

Title

‘Murders and other Mysteries in the Grand Harbour area of 19th Century Malta’

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Abstract

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Research/Project Title 'Murders and other Mysteries in the Grand Harbour area of 19th Century Malta'		Number of words excluding abstract, references and appendices - 5595
<p>Dark Tourism is one of the evolving niche markets that keeps increasing with the passing of time. The attraction of humans to events and sites related to murders and mysteries, has been existing for many years. Destinations such as London, Manassas, Chernobyl and Rome, have been attracting tourists to particular sites related specifically to suffering, killing and death. Manassas, a town in North Virginia, is the site where the first battle in the American Civil War was held. This site was already on the market to be sold as a tourist attraction, the day after the battle. (Lennon and Foley 2000)</p> <p>The Grand Harbour area in Malta in the 19th Century was often the setting for murders, crime and mysteries that happened at that time, mainly due to the number of sailors, trade ships and movement that was present during that period. From the research done in this long essay, a number of murders and mystery cases were studied, these murders and mysteries happened in the Grand Harbour area which involved Maltese people, but also involving British nationals residing in Malta during the specific timeframe. Malta was a British Colony for over one hundred and fifty years, therefore a number of murders involved also British people living or that found themselves in Malta either for work or at leisure.</p> <p>The objective of this research was to identify what the tourist interested in 'Dark Tourism' is after, what motivates them to visit a 'Dark' attraction, if they consider Malta to be a 'Dark Site' and most of all, if the Grand Harbour of Malta, with all its history, could be considered a 'Dark Tourism' location. Once the research was concluded, a tour focused on a number of murders and mysteries that took place in the Grand Harbour area during the 19th Century was created and presented as part of the final exam of this course.</p>		
Keywords Dark Tourism, Grand Harbour of Malta, Murders, Mysteries, 19th Century, Macabre, Victims		

Declaration of Authenticity



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Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Mr Vincent Zammit

Date

Student's Signature

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

1.1 The meaning of 'Dark Tourism'

Whilst driving past the Coast Road, which takes you from Pembroke to Bugibba, I encountered a lot of traffic caused by an accident which involved a truck and a heavily damaged car. The traffic was not caused due to the accident, but it was the result of all the cars slowing down to get a closer look at all the wreck and the two bodies lying on the floor. The passers-by were curious about the vivid scene they were going to see when passing in front of the accident location. The term "Dark Tourism" is exactly related to what the people passing by that accident wanted to see, they were intrigued by the details pertaining to the accident, the blood on the floor, several car spare parts scattered on the tarmac, the macabre scene and all the details that they could possibly manage to see whilst driving past.

Locations associated with murder, atrocities, natural disasters, death and mysteries have been an attraction since Medieval Times when people would set on long trips to pilgrim sites, to visit places where religious martyrdom had taken place or to the tomb of their patron saint. According to J. John Lennon, a professor of tourism at Glasgow Caledonian University, in Scotland, 'Dark Tourism' could date back to the Battle of Waterloo, when people would stay in their carriages and watch the soldiers fight and kill each other. We can also relate to the time of the Romans, when people would flock to the Colosseum for daily or weekly entertainment of Gladiator fights and public executions, this is when a person travels with the intent to witness death itself 'thanatourism' (A.V. Seaton, 1996). In 1996, Lennon and Foley initially devised the term 'Dark Tourism', where the authors described it as 'the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites' (Foley, 1996a).

The research the author worked on, was to better understand this niche market, what entices the public to want to visit these macabre locations? What does the tourist that visits a particular location seek? a location related to a dark and most of the time, sad history, not a place that transmits happiness but the exact opposite. During the research, a focus on locating new areas that could be associated with Dark Tourism, mainly in the Grand Harbour area, an area that has seen so many murders, crime and mysteries throughout Malta's long history.

1.2 Research Background

Using a qualitative research, a more detailed result was obtained and a further understanding to discover why certain tourists are attracted in particular locations related to dark history. A total of 25 (twenty-five) interviews were held to extract general data with regards to 'Dark Tourism', to understand better the knowledge that the general public has about this segment, what other countries are offering, in terms of dark related locations and also what Malta is offering to this increasing segment.

Several books relating to murders, mysteries and bizarre stories that happened in Malta, were also read. Through the research background related to Dark Tourism, the motives, characteristics and macabre events related to the murders and mysteries specified in the final tour presented from this long essay, was acquired.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Hypothesis or Question

The main objective of this research is to discover new dark tourism subjects or locations within the Grand Harbour Area. The area of Valletta and the three Cities (Vittoriosa, Cospicua and Senglea), was the area most focused on as these towns were very populated and several incidents and mysteries happened due to the amount of British military personnel that frequented these areas, since they are harbour towns and British Navy vessels would be berthed in the Grand Harbour of Malta.

With Malta's long history, we have several locations and subjects that are still not being used or we are not maximising their potential when it comes to Dark Tourism. From the research done, it transpired that most of the tours available locally are focusing on the same spots or subjects, the ones relating to World War II, for example Fort St Elmo, The National War Museum, Lascaris War Rooms, The War Tunnels Tour & Saluting Battery, at the Upper Barakka Gardens. When one compares Malta to other European destinations with regards to innovative ideas within this segment, Malta is still behind in the development and marketing exposure, focused on Dark related travel. In fact when one visits certain websites that promote Malta when it comes to incoming tourism, one notices that the majority of these sites promote Malta as a wedding destination for example, or as a leisure/cultural destination, or as a Meeting and Incentive/Events destination, as this segment generates a lot of revenue and exposure for both the hotel and the Maltese Islands.

However hardly any sites promote Malta as a Dark Tourism location.

To help in gathering the correct information, several research questions were given attention to:

- What is the true meaning of Dark Tourism?
- What does one understand by Dark Tourism?
- What motivates the traveller to visit 'Dark' sites?
- Would Malta be considered a 'Dark Tourism' attraction?
- Would the Grand Harbour of Malta, attract tourists interested in 'Dark' history or events?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this section, we will discuss the literature review pertaining to 'Dark Tourism' as this will give us a much clear perspective on what the term 'Dark Tourism' means, and why a specific location/area is considered a dark spot.

The word 'Niche Tourism' reflects the different needs a tourist might have. We are all different and our needs vary, not only with regards to food but also when we travel. There are several segments of 'Niche Tourism', some tourists opt to book trips related to trekking, others opt for culinary tours, some prefer Cultural and Heritage, others prefer adventure trips full of adrenalin, and then there are the ones that choose to travel to Dark Locations. Dark Tourism is one of the niche segments which includes the need of tourists visiting certain locations and museums which are associated with murders, death, macabre history and pain' (Stone, 2006a). Foley and Lennon (Foley, 1996a) made the first reference to the term 'dark tourism' in the International Journal of Heritage Studies, after this, they also came up with a book that had the same title relating to the term 'dark tourism', this book remains the most read and detailed book ever printed, that describes this term in a very detailed aspect (J John Lennon, 2000).

An analysis done by Rojek (Urry, 1997), relates to the large group of people that visited sites relating to disasters, some of these sites mentioned were the port of Zeebrugge where in 1987, on the 6th of March, the ferry MV Herald of Free Enterprise capsized, leaving 193 crew and passengers dead.

Another location mentioned was Scotland, in particular the Lockerbie area, where the Pan Am Flight 103, flying between Frankfurt and Detroit, exploded by a bomb which was placed on board, leaving 259 crew and passengers dead. Other Black Spots mentioned by Rojek (Rojek, 1997) refer to anniversaries of assassinations, for example the location related to the shooting of John F Kennedy in Dallas, Texas or the site where James Dean had crashed in 1955 and died. Rojek explains and discusses the three different scenarios relating to Black Spots, the *postmodern spectacles* (referring to locations such as the yearly vigil in memory of Elvis Presley in Graceland) is one of the scenarios, another scenario relates to the '*nostalgic*' locations (national cemeteries) and the third scenario is the '*sensation sites*' the ones related to disaster (the 9/11 Ground Zero location) (Rojek, 1997).

2.2 Different types of 'Dark Tourism'

Although we find several types of 'Dark Tourism' locations, according to the researchers on this topic, the type of location chosen by the tourist, depends on the motivation the visitor has towards the site. Below we can find a list of the different types of 'Dark Tourism' and a brief description in relation to the definition of the term associated with it.

2.2.1 Holocaust Tourism

The term holocaust is associated with a macabre and destruction of a particular place or a person. Holocaust tourism refers to a person that is interested in visiting a location which is famous for a crime that happened against humanity. During the time when Germany was ruled by the Nazi, mass murder against the Jewish and even non – Jewish nationalities took place in Auschwitz. The horrendous and macabre stories related to the killing of so many children, families and innocent people, enticed people from all over to world to travel to these locations and not only Auschwitz but also other locations that refer to the Holocaust, such as, memorial museums and Nazi concentration camps. This type of 'Dark Tourism' is believed to be very popular with the younger tourist, most probably the ones that were born much later after the macabre events represented by these sites.

Auschwitz is still considered to be one of the top Holocaust sites to be visited, this could also be due to the increase in 'Dark Tourism' in the last thirty years, which could also be related to certain movies that have made us aware of what happened during the Holocaust, such as, 'Schindler's List' (1993) and 'The Diary of Anne Frank' (1959)

2.2.2 Grave Tourism

Visiting a grave or a cemetery takes us back to a sad past. To certain people, it even offers a closure and helps them bridge the emptiness between the past and the present. For several people, visiting a tomb or a funerary monument of a person they admired, is found to be fascinating, in fact, a cemetery in Paris, the 'Parisian Pere Lachaise', where several celebrities such as Jim Morison and Oscar Wilde are buried, is one of the top visited sites in the world. Grave Tourism dates to approximately the fourth century, when people would go on a long journey to visit the Holy Land and see where Jesus, his apostles and their favourite saint, were martyred.

2.2.3 Heritage Tourism

The term 'Heritage Tourism' offers an exposure to the historical aspect of the destination. A particular site related to a tragedy and visited by a tourist, also offers the details about that particular event. When one visits a 'Dark Site', for example Auschwitz, this site is also related to the heritage of the destination. The tourist that seeks 'Dark Sites', will absorb a combination of heritage and historical information related to the particular site being visited. Heritage Tourism develops and helps boost the economy, whilst the tourist is gaining knowledge in relation to historical and cultural sites. One particular site that can be mentioned related to 'Heritage Tourism' is that of 'Sedlec Ossuary', the church of bones to be found in the town of Kutna Hora in the Czech Republic. This church is covered with skeletons of approximately forty to seventy thousand people. Most of the decorations you find in the church, are made from human bones and portrayed in a macabre way.

2.2.4 Communism Tourism

How communism is perceived, remains up to this day, controversial. The communist ideology is based on certain rules and regulations that are set within the community and the population need to abide by. Even though communism has caused many controversies relating to the authoritarian behaviour, in particular the killing of protesters and the forced labour in concentration camps, it left a legacy, a history, that can be marketed as a tourist attraction.

Berlin is one of the top cities that attracts 'Communism Tourism'. According to official statistics, 5.13 million tourists visited Berlin in 2021, out of which 3.85 million were international tourists. Berlin was cut off from the rest of its surrounding area by a brick wall between 1961 and 1989, part of the wall is still visible and one of the main 'Dark Sites' visited in Berlin, (source statista.com). This was built to prevent further people from leaving East Germany, since over two million Germans from the East had managed to run away and move to the West of Germany after the second World War (1939 – 1945).

2.2.5 Disaster Tourism

Areas that have been affected by a natural disaster or even by a man-made one, are found to be very attractive to certain tourists, tourists that are not afraid of the thrill and adrenalin they feel when visiting sites that could be dangerous. Anything related to the disaster, in terms of effects and aftermath, attracts the tourist in an educational and informative way. The typical profile of the tourist attracted by 'Disaster Tourism' would be that of the curious type, aged between twenty and forty years old, loves thrill, adventure and most of the time would travel to these sites with a group of friends. One of the most visited locations within this type of 'Dark Tourism' is that of, Chernobyl, Ukraine. Chernobyl was effected by a nuclear accident that happened in 1986. It was not just a nuclear accident, it was the worst accident ever, both in deaths and costs. The aftermath effects which were long-term, resulted in inhabitants being diagnosed of cancer and other serious health problems, all related to the radiations which they were exposed to. Another location which is one of the top tourist destinations, is that of Fukushima in Japan. Fukushima was hit by a major earthquake which caused a tsunami that created a fifteen metre wave, this wave halted the power supply resulting in the cooling of three Fukushima Daiichi reactors stopping, causing a nuclear accident. Both Chernobyl and Fukushima attract thousands of tourists every year.

Between 2017 and 2019, Chernobyl's tourism tripled, increasing from 46,136 to 124,423 tourists.

These figures are taken from the Statista Research Department (Statista, n.d.).

"Dark Camps of Genocide represents those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main thanatological theme, and thus occupy the darkest edges of the 'dark tourism spectrum' (Stone, 2006a)

Other types of 'Dark Tourism' can be found in **appendix 7**.

2.3 The shades of 'Dark Tourism'

What makes a 'Dark Tourism' site or location darker than another site? 'Dark Tourism' is something that is easy to market but harder to reckon with, just as no two hotels are made equal. Do we need a 'darkness spectrum' like a Tripadvisor rating for tragedy? To help make sense of this tourism conundrum, (Stone, 2006a) Fig. 2, came up with a sixstep scale he refers to as a dark tourism 'spectrum'. This spectrum ranges from the lightest hint of tragedy to the darkest and most macabre shade of death, assigning a shade or measurement to the value of an attraction's darkness. Looking at the purpose of an attraction or a site, we must first ask ourselves is it factual or something more dubious? Is it serving to educate its visitors or just to simply arouse the interest? Is it some distant historic event or a more recent tragedy? And due to the varied locations that are available worldwide, Stone came up with this idea to identify and distinguish a shade of darkness related to the characteristics and interpretations related to each site and location.

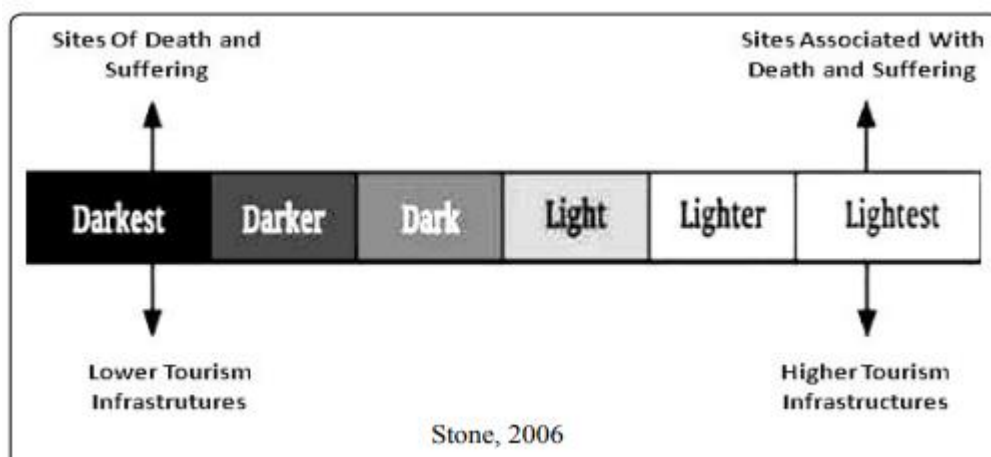


Fig 2: Dark Tourism Spectrum (Stone, 2006a)(Stone, 2006 p.151)

According to scholars and researchers relating to this subject, 'Dark Tourism' sites are identified and calculated according to the grade of darkness, transitioning from the darkest to the lightest.

2.4 The rise of 'Dark Tourism'

Although some of us might not even know what the term 'Dark Tourism' means, surely enough, we might have already been part of this niche market, without even knowing! That visit to Pompeii or The London Dungeons, that tour at the Colosseum in Rome or The St Paul's Catacombs in Rabat. The fact that nowadays we have the possibility to access and avail so much information on social media, 'Dark Sites' are being promoted and exposed worldwide. This has attributed to a peak in numbers when related to this niche market.

Kiwi.com, an online platform that offers flight bookings, had published figures, in August 2018 (Anon., 2018), stating that, an increase in searches relating to 'Dark Destinations' shot up by three hundred and seven percent only in the United Kingdom. The top 'Dark Site' searched in 2018, was that of 'Chernobyl'. The site that suffered a nuclear catastrophe, saw an increase in bookings of one thousand percent in just two years (2016 – 2018) **Fig 3**. Furthermore, TV series relating to 'Dark Tourism' have been aired and have also helped in the rise of this niche market. Such movies were 'Chernobyl' (2019) (HBO, n.d.) and 'Dark Tourist' (2018) (Anon., n.d.)

	Dark destination	Search increase (2016 - 2017)	Search increase (2017 - 2018)	Overall search increase (2016 - 2018)
1	Chernobyl, Ukraine	121%	423%	1057%
2	New Orleans, US	219%	108%	561%
3	Phnom Penh (Killing Fields), Cambodia	233%	70%	465%
4	Pompeii, Italy	92%	187%	451%
5	Hiroshima, Japan	200%	21%	263%
6	Benin, West Africa	25%	130%	188%
7	Medellin, Colombia	110%	36%	185%
8	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	50%	80%	170%
9	Auschwitz, Poland	1%	140%	142%
10	Iraq	99%	-13%	72%

Fig 3. The most researched dark destinations according to Kiwi.com (Anon., 2018)

2.5 Conclusion

This literature review revealed that ‘Dark Tourism’ has been increasing year on year, both in relation to tourists visiting macabre related sites to the knowledge of the public. The term ‘Dark Tourism’ was hardly heard of a decade ago, whereas now, it was also used as part of a Netflix TV series. The general public has gained so much knowledge about this niche market which helped in the increase in numbers and revenue, certain dark sites are reporting at the end of each year.

During this research, we have discussed the different types of 'Dark Tourism' and the different levels related to dark sites according to the 'Dark Tourist Spectrum' (Stone 2006) which aid us in understanding further in depth this tourism segment and the motivation a tourist feels when opting to visit these sites. The following chapter will focus on the research conducted in relation to 'Dark Tourism' within the people living in Malta and their knowledge about this segment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this research is to explore the knowledge of a random sample of people that were interviewed and asked questions related to the 'Dark Tourism' niche market. The research involved a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews held with a number of persons based in Malta, but not necessarily Maltese and asked specific questions to enable the objectives of this long essay to be reached, focusing on the questions initially mentioned in chapter one.

To help in gathering the correct information, several research questions were given attention to:

- What is the true meaning of Dark Tourism?
- What does one understand by Dark Tourism?
- What motivates the traveller to visit 'Dark' sites?
- Would Malta be considered a 'Dark Tourism' attraction?
- Would the Grand Harbour of Malta, attract tourists interested in 'Dark' history or events?

3.2 Data Collection

The method used in this research was focused on a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one, this was due to the fact that the segment of 'Dark Tourism' is so varied and offers so many different types of dark sites, that the result would not have been specific and detailed enough to finalise this long essay. Each and every person is different, with different needs and wants, different options and requirements. A qualitative research enables the researcher to feel the emotions and energy, whether positive or negative, of the interviewee and gain a deeper understanding of that person. The results are also directional and help in pointing out to what the tourist is really motivated about, when opting for certain dark sites or locations.

Rahi mentions that a qualitative data is more centralized on obtaining an in-depth knowledge on a particular subject, this method is used to enable the researcher a better interpretation and a more detailed observation to develop a concept (S, 2017). Light suggests that a qualitative research is frequently used (Light, 2017). The process is to set up a combination of interviews to observe the participants' behaviour.

3.3 Primary Data

The Primary data of this research was obtained through interviews.

3.3.1 Interviews

During this research, a semi – structured interview was used which involved a number of questions related to the subject of 'Dark Tourism'. Silverman mentions that interviews to individuals are mainly conducted to identify opinions, experiences and biases (David-Silverman, 2000). This method was chosen to enable the interviewee to reply freely and offer a more in-depth response within the subject being discussed. A total of (25) twenty-five interviews were held which started initially being focused on the demographic side of the interviewee, then shifting towards questions focused on the main subject, that of 'Dark Tourism'. The people selected for the interviews were frequent travellers, people that at least travelled several times a year. The questions asked were open-ended to enable the interviewee to reply freely and not restrict the person to a specific reply.

3.4 Fieldwork

During this research, the author started analysing different murders and mysteries that took place in the 19th (nineteenth) century to be able to create a tour and present it at the end of this research. The murders and mysteries needed to be linked to be able to create a flowing tour and story, as this will involve the audience and create an interaction between the person relating the story and the attendees. The stops that were to be chosen for the tour, needed to be analysed and at walking distance or a short boat ride away, to fit in the time and area of the proposed tour. Throughout the research on murders in Malta held in the nineteenth century from the book, 'Delitti F'Malta' (Attard, 2001), several of the murders were held either in the Grand Harbour Valletta side or in the Three Cities across the harbour, a few also took place in the middle of the harbour itself.

During my research, several murders related to the Barklori (oarsmen) that owned or worked on taxi boats in the Grand Harbour, were identified. Since this is not a topic frequently used, it was more enticing and interesting to focus on this topic. The author identified three locations where the murders committed by the Barklori (oarsmen) could be related and apart from these sites, other sites related to tragedies and dark events were visited, these sites are already being used in some 'Dark Tours'. We shall discuss all the sites and stops in the next chapter.

3.4.1 Upper Barrakka Gardens

The tour commences at the Upper Barrakka Gardens.

The Upper Barrakka Gardens is one of Malta's most popular gardens, perched on the St Peter and St Paul Bastions overlooking the Grand Harbour. These gardens are mostly frequented by leisure tourists visiting Malta and by the locals that are attracted by the view offered from the terrace of these gardens. This site offers also a view on the lower level where the Saluting Battery is found, from here one is able to experience the firing of cannons daily at noon and 4.00pm. One can also visit the War Rooms, related to World War II. During my research, this area was identified in relation to the monument of **Thomas Maitland** – the first British Governor of Malta 1813 – 1824. During his service in Malta, the plague hit our islands, causing approximately the death of 4,500 people over a span of sixteen months between May 1813 and September 1814. This area was also identified due to the view overlooking the harbour and the stories related to the 'Crimean War' and murders committed on taxi boats during the nineteenth century.

3.4.2 St Ursula Street Valletta

The second stop takes us to St Ursula Street

St Ursula Street is one of the much narrower streets in Valletta that crosses from one main street to another. Here we also find several traditional Maltese houses and locals living their daily life, which is more authentic than what one experiences by walking through the main streets in Valletta. This street has been used during tours related to 'Dark History' both in relation to 'Ghost Tourism' and also in relation to a tragedy involving approximately one hundred children in one of the churches found in the corner between St Ursula Street and St John Street, both events happened during the British occupation in Malta. During the tour, stories related to British sailors and ghosts will be presented.

3.4.3 Nix Mangiari Stairs

Third location – the Nix Mangiari Stairs

These narrow steps were for a number of years, during the early nineteenth century, the meeting place and area where beggars would establish themselves awaiting the new visitors to Malta to disembark from the ship after berthing at the Grand Harbour. This site got its name from the definition used by the beggars, that of 'Nix Mangiari' (nothing to eat) as they would prod and pull whilst shouting 'Nix Mangiari' to anyone that would be brave enough to pass through these stairs. Several stories related to poverty and the life locals lived during the first half of the 19th (nineteenth) century were identified and presented in this location. One has to mention that this site is already being used by other 'Dark Tours' held in the Valletta area.

3.4.4 Grand Harbour – Taxi Boat Stations

Fourth location – Grand Harbour and Taxi Boat stations

During the 19th (nineteenth) century, especially the 1850's, the effects of the Crimean War in Malta, gave a huge boost to the economy of Malta, especially within the Grand Harbour area. With approximately 6 ships sailing into the Grand Harbour daily, the 'Barklori' were very busy with the transportation of navy officers, sailors, soldiers and merchandise ship crew, from their vessels to the harbour towns. There were 1200 (one thousand two hundred) taxi boats operating with 3000 (three thousand) oarsmen working on these boats. The crime and fights with the military personnel, was an ongoing issue.

Whilst doing the research, the author identified that stories related to this period and to the crime committed by the oarsmen, could be a potential dark story. The location of the Grand Harbour and the Taxi Boat Stations, relate to one of the subjects in this research, that of the 'Barklori', the Grand Harbour including the taxi boat stations, both on the Valletta side and the Birgu side (Vittoriosa) were two new locations identified for the tour. These sites were either the backdrop, or the area where some murders took place during the nineteenth century, these murders involved British soldiers stationed in Malta.

4. Results, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

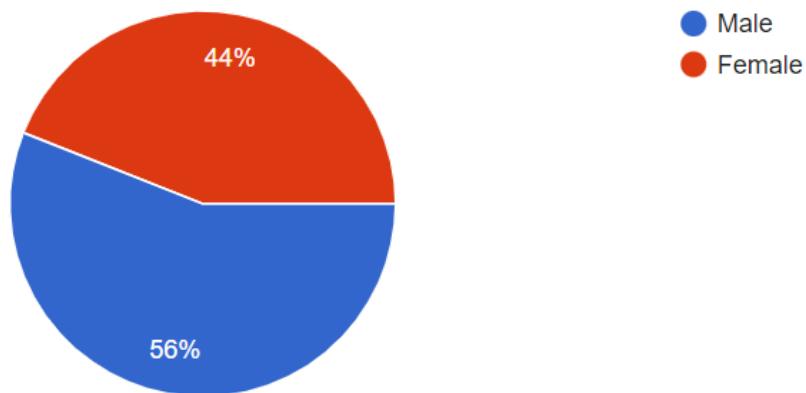
In this chapter, the feedback received from the interviews that were held and the data collected, were analysed in order to make a comparison with the questions and objectives related to this research.

4.2 Results relating to demographics

Graph 4.2, shows the gender of the interviewees, where 44% were male and 56% were female. **Graph 4.2.1**, relates to the age of the interviewees which ranged between 20 (twenty) and 51 (fifty – one) years old. **Graph 4.2.1** shows the nationalities of people interviewed, currently living in Malta. Fourteen different nationalities were interviewed with the highest number of interviewees being Maltese, 8 (eight) persons.

1. Demographics: Gender

25 responses

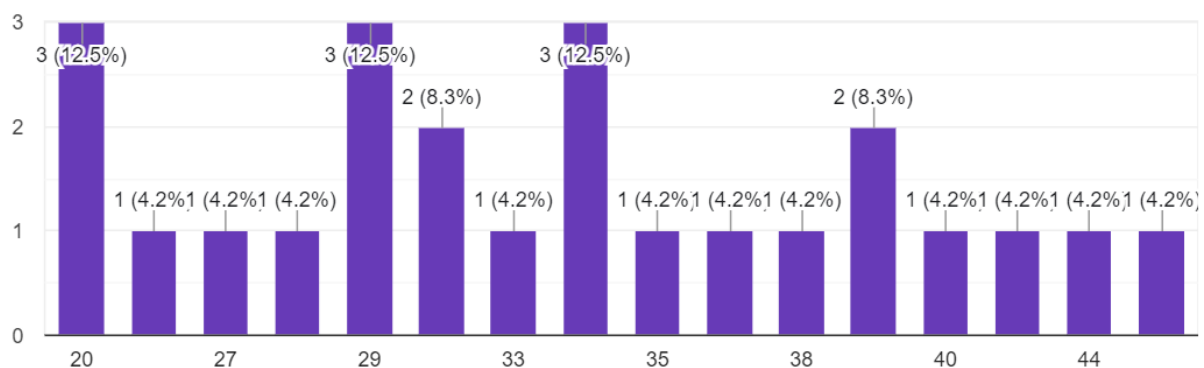


Graph 4.2

1. Demographics: Age



24 responses

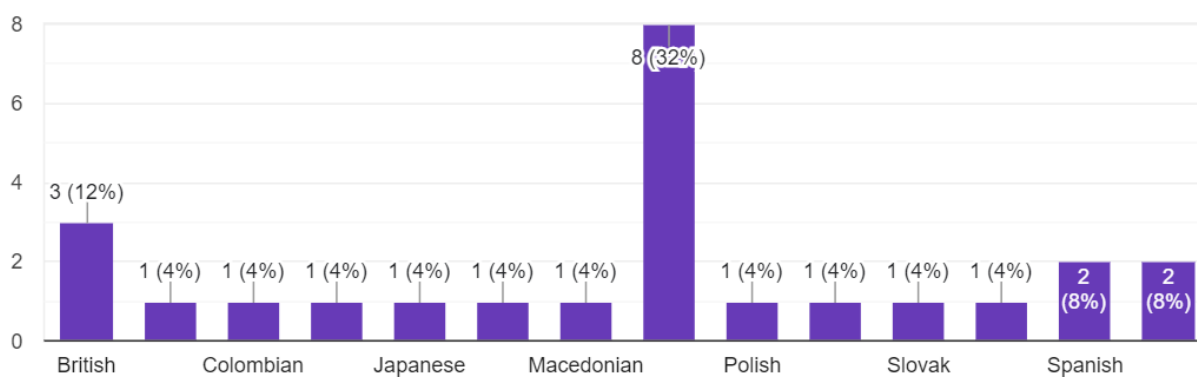


Graph 4.2.1

1. Demographics: Nationality



25 responses



Graph 4.2.2

4.3 The term 'Dark Tourism'

One of the main questions asked to the interviewees, was about the understanding of the term 'Dark Tourism' and what the interviewee understood by this phrase. Out of the 25 (twenty-five) interviewees, 60% (sixty) percent replied that they had heard and knew about the term 'Dark Tourism', however 40% (forty) percent replied that they did not know what 'Dark Tourism' meant or related to. The interviewees that replied in the affirmative way, also gave a good description of what 'Dark Tourism' identifies with and even gave certain explanations, confirming that they had a clear understanding of the term and what it relates to. When asked if they have ever visited any 'Dark Sites', 12 (twelve) interviewees mentioned that they had visited dark related sites in the past. Sites mentioned were, Chernobyl, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Catacombs, Alcatraz, Pearl Harbour and Notre Damme de Strasbourg.

4.4 Motivation and expectations

One of the main objectives of this research is to identify what motivates a person to visit a dark related site and what are the expectations one has before visiting these locations. During the interviews held with the persons that identified the term 'Dark Tourism', 50% (fifty) percent mentioned that their main motivation was related to the historical side of the location. 30% (thirty) percent mentioned that it was pure curiosity that motivated them. Whereas the remaining 20% (twenty) percent mentioned that they wanted to feel a connection to the victims that had suffered.

A respondent also mentioned that the motivation felt was *'To understand that some people had no power over their life and could not choose how or where they want to live or what they want to do. They were taken away from their families and homes against their will. They sacrificed their lives for us to live at peace'*. When asked about their expectations when visiting the dark related sites, 30% (thirty) percent replied that they had no expectations at all when visiting these sites, whereas 40% (forty) percent, new that it would be an emotional experience. The remaining 30% (thirty) percent had mixed expectations, one person mentioned that they wanted *'to experience the real feeling of war'* and another stated that they wanted *'to be able to see as much as possible & essentially learn'*.

4.5 Is Malta a 'Dark' site?

During the interviews, a question about Malta and the Grand Harbour being a Dark location, was asked to help the author identify further details and information relating to how Malta is perceived and what is the general view about the location researched about. Furthermore, the author wanted to find out if the general public would consider booking a 'Dark Tour' in the Grand Harbour of Malta. Out of the 60% (sixty) percent of the interviewees that knew what 'Dark Tourism' meant, only 7% (seven) percent replied that they would consider Malta as a 'Dark' location and would definitely consider attending dark related tours, in fact they mentioned that they had already attended a Ghost Tour in Birgu. 15% (fifteen) percent, replied that they have not considered Malta as a 'dark' site, maybe due to the fact that they do not really know about the historical part of the Maltese Islands being foreigners, but they might be interested if the tour being sold is interesting enough. 38% (thirty-eight) percent replied that although they knew about 'Dark' sites in international countries, they have no knowledge about any 'Dark' sites in Malta. Some even mentioned that they have not seen any promotions related to 'Dark Tourism' and others mentioned that they are not very interested in taking part in anything locally, but opted to visit these places when visiting new countries abroad, mainly because of their lack of historical interest or knowledge within the local scene.

4.6 Analyses

Through this research, the author identified that although the majority of the interviewees, being 60 % (sixty percent) understood the definition of 'Dark Tourism', there was still a large percentage of the travel population that still did not know the meaning of the phrase 'Dark Tourism'. This could be related to the fact that certain agencies promoting 'Dark Tours' opt to use other references rather than the specific word of 'Dark', for example 'Ghost Tours' (travel, n.d.) or 'Auschwitz Tour' (Anon., 2004) related to the site itself. The phrase 'Dark Tourism' is still not being marketed well and this could be the reason why it is not well understood. Furthermore, the percentage of people visiting dark sites in Malta is very low compared to the sites visited in other countries e.g Auschwitz (Auschwitz, n.d.) and Chernobyl (Statista, n.d.). Could this be due to Malta not being promoted nationally and internationally as a 'Dark Site'? Could this lack of 'Dark Tourism' visitors to Malta (Office, n.d.), is due to the fact that Malta is mainly being promoted as a Leisure and Cultural destination and the dark history that Malta has gone through, is not being given so much importance?

Furthermore, the main tours related to 'Dark' tourism in Malta are focused on War Heritage and Ghost Tours, although these two subjects could be of interest to the general public, we need to diversify and offer other new subjects, for example, one of the murders committed in the Grand Harbour by the Barklori (oarsmen) as proposed in the tour by the author.

5. Final Arguments

The main objective of this research is to explore the possibility of promoting the Grand Harbour area as a dark site related to murders and mysteries that happened specifically in this area, during the 19th (nineteenth) century. But before we start working on promoting The Grand Harbour itself, we need to first start promoting Malta as a 'Dark' site, as the knowledge, locally and internationally is still very low, compared to that of other countries. By being innovative and creating dark related tours that offer a much intriguing subject, a subject that one can connect directly and feel a more vivid experience when experiencing one of these tours. An example of the tour is proposed in **Appendix 8**. The Tour, which is a walking tour around the Grand Harbour area, relates different stories that involved the Barklori (oarsmen), their lifestyle, the regulations of the port during the mid-19th (nineteenth) century, a time when the Grand Harbour was a protagonist due to the effects of the Crimean War 1853 – 1856 (Grima, n.d.) but also several murders committed by the oarsmen themselves involving British Army and Navy personnel. A way to promote the Grand Harbour area as a 'dark site' in Malta.

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Appendices

Appendix 7

Other types of 'Dark Tourism'

Battlefield Tourism

Battlefield or War Tourism dates back to as far back as the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. This type of 'Dark Tourism' travel, is focused on locations to battlefields or war zones. Some people visit these places in relation to history or as a recreational/sightseeing purpose, others prefer to visit fortifications or museums related to military. Countries that were involved in conflict and war, attract 'Battlefield Tourism' also since tourists are in search and attracted by war evidence. This type of 'Dark Tourism' is also referred to as 'Extreme Tourism' since visiting a War Zone that is still active, can be very dangerous. Due to the recent wars, this type of tourism has seen an increase and the main destinations that are most requested are Pakistan, Syria and Afghanistan.

Although it is not recommended to visit these countries, and sometime even totally banned, some people that are passionate about travelling to war zones, opt to become a volunteer and join an NGO (non government organisation) to be able to visit these high risk locations. One can even find Travel Agencies that are highly informative and equipped in organising tours to war zones.

Ghost Tourism/Prison Tourism

The general reference we use in 'Dark Tourism' does not identify the several types of options offered within this niche market, as the term is too generic. Apart from the different types of locations we mentioned above, one can find other types of 'Dark Tourism' sites, such as those related to 'Ghost Tourism' and 'Prison Tourism'. 'Ghost Tourism' relates to excursions visiting sites related to paranormal activity. Most common locations used in this type of 'Dark Tourism' are haunted houses, haunted castles and haunted hotels. We can even find paranormal tours offered in certain destinations as seen in Fig. 1. In Malta, we have several companies offering 'Ghost Tours' both in Valletta and in the Three Cities. One of the agencies that offers these tours is 'Colour my Travel'. The sites that this agency uses for the offered tours, are mainly Valletta, Birgu and Mdina.

These three locations offer not only a lot of history, but also the possibility to view very old houses, as old as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. The tours focus on stories that evolved around the haunted locations rather than the search of ghosts as other countries offer.

[Home](#) | [Visit Brushy](#) | [Paranormal Tours](#)

FOOTSTEPS, APPARITIONS, DISEMBODIED VOICES

Ask yourself. Do some souls cross over, while others remain
trapped in the veil?

Evil men who did evil things were imprisoned here, with many locked away for the rest of their lives. And while the death penalty was never carried out at Brushy, more than a few died of natural causes or in the mines. Others met their end with the blade of a meat cleaver or a shiv, the final blow delivered by the violent hands of fellow inmate.

These are the souls that haunt this stone-cold fortress, whose spirits refuse to cross over. Who remain here because they have unfinished business.

Visitors have been touched, shoved, scratched and even growled at. Nevertheless, they have a cautious fascination with this unexplained world of the undead.

Fig 1. Website promoting a Paranormal tour at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary (Source <https://tourbrushy.com/paranormal-tours>)

Appendix 8: HND TG Long Essay Tour Itinerary

'Murders and other Mysteries in the Grand Harbour area of 19th Century Malta'

1: Meeting spot - Outside the Upper Barrakka Gardens Valletta

- Introduction to the tour
- A brief history of Valletta
- Introduction to the upper barrakka gardens
- Mystery about the wooden roof and several theories related to this story
- Introduce the British period in Malta

2: Monument dedicated to Sir Thomas Maitland at the Upper Barrakka Gardens

- Introduction of the first early years of the British period
- Thomas Maitland
- Thomas Maitland story in Sri Lanka
- How did the plague come to Malta? Relate mysteries relating to this period
- The plague, sanitization process, quarantine, figures and hospitals.
- Discuss poverty during the early 19th century

3: Terrace overlooking the Grand Harbour

- Introduce the Crimean War, effects and depict the Grand Harbour during mid 19th Century
- Talk about the Bumboatmen and Barklori (oarsmen)
- Discuss the Royal Navy Bighi Hospital
- First murder will be discussed relating to a British General Inspector that happened in Birgu (across the harbour)

4: Walk to Saint Ursula Street Valletta

- Introduce a typical Maltese house which is believed to be haunted
- Relate story regarding British soldiers and the haunted house

5: Walk to Ta Giesu Church corner with St Ursula Street Valletta

- Introduce Ta Giesu Church
- Talk about poverty in the early 19th Century
- Relate story involving the death of approximately 100 children during Carnival of 1823.

6: Walk to Nix Mangiari Stairs

- Relate stories about poverty, beggars, visitors to Malta on the P&O steamship
- Figures relating to poverty during the first half of the 19th century
- The lifestyle and food consumed during this period
- The unemployment and wages
- The perception about Army and British personnel

7: Walk to the Grand Harbour (Quarry Wharf)

- Talk about the oarsmen (Barklori), what the job involved, how it was inherited, their lifestyle and traditions.
- Crime and entertainment in the Grand Harbour during the 19th Century
- Relate story regarding the fight and murder involving two 'Barklori' (oarsmen) and three British personnel

8: To conclude - walk to the Taxi Boat Station Valletta Grand Harbour side

- Talk about certain rules and regulations in the Grand Harbour relating to the Barklori (oarsmen) introduced in 1856
- Relate the story of the murder involving a Barklor (oarsmen) and a British Captain

Long Essay Meeting Record Form

Student Name & Surname	
Student Email	
Tutor	

_____	_____	_____
Tutor's Signature	Date	Student's Signature

Long-Essay Title

Tutor's Comments

Date



Time

Tutor's Signature

Student's Signature

Subjects Discussed / Changes Required

Agenda / Changes for Next Meeting
