative association or connotation of the term “dark tourist”, even though they like to visit places considered dark they rather not to be called like that, the same outcome has been presented in other research like the one conducted by Mencfel (2016).

RF2: Push and pull factors affect the memorability of the experience
Stronger push factors as gain deep knowledge and desire to learn about the history of the site influenced more the memorability of the dark tourism experience in comparison of weaker push factors as curiosity. Furthermore, pull factors as the conservation of the originality of the sites’ infrastructure enhance the memorability of the experience.

RF3: The year of visit do not influence the memorability of the experience
The results prove that the year of the visit to the dark site do not affect the memorability of the experience, however, the motivation to see the attraction does.
**RF4: Tangible memories help to the memorability of the experience**
The interviewee who got any souvenirs, postcards, gifts, photographs or shared their dark tourism experience were more capable of recall the whole experience.

**RF5: Involvement, novelty, and knowledge the three most relevant factors**
These three factors were claimed by interviewees as the most relevant factors that made their experience in the dark site memorable, moreover, meaningfulness, local culture, and hedonism were also mentioned.

**RF6: Refreshment is not a factor that creates MTE in dark tourism**
According to the outcomes, this factor does not suit the niche market of dark tourism, the association of feeling free or rejuvenated do not work with this type of tourism.

**RF7: Six further factors that affect the MTE in dark tourism were found**
There are six further factors that affect the MTE: outside factors, travel companions, infrastructure, educational tools, original content, and victims.

**RF8: The visual content analysis reveals the association of sadness with MTE**
The majority of the interviewees did not take pictures of themselves at the site, instead, a lot of pictures of the victims were shown. Interviewees wanted to remember the tragedy and the victims more than “them” being there.
6. Conclusions

The goal of this research was to discover the main factors that help tourists visiting sites belonged to dark tourism as cemeteries, concentration camps, battlefield, disaster zones, prisons, war memorials, and war museums to have memorable experiences.

This research study has one main question: What are the factors that create memorable experiences in Millennials in the case of dark tourism?, and two sub-questions: How can push and pull factors affect the memorability of dark tourism experience?; What do tangible memories as photographs say about the memorable tourism experience?

In order to answer the research questions, seven factors were found in the theoretical framework which are likely to affect the memorability of overall tourism experiences, the seven factors found in the research paper of Kim et al. (2012) are the followings: “hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, and knowledge”.

The methodology used to answer the research questions were eight consumer in-depth interviews and visual content analysis of nineteen photographs. Information about the data analysis and limitation of the research can be found in chapter 4.4. and 4.5.

The empirical research results revealed twelve factors that create memorable tourism experience in dark tourism. The most important for this niche market are six out of the seven already mentioned by Kim et al. (2012): Novelty, involvement, knowledge, local culture, meaningfulness, and hedonism.

One factor that was excluded for dark tourism is “Refreshment”, it was proved that this factor is not present in dark tourism experiences. Further, six more factors were found in the research, being those: outside factors, travel companions, infrastructure, educational tools, original content, and victims.

Moreover, the study revealed the influence of “push and pull factors” in the creation of MTE, the tourists with stronger “push factors” as knowledge and learning were affected in a greater way to have MTE in dark tourism than the tourists with weaker “push factors” as curiosity. While “pull factors” as the conservation of the originality of the sites’ infrastructure and authenticity of the content enhance the memorability of the experience.
Furthermore, it was shown that tangible memories as photographs reflect the essence of the dark tourism experience, the memories that tourists want to conserve of their experiences is related to the commemoration of the victims and to remember the tragedy, more than themselves appearing in the photographs.

The outcome of this research can be used for dark sites to improve the way they are providing experience in order to provide memorable ones and to understand the tourist’s behavior in the dark attractions. This research contributes to fill the gap existing in the demand side of dark tourism that has been claimed by scholars, researchers, and practitioners.

**Limitations and Further research**

Due to some limitations found in this research and to answer further related questions it should be helpful to conduct future research that overcomes the limitations, this thesis is focused on Millennials, that is why it is necessary to conduct further research with other age segments as Baby Boomers and Generation X, due the age can change the perception of the experience, hence, the factors may be different from the ones thrown by this research.

The outcomes of this research were limited to the analysis of the number of interviewees' responses. Further research should be conducted applying quantitative tools as surveys, in order to have a bigger sample of respondents, thus, more answers and ideas.

Not having a variety of sites with degrees of darkness was a limitation, hence, further research should be conducted with tourists that have been in sites considered “light”, the factors that create MTE in “lighter” sites could be different from the ones revealed in this research of “darker” sites.

Another topic that should be researched in the future is the interrelationship of co-creation and memorable experiences in dark tourism.
7. References

Books


**Articles**


Websites


Thesis


8. Appendices

8.1. Interview guide

A. Demographic questions
- Please introduce yourself: Age, educational degree, occupation, and nationality.
- What is your average monthly income from 0-300 €, 300-600 €, and 600 + €?
- Where do you live?

B. Warm up questions
- What are your hobbies and fields of interest?
- How often do you travel? How do you travel? What are you doing during your trips? What kind of sights, places do you like to see? Where? For how long time? With whom?
- Has it ever happened that you visited sights which are connected to death, wars, and tragedy?
- Can you list all of your previous tourism experiences of this kind?

C. Travel decision-making process
- Please choose one the most memorable experience of this kind.
- What comes to your mind about this experience when we start to speak about your trip?
- Please describe the experience with your own words and tell me everything about it which you think to be important.
- Where did you go? When was it? How old were you then?
- With whom have you gone to this dark attraction? How long did you spend there? Was it the one and only attraction you visited during your trip or did you visit other attractions as well?
- How did you organize the trip?
- Why did you want to go there? What motivated you to go there? What was your previous requirement? Did you get the appropriate experience? How did you feel after the visit?
- Did you tell about the experience to your friends, relatives or did u share it on social media?

D. Memories
- Please describe what happens in the picture or what do you remember of the pic?
- Which one of the three picture is your favorite? Why?
- Did you take any other tangible memory from this trip? E.g. Souvenirs, pictures, postcards, videos, brochure?

E. Factors enhancing MTE:

Knowledge:
- Did you acquire new knowledge with the experience?
- What did you learn about the history and culture?
Do you think the knowledge you acquired help the experience to be memorable?

Refreshment:
- Do you consider the experience was liberating or did you have any sense of freedom?
- Did you feel revitalized or rejuvenated with the experience?
- Do you think it could have affected the experience to be memorable?

Local culture:
- Were you able to interact with the local people and culture?
- What was your impression of the local people?
- Do you think it could have affected the experience to be memorable?

Novelty:
- Was the experience unique and different from other tourism experiences?
- Was it a one-time experience or would you repeat it?
- Do you think the uniqueness and authenticity could have affected the experience to be memorable?

Hedonism:
- How enjoyable was the experience for you?
- Did you feel excited during the experience?
- Do you think it could have affected the experience to be memorable?

Involvement:
- Did the experience touch you? How involved did you feel with the experience? How did they get you involved with the experience?
- Were you an active or passive participant in the experience?
- Do you think it could have affected the experience to be memorable?

Meaningfulness
- Do you think the experience was important/relevant to you? To what extent was important/relevant?
- Did you learn something new about yourself with the experience?
- Do you think it could have affected the experience to be memorable?

F. Others
- From the previous seven factors which ones do you think influenced the most your tourism experience to be memorable?
- Were your expectations satisfied with the experience?
- What other factors do you think made your tourism experience memorable?
- Do you consider yourself as a dark tourist?
- Are you planning to visit more dark sites?
8.2. Interviewees’ dark sites’ pictures

Interviewee No.1 - Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum-Poland
Interviewee No.2-Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum-Poland
Interviewee No.3-House of Terror Museum-Hungary
Interviewee No.4-Old Jewish Cemetery-Czech Republic
Interviewee No.5-State Museum at Majdanek-Poland
Interviewee No.6-Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe-Germany
Interviewee No.7-St. Marx Cemetery-Austria