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Morbid Curiosity: Exploring the Ethics of Dark Tourism

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Morbid Curiosity: Exploring the Ethics of Dark Tourism

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Abstract

The role of government in dark tourism is currently unclear. Public sector employees find themselves in a challenging position where they must establish how to deal with locations that have a dark history. Should these places be condemned, have minimal government interference, or have active involvement from government officials? By examining visitor motivation, the aim is to uncover the connection between government and dark tourism from a postmodern perspective with ethical undertones.

A mixed-method approach was utilized with both open and closed-ended questions during the survey process. The quantitative data was run through SPSS, and the way the queries are formatted has resulted primarily in frequencies. For the qualitative responses, coding has flagged reoccurring themes, which were later analyzed. Employing a postmodern intent has allowed for greater insight, even though extensive data limitations were due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the qualitative data was the most telling as they allowed for more in-depth responses. At the heart of the government's involvement in dark tourism is the concept of people.

The findings show that further research needs to be concluded on the topic of dark tourism and government. One can make inferences regarding such a sensitive topic, but it would come off as a personal opinion rather than fact. The role of the investigator is to be unbiased. Without taking liberties, an individual would have no choice but irrevocably state that the study is inconclusive.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dark tourism is commonly referred to as grief tourism and is a subset of the travel industry. Currently, the government's role in the tourism industry is often ambiguous. Punishment, disaster, death, anguish, and violence are all words that could lead to a dark tourism designation; controversies surrounding such sites can spark interest or censure, both domestically and abroad. Negatively, dark tourism can monetize and commercialize the pain and suffering of victims with the added elements of symbolism to reinforce this concept. However, there are good parts to dark tourism as well. Visitors can be the catalyst for enhancing infrastructure, generating revenues, healing, education, and remembrance. Much of dark tourism comes down to interpretation.

Should the government take a collaborative approach to dark tourism management due to ethical concerns? Is it considered ethical to visit places derived from misery, and what exactly are the visitor's motivations? In other words, should the government partner with existing foundations or programs that currently exist? There are situations where the federal government may even own a dark site such as Gettysburg but are the proper measures being taken? Perhaps connecting with additional nonprofits and private organizations may benefit taxpayers.

At the end of the day, dark tourism is a story about people. Postmodernism will be utilized as the framework allows multiple narratives to be examined and questions preexisting truths. What may be justified by one group is unthinkable to another, which can raise many ethical queries. Who defines what is right and wrong? What stories have the right to be told? The United States, much like any other nation, is made of multiple explanations and experiences. By subverting commonly held beliefs, one can examine collective tragedies from a new perspective. As new voices emerge, it is the perfect opportunity to examine the government's role.

The literature review covers dark tourism as a whole and the connection to government based on preexisting data. A substantial amount of data was sourced throughout the years. Meanwhile, the method portion explains the study that was conducted at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The surveys were completed in October 2021, with 147 responses over two days. The goal of the survey was to identify what motivates an individual to visit a dark tourism location and whether the government has an active role in places associated with a collective heritage based on tragedy.

A mixed-methods approach was taken when the surveys were analyzed, as some questions were open-ended while others were more structured. The finding section elucidates the study's outcome, which ends up being somewhat inconclusive due to restraints created by COVID-19. The conclusion of the dissertation sums up the overall study along with ethical concerns that were not covered in the surveys but should still be mentioned. Ethics plays a significant role in dark tourism. A more in-depth analysis could expand the existing academic work and benefit citizens, who, in a sense, own these dark tourism locations as they are often owned by the government or get some form of public funding.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

        While each generation claims to be more civilized than the last, humankind's fascination with death is still very much alive. The allure of the macabre can be seen as far back as the gladiator spectacles that once filled the expansive colosseums throughout the Roman empire. During the Medieval era, public execution became a form of entertainment and continued throughout the centuries (Seaton, 1999). Visitors who were rich and poor in 19th century Paris eagerly visited the morgue near Notre Dame, where bodies were left on display for up to three days unless claimed (Joanne, 1870). Questionably sourced cadavers are incorporated into traveling exhibits in recent decades, and even regularly organized tours monetize national tragedies. Souvenirs are always readily available to be purchased, whether on-site or within a short walk (Stone & Sharpley, 2008).

        Dark tourism appeals to taboo, the unknown, and what is whispered in the night. While researchers disagree on the definition, it has evolved throughout the years. One may be so bold as to declare it is the convergence of the traveler and local in a post-modern consumer exchange relating to the tragic (Lennon & Foley, 2000). There is typically an element of death or disaster synonymously linking a specific location to a collective memory (Light, 2017). People generally relate a particular place to a violent occurrence that they might have witnessed on television, online, or even first-hand. Whether conscientiously or through sheer happenstance, dark tourism sites are devised to invoke an emotional response from the visitor, usually through shock value. A supply-driven industry with no shortage of attractions generated by the elaborate and concise promise that man will inevitably inflict destruction, creating even more dark destinations for future tourists to reconnoiter (Ramlee, Hussin, & Hashim, 2018).

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The implications surrounding misfortune are often complex, reflective of the spectrum of attractions currently available. Terrorism, genocide, war, the economy, general political upheaval, and even the rise and fall of empires can lead to morally repugnant events that become tourist sites. There is almost a paradox in how visitors in the present can observe what might have been the final moments of someone's life through pictures, displays, audio, or even video. It would appear that a chasm exists between past and present, where empathy dissipates as time passes and, by default, decreases ethical concerns (Lennon & Foley, 2000). The question remains whether it is the government's obligation to care for such tragic locations.

Past Literature

By analyzing motivations and ethics, one must break dark tourism into seven commonly accepted subsets: Fun factories, cemeteries and final resting places, exhibitions, crime and punishment, memorials, conflict zones, and sites of genocide (Stone, 2016). A person can think of each of these categories on a scale created by Stone and expanded on by many other scholars in the field. While it is subjective, locations classified as one are considered the palest. They are low on the dark spectrum and by far the tamest of offerings; these types of visits are usually entertainment-oriented (Ivanova & Light, 2017).

A seven would be the darkest of places where the deepest of societal wounds have been inflicted. Touring a mock dungeon would be light compared to the somber fields where a plane recently crashed (Stone, 2012). Why is it acceptable to be jovial at one site but not the other? The funhouse only replicated the dungeon, so fewer negative feelings are associated. An individual imprisoned in a Medieval dungeon existed a long time ago compared to a person who died when Flight 93 was downed. There are fewer connections to someone who existed centuries ago and less objections to tourists being allowed in that place over another. Time heals wounds. Overall,

the palest of visits will generally produce the least negative response as the horror is fake and the atmosphere is festive (Stone, 2006).

An easy way to identify lighter visits on the spectrum would be to look at their marketing. Typically, these attractions are flush with cash and offer some kind of visually stimulating experience. Rarely are the attractions authentic, even if they are based at the locations of a gruesome event. Not to say that information cannot be recounted factually, but that is not the primary motive (Stone, 2016). For example, guides will weave a story of horror while leading guests to the scene of the crime. It is not about narrative but rather the scare; while kitschy, most individuals do not object, ethically speaking, to these types of sites. On this end of the spectrum, there is not much room or need for government intervention.

Besides being entertained, what are some other reasons that people visit manufactured fun factories? A tourist might want to visit London's Dungeon or Castle Dracula if he or she is interested in horror movies and the gruesome. Essentially, people of all ages will visit a fun factory as it is an extension of one's interest. Additionally, discounted tickets, revisiting with someone who has never been, and seeing what the hype was about are other reasons people choose to visit replicated sites of suffering. Regularly, there is a disconnect between replication and death in fun factories as it is about visual stimulation rather than consequences. After all, the artificial scares provide thrill, safety and satiate a bit of perverse curiosity. Some individuals have a more profound affinity and appreciation for the past, but understanding history is not a top priority. Perhaps "there is a need for more attention to the ways in which entertainment can enhance or complement informal learning" (Ivanova & Light, 2017, p. 366).

Cemeteries or final resting places are next on the spectrum of dark destinations, so they are not the palest or darkest offerings. In the 1800s, families would spend the entire day relaxing

in cemeteries. They would picnic with deceased family members in a peaceful backdrop. Eventually, a cultural shift moved people to the public parks. The smaller burial ground became primarily known as places of hushed remembrance (Tomašević, 2018). The larger cemeteries remained open to the public and have seen a flux in visitors in recent decades. For instance, approximately two million tourists frequent Pere Lachaise Cemetery annually (Venbrux, 2010). Everyone from Jim Morrisson to Oscar Wilde and even Countess Walewska, one of Napoleon's mistresses, is buried at this cemetery (Tomašević, 2018).

The shift to attract people back to the graveyards began after World War II, when much of Europe was left in shambles with countless dead. Almost everyone in their 20s or 30s knew someone that fought, died, or suffered because of the war. Regrettably, there were not enough people to properly maintain the cemeteries. A collaboration between citizens and government spurred an initiative of remembrance. If there was a correlation that links the living and the dead, visitors might be willing to help maintain the plots (Lennon, 2000). Loosely, one could state a case for Principal-Agent Theory. The government acts as an indirect delegator or the principal, and the mourners are the agent in maintaining the cemeteries (Lupia, 2001).

Celebrity is the driving force of cemetery tourism as it establishes a more profound connection for the fanbase or anyone with a general passing interest (McLean & Vibber, 2020). Michael Jackson, George Washington, Martin Luther King, Walt Disney, and Sacajawea are just some of the many graves people regularly visit. There is no shortage of public figures that someone might want to see. (Young & Light, 2016). The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the United States and France, along with the Unknown Warrior in the United Kingdom, attract many visitors each year. Other countries may have similar sites, but the premise remains the same: pay respect to the unidentifiable soldiers who have fought and died for their country (U.S. Army,

n.d.). As morbid as it sounds, celebrities die every day, and the more sensational will likely attract greater public interest.

Cemeteries across the globe, from California's Forest Lawn to Dublin's Glasnevin, have responded to the renewed public interest by offering travelers unique opportunities. Many offer self-paced and guided tours on numerous topics, exceptional art displays, and on-site museums with gift shops (Tomašević, 2018). Other options might include lantern lighting, memory trees, grief circles, sketching, birding, tai chi, support groups, and chapel service (Lakewood Cemetery, 2021). While admission to most burial grounds is free, activities range in cost. For example, a public walking tour usually costs around $10-$30, but a customized experience could be anywhere from $50 and up per person.

As infrastructure and profile on the cemetery expand, so do cases of vandalism and theft. Graverobbing and vandalism are substantial ethical offenses; the frequency of occurrence may require authorities to get involved. For instance, Charlie Chaplin's body was stolen for a brief time in 1978. The tombstone for James Dean's grave has been stolen on several occasions. The diamond collar that once belonged to Rin Tin Tin was taken from a pet ceremony, so not even an animal's grave is sacred. The response to such crimes is additional security, fencing, and even site restrictions (Tomašević, 2018). Public administrators may draft legislation that offers sharp penalties for graverobbing or simply disturbing the dead. As for commercializing cemeteries, there seem to be minor concerns.

The famous inhabitants are the present-day draw to burial grounds. There are several explanations for why an individual may want to visit the grave of someone they may not have directly known. Perhaps the desire to mend an individual's flaws or the need to rationalize social-political outcomes is why the dead are memorialized (McLean & Vibber, 2020). As each year

passes, "eye-witnesses of key events are disappearing, and that inter-generational memory transition is on the wane" (MacDonald, 2013, p. 1). In a sense, collective memory is amplified when individuals visit cemeteries (McLean & Vibber, 2020).

Death is no longer ritualized as it has become abstract and private to some degree. The medical industry, including hospices, has made death a personal experience. In past centuries, the entire community may have been a part of the mourning process; the disconnect makes it problematic for some to come to terms with their subsequent passing because they cannot confront death (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). How one chooses to spend their final hours should be up to them and not necessarily a primary responsibility of a public administrator. Overall, the cause of the death and the disruption of the deceased is where government interest would lie.

The third point on the dark spectrum would be exhibitions; these attractions "revolve around death, suffering or the macabre with an often commemorative, educational and reflective message" (Stone, 2006, p. 153). Frequently exhibitions will include body parts, and the most famous is arguably Body Worlds. The exhibition puts dissected humans and animals on display in various positions, such as dancing or even playing cards (Seaton, 2019). The Mutter Museum, the Berlin Museum of Medical History, and many medical museums might find themselves in this bracket, mainly featuring controversial exhibits. These museums have anatomical specimens, samples in fluids, physical instruments, and much more. The spectacle of viewing corpses began in the Renaissance when people watched dissections in what was dubbed anatomy theater. In the Victorian era, embalmed bodies were incorporated into freak shows or side attractions (Durbach, 2014).

When Gunther von Hage premiered his medical exhibit known as Body Worlds in 1995, it popularized corpses being on display once more. The bodies are purposely posed, providing an

almost voyeuristic element (Connor, 2007). Unfortunately, the educational narrative is essentially nonexistent, and the experience becomes about viewing rather than understanding. Children need contextual analysis often lacking in an exhibition (Hibbs, 2007). While gawking at the dead might be distasteful, perhaps the most significant concern regarding body exhibits is the limited supply of parts and how they are sourced. Anthony Noel Kelly was such an individual who was caught stealing human remains in 1997. The sculptor used the body parts that he took for his artwork (Walter, 2004).

While there should not be a need to create a law regarding the trafficking of human body parts, as seen with Anthony Kelly, it is needed. For every person caught trafficking bodies, another is getting away with the crime (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). If one wants to speak to ethics, using body parts for art, profit, or any derivative of two is sacrilege by societal standards. If more cases of such impropriety were brought to the forefront of modern society, there would be public urging to take care of these miscreants.

Moreover, the government may need to be involved in the infrastructure of body exhibition; while similar to fun factories by being commercial, there is a very human component. Again, items of the deceased, body parts, or entire specimens are removed from their place of origin. The product is generally sanitized but still meant to provoke. There is just enough on display so that people question what they see. The line between leisure and learning is frequently blurred (Stone, 2006).

Countries may even have open disputes regarding items on display. For instance, in the nineteenth century, tomb robbers had no qualms about stealing anything from a tomb, as it was a great way to get rich. Ramses I is one of these unfortunate mummies and was on display in a museum in Niagra Falls for over a century under a different name (CBC News, 2002).

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Eventually, the mummy was discovered to be Ramses I through DNA testing and returned to Egypt (World Archaeology, 2004). When it comes to the dead or even body parts, there can be a need for international relations and a savvy government to navigate such tricky situations.

Moving to the center of the spectrum are sites associated with crimes, prisons, and punishment (Seaton, 2019). Overall, these attractions garner some pushback, and a traveler may hesitate to visit. After all, many prisoners were treated inhumanely in the past, and their stories are lost to time. The most challenging component of maintaining a prison as a tourist attraction, besides the upkeep, is telling stories correctly. Also, which prisoner's account should be highlighted? The story of a dungeon belongs to whom (Johnson & Pickin, 2019)? There is insufficient literature on ethical concerns of touring dungeons, so it is assumed that the passing of time accounts for why there are fewer objects compared to prisons, which are in use to this day.

Much like morgues were toured in Paris, the prisons, mental asylums, and even the institutions for the disabled were popular to visit in the early 19th century (Dawes, 2020). Order, cleanliness, accessible locations, and the belief that the institutions could reform prisoners and patients piqued people's curiosity. At one point, New York's Utica Asylum "averaged as many as twenty-seven hundred visitors a year, easily outstripping Mammoth Cave [Kentucky] in attendance, if not fame" (Sears, 1998, p. 89).

Places like Utica Asylum fell out of favor because they did not live up to the Christian ideal of saving the reprobate. One cannot pray away a mental illness. In fact, the asylums and the prisons increased corporal punishment and became more bureaucratic as the years passed (Sears, 1998). Nowadays, people do not generally visit active prisons, but they frequent former places of punishment that offer an eclectic mix of fun and history. For example, the Eastern State

Penitentiary in Pennsylvania hosts weddings, photography sessions, movie screenings, virtual mitzvahs, and most types of micro-events (Eastern State Penitentiary, n.d.).

Visiting former prisons can be educational due to their authentic nature. A portion of grants, donations, and admissions go towards maintaining the structure and the items within. Famous inmates typically get their own guided tour or will be mentioned in passing. Guides will often discuss the history and brutality of the location; the first-hand experience can be edifying. Prisons can play host to commemoration and even have political elements; for instance, a dissident who opposed the government may have been incarcerated at that location (Barton & Brown, 2015). The unfortunate part is that while some people deserved to be in prison, others did not. The most egregious offense these former prisons committed was the treatment of the prisoners. While unjust criminal sentences cannot be undone, they are a stark reminder of what not to do. Legislators can learn from former prisons when creating policies related to prisons.

A crucial issue in the United States is cultural sensitivity. For instance, tribal communities once occupied Alcatraz before becoming a military fort and later a prison. At one point, Native American activists sought reparations and even a cultural center on the island, but then-President Nixon decided to hand over Alcatraz to the National Park Service. While the site is infamous for imprisoning notable people tied to organized crime, such as Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly, there is a lot of history surrounding the former prison (Strange & Kempa, 2003). Many activists have raised concerns about the park service in interpreting the past. While other prisons do not garner as much attention as Alcatraz, they all come with moral conundrums and baggage. Is it ethical to monetize sites associated with crime and punishment as the subscribed sentence is often quite dark?

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Dark shrines are essentially memorials that are "constructed, formally or informally, very close to the site of death and within a very short time period of the death occurring" (Stone, 2006, p. 155). Due to the often turbulent nature of dark shrine sites, they are listed as number five on the spectrum. Shrines capture the attention of media outlets and lawmakers for a short period after the initial tragedy; during this time, there will be an influx of mourners, tributes, and symbolic gestures, some of which are genuine. The initial memorials are usually semi-permanent and hastily built but are created to provide a palatable point of convergence for mourners. Eventually, infrastructure will be constructed, and a long-term monument or museum of some sort will be erected in honor of those who perished (Stone, 2016). Safety would be a major concern of the government.

Katrina National Memorial Museum in Louisiana, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan, and the Ford's Theater in Washington D.C. are dark shrines. Yet, a commonality shared by these locations is a lasting connection to a singular deleterious moment. At one time, these locations might have been known for their food, music, and art, but those memories are now replaced. While many locals may wish to bury the memory, they may have no choice but to profit from tragedy, as their primary way of generating income has gone away (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Furthermore, largescale tragedies produce a sense of foreboding disbelief and anxiety. Shattered is the idea of permanence and safety (Goatcher & Brunsden, 2011). There could be a need for more government funds to be allocated towards mental health as individuals could be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or something similar.

One of the most high-profile dark shrines is the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York City. Since the museum opened in 2001, over 33 million tourists have viewed the exhibits and extensive collections. The museum provides lesson plans, educational

programs for the public, and teacher development. Phones are requested to be silent, and it is a much more somber experience than visiting a funhouse or cemetery (9/11 Memorial Museum, n.d.). The souvenir-based economy developed around Ground Zero is seen as morally egregious and undermines the diplomatic repercussions sparked by the terrorist attack (Potts, 2012).

Another dark shrine would be Pripyat, a town evacuated after the many failures at the Chernobyl Powerplant in Ukraine. Visitors get a unique look at what life might have looked like before that fateful day in 1986 (Hryhorczuk, 2018). Graffiti covers many walls, and everyday items were abandoned. A science lab filled with equipment, children's toys left askew, and even an aging ferris wheel was left to the elements. Pripyat is an example of what no one wants to happen again. Therefore, it is a lesson for the government to review its energy policy to ensure the safety of millions of Americans.

Next, there is the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, which examines the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and his lasting legacy. Audio, video, news clippings, and artifacts replicate a form of reality. While the museum is one of the top attractions in Dallas, the Kennedy family prefers not to be associated with a place connected to President Kennedy's final hours; the museum represents a perpetual death loop for loved ones (Lennon & Foley, 2000). For the government, the museum illustrates that not even a president is immune to death. The security of politicians and public employees should regularly be assessed.

While dark shrine sites can provide clarity, they can also evoke strong emotions. As technology progresses, tragic events affect even more people. In 1912 when the Titanic sunk, it was the first-time global communications played a role in informing the public about a large-scale disaster. It shook many people to the core as the ship was supposed to be unsinkable. The next time technology played an active role in a tragedy was in 1963 when "93 percent of the tv-

equipped households" watched President Kennedy's funeral as it occurred (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 79). As technology progresses and expands, there will be even more witnesses to events in real-time. Witnesses like survivors, friends, and family members of victims often feel a sense of loss. Most people choose to visit dark shrines out of the need for remembrance and reaffirmation of the memory. A sense of identity can be tied to dark shrines. A man or woman visits Pearl Harbor or the 9/11 Memorial because they are American and must honor their fellow countryman (Tinson, Saren & Roth 2015).

Number six on the dark tourism spectrum are attractions that were once conflict zones or battlefields. Activities that would fall in this range would be "visiting war memorials and war museums, 'war experiences,' battle re-enactments," and guided tours of battlefields (Dunkley, Morgan, Westwood, 2011, p. 862). Humanity has always been curious about war, but in the 19th century, it became a spectator's sport. En route to Brussels or Flanders in 1815, visitors would stop to observe the Battle of Waterloo (Seaton, 1999). Meanwhile, picnickers flocked to Manassas, Virginia, in 1861, expecting the Union army to crush the southern rebels; however, the Union was quickly bested; thus, countless spectators were caught in the throng of soldiers retreating (American Battlefield Trust, 2021).

In the 21st century, it is not suitable for the average individual to observe battles in person. However, with the advent of the film and, later, the internet, there was no need to leave the comforts of one couch to witness a battle. With information spreading so quickly, the government must be vigilant to keep its secrets. After all, if battle plans are broadcasted on the internet, it gives the enemy an advantage. Citizens need transparency, but public employees also need privacy.

Then there are fictitious narratives that can amplify interest in war and even romanticize battle. For instance, the television show, *Outlander,* features a character named Jaime who fights in the Battle of Culloden; as a result, fans are flocking to the actual life location where many Jacobites were killed (National Trust for Scotland, 2021). Meanwhile, Game of Thrones might inspire a tourist to visit battlefields associated with the War of the Roses as the show is loosely based on the events of that period (West, 2019). Some movies that might inspire customized battlefield tours might be everything from the Patriot, Glory, Saving Private Ryan, and Dunkirk.

Regardless of the motivation, countries like France, Belgium, Turkey, and Italy have benefited extensively from battlefield tourism. From 2014 to 2018, France had made "an estimated 110 million euros" from visitors who explored World War 1 Battlegrounds (Fathi, 2012, p. 5). It is estimated that France makes double that amount for World War II locations, partly due to travelers' interest in Normandy, France (Faithi, 2012). Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania is yet another site that has profited from the war as the national military park brings about $1 million a year. Before Covid, over 8,000 jobs were related in some way to the Battle of Gettysburg, and locals even received $800 in tax relief because of the extensive tourism generated (Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). Again, government, taxes, and tourism heavily overlap.

"Visits to these sites combine serious purpose with recreation or exhibit a gradual transformation of meaning from serious to non-serious" (Keil, 2005, p. 479). The serious side or more ethical would include the need for remembrance and to better understand war. For former soldiers or family historians, visiting battlefields could be an experience similar to pilgrimages. One can uncover more information about deceased relatives and, in a sense, discover a part of themselves. The trip may not be out of guilt but the need to commemorate the dead (Dunkley et

al., 2011). For others, it is about dealing with an intergenerational trauma produced by the loss of an individual or entire group (Balaev, 2008). There can also be a desire to validate history (Keil, 2005). Almost everyone likes the idea of being related to a hero who died valiantly in the line of duty (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Additionally, preserved space such as a battlefield that is expressly set aside attracts the type of visitor who may be tired of media culture and looks for an authentic narrative (Lennon & Foley, 2000).

There is a strong connection between battlefield tourism and voyeurism. Tourists who wish to see misery and death but are not deterred by brutality would fall into this category (Dunkey et al., 2011). There can be a disconnect between interpretation and commercial development (Keil, 2005); they can begin to infringe upon the expansive area of a conflict zone. Why is one section sacred but not another? There may be a cultural need to leave the battlefield as it was so that visitors can understand the tactical issues that a soldier might have faced. A significant problem for adequately maintaining a conflict zone is that many wars are often fought in or near a city due to commerce and decision-making (Lennon & Foley, 2000). In other words, urban buildup and sprawl could conflict with maintaining battlefields. The government may be required to step in and establish boundaries for battlefields and where people can build.

Finally, there is the darkest form of tourism which are sites that are associated with genocide. Some researchers argue that attractions related to slavery should fall under the classification, but that is still in dispute. When genocide occurs in Western nations, these locations are more accessible compared to Rwanda or Cambodia. Resources, funding, and preservation efforts are more readily available. Additionally, the length of the Holocaust, mass numbers of victims, and constant media focus make sites associated more mainstream (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). The interest in Holocaust sites has significantly increased. For example,

Auschwitz-Birkenau saw two million people walk through its doors between 1947 and 1957 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, n.d.). In 2019, over 2 million tourists visited Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial in a single year (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2020).

The public perception of allowing the camps to remain has drastically changed since the 1940s or 1950s. When the concentration camps were liberated, the initial reaction from locals would have been to eradicate everything related to the Nazis. The barracks, ovens, gas chambers, and even the toilets were offensive; everything was appalling. Yet, the buildings stand as a warning memorial and a testament to what people went through at these horrendous camps (Lennon & Foley, 2000). At first, there was little funding for exhibits and next to nothing for preservation, so some buildings began to deteriorate, and curators feared collapse (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, n.d.). For the government, it is more about paying respects similar to that of a pilgrimage rather than interpretation, which only becomes acceptable when enough time has elapsed (Lennon & Foley, 2000).

One of the more troubling concerns about modern interpretation at the camps is that the lived memory or first-hand accounts are vastly declining each year (Kildron, 2010). Much of present-day interpretation is second or third generation, but primarily third. The second generation involves a person whose parents lived through the Holocaust and told them stories in youth. Third is distinctly learned information through school or media, and this person might have had a relative connected to the event (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). "The return to experience entails the active involvement of the visitor in the commemorative process and the shift from event-based collective history to the subjective and moving personal stories" (Kildron, 2010, p. 431).

Another ethical issue may be the purposeful falsification of the facts strictly for political gains. When a specific faction of people is targeted, many flee, leaving behind a government that may not represent those killed (Kildron, 2010). The equivalent can be said for photographs as historical images may show first-hand accounts but, as time passes, lacks context. A tourist viewing pictures which show incredible suffering will never undo past misdeeds. "Photos of skeletal bodies, both living and dead, are reminders that liberation came too late for too many and testify to the failure to intervene sooner" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 341).

A third problem would be general voyeurism, whether direct or indirect, as the act of viewing is already heightened by the objectivity of the ordeal. Even something as trivial as taking a photo or video at a genocide site and uploading it to one's social media diminishes the trauma. When the crowds battle over the best locations, it lacks sensitivity. It appears less troubling when people do not pose in the pictures and instead let the image speak for itself. Nevertheless, the picture only tells part of the story, which the photographer sees. Natives and survivors will usually take photos of genocide sites with less of a voyeuristic element than a tourist or even a historian. Auschwitz-Birkenau and many genocide sites have strict photography rules to limit the tourist gaze so that pictures can only be taken in specific locations (Reynolds, 2016). Why is it acceptable to take photos in one area but not another when awful occurrences happen everywhere within the site?

Could secondary trauma stress, which is interchangeably used with vicarious trauma, be an additional ethical stressor? First-hand accounts can be unsettling and vivid, triggering symptoms similar to PTSD. These symptoms emerge because one cannot help, but the desire to do something is still there (Leshem, 2018). First responders, counselors, friends, and family members closest to victims of horrific crimes often exhibit signs of vicarious trauma (Jenkins &

Baird, 2002). Many tour guides are well removed from the first-generational narratives but are left to repeat lived memories multiple times a day. Over time, guides will often display signs of secondary trauma stress, which fluctuates based on engagement from the visitor and their ability to unwind after work (Leshen, 2018). For the government funds dark tourism sites, there should be mental health services offered to the tour guides, especially at sites related to genocide.

There has been a lengthy discussion as to whether genocide tourism should exist. One of the main concerns is distance. Does it matter if the final product provides in-depth interpretation and respectful displays if it is far away from the site of tragedy? There could be an argument for removing interpretation from the actual location due to trauma. It is hard to say where places of remembrance should be erected. "No memorial has been established at Babi Yar, a ravine in the Ukraine where over 100,000 people (mainly Jews) were killed in 1941 by the SS-trained Einsatzgruppe squads" (Cohen, 2010, p. 198). Should the government decide if genocide memorials or museums be constructed?

Even though the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. and the Chicago-based Killing Fields Memorial were built to honor the victims, are such places needed a great distance away? For example, a Holocaust Museum would make sense in Poland, Germany, or Israel as those nations are directly affected. Not to say that these museums in the United States are not well done as they do an exceptional job provoking strong emotions. Still, they offer a replicated experience even with the exclusion of authentic items. A trauma far removed from the source lacks nuance and puts the victims on display every day (Lennon & Foley, 2000); in their defense, these sites are generally educational and have substantial political clout compared to sites lower on the spectrum (Farmaki, 2013).

Analyzing the Literature

Just as dark tourism is a spectrum, so are the ethics which revolve around the segment of travel. As the visits get darker, more significant moral reservations emerge. While COVID-19 may have slowed the growth of the travel industry, many dark destinations have innovated by offering virtual experiences. Much like society has shifted away from war as an in-person spectator sport, this trend may be incorporated into other areas of dark tourism. If someone wants to explore a museum, tour Sedlec Ossuaryor, or fly a World War II fighter plane virtually, technology can make this possible (Perry Hobson & Williams, 1995). Does the government need to create policies regarding virtual tourism?

As technology expands, the authentic experience is enhanced by visual and audio stimulation. The immersive environment can make a person feel like they are walking the old cobblestone streets of Victorian London or exploring the tombs of ancient pharaohs. Breaking free from reality can be fun, and most view it as an overall positive activity (Kim, Lee, & Jung, 2018). After all, anyone can join in the adventure no matter their health, mobility, or age as long as someone operates the technological aspects. After initially setting up a virtual journey, there is little expense, but it can create a modern connection to the past and make a place or event relevant again (McDaniel, 2018). One might suggest Peak–End Theory is appropriate as "lived emotions transform into remembered experience" (Bastiaansen, Oosterholt, Mitas, Han & Lub, 2020, p. 3). An ethical downside is that a virtual tour can oversimplify a tragedy or leave complete segments to save time (McDaniel, 2018).

Meanwhile, cultivation theory suggests that the media dictates reality and decides whose story is told. Whether intentional or not, the media sets expectations or preconceived expectations by those who consume their product. It can alter perception by romanticizing a

villain or a story about a sinking ship (McDaniel, 2018). Moreover, many online personalities lack cultural awareness but have substantial influence over his or her followers. A social media influencer named Logan Paul found himself in hot water after filming a video of a corpse in Aokigahara Forest, a popular place in Japan, to commit suicide (Matsakis, 2018).

The scary part is that Logan's video received over six million views in a single day, and many of his fans are young and impressionable. It was about Logan's experience and putting death on display for clicks (Matsakis, 2018). Logan essentially dehumanized the suicide victim and provided no educational context. Profiting off death in such a way, most individuals find it repulsive and unethical. Suicide for clicks should be something that policymakers explore further to see what needs to be done. While discussing suicide is not verboten, highlighting a place where people regularly end their lives is questionable as it may encourage more individuals to attempt suicide.

One area that virtual experiences currently lack is the smell, which museums will sometimes intentionally replicate, and for other locations, it may just come naturally. People can participate in a famous battle, see a president get shot, explore a hurricane-ravaged city, or even experience life at a concentration camp. To encounter such tragedy first-hand, a person would have smelled the death and decay; thus, it would allow greater comprehension and an appreciation for life (McDaniel, 2018). "To sell death, it had to be made 'friendly' as the death in itself has no value" (Aries, 1976, p. 99). By inadvertently domesticating mortality through the means of technology and defined perimeters, the for-profit component removes a very human element from death (Aries, 1976). Is there a way to ethically provide interpretation, education, and remembrance online without making it a voyeuristic commodity? Should government-funded dark tourism sites even venture into the virtual realm as there are many pitfalls?

Digital marketing campaigns can get people to book a trip to any number of dark tourist sites; whether good or bad, visitor motivations are likely to answer that question. Individuals might have reservations about visiting a particular location related to the taboo death until they have taken part in a positive virtual event. Additionally, online reviews by influencers or words written by past travelers can spurn interest. Even friends who post pictures on social media can drum up fascination for traveling to a specific place (Kim et al., 2018). Dark tourism sites run by the public sector may not generate as much revenue as their private sector counterparts due to the lack of digital marketing. Often the government lags in technology compared to the for-profit businesses. There could be a case for increased technological output, so these sites thrive.

Businesses that prosper because of tourism can use advertising or virtual events to bring people to their areas, especially after life-changing occurrences. For instance, social media influencers helped slowly bring tourism back to New Orleans by taking people on a virtual journey through areas of the city affected by Hurricane Katrina. These influencers also showed that it was safe to return to the city (McDaniel, 2018). While hurricane tours exploit the tragedy, they can help a community, which might be considered ethically gray. Nevertheless, dark tourism is a way for an economically ravished population to rebuild. The ultimate goal for the government would be for a city or town to eventually be in the black and not rely on state or federal aid.

Several video games over the years have used past tragedy as a part of the storyline and, in essence, created alternative historical narratives. Eternal Darkness, Assassin Creed, Fall Out, and even Tomb Raider has used history to their advantage. Call of Duty WW2 portrays a soldier from the Allied Forces storming the beaches in Normandy, a sequence that could cause the player to visit the actual location in real life. A slightly different offering titled Chernobylite has

a gamer play as a former employee of the powerplant looking for someone missing. The commonality that the above games share is that they give people a loose idea of the hardships victims and survivors face. Unlike guided tours, games might not be sensitive to trauma, and perception of an event can be altered. Positively, a game can show what the world would have been like if a darker path was followed and question what is known (McDaniel, 2018).

The connection between dark tourism and video games has yet to be studied thoroughly, and additional research should be conducted in this area, notably from an ethical standpoint. The government would most likely not have to regulate gaming; however, history should be adequately taught in schools so children understand the difference between fact and fiction. Unfortunately, many children cannot answer fundamental questions regarding past events in the United States. In 2019, "Only 15% of 8th-graders scored proficient or above in U.S. history along with about a quarter in civics and geography" (Wexler, 2020, p. 1). In other words, games connected to dark tourism sites highlight where the education system may be lacking.

Ghost tours are fascinating because they could fall into many different categories but usually are a bit more lighthearted, even when they cover dark topics. One of the earliest tours dated to 1762, when local taverns profited off the ghost of Cock Lane (Holloway, 2010). To this day, the interest in spirits has not waned as companies conducted haunted virtual events and much more in-person at various sites. It has to do with the versatile nature of ghost tours that make them popular. Themes, locations, scale, and even the participatory nature of the activity create an environment that allows businesses to be flexible. The most famous haunted places are prisons, houses, hotels, and restaurants. Dine with a ghost, spend a night in a hotel with one, possibly hear or even see a spirit during a walking tour; the possibilities are endless as one's

imagination (Houran, Hill, Haynes & Bielski, 2020). The government benefits by collecting tax revenue.

With little effort and substantial financial gains, countless businesses decide to offer ghost tours even when there are no haunting happenings. Defrauding the public is a major ethical concern, and for others, it promotes the supernatural as they find it assumedly evil (Houran et al., 2020). Secondly, some individuals take offense because ghost tours frequently downplay serious misfortunes. Most allege that someone was brutally murdered and is left roaming self-described haunted location. Once again, there is a component of sensationalizing pain for monetary gain (Holloway, 2010). It can be hoped that there is an educational or moral piece that someone takes away from a ghost tour, but that is not guaranteed.

An individual might take part in a ghost tour for various reasons. It could be that they believe in ghosts, as it is estimated that somewhere between 33% to 50% percent of Americans think that they exist. Often there is an element of history mingled with humor, but never that serious. Television shows created around ghost-hunting and the need to do something spooky near Halloween can get someone to sign up for these types of tours (Houran et al., 2020).

Unlike whale or dolphin watching, witnessing apparitions in a haunted place is not promised. It is about anticipation rather than engaging with a spirit. All though, some seek out mediums for more serious matters, such as seeking closure with a deceased loved one (Ironside, 2018). The reasons supernatural encounters are sought out, or the possibility of one is open to analysis, even more so than most other forms of dark tourism. Not much would need to be done by the government's sunless there are fraudulent claims.

Pilgrimages are classified as dark and, coincidently, the earliest form of tourism still in existence (Benedetto, 2018). Religiously motivated individuals would trek long distances to

sacrosanct locations for penance, healing, affirmation, and growth. Visiting burial chambers, cemeteries, and sacred shrines would often be a part of the experience (Dunkley et al., 2011). Often these individuals would be at a particular destination for an extended period where they could immerse themselves in the history and the meaning of what might have transpired. There is a genuine kinship and more defined motives for individuals who embark on these types of journeys (Dawes, 2020).

As far back as the 4th century, humans began monetizing pilgrimage sites and effectively started making profits from dark travel. A mold with a sacred image might be one of these such items (Cline, 2014). These items were not seen as distasteful; instead, they were revered because they linked an individual to a place or a specific memory during the pilgrimage, and they were one of a kind. However, everything began to change during the latter part of the Industrial Revolution when society became capable of mass-producing souvenirs (Paraskaevaidis & Andriotis, 2015).

By the mid-20th century, gone was the uniqueness of commemorative items. Nowadays, most individuals see souvenirs as cheap tchotchke and very commonplace. Often tourism is seen as not authentic because of "the commodification processes, which give a phenomenon an alienating and explicit exchange value" (Thompson & Petrie, 2012, pp. 339-340). On the one hand, if people felt that the item was genuine, fewer ethical reservations would be related to monetizing dark tourist destinations. Then there is the argument that items help people, especially survivors, channel their emotions at the location and even after they head home. What is decent and culturally appropriate is where the most significant ethical concerns lie regarding souvenirs (Cave, 2018). Government agencies specializing in antiquities or religious memorabilia would have to investigate fraudulent claims.

It is evident that pilgrimages have declined, and society has become more secular; however, there is still an innate void that still needs to be filled (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). A visit to a dark destination might satisfy that need, and having an item to commemorate the experience is not necessarily terrible. Soldiers may find themselves visiting a battlefield and buying a hat marking the occasion. Uncovering past racial injustices might encourage someone to visit places linked to slavery, and they could get a book to memorialize the experience. Others might want to visit destinations connected to their favorite historical drama and will procure a deck of cards with a show's logo at the gift shop. One can assign an ethical value for each item purchased and label the motivation behind every tourist, yet it is not that simple. Yes, people make money from tragedy, and others buy tangible things, but a deeper analysis might reveal a more complex answer.

Reoccurring themes have emerged throughout the literature review section, such as why some sites are more frequented. Push and pull factors also play an underlining role in dark tourism. Typical requirements for a successful dark tourism site are sufficient infrastructure, adequate facility, physical characteristics of the site, and accessibility. These are considered pull factors, which the media and those who work in travel use to draw people to a particular location. Then there are the push factors, such as how much time has gone by and the needs of the individual. Being affected personally or nationally can explain why someone is interested in a particular location. An expressed interest in death is not necessarily a driving factor for some or all visitors, but it will generally be a component of the experience (Farmaki, 2013). The government's role in dark tourism varies by where the attraction falls on the spectrum. A funhouse would not get as much attention as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

There is a finite balance between the collective memory or heritage and darkness. A presidential home can show the many successes of a leader and the ugliness of slavery (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009). Touring former prisons can highlight the need for a societal shift regarding how inmates should be treated (Strange & Kempa, 2003). Seeing the remains of a ship that was supposed to be unsinkable can teach people that nothing is infallible. Visiting sites related to genocide can show people the true extent of depravity. Many of these sites imply that there is always a promise of morning, even after the cruelest and bleakest nights. While motives for visiting might not precisely align with the mission, perhaps a greater focus needs to be done on stopping future atrocities rather than speaking as if they are all in the past (Bowman & Pezullo, 2010).

The ethics and motives of an individual are never straightforward or apparent. It is not easily defined from what should be monetized to the appropriate form of interpretation, let alone where it should take place. Numerous stories have been told, and countless more are lost to time. First and secondary trauma becomes part of the cultural memory. Death is assuredly always on display for millions to see every day. Are people learning, or is it just morbid curiosity? There is much uncertainty regarding dark attractions, and it should behoove those in government to study this sector of tourism more than the other markets. Why? Whether at the federal, state, or local level, government employees work for the taxpayers.

What is more for the people than locations that are engrained in collective memory? Most individuals remember when J.F.K. was shot, or the Twin Towers fell. Whether these sites are publicly or privately owned, dark tourism sites belong to the people except for possible attractions in spectrum one. Tragic events define a nation and can alter how an entire culture operates. Flight 93 and the other planes, which were a part of a terrorist plot on September 11,

2001, ushered in the Patriot Act and more noticeably increased airport security. There is a negative connection between terrorism and tourism.

How history remembers its victims and survivors is also significant. While the government can be very bureaucratic and hierarchical, the field deals with policy implementation and the public's general interest (Kumari, 2021). If dark tourism sites are not maintained to the highest standard, history could be lost and might inevitably repeat. The darker on the scale usually has more of an educational component and probably has a greater need for government to take an active role. Fraud, taxation, and the emotional well-being of citizens are also areas where there could be local, state, or federal involvement.

There is a worry that there is much exploitation of these tragic sites, but without some pizazz, will people visit? A trained government worker would ideally assess each dark location. Ultimately, find a balance between profit, education, and tribute. A diverse and rich narrative also needs to be told at each dark attraction representing the society and victim. The neutral political nature of a public administrator would allow them to assess controversial sites fairly. In other words, there could be a need for collaborative governance. Since dark tourism sites are owned by the government, nonprofits, or private organizations, any collaborative agreements must be flexible.

Summary

Tourism, as a whole, generates significant profits throughout the entire world and has created many jobs over the years, which should be of interest to the government. Before Covid, tourism contributed over $9 trillion annually to the global GDP, or approximately a tenth of all profits generated. The United States brought in roughly $1.7 trillion solely from international spending. Over 334 million people were employed in the industry, but it is suspected that

number dropped to 272 million. Expenditures for traveling domestic have declined by 45%. International tourism has suffered by a record 69.4%. It is suspected that both foreign and domestic markets will rebound within the next few years (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021).

Property values, retail, restaurants, hotels, and many other industries flourish because of tourism. According to a popular travel website, the Colosseum, a dark tourism site, was the number one booked attraction for 2018 and 2019 (Trip Advisor, 2019). Dark tourism has considerable influence and is an underutilized asset in most countries. If the United States government harnessed the power of dark attractions, let alone tourism, they could fund many public sector programs or much-needed infrastructure repairs. Additionally, taxes can be lowered if the money is coming in elsewhere, and the quality of life will improve for the citizenry. Tourism is a behemoth when it comes to making money, but only if the correct policies are in place. However, money means nothing if the nation does not live up to its ideals, so an ethical tightrope must be walked. Public sector employees serve as decision-makers in allocating resources to promote tourism domestically and overseas.

In conclusion, dark attractions are misunderstood as tragedy should never alone define a place (Korstanje & Baker, 2016)? Dark travel is as complex as it is messy. Entire books and academic journals are dedicated to understanding the intentions of visitors and the moral ambiguity surrounding dark sites. Answers have always been elusive, and perhaps the watchful eye of a public administrator is needed now more than ever. As outlined in the Methodology Section, the proposed survey seeks to clarify whether the government should be involved in the business of dark tourism.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

Do ethical concerns suggest that the government needs to step in so dark tourist sites are managed respectfully? Perhaps a collaborative approach needs to be taken. Dark tourism typically affects an entire culture, people, or nation, so how can anyone justify telling only one version of what happened? After all, there are winners, losers, and everyone else in between minding their own business when tragedy suddenly strikes. Lives could change in seconds, and everyone's story should be represented.

Multiple truths converge by employing postmodernism and a primarily qualitative approach. Individuals are studied rather than groups. Different perspectives are embraced rather than a singular narrative (Creswell, 2013). It should be noted that mixed methods will be utilized for surveys so that data to be examined from a multitude of angles. The study will be predominately conducted from a quantitative point of view as Covid required an adjustment from the initially proposed methodology. Nevertheless, the goal remains the same to establish a baseline for government involvement in dark tourism.

Analyzing visitor motivations surveys will create a general view of how the public receives these sites of sorrow. There will undoubtedly be outliers, but the goal is to uncover whether ethics and motivations are reason enough for the government to collaborate with various dark tourism providers in the United States. Dark tourism is grief-driven and, in essence, belongs to the individuals who were affected by an event, whether explicitly or implicitly. The issue is that the people who run these sites may not have the best intentions in mind, and if they do, there could still be problems managing such sensitive locations. There must be a balance between kitschification and tribute.

Now "the English word 'administer' is derived from a combination of two Latin words ad and ministrate meaning 'to serve' or 'to manage.' Literally, the term 'administration' means management of affairs – public or private" (Murume, 2016, p. 15). By virtue of the prickly nature of dark tourism, perhaps the government should partner with various entities and fluctuating degrees based on the needs of the people. While dark tourism attractions are places of mourning, acceptance, and learning, some of these sites have been exploited for personal gain. To what extent is commercialization acceptable? Perhaps the owner or manager of the facility does not have the means to live up to the socially accepted norms. Again, the government can establish a cooperative or collaborative agreement to enhance dark tourism's contributions to the local community.

Whether the government establishes partnerships or not, the intricate connections associated with dark tourism have yet to be thoroughly examined. Public funding often contributes to maintaining a dark destination. In some cases, the government would oversee all locations' operations; everything from maintenance to specialized tours would be under their purview. If there are fraudulent claims or employee issues that violate the law, the government will get involved whether they own the site or not. Additionally, tax revenue is collected when visitors frequent dark destinations. People will typically taste the local cuisine, do a bit of shopping or even book a hotel for a couple of nights if they travel far to visit a dark destination. In other words, sites of tragedy are a moneymaker for the government.

The versatility of many of these sites allows different opportunities for the community. Public events may be held at dark tourism sites where they will pay respect to the dead or educate individuals about various topics. Politicians could fundraise at these locations as well. Everything from weddings, movies and evening walking tours are regular occurrences at some

locations. While dark tourism stems from death, there is a possibility to transform these places into vital parts of society and still pay reverence to those who were lost. Overall, the revenue generated preserves history, creates jobs, and benefits local businesses.

Data Collection

On October 9-10, 2021, surveys were conducted at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In total, there were 147 respondents. What is presented in this dissertation has been a several-month-long undertaking that evolved as per guidance from the state and federal governments. The majority of the paper and its outcomes would be substantially different had interviews been granted and initially, venues allowed surveying to occur. Unfortunately, many dark tourism sites within the MidAtlantic Region of the United States were either closed, operating at limited capacity, or were just not comfortable to have a researcher survey at their location.

Data collection was accomplished in what seems like only a few short steps, but that is an oversimplification of the process. Initially, interviews of survivors and surveys from visitors were to be conducted, but due to Covid-19, the former had to be cut due to lack of participation; with the latter, over thirty other locations did not respond or cited Covid-19 as their reason for declining, and it looked like the study would fall apart before it began. Luckily, Eastern State Penitentiary permitted surveys on-site, and it is significant because its ranks as a four on the dark tourism spectrum.

Locations associated with crime and punishment are neither pale nor dark. Since only one place allowed a study to be conducted, it was beneficial to be at the halfway point of the spectrum. In other words, if participants leaned significantly in one direction or another, it revealed how individuals might feel about attractions that are higher or lower on the scale.

Additionally, a visit that was lower in the spectrum would not elicit much need for government involvement in most cases. If the survey had been conducted at a body exhibit, where human parts had been trafficked, participant responses might have been skewed in one direction or another. Eastern State Penitentiary would be considered a neutral and middle ground visit.

After permission was obtained from Eastern State Penitentiary, the IRB had to be completed and approved. Again, the surveying was conducted over a weekend in October 2021. The surveys were twenty-five questions, and to see the entire list of questions, please refer to Appendix D. The majority of questions were multiple-choice, but some were open-ended. There are no scale questions, but five pertained to demographics. The idea was to find out what type of people visited that Eastern State and any potential biases they may have or the researcher's own. Since the research was limited to one location, the goal was to provide the most pertained and equitable sampling possible.

As for the actual surveys, those who participated had to be over eighteen, not with child, as they are protected class and given the ability to skip any questions that they did not have answers to or made them uncomfortable. Mental health contacts were also available if needed. Both electronic and paper questionnaires were anonymous. Participants were offered snacks of their choice for participating, but most declined as their aim was simply to help with the study. The electronic surveys were the only ones that could be completed off-site due to a Q.R. code printed on business cards. An individual could scan the code with the phone and pull up the survey instantly. Face-to-face interaction was preferred as it was real-time, allowing participants to ask questions. Further elaboration, if needed, helped with the diversity of opinion.

The final stage was data analysis and the longest step as there were many surveys to read through. Selective coding, which was axial at times, was employed while analyzing surveys. The

researcher could predict recurring themes or relationships by identifying central phenomena and the condition that influences them. The primary goal was to uncover whether the government needs to play a more active role in managing these dark sites based on responses from visitors.

Multiple choice questions (closed-ended responses) were effectively and efficiently coded. Strongly agree is a one, while strongly disagree is a five (Fricker, 2012). Sections of the survey were run through SPSS, which allows the qualitative data to be further examined. (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). The primary mode for analysis in SPSS was frequencies due to the nature of how the questions were worded on the surveys. Crosstabs were utilized to a lesser extent but were not necessary. What would have been more beneficial is for only one selection for each question, as it would have demonstrated what items were most significant to everyone involved in the study.

The open-ended questions provided narrative data and were strictly qualitative. There was a combination of preset and emergent categories. When a theme had not been previously identified, it was coded before reviewing the rest of the data. Furthermore, a summary was created for each recurring theme that develops (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Substantive-Level Theory suggests that it is beneficial to memo or jot down thoughts during coding. Discriminative sampling was used minimally as most individuals that were analyzed were unfamiliar with dark tourism (Creswell, 2013).

All survey coding was done electronically, and backups were stored offline. Due to the reduced stature of the study, qualitative software was not used. Excel was the primary location of all coded data. A Word document saved on the researcher's computer tracked all changes so that nothing was sorted incorrectly. Moreover, there was no need to generalize responses as qualitative answers were not similar (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). A postmodernism

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approach means understanding perspectives from various "class, race, gender, and other group affiliations" is more valuable than establishing recurring themes (Creswell, 2013, p. 27). Having deconstructed perceived narratives, postmodernism allows for ethics to be questioned along with the government's role in the dark tourism industry (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations

As previously mentioned, COVID-19 was substantially more limiting than initially assumed. The request that was made to various dark tourism sites was simply to set up a fold-up table outside of their facility. The idea was to be socially distanced with hand sanitizer available. The electronic version of the survey allowed people to take a card and go or even scan the banner on the front of the table. It is assumed that the contacted organizations did not want to take a chance on potentially spreading the virus. At the same time, that concern is valid to what point and how long should research be affected, especially when precautions are taken?

Generally, researchers do have some bias, and I am not immune. I have visited several dark tourism locations in the United States and Europe. Additionally, I have researched and planned many dark-themed trips for a past employer. Despite my interest in the industry, I can separate feelings from facts. Ultimately, if the study shows that these attractions should exist, they must continue to benefit society. Again, the government's responsibility is to carry out the people's will. My intentions and aspirations are solely to serve the community in some form or another.

Regarding surveying, there are a few threats to reliability and validity. For instance, most individuals will disregard the survey. The ones who agreed to take the surveys typically viewed the location favorably and had been to similar locations. Since surveys were handed out at Eastern State Penitentiary, the larger-than-life imagery of the attraction may have swayed

opinion. The participants were encouraged to fill out their survey before their visit to alleviate some bias. There could also be a regional influence as the surveys are conducted in the Mid-Atlantic and not the entire United States. A core objective is to control for any biases. Ideally, there will be a 60% return rate on all surveys, but that is unlikely as the internet can be somewhat of a wildcard regarding responses (Fincham, 2008).

While tourism typically skews heavily towards the sixty-five and the older crowd as these individuals often have more money and time to travel, that was not the case at Eastern Penitentiary. Most visitors were college-age or entire families, and tech was not an issue. People either wanted to fill out the surveys online or on paper; it came down to preference. Overall, language barriers were minimal, but there were still minor issues. Perhaps the biggest challenges were reading handwriting, the marathon that blocked sections of the city early in the day on Sunday, and a bit of rain, but that was not so much biased as obstacles. Despite any hardship, participant involvement was greatly appreciated.

Summary

After gathering, coding, and thoroughly examining the data, a more substantial view of ethics and motives should be revealed. After all, why do people go to these locations, and what can be done better? Is everything ethically sound, and if not, how can it be fixed? Perhaps the most vexing quandary would be regarding the government's service to dark tourism providers. While tourism may not seem pertinent, the industry generates billions domestically in the United States (U.S. Travel Association, 2020). Whether directly or indirectly, money will always link government and dark tourism.

Dark tourism attractions are places of learning, grief, and remembrance; the core mission should remain intact despite outside influence. The above research focuses on the darkest of

offerings, which need to be monitored due to their delicate circumstances. If the government

decides to collaborate, many ethical concerns can be addressed. If visitor intentions are

somewhat immoral, perhaps assist with restructuring the visits. Finally, by the end of the Results

Section, one should see a greater connection between dark tourism and the government.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Surveys were conducted at Eastern State Penitentiary to determine if the government in some form should take a collaborative approach to dark tourism management while keeping ethical concerns in mind. In other words, should a public sector employee be involved in sites of tragedy as people of the nation share a collective memory due to the events that had transpired? Eastern State Penitentiary is right in the middle of the dark tourism spectrum; again, it is not the darkest of visitors, nor is it the tamest. Visits associated with crime and punishment are at a solid four. As per the lit review, a funhouse would be a one and a genocide site a seven.

A sample of 146 individuals consented to participate in the survey. Before an in-depth analysis of the data, there will be a brief breakdown of the demographics. Moreover, it will be discussed why analyzing various tables is significant to the research. Each table will provide additional insight into connecting dark tourism to visit motivation and government.

Gender

The gender distribution of the sample were as followed: (54.3%) were women, (40%) were male, and (5.7%) reported Other (Table 1). The significance of gender is that it allowed researchers to see if more males, females, or non-gender conforming individuals visit Eastern State Penitentiary. Since more women visited the penitentiary, the question becomes why. Do women have higher disposable income or perhaps prefer to visit historical sites? Questions such as the ones proposed need to be further explored. The displays are gender-neutral and even went to great lengths to design an exhibit on transgender inmates, so there is inclusivity by design. However, men and women tend to respond differently, and thus the main reason why the question of gender was asked (Toor, 2020).

Table 1
Gender of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Other	8	5.7
Male	56	40.0
Female	76	54.3
Total	140	100.0

Age

The predominant segment within the sample was in the 19-25 age range, which may have

resulted from local universities running a class trip during the period when the data was

collected. Participants aged 65 and older were the smallest proportion (Table 2). Age, while not

necessarily an essential factor of this study, creates a snapshot of participants' profiles and is

perfect for identifying, in most cases, product-market segments (Toor, 2020). Questioning age

allowed researchers to determine if people would respond differently based on how old they

were when they completed the survey. However, the findings show that age did not affect

visitors' motivation as the responses were relatively in sync (Table 5 & 6).

Table 2
Age of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percent
18	8	5.7
19-25	41	29.1
26-35	40	28.4
36-45	26	18.4
46-55	14	9.9
56-65	10	7.1
66 -75	1	0.7
76+	1	0.7
Total	141	100.0

Level of Education

Collecting educational data shows the attainment levels of visitors. The majority of the sample had at least a high school diploma, while people who had attended high school, but did not graduate were the smallest group (Table 3). A public administrator could use this information to measure equal opportunity in the community. According to the 2020 Census, approximately (33%) of the population over the age of twenty-five have at least a bachelor's (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The table below indicates that over (60%) of visitors surveyed have at least a bachelor's, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of attainments are more apt to visit a dark tourism site.

Is it preference, cost, or ease of entry that allows individuals with greater educational attainment the ability to visit Eastern State Penitentiary? Is there a relationship between education attainment and money spent at a dark tourism site and the local community? For instance, if someone is a medical doctor, they would probably make more money than much of the population. Therefore, people in higher educational brackets typically have a greater quantity of money to spend while on vacation, which benefits locals.

A final thought on education is whether the government needs to provide additional public transportation to dark tourism sites so that the general public has better access? As dark attractions relate to the collective memory, there could be an argument for removing barriers to accessibility. The public education system only has so much time to teach the required school curriculum that an average person may not know about various events in the United States, let alone the world. In some instances, individuals who only have some high school or associates

may not have even learned about dark tourism. One might only know about dark matters when they find their way into pop culture.

Table 3
Level of Education

Education	Frequency	Percent
Some HS	4	2.9
HS Diploma	29	21.0
Associates	17	12.3
Bachelors	42	30.4
Masters	33	23.9
Doctorate	13	9.4
Total	138	100.0

Income

The largest proportion of reported yearly income was $70,000 or more at (42.4%), followed by unemployed / students at (20.5%). The smallest proportion of participants reported earning less than $25,000 (Table 4). As previously mentioned, several classes were visiting the museum in part due to a required class trip. The number of unemployed individuals who participated in the survey might be skewed. If the numbers were akin to society over (20%), unemployed would be alarming as it could be a precursor to a great recession or even depression. From a public administrator standpoint, these numbers might suggest a need to look at the job market. Moreover, could the figures be an indicator of a shrinking middle class? Again, the notion of accessibility is questioned. Can people from all walks of life afford to visit dark tourism sites?

Table 4
Yearly Income of Participants

Income	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed/Student	27	20.5
< $25,000	10	7.6
$25,000- $39,000	14	10.6
$40,000-$54,999	12	9.1
$55,000- $69,999	13	9.8
$70,000 +	56	42.4
Total	132	100.0

Overall, demographics help give researchers a general understanding of those who have participated in the survey. Gender can influence opinion, and based on someone's age, their lived experiences may vary, which can influence results as well. Moreover, unemployed people might have a different view than individuals making $125,000 a year after taxes (Si, 2015). Understanding the participants allows the survey's core focus to be fleshed out. On their own, demographics allow government workers to see a more significant connection between community and government. In other words, what do people value and how does it becomes ingrained into the culture are significant for public administrators to understand. Funding, regulations, and even historic preservation emerge in part from the people's will.

Quantitative Results

The following questions made up the quantitative portion of the survey. Participant answers to each question were broken down by frequency. These previously run frequencies aim to determine the government's connection to dark tourism sites.

"What needs to be fixed at Eastern State Penitentiary."

Most participants felt that nothing needed to be changed (37%). The next highest category was multiple issues (29.5%), which indicated that participants had selected more than one of the options on the list. The data shows that people either saw no problems that needed to be resolved at Eastern State Penitentiary or multiple issues that needed to be settled (Table 5). Demographics did not influence the question, but people either thought there were no problems, or several things should be fixed at Eastern State Penitentiary. Government, which often funds a segment or even the majority of a dark tourism location, might consider granting a particular location more money if enough individuals say that it needs improvement.

Table 5:
What Needs to Be fixed?

Needs to be fixed at ESP?	Frequency	Percent
Nothing	49	33.6
Exhibit	5	3.4
Maintenance	11	7.5
Tech	6	4.1
History	5	3.4
Entertainment	4	2.7
Special	3	2.1
Survivor	11	7.5
Narrative	1	0.7
Other	8	5.5
Multiple	43	29.5
Total	146	100.0

What is appealing about Eastern State Penitentiary?

Almost (75%) of all individuals selected multiple reasons for why they had visited

Eastern State Penitentiary. History was the top reason people visited the former prison (13%).

The lowest ranking reasons were curiosity, boredom, and entertainment, each (1.4%) (Table 6).

However, an overwhelming majority selected multiple as the driving factor for visiting was for

more than just history. The penitentiary provides many services for the community, which makes

it unique. Again, one must refer to the idea of needed government funding and accessibility.

Table 6
What is Appealing About Eastern State Penitentiary?

What is appealing	Frequency	Percent
None	3	2.1
History	19	13.0
Curious	2	1.4
Bored	2	1.4
Entertain	2	1.4
Activities	3	2.1
Education	3	2.1
Dark Tourism	2	1.4
Not Listed	2	1.4
Multiple	108	74.0
Total	146	100.0

How did you find out about this attraction?

When asked how the participant found out about Eastern State Penitentiary, (66%) of

the preponderance of responses were friends or family (Table 7). Travel agents (1.5%),

magazines/brochures, and road signs (both 0.7%) were the least informative resources. The data

might suggest that travel agents, magazines, and road signs no longer carry the influence they

once had in society. More people are turning to technology to book short and long-term trips.

Perhaps the government may want to spend less money on signage and seek alternative avenues to inform the public. As travel agents are being phased out of society to a degree, the government may want to offer job training opportunities to these individuals.

Table 7
How Did You Find Out About This Attraction?

How did you find out?	Frequency	Percent
Family or Friends	88	65.7
Coupon/Discount	3	2.2
Magazine/Brochure	1	0.7
Travel Agent	2	1.5
Direct Website	17	12.7
Online Ad	5	3.7
Road Sign	1	0.7
Not Listed	17	12.7
Total	134	100.0

How often do you visit the prison?

For most respondents (77.8%), October 2021 was their first visit to the prison. The fewest amount of people visited weekly (1.4%) or more (2.8%) (Table 8). The juxtaposition between first-time and returning guests is vast. Initial visits often stem from curiosity and the novelty of the experience, along with being younger. These individuals will typically take information at face value. Returning guests typically seek the familiar, shared memory and require stability. Additionally, they are more loyal and have a wealth of information; however, they are just as likely to point out flaws of the location (Li, Cheng, Kim & Petrick, 2008).

The government may consider consulting returning guests regarding funding and accessibility rather than first-time visitors. Individuals who have visited multiple times are likely to understand the site's nuance. Furthermore, these people are more likely to infuse cash into

society. For instance, returning guests might live in the area, have a yearly membership, donate to the site, or volunteer. Overall, returning guests to dark tourism sites may be able to help guide funding along with the staff that runs the location. When possible, the government should involve citizens in dark tourism matters as the heart or crux of the sector is the community.

Table 8
How Often Do You Visit the Prison?

	Frequency	Percent
My First Visit	112	77.8
Three or Less	17	11.8
Few Times a Year	9	6.3
Practically Weekly	2	1.4
My Second Home	4	2.8
Total	144	100.0

Are you looking to visit nearby attractions?

      The prevailing response was that most individuals would visit nearby attractions (55.9%), while the fewest said they were unsure (18.9%) (Table 9). Tourists bolster Philadelphia's economy, including many restaurants, shops, hotels, nightclubs, etc. If the penitentiary is what drew someone to Philadelphia, they will be spending money at more than one location. Additionally, the prison provides jobs to residents who pay taxes. When people live and work in the same community, there is a sense of camaraderie. Whether direct or indirect, tourism can influence and enhance society; taking this concept one step further with dark tourism, these sites may have a tragic foundation, but locals can use attraction to generate revenue. As more money is generated, improvements, additions, and additional employees are hired. These workers will buy food locally and perhaps even a home near their work.

Table 9
Are You Looking to Visit Nearby Attractions?

Visit nearby attractions?	Frequency	Percent
No	36	25.2
Yes	80	55.9
Unsure	27	18.9
Total	143	100.0

Will you be taking part in any activities related to your visit today?

Most participants stated that they would not be taking part in any add-ons to their visit to the prison (37%); however, the second-highest proportion of participants indicated that they would take part in a walking tour (32.2%). The least popular activity was attending a lecture (0.7%). While the respondents answered the questions truthfully, it can be a bit deceptive as the researcher could only survey at one location. A place like Gettysburg or Chernobyl might trigger further follow-up activities, whether because of movies, video games, or personal ties. There are many reasons people choose to explore a dark tourism destination for the first time or why they become a repeat visitor.

Table 10
Will You Be Taking Part in Any Activities Related to Your Visit Today?

Related Activities	Frequency	Percent
None	54	37.0
Bus	10	6.8
Walking Tour	47	32.2
Ghost	5	3.4
Lecture	1	0.7
Photo	3	2.1
Exhibit	4	2.7

Will you be buying a souvenir today?

   Most participants stated that they would not be purchasing a souvenir (63.7%), and the

fewest reported that they would (14.1%) (Table 11). Eastern State Penitentiary may need to look

at the items they are selling and see what they can do to attract more potential consumers. From a

government perspective, they would want to see increased revenue for the penitentiary as the

sales tax benefits the community. Public service programs are funded in part because of

everyday, ordinary visitors.

Table 11
Will You Be Buying a Souvenir Today?

Buying a souvenir?	Frequency	Percent
Not Sure	32	21.9
No	93	63.7
Yes	21	14.4
Total	146	100.0

Do you think the location has a particular political leaning?

   The majority of respondents stated that they did not feel the attraction had a political

leaning (44.3%), and the fewest reported that they felt it did (11.5%). Political leaning could

affect the type of visitor who would visit Eastern State Penitentiary. People may not want to visit

a location that clashes considerably with their beliefs. If receiving government funding, a dark

tourism site should try to be neutral, which may be difficult in a heated political climate. Again,

according to the majority of participants who completed the survey, most thought that Eastern

State Penitentiary presented the facts rather than politics.

Table 12
Do You Think the Location Has a Particular Political Leaning?

Political leaning?	Frequency	Percent
Not Really	54	44.3
A Little	29	23.8
Somewhat	25	20.5
Very much	14	11.5
Total	122	100.0

While dark tourism has been defined in many instances throughout this dissertation, not everyone knows what this niche term means, so the idea was to query participants. Most respondents more or less knew the general definition of dark tourism. Scary, fearful, and spooky were reoccurring ideas; even the concept of demonic and sin was mentioned. The individuals who listed dark history, macabre, tragedy, and grim were a bit closer to the actual definition. Overall, individuals seem to have at least a general idea of dark tourism, which indicates the mainstreaming of this tourism sector.

Money appears to be the most significant element linking the two, but other factors are considered. An employee of Eastern State or a survivor would potentially have a different assessment. As the study was confined to visitor motivation, the government's involvement in dark tourism still needs to be further explored after initially viewing the quantitative data. Moreover, A supplementary analysis is located in the discussion section. It will clarify any misnomers and pinpoint shortcomings.

Qualitative Results

The most straightforward qualitative question which can answer the research question is whether the local, state, or federal government can help improve Eastern State Penitentiary.

Previously, individuals were asked if anything needed an overhaul, and responses were more

lackluster; however, the open-ended version allows for more meaningful discourse. While half of

the respondents did not answer, a good bulk of the participants cited increased funding for

renovating the facility, specifically the bathrooms. Some of the additional top comments were

increased signage, cleanliness, and a greater emphasis on history. A small minority also expressed

the need for education related to prisons or abolishing them altogether.

The next question of significance is what does Eastern State Penitentiary make the

participant feel? Answers were a bit broader compared to previous questions. Curious, excited,

and interested are words that often appear in responses. Moreover, sadness, creepiness,

spookiness, and anger were common emotions. Visitors want to learn but are unsure what to do

with the information. Participants can understand that there were problems with the prison system

in the past and potentially see the need for reforms today. Most individuals who visit Eastern

State Penitentiary are not experts in criminal justice, so some ideas might push them outside their

comfort zone. The connection between government and criminal justice is apparent, but ethically

or culturally, the concept may not directly impact society.

A follow-up question was asked to the participants regarding feelings that may have

surfaced from their visit. Again, about half elected not to say how they coped and that could be

for a variety of reasons not listed. For those who did choose to answer, many seemed to want to

discuss their visit and reflect. Once more, comments mention the need to learn more about the

prison system and celebrate life. There is a desire to understand parts of humanity that not

everyone is exposed to daily. Then there were the individuals who wanted to be under the

influence, primarily of liquor but weed as well; not sure if these responses were wholeheartedly

honest. A focus group would have provided more in-depth answers regarding coping mechanisms.

Participants were asked what dark tourism places they had visited. Responses varied for past destinations, but other prison-related attractions and asylums were answers that popped up a few times. Gettysburg and the Mutter Museum were also mentioned, yet proximity most likely plays a role in those responses. Sites associated with 9/11, Salem, and Holocaust held general interest. Salem is a bit of an anomaly as the event took place much further in the past. Moreover, cemeteries and ghost tours garnered some attention as well. Several one-off responses included the Killing Fields in Cambodia, Place of Depression in New Jersey, and the Korean Demilitarized Zone. One would imagine that popular dark tourism destinations would receive more funding than smaller, more obscure locations.

Finally, individuals were asked if there were any dark tourism destinations they would like to visit. More than half skipped this question, and many also said they were unsure. Prisons, Holocaust, 9/11, and haunted visits were the most common responses. Numerous replies were quite different; for example, individuals wrote Winchester Mystery House in California, Hiroshima, the Catacombs of Paris, West Virginia Mines, Chernobyl, and even the Bermuda Triangle. The commonalities between past and future show what tourists value. The one-offs indicate that while they may be one individual, they are a sampling of the totality of visitors.

Again, the notion of what is important comes to the surface when participants were asked about places they would like to visit. Government should listen as the linking between people and locations with troubling background exist for a reason. While the government can make money from tourist hot spots, people can need to find solace, understanding, and even

safety in dark destinations. While something tragic occurred at a particular site, the likelihood that it would have happened has decreased exponentially.

Discussion

Quantitative and qualitative complement one another as they fill in the gaps where the other is lacking. The data presented has only begun to scratch the surface of government involvement in dark tourism, but there is no conclusive evidence of a direct correlation. While additional qualitative information would have been highly beneficial, some conclusions can be drawn. Eastern State Penitentiary does provoke strong emotions for half of the participants, whether good or bad. Most individuals wanted to understand the criminal justice system in the United States and acknowledge the dark history. If the dissertation focused on prison reform, a follow-up question regarding what needs to be done today would have been an advantageous inquiry. Perhaps examining the issue from an economic perspective may also justify the government's participation.

Funding was the top response when participants did identify a need for government involvement. Upkeep, history, and cleanliness seemed to be targeted areas of interest. While the data is somewhat weak, there can be a case for government involvement. Most respondents saw the government more as a financial backer or silent backer rather than having an active role in Eastern State Penitentiary. One cannot conclusively say that the exact parallels would be drawn at every dark tourist destination; nevertheless, it could be conferred if further surveys are conducted at various locations post-COVID-19.

The literary review covers the idea of collective memory, which is a reoccurring idea throughout the dissertation. Dark tourism locations have a profound impact on survivors and the families of the deceased. Each generation is less connected to a particular tragedy. While Eastern

State Penitentiary closed over fifty years ago, there are still some first-generation connections, but most visitors would be second or third if even connected at all. Had there been a more recent tie to Eastern State Penitentiary, how visitors view the prison may be different.

As previously mentioned, the majority of participants reported that they did not feel the attraction had a political leaning (44.3%), and the fewest reported that they felt it did (11.5%). Politics can influence dark tourism sites, as discussed in the literature review. Political affiliation might have something to do with how participants answered this question; a person who leans left might say the attraction is one way or another, and the same could be said for those on the right. Some politicians may use a shrine or memorial as a photo opportunity. However, this is not the case at Eastern State Penitentiary, but a possibility at some locations.

An area where politics can come into play but is not discussed in the survey is symbolism. Many dark tourist sites will display patriotic work and emphasis the heroic struggles of a group of people. Typically, there are clearly defined winners and losers. Moreover, government officials may use these sites to make a statement or campaign. For instance, a politician may go to the 9/11 Memorial to give a speech emphasizing security. The darker the visit more likely there will be increased symbolism. There are ethical questions regarding politicians exploiting misfortune for personal gain, especially if the site has recently become a dark tourism destination.

There were paranormal aspects of Eastern State Penitentiary, just as with other dark tourist sites; it was not the main focus of most participants, even though the survey was conducted near Halloween. Eastern State Penitentiary has Halloween Nights where their haunted history and scares are embraced, but that is not the dissertation's central focus. It should be noted that approximately (27%) of participants do believe in the paranormal (Table 13). The idea of the

unknown is a driving factor for over a fourth of the participants in the survey. While hauntings

and ghost tours are often commercialized, some individuals believe visiting dark attractions

allows them to pay respects. The role government would play in this instance is to do nothing.

Let people worship, pay their respects, or believe whatever they wish.

Table 13
Do You Believe in the Paranormal?

Believe in the paranormal?	Frequency	Percent
Not sure	11	8.0
No	90	65.2
Yes	37	26.8
Total	138	100.0

In conclusion, the raw data attempts to determine the government's role at dark tourism

locations. An objectively firm conclusion cannot be reached without more substantial evidence.

Again, further qualitative analysis would be valuable. Focus groups, interviews, or even

uncontrolled observations would add another dimension of analysis that could argue for

government involvement within the dark tourism sector.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The data does not answer why or if the government should participate in collaborative efforts at dark tourism sites, just that there is a potential need. The ethical component may be challenging for a casual visitor to identify. However, if the data is examined through a postmodern context, there is evidence that past narratives are being rejected. Individuals are seeking truth and an examination of power. The literature review stated that new voices are emerging at dark tourism sites. For example, a dark tourism exhibit may now center around an unknown prisoner or a battlefield nurse; in the past, these individuals would not get much attention unless they were famous. Postmodernism would apply that there should be a focus on narrative, especially those rich in diversity of thought.

Participants had a favorable view of Eastern State Penitentiary even though it was generally their first visit. Individuals who declined to take the survey spoke highly of the penitentiary. Most comments on the record were related to how Eastern State needed more funding. Funding would likely be the top response regarding government involvement if the questions were phrased differently or if surveys were held at multiple locations. There were observable sections of the prison that desperately did need repairs and issues with the plumbing, so a portable restroom trailer was on site. Most dark tourist sites are old and need repair. Selling tickets, donations, and souvenirs can sometimes cover the cost of renovations, but not always. Government, donations, and ticket sales play a big part in maintaining along with improving dark tourism sites.

No one brought up any real objections to souvenirs unless the idea of potential exploitation was brought up after the survey was completed. It would appear that most had no objections to Eastern State Penitentiary selling gifts, nor did they think the government should

regulate what can be sold; this idea was not expressed in the survey but in random conversations that were initiated. Additionally, the politicization of Eastern State Penitentiary was not ranked much of a problem. Location, recency-biased, programming offerings, and where the visit falls on the spectrum might prompt concerns for some individuals. There were no issues of fraudulent claims, so the government does not need to get involved in that area either.

Crisis often affects mental health, and dark tourism can exacerbate an underlining problem. Visitors seemed to care for themselves and were less affected by trauma, but as past studies indicate by a second or third generation, it is not as personal. Time can heal to the point where the trauma is just a page in a textbook. There could be an urgent need for mental health providers to take action at sites that have become a sudden flashpoint. The government might provide funding or oversee a program for victims and survivors of tragic disasters. A way to test the need would have been to interview survivors of 9/11 or another significant event on such a scale that has happened in the last twenty years. Again, government services or funds may need to be available for victims of large-scale collective tragedy.

It would be remarkable to see how an attraction at every level of the dark spectrum would fair regarding government involvement. Theoretically, a funhouse, which is considered a one, would not need any assistance, but a genocide site on the opposite part of the spectrum could use extra support. Perhaps the answer to whether or not the government should be involved can be whittled down to a case-by-case basis. Some attractions are in need while others may not be, or the collective conscience drives more of a demand. In other words, objective constructs that society has built might reverence one place over another. A shrine to recently fallen citizens might garner public support over a centuries-old battlefield; such a scenario might trigger government participation in some manner, as referenced in the literature review.

While reason or common sense can make assertions regarding the nuances surrounding dark tourism, there is still much academically that needs to be discovered. There is always more that can be researched and unearthed. The government, for its role, often takes a hands-off approach to these tragic sites if operated by the private sector. Caretakers see the day-to-day workings of the facility and its offerings to the general public. Overall, dark tourism sites are left to their own devices except when the government has legal rights over these attractions. For example, Gettysburg National Military Park and Alcatraz Island are under the authority of the United States Park Service. The government will hire workers to run educational programs and maintenance to care for the property. Another scenario that regularly happens is that the government outsources specific functions of the dark attractions to outside vendors.

These partnerships allow for expanded services and offerings that benefit visitors and the local community. There are some questions regarding partnerships that the survey did not answer as it was not a focus of the study. Are the partnering entities overseeing a location to the best of their ability or just looking to make a profit? Is there any abuse, harassment, or exploitation occurring at the dark tourism site? If yes, what is the government doing to mitigate such issues (Ghere, 1996)? A secondary issue might be that government actors do not understand the importance of a dark tourism site. Moreover, only a limited number of individuals specialize in the sensitive nature of dark tourism. Who would care for the site if the hostile actors were removed? While government partnerships might need to be explored further, it could be challenging to get this data because no site would invite individuals to monitor them if they are committing malfeasance.

Ethical standards differ from culture to culture, and as the United States becomes more diverse, there is a challenge to find balance. What might offend one individual could be

respectful to a second person. Another problem is that tourism is not just made up of one type of provider; there are hotels suppliers, transportation services, tour guides, marketers, entertainers, planners, and many other people that contribute to the sector's diversity. Due to tourism's inconsistent and sometimes overlapping nature, it becomes difficult for the government to regulate tourism, leading to exploitation (Payne & Dimanche, 1996).

Dark tourism can generate tax revenue and jobs for locals. It is exceedingly uncommon that dark tourism would create food or housing shortages, but it could be possible. Regular negative interactions with tourists can damper the locals' temperament, so they become hostile to the visitors, who may be seeking to pay their respect or better learn about a dark destination. Central planning with the government's aid might help ensure a healthy relationship within dark tourism communities (Payne & Dimanche, 1996). Another suggestion would be a universal code of ethics that could be established in the United States where all businesses and not just some, operate under a set of principles (Fleckenstein & Huebsch, 1999).

Many people have booked vacations that did not live up to their expectations. While dark tourism destinations are rarely falsely marketed, it is still possible, especially in more remote areas. If the only source of revenue is this one location, people may play up the tragedy. Everyone involved in profiting off a tourist spot wants a more significant cut in the profit, whether directly or indirectly. There must be a way to ensure services at the location are up to the promised standards. Again, this harkens back to establishing a standardized ethical code (Fleckenstein & Huebsch, 1999). Perhaps other nations can create their own codes and make them easily accessible to tourists to avoid adverse social or cultural exchanges.

Due to the seasonal nature of numerous tourism locations, the profession attracts students, older populations, those with handicaps, and immigrants. Low-level positions offer

minimum wage with minimal security and could be laid off at any time. These employees, who might be considered vulnerable populations, could require government assistance to ensure equal protection (Payne & Dimanche, 1996). From an ethical standpoint, if workers' rights are violated, the government or its partners may need to get involved. Sexual harassment, equal pay violation, whistleblower retaliation, or one of many other ethical violations could occur. No recent academic studies have been methodically conducted on seasonal employment and dark tourism.

While dark tourism sites can spring up abruptly due to tragedy, visitors can arrive just as quickly. Before COVID-19, global transportation was more accessible than ever, so a substantial number of people traveled for leisure pursuits. Tourism can infuse money into an economy while negatively affecting the environment (Debarbieri, 2008). Natural resources can be strained, crowds can create pollution, and crime uptick. On the positive side, travelers can advocate preserving culture and heritage, which could stop invasive businesses such as mining from setting up shop in the area (May, 1999). The government plays a role in this scenario involving the environment, but it can also be so much more. The balance between preserving, educating, honoring the deceased, and promoting sustainability are crucial to society. It would not be unethical of the government to simply sit back and collect tax money.

The government's role as a whole in the dark tourism sector has yet to be fully fleshed out. The survey has not resoundingly answered the research query in one way or another, but it lays a valuable foundation for future studies. Researchers will be able to see where questions are lacking and approach this topic from a different perspective. Additionally, while scholars have done their best to adapt data collection for the "new normal," not all methods are robust for a

surfeit of reasons. Many other ethical avenues need to be explored regarding dark tourism that this study did not cover.

In conclusion, dark tourism and its ethics are still somewhat a mystery. Should the government take a collaborative approach to dark tourism management due to ethical concerns? Again, based on current data, public sector workers should collaborate with the agencies that oversee the locations, but the validity needs work. The government may also want to study dark tourism's impacts on the environment, economy, and workers. It is the desire of this researcher that dark destinations will get significantly more academic focus in the future.

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EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY APPROVAL

IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

EASTERN STATE
PENITENTIARY

AMERICA'S MOST HISTORIC PRISON

September 2, 2021

International Review Board
West Chester University
700 South High Street
West Chester, PA 19383

To whom it may concern:

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site welcomes Kristina Garlick to conduct surveys of historic site visitors on Saturday, October 9, 2021, and Sunday, October 10, 2021, from 10am to 5pm.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at dm@easternstate.org.

Sincerely,

Damon McCool
Specialist, Research and Public Programming

IRB APPROVAL

IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

Date: 9-28-2021

IRB #: IRB-FY2022-14
Title: Morbid Curiosity: Exploring the Ethics of Dark Tourism
Creation Date: 7-25-2021
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Kristina Garlick
Review Board: West Chester University Institutional Review Board
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member	Michelle Wade	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	MWADE@WCUPA.EDU
Member	Kristina Garlick	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	kg939331@wcupa.edu
Member	Kristina Garlick	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	kg939331@wcupa.edu

CONSENT

IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

Project Title: Morbid Curiosity: Exploring the Ethics of Dark Tourism

Investigator(s): Kristina Garlick; Michelle Wade

Project Overview:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Kristina Garlick as part of her Doctoral Dissertation. Should public administrators take a collaborative role in dark tourism management due to ethical concerns? It will take 10 minutes to take the questionnaire. There is a minimal risk of harm; Even though Eastern State Penitentiary is linked to violence and suffering, it is unlikely to trigger anyone as it has been closed since 1970, over 50 years ago. In other words, there is a detachment from the tragedy. Visitors are under no obligation to complete the survey and can skip any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. Individuals who participate in the survey on-site are welcomed to a snack. As a participant, you will help me determine if public administrators should take a more hands-on approach to dark tourism due to the sensitive nature of the sites.

Kristina Garlick is doing the research project as part of her Doctoral Dissertation. Should public administrators take a collaborative role in dark tourism management due to ethical concerns? If you would like to participate, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form. You may ask Kristina Garlick any questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. What is the purpose of this study?
Should public administrators take a collaborative role in dark tourism management due to ethical concerns?
2. If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:
Take Questionnaire
This study will take 10 minutes of your time.
3. Are there any experimental medical treatments?
No
4. Is there any risk to me?
Possible risks or sources of discomfort include: Eastern State Penitentiary, while linked to violence and suffering, is unlikely to trigger anyone as it has been closed since 1970, over 50 years ago. In other words, there is a detachment from the tragedy. Visitors are under no obligation to complete the survey, and you may skip any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with

Mental Health America: 1-800-27308255. If you experience discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.

5. Is there any benefit to me?
Benefits to you may include: Individuals who participate in the survey on-site are welcomed to a snack. Other benefits may include: I am looking to discover if public administrators should take a more hands-on approach to dark tourism due to the sensitive nature of the sites.

6. How will you protect my privacy?
The surveys will be recorded. Your records will be private. Only Kristina Garlick, Michelle Wade, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses. Your name will **not** be used in any reports. Records will be stored: Hackettstown, NJ. Data will be stored on a flash drive and kept in a locked safe in Hackettstown, NJ 07840. All electronic surveys will be saved onto Excel and uploaded onto the flash drive. Then the electronic surveys will be wiped from the online server. Records will be destroyed Three Years After Study Completion

7. Do I get paid to take part in this study?
No

8. Who do I contact in case of research-related injury?
      For any questions with this study, contact:
      Primary Investigator: Kristina Garlick at 201-317-3245 or kg939331@wcupa.edu
      Faculty Sponsor: Michelle Wade at 610-436-2031 or mwade@wcupa.edu

9. What will you do with my Identifiable Information/Biospecimens?
Not applicable.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is impossible to know every risk regarding a study, but I think reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

_____   _____

Subject/Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____

Witness Signature   Date

SURVEY QUESTIONS

IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

1. What attraction are you visiting?

_____

2. How did you find out about this attraction?

Family or Friend ☐   Radio/TV Ad ☐   Online Ad ☐
Coupon/Discount ☐   Travel Agent ☐   Road Sign ☐
Magazine/Brochure ☐   Direct Website ☐   Not Listed ☐

3. What is appealing about this attraction?

History ☐   Entertainment ☐   Dark Tourism ☐
Curiosity ☐   Activities ☐   Price/Cost ☐
Boredom ☐   Education ☐   Other - Comment ☐

If Other, Explain

_____

4. How often have you visited this location? (Approximately)

My First Visit ☐   Few Times a Year ☐   Practically Weekly ☐
Three or Less ☐   Almost Monthly ☐   My Second Home ☐

5. Are you looking to visit nearby attractions?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Unsure ☐

6. Will you be taking part in any activities related to your visit today?

Bus Tour ☐   Seminar ☐   Theme Dining ☐
Walking Tour ☐   Lecture ☐   Photography ☐
Ghost Tour ☐   Reenactment ☐   Limited Exhibit ☐

7. What does this location make you feel?

_____

_____

8. How did you cope with these feelings?

_____

_____

9. Are any of your family members living or deceased connected to this location?

Bystanders ☐   Victim ☐   Survivor ☐

10. Will you be buying a souvenir today?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

11. What needs to be improved?

Better Displays/Exhibits ☐   More Focus on History ☐   Victim/Survivor Focus ☐
Maintenance of Facility ☐   Better Entertainment ☐   Narration/Interpretation ☐
Improve Technology ☐   Special Experiences ☐   Other - Comment ☐

If Other, Explain

_____

12. Is there anything that the local, state or federal government can help improve?

_____

_____

13. Do you think the location has a particular political leaning?

Very much ☐   A Little ☐   N/A ☐
Somewhat ☐   Not Really ☐   Other ☐

If Other, Explain

_____

14. What is dark tourism?

_____

_____

15. Do you consider the attraction you are visiting today to be dark tourism?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

16. What dark attractions have you visited?

_____

_____

17. What dark attractions would you like to visit?

_____

_____

18. Have you visited (or done) the following? (Check all that apply)

Haunted House/Hayride ☐   Celebrity/Famous Grave ☐   Shrine/Memorial ☐
Ghost Hunting/Seance ☐   Body Part Exhibit ☐   Former Prison/Dungeon ☐
Ghost Tour ☐   Battlefield ☐   Concentration Camps ☐

19. Have you had a paranormal experience?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

Demographics

20. State or country of primary residency?_____

21. Gender?

Male ☐   Female ☐   Other ☐

22. Age?

18 ☐   36-45 ☐   66 -75 ☐
19-25 ☐   46-55 ☐   76+ ☐
26-35 ☐   56-65 ☐

23. Education?

Some High School ☐   Associates ☐   Masters ☐
High School Diploma ☐   Bachelors ☐   Doctorate ☐

24. Income?

Unemployed/Student ☐   > $24,999 ☐ $25,000- $39,000 ☐
$40,000-$54,999 ☐ $55,000- $69,999 ☐ $70,000 + ☐

25. Any Additional Comments?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

SURVEY EXPLANATION

IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

01. What attraction are you visiting?	The location you are visiting
02. How did you find out about this attraction?	Who or what told you about the location?
03. What is appealing about this attraction?	Essentially, what made you want to visit.
04. How often have you visited this location?	How many times a year do you come to this location.
05. Are you looking to visit nearby attractions?	Will you be doing other activities in the area such as going out to eat, sports, shows, tours, etc.
06. Will you be taking part in any activities related to your visit today?	Besides walking around the location, will you be taking part in other related activities?
07. What does this location make you feel?	Do feel sadness, guilt, anger, curiosity, etc.
08. How did you cope with these feelings?	How do you deal with any feelings that emerge from visiting this location? Talk, cry, pray, etc.
09. Are any of your family members living or deceased connected to this location?	Did someone you know fight, die, escape or witness the past event, which made the location famous.
10. Will you be buying a souvenir today?	Will you be buying anything related to your visit, such as a hat, shirt, cards, movie, map, books, etc.
11. What needs to be improved?	How can the location be enhanced for future visitors
12. Is there anything that the local, state, or the federal government can help improve?	Is there anything the government can do to improve the experience, such as provide funding, grant access or release documents, or partner with the location?
13. Do you think the location has a particular political leaning?	Does the location appear politically Left, Right, Independent, neutral, etc.?
14. What is dark tourism?	Dark "Grief" Tourism are locations that are associated with past trauma. These places become engrained in the collective consciousness.
15. Do you consider the attraction you are visiting today to be dark tourism?	Do you think this location is popular due to its turbulent history?
16. What dark attractions have you visited?	Popular dark tourism attractions include the Colosseum, Chernobyl, Ground Zero, Hiroshima Museum, Auschwitz, Murambi Memorial, Alcatraz, Salem, Pompeii, Body Worlds, JFK Assassination Site, Alcatraz, Normandy, etc.
17. What dark attractions would you like to visit?	Some more popular dark tourism locations are the London Dungeons, Cambodia Killing Fields, Leap Castle, Island of Dolls, visiting a famous grave (Michael Jackson, etc.)
18. Have you visited (or done) the following?	The activities listed are considered different levels of dark tourism.
19. Have you had a paranormal experience?	Have you seen or interacted with anything supernatural?
20. State or Country?	Demographic
21. Gender?	Demographic
22. Age?	Demographic
23. Education?	Demographic
24. Income?	Demographic
25. Any Additional Comment?	Additional information that you would like to add

Appendix F

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS
IRB Approval: IRB-FY2022-14

Signs of Post Traumatic Disorder: Several mental distress, flashbacks, stressful memories, nightmares, physical reaction, avoidance, feeling helpless and negative thinking. Additionally, feeling detached, numb, memory problems, trouble sleeping or concentrating. There could be issues of feeling guilty, shameful, suicidal, or even heighten aggression (Mayo Clinic, n.d.). If you encounter one or more of these signs consider contacting one of the below hotlines or consult your doctor.

CONTACTS

Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741 (24/7)

MentalHealth.gov: (877) 726-4727 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

Mental Health America: 1-800-27308255 (24/7)

Mental Health America: Text to 741741 (24/7)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): (800) 950-6264 (10 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, M-F)

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): 1-866-615-6464IRB (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (24/7)

SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline: 1-877-726-4727 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m., EST, M-F)

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, press 1 (24/7)

Veteran's Crisis Line: Text to 838255 (24/7)

References

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