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Dark tourism: Understanding the motivations for visiting Camp Vught



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Abstract

The field of dark tourism studies developed a lot over the last decades. Nevertheless, there is still little empirical research done, especially qualitative research focused on the consumer side. The research that is available shows that the motivations for visiting dark tourism sites are not one-sided, rather it is complex and has a multiplicity of possible reasons, which vary between places and people. This thesis aims to investigate and understand the motivations of people for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught. Camp Vught was the only former SS-concentration Camp in The Netherlands during the Second World War. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with visitors of Camp Vught. The findings demonstrated the complexity and multitude of visiting motivations for the dark tourism site of Camp Vught. Examples include: telling the story to the next generations, heritage, this can never happen again, educational function, curiosity, and commemorating. Given the relatively small sample size of the study, additional research is needed to identify and to validate the additional possible motivations given by the interviewees for visiting Camp Vught. This was beyond the scope of this research. Furthermore, it would also be valuable to conduct similar qualitative empirical research on other dark tourism sites.

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1 Introduction

You could visit the nuclear power plant of Chernobyl in Ukraine (Goatcher & Brunnsden, 2011), have a conversation at the 9/11 ground zero memorial in New York (Stone, 2012), take part in an organized tour at the killing fields in Cambodia (Barton & Brown, 2012), photograph a concentration or death camp such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or Camp Vught (Hartmann et al., 2018), visit the graveyards of notable people at Pere Lachaise in Paris (Toussaint & Decrop, 2013), stand two hours in line to catch a glimpse of Ho Chi Minh at the mausoleum in Hanoi, Vietnam (Farmaki, 2013) or just wander around Bran Castle of Dracula in Romania (Light, 2016). These are just a few examples of destinations that attract millions of tourists each year, and they are all considered “dark tourism” (Farmaki, 2013). Dark tourism attracts visitors through its connection with tragedy, particularly death in its historic past (Gotham, 2015; Seaton, 1996). Walter (1991) even claims that the media is “death-obsessed” as it is continuously reported and discussed in the mainstream (news) media. Therefore, it is not surprising that dark tourism sites are visited by the millions.

To unpack the concept of dark tourism, it is essential to understand what tourism in general is. In general, tourism refers to the movement of people (tourists) away from their usual environment/location and includes social, cultural, and economic activities and practices (UNWTO, 2008). Therefore, engagement in an environment outside one’s usual location, the opposite of (mostly well) organized (work) life, with an emphasis on leisure (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In this conceptualization someone is considered a tourist if their trip includes at least one overnight stay, otherwise they are considered a same-day visitor (UNWTO, 2008). Dark tourism as a niche tourism product can help places develop in a sustainable way, creating the opportunity to develop in an already competitive and chaotic tourism sector (Ali-Knight, 2011). Over the years the niche dark tourism product is getting more and more visitors. Understanding visitors’ motivations will contribute to our understanding of this touristic practice (Podoshen, 2013). Ultimately, this could help foster sustainable development (Podoshen, 2013).

Scholars have developed and adapted the definition and concept of dark during the two decades it has been studied. Foremost, dark tourism is characterized by places of distress, tragedy, grief, or death (Gotham, 2015). It can be defined as the circulation of people (the tourists) traveling towards sites characterized by grim historical events, associated with tragedy, suffering, distress, grief, or death (Gotham, 2015; Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

The dark tourism concept, according to Sharpley and Stone (2009), is still being studied at low intensity. After this original call of Sharpley and Stone, research on the visiting motivations became increasingly prominent in the field of dark tourism studies. Currently, there is a particular research gap on the consumer side of dark tourism (Stone, 2005; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Specifically, research on visiting motivations has not yet been fully and systematically studied (Yan et al., 2016). More recently, the discourse in the academic field of dark tourism studies has brought attention to how the focus in the field has been more on theory building than on empirical research (Isaac & Çakmak, 2014; Isaac et al., 2019; Seaton, 2012; Stone, 2013).

In addition to the academic relevance, trends in the past two decades such as the rise of social media and its possibilities for sharing as well as (geo)political developments have increased the societal relevance of the concept of dark tourism (Dann, 2012). The current geo-political events surrounding the war in Ukraine, as well many other current events (e.g., hurricane in the Philippines, civil war in Ethiopia). These are current events with a dark character that have the potential, and likelihood, of becoming a (popular) dark tourism sites. That this is not merely a possibility has been proven by reports of a British person who went to Ukraine with the specific purpose of trying to experience the tragedy of the war (Daunton, 2022).

1.1 Study objectives and research question

This research aims to fill the identified gap in the literature by conducting empirical research through a case study of Camp Vught. Camp Vught is unique in the Netherlands. Besides Camp Vught being one of the five former concentration camps (others being Amersfoort, Ommen, Schoorl, and Westerbork) in the Netherlands during the Second World War, Vught was the only “Schutzstaffel” (SS) concentration camp (Historiek, 2019).

Through this case study, this thesis aims to gain an understanding of the motivations of people for visiting Camp Vught, as well as to gain more knowledge and further develop the concept and research field of dark tourism. This research, in particular the unique case study of Camp, Vught can expand the scope of dark tourism studies. This will be studied through the following research question:

What are the motivations of people for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught?

Through in-depth interviews, founded on a qualitative research paradigm, with people who visited Camp Vught, this research aimed to discover the motivations of people for visiting this site. Collecting and analyzing valuable empirical data from individual participants on this unique site, comparing, and connecting it to existing dark tourism literature led to rich research results, acquiring new insights for the case of dark tourism at Camp Vught, and additionally expanding on the visiting motivations of dark tourism sites in general.

Research overview

In the upcoming sections this research will outline multiple sections to answer the research question. First the existing theory and conceptual development of dark tourism will be discovered, specifically with regards to motivations for engaging in dark tourism. Subsequently, the study area is discussed and demarcated. Thereafter, in the methodology section, there will be a thorough explanation of the research process and ethics. After this, the results of the collected data are provided and analyzed. Then follow the conclusion and discussion section, connecting the results and analysis to the existing literature. Next, the limitations and recommendations of this research are discussed. Finally, a list of the used references and appendices are provided.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Conceptualization of dark tourism and thanatourism

While the academic research field on the concept of 'dark tourism' it is still relatively new as it has existed for about two decades, the practice of dark tourism is far from new. Nevertheless, it was not until 1996 that Lennon and Foley first proposed the phrase “dark tourism.” In addition to the more mainstream known 'dark tourism' (Foley & Lennon, 1996), other lesser-known terms can be found in the literature, such as: 'milking the macabre' (Dann, 1995) 'black spots' (Rojek, 1997), 'sick tourism' (Blom, 2000) and 'heritage of atrocities' (Ashworth, 2004). The most notable phrase used alongside dark tourism would be “thanatourism” coined by Seaton (1996). However, in the academic literature, a dichotomy has arisen in which – as becomes clear in this study, as through the work of other scholars (c.f. Dunkley & Morgan, 2007; Light, 2017; Martini & Buda, 2020) – the terms dark tourism and thanatourism are often used interchangeably, while on the other hand they are sometimes seen as partly different (Dunkley & Morgan, 2017).

2.1.1 Thanatourism

The phrase thanatourism (the personification of death), was first coined by Seaton (1996). Thanatourism is the “travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death” (Seaton, 1996, p. 240). The first people visiting these sites made the effort to travel towards sites we now consider “dark tourism” because they were already attracted to those places. Those people, according to Sharpley & Stone (2009), were attracted by the associations with tragedy, death, and disaster that shaped those historical sites. This is in line with the work of Smith et al. (2010) who argue that some tourists are interested in the dark(er) side of life which explains that dark tourism in itself is not a new phenomenon. This coincides with how Lisle (2007) claims that dark tourism appeals only to a specific set of people that gain satisfaction from the engagement with this form of tourism. There are many examples of thanatourism, dating back thousands of years, centuries before its academic conceptualization. Examples include, but are not exclusive to, the Roman gladiatorial games, prestige battlefields (such as Waterloo in 1815 or Vienna in 1683), or sites of tragic events such as (natural) disaster or public hangings (Seaton, 1999; Stone & Sharpley, 2008).

An explanation for this broad range of thanatourism sites was found by Seaton (1996) who firstly states that behavioral component is the driving force behind thanatourism in lieu of site-

specific characteristics, wherein the person specific motivations play a role. Secondly the concept is seen as a continuum of intensity with (1) one or one among several motivations and (2) the person-centered or generalized interest in death (see Figure 1).

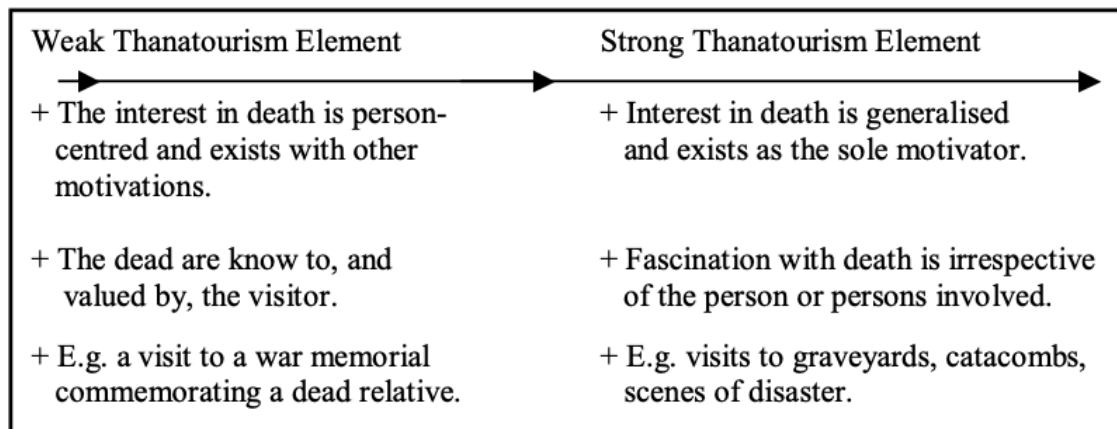


Figure 1 The continuum in thanatourism (Seaton, 1996)

Seaton (1996) made a distinction between five different categories that make up thanatourism:

1. Travel for encounter with death (e.g., political executions, crash sites)
2. Travel to places that previously experienced death (e.g., concentration camps, colosseum, Pompei)
3. Visiting memorial of/and internment places linked to death (e.g., war memorials, graveyard to commemorate)
4. Visiting sites that reenactment (symbolic representation) of actual places of death (e.g., monuments, museum)
5. Seeing re-enactments or simulation regarding death (e.g., restaging death of for example Christ every year or reenacting battlefields)

Seaton clearly made a distinction between the five categories which are different ways thanatourism presents itself, starting with (1) personal encounters with death to secondary experiences of places related to death to (5) simulating/reenacting those places/events.

2.1.2 Dark tourism

In addition to thanatourism, the phrase “dark tourism” was first introduced by Foley & Lennon as “...the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites” (1996, p.198). Lennon and Foley (2000) focused mainly on contemporary (20th century and onwards) events influenced by the mass media, describing that dark tourism is mostly driven by the media and therefore became a product of commodification. This differentiates their conceptualization from thanatourism which places

more emphasis on both the interest side and the historical events. They further defined dark tourism as: “the visitation to any site associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the twentieth century for remembrance, education or entertainment” (Foley & Lennon, 1997, p.166). Additionally, they focused more on emphasizing the memorial and educational side of dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2000). They state there is no harm in visiting places related to death or disaster as it involves commemorating and learning from historical notable times (Lennon & Foley, 2000).

Although as described above there is an ample variance between the two terms, this research will use 'dark tourism' and 'thanatourism' interchangeable as many other scholars do. Most scholars use both the components of thanatourism as well as dark tourism as described above, but prefer the word 'dark tourism', as do the wider audiences (see Buda, 2015a; Martini & Buda, 2020; Dunkley et al., 2011). Hence the more recent description of dark tourism: the whole circulation of tourists, focusing on all people visiting sites characterized by tragedy, grief, distress and/or death (Gotham, 2015).

While definitions are important, more important is its usage. As described above in the definition of thanatourism, Seaton stated that people always have been attracted to thanatourism (1996). As mentioned by Reader (2002, p.2) “it is not just in modern times that curiosity has drawn people to death sites”. This is in line with later work by Seaton (1999) which describes the interest in historical battlefields over the centuries. This all goes to show that people were already engaging in thanatourism, or dark tourism, (long) before its academic conceptualization. Only later the practice of the concept became (more and more) mainstream. Now that dark tourism places are becoming widespread and better known, the visitor numbers are on the rise (Stone, 2005). However, this recent increase in interest does not imply the ambiance changes (Stone, 2005). Therefore, Stone (2005) claims dark tourism is an old concept applied in a new jacket.

2.1.3 Shades of darkness

Stone (2006) conceptualized the dark tourism spectrum, distinguishing between multiple shades of darkness. Figure 2 illustrates the visual conceptualization made by Stone. According to Stone (2006) sites differ in their categorization of ‘darkness’ through differences in perception(s), characteristics, and product traits. As a result, some places are considered "darker" than others.

As depicted from Figure 2, the darkest sites take place in their authentic location associated with death and suffering. Because those sites are place bound to the actual occurrence, this often results in lower tourism infrastructure, therefore the focus is more on conservation and education. This is the opposite of the light(er) sites that focus more on the commercialization, since they are not location-specific and focus (more) on entertainment to increase the tourism infrastructure (Stone, 2006). This spectrum contributes to Seaton's work as it also differentiates between different 'dark' sites but adds a variety of components such as visitor orientation(s), political influence, supply, etc. (see Figure 2).

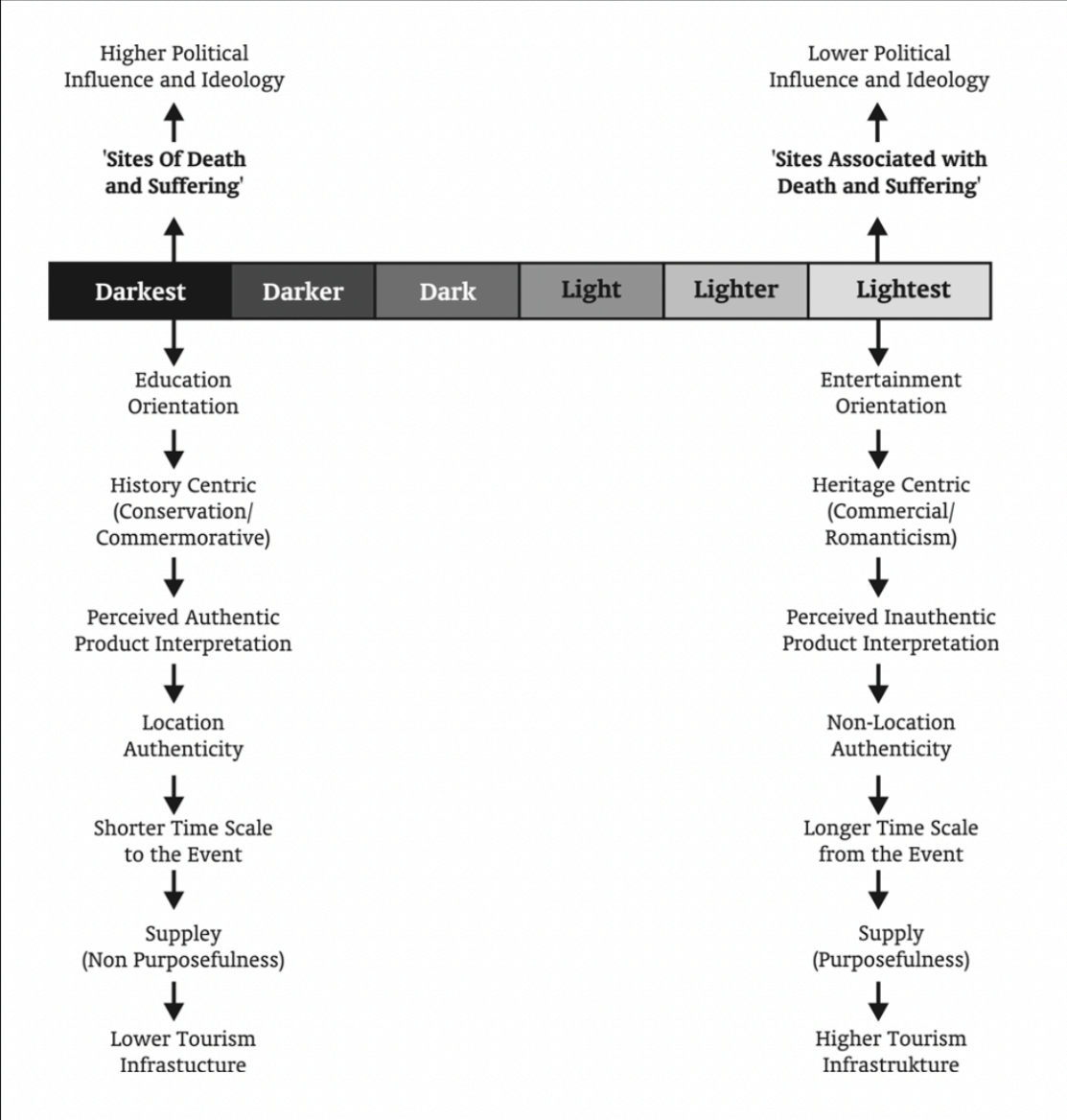


Figure 2 A DARK TOURISM SPECTRUM (STONE, 2006)

2.2 Tourists' motivations for visiting dark places

2.2.1 General motivations for (dark) tourism

When examining dark tourism sites in their quest for visitors, Stone (2006) states that it is important to study tourists' behavior. This identification could lead to a greater understanding why people attend dark sites (Stone, 2006). Motivation in both tourism and tourism studies is an extensive topic, covering several theories and facets. In general, motivation comes from people's need(s) and desire(s), which will lead them to take further actions/decisions suggested to provide them (greater) satisfaction (Heitmann, 2011). In much of the literature, it appears that in tourism this is often motivated by a desire to 'escape' from their daily lives which is the driving factor behind tourism (see: Simková & Holzner, 2014).

The mechanism behind this phenomenon is described by Dann's (1977) push and pull factors. The push factor in this instance is their desire to escape the 'daily life,' by selecting a travel destination and thus engaging in tourism. The 'appealing' (e.g., climate, landscape, gastronomy) things for a (specific) tourist is what pulls them towards a site or destination (Dann 1997, as cited in Simkova & Holzner, 2014). For the dark tourist, these pull factors are around the concept of dark tourism, such as the features of distress, death, and the macabre. Motivations of people engaging in (dark) tourism, however, are not one-sided and can vary amongst tourists, destinations, cultures, religions, etc. Stone (2011) discussed the complexity and disparity of dark tourism, which results in a variety of reasons to visit. As a result of this complex and disparate character it remains an under-researched phenomenon (Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

Nevertheless, Dunkley et al. (2011) designed a general framework consisting of several motivations to engage in dark tourism. These motivational drivers strongly differentiate from each other, and additionally, people can also experience a multitude of drives simultaneously.

- Visiting sites for spiritual and/or retrospective purposes
- Thrill-seeking
- Going to a site for validation (e.g. disaster or robbery place)
- Authenticity purpose (seeing it with your own eyes)
- Educational purpose (self-discovering and learning goal)
- Purely the desire for the 'iconic' encounter with the site
- The site is already nearby the visit location (convenience)

- Encounters with death, morbid curiosity (e.g. war tourism)
- Out of religious point of view
- Memorial and empathy towards the site and event (showing respect)

2.3 The role of (social) media and ego-enhancement

Seaton (1999) argues that the motivations of tourists are not merely place determined, but their behavior is influenced by (mass) media, politics, cultural aspects, and the degree of commercialization of a dark site (c.f. Chen & Xu, 2021). Recent examples such as the Netflix Series 'dark tourism', the documentary 'Chernobyl' of HBO (Polyzogopoulou, 2020), such media offerings have their influences on the darkness and attractiveness of sites. This is also conceptualized by Urry & Larsen (2011) in terms of the (tourist) gaze. The media tell us what to expect when visiting these places, this ensures anticipation among (potential) visitors. Upon arrival at the sites, we expect to consume our expectations (e.g., the site of Dharavi through *Slumdog millionaire* (Mendes, 2010), Kraków through *Schindler's list* (Karpovich, 2010), as well as documentaries on townships before engaging in township tourism South Africa (Rolfes et al., 2009)).

Even though Dann's (1977) earlier mentioned work on push and pull factors is more than four decades old it has become increasingly relevant with the rise of social media. Since escaping the misery of everyday life has not ceased to attract many people and remains an applicable push factor causing a desire to travel for many. In this desire to travel, people develop a form of ego enhancement (Dann, 1977). This leads to people wanting to be recognized and experiencing the feeling of being superior to others. These egocentric motivations make people socially advanced compared to others (Dann, 1977). Since the advent of social media, this ego enhancement has become even more prominent (Andreassen et al., 2017). This can be ascribed to the shareability of social media. It allows people "show off" where they have been and that it was a remarkable experience. People do not only engage in this process during the travel period, but it also flourishes afterwards. The modern trend of sharing memories and collecting likes from others boosts one's ego (Dann, 2012). Therefore, it is natural that people will continue to share "highlights" from their trip even after it ended. Social media augments people's ego-boosting through its ease of use and widespread ability to reach potential (millions of) people (Andreassen et al., 2017).

The explored dark tourism theories and the potential motivational drivers for visiting dark tourism sites are the theoretical foundation of this research. It has identified the current gap in the dark tourism literature, specifically that motivations are site-specific. Prior to this research, the unique site of Camp Vught was under-researched. Therefore, the theory above guided in the creation of the interview guide and aided in the further coding process to explore visitor motivations for the site of Camp Vught. The study area of Camp Vught and its history is discussed in the next section.

3 Study area

This research about visitors' motivations for dark tourism investigates this phenomenon using a case study. Camp Vught was selected to discover the site-specific dark tourism visiting motivations. Camp Vught is a former De Schutzstaffel (SS) concentration camp, in Vught, North Brabant, The Netherlands (See figure 3).

Camp Vught

Camp Vught was established on January 13, 1943, and is formally called "Konzentrationslager-KL Herzogenbosch" (Historiek, 2019).

Its official name given by the Nazis refers the location of 's-Hertogenbosch, a larger city near Vught. Among the Dutch population and general public, it is known as Camp Vught, referring to the village in which it is located.

During the Second World War and the occupation of the Netherlands under Nazi Germany, the Netherlands had five concentration camps: Westerbork, Erika, Schoorl, Amersfoort and Vught.

However, Camp Vught was the only

official SS concentration camp in the Netherlands, whereas the others were led by other (often country-specific) groups of the same mindset, allied to the Nazis. Therefore, Camp Vught was under direct control of Berlin (Historiek, 2019). The SS was an organization of the German Nazi Party. They were self-proclaimed "political soldiers", commonly known as elite, black-uniformed corps (Historiek, 2019). This official former SS status makes the concentration camp of Camp Vught a distinctive and unique historical location in The Netherlands.



Figure 3 Map of The Netherlands with Camp Vught (Kuster, 2020)

The camp was divided into two parts, separating Jewish prisoners from other (often political) prisoners. The first sections held Jewish people. They were imprisoned and forced to work before being often deported to other camps. In most cases this was to camp Westerbork in the north of the Netherlands and from there many were permanently deported to extermination camps around Europe, such as Sobibor or Auschwitz-Birkenau both in Poland.

The second part of the camp was mostly for Dutch and Belgian political prisoners, who were often starved and tortured. They were forced to work six and a half days a week (Historiek, 2019). Also imprisoned in this part of the camp were people such as black marketeers, gypsies, resistance fighters, hostages, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Within the camp there was also a separation between the men and the women with their young children.

On October 26, 1944, Camp Vught was liberated by the allied forces. At that time camp was almost empty as most prisoners were deported shortly before the liberation, but the traces still lead to death and suffering. In the words of a British soldier: "It takes very little imagination to imagine what happened to the prisoners. Walking slowly, in dead silence, we searched the camp. We found traces of death everywhere" (Nos, n.d.).

Camp Vught is a relevant case study to research, as the former concentration camp is now considered part of the dark tourism phenomenon. As a dark tourism site, tens of thousands of people visit the site every year (Brabantsdagblad, 2017). By conducting qualitative research through interviews with participants who visited Camp Vught, this research tries to discover their motivations for visiting this place. Since no qualitative research has yet been conducted on the visiting motivations for this dark tourism site, this study attempts to discover individual motivations of the interview participants.

In the next section the methodology for this research is outlined.

4 Methodology

4.1 Qualitative research paradigm

This section will discuss the qualitative research method of in-depth interviewing and the additional relevant ethical considerations of this approach. This study researched the motivations for visiting Camp Vught, for which a qualitative approach was adopted. Qualitative methods are used in intensive research to answer ‘how, what and why’ questions, therefore this would be the most appropriate method for this research (Clifford et al., 2010; Sayer, 1992). In line with qualitative research methods, which centre around intensive data collection, the focus was on a small number of cases to gain a good understanding of visitors’ motivations in Camp Vught. This ensures a qualitative approach that includes quality, depth, richness and understanding (Clifford et al., 2010; Punch, 2014).

4.2 Participant recruitment (sampling strategy)

Participants for this research were selected foremost because they had visited Camp Vught in the past. To select only those people, the study employed two sampling strategies: namely a judgement sampling approach (also known as purposive sampling) and snowball sampling. Judgement sampling aims to target specific participants from the desired population (Barrat & Shantikuma, 2010). It is an overall time-and-cost efficient way of conducting research (Barrat & Shantikuma, 2010). However, because it is not a random sample, it does naturally induce some selection bias in the research (Clifford et al., 2015). However, as random sampling is not central to a qualitative study research design that focuses on individual in-depth interviews, this slight bias from judgement sampling is negligible. The sampling started with the first participant, a personal acquaintance who was approached by the researcher through this judgement sampling strategy. This person, the gatekeeper, helped identify other people who had visited camp Vught who were willing to participate in the research, with the snowball sampling technique. Since the gatekeeper helped identifying the other participants for the research, this ensured little research bias, since the participants are from the personal network of the gatekeeper.

In total the research conducted seven in-depth interviews. Throughout the interview process, the interviewees motivations for visiting started to resemble more of the previous data collected, resulting in traces of saturations, however the time frame of the thesis also played a role in the

total number of interviews therefore it cannot be concluded with certainty that full saturation was reached which was outside the scope of this research.

4.3 Research instrument & rationalization of interview guide

In order to gain understanding of the visiting motivations of the dark tourism site of Camp Vught, the research established a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix A3). The interviews took place online as per participants preferences and the geographical distance between researcher and participant. A semi-structured interview style was selected as this best suited the research approach, since the semi-structured interview guide directs the interviewee in the interview process but leaves enough room for the participant to include their own input (Baumbusch, 2010).

The interview guide was developed based on the theoretical framework and additionally through interpretations of the researcher in order to encourage participants to share their motivations during the interview. The motivations for engaging in dark tourism described by Dunkley et al (2011) were used to compose various questions in the interview guide and were considered by researcher during the interview in response to the answers from the interviewee. Furthermore, the researcher had consciously chosen certain opposing questions in order to obtain a distinct perspective between normal touristic activities, different dark tourism sites and this particular visit to Camp Vught. This is based on Stone's (2006) differentiation between dark and light sites in the dark tourism spectrum and mentioned the multitude of possible visiting motivations; it was also interesting and relevant to keep this in mind while interviewing. The interviews started with a general introduction part where the researcher introduced himself, the topic, and some general information. After this, the participant was asked to do a short introduction, this included explaining who they are, their gender and/or age and what they do for their profession or as a hobby in their daily life (see Table 1 in the results section). A general follow-up question was about the visit to Camp Vught, aimed to direct the conversation towards the research topic, whereas the first few questions foremost served to ensure interviewee felt comfortable during the interview.

Then the participants were asked to think about why they initially wanted to visit Camp Vught, this question encouraged them to consciously think carefully about the foremost motivations. Thereafter, some follow-up questions were asked regarding if they had any prior knowledge on what took place at Camp Vught aimed to discover if this potentially affected or influenced their

visiting motivation. Next were questions to uncover what the expectations were before the visit, if any, and if so, whether they were met afterwards. This aimed to discover if any expectations or prior information (for example from a documentary) might have influenced their motivations. The following questions focused on the motivations, asking about their experience at Camp Vught, their main reasons to visit and explain why. The researcher consciously varied how they posed the questions about motivations to find if there were also unique motivations to visit Vught. For example: asking interviewees if they visited other dark tourism sites, and explaining them light to dark sites on the dark tourism spectrum by presenting examples of different sites. This to ensure the interviewees understand that many places are covered under the dark tourism phenomenon, and if they had visited other dark tourism sites, what their motivation was to visit those places. Investigating if their visiting motivations for those sites were different from Vught. The same was done by asking them to compare their motivation to the more 'regular' touristic places, such as beaches or (island) vacations. This too was deliberately done, to probe the participants to let them consider, explain, and substantiate their motivations for this visit. This served to gain the most possible information about their motivations. For the last question regarding motivations to visit, the researcher asked the participants to think about what they thought might be other motivations for other people to visit Camp Vught. The purpose of this question was two-fold, foremost it could be used in follow-up interviews and second it led to interesting answers in itself. Finally, the researcher asked whether they also thought that Camp Vught is currently increasing in popularity as a tourist site, in order to gauge whether, for example, commodification influenced potential visiting motivations. At the end of the interview participants were asked if they wanted to add anything else, e.g., any additional information that could benefit the research, or any questions from the interviewee. This was also to reflect on the interview process with the participant and to see if they still felt comfortable. Finally, they were thanked for their participation.

4.4 Data collection method

The data was collected from the seven in-depth interviews to gain insight into their visiting motivations for Camp Vught. Since the participants had already visited this dark tourism site, they knew about the place, its history, and their personal reasons for visiting. Since the participants held place-specific knowledge of Camp Vught whereas the researcher held knowledge about dark tourism, this made the researcher – participant relationship more equal

(for the importance of a balanced participant-researcher relationship see: Dowling (2016)). As a result of their knowledge, participants felt at ease during the interview process since they could talk about their own experiences which allowed interviewees to be partially in control during the interview. The interviews were conducted by the researcher self. The research ethics section will expand on the positionality of the researcher.

4.5 Data analysis method

After conducting and recording the interviews, the audio recordings of the interviews were played back multiple times to ensure accuracy of transcription. Transcribing was done manually in Word. The interviews were conducted in Dutch, this ensured the contents of the collected data posed no language barriers to the researcher. Listening to the audio-records while manually transcribing created 'ad verbum' transcripts that provide trustworthy quotations for the research. Additionally, this also meant minimize the risk of any data leaks by using transcription software programs from outside parties.

The collected interview data was analyzed using ATLAS.ti., an acknowledged analyzing and coding software program. The transcripts were manually coded, using both deductive and inductive (in vivo) coding (see: Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). For the deductive coding, codes were created based on the theoretical framework and used to arrange the information shared by the participants. The unique, personal, and site-specific motivations formed the inductive codes, derived from the interviews with the participants.

Using both inductive and deductive codes, this research builds upon previous dark tourism research while simultaneously allowing for new findings and insights, especially considering the uniqueness of the case study. This method of coding provided a complete and unbiased analysis of the collected data. The developed code tree can be found in appendix A4.

4.6 Research ethics

Critical to any research are the ethical considerations, foremost handling (personal) data in the correct manner and ensuring voluntary participation. Therefore, the Netherlands Code of Conduct (2018) was followed during the research. This conduct describes the key principles (honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence, and responsibility) which were implemented during the research process.

Participants received an information letter and consent form informing them about the research and their rights. This was to guarantee voluntary participation in the research (see Appendix A1 and A2). Furthermore, this aimed to minimize the possibility to do any harm, ensuring understanding of the research to avoid confusing practices and protect interviewee's privacy and confidential information. Thereby, it created a high degree of anonymity for the participants and above all gave them the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any moment (Dowling, 2016; Laerd, 2012). Participants signed the consent form prior to participation, and this was confirmed when the researcher asked permission once again at the start of each interview (as a control question).

Data obtained from the interviews with the participants was made confidential, to protect their personal information and stored on an offline, password-locked SSD drive, personal property of the researcher. The data is used for transcribing only and quotations from the transcripts are presented anonymously in the research. After transcribing, the audio-records were deleted from the SSD and only the anonymous transcripts remain, which are stored safe and confidentially. This ensures protection of the data of participants and their privacy which is the foremost priority of the researcher.

Positionality

Positionality is a vital component within the broader research process, as it shows the placement of the researcher within the research itself (Waite, 2016). This can be the locational, social, or political placement towards the research itself, or the participants involved in the research (Waite, 2016). Therefore, researchers must reflect on the reason for conducting the specific research and declare their positionality.

The researcher studies 'Tourism Geography & Planning' as specialisation part of the broader Cultural Geography Master program. The researcher personally has great interest in dark tourism sites in general, and especially visiting these places for learning and remembrance purposes. The researcher visited similar dark sites but did not disclose his personal interest in such sites to the participants as to not influence the interview process. As a result, the interviewees gave their own motivations for visiting. Since the researcher wanted to be an outsider (see: Kearns, 2016) without prejudices about this specific site, he deliberately decided not to visit this site before or during the research process. As previously described, the researcher selected the gatekeeper, a personal acquaintance, as the first participant. This was

the only familiar person in the research, however during data analysis this did not reveal any remarkable differences with the other participants.

5 Results

5.1 Analysis

This to discover what their motivations were for visiting this dark tourism site semi-structured interviews were conducted with people who visited Camp Vught. Of the seven total interviewees, three were women and four men. This is a balanced distribution, considering the odd number of interviewees. Furthermore, the age distribution is between the 28 and 56 years old. Table 1 gives a clear descriptive overview of the participants.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants

Name (pseudonym for confidentiality)	Gender	Age
Anton	Male	56
Britt	Female	32
Charlotte	Female	42
Dana	Female	28
Emil	Male	41
Felix	Male	53
Giel	Male	49

The purpose of this research was to discover the motivations of people for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught. The interviews and their analysis yielded good insights in this. This resulted in the following themes: “this can never happen again,” telling the story, the educational function, visiting the authentic place, curiosity, commemorating, heritage, interest in history, learning more about World Warr II, to draw a parallel to the present, recommended, commodification and well-known place. These themes are discussed below in the findings.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 “This can never happen again”

Numerous participants during the interviews said that what happened during the Second World War and especially the horrors that happened in the camps, was one of the motivations for visiting Camp Vught. As they stated, such horrors should never happen again, therefore they wanted to visit Camp Vught to really get a sense of what happened here. This realization leads to more awareness as mentioned by the interviewees:

“Well, I just thought it was very important that my children know what a camp like this looked like, what life was like in such a camp. Uhm well, they also have an incinerator, which

are very shocking things, but I think it is important that they get to see how shocking that was. (...) I sometimes hear classmates doing a Nazi salute for fun or shouting, well, things that are related to the Second World War. I personally think that's terrible, purely because they don't know how intense that was and should not happen ever again.” – (Anton)

“Uhm, I thought, this could be very intense, because I had heard of my parents who have been to Westerbork (..) that shocking images can be shown. So, I was a bit mentally prepared for some pretty bad things to be exhibited, and that is quite true. Especially, uhm, the stories are very moving, but of course it is very good to know what happened there and that we just cannot let that happen again.” – (Britt)

“Because I understand that children of that age and puberty may also find it a bit difficult to see and experience such intense things, but they did well in my opinion, they also found it interesting. And they said (...) how hard life must have been at that time? And they were glad they did not have to experience and hopefully never will. And that is something we hope. that something like this will not happen again. So, let's hope for that.” – (Giel)

With this understanding of the horrific time in this place, the interviewees shared the hope that history will not repeat itself. Understanding the history and visiting the place creates awareness among the people

5.2.2 Telling the story

Another repeatedly mentioned motivation for visiting Camp Vught was to tell the story of Camp Vught. Because this place has a unique and place-specific story full of history to tell, people chose to venture the visit. As mentioned by interviewees:

I think it is very important that other people's stories, that they live on, also that we can show this to the next generations like gosh, your ancestors, they've been through this, they went through all of this” “(...) especially for the point of information, I think it is very important that history is passed on yes, to me in this case.” – (Britt)

“(..) I already knew how the Second World War actually went, (..) what life in the camps was like, because that has always interested me (...) one of the reasons why I took my children here was to also teach them and show how it really was, uh walk through it yourself with the stories and that you really get that heritage (...), see how important it has been for us and our freedom, but also what sacrifices have been made ... I had consciously brought my children with me to learn them more about it and to create a kind of awareness(..).” – (Giel)

As can be perceived from the second quote, this turned out to be an important motivation. It was especially so for participants with children, who mentioned the importance of telling and teaching the story of Camp Vught to the next generation.

5.2.3 Educational function

Learning about Camp Vught was an often cited motivation that led people to visit the place. In the case of one of the interviewees, it was actually an educational field trip with her school. Going to Vught was part of a lesson about the Second World War within the broader history course.

“It was in high school for me. In that year you talk a lot about the Second World War, because it was then a large exam component and then our teacher also thought (...) to make it a bit more interactive (...), by taking us to well, concentration camp Vught, that was close too (...) Yes, I thought that was impressive at the time.” – (Britt)

Another interviewee mentioned the educational component of Camp Vught as a motivation as well, especially for schools to organize field trips to the site.

“Well, I can imagine that you go there to learn something, for example about the Second World War in relation to the camp. I also saw a class of children walking by, I can imagine that people from the neighborhood would like to know what the history of their environment is. (...) I think this makes make the place attractive to visit, and not in the positive sense, but mainly in the educational sense, so as to learn.” – (Dana)

5.2.4 Visiting the authentic place

Visiting the place itself is mentioned by many as a main part of the reason to visit Vught. Considering the place itself is full of history, from hearing and reading the stories of people who were imprisoned here, to viewing authentic artefacts and walking around the grounds of the former SS-Camp. These are all things that gripped people and sparked their interest for the visit.

“I was actually always interested in things about the war and especially the camps, what it was like, and I really just wanted to see with my own eyes, so see, how and what, yes, how and what happened here.” – (Felix)

“(...) the atmosphere is very special there, (...). It is almost surreal to go there, to know what happened there, you will get it, the feeling again what happened when you are there. (...) I come back to the atmosphere that hangs there, but also just, you still see attributes there, you see the small places in which those people have lived. Yes, that just grabs you, but that is purely the authenticity of that place” – (Dana)

5.2.5 Curiosity

Curiosity was one of the driving factors that were prominent during the interviews, often combined with one or more other motivational aspects. One interviewee indicated that she had

seen a documentary about Camp Vught, which sparked her curiosity. This curiosity eventually led her visit the place itself.

“Well, I think I had once seen a documentary about Camp Vught on television or on the internet. This documentary was quite gripping, so it sparked my interest in visiting the place myself.” - (Dana)

Another interviewee got curious after having seen an advertisement. This shows that even sudden unexpected encounters with information about this site can trigger people's interest in deciding to visit Camp Vught.

“My husband, had found it on a voucher in an advertisement or something like that and yes, that made me curious actually.” – (Charlotte)

Hence, curiosity can play a rather important role in the motivation for a visit.

5.2.6 Commemorating (remembrance/memorialize)

At the dark tourism site of Camp Vught, commemorating seemed to be an important reason why people tend to visit this place. It is connected to the horrific tragic history that took place at this camp. The interviewees thought this was an important point, reflecting on those who have experienced this. Whether prisoners had survived or not, visitors wanted to express their respects, all in their own way.

This may be for example, as one interviewee said, through a moment of silence. Thinking about those people that suffered, memorializing their lives.

“It was more that I wanted to go there to uhm the people who survived or did not survive the atrocities there, I wanted to commemorate them, as a kind of tribute” – (Emil)

“You have those resting places here and there on the site where you can pause for a moment to reflect on the situation that occurred there, that you indeed just briefly think back to those people and how terrible it must have been to sit there, without any outlook on the future” – (Emil)

5.2.7 Heritage

Camp Vught is a place of Dutch heritage dating back to the Second World War. The people have chosen this historically rich place to visit, learn, experience, commemorate in the present in order to bequeath the important value of the place to future generations.

As interviewees mentioned the importance of telling the story of Vught specifically instead of the often-normal bigger picture about the period.

“It is always made very big, but really those detailed, personal stories that, well, that we found in camp Vught, they are very memorable to me (..) It's not all rose scents, moonshine (Dutch proverb translatable ‘to it is not all sunshine and rainbows’), but it is intense, but it must continue to exist. Especially for those personal stories here.” – (Britt)

Simultaneously one interviewee mentioned regarding to him the importance of visiting such places, as it tells story, so we should cherish it, so that it lasts forever.

“My motivation was that it is actually a very important piece of heritage in the Netherlands, in our Dutch history. Yes, something we should continue to cherish and that is why I actually think that every Dutch person should know something about it and should actually go there once.” – (Giel)

5.2.8 Interest in history

A frequently mentioned factor was the (overall) interest in history, which in times formed the basis for the visit to Vught. Sometimes this interest was the reason for the visit, on the other hand it was also often part of the multifaceted motivation to go. As an interviewee mentioned their interest and knowledge of the place was one of the motivations.

“Yes, that certainly plays a role, my prior-knowledge, that actually motivated me to go there” – (Emil)

Another interviewee said his interest was one of the reasons for the visit, but he also mentioned his children's lack of knowledge about this place and hoped to motivate them to become interested in history.

“(...) I am very much interested in the Second World War myself, so I knew partly what had happened in Camp Vught, but I noticed from my children that they did not have eaten any cheese of it [Dutch proverb which translates to ‘no understanding of the topic’], so I thought it was very important that they knew that.” – (Anton)

The interest was therefore two-sided, on the one hand for the interviewees to learn more about Camp Vught, but also to motivate others: in this case to motivate their children to become interested.

5.2.9 Learning more about World War II

Some of the interviewees said that one of the reasons they wanted to make the visit, was their knowledge gap about the World War II, or specifically Camp Vught. They wanted to fill this gap by visiting the camp, thereby learning more about the history.

“What I mainly learn about myself is that uhm, that a lot of things, uh I don't know a lot of things. I was not sure what happened in well, in camp Vught for example, now I do” – (Britt)

This shows that the participants were aware of their current knowledge level about the topic, or of one of their children as this interviewee said:

“(…) well I'm actually bummed that they didn't learn much about it at school” – (Anton)

This actively demonstrates their desire to learn something about the place and its history.

5.2.10 To draw a parallel to the present

Making a comparison with the present was also discussed a number of times in the interviews. They indicated that they wanted to see how this exact place used to be, compared to today's world. Interviewees often indicated how good we have it in present times compared to back then. Imagining this through, for example, these personal stories in Camp Vught was a stated reason for the visit. As this interviewee said:

“Yes, take a moment to reflect on their lives at that moment, (…) also as a reality check of; look how good we have it, look what those people have been through for us.” – (Emil)

Another interviewee mentioned too the parallel to the present. This was also because the period of the visit: it was the end of April, which is close to May 4th and 5th. These are historically important days in the Netherlands, May 4th is Remembrance Day and May 5th Liberation Day. This made the visit more current, which was part of the motivation.

“It was a little before the end of April, I think, so just before May 4th and 5th. Then you also have a lot of movies about the war etc. I think you know; it is good to take them then. Then everything becomes more current.” – (Anton)

5.2.11 Recommended (by others or advertisements)

In a number of interviews, it emerged that there was some form of recommendation that led people to visit the place. This recommendation could come from watching a documentary to talking about it with other people. This often, in combination with one of the other motivational components, was the deciding factor to go. These often reinforced each other: for example someone with an interest in history could come across a documentary about Camp Vught that made them decide to go here. The same goes with curiosity, as stated by one of the interviewees:

“Well, I think I had once seen a documentary about Camp Vught on television or on the internet. This documentary was quite gripping, so it aroused my interest in visiting the place myself.” - (Dana)

Another interviewee said that the conversations with others, and recommending each other possible place to visit, was one of the reasons to visit Camp Vught.

“Also because I have talked about it with others and yes, we do recommend each other to visit such things” – (Giel)

The last section of the findings is about motivations that were named when asking the participants what reasons they assumed were others’ potential motivations to visit Camp Vught. Some of these motivations were not mentioned in the seven interviews, however these were coded as ‘commodification’ and ‘well-known place’. Although these did not emerge as personal motivations in the seven participants, it seemed to the researcher that these are motivations that other visitors might have or have had and could emerge with a larger sample size. The researcher thinks the potential motivations named by the participants are worth shortly presenting, alongside the thoughts of the participants. These may be of interest for future research on this topic.

5.2.12 Commodification

According to some, boosting visitor numbers through (active) advertisement and shareability could be a reason why other people visit the place. None of the interviewees said this about themselves as one of the motivations. One of the interviews mentioned that the enabling of advertising is maybe a bit less sensitive now among the people, given that the serious events are some decades ago.

“(...) it is of course already a few generations behind us. Then it might be easier for a place to advertise it in order to, well, recruit visitors, then when it is just over, because then it seems to me to be very sensitive, and you would not do something like that so quickly. And now it is more of it, you do advertise, but it is purely for educating people and keeping the story alive, not just to only sell more, I don't mean it that way” – (Felix)

The commodification is however according to the interviewee not only for increasing visitor numbers and increasing revenue, as this is not the right place to do this. Since it is on the darkest side of the spectrum. Another interviewee also mentioned that the threshold to visit today is lower due to the years that have passed. Furthermore, the interviewee adds the social media component as a possible motivation for people to visit.

“I think that can stimulate (...) especially now with social media that was not so trendy then, that people then think oh, he/she has experienced this and this (...) That sounds interesting, maybe I want to go there too (...). I do think that the power of well, things like Instagram and Facebook (...), can set off a bit of a chain reaction. (...). Yes, I actually think because history so now, it is already a bit further away and I think that people just (...) it becomes uh easier to go there, because all those intense things are already a bit further away” – (Britt)

5.2.13 Well-known place

As Camp Vught could be considered as a well-known place in the region. An interviewee mentioned this as a possible motivation for people to make the visit.

“(...) Well uhm, maybe also because it is quite a well-known camp in the region, that people, tourists see it as a bit of a must-see attraction.” – (Emil)

Another interviewee also mentioned the Covid-19 pandemic as a possible motivation. Since people mainly went looking for things to visit in their own country

“I do think there is growth now, also due to Corona, I think. People had to stay more in the Netherlands. Because flying well, that was not so easy before, but this place remained open and accessible for most of the time. So, I think people want to experience something more, really unique within their own country. And I think that camp Vught is quite suitable for going there.” – (Dana)

The findings showed the great variety in personal motivations for visiting Camp Vught. From more general interest to place-specific motivations were mentioned. In the next section the findings will be linked to the literature.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The results show a multitude of motivations why people visit Camp Vught. There is difference between the participants, but also overlap in their motivations for visiting this place. This is in line with earlier research of Stone (2011) explaining the complexity and disparity of dark tourism sites, giving rise to several motivations to visit places. The participants' data suggest exactly this: that dark tourist sites are not one-sided, since motivations for visiting can differ amongst people or places. The results signify that the motivations for visiting dark tourist sites are subjective and can be person related. This is in line with the work of Seaton (1996) stating the behavioral component of the person-specific motivations are at the core of dark tourism, wherein the motivations are a continuum of intensity, composing of one or several motivations (Seaton, 1996).

Since these visiting motivations are complex and in this research one specific dark tourism site – Camp Vught – was researched, this helped to further develop dark tourism studies as understanding a unique site is different than a more general study on dark tourism motivations. The main finding of this research was the multitude of motivations why people visited Camp Vught: from general interest in history or site-specific interest to experiencing the authentic place. But also, commemorating the ones who had lived through this horrible experience, telling the stories to further generations, heritage, drawing a parallel to the present or mere curiosity where, in addition to the other mentioned motivations in the results section, part of the visiting motivations for Camp Vught mentioned by the participants.

The results are in line with some of the motivations Dunkley et al. (2017) state in their research for visiting dark tourism sites. Authenticity purpose, going to a site for validation, educational purpose, site is nearby, memorial and empathy towards the site and event were all stated by participants as part of their visiting motivation. However, some motivations by Dunkley et al. (2017) were not mentioned by the participants. This, according to the researcher, is probably due to the site-specific study: some of the motivations mentioned by Dunkley et al. (2017) are more known to be applicable to lighter or other dark tourism sites, such as for thrill-seeking or religious visits.

The research helped to fill the research gap of understanding the motivations for engaging in dark tourism, as it is studied at a low intensity, especially since most of the research that was done focused on theory building rather than understanding the empirical consumer side of dark tourism places (Isaac et al., 2019; Sharpley & Stone, 2008; Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Stone,

2005; Yan et al., 2016). This study obtained a general understanding of why people visit the dark tourism site of Camp Vught, therefore being both empirical as well as dark tourism consumer related research.

These results build on the existing knowledge available on motivations for visiting dark tourism sites. In addition, this research displayed the motivations for a specific place, Camp Vught. The qualitative empirical character of the research explained and substantiated motivations of those who have visited the place, as a result of which, it further elaborates on the niche of dark tourism research within the broader field of tourism studies.

7 Limitations and recommendations

A limitation to the research is the relatively small sample size, a larger sample might present additional motivations. A larger sample could also validate whether the other motivations identified by the participants in this study ('commodification' and 'well-known place') are in fact motivations for others to visit Camp Vught. This was beyond the scope of this research to empirically establish this as a potential self-indicated motivation to visit Camp Vught.

Other limitations could be language of the interviews. These were conducted in Dutch for the convenience and the opportunity for the interviewee to express themselves without a language barrier. However, with this consideration, slight translation differences could have occurred. Nevertheless, the researcher has gone through the transcripts several times and translated the citations as accurately as possible to prevent translation errors to the best of his ability. For example, when a Dutch proverb was used, both the literal and the closest translation to the meaning of the proverb were presented.

To conclude, there are some recommendations for further research. Further research is needed to validate whether the other motivations ('commodification' and 'well-known place') that the participants indicated they thought were possible motivations, why others visit Camp Vught, are adequate. It would also be interesting to investigate other case studies: e.g. Camp Amersfoort in the Netherlands, another dark tourism site that is studied at a low intensity. This could help explore possible similarities or differences in visiting motivations.

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9 Appendices

9.1 A1 Information letter

Information letter motivations for visiting Camp Vught

Hello,

I am grateful for your willingness to participate in my research and to provide me with insight into why you visited Camp Vught. I will firstly introduce myself shortly. My name is Patrick Jetten, and I am a Cultural Geography master student with a specialisation track in Tourism Geography and Planning at Campus Fryslân faculty, of University of Groningen.

In my master's degree I take various courses to gain a better academic insight, doing research is an important aspect of this. This master thesis is the final research project of the year, and I am researching motivations for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught. This is qualitative in-depth research with interviews with participants who already visited Camp Vught. I am interested to hear from you (the participants) your experiences at Camp Vught and especially your motivation to visit this place and if applicable talk about other dark tourism places you have visited. In the beginning of the interview, I will introduce you to the research topic and explain everything you need to know about the research process. Also, the attached consent form outlines to most important elements for this research.

Since I am always interested in visiting places such as former concentration camps or battlefields, I choose to research this topic. I want to know your motivations to visit Camp Vught. This research fits with my specialisation in Tourism Geography.

You would be of great help to me, by participating in this study and I cannot wait to hear your motivations!

If there is anything else, you want to know or ask? Don't hesitate and contact me.

Mail: p.j.jetten@student.rug.nl

See also for more information the attached: Consent form

Thanks a lot!

Patrick Jetten

9.2 A2 Consent Form

Hello,

First of all, thank you for taking the time to participate in this research about the motivations to visit Camp Vught, a dark tourism site. In this consent form, I would like to formally request your consent to participate in this study.

The consent for outlines how this research data collection is done and how I will threaten the data. This is to enable validity between me (the researcher) and you (the participant)

Contact Details

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Participation in a Semi-Structured Interview about your motivations to visit Camp Vught

Time interview: 15-30 minutes

Location: preference of participant, online (e.g., Google meet, facetime etc) or at location.

Purpose of this research

This interview is done in order to understand why people visit Camp Vught. As a unique dark tourism site in The Netherlands, I am interested in researching this. For this research I am interested in your experiences, why you went to this place and maybe if visited also talk shortly about other dark sites. The main purpose is the understand why people visit Camp Vught, therefore I am looking for your personal motivation.

Procedures

For this a semi-structured interview will be held, it will last approximately between fifteen and thirty minutes, this differs depending on the input and stories to tell about the places and potentially other visits. During the interview the audio will be recorded, only for transcribing purposes.

Risk and Benefits

The collected data is used understand the visiting motivations of people who went to Camp Vught. I want to collect your individual experiences and motivations. The audio record will be used for transcribing purposes only. The audio-record will be stored offline by the researcher and after transcribing it will be deleted. Also, there is an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, this for open clarification and/or to remove any information you do not want to be in the research.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Taking part in this research is totally voluntary, you can withdraw at any moment, regardless of the status of the project. By taking part in the research, you agree on the general rules described in this consent form.

As described the interview data will be only used for educational purposes, therefore at no time the audio records will be shared or publicized too others. Only the transcript of the interviews is used in the further research steps. It will be used in the institution from which I am doing this research for my thesis (University of Groningen). The data will be made confidential in order not to cause any damage. This means remove original names or other place-specific information which could lead to you as a person.

Compensation

No (financial) compensation for participation in this research is offered.

Freedom to Withdraw

Please note, that you may withdraw at any time, please contact me in this case. See above for contact details.

Question or Concerns

If you have any questions, do not hesitate, you can ask them at any point in the inquiry process. Just send me an email.

For this research you agree with the following statements:

- I have read the information and consent information. I have had ample time to reflect on my participation and have had the opportunity to ask questions
- I voluntarily consent to participate in this project (with the rules outlined above).
- I voluntarily consent for the researcher to use the data for study purpose, as stated in this consent form. Your privacy is protected/respected at any time. The audio will be recorded and stored offline by the researcher and deleted after transcribing. Part of the transcripts (citations) will be used confidentially in the actual research for this master thesis of the university of Groningen.

9.3 A3 Interview Guide

Dark tourism

Motivations for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught

Interview guide (The interview guide will be also translated in Dutch for better understanding and useability during the interviews).

Hello, first of all thank you for participating in this research.

On the first hand I would like to explain you in general what the research is about and what I will specifically do with this interview. The research is about the motivations of people for visiting the dark tourism site of Camp Vught. I will ask question about Camp Vught about the motivations for visiting and some overall experience questions. The interview lasts between fifteen and thirty minutes. As stated in the information letter and consent form the interview itself will be audio recorded. The audio-record will solely be used for transcribing, with the transcript I can start the analysis. The audio-records will be deleted after the transcribing process, to do no harm to you (the participant). Additionally, your own name will never be used in the actual research itself, it all will be made confidentially. The parts of the interview will be used in the research paper. This are sentences/citations from the interview (e.g. your motivation), your gender and age for the description of the participants.

With the first question I will therefore ask for your consent again, just for additional confirmation.

First the question, do you still want to participate in my research and therefore lend support to what I just explained in the introduction (Additional to what was earlier explained in the information letter and consent form). (Additional Oral Approval Question)

General part to get participants related to the research and starting with introduction question (to feel comfortable).

Can you tell me something about yourself?

For example:

Can I write down you age for the research?

What is your gender?

Introducing the case study and dark tourism

When did you visited Camp Vught?

Why did you in the first instance wanted to visit this place? Was it on purpose or not?

Did you know what happened here before taking the trip?

If yes: Did this prior knowledge strengthen your choice to visit this place?

Expectations of Camp Vught

Did you had any expectations before visiting Camp Vught?

What kind of expectations and how did they arise?

Where your expectations met?

No expectations? Ask if this was on purpose

Motivations

How was your experience at Camp Vught, can you tell me more about this?

Was their one main reason you visited this place or multiple?

Have you visited other or similar (dark) tourist sites? (Name a few example sites so that the lighter sites, so they also come to mind)

If yes: Did you had the same or other reasons to visit those sites?

Did the reason(s) to visit changes after other visits or between certain sites?

What did you learn from visiting those places? Was this one of the reasons to go?

You probably also visit other (more popular) tourist places such as mountains, beaches, or islands. Do you visit and experience such places differently than in this instance Camp Vught?

What do you think could be other reasons for people to visit this place? So, what do you think could be other motivations for visitors at Camp Vught? (Interested to find out what reasons they come up, if thinking about the other tourists at the site)

Do you think people are getting more interested/motivated to visit places such as Camp Vught than before?

Is there anything else you would like to contribute to the research? Or is everything covered?

Thank you for participating (Explaining the further procedure of the research process and thanking everybody)

9.4 A4 Code Tree

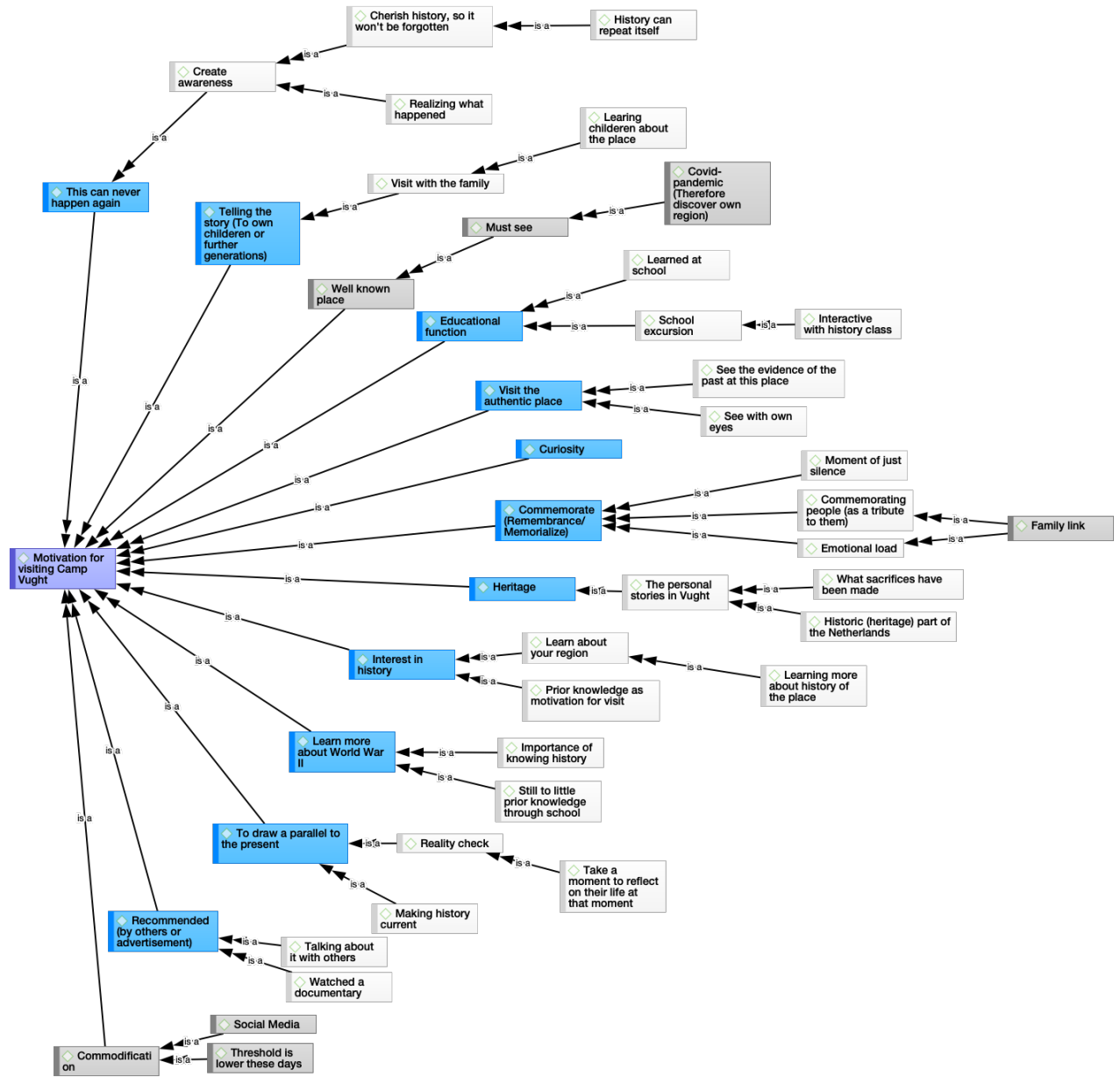


Figure 4 Code Tree, Source: Researcher