
1-1-2012

Dark tourism: An assessment of the motivations of visitors to Auschwitz – Birkenau, Poland

Aisling Ward

Agnieszka Stessel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://sword.cit.ie/irishbusinessjournal>



Part of the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ward, Aisling and Stessel, Agnieszka (2012) "Dark tourism: An assessment of the motivations of visitors to Auschwitz – Birkenau, Poland," *Irish Business Journal*: Vol. 7 : No. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://sword.cit.ie/irishbusinessjournal/vol7/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Cork at SWORD - South West Open Research Deposit. It has been accepted for inclusion in Irish Business Journal by an authorized editor of SWORD - South West Open Research Deposit. For more information, please contact sword@cit.ie.

Dark tourism: An assessment of the motivations of visitors to Auschwitz – Birkenau, Poland

Dr Aisling Ward and Agnieszka Stessel

Abstract

Travel to sites of death and destruction is not a new concept. It is however, a phenomenon that has in recent years emerged as a clearly identifiable tourism product from a supply perspective and a growing tourism trend throughout the world. An element of human nature is this fascination with death and disaster, which has been catered for through the emergence of tourism sites associated with death, disaster and destruction. Today, many places of death and disaster attract millions of tourists from around the world such as Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam, Ground Zero in New York, Arlington National Cemetery and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa to name but a few. This paper seeks to establish an understanding of the concept of dark tourism and its growth throughout the world. It will then assess the role of dark tourism in a Polish context with a particular emphasis on Auschwitz – Birkenau (a German World War 2 concentration camp). The empirical research for this paper seeks to develop a profile of visitors to Auschwitz and examine the key motivations of visitors. A triangulation approach was adopted incorporating qualitative focus groups and a questionnaire survey in order to identify the motivations of visitors to this site. It emerged that education, curiosity and remembrance were the dominant motivations of visitors while almost all expressed the emotional impact of the visit.

Keywords: *Dark tourism, Thanatourism, Poland, Auschwitz, Motivations*

Introduction

From as early as travel became possible people have been drawn to places where tragedies have occurred (Stone, 2005). Evidence of this form of travel can be garnered from the gladiatorial games, pilgrimages and travel to sites of medieval executions (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Seaton, (1999) spoke of visits to battlefields such as Waterloo from 1816 onwards as an example of what he referred to as 'Thanotourism', while Mac Cannell (1989) identified visits to the morgue as a feature of 19th Century tours of Paris.

There is no disputing that dark tourism itself is not a new phenomenon, although it has not until very recently been categorised as such within the tourism literature. Dark tourism is now a recognised niche tourism product and there has been substantial growth in the supply of dark tourism attractions which are marketed and promoted to the visitor (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). The focus of this paper is exploratory in nature and seeks to address how dark tourism has been defined in the literature, identify the motivations of visitors to dark tourism destinations and to identify the motivations of visitors to Auschwitz in Poland.

Irish Business Journal Volume 7, Number 1, 2012

Definition of Dark Tourism

Several definitions of dark tourism have emerged in the literature over the last number of decades. According to Smith (1998) the most dominant form of dark tourism are those trips that are associated with war, such as visits to battlefields or commemorative sites. These comprise the most significant category of tourist attractions in the world (Henderson, 2000; Ryan, 2007). However, other forms of dark tourism also exist including; visits to graveyards (Seaton, 2002); Holocaust tourism (Ashworth, 1996; Beech, 2000); Atrocity tourism (Ashworth and Hartman, 2005); Prison tourism (Strange and Kempa, 2003); or Slavery-heritage tourism (Dann and Seaton, 2001). Sites of famous deaths such as James Dean and Buddy Holly (Alderman, 2002) and areas where major disasters (Ground Zero) occurred are also included. In addition, more novel forms of dark tourism have emerged such as murder mystery trips, Dracula tours and visits to the Body Worlds exhibitions (www.bodyworlds.com, 2011).

The range and complexity of dark tourism attractions makes it difficult to pinpoint one clear definition although some theorists have succeeded in doing just this. Table I summarises the key dark tourism terms as identified in the literature.

Dark Tourism Term	Author, Year	Definition
Dark tourism	Foley & Lennon	'The presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites' (1996a:198)
Thanotourism	Seaton (1996)	Travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death (1996:240)
Morbid tourism	Blom (2000)	Tourism that 'focuses on sudden death and which quickly attracts large numbers of people' and, on the other hand, 'an attraction-focused artificial morbidity-related tourism (Blom, 2000:32)
Black Spot tourism	Rojek (1993)	'the commercial [touristic] developments of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with sudden and violent death' (1993:136)
Grief tourism	www.grief-tourism.com	Travel to areas affected by natural disasters, places where people were murdered, etc
Milking the Macabre	Dann (1994)	'The commercialisation or promotion of destinations or sites linked to dark tourism'. (1994:61)
Fright tourism	Bristow & Newman (2004)	'A variation of dark tourism where individuals may seek a thrill or shock from the experience' (2004: 215)
Dicing with Death	Dann (1998)	Experiences that relate to an individual's concept of their own mortality
Holidays in Hell	(O' Rourke, 1988; Pelton, 2003)	Holidays that challenge tourists an increase their own sense of mortality.

Table 1: *The Range of Dark Tourism Definitions*
Source Adapted from Sharpley and Stone (2009)

Although Foley and Lennon (1996) were the first to describe and categorise the term Dark tourism, as is evident from the above table several researchers have further defined and categorised the dark tourism phenomena. Furthermore, there are clear correlations with all of these definitions and the concept of dark tourism. However, the degree of complexity, the motivations involved and the level of authenticity of each theory varies greatly.

In order to understand this concept in greater detail, Seaton (1996) proposed there were in fact five categories of dark travel activities including;

- Travel to witness public enactments of death – this concept is linked with Rojek's (1997) sensation tourism located at disaster sites (e.g. Ground Zero).
- Travel to see sites of mass or individual deaths after they have taken place – numerous sites including battlefields and World War 2 concentration camps (e.g. Waterloo or Auschwitz).
- Travel to memorials or internment sites – graveyards where famous people are laid to rest, or old prisons (e.g. Kilmainham jail and Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin)
- Travel to see evidence or symbolic representations of death at unconnected sites – museums or attractions that reconstruct specific events (e.g. Holocaust museum in Washington).
- Travel for re-enactments or simulation of death – traditionally religion and now characterised through plays, festivals and re-enactments (e.g. The Passion of our Lord on Good Friday).

This is further substantiated by Dann (1998) who also devised a categorisation of dark tourism. Although this in itself is not a definitive classification as it is based on preliminary research in the field of dark tourism. Table 2 details the categorisation of dark tourism as identified by Dann.

Divisions of the dark	Examples
Perilous places – dangerous destinations from the past and present	Towns of horror Dangerous destinations
Houses of horror – Buildings associated with death and horror, either actual or represented	Dungeons of death Heinous hotels
Fields of fatality – Areas/lands commemorating death, fear, fame or infamy.	Bloody battlegrounds The hell of the Holocaust Cemeteries for celebrities
Tours of Torment – Tours/visits to attractions associated with death, murder and mayhem	Mayhem and Murder The now notorious
Themed Thanatos – Collections/museums themed around death and suffering	Morbid museums Monuments to morality

Table 2: *A Categorisation of Dark Tourism*
Source: *Adapted from Dann (1998).*

As is evident from Table 2 there is a vast range of dark tourism experiences available which may not have been categorised as such in the past. These include anything from a visit to a cemetery where famous historical or celebrity figures are buried (e.g Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin where many historical Irish figures are buried) to Auschwitz in Poland, the site of the greatest mass murder in history. Furthermore, there are clear correlations between both the classification of Seaton and Dann, which assist in supporting the framework of each study.

Motivations for Tourism

The study of tourism motivations has become a prominent area of discovery over the last few decades with the necessity to understand the reasons why people travel and what impacts on their tourism decision making process. In a general context Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) was one of the first studies which provided a framework for understanding motivation. Maslow’s hierarchy involved five orders of needs including; physiological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, self-esteem needs and self-actualisation. This needs based theory worked on the assumption that individuals will seek to move up the hierarchy once the lower order needs are established. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) developed Maslow’s theory in a tourism context and created the Travel Career Ladder which noted that an individual’s motives to travel will change as they become more experienced travellers. Similar to Maslow’s model, the travel career ladder followed a hierarchical framework which was

based on the premise that tourists would only travel up the ladder and may not necessarily return back down the ladder. Therefore it failed to take into consideration a change in an individual's circumstances that would impact on their behaviour. In response to this Pearce and Lee (2005) adapted the original ladder to resemble a pattern which allowed for tourists to travel in both directions depending on their personal circumstances in any given time and place. The five categories of needs were similar to Maslow's and included in hierarchical order; relaxation; stimulation; relationship; self-esteem, and development and fulfilment.

Dann's (1977) Push and Pull model of tourism motivation is possibly one of the most cited tourism motivation frameworks and is grounded on the premise that tourists are motivated to travel based on an internal push or external pull to a destination. Dann (1977) proposed two dominant motives for travel namely, *anomie and ego-enhancement*. Anomie refers to a push factor in which the individual seeks to "...transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, where the tourist simply wishes to 'get away from it all'" (Dann, 1977: 187). Ego-enhancement also relates to personality needs and is the desire "...to have one's ego enhanced or boosted from time to time" (Dann 1977:187). It can therefore be surmised that the needs as outlined by Maslow are associated with push factors while the attractiveness of a destination act as pull factors.

Motivations for Dark Tourism

There is a dearth of information in the literature with regard to the motivations of dark tourists. The research in relation to dark tourism, has to date focussed on the supply side of the dark tourism product and has to a lesser extent looked at the demand for dark tourism. Therefore, there has been little emphasis on the analysis of why people visit dark tourism sites and the motivations of these individuals. In addition to this, the exploration of visitor motivations to dark tourism sites is a pivotal element for understanding the reasons why people visit. However, it is difficult to identify these motivations due to the range and variety of tourism attractions which fall under the broad category of dark tourism. Furthermore, due to the fact that many dark tourism sites involve the death of one or thousands of individuals, there is a level of sensitivity required in assessing the reasons for visiting and some individuals may be reluctant to admit to motivations that may not be regarded as appropriate. Nevertheless, some research has been conducted in this area.

In 1998, Dann put forward a preliminary list of motives for dark tourism including the desire to overcome phantom; search for novelty; nostalgia; celebration of crime and deviance; basic bloodlust and interest in challenging one's sense of mortality. According to an initial study by Ashworth (2002) on dark tourism there are four main motivations for participating in this form of tourism. These include; curiosity; empathic identification; entertainment through horrific occurrences and the suffering of others and seeking self-identification and self-understanding. In Ashworth's (2004) later research, dark tourism motives extended from on the one hand motivations such as pilgrimage, search for identity and a sense of social responsibility towards darker motives of an interest and indulgence in violence and suffering.

Seaton and Lennon (2004) identified two key motives for dark tourism namely *Schadenfreude* (the pleasure in viewing others misfortune) and the contemplation of death. From the above analysis, there seems to be a two-tier framework emerging from the literature in the analysis of dark tourism motivations. These range from lighter more general motivations such as curiosity, novelty, nostalgia and remembrance towards more darker and sinister motivations such as a type of bloodlust and a warped interest in the suffering and pain of others. This is summarised in Table 3.

Author	Lighter motivations	Darker motivations
Dann (1998)	Desire to overcome phantom Search for novelty Nostalgia	Celebration of crime and deviance Basic bloodlust Interest in challenging one's mortality
Ashworth (2002)	Curiosity Emphatic identification	Entertainment through horrific occurrences and suffering of others Self-identification and self-understanding
Ashworth (2004)	Pilgrimage Search for identity A sense of social responsibility	Interest and indulgence in violence and suffering

Table 3: *Motivations of Dark Tourists*
(Source: As Above)

A completely different framework for analysing dark tourism motivations was put forward by Yuill in 2003. Yuill (2003) adopted Dann's Push and Pull theory in her assessment of visitor's motivations to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. From this research she examined eleven key motivations for dark tourism categorised into push and pull factors. The push factors included; heritage and identity; historical; survivors guilt; remembrance; death and dying; nostalgia and education, while the pull factors incorporated are; curiosity and novelty seeking; the artefacts at the visitor attraction, sight sacralisation and the role of the media. However, the findings of this research indicated that in fact there were only two dominant motivations for visitors to the Holocaust Museum, namely remembrance and education.

Similar findings to Yuill were noted in a more recent study on the motivations of visitors to Auschwitz by Biran *et al.* in 2011. They concluded that tourist motivations are varied but focus particularly on a desire to learn and understand the history presented and an interest in the emotional experience of a visit. However, they also noted that further research would be required in this area to corroborate with their findings and develop existing knowledge on dark tourism motivations. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to conduct a study on the motivations of dark tourists to the most well-known site of dark tourism, namely Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. Auschwitz is generally considered to be the darkest of dark tourism sites in the world (Stone, 2006). It is estimated that approximately 1,300,000 individuals perished in Auschwitz between 1942 and liberation in 1945 with almost 90 per cent of these being Jewish (Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, 2011). The history of Auschwitz is harrowing and is the most cited example of dark tourism in the literature (e.g. Lennon and Foley, 2000; Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Biran *et al.*, 2011), hence the reason for the choice of this site for this study.

Methodology

The methodology for this exploratory study was a mixed methods approach. Therefore a two-stage process of research was adopted incorporating qualitative focus groups and a quantitative questionnaire survey. The unique characteristic of focus groups is the involvement of several respondents in the research process, with the explicit use of group interaction to generate data (Morgan, 1988). In essence, ‘the focus group will seek to gain insights into meaningful constructs of phenomena which emerge out of sharing and discussing issues’ (Carson *et al.*, 2001: 115). A focus group allows for more in-depth understanding of the research concept and can help in the development of further research stages. One focus group was conducted with employees of the Auschwitz museum in January 2011. There were five participants in total in the focus group (3 men and 2 women). Table 4 identifies the people who participated in the focus group.

Title of Participant	Role of Participant in Museum
Dr Wojciech Plosa	Head of the museum archives and the historical teacher on SS (Soldier Nazi Organisation) everyday life;
Elzbieta Brzozka	Collection department of the museum
Krystyna Oleksy	Deputy director for education in the museum
Prof. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski	Member of the International Auschwitz Council, former prisoner and a professor of philosophy and humanities
Stefan Wilkanowicz	Member of the International Auschwitz Council

Table 4: Focus Group Participants

Source: Primary Research (respondents in focus groups approved the use of their real names and titles)

² A similar methodology has been adopted by other authors in the assessment of dark tourism motivations. Yuill, 2003 used both focus groups and a quantitative survey incorporating closed questions on motivations; Biran *et al.* (2011) similarly used in-depth interviews and quantitative surveys to determine motivations of visitors to dark tourism attractions

In developing the focus group the Auschwitz museum was contacted and a detailed explanation of the research being conducted was presented with the objective of gaining participation by employees in the focus group. As is evident from the above table the members of the focus group would be considered experts in their field, are all employees in Auschwitz, have differing levels of experience and would be very knowledgeable about the behaviour of visitors to the museum.

The second stage of the triangulation process involved a questionnaire survey with visitors to the museum and was also conducted in January of 2011. Whilst qualitative methods seek to explore and discover attitudes and motivations on an individual basis, questionnaire surveys allow the researcher gather data on the frequency of these attitudes and motivations among the population as a whole (Veal, 1997). Two methods of questionnaire administration were incorporated; firstly, 30 previous visitors to Auschwitz were contacted by e-mail and asked to complete the questionnaire. The e-mails of these visitors were provided by the employees of the museum. The reason for conducting an e-mail survey was due to the sensitive nature of a visit to Auschwitz as some tourists may not want to complete a face to face survey. The second stage of the survey was a self-administered questionnaire. A further seventy questionnaires were distributed over a two-day period to visitors to the Auschwitz museum in order to determine their motivations for visiting and to develop a profile of visitors.

The questionnaire was designed based on findings from the literature review in relation to the motivations of tourists in general and those of visitors to dark tourism sites. Both the e-mail survey and the self-administered questionnaire resulted in a one hundred per cent response rate. This is due to the fact that the e-mail participants were chosen by the employees of Auschwitz and had already agreed to complete the questionnaire and the nature of a self-administered questionnaire allows for a one hundred per cent response rate.

Research Findings

An agenda of eight discussion topics was created for the focus group in order to develop a profile of the visitor to Auschwitz and to gain an understanding of the motivations of visitors to the museum based on the interpretation of those working in Auschwitz. The first issue related to the development of a visitor profile and the identification of their characteristics. It was found that the age profile of visitors was not distinctive ranging from 18 to 80. Polish people tend to be the number one in terms of nationality, however, a large proportion of Germans and Jews also visit. This is not surprising due to the history of the site and as one focus group participant noted *"...everyone knows, the most affected were Jews and Poles"* (Polsa, 2011). This indicates that the desire to visit may be motivated by the need to remember those who perished in this site of mass destruction. This is further emphasised by Oleksy who noted that *"...the memory of the victims of Auschwitz ensures the existence of this place today and tomorrow"*. Furthermore, another focus group respondent noted that for some visitors, it is out of a fascination with death that they are motivated to visit Auschwitz *"...People are fascinated with death, and therefore from year to year, more and more visitors are coming"*

to the Museum...". This is clearly linked with the darker tourism motivations described in the literature (Table 3).

The next topic for discussion in the focus group centered on the exhibitions in Auschwitz, and the overall experience of the visitor as they tour the site. The exhibitions themselves convey the enormity of the devastation that took place at the hands of the Nazis and according to the focus group respondents have a huge bearing on the overall experience of the visitors.

"at the Memorial, we preserve and protect the camp objects and part of the property brought by Jewish inmates, which Germans did not manage to destroy or send to the Reich. These include: over 110 thousand shoes, about 3.8 thousand trunks, including 2.1 thousand with names, more than 12 thousand pots and pans, nearly 470 prostheses and 350 pieces of camp clothing, so called striped uniforms. Also under the care of the Museum are close to two tons of hair." (Wilkanowicz, 2011)

In addition to this, Brzozka noted that many people who visit the gas chamber and the execution wall in Auschwitz find *"...it hard to control emotions and imagination, many people mentioned that in this place they felt the presence of the people who died there"*. According to the respondents another exhibit at the museum which causes much emotional distress for visitors is that where the letters home from inmates are contained. Many of these individuals knew they were going to die and this is conveyed in the letters. As Brzozka stated: *"It is sad to see people who are crying when reading these letters, but it is authentic, and it will make people cry"*.

It is worth mentioning that there is no one who walks through the gate of Auschwitz where the infamous inscription "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Works Make Free) is presented, and does not stop there or take pictures. But it is not the only inscription which raises emotions. Other inscriptions include: *"The Jews are a race which has to be completely destroyed"*, *"We need to free German people from Poles, Russians, Jews and Gypsies"*, etc. Therefore, many people who visit Auschwitz have a hugely emotional experience which may not have been anticipated prior to the visit.

For those visitors who were survivors of the camp or relatives of those who died there, the motivations to visit are very much driven by a desire to maintain the memory of their loved ones and ensure that their story is told. As Oleksy stated: *"People come to us who talk about how it was in the camp and who want to tell about their experiences, about what had happened and what to do to guard against similar disasters"*. People need to have a place to pay their respects and remember those who died. The focus group participants noted the significance of memory in the decision to visit Auschwitz. According to Plosa: *"The memory and learning are the hope that such an event will never happen again"*.

Historical and educational reasons are also dominant in the decision to visit the camp, many history teachers will visit and many students will visit to learn first-hand about the devastation

which occurred during World War 2. *“I think they are the people who are interested in history, and when they learn about the Holocaust, they want to see these places. People know the stories, statistics, but otherwise it is to see with their own eyes”* (Brzozka, 2011).

The focus group respondents also noted that curiosity plays a big part in deciding to visit Auschwitz. *“People have always been curious, and even more when it comes to the Holocaust ... sometimes it is a sick curiosity ... lots of people lost their lives in the camp, and people are interested only on how they died”* (Wilkanowicz, 2011) . The dark tourism literature also noted that curiosity can be a factor in the decision to visit dark tourism sites. However, it is not known the extent to which this curiosity is driven by education or whether it relates to a more sinister curiosity.

Guilt was a factor rarely mentioned by the participants. Wilkanowicz said: *“People come that have a sense of guilt, but do not want to talk about it, and their face is not expressing any emotions”*. However, guilt is not an emotion which would be readily expressed by visitors; therefore it would be difficult to identify the extent to which guilt drives people to visit Auschwitz.

Finally, respondents agreed that the number of people visiting Auschwitz is on the increase and that people will continue to visit this place to remember those who died. Oleksy stated that: *“Auschwitz is the most visited of all the former German Nazi concentration camps throughout Europe and has the highest museum attendance in Poland”*. The most important thing is to pass the information on to the next generation and to be aware of the things people can do, in order to prevent such atrocities from occurring in the future.

Survey Analysis

Following on from the focus group research a survey was conducted with visitors to Auschwitz as outlined in the methodology above. The first section of the questionnaire revolved around the demographic profile of visitors to Auschwitz. In terms of nationality 37% were Polish, 19% from Israel, 18% were German, 11% from France and 5% from the US, the remainder included visitors from Japan, Italy and Spain. The age group breakdown indicated that almost 35% were between the age of 18-24 and clearly would have no memory of the atrocities that occurred in this dark tourism site. A further 20% were aged between 25 and 34. The very young age groups visiting Auschwitz during the course of this research could be linked to the educational motivating factor discussed earlier. Correlating with this finding is the fact that those people visiting the museum at Auschwitz appear to be very well educated, with 72% having attained some form of third level education and a further 5% with postgraduate qualifications. As a reflection of the high educational attainment of respondents, the income levels were also relatively high. The majority of respondents were Christian (70%), while 26% were Jews. Finally, the gender divide of respondents was rather even with slightly more female respondents (56%) than male (44%).

The next series of questions sought to gauge whether respondents had visited other dark tourism sites throughout the world. Sixty four per cent had been to other dark tourism sites. When asked to expand on which sites were visited responses included other concentration camps in Poland (Majdanek and Stutthof) and Germany (Dachau); Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam and Ground Zero in New York. This indicates the overall interest of respondents in Dark Tourism, and suggests the experience of the sample under investigation.

Motivations for Visiting Auschwitz

Following on from this, respondents were presented with a series of motivations, derived from the literature on dark tourism and were asked to rate each of these motivations on a scale of one to five, to determine which were of most importance to them in choosing to visit the Auschwitz site. From this analysis it was identified that education was indeed the overwhelming motivation for visiting Auschwitz. This corresponds with both the education level and age profile of respondents. Historical factors and remembrance were also particularly dominant amongst respondents with 70% and 63% respectively responding that they found these motivations to be either important or very important in the decision to visit Auschwitz. Curiosity was also an important motivating factor for visitors to Auschwitz. This motivation could be very much linked with the Bloodlust concept identified by Dann (1998) in the literature. Table 5 summarises each of the motivational variables in terms of their importance to the respondents in choosing to visit Auschwitz.

Motivation	Not at all important or not important	Not influential in the decision	Important or very important
Education	24%	4%	72%
History	22%	8%	70%
Remembrance	28%	9%	63%
Curiosity	19%	22%	59%
Exhibits	28%	15%	57%
Nostalgia	20%	25%	55%

Table 5: Motivational importance in the decision to visit Auschwitz
Source: Primary Research (2011)

All of the motivations identified in the primary research of this paper relate to the lighter dark tourism motivations and as discussed in the literature review, the darker tourism motivations can be much more difficult to determine as people are less likely to admit to these. In addition there is a clear correlation between the motivations presented by respondents in the focus group research and the motivations identified in the questionnaire survey and summarised in Table 5. Education, history, and remembrance being dominant in both stages of the research process.

The final series of questions in the survey related to the respondents personal connection to Auschwitz and whether there were any feelings of guilt experienced following the visit. Twenty seven per cent of respondents noted a personal connection to their visit and when asked to develop this further it was determined that five per cent of these individuals were actual survivors of the Holocaust while a further twenty-two per cent were related to or knew someone who had perished in the concentration camp. There was an overwhelming sense of loss as well as guilt with 7 per cent of participants noting the feelings of guilt experienced during their visit.

Implications and Conclusion

The results of the focus group analysis and supported by the questionnaire survey have indicated there are several motivations instigating a visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The key motivators identified include; history, remembrance, education, curiosity, guilt, emotional experience, the various exhibitions at the site and the infamous nature of Auschwitz. These findings correlate with some of the results of other dark tourism motivational studies as identified in the literature (Table 3). However, there seems to be less significance placed on a fascination with death so fervently put forward by the earlier dark tourism motivation studies. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that these more sinister motivations may not be openly identified and communicated. Conversely, there are in particular clear associations between this study and that of Yuill (2003) and Biran et.al. (2011). Yuill's (2003) and Biran et.al.'s (2011) more recent study categorised dark tourism motivations into push and pull factors which can similarly be applied to this study. These are summarised in Table 6.

Research	Push Factors	Pull Factors
Yuill (2003)	Heritage and identity Historical Survivors guilt Remembrance Death and dying Nostalgia Education	Curiosity and novelty seeking Artefacts at the visitor attraction Sight sacralisation The role of the media
Biran et.al. (2011)	History Heritage Emotional experience Learning and understanding	Famous death Tourist attraction See it to believe it.
Ward and Stessel (2011)	Historical Educational Remembrance Emotional experience	Curiosity Exhibitions Infamous nature of the site

Table 6: *Dark Tourism Push and Pull Motivations*

Source: *As Above*

As is evident from Table 6, history, education, emotion and remembrance are the key push factors emerging from the literature and also apparent from this exploratory study. On the other hand the curiosity element, the various events and exhibitions in Auschwitz and the familiarity of this site in general draw individuals to choose to visit Auschwitz rather than any other concentration camps or dark tourism sites. The link between some of these motivations is relevant. Those students who learn in history class about Nazi crimes and are interested in finding out more on this subject may often choose to visit, linking both the educational and historical motivations. There is also a correlation between the emotional experience of a visit and the need to remember particularly for those who are survivors of the camp or relatives of survivors.

Auschwitz remains a place of memory, after more than sixty years, people around the world continue to visit this place to see the ruins of a factory of death. *“Millions of people in the world know what Auschwitz was, but still we need to maintain awareness and memory of the camp to prevent similar tragedy. Only people are able to do so, and only people cannot allow for it” (Wladyslaw Bartoszewski).*

References

- Alderman, D. (2002). Writing on the Graceland Wall: On the Importance of Authorship in Pilgrimage Landscapes. *Tourism Recreation Research* 27 (2), pp. 27-35.
- Ashworth, G. (1996). Holocaust Tourism and Jewish Culture: The lessons of Krakow-Kazimierz. In M. Robinson, N. Evans and P. Callaghan (eds) *Tourism and Cultural Change* (p.1-12). Sunderland: Business Education Publishers
- Ashworth G. and Hartmann, R. (2005). The Management of Horror and Human Tragedy. In G. Ashworth and R. Hartmann (eds) *Horror and Human Tragedy Revisited: The Management of Sites of Atrocities for Tourism* (pp. 253-262). New York: Cognizant Communications Corporation.
- Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, (2011). www.auschwitz-birkenau.org (accessed 03/04/2011).
- Beech, J. (2000). The Enigma of Holocaust Sites as Tourism Attractions – the Case of Buchenwald. *Managing Leisure* (5), pp. 29-41.
- Biran, A., Y. Poria and G. Oren (2011). Sought Experiences at Dark Heritage Sites. *Annals of Tourism Research*. Doi:10.1016/j.annals.2010.12.001
- Blom, T. (2000). Morbid Tourism: A Postmodern Market Niche with and Example from Althrop. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 54 (1), pp. 29-36.
- Bodyworlds, 2011. www.bodyworlds.com (accessed 25/03/2011).
- Boorstin, D. (1964) *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Bristow, R. and Newman M. (2004). Myths V's Facts: An Exploration of Fright Tourism. *Proceedings of the 2004 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium* (pp. 215-221). Westfield, MA: Westfield State College.
- Carson, D., A. Gilmore, C. Perry and K. Gronhaug, 2001. *Qualitative Market Research*, London: Sage Publications.
- Dann, G., 1977. Anomie, Ego-enhancement and Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4 (4), 184-194.
- Dann, G. (1994). Tourism, The Nostalgia Industry of the Future. In W. Theobald (ed.) *Global Tourism: The Next Decade* (pp. 55-67). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Dann, G. (1998). The Dark Side of Tourism. *Etudes et Rapports, Serie L. Sociology/Psychology/Philosophy/Anthropology* (Vol 14.). Aix En Provence: Centre International de Recherches et d' Etudes Touristiques.

Dann, G. and A. Seaton (eds.) (2001). *Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanotourism*. Binghampton, NY: Haworth Hospitality Press.

Foley, M. and J. Lennon (1996a). Editorial: Heart of Darkness. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2(4), 195-197.

Foley, M. and J. Lennon (1996b). JFK and Dark Tourism: A Fascination with Assassination. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2(4), 198-211.

Henderson, J. (2000). War as a Tourism Attraction: The Case of Vietnam. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 2(3), pp. 269-280.

Luz, G., 2011. Record number of visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2010. *European Jewish Press*, 14th of January, 2011.

MacCannell, D. (1989). *The Tourist: A New Theory of Leisure Class* (2nd Ed.). New York: Schocken Books.

Maslow, A. H., 1943. A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

Morgan, D., 1988. Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 16, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

O'Rourke, P. (1988). *Holidays in Hell*. London: Picador.

Pearce, P. and M. Caltabiano, 1983. Inferring Travel Motivation from Travellers' Experiences. *Journal of Travel Research*, 12 (2), 16-20.

Pearce, P. and U. Lee, 2005. Developing the Travel Career Approach to Tourism Motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43, 226-237.

Pelton, R. (2003). *The World's Most Dangerous Places* (5th Ed.) London: Harper Resource.

Rojek, C. (1993). *Ways of Escape*. Basingstoke: MacMilan.

Ryan, C. (ed.) (2007). *Battlefield Tourism*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Seaton, A. (1996). Guided by the Past: From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2 (4), 234-244.

Seaton, A. (1999). War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914. *Annals of Tourism Research* 26 (1), 130-158.

Seaton, A. (2002). Thanatourism's Final Frontiers? Visits to Cemeteries, Churchyards and Funerary Sites as Sacred and Secular Pilgrimage. *Tourism Recreation Research* 27(2), 73-82.

Sharpley, R. and P. Stone (eds.) (2009). *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Smith, V. (1998). War and Tourism: An American Ethnography. *Annals of Tourism Research* 25 (1), 202-227.

Stone, P., (2005). Dark Tourism: *An Old Concept in a New World*. *Tourism (London)* IV (25), 20.

Stone, P. and Sharpley, R. (2008). Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thanatological Perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research* 35 (2), 574-595.

Yin, R., 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 2nd ed. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Yuill, S. (2003). *Dark Tourism: Understanding Visitor Motivation at Sites of Death and Disaster*. MSc Thesis, Texas A & M University.