Chapter 5
Research Methods in Dark Tourism Fields

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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 focus 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.
Middle East Tourists' Behaviour Towards Malaysian Gastronomy and Dining Experience in Malaysia
www.igi-global.com/article/middle-east-tourists-behaviour-towards-malaysian-gastronomy-and-dining-experience-in-malaysia/189746?camid=4v1a

The Role of Self-Confidence in the Criteria of Aesthetic Labour Recruitment
www.igi-global.com/article/the-role-of-self-confidence-in-the-criteria-of-aesthetic-labour-recruitment/218906?camid=4v1a