Chapter 5
Research Methods in Dark Tourism Fields

Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje
University of Palermo, Argentina

ABSTRACT

The current chapter delves into the methodologies as well as limitations of used method in dark tourism fields. As fieldworkers are familiar, sometimes interviewees not only are incognizant of their inner-world, but in other occasion, they simply do not say the truth to protect their own interests. Though in tourism and dark tourism fields, researchers are prone to administer questionnaires or interviews as the main methodological option, no less true is that results are far from being clear or have very problems to be organized in an all-encompassing model.

INTRODUCTION

Dark Tourism situated as one of most intriguing issues in tourism research over the recent years. In fact, it represents not only a new fertile ground to understand how authenticity works but the fascination for others' death (Lennon & Foley, 2000). For some voices, dark tourism is both, a result of the rise of twentieth century as well as the consolidation of postmodernism that ushered society into a solipsist individualism (Korstanje, 2016). What is even more important seems to be the connection of death and secularization. While for some scholars, dark tourism can be defined as a form of new heritage (Poria, Reichel & Biran, 2006; Cohen, 2011), for others, it can be framed under the logic of consumption (Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2013).

As this backdrop, no less true is that this emergent subfield shows some methodological limitations in how the fieldwork is conducted as well as samples

are drawn. In a seminal manuscript, Philip Stone (2011) questioned despite the advance of applied research in last years, there is a clear fragmentation in the produced knowledge which leads very well to misunderstanding and confusion. In this respect, it is necessary to posit a clear agenda to forge multidisciplinary and unified methods of study. In this chapter, we explore not only the main limitations of current research in dark tourism fields, but also focuse on the multiplication of different meanings about the phenomenon. Under the same connotation, there is no consensus what dark tourism means. While some specialists allude to "dark tourism" (Stone, 2011; 2013), others prefer other nomenclatures as "Thana Tourism" (Knudsen, 2011), Morbid tourism (Blom, 2000), Tragedy Tourism (Verma & Jain, 2013), among many others. This essay-review is not ended to ignite a debate in what what has been written but only to focus in the methodological approaches followed by professional fieldworkers up to date.

Our main thesis is that applied-research in dark tourism issues show three main problems, which obscure part of obtained results. At a first glance, beside the lack of coherence to use methodologies, there is a tendency to abuse from open-ended or close-ended questionnaires, which often are applied to tourists on the visited sites. Since dark tourism is defined exclusively as "an experience", in a whole portion of literature, professional researchers allude to what tourists think, feel or surmise to elaborate further indicators that help understanding the issue from an all-encompassing way. But quite aside from this, these approaches ignore sometimes people are unfamiliar with their inner-world while in others they simply lie to protect their interests. This means that there is a great dissonance between what people do and really think. The second problem consists in replicating the logic of destination-management in the resulted diagnosis. Since dark tourism revitalizes the resources of affected community to boost their economies, dark tourism sometimes is viewed as a vehicle towards improvement. This particularly seems to be true, but the profit-oriented approach leaves behind other important factors that determine dark tourism. More interested in protecting the interests of destinations and investors, than in explaining facts, these approaches sometimes become in marketing plans. As a result of this, the interests for studying dark tourism are not associated to its socio-cultural nature, but only to added-value these destinations promise. The previous assumption suggests that only a partial view of the issue is obtained. Last but not least, further discussion is necessary to forge an all-comprising epistemology of dark tourism that escapes from the re-visited caveats. In the section "towards an epistemology of dark tourism" We review the role of ideology as a cultural matrix that not only co-determines what people feel, but also the ways the world is reached. It reproduces a paradoxical situation simply because epistemologically speaking; interviewees are unable to respond beyond the cultural borders of ideology, which mold the cosmologies of *interviewee and interviewer.*

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/research-methods-in-dark-tourism-fields/185814

Related Content

Role of ICT And Tourism in Economic Growth of India
Surender Kumar, Karuna Chauhanand Abhay Kumar Srivastava (2017). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/role-of-ict-and-tourism-in-economic-growth-of-india/177119

The Impact of Social Network on Italian Users' Behavioural Intention for the Choice of a Medical Tourist Destination
Francesca Di Virgilio, Angelo A. Camilloand Isabell C. Camillo (2017). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 36-49).*
www.irma-international.org/article/the-impact-of-social-network-on-italian-users-behavioural-intention-for-the-choice-of-a-medical-tourist-destination/177121

Recommendation System for Sightseeing Tours
Ricardo Claudino Valadasand Elizabeth Simão Carvalho (2020). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 34-54).*
www.irma-international.org/article/recommendation-system-for-sightseeing-tours/259006

Exploring the Food Tourism Effectiveness of Official Websites of BRICS Nations
Ashish Dahiyaand Shelley Duggal (2020). *Destination Management and Marketing: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice (pp. 1188-1205).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/exploring-the-food-tourism-effectiveness-of-official-websites-of-brics-nations/251104

Enlivening the Effect of Tourists' Knowledge and Involvement on Malaysian Heritage Food (MHF) Towards Food Tourism Image in Malaysia
Siti Radhiah Omar, Shahrim Ab Karim, Siti Suriawati Isaand Siti Nazirah Omar (2019). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 23-42).*
www.irma-international.org/article/enlivening-the-effect-of-tourists-knowledge-and-involvement-on-malaysian-heritage-food-mhf-towards-food-tourism-image-in-malaysia/218907