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Guiding the Dark and Secondary Trauma Syndrome: Tour Guides' Coping Mechanisms for Guiding in Dark Tourism Sites

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Abstract

This research is a part of PhD research exploring how tour guides interpret the dark chapters of Berlin's history. The theoretical framework brings together the strands of dark tourism, tour guide, and interpretation literature. In guiding tourists through topics and sites of death, atrocity and genocide, tour guides are subjected to a form of Secondary Trauma. The article examines the part of the research which looks at what kinds of coping mechanisms guides adopt in order to deal with regularly interpreting acts of violence, cruelty and human tragedy. The article reviews the context of this examination and the literature written on Secondary Trauma. It goes on to present early findings and to discuss the ad-hoc ways in which guides deal with the psychological effects of guiding the dark, with various levels of awareness to the symptoms of secondary trauma. Finally, the article coins this phenomenon as Guiding the Dark Accumulative Psychological Stress, allowing room for more research in the future to fill this gap in the literature.

Keywords
Tour guides • Dark tourism • Secondary trauma • Ethnography

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Introduction

The context of this paper

This research paper was born out of ethnographic - and autoethnographic - exploration of how tour guides in Berlin interpret the dark chapters of Berlin's history. Thus, the title of this PhD research is "Tour Guides as Interpreters of Dark Tourism: A Case Study of Berlin Germany". Prior to researching for the PhD my observations were spontaneous and without any particular aim. Nevertheless, as I have been guiding in Berlin since 2010 I have had countless opportunities to observe the way guides interpret history in memorial sites and in the streets, and of course to notice my own interpretation. Furthermore, as a representative of a tour operating company in the late 1990s I observed more than 30 youth groups to Poland, in their visitation to 'regular' tourism sites, and to the infamous dark tourism sites of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and several others. Over the years I observed the power that tour guides have on how they tell stories, and how they interpret particularly sensitive points in history.

The social and cultural impact of tour guiding is a topic that became interesting to scholars in the early decades of the new millennium. Hu and Wall (2012) and Wynn (2011) argued that through teaching local history, tour guides can contribute to social sustainability. And Weiler and Kim (2015) also argued that tour guides have the power to show new angles of a story or historical event. My PhD research builds upon the assumption that what tour guides say has a meaning; it is important as it can have a significant impact on the tourists (App & Wong, 2001; Hu & Wall, 2011; Pond, 1993; Weiler & Kim, 2015; Wynn, 2011).

Based on these assumptions, the main aim of this PhD research is to critically appraise the interpretive role of the tour guide in the dark tourism experience. More explicitly, (1) the research seeks to analyse critically the nuances of tour guides' interpretation, (2) to identify where tour guides' interpretation plays a mediating role in the dark tourism experience, (3) to identify factors involved in tour guide's interpretation and how they might influence tourists' experience, and (4) to identify and explore parameters causing tour guides to interpret events in one way or another.

In terms of methodological framework, from the outset of the research I decided to treat the tour guiding community as a 'tribe' with their own customs and some socio-cultural attributes that are unique to this group. As a member of this 'tribe' I participate in some social activities, and engage in many informal conversations with my friends and colleagues. In doing so, I have noticed that the stress I feel after guiding a tour in Sachsenhausen is not unique to me, and is in fact takes the scale of a phenomenon. As a result, during formal interviews and informal conversations I

started asking guides about how they cope with guiding dark tourism generally (e.g. guiding about the victims of the Berlin Wall, or tour of the Third Reich) and more specifically the tour to the Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen.

Consequently, this research paper focuses on the Secondary Trauma Stress of guiding in dark tourism sites. It is also hypothesised that such stress has an impact on how tour guides interpret sites/events, and therefore, on the type of information/ interpretation conveyed to the tourists. It is important to note that the impact is not inconsequential. To illustrate the magnitude of the impact tour guides may have in dark tourism sites, the museum in Auschwitz receives some 2 Million visitors per year, the memorial museum in Dachau over 1.2 Million, and the memorial museum in Sachsenhausen exceeded 700,000 visitor numbers last year (Gubernator, 2017).

The three existing pieces of research on tour guide interpretation of the dark approached this subject from three theoretical directions. Namely, these included Sharon Macdonald's media theory approach to tour interpretation in the Nazi Rally grounds in Nuremberg (2006), Alon Gelbman and Darya Maoz border tourism approach to their research on tour guide interpretation in the Island of Peace (2012), and Bernadette Quinn and Theresa Ryan's memory theory approach to tour guide mediation of difficult memories in the Dublin Castle (2015). For my research, I have chosen to fuse together dark tourism, tour guide, and interpretation theory. Moreover, and as an essential addition to the main focus of this article, a small review of Secondary Trauma Syndrome is given.

Literature Review

Dark tourism

Although the phenomenon of dark tourism existed already both in pre- and modern forms of tourism (Seaton, 1996; Stone, 2005), it was Malcolm Foley and John Lennon, who in 1996 coined the term, originally defining it as "*the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites*" (Foley & Lennon, 1996, p. 198). Likewise, in the same year Tony Seaton (1996) defined Thanatourism as "*travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose deaths are its focal objects*" (Seaton, 1996, p. 240).

Other scholars continued to refine the definitions of dark tourism. Tarlow (2005, p. 48), for example, suggested that dark tourism can be defined as "*visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives*". Later, Stone's definition states that dark tourism is "*the act of travel*

to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre" (Stone, 2006, p. 146). The variations on the purpose of the visitation, and the nature of the attraction itself was further elaborated by Ashworth who stated that "*Dark tourism…is where the tourist's experience is essentially composed of 'dark' emotions such as pain, death, horror or sadness, many of which result from the infliction of violence that are not usually associated with a voluntary entertainment experience*" (Ashworth, 2008,p. 234).

The above definitions were chosen out of more than 15 known definitions (Light, 2017) for including the keywords 'suffering', 'death', 'tragedy', 'sadness', 'violence', and 'not usually considered as voluntary entertainment'. The reasoning behind the choice was the need to focus the research on the particular strand of dark tourism, out of the light to dark spectrum (Stone, 2006). Lastly, and arguably the most relevant to the sites visited in Berlin, I have chosen Preece and Price's (2005, p. 200) who suggested that dark tourism is "*travel to sites associated with death, disaster, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity*". From their definition I have omitted the word 'disaster' as it may imply that the events covered in dark tourism sites in Berlin may have been incidental. Therefore, the working definition of dark tourism for this research is: *travel and visitation to sites associated with death, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity*.

Finally, while this paper debates the topic of guiding in dark tourism sites, its main aim is not to discuss other aspects of dark tourism research, such as the demand and supply, the ethics of visitation to dark sites, visitor motivations, visitor expected outcomes, sites management, and the ethics of marketing of such sites. The following section, then, will review the main points in the research on tour guides, as the second pillar of the theoretical framework of this research.

Tour guides – terms, roles and the particular 'breed' working in Berlin

At the opening of this section it is important to clarify some of the terms, so that when reading this paper one will be able to understand precisely what type of tour guide the research refers to. The confusion between different terms of the tour guiding profession is not new (Holloway, 1981; Pond, 1993; Weiler & Black, 2015), and therefore requires some focusing. A variety of terms have been used (most are still in use), including 'tour leader', 'tour manager', 'tour escort', 'city guide', 'local guide', and museum docents. While 'tour leader' and 'tour manager' have operation roles, with greater or less degree of guiding, 'city guide' and 'local guide' are arguably more closely related to the definition of a tour guide as adopted by the World Federation of Tour Guide Associations (World Federation of Tour Guide Associations [WFTGA], 2003). The WFTGA defined a tour guide as: "*A person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area*".

Historically as well, there is a variety of job titles closely related to the modern tour guide. Perhaps the oldest is the 'pathfinder', whose title indicates his role as finder of geographical path (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993). It can be argued that even in today's reality of online and offline smartphone maps, the tour guide role of geographical pathfinding is more about saving the modern tourist's time in knowing where interesting sites are, rather than the safety of not getting lost; although, that function, too, is not completely gone (Meged, 2010).

Erik Cohen's paper from 1985 was pioneering in that it established the role of the mentor, in addition to that of the pathfinder as part of the definition of the tour guide. Today, many guides would contest to defining themselves as pathfinders or mentors. The argument being that tourists in major urban destinations such as London, Paris or Berlin have no need for a person, nor are they looking for a spiritual mentor. What, then are the modern roles of the average present-day guide? Adapted from Weiler and Kim (2015) and Meged (2010), tour guides today are versatile in their roles, being interpreters (of language *and* information), information givers, social catalysts, at times conversation motivators, tour managers, the name and face of the company they work for on that tour, navigating between interesting sites, and in some cases facilitating access to museums and sites.

Tour guides may also assume different roles according to the particular 'gig' they have accepted. The guide which is the focus of the exploration is this research is no exception. This may seem confusing, and indeed there may be some confusion as to the different types of tour guides working in different countries and work settings. That is to say, a tour guide in Budapest, guiding 20 guests who have never met each other prior to the tour is a different guide to leading a group of Australians for a week on a bus tour through Austria and Italy. The focus of this research is an urban guide. Most of their work is a day tour of 3 to 6 hours, private or open to the public, walking in a combination with public transport or taking people around with a driver in a car/bus. Effectively, this means that the guide is not responsible for the guests' flights or accommodation, and is only responsible for the guests' safety during the several hours they spend together exploring mostly safe and familiar urban environments. In other words, the guide in the focus of this research does not normally assume the role of the tour leader or tour manager. They are however required to assume (arguably) a bigger role of historical interpretation than in other destinations. The next section will discuss several crucial theoretical points with regards to interpretation, and specifically, tour guide interpretation.

Interpretation

Interpretation may be thought of in relation to the profession of language in the court of law, interpretation of dreams in ancient cultures, or referring perhaps

to television news interpretation to the hard of hearing. What is often colloquially referred to as translation, in the context of documents is also a form of interpretation (Tilden, 1957). This section looks at interpretation in the context of tourism, describing tourism situations in which interpretation takes place, with a focus on tour guide interpretation.

Interpretation in the context of tourism may be thought of in two ways. The first is John Urry's concept of the Tourist Gaze (1985). Urry not only described the physical way in which tourists are looking at buildings, streets or people and their culture, but also at how they interpret what they see according to the cognitive 'set of tools' tourists bring with them to examine and explore the culture of the destination. A similar concept was earlier described by anthropologist Franz Boas who coined the term "Kulturbrille" to explain the set of 'cultural glasses' each person wears to interpret the world around them. The function of Boas' metaphorical glasses changes drastically when looked at from the outsider gaze of the tourist visiting a place far away from home, often in a different country with a different language and different cultural customs.

The second way of looking at interpretation in the context of tourism, and one more widely researched, is the one of how destinations, museums and guides interpret the heritage and culture of the destination. Freeman Tilden defined interpretation as "*an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand* [sic.] *experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.*" (Tilden, 1957, p. 8). Tilden continues to remind us that interpreters – historians, archaeologists, tour guides, and other specialists - will most likely use their own definitions of interpretation, and that those will be equally valid. To that end, these specialists, according to Tilden, engage in revealing to their visitors the beauty, known or hidden meanings, and analyses which may lie behind that the visitor can initially perceive with their sense.

The connection between historical facts and the meaning of historical events or processes is a crucial point in interpretation. In his book The Adventures of a Nature Guide, Enos Mills (1920) famously put it: "*A nature guide (interpreter) is a naturalist who can guide others to the secrets of nature. It is not necessary for them to be a walking encyclopedia* [sic.]. *They arouse interest by dealing in big principles, not with detached and colorless information.*" Many scholars since have argued that the professionalism of the interpreter is closely linked to using facts to establish authority in order to provide quality interpretation (Cohen, 1985; Holloway, 1981; Pond, 1993; Weiler & Black, 2015). However, the point Mills is trying to make remains: the interpreter's role is not to simply display facts, but to show the importance and meaning of facts.

In interpretation of destinations, museums have a long-established role as premiere attractions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues further that museums are central to the process of establishing the heritage of a location, effectively turning it in to a tourist destination. Interpretation made in museums and heritage attractions also serves as a vital tool for countries to create, reinvent and maintain heritage (*ibid.*). Moreover, newly established countries or countries that have gone through major regime changes may seek to use museums as a facility of education to tell their historical narrative in a different way; in most cases, editing it to suit the new governmental voice, rather completely deleting it (Frank, 2015; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Lowenthal, 1985).

As stated in the definitions above, interpretation is an art of language which goes beyond mere facts and figures. The choice of words, anecdotes and narrative, then, becomes a decisive tool in interpreting a theme or a place in one way or another. One such interpretation instrument is the concept of hot interpretation as defined by Uzzell (1998, p. 154). The author described this as interpretation injected with a new component added to its subject matter. This could be, for example, a dramatic voice or facial expression added to the information giving, thus creating an impression of greater importance or seriousness in a more theatrical way.

Contrary to that, it is also implied that if interpretation is performed (as opposed to statically presented in a museum exhibition) with less voice alteration, body language and other dramaturgical devices, interpretation may take a 'colder', more factual tone (Goffmann, 1959), arguably allowing more emotional control to be had by the listener.

Interestingly, Uzzell argued that on a society level we may advocate a rational Vulcan-like approach, but that realistically, this approach may prove difficult, and in many cases undesirable (Uzzell, 1998). In other words, the author argues that although we – as a global society – would rather describe ourselves as scientific and analytical, in practice we often find ourselves demanding more drama to be added to the facts to make them more interesting and attractive to listen to. It can be argued that as a result, interpretation often brings a bias agenda which may touch upon a projection of personal experiences, political agenda, gender agenda, and a diverse array of biases.

As the years went by and the process of tourism evolution made social and technological progress, interpretation grew to play a larger role in the day to day work of the tour guide (Meged, 2010). On different levels, guides are now intrusted by their guests to teach them history, disseminate information on the destination (e.g. culinary, historical, safety, political, etc.) and even to represent the destination. (Dahles, 2012; Meged, 2010; Weiler & Black, 2015). Contrary to that statement, guiding dark themes and sites may prove to be, at the very least, difficult in the representation of

a destination; and in the case of sites presenting genocide, practically impossible. Considering the growing demand for and supply of dark tourism sites, the theory on the role of the guide is still lacking, and may prove to be challenging in different ways in different countries, mostly depending on the political sensitivity and the current political atmosphere.

Pearce (1984) and Hu and Wall (2012) present a contradictory perspective on the potential power of tour guide interpretation. Whereas Pearce points out the danger of depicting local culture in a false way, Hu and Wall argue that this power can potentially be harnessed to create a positive effect on tourists and destination. Gelbman and Maoz (2012) go further, stating that tour guides direct the tourist gaze, as Urry (1985) described, effectively pointing out to their guests what to look at, how to interpret what they see, and what to ignore. Indeed, it is argued that the significance that lies in any research on tour guide interpretation, and in particular interpretation of sites of death and tragedy, is that by interpreting a site or a story, tour guides plant ideas into the minds of their guests. It can, however, be argued that planting ideas or manipulation of information through interpretation may have either positive or adverse effects.

This point is illustrated Quinn and Ryan (2015) who in their observations of guided tours in the Dublin Castle found that interpretation is a form of mediation of difficult memories, and that guides face the challenge of treading between what the tourists know prior to the tour (i.e. factual information and *Kulturbrille*) and the guides' expertise of the place.

Tour guides, then, inhabit a position of influence, playing a big part in the tourists' dark tourism experience, arguably to the extent of making substantial changes in the visitors' world views. It can be concluded that the guides' own mental state in relation to the guided subject material holds great significance.

Secondary trauma syndrome

Although secondary trauma is not included in the objectives of the PhD research, it is indirectly related to how tour guides choose – consciously or subconsciously – to interpret the dark chapters of Berlin's history to their guests. For that reason, it is imperative to first define secondary trauma syndrome and the related vicarious trauma.

Zimering and Gulliver (2003) defined Secondary Trauma as "*indirect exposure to trauma through first-hand account or narrative of a traumatic event. The vivid recounting of trauma by the survivor and the clinician's subsequent cognitive or emotional representation of that event may result in a set of symptoms and reaction*

that paralleled PTSD". For tour guides in Berlin, particularly for those guiding tours in Sachsenhausen, there is normally no first-account of trauma. This is for the reason that many guides today are too young or have not had the opportunity to meet a survivor of the former concentration camps they guide in. The second important point related to this definition is that tour guides by the nature of the work will often repeat the narrative many times during their work life; effectively, repeatedly reliving a secondary version of the story.

Similarly, Figley (1995) describes secondary trauma stress (STS) or vicarious trauma (VT) as behaviours and symptoms arising from secondary knowledge of traumatising events experienced by others. It comes as a result of wanting to help a suffering or traumatised person.

Figley (1995), like Zimering and Guiliver (2003) deals with direct contact with the victim/s, addressing the symptoms arousing from trying to help or treat the victims. His description is one of secondary trauma which results from indirect exposure to trauma. Here, too, the explanation is not suitable for the circumstances of the tour guides, as in most cases they do not come in direct contact with the victim (even guides who have met a Holocaust survivor, are not employed to treat survivors, rather to tell their story and the story of the camp).

Moving on from the focus on medical staff, Pearlman and McKay (2008: 4) define vicarious trauma as "*the negative changes that happen to humanitarian workers over time as they witness and engage with other people's suffering and need.*". In common with STS, the authors specify similar symptoms that can be identified with the researched humanitarian workers. Those include feeling numb, disconnected, isolated, overwhelmed by the work, depression, and even having their deepest beliefs challenged by the work (*ibid*.). The authors provide more details, clarifying that "*vicarious trauma is the process of change that happens because you care about other people who have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time this process can lead to changes in your psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being*" (*ibid*.: 7). The main point correlating to the work of tour guides guiding the dark is the feeling of feeling compassion for someone who has been hurt. Crucially, guides at the moment of conducting this research (2014-2020) are commonly three generations away from the event (WWII and the Holocaust) the narrative of which they repeatedly interpret to tourists.

The projection of events that happened to others is the key component of secondary trauma. Bernhard *et al*. (1998) described the vicarious feelings that fans of sporting teams have after winning or losing sporting events. Fans, generally have a feeling of 'we'. In winning, they feel stronger, more optimistic, and prouder. Whilst when losing, fans feel defeated, depressed and angry.

Pearlman and McKay (2008) went a long way in detailing the possible symptoms, which can be self-identified by workers, or guides. Awareness to these symptoms is key. These following points outline some of the signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma. In broad terms, some common difficulties associated with vicarious trauma include:

• Difficulty managing your emotions;

• Difficulty accepting or feeling okay about yourself;

• Difficulty making good decisions;

• Problems managing the boundaries between yourself and others (e.g., taking on too much responsibility, having difficulty leaving work at the end of the day, trying to step in and control other's lives);

• Problems in relationships;

• Physical problems such as aches & pains, illnesses, accidents;

• Difficulty feeling connected to what's going on around and within you; and

• Loss of meaning and hope.

These symptoms may be divided into short-term and long-term damages. Undeniably, depression, loss of meaning and hope, cynicism and numbness, can be more clearly described as the accumulative stresses, potentially causing bigger psychological stress than the commonly known job burnout. In the next section which will deal with the methodology of the PhD research, I will explain how during the process of ethnographic and autoethnographic research, I came to identify the above symptoms, particularly with guides working at the museum and memorial site of Sachsenhausen.

Methodology

Introduction
The aim of this section is to discuss the reasons for choosing ethnography as the research strategy, to explain the logic behind employing autoethnography as part of the analysis and exploration of this research, to describe the methods of data collection, and finally, to explain the nature of collecting informal data within the setting of ethnographic research.

Ethnography
The entire premise of this PhD research is based on nuances. That is to say that in examining the role of tour guides as interpreters of the dark, it is argued that one must make an in-depth exploration of words, voices, feelings, customs and commonalities.

In addition to that, as a member of that more or less defined group of full-time tour guides working in Berlin, I had an opportunity to conduct a type of qualitative research that requires the researcher to be constantly 'in the field'. Ethnography was then deemed the most suitable strategy for this research.

The main aim of ethnography, as argued by Lévi-Strauss (1963), is to learn about a specific group, accurately describing it and its customs to others. Or as Kottak suggests that ethnography "*provides an account of a particular community, society, or culture*" (Kottak, 2005, p. 3). In my research, as I will explain in the following sections, I engage fully in this cultural group I belong to, gathering and interpreting data, which is gathered from both formal and informal situations. Few scholarly efforts have been made in the past within the discipline of tour guide research, employing similar ethnographic strategy. These include Jonathan Wynn's research on tour guides in New York (2011) and Susan Mackenzie's (2013) research on guides' experiences, their emotions and stress. In the case of Wynn, after a long period of conducting complete silent observations of guides, and spending time with the guides, the author eventually constructed his own tours and started guiding himself. Whereas in the case of Suzan Mackenzie, the researcher made an insider accurate exploration of the experiences of the guides. The latter bears a greater resemblance to my own circumstances. At the time of starting the PhD research, I was already an experienced full-time guide of four years (in 2014).

Arguing further in favour of choosing ethnography as a research strategy is that unlike tangible products, the value of which measured mathematically by economists, understanding nuances of tourism cultures requires tourism anthropologists to show research elasticity (Greenwood, 1989). In other words, using a research strategy that allows interlinking diverse theoretical issues with adaptable ethnographic methods.

Autoethnography

It was and still is imperative that I reflect and analyse my own interpretation in the same way I analyse my peers'. It follows, then, that I also had to look into how I cope with guiding in Sachsenhausen. Although not identified by name, my coping mechanism is presented here along with those of my colleagues.

In Ellis and Bochner's (2000) seminal work on autoethnography, the authors open by arguing that there aren't enough scholars who put their own voice as the central focus of the research; a valid justification to conduct and write in the autoethnographic voice. Somewhat in contrast to that, I decided from the beginning of my research in 2014 that my own perspective is not and should not be the central focus. However, it provides a validity and reliability to my analysis of tour guide interpretation if I write in the first person – because I am there, and, analyse myself as I analyse my peers –

because we do the same work. In using the first-person singular, I avoid disguising myself as neutral (Cole, 2005).

Nevertheless, it is the job of the autoethnographer to continue employing accepted analytical tools in order to not succumb to becoming a guest on a talk show telling a funny story (Ellis *et al*., 2011). In other words, my identities of me being a researcher and a guide must merge to write a reliable analysis. In doing so I have to continue to ask myself what is the significance of my work? Am I still writing in an honest way about myself and about my peers? Is the story I am telling helping to progress the aims of the research with the appropriate academic rigour? (Cremin, 2018; Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

This section of the article and the preceding section presented the rationale behind the general qualitative research, and the nature of the data analysis. The following, then, will discuss the specific methods of collecting data, detailing the practical reasons behind each one.

Methods of data collection

To date, in order to collect data for this research I have employed a number of methods. Direct observations and interviews have been the two prime methods. Direct observation of tours was and still is the focal point of the PhD research. It is done by receiving permission from guides prior to a public tour they are conducting. The three tours I observe are the tour of the Cold War or as it is sometimes called The Berlin Wall (and other variations on that theme), the tour of the Third Reich (also with different variations between different tour companies), and the tour of the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen. These are all tours of companies holding public tours, where individuals can join simply by coming to a pre-determined meeting point and paying for a ticket. I then observe and record the guide. It is important to note that in most cases although I refrained from actively joining in the tour, my presence with a small recording device is obvious to the guests on the tour. For that reason, most guides chose to reveal my identity to the guests, explaining that I am conducting a research on tour guides. In this way they made sure guests would not think that I may be observing the guides to learn from them as a new guide, to observe them because they are new guides, or to record the tourists without their permission (i.e. the tourists are not the object of the research).

At home, I would then analyse guides' selection of words, anecdotes and their general choice of narrative (I let the guides tell me how they define the narrative of the particular tour). In addition to that, when listening to the recording I analyse voice fluctuations and changes in rhythm and volume, as part of the dramaturgical tools used by the guides in their interpretation.

From the beginning of the research I was very open with the guiding community as to who I am (for those who didn't know me before) and to the nature of the research. In most cases, guides of various ages, genders, nationalities and professional backgrounds are happy to cooperate. Guides talk to me in a variety of social situations, allowing me to present their perspective and professional and private experiences in the research. In the four years of the research thus far, I have observed nearly 40 tours, and collected countless stories, as well as telling my own experiences. The goal of collecting such a large sample is to increase the validity of the research in order to make sure it stays within the realms of evidence-based research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Freshwater et al., 2010).

Interviews, the secondary data collection method, are used for the following two-part rationale. The first is the limitation of language. I am able to understand tour interpretations in Hebrew, English and German. Tour guides in Berlin work in dozens of other languages. Spanish, for example, – a language I am not proficient in – being the second biggest tourist market after English. The second limitation partly resolved by interviewing guides, is the limitation of open to the public versus private tours. In Berlin there are four or five big tour guiding companies, conducting the above-mentioned tours, and are they open for tourists to come to a meeting point and join a public tour. All other tours are private, usually given to a small family/friends group or to a big group in a bus. In such cases observing a tour is not possible due to the intimate dynamics and nature of the interaction between the guides and their guests.

Consequently, interviews are advantageous not only for providing a solution for the limitations previously presented, but also for allowing guides a free and safe environment to discuss their experiences and opinions. For example, among the topics that came up in these interviews was the topic of how us tour guides cope with the (sometimes) inexplicable feelings of sadness and anger which follow guiding a tour in Sachsenhausen.

In addition to a known but 'backstage' form of direct observation, I also spoke candidly and in a transparent manner to guides in a variety of social situations. The next section will elaborate on the nature of this ethnographic social interaction.

Informal conversations with guides

Informal conversations or chance exchanges may occur in many situations during ethnographic research. Several scholars have argued that for the ethnographer, unexpected data may prove equally valuable than that of which is collected during formal observations or interviews (see for example, Emerson et al., 1995; Monaghan & Just, 2000). Here, too, the concept of a tour guiding community as a virtual urban tribe proves to be significant for a research based on nuances of words, opinions

and emotions. Wynn brings evidence from ethnographic research of tour guides in New York, telling us that although working autonomously is a major motivation to choose a career as a tour guide, guides also rely heavily on maintaining various other relationships outside their immediate work (Wynn, 2011). For that reason, and in those circumstances, living within my tribe was a conscientious decision, which time and again proved crucial for the success of the research. This article is exactly such an example. Guides started telling me about what they do after a guiding day in Sachsenhausen, and how they cope with the sadness which often comes as a result of interpreting the story of the camp. After hearing this from two or three guides, I started asking the others as well. It is important to note that attending less or more social events of tour guides was never something I did against my wish or with the intention of going to an event with the sole purpose of contributing to the research. I am part of the tribe and was therefore in the perfect position to explore it from both the ethnographer perspective, and one who is a member, thus familiar with vocabulary, habits, personal and professional interests, cultural attributes, common joys, and of course, common personal and professional problems.

The next section presents such common problems. At the end of observation tours, or in meeting with friends over coffee, or at parties and gatherings, the following data I had been gathering started to shed light on what guides decide to do when they finish a tour in Sachsenhausen in the afternoon.

Emerging findings

In this section I will present information given to me by the guides who told me of their ways to try to deal with their feelings after guiding a tour in Sachsenhausen, and how they try to avoid the potentially accumulative damage they intuitively feel may occur.

The word *Feierabend* in German – 'home time' or 'end of work time' - literally means festive or celebrate evening. Most tours to Sachsenhausen involve spending a nett of 2.5 hours inside the memorial site itself. In this context, as it shows, it is a relief to finish work, but is not considered by most guides as something they can associate with a literal or psychological form of celebration. The section will be divided into groups of similar guide reactions, followed by analytical commentary.

1. Guides 1, 8, 9, and 10 - The need for social isolation

Several guides told me about the growing feeling of misanthropy and the general need for isolation.

Guide 1: *After a tour in SH I go home and don't talk to anyone for the rest of the evening. The next day I'm fine.*

Guide 8: *Once, back in the city after a tour, I realised that I reacted aggressively to a situation in the street, and that I probably wouldn't react like that if I didn't do SH that day.*

Guide 9: *I go home, put my legs up and watch a lot of sports for the rest of the evening.*

Guide 10: *I go home, put my legs up on the sofa. Shut myself completely and watch a lot of stand-up comedy on YouTube.*

In a manner of speaking, it can be argued that what Guide 8 experienced is an outcome which is similar to *hostile attribution bias* (HAB). In research on child psychology, Usha Goswami (2014) summarised this suggesting that young children whose behaviour is constantly interpreted as hostile and purposeful by their parents or caretakers, will grow up to interpret seemingly neutral behaviours of others as intentionally hostile. And Helfritz-Sinville and Stanford (2014, p. 45) paraphrased Milch and Dodge (1984) to define HAB as a "*tendency to interpret the intent of others as hostile, despite the fact that environmental cues fail to indicate clear intent*". By spending the day telling and interpreting the hostile, and in fact cruel actions of SS guards in a concentration camp, Guide 8 felt defensive and antagonised as a reaction to a benign situation.

The similarity between Guides 9 and 10 is two-part. They presented misanthropic inability to connect with others after a tour. Furthermore, they used similar methods of 'decompression' to create a short-term world of escapism. Guide 10's choice of comedy was also supported by another guide who testified during a tour that they use a light joke between difficult stories or anecdotes. The guide explained their logic stating that: "*a guide has to breakdown the dramatic serious interpretation* [of the tragic and the sad] *to allow the tourists a crucial psychological break*".

2. Guides 2,3 and 4 - Comfort over eating

Guide 2: *I tend to overeat. I eat nothing all day during a tour, then at home I eat a lot.*

Guide 3, 4: *I eat a huge cheeseburger and chips.*

The above statement of guides 3 and 4 has to be read in context: the two guides are normally vegetarian/vegan. In addition to that statement, they both (separately) stated that they try to avoid guiding in Sachsenhausen.

3. Guides 5, 6, and 7 – limiting guiding days in Sachsenhausen

Guide 5: *I made a conscious decision not to guide there anymore. I may change that in the future, if there will be customer demand that I won't be able to refuse. At the moment I rather not deal with that.*

Guide 6: *I limit the times I guide there. Never more than once a week*.

Guide 7: *I try to sway my customers* [before they book a tour] *to only get an SH tour if they do the highlights tour first*.

There are several factors that need to be considered when interpreting the above three statements. Tour guides have limited control over what the customer wants. The customers themselves may not have such control, as they often have scheduling constraints. Weather and sporting events in Berlin are also factored in. For example, it may be smarter to do the Sachsenhausen tour on a marathon Sunday, when the entire city centre is closed. In addition to that, guides are ultimately freelancers and are constantly worried about the amount and quality of work they will receive. Refusing a tour may not always be an easy or even viable option. Lastly. The Memorial and Museum at Sachsenhausen charges guides 23 Euros for a guiding day pass and 90 Euros for an annual pass. This amount is subtracted from the guide's wages. Guides are then faced with the choice of buying a day pass and facing the loss of 10 to 20 per cent of their day's wages, or buying an annual pass and making sure they work enough so that the pass will pay off. Again, this means that refusing work may not be a viable option.

4. Guides 8 and 11 – doing sports/physical activity.

Guide 8: *I used to go home, close myself in and not do anything. Now I go home and do yoga on my own.*

Guide 11: *I go to the gym. Always after SH.*

5. Guides 12, 13, 14, and 15 – the need for hedonistic indulgence and sociability.

Guide 12: *I love eating good food after SH tours, especially Sushi.*

Guide 13: *I don't do SH often enough to feel the weight of it so strongly… However, when I get too deep into these subjects, I need to do something fun or spend some time with family/friends.*

Guide 14: *To be honest, I drink a lot… I'm a social drinker, I often meet with friends after a tour and we drink. Life don't stop because of a Sachsenhausen tour… there are   birthdays, events, gallery openings, etc.*

6. Guides 12 and 16 – the correlation between a good tour and the mood of the guide in the evening

Guide 12: *I'm in a different mood if the group was engaged and alert or if they 'weren't really there'/i.e. if there was no chemistry between us. In the latter case, I feel quite depressed.*

Guide 16: *I follow up on questions I was asked on the tour and didn't know the answers to; there are always new questions! If the students on the group*

didn't ask any questions, or worse yet, if the teachers were not engaged or at all seem interested, then I feel quite bad after a tour. I ask myself, if they're not interested, why did they even come on the tour?? People like that end up voting for far-right parties.

Guide 12's raises an interesting point, which seems significant on one level or another to most guides. During interviews and observations, about half of the guides agreed to the statement that they also function as a role of a teacher, especially due to the serious nature of dark tourism. Whereas the other half strongly opposed to being anything like teachers, or even assuming that role for a short time. Many went as far as disagreeing with the argument that guides function as cultural mediators (Hu & Wall, 2012; Rabotic, 2010; Yu et al., 2004). In rare cases, there are guides who even oppose assuming the role of an 'ambassador' of the destination, not feeling responsible for delivering positive memorable experiences to the tourists from the place itself; another role argued by Yu et al. (2004). With regards to guiding in Sachsenhausen that changed, with most guides admitting that guiding in the memorial site holds more responsibility. Whether they feel a bigger educational role or one who has an important social role to play, the dynamic with the group plays a strong part in the negative or positive impact it has on them, as Guide 12 and others pointed out.

7. Guide 15 and others – the need for total detachment from topics mentioned at work

Guide 15: *I have a rule: no Hitler talk about 20:00! Many of my friends are tour guides, Hitler and Sachsenhausen, that's work, and we don't talk work stuff when we go out in the evening.*

Guide 15's remark is very common in the guiding community. The guides' intuitive choice of coping is more clearly argued by Pearlman and McKay (2008), suggesting that people who may suffer from vicarious trauma (after self-identifying the symptoms) should escape – physically or mentally, rest and play – engage in fun activities that make you happy. It can be argued that finding the right channel/audience and time to vent off is crucial in the process of psychological escapism. However, this may not be efficient with guides who do Sachsenhausen tours often, and may feel that there is nothing new to tell.

Conclusions

As an option for a possible preliminary conclusion, it can be argued that Work Fatigue, Burn-out or even Secondary Trauma Syndrome are not suitable titles for the type of psychological issue faced by the guide over long periods of time. The final section of this article will attempt to define and explain the issue at hand, potentially giving way for more research on this subject in the future.

Secondary Trauma Syndrome is often researched and talked about in the professional context of medical staff (especially nurses and field medical staff), aid workers, criminal lawyers and criminal procedures, and several other similar professionals. Faced with metaphorically touching extreme trauma, under different circumstances, the phenomenon revealed above may be defined as **Guiding the Dark Accumulative Psychological Stress** (GDAPS). This phenomenon differs from STS in several ways. The first, and most obvious, is that in most cases the accumulative psychological stress comes from telling/interpreting the stories, not from hearing them or treating patients with PTSD. As Pearlman and McKay (2008) explain that by assisting people who have been victimised, humanitarian workers often experience the lasting effects of psychological stress, and are spiritually changed. This is very different for tour guides, who are clearly not in direct contact with the victims of the told event/site. Guides spend anything between five tours per season to 3-4 tours per week (in extreme cases) telling stories of the prisoners of Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen and what they had to endure during their life in the camp. Therefore, in contrast to the direct contact endured by humanitarian workers and medical staff, the psychological stress accumulated is a result of repetitive mediation between the victims (and the event) to a listener (the tourist).

Secondly, although general burn-out is a relatively known risk to tour guides, other psychological impacts are not commonly something tour guides consider. These include depression, an increase in aggressive behaviour (specifically aggressive reactions to situations that would not otherwise aggregate severe reaction), change in perception of people and society (the inevitable expectation in social situations that other people are intentionally aggressive or rude), and radicalisation or pre-existing opinions.

These vicarious feelings that tour guides have can be compared to those of Bernhardt *et al.*'s sporting fans (1998). The authors argued that these changes are cognitive and behavioural. It can be argued that whereas sporting fans are likely to feel a fluctuation of positive and negative feelings, and therefore will not be tilted into just positive or negative, tour guides of the dark will in most cases endure the stress of the negative feelings. There are exceptions, as Guide 12 explained: "*if I have a group and they ask good questions, and it leads to a good debate, then at least I go home feeling good about myself, and not too depressed.*"

The issue of Accumulative Psychological Stress arises partly due to the ever-increasing visitor numbers to dark tourism sites. Considering Stone's (2008) spectrum of dark to light, the reference here is to the sites referred to as the darkest, as they present the most emotionally difficult historical events, and may therefore be argued to be the most sensitive places of tour guides interpretation. These sites include the

most infamous sites of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Killing Fields in Cambodia, the museums in Kigali presenting the genocide in Rwanda, and the major concentration camps in Germany (Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen). The sheer numbers of visitors to these sites are now counted in the millions. Sachsenhausen alone is listed as the first item on the list of Day Trips & Excursions in the TripAdvisor page of Berlin (TripAdvisor, 2018).

From the emerging findings of this research it is already revealed that the vast majority of guides see guiding in Sachsenhausen as different to all other tours ("*it's not like any other job…*"). Bearing that in mind, along with the concept of the power that guides have on the tourist understanding of historical events, and with the large numbers of visitors to these sites, the accumulative impact on the guides is arguably of greater importance than simply arguing that guides may become numb to the material.

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