

# Chapter 4

## Dark Tourism and Human Rights: A Philosophical Quandary?

**Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5149-1669>  
*University of Palermo, Argentina*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Over the recent years, scholars have focused their attention on dark tourism as a newly emerging and global trend. Without any doubt, dark tourism remains a more-than-interesting object of study for social scientists and academia. At first glimpse, dark tourism exhibits a new morbid taste generated in post-disaster contexts, as well as environments of mass death and suffering. Paradoxically, dark consumption opens a much deeper question revolving around human rights. This chapter interrogates the intersection of dark consumption (as a type of commoditizing process) and human rights. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it, one of the paradoxes of memorizing the tragedy is that its roots are ultimately forgotten. In consonance with this, the authors hold the thesis that dark tourism enhances resiliency and local community, but at the same time, it generates a biased story of what should be memorized.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Not surprisingly, the dilemma of human rights has impregnated all levels of social sciences and beyond. Since the end of WWII, scholars interrogated furtherly the violence perpetrated against ethnic minorities as well as the urgency to make the necessary institution not to repeat “this holocaust” in the future (Keet 2012). Human

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8726-6.ch004

rights have been thought to protect the lay-citizens from the abuse or crimes of the proper state. At a closer look, human rights, have been contemplated as a necessary step to protect not only the basic rights but also the privacy of lay citizens. The paradox seems to be given by the fact the same state which serves as the WatchGuard of human rights violates them under some conditions (Levy & Sznajder 2006). Of course, this debate is not new and remains open in the fields of humanism and the core of academic debate (Ignatieff 2011; Frezzo 2014). In consonance with this, human rights have certainly entered the core of tourism research as a result of different combined factors. At first glimpse, the lack of legal follow-up of governments to monitor clandestine and criminal activities such as human trafficking or child prostitution. It is very difficult for authorities to implement efficient policies that scrutinize closely and globally the demands of these activities. Eli Roth's film *Hostel* amply narrates the sad story of three young tourists who are kidnapped, tortured and killed by millionaire tourists taking part in a dark and criminal network in Eastern Europe. Tourists not only are vulnerable to criminal activities but also in some cases, they are active players in atrocious acts; what is more important, leisure activities go a much deep sinister direction where the "Other's pain" is the main commodity to exchange (Korstanje & Olsen 2011; Korstanje & Tarlow 2012). Having said this, human rights encompass not only the security of tourists but also locals. Over the recent years, some studies have alerted on the importance to instrumentalize "dark tourism" as an efficient form of recovery just after a disaster takes a hit. Dark, Thana or post-disaster tourism revitalizes obliterated zones while accelerating the recovery timeframe without mentioning the reciprocity between victims and outsiders (Miller, Gonzalez & Hutter, 2017; Martini & Buda 2020). Soulard et al (2022) argue convincingly that one of the main lessons given by dark tourism rests on activating a memorizing process for the traumatic event not to be repeated in the future. This process is very well applied to the Holocaust and other manslaughters. Dark tourism enhances efficiently social cohesion (among survivors) as well as solidarity equating all persons before the tragedy. In this vein, dark tourism shows potential for emotional mobilization in the context of genocide, ethnic cleansing and extreme violence. To some extent, dark tourism proffers a pedagogic nature educating visitors through dark experiences. In Phillip Stone's terms, dark tourism exhibits a necessary attempt to understand the own finitude through the significant "Other death" (Stone 2012; Raine 2013). This begs a more than interesting question: is dark tourism seen as a mechanism to reaffirm the importance of human rights or simply an ideological driver that ultimately tergiversates the roots of events to protect status-quo?

The present book chapter centers on the dilemma of dark tourism and human rights, in the context of post-disaster, violence and genocide. This moot point remains overlooked by Academia as well as the specialized literature. The goals of this

11 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/dark-tourism-and-human-rights/324707](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/dark-tourism-and-human-rights/324707)

## Related Content

---

### eWOW of Guests Regarding Their Hotel Experience: Sentiment Analysis of TripAdvisor Reviews

Zelia Breda, Rui Costa, Gorete Dinisand Amandine Angie Martins (2020). *Handbook of Research on Social Media Applications for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector* (pp. 295-308).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/ewow-of-guests-regarding-their-hotel-experience/246385](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/ewow-of-guests-regarding-their-hotel-experience/246385)

### Steps toward a City Marketing Mix and Its Perception Measurement

Katja Udir Mišianđ Klement Podnar (2017). *Strategic Place Branding Methodologies and Theory for Tourist Attraction* (pp. 67-86).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/steps-toward-a-city-marketing-mix-and-its-perception-measurement/163011](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/steps-toward-a-city-marketing-mix-and-its-perception-measurement/163011)

### Knowledge Management in Tourism Services: A Literature Review and Case Study – The Case of INATEL

Sérgio Jesus Teixeira (2018). *Managing Sustainable Tourism Resources* (pp. 111-148).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-management-in-tourism-services/205758](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-management-in-tourism-services/205758)

### Strategic Framework for Innovative Tourism and Sustainable Development in Namibia

Neeta Baporikar (2022). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age* (pp. 1-16).

[www.irma-international.org/article/strategic-framework-for-innovative-tourism-and-sustainable-development-in-namibia/296685](http://www.irma-international.org/article/strategic-framework-for-innovative-tourism-and-sustainable-development-in-namibia/296685)

### Risk Perception and Tourist Types: A Study Among International Tourists

Deepti Jogand Nandakumar Mekoth (2019). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age* (pp. 22-43).

[www.irma-international.org/article/risk-perception-and-tourist-types/231523](http://www.irma-international.org/article/risk-perception-and-tourist-types/231523)